Searching for Specific Emails in Outlook 2007

There are several ways of searching for Emails in Outlook. This document discusses a simple method of searching by folder, and through the entire online store (OST) file if a simple folder search fails. Alternate search methods are noted at the end.

Step 1: Select the folder you would like to search in the Folder Navigation pane by clicking on the folder once.

Step 2: The Search box prompt will change to verify your folder selection. Click once in the Search box.
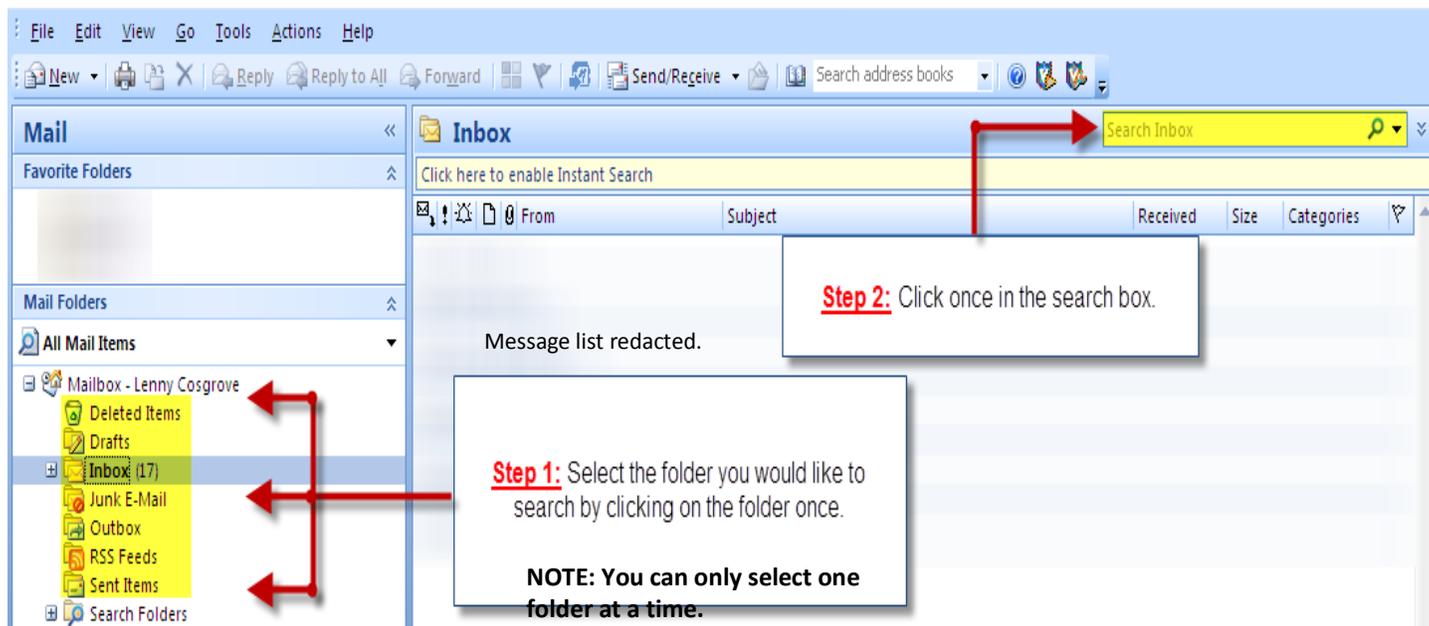
Figure 1. Outlook 2007 showing Mailbox OST folders.

NOTE: The example images in figures 1 through 3 also show a yellow Option box stating "Click here to enable Instant Search". Instant Search is a Windows search utility that indexes the contents of your entire *local* hard drive, including the contents of your Outlook local personal store (PST). While enabling Windows Instant Search may seem like a good idea, please understand that the utility runs as an independent background service that is constantly indexing all files (not just documents) as they are created and changed, and therefore has an impact on overall computer performance. *If computer performance is an issue, then you may not want to enable Instant Search.*[1]

Step 3: As you can see from the example in figure 2 (next page), we searched for an email with meeting in it. Here is where the emails in the inbox with meeting in them will appear. For this example I found the email I was looking for. You can also type in a name, email address, etc in the search box. If you do not find the email you are looking for you can choose another folder such as the sent items folder and search again.

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[1] You may wish to disable the Option box from asking by navigating to Menu bar > Tools > Options... > Other tab > Advanced Options... button and un-checking the "Show prompts to enable Instant Search" box in the General Settings section of the pop-up dialog window.
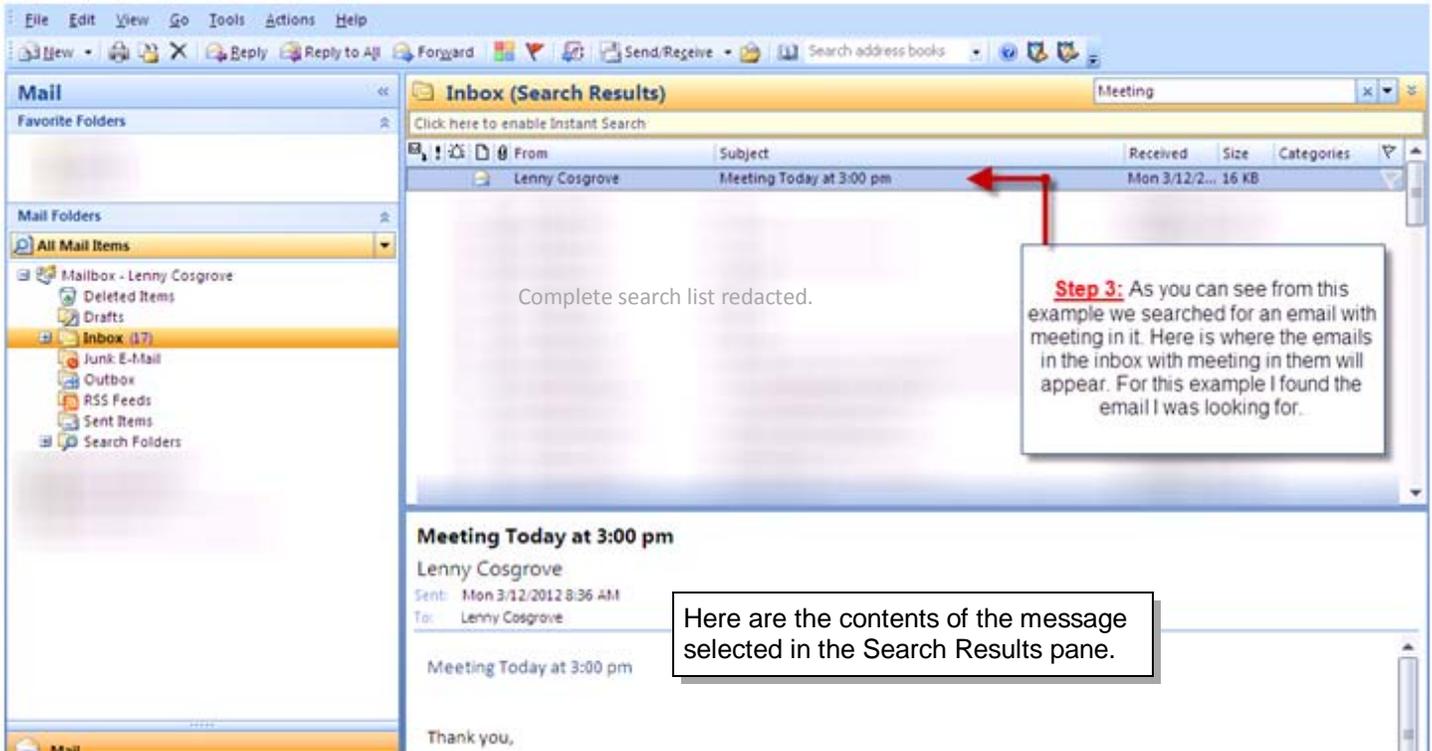
Figure 2. Example Inbox search results

If you are still are unable to find the desired email, you can click on "Try searching again in All Mail Items" link at the end of the search results list. This option will perform a search of all folders, including additional message stores (online and local) that may be attached.
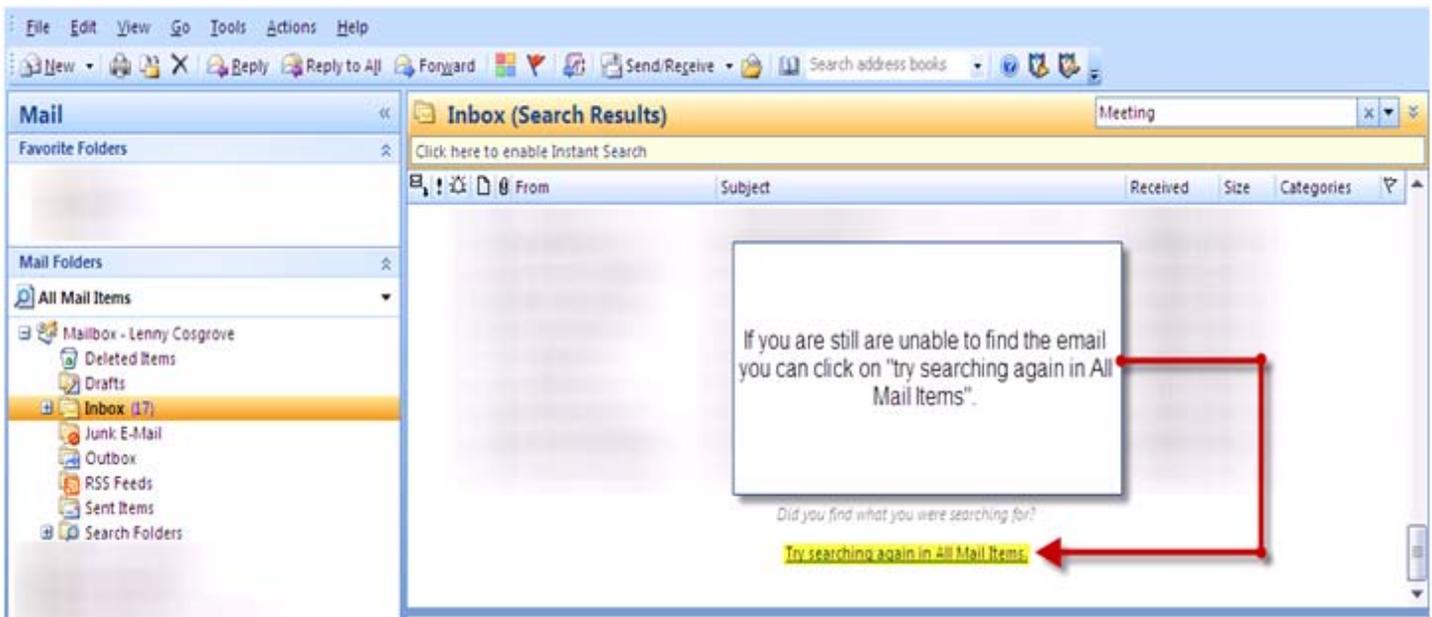
Figure 3. Example Search pane showing "Try again..." link at the end of results.

Additional Search Procedures

For more search options, on the Menu bar navigate to Tools > Instant Search > Advanced Find… (figure 4) which opens a Search dialog window that provides a more granular search. Note the Browse… button in the upper right corner (figure 5). Clicking this button will open another dialog window (not shown) where you can select multiple folders by checking them from a hierarchal list.
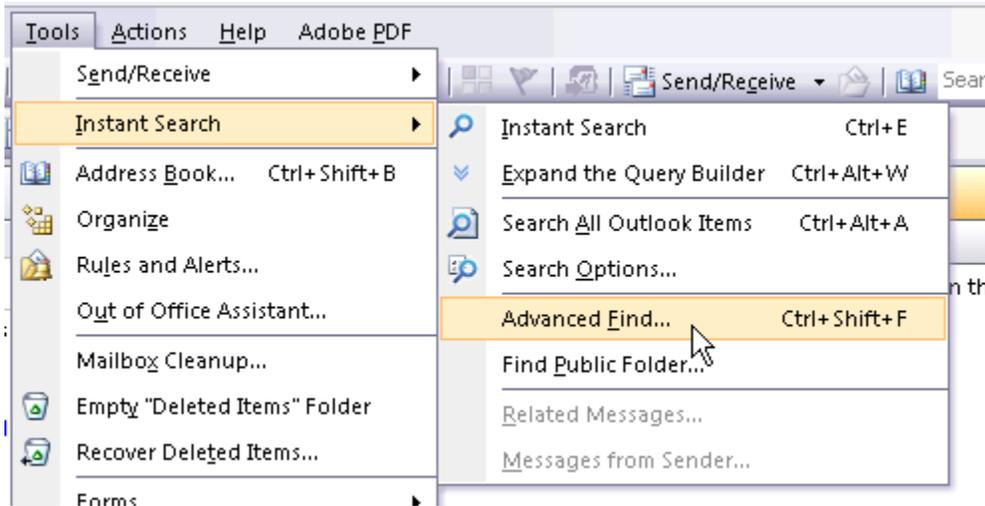
Figure 4. Navigating to Advanced Find...
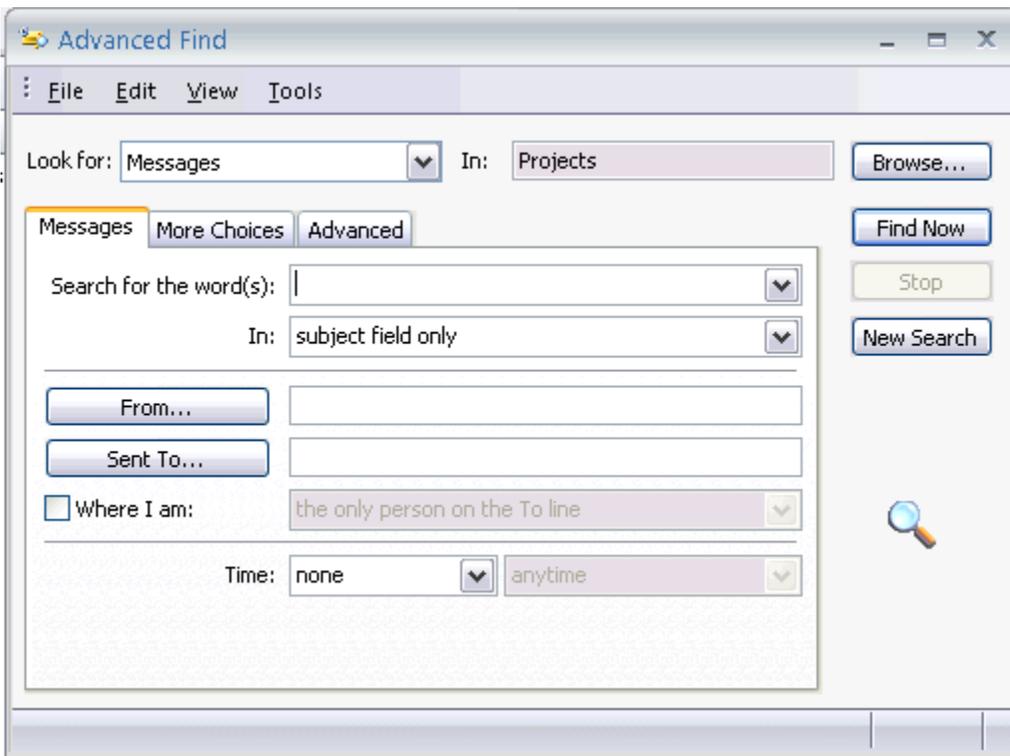
Figure 5. Advanced Find dialog window