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X1 Search



By M. David Stone August 18, 2015 3:18PM ESTAugust 18, 2015

Editors' Rating: ●●●●○EXCELLENT



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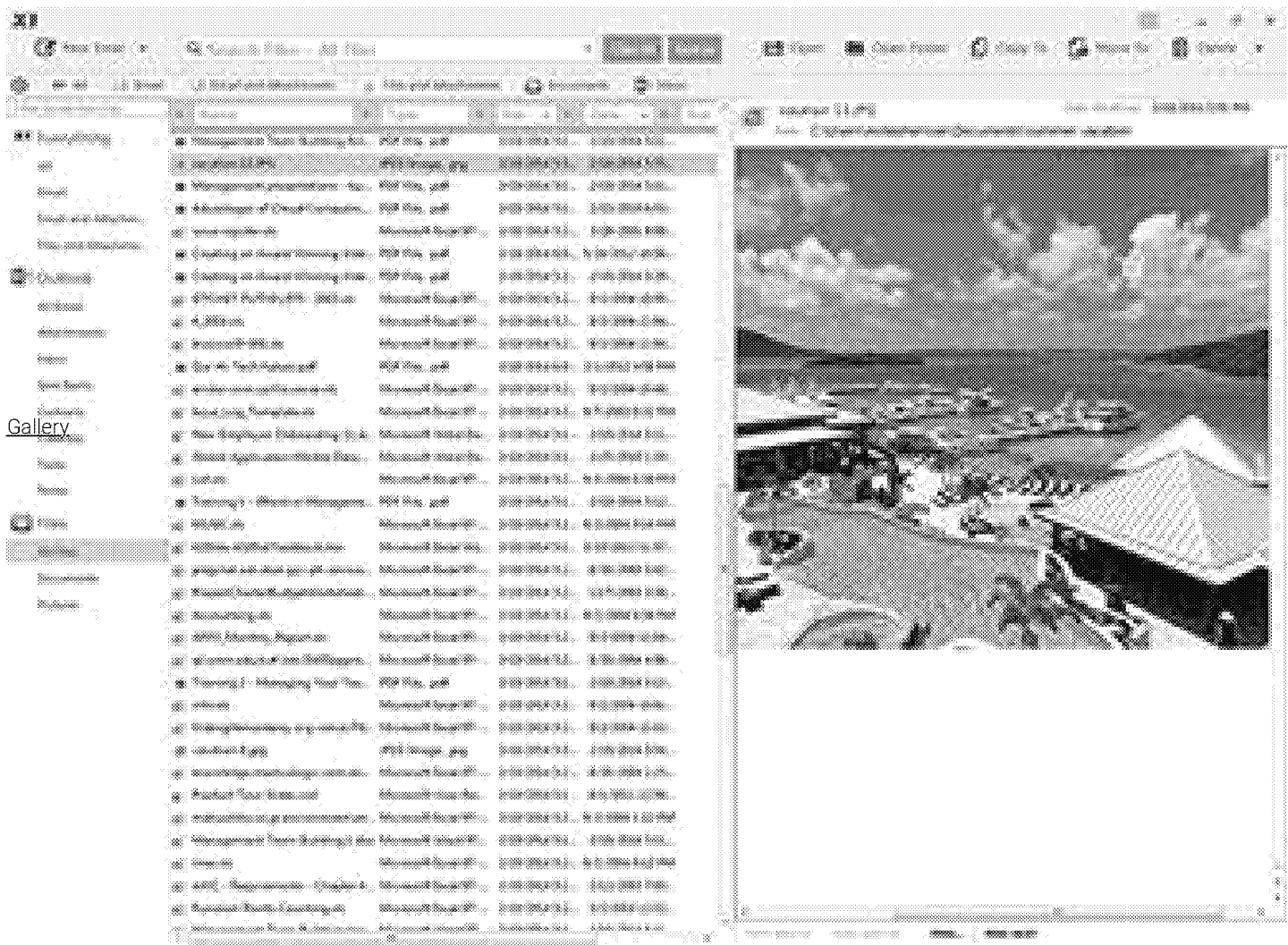
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MSRP

\$49.95

PROS

Easy setup. Quickly finds any file or email message on your hard drive. Also works with SharePoint, popular email servers like Gmail and Yahoo Mail, and files stored in a Box online storage account.

CONS

Pricy. Yearly fee for premium support.

BOTTOM LINE

If you're willing to pay for it, X1 integrates Web mail and online storage services into search and delivers a much more sophisticated experience than Windows can offer.



Some people don't see a need for a desktop search utility like X1 Search (\$49.95, plus \$19.95 yearly for optional premium support). They prefer to rely on a carefully maintained, hierarchical folder structure and religiously adhere to it. Those people no doubt never lose their car keys either. For the rest of us, tools like X1 Search are the ideal way to find the files, emails, and other digital items we need when we need them and with minimum effort.

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When Microsoft added Windows Search to the OS it undercut some of the need for desktop search programs. Just like X1 Search and competitors like [Lookeen Desktop Search](#), it creates an index to search through, so it can find results a lot faster than searching through the full text of each file every time. It even finds Outlook email messages, so you don't have to use Outlook's wimpy search feature. And because it's built into Windows, it's free. Whatever the benefits of Windows Search, however, it's simply not in the same league as a full-scale desktop search utility. Windows doesn't offer the same level of sophistication, and it doesn't offer the ability X1 Search has for indexing and finding information on email and file-storage cloud sites like Gmail, Yahoo Mail, and Box.



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Going Beyond the Desktop

X1 Search supports Windows 7 through 8.1 at this writing and will support Windows 10 with an upcoming release shortly, according to the company. It also officially supports both 32- and 64-bit versions of Outlook 2007 through 2013. For my tests, I installed Version 8 of the program on a system running Windows 7 64-bit and Outlook 2003, and it worked without problems. According to X1, it will work with Microsoft Exchange Server 2007 and later directly, for example, as well as by indexing OST files that sit on your hard drive. Dipping into the cloud, it can index messages on IMAP servers, with built-in setup routines for connecting with AOL, Gmail, Outlook.com, and Yahoo, plus a generic IMAP choice for still other email storage sites. In addition, it can index and search for files stored in a Box account.

Beneficial for business use, you can also set up X1 Search to work as a client with Microsoft SharePoint, Vault (an enterprise-level email archiving program from Symantec), and X1 Rapid (X1's own enterprise-level indexing program that runs from—and stores index files on—a server).

Setup

Basic setup for the program couldn't be simpler. Download the installation file from X1's [website](#) and run it. When the installation finishes, X1 Search will build an index in the background, including all of your files and Outlook entries from contacts to calendar entries to tasks. How long the indexing will take depends on your computer's speed and how much there is to index, but you can keep working while it's going on in the background.

Beyond the basic setup, you can browse through menu options to customize settings and add data sources to, or remove them from, the index. If you regularly archive your Outlook data at the end of each year, for example, you might want to index one or more of the archive PST files. Adding them is a simple matter of telling the program where to find them on your hard drive. You can also choose whether to start X1 Search automatically when you start Windows, how often to index, and details of what to index. You can, for example, specify which folders to include or skip, or you can change settings to ignore, say, Outlook Calendar entries or specific file types.

Searching

The program's search capability is impressive, both for its ease of use and its sophisticated features. The X1 Search window includes several text boxes that you can enter search phrases in. Enter text in the main search box (for lack of a better term), and the program will pore through its entire index, finding all matches whether the text is in a file name, in the full text of a document, email, or contact entry; or in any field in any Outlook item.

The other text boxes let you search in specific fields. For emails, for example, the choices include From, Subject, Date, and Name fields. For files, they include Name (of file), Date Modified, and Path.

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Assuming the program is already running in the background, all you have to do to start a search is hit Ctrl twice—or double-click on the X1 icon in the Notification Area—to call up the search window, and then type in a search phrase or phrases in one or more of the text boxes. You can also choose to narrow the search by highlighting a type of item—email, contact, or document for example—in a list on the left side of the screen.

If I were searching for every item on my computer related to X1 Search, for example, I would enter *X1 Search* in the main search box. If I wanted to find only this review, I could choose the Document type and enter *X1* in the Name box. If that turned up too many hits, I could narrow the search further by adding any other information in the appropriate text box, like the approximate date it was written, as *After 2015-06-10*, or a likely phrase in the file, like *"According to X1"* (complete with the quotes). The quotes around the last example tell the program to find an exact match to the phrase. Without them, the results would also include any file that includes each of the words anywhere in the file.

Advanced Search

For more sophisticated searching, you can build complex search phrases using *and*, *or*, *not*, or *near* (to find two words separated by no more than a specified number of words between them), and *pre* (similar to *near*, but also specifying which word comes first). You can also use parentheses: *(dog or cat) and food*, for example would find items with both the words *dog* and *food* as well as items with the words *cat* and *food*, while *dog or (cat and food)* would find all items with the word *dog* plus all items with the words *cat* and *food*.

Much like Outlook—or Lookeen for that matter—X1 Search shows the list of the items it finds along with a preview pane, so you can browse through the list and see a preview of each item as you highlight it. When you've found the item you want, you can double click on it or hit Enter to open it with the program it's associated with, assuming there's one installed on your system. The company says that the program's preview supports more than 500 file types, so you can see files in their correct format whether you have a program installed that will let you work with the file or not.

Conclusion

Even if you're not convinced that you need something more than Windows Search for finding items on your hard drive, you're well advised to try X1 Search's 14-day free trial or Lookeen's free version to see what you're missing. Odds are you'll quickly decide that both Lookeen and X1 Search are far better search tools than Windows Search. If you're only concerned about searching for files on your hard drive, Lookeen's free version will probably be your best choice. If you also want to find Outlook emails, either Lookeen Standard or X1 Search will do.

That said, if you can take advantage of X1 Search's ability to extend its reach to SharePoint or cloud-based email and Box or make use of its ability to build much more sophisticated search phrases than Lookeen can handle, X1 Search is the obvious choice. These additional capabilities—along with easier setup than Lookeen for some features and an equally easy-to-use interface—make it our Editors' Choice for desktop search utilities.

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