

Microsoft Office Productivity

5 steps to create the perfect customized form and save big bucks in the process

Design, Media & Graphics

Non-destructive image filtering is now possible with CS3's Smart Filters

Business Skills

Master Vista's new search tools for guaranteed results

From the Editor

Electronic forms are practically a "must" in today's business world, but sometimes it's difficult to get them working the way you want. We'll give you a few tips on creating stellar Microsoft Word forms.

Also, there's nothing worse than experimenting with a Photoshop image, only to realize that you can't get back to your original image. Fortunately, Photoshop CS3 offers Smart Filters that can alter an image while still preserving your original.

Finally, Windows Vista offers tools that make hunting for files and folders a little more intuitive. Make sure you're getting the most out of your Vista operating system with our helpful search hints.

MICROSOFT OFFICE PRODUCTIVITY

5 steps to create the perfect customized form and save big bucks in the process

Many companies spend hundreds of dollars to purchase customized paper forms, and then spend even more money to duplicate them for online use. But you can use Word's form tools to create a single questionnaire, such as the one shown in **Figure A**, that you can electronically fill out, print, and instantly revise so you aren't stuck with an unwanted pile of expensive, out-of-date forms.

Find your perfect form

Constructing a form is as easy as creating a document and adding tables and form fields. We'll show you how to create a form in Word 2003, but the technique works in other versions as well, although your menu choices will vary depending on the version you use.

Step 1: Create a form template

Since a form is for multiple users, we recommend you save yours as a template. You can save it on your hard drive, or you can save it in a shared network location where others can also use it. Simply open a blank document and use Save As from the main menu. Select Document Template (.dot) from the Save As Type dropdown list, enter a name, and click Save.

Step 2: Lay out the form

On your open template, enter the information you want to include on every copy of your form. For instance, add a title, form questions, and labels for fill-in-the-blank items, as we did in **Figure A** — just as if you were creating a normal document.

Step 3: Add form fields

Once your form's basic information is in place, you're ready to add form fields to accept the user's input. To add form fields,

A

Professional-looking paper and electronic forms are easy to create using Word's built-in form tools.

Related Courses

- Word 2000, 2002, 2003, 2007 & 2007 New Features
- 4008 Building Better Microsoft Office Word 2003 Documents in Less Time

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STUDENT EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION	
Student information	Name (last, first):
	Street address:
	City/State/Zip:
	Birthdate: <input type="text"/> Gender: <input type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F
Parent or guardian information	Name (last, first):
	Street address:
	City/State/Zip:
	Home ph: <input type="text"/> Work ph: <input type="text"/> Cell ph: <input type="text"/>
Emergency contact information	Name (last, first):
	Street address:
	City/State/Zip:
	Home ph: <input type="text"/> Work ph: <input type="text"/> Cell ph: <input type="text"/>
Student medical information	Allergies: <input type="text"/> None
	Medications: <input type="text"/> None
	Other medical notes:
Form data	Date completed: <input type="text"/>
	Name (please print): <input type="text"/>
	Signature: <input type="text"/>

you first need to display the Forms toolbar, shown in **Figure B**. Choose View | Toolbars | Forms from the menu bar.

Click the Show/Hide button on the main toolbar to view the hidden characters in your document. Additionally, if the Form Field Shading button on the forms toolbar isn't activated, click it now to enable form field shading. These two changes will help you see exactly how your fields work.

You can add three types of form fields to your forms. Each serves a unique purpose and supports parameters that let you limit user input, as we've described in **Table A**.

Use a text field for simple text entry

Instead of relying on tabbed underlines or table cell borders for text-based form blanks, you can use the Text Form Field button on the Forms toolbar.

To add a form field:

1. Position the insertion point where you want the user to provide data.
2. If necessary, add a space before your field to separate it from the form's text.
3. Click the appropriate Form Field button.

To follow along with our example, insert a text form field after the Name label in our sample form's Student Information area. Word adds a shaded placeholder that contains five circles.

Figure C shows some of the text form fields we added to our sample form. To follow along, add the remaining text form fields to your own form.

Don't forget your punctuation, period. While you're entering your form fields, insert additional spaces and punctuation, where needed. For instance, we added a comma and a space after our City field, and added a space before our Zip field.

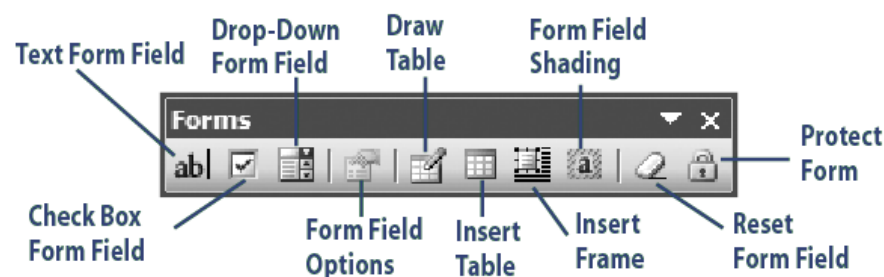
instance, you can modify a text form field so it only permits users to enter a date, or limit the number of characters a user enters in a field.

To format a text field:

1. Select the field and click the Form Field Options button on the Forms toolbar.
2. Select the field type from the Type dropdown list. We'll select Date for our Birthdate field.
3. To display default text in your field, enter it in the text box to the right of the Type field.
4. To limit the number of characters in a field, change the value in the Maximum Length setting. We selected 2 for our State field.

Table A: Form fields

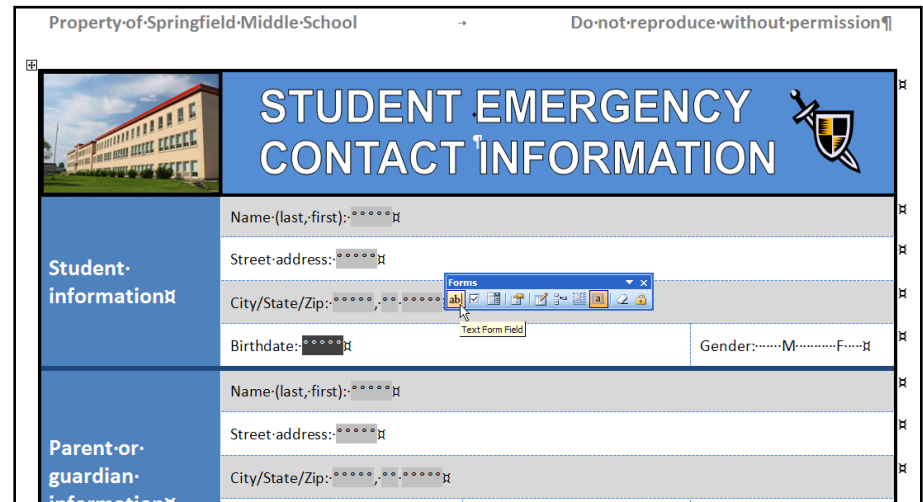
Field type	Description	Parameters allow you to ...
Text	Adds a placeholder which users will fill in with text.	Format font style, set default text that appears in form field, and limit the number of characters the user can enter.
Check Box	Adds a box the user can select or leave blank.	Format check box size and the default state — checked or unchecked.
Drop-Down	Adds a dropdown list from which users select a value.	List the values you want users to select from and set the order in which they appear.



B The Forms toolbar is all you need to create fields that users can fill in electronically.

Format your field

Text form fields don't just allow users to input regular text in a form. They can also restrict the type of text users enter. For



C Users can enter text wherever you place a text form field in your document.

- Select the desired format for your field text from the Format dropdown list. We selected Uppercase for our State field and M/d/yy for the Birthdate field.
- Click OK to apply your field settings.

Repeat the process with each of the text form fields you wish to add to your document.

Use a check box for yes/no entry

Instead of using bullets, symbols, AutoShapes, or empty table cells to simulate check boxes, you can use the Check Box Form Field button on the Forms toolbar. In our sample form, we added a check box form field after each Gender label to allow the user to choose between male and female.

Check your check box: When you add a check box form field, it's empty by default. If you'd like the box selected, double-click on it to access the Check Box Form Field Options dialog box. Select the Checked option in the Default Value panel, and then click OK.

Use dropdown form fields for multiple-choice input

To allow users to choose an item from a list, you have two options: check box form fields and dropdown form fields. Dropdown fields allow the user to select

just one option and show just that option when you print the finished form, providing a more streamlined alternative.

Use the form field options dialog box to add your dropdown list choices.

- Double-click the field to open the Field Options dialog box.
- Type an item in the Drop-down Item text box.
- Click Add. The item appears in the Items In Drop-down List list box.
- Repeat for each item you want to display in the list.
- To change the order of an item, click on it and use the Move buttons to move it up or down in the list.
- Move the item you want to display by default to the top of the list and click OK when you've finished.

We used dropdown lists for our Relationship field and set *Parent* as our default display item.

Step 4: Protect the form

When your form fields are in place, the next step is to protect the form. When a form is protected, users can fill it in using each of the form fields you included, but they can't change any other part of the form. To protect the form, just click the Protect Form button on the Forms toolbar and click the Save button on the Standard toolbar to save your changes.

Step 5: Distribute your form for completion

Anyone can complete a copy of your form by double-clicking on the template's icon. When you do so, Word automatically activates the first form field.

- To fill in a text form field, just type your entry.
- To fill in a check box form field, click on the form field to toggle its value.

- To fill in a dropdown list form field, click on the form field and choose the desired option from the resulting dropdown menu.

Press the [Tab] key to jump to the next form field, use [Shift][Tab] to move to the previous field, or click on any field to activate it.

When you've finished filling out the form, you can save it, print it, or email it like you would any other document. 🌐

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Non-destructive image filtering is now possible with CS3's Smart Filters

As a professional pixel-pusher your goal should always be non-destructive image editing. That's why adjustment layers are the cream-of-the-crop in Photoshop. They allow you to apply editable curves, levels and other color and tonal transformations to an image, without ever altering the image's pixels. (This is especially important when you have clients who want last-minute changes!) Well, the fantasy of non-destructive image filtering is now a reality with CS3's Smart Filters. Does it get any better than this?

What's so smart about Smart Filters?

Adobe introduced Smart Objects to Photoshop in CS2, and with the release of CS3, the Photoshop engineers have added the ability to non-destructively filter a Smart Object using Smart Filters.

Smart Filters are simply any filter(s) that you apply to a Smart Object. The beauty is that they are editable and non-destructive to your image. If you decide 10 steps later that you don't like the filter effect or want to change the filter's settings, making that edit is now a breeze.

While you don't necessarily need to understand how Smart Objects work to reap the benefits of Smart Filters, we've provided a brief explanation on Smart Objects. See our pullout box "Smart Objects revealed" for more information.

Apply a Smart Filter

To explore Smart Filters, you'll need an image to work with, as shown in **Figure A**. (Images provided by PhotoSpin. Some images modified for educational purposes.)

Note: Smart Filters aren't limited to RGB color mode or 8-bit images for that matter. You can use CMYK images as well as 16- or 32-bit images with Smart Filters. Be aware, however, that the same filtering limitations apply to those image types when using Smart Filters as when applying standard filters: many of the filters are unavailable.

We stated earlier that a Smart Filter is any filter you apply to a Smart Object, so it makes sense that we need to convert our image layer to a Smart Object first. We'll show you how to do that quickly and then apply the filter effects.

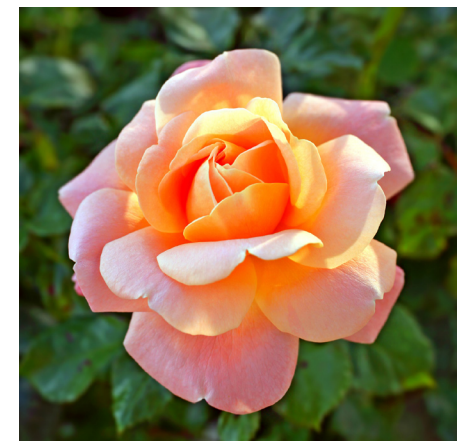
Related Courses

- Photoshop 7.0, CS, CS2, CS3

To apply a Smart Filter to a Smart Object:

1. Drag the image layer to the Create A New Layer icon located at the base of the Layers palette to duplicate the layer.

Tip: Duplicating the layer isn't a necessary step for using Smart Filters, but for the purpose of this article, it will help to illustrate an effect.



A

We'll use this image to demonstrate how Smart Filters can make editing a breeze.

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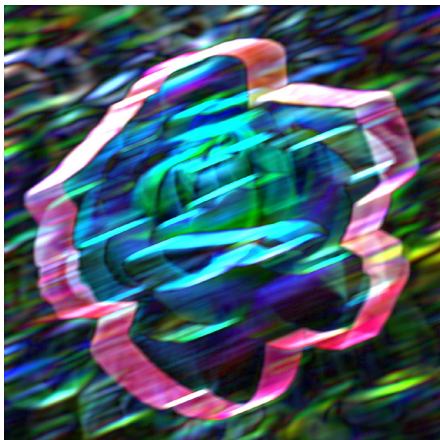
Microsoft Certification



2. Select the image layer you wish to filter, and choose Filter | Convert For Smart Filters.
3. Click OK in the Photoshop dialog box stating, "To enable re-editable smart filters, the selected layer will

Smart Objects revealed

Smart Objects are layers containing an embedded copy of a native Illustrator, Photoshop or RAW file. Because Photoshop embeds a copy of the original source file in the Photoshop file, every time you scale or transform the Smart Objects layer, Photoshop revisits the original embedded image data. The layer transformation regenerates with the new specs as if each transformation was the only one, so you won't get any distortion or pixel degradation.



B The Glowing Edges filter gives our image a neon look.

be converted into a smart object." Your image layer should now have the Smart Object icon.

Note: To convert the layer for Smart Filters, the layer needs to be unlocked. Photoshop will unlock the layer automatically if the image layer is a locked Background layer.

4. Select Filter > Blur > Motion Blur, enter 22 in the Angle text box, 35 in the distance text box, and click OK.
5. Select Filter > Glowing Edges. Enter 5 in the Edge Width text box, 17 in the Edge Brightness text box and 11 in the Smoothness text box, and click OK, for results shown in **Figure B**.

Editing made easy!

The Smart Filter appears below the Smart Object layer to which you applied it. After you apply the Smart Filter, you can change the stacking order, toggle the filter on or off, mask the layer, or apply independent blending options to each filter. Let's look at these options in our example.

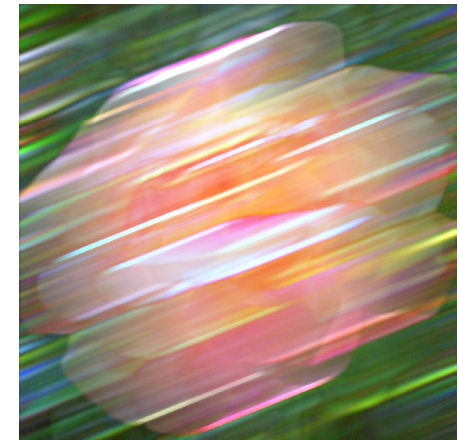
To edit Smart Filters:

1. Double-click on the icon to the far right of the filter name to open the Blending Options dialog box.
2. Select Screen from the Mode pop-up menu. You can also edit the layer opacity; we left ours at 100%.
3. Double-click on the filter effect name Motion Blur to open the Motion Blur dialog box and edit the filter settings.

Note: Because this Motion Blur filter is beneath another filter in the stacking order, you'll receive a warning dialog box before the Motion Blur dialog box opens.

4. Click OK in the Adobe Photoshop dialog box. Photoshop won't display the multiple-filter composite preview on the fly. If you edit a lower-level filter, the preview will display just that one filter until you are finished editing it.
5. Edit the settings in the Motion Blur dialog box, and click OK. We set the Distance slider to 100.

6. Click and drag the Glowing Edges filter effect name below the Motion Blur filter effect name to change the filter stacking order.
7. Select the Brush tool from the Tools panel, choose a soft round brush, and set the foreground color to black. Paint on the Smart Filter mask to mask both filter layers and reveal portions of the Background layer. 🌐



C You can convey the feeling of action through the Motion Blur dialog box.



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Master Vista's new search tools for guaranteed results

Microsoft built into Windows Vista several new features designed to make all types of searches quicker and easier than in previous versions of Windows. But in many cases, you don't have time to experiment with and configure these options — you just need to find the file, and fast. Because Vista is so different than XP, you may struggle to find files in even the simplest file searches. Fortunately, we'll share the tricks to finding files, programs, and more with Vista's new Instant Search and Advance Search features.

Find much of what you need in an Instant

You can find Vista's new Instant Search throughout the interface, but you might not find the files you need when you use it. *Instant Search* allows you to simply type text in an Instant Search text box and Vista does the rest — it automatically begins to search without you designating a search location, a file type, or whether you want to look for text within files. You don't even need to click a Search button. You'll most frequently use Instant Search in three places: Control Panel, the Start menu, and Explorer.

Gain quick access to Control Panel applets

With all the Windows knowledge you carry with you, it can be difficult to remember where in Control Panel you'll find the specific Control Panel applet you

need — especially when using a new OS. When in Vista's Control Panel default view (not Classic View) you can use the Instant Search feature to find the desired applet quickly.

Let's say you want to configure Windows Firewall in Vista and you're not sure where all the options reside. Simply open Control Panel and type *wall* in the Search text box in the upper-right corner of the window, as shown in **Figure A**. Windows lists every Control Panel applet that relates to "wall" and includes links to open them.

Look from the Start

Vista's default Start menu looks significantly different than the XP Start menu you've customized to perfect performance. When you open the Start menu, the Start Search text box surely catches your eye.

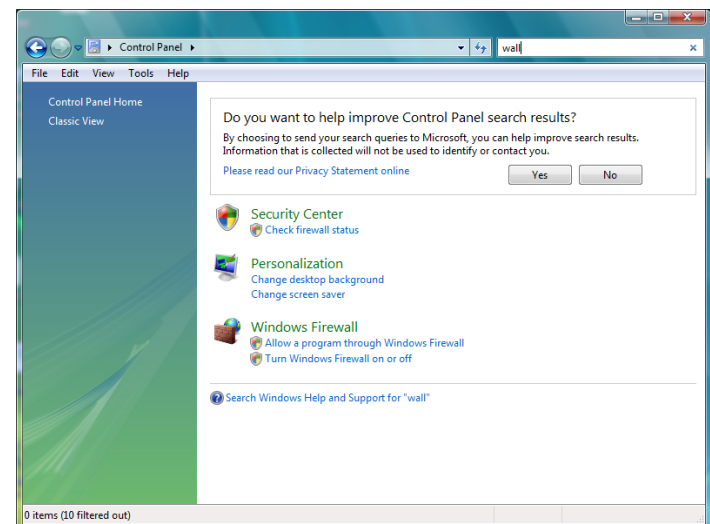
As shown in **Figure B**, when we type *diag* in the Start Search text box, Windows automatically displays the search results. You'll see the results in the Start menu where recently opened Programs traditionally appear. As you can see, Windows found a Program with "diag" in the name, and also found several files with "diag" in the name or the text of the file. You can open a file from here by clicking on it or

click on the See All Results link to view the files in Explorer for more details or to copy them.

Watch out: The Start menu's Instant Search only examines specific locations. You won't find the file you're searching for unless it resides in one of those directories. By default, those directories are:

A

Quickly find any Control Panel applet without all the hunting around in the new interface.



Related Courses

- Windows Vista — Level 1
- Windows Vista — Level 2
- Windows Vista New Features
- 5062 First Look: Using Windows Vista™

- Users (which include your personal folders such as Documents, Favorites, and Pictures.)
- Start Menu
- Offline Files

Get quick standard Explorer search results

The Instant Search text box resides in the upper-right corner of every Explorer window. You start searching at any time by opening Explorer to a specific folder you want to search, such as Documents, or opening it to Computer to search the entire computer and its various drives.

In addition to the search-as-you-type capability of Instant Search, the

feature offers a simplified basic search compared to the XP process in two ways. First, you don't need to click the Search button on the toolbar to open the Search Companion — the Instant Search text box is always there. Second, you can easily filter the search results by type with a single click. To do so:

1. Open Explorer and type your search string in the Instant Search text box. We typed *diag*.
2. Windows displays every result it finds. To filter them, click the desired file type in the Show Only toolbar. For **Figure C** we clicked Document.

As you can see, the Show Only buttons allow you to filter based on predefined file types — a real timesaver.

Force Vista to find files in non-default locations

If you perform a search from the Start menu, Vista won't search any folders on the hard drive other than those we listed previously.

Reason: Bypassing other hard drive directories such as \Program Files and \Windows saves a lot of time that would otherwise be wasted searching directories where you don't save files.

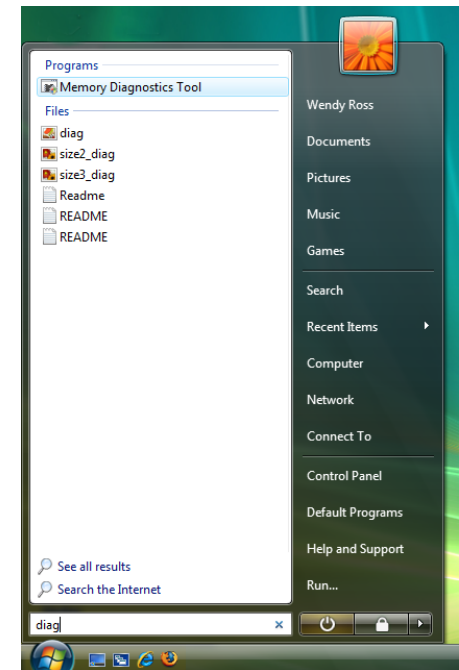
Problem: As a power user, you often need to search other locations.

Solution: Specify a different search location by searching via

Explorer instead of from the Start menu as we did in the section "Get quick standard Explorer search results." Alternatively you can customize Vista to also search in your favorite locations.

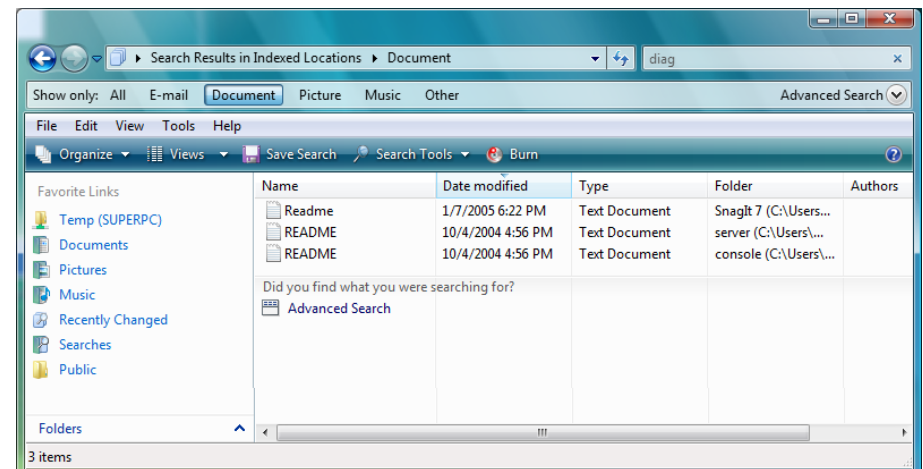
Include more locations in the index

Vista uses indexing to streamline searches by storing information about your files, such as the file name and location, modified date, and certain



B

Search from the Start menu for quick access to programs and personal files in your User directory.



C

Filter search results into different file types with the click of a button.

properties like author. We'll look at indexing more closely later in this article, but it's important to note here that search locations are also indexed. You can add directories in which you store personal files to the list of indexed locations.

To add your folders to Vista's indexed locations:

1. Open Explorer and enter text in the Instant Search text box. The Command bar displays the Search Tools button.
2. Select Search Tools | Modify Index Locations from the Command bar. The Indexing Options dialog appears.
3. Review the directories listed in the Included Locations list and click Modify. The Indexed Locations dialog box opens.
4. Use the Change Selected Locations selection box to designate additional locations you regularly search.

Recommendation: Don't select the entire C: drive as doing so will slow down future searches.

5. Click OK and then close the Indexed Locations dialog box. We recommend you test the newly indexed search location to make sure it works as expected.

Force Vista to find non-default file types

Whether you search from the Start menu or Explorer, Vista only looks for specific file types. Fortunately, you can designate additional file types for Vista to index and search. To do so:

1. Open Explorer and enter a search string.
2. Select Search Tools | Modify Index Locations from the Command bar.

3. Click on the Advanced Button to open the Advanced Options dialog box.
4. Select the File Types tab and then select the check boxes for every extension you want to index.
5. As you go, select the desired option button in the How Should This File Be Indexed section of the tab.
6. When complete, click OK and then close the Indexing Options dialog box that appears. 🌐

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