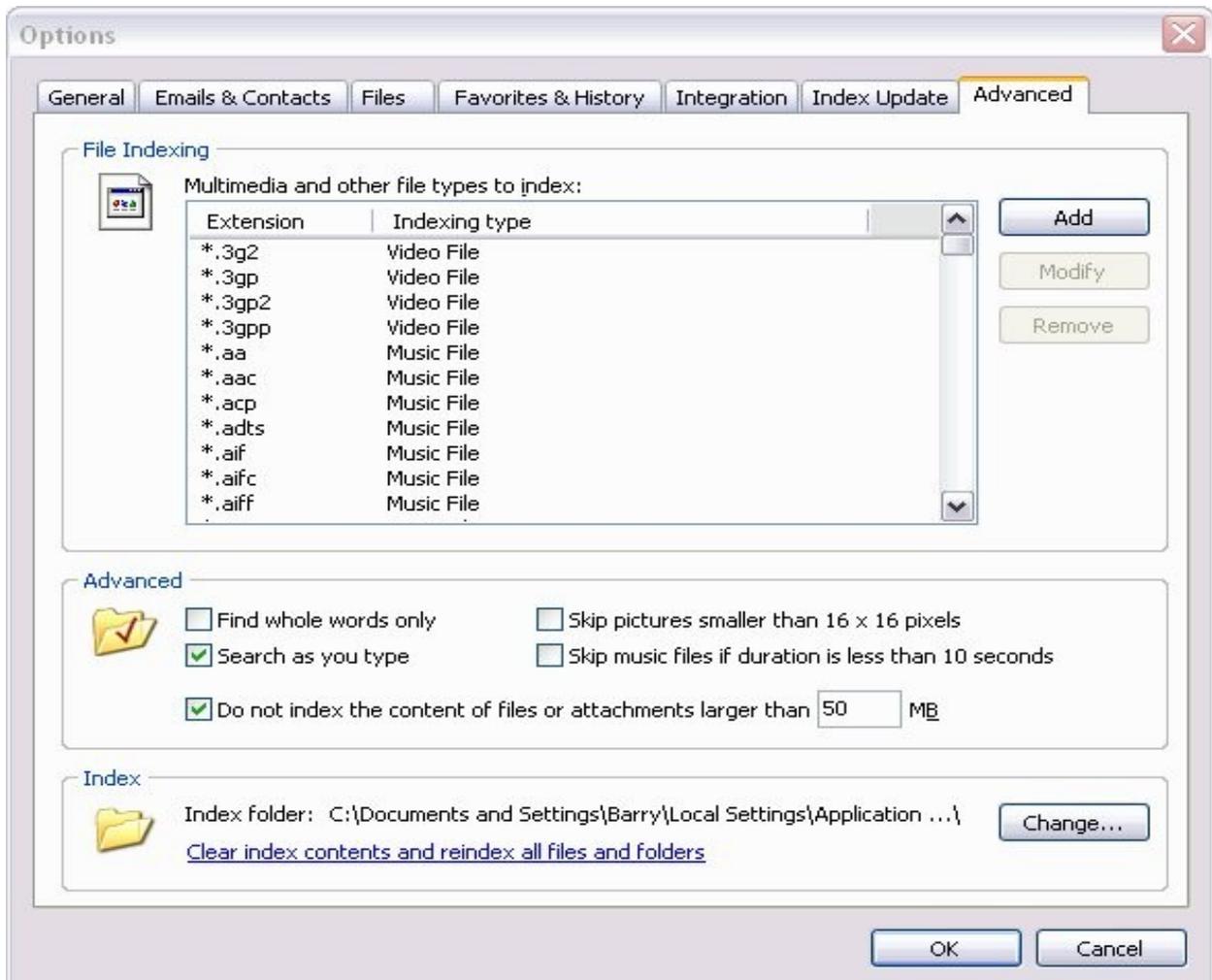# Copernic Desktop Search 1

By Barry Thompson

On a Windows PC with gigabytes of data, it can often be difficult to find that elusive bit of data an email, a datafile, a Word file, etc. that you know is on there somewhere. Barry Thompson shares his experience of using the free Copernic Desktop Search facility and finds it fast and versatile.

For a number of years I have used Copernic Desktop Search. It can be quite difficult sometimes to remember where a particular file is located; Copernic Desktop Search (CDS) has saved my bacon on many occasions.

Installation and setup

After installing this free program from http://www.copernic.com, a 3MB download, the user needs to set up certain parameters within the program. These include when you want the program to update its indexes and, if necessary, which drives to index. It is possible for the user to include additional file types to be indexed; such files for me include the image files from the digital camera that I use (X3F), XAR for Xara Xtreme and OVN for Serious Magic's Ovation program.

It could be that users have other specific programs which generate other non-standard file types; these can be added to the indexing facility very easily. Now that I very rarely use my RiscPC, I have copied the contents of that hard disc drive to a directory on the PC and those files are also indexed.
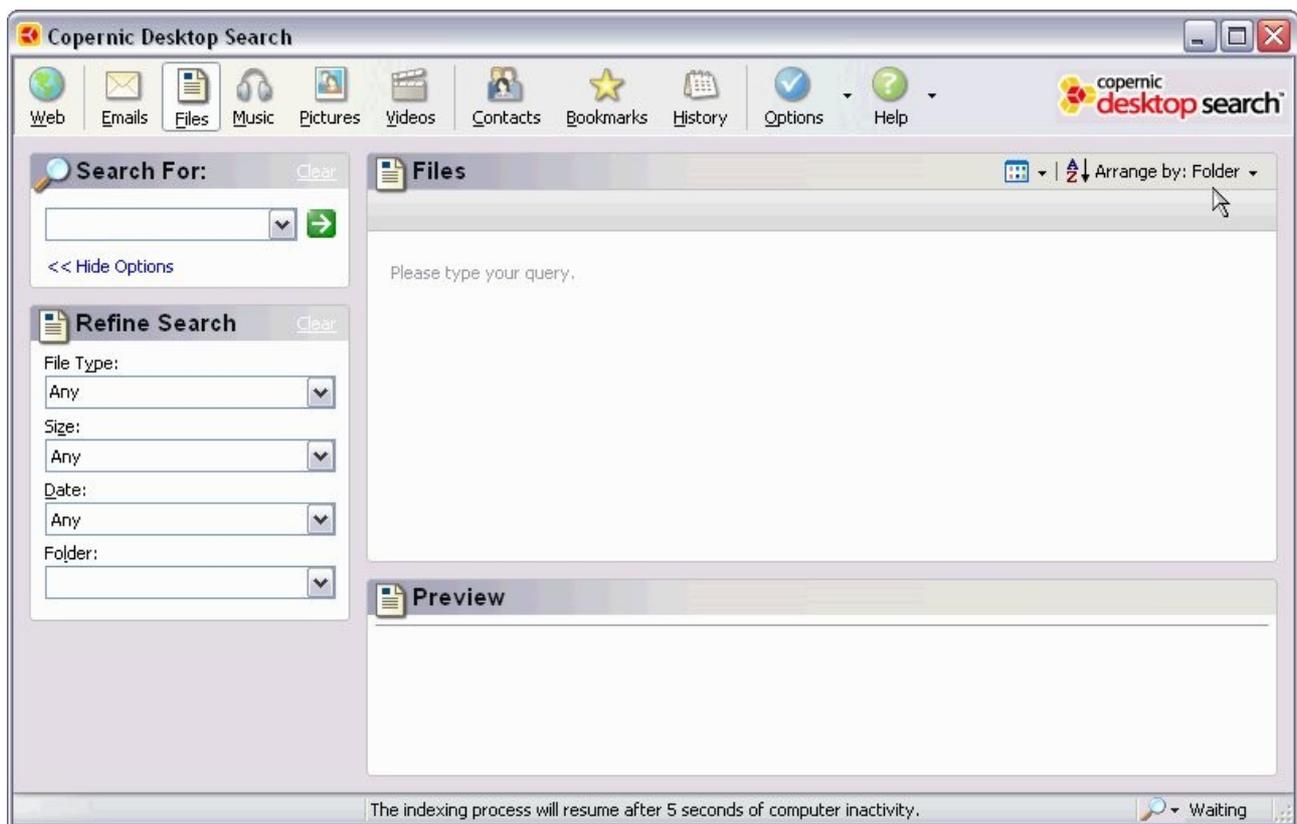
Privacy?

If you are concerned about the privacy of your personal data, fear not because CDS was designed with privacy in mind. Be assured that the data indexed by CDS stays on your PC and on no account will it be transferred to Copernic or any of its partners. Furthermore, computer activity is never logged. It is solely monitored to enable or disable the indexing process.

Starting to index

Once set up, the program needs to index the files in the locations specified. This is probably best set to run when the computer is not going to be used, although the program is intelligent enough to stop its indexing work when use is being made of the computer and it resumes when neither mouse nor keyboard is used for a period of five seconds. Having said that, it is possible to set up the program to carry out the indexing whilst the computer is being used. Initially, it may take several hours for the indexing to be completed.

I currently have many thousands of data files and photographic images from my digital camera which are indexed, and the index files themselves total nearly 300MB. You may ask why they occupy this amount of space; the reason is that the program indexes all words in all documents. The file types indexed by default are shown in the Copernic FAQ at:
http://www.copernic.com/en/products/desktop-search/faq.html

Using the program

If you can't remember the name of a file, you may be able to remember some of the text contained within it, type that into then Search For: box, and usually the result is presented in a fraction of a second, because Copernic has already pre-fetched the information.

If you are in any doubt as to the power of Copernic, both Boolean operators and nested searches within parenthesis are supported, and new and updated content is indexed on the fly for almost instantaneous results. The ability to index emails as they appear in your inbox is currently limited to Outlook only.

Within the program there is support for the Mozilla Thunderbird email client (as well as Outlook and Eudora), including indexing of emails, attachments and contact data, along with support for Firefox bookmarks and cache. Network drives can also be indexed. The integrated file viewer possesses an embedded player for both audio and video files, film strip image viewing and a dedicated Contacts viewing pane.
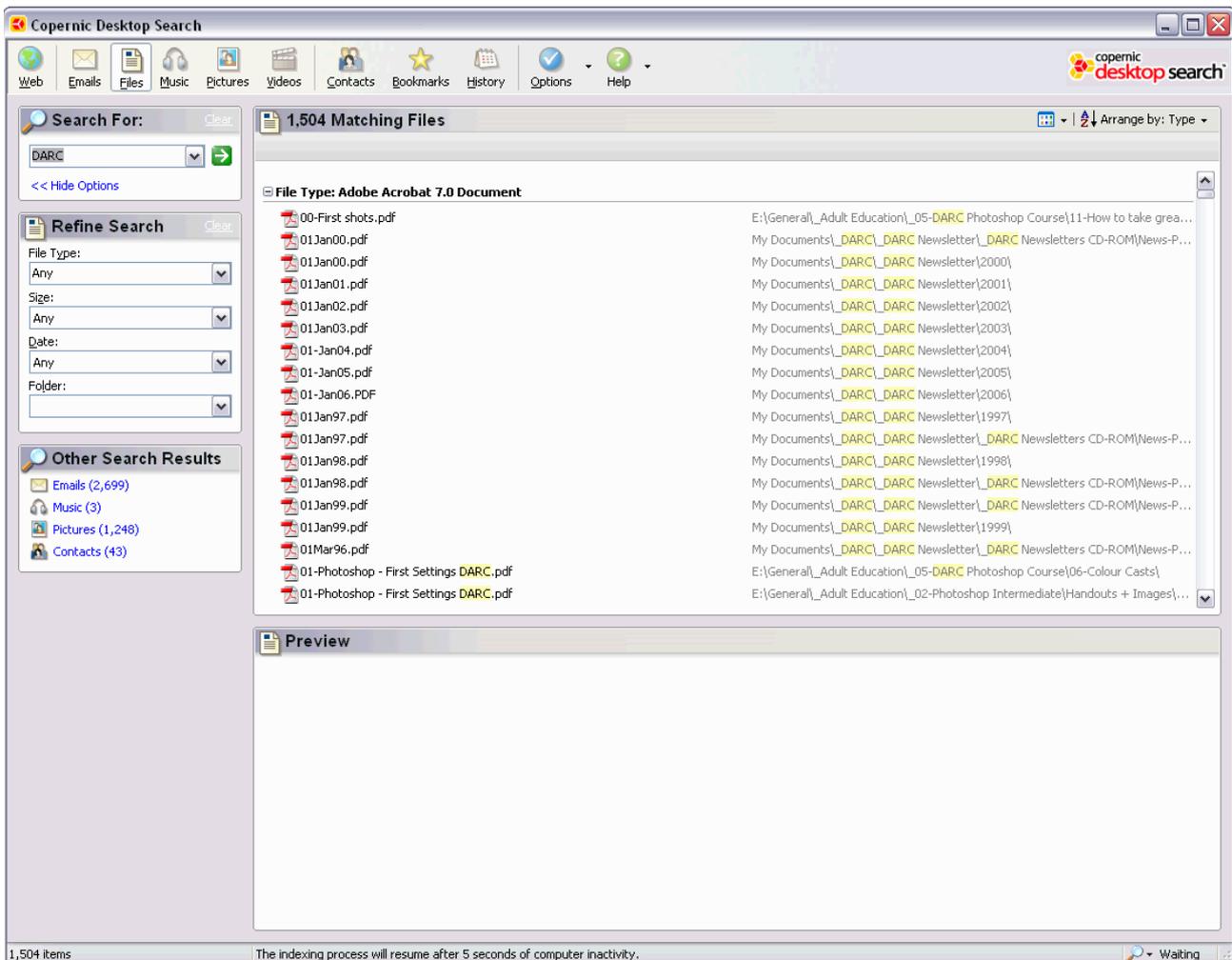
In use, the program proves to be very accurate and is fast. PDF files (minus images) appear in seconds.

There are two configurations in which the program can be set up to run, from a desktop bar if configured to appear on the task bar, or by double-clicking on the icon located in the system tray.
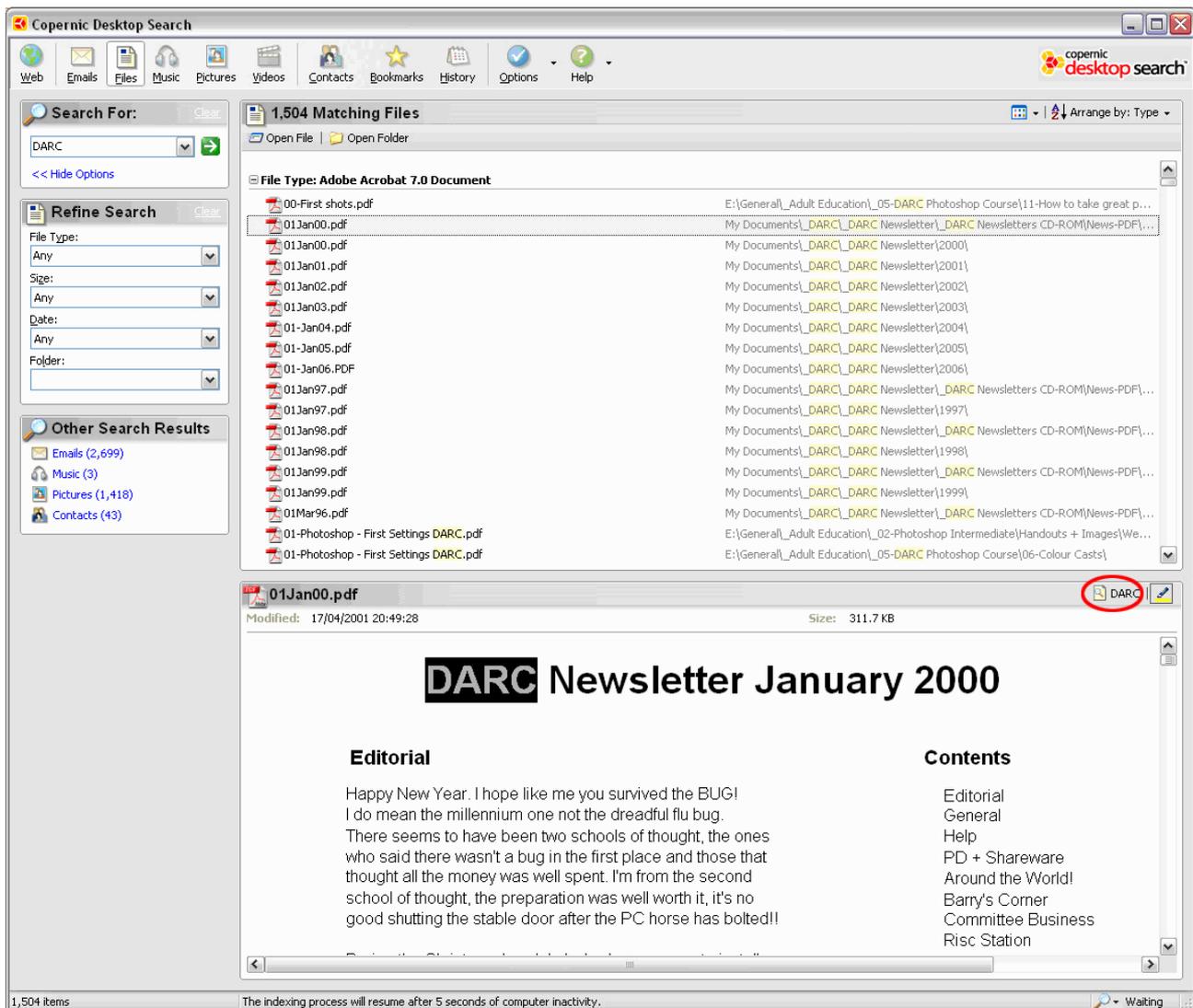
The interface, shown above, is what will be presented to the user when initiating a search.

First, a search category needs to be selected from: Web\, Emails, Files, Music, Pictures, Videos, Contact, Bookmarks or History.

If Files is selected as the search category, and I enter DARC as the search string, the window shown below is what is presented to me in a fraction of a second. As well as the File details, it also shows at the bottom left in Other Search Results, that there are 2699 emails, three music files, 1248 pictures and 43 Contacts that are also indexed and contain the search string. Clicking on the any of the other category icons at the top of the page will display the items in that category.

As can be seen in the illustration below, the document which has been selected is shown in the preview window without images. The search string is shown as a yellow highlight. There is also the ability to jump to the next highlighted occurrence with one click on the icon outlined in red.

Clicking the Web button starts your default web browser and opens the search alltheweb.com search engine's home page. Type the query terms in the search box. Select the appropriate search domain tab to submit your query.

It is a pity that the Copernic program cannot be configured to use your search engine of choice.

Other search engines to try

There are other desktop search programs which can be used, such as:

Blinkz

Google Desktop Search

Hotbot

Lookout

 MSN Desktop Search

Yahoo Desktop Search

 X1Search

There is also a website which carries out comparisons on the various options:

http://www.zdnet.co.uk/search/reviews/n-6c9/search+engines.htm