

## Finding Messages Instantly

### A technology brief comparing the technologies of Google Desktop Search, Nelson Email Organizer and Microsoft Outlook as related to finding messages

Instantly locating messages - that's the simplest operational definition of email productivity. If you can always count on instantly finding the messages you so urgently need, why bother organizing? It's an important and timely question.

In late October 2004, Google launched a new product, Google Desktop Search, the latest and clearly the most impressive entry so far in the hot desktop search space. Along with their new product, Google made a remarkable claim "you don't need to worry about organizing your files, email or bookmarks. You can just do a quick search for what you remember seeing...".

This briefing peels back some of Google's hype so we can look at what's really involved in finding messages instantly, and what it means to email productivity. First, let's introduce the players:

- Google Desktop Search** A desktop search product that indexes email (Outlook, Outlook Express), files (txt, doc, xls, ppt), Internet chat (AOL) and cached web pages. For email, only message content is indexed. Search results are displayed in the familiar Google way, 10 entries per page.
- Nelson Email Organizer** The industry leading email organizer, NEO uses its patented technologies to automatically index email message properties (recipients, date/time, flags, etc.) to display the same message in different ways. Like Google Desktop Search, NEO also indexes email message content for targeted searching.
- Microsoft Outlook** The leading email client program, Outlook offers limited email message property indexing via user-definable saved searches, and offers no indexed searching for email message content (searches are practical only for tiny message stores).

### Why are messages so hard to find?

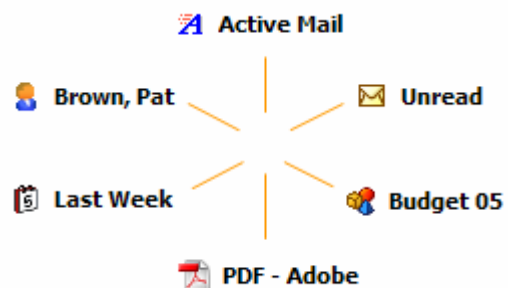
Contrary to popular belief, the problem is not increasing message volumes. Simply put, messages are hard to find because they are not intrinsically organized. As a result, users spend unnecessary time filing messages or creating rules to file messages. What is worse, they often delete messages they will need later to reduce clutter, or simply because they don't know what to do with them. All this extra work because they know they will be called on to find an important email some time in the future.

Rather than manually organizing messages, the key to email organization is to leverage the power of email's natural properties. By indexing message properties, the same message can be displayed in different ways.

Consider a message from Pat Brown you received last week that contained a PDF file. In NEO, you would find this same message in your Pat Brown folder, your Last Week folder and your PDF folder, and several others. Locating messages is immediate because you know exactly where to look based on the message properties, without having to rely on the content of the message.

Interestingly, Microsoft is most to blame for limiting real growth in email productivity. Their flagship Outlook product is used by more people than any other email product - they should be leading, not lagging the industry. Outlook offers only nominal indexing of message properties which make messages difficult to browse to. And without indexed message content, there's no consolation in searching because it is so slow.

#### Same message in different contexts



## What's wrong with finding messages using search alone?

Google proposes there is no need to organize email because "you can just do a quick search for what you remember seeing". This demonstrates a surprising naivety on email workflow and what it means to find email messages quickly.

In fact, there are several important points that need to be more clearly understood:

1. If the message is right in front of you, why would you search for it? This may seem obvious but it's an important point that relates directly to message organization. If you used a typical email client program like Outlook, you would have to resort to search more often because these programs do not index on message properties. Messages are harder to browse to. With NEO's message property-based indexing, messages are much easier to find without having to search.
2. Google displays search results quickly, but you then must sift through the results. Immediately seeing 458 email hits on 'budget' is impressive, but you are usually looking for just one. You then need to sift through hundreds of entries, ten entries at a time to find the one you are looking for. It gives a whole new meaning to 'false-positives'.
3. To successfully find messages based on searching you need to remember or guess words in the message content. Who can remember what words are in a message, who can count on a correspondent to include search-suitable words, what about typos, what about foreign languages, how much time is wasted guessing, and what about that feeling that you may have missed it?
4. You interrupt your email workflow by leaving your email program. When searching for a file it's entirely appropriate to pause your workflow to use another program. It's an occasional activity. Email is different. Consider the number of times each day you need to locate and act on messages. Imagine having to start a Google desktop search in your browser, sift through the results to find the message, then act on it completely out of context - each time you need to put your finger on a message.

## Does this mean search isn't important?

Not at all. Fast searching is a must-have feature for any email program. We know. We've had lightning-fast searches in NEO since 2000. The real message here is that searching is inherently a reactive activity. It's necessary when the message isn't readily in front of you but should not normally be your first course of action because it interrupts your workflow and simply takes too much time (its other shortcomings notwithstanding).

Google Desktop Search is an impressive product for finding objects on your computer. While they show a lack of understanding of email searching, Google did get one statement right about email: you don't need to worry about organizing your email.

In fact, organized email is important, but **you** shouldn't have to do it. Your email can and should be automatically organized for you. By indexing messages by their natural properties and automatically displaying them in easy-to-find folders, the ability to instantly locate messages is available today. That's the essence of what makes NEO users so productive and contributes most to their timesaving claims of 1/2 to 2 hours per day.

## Next generation email - getting to the next step

It's worth pointing out that although finding messages quickly contributes most to email productivity, it isn't the only contributor. Knowing where messages are, the automatic classification of email, and progressive workflow features such as Active Mail give NEO users a coherent view of their email. They experience a refreshing sense of email ease, control and enhanced productivity. Innovations like these make email organizers the next generation of email clients.

In order to truly improve email productivity, industry-leading companies like Microsoft, Google and Yahoo need to better understand what contributes most to email productivity. Over the past six years Caelo has developed, perfected, proven and patented message property indexing technologies. While indexing message content is a good first step, industry leaders need to go beyond message content by adopting Caelo technologies. It's the natural and obvious next step in enabling users to truly find messages instantly, and to improve their productivity.

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