

When to Run a "Complete File Search"

A "Complete File Search" is best used when files have been deleted and emptied from the Windows Recycle Bin. It is more thorough, but slower than a "Fast File Search" as it performs a search for Deleted Files and the additional step of scanning the entire drive to identify Lost Files by their unique file structure. It is usually best to search the drive letter. Learn more about the differences between the types of search here.

[A "Complete File Search" is also used when "all else fails". In this situation search the "physical disk" for a specific file type. This type of search ignores all partition (drive letter) information and runs a sector level search of the entire physical hard drive for the selected file types.]

Step 1 - Selecting the "Complete File Search"

To run a "Complete File Search", open the Recover My Files wizard by:

- running Recover My Files from the desktop icon (the program will open to the wizard); or,
- if you are at the main program screen, click the "Start Search" button;

select "Complete File Search" and then click "Next".



Step 2 - Select the Drive To Search

The next wizard screen performs a scan to identify the devices (hard drives, digital camera, USB drive etc) that are connected to your computer. Select the device/s you wish to search by using your mouse to place a green tick in the box next to the device name.

A "Complete File Search" lists both "Logical" (drive letters) and "Physical" (hard disk drives) storage devices. Learn more about the difference between a drive letter and a physical drive here.



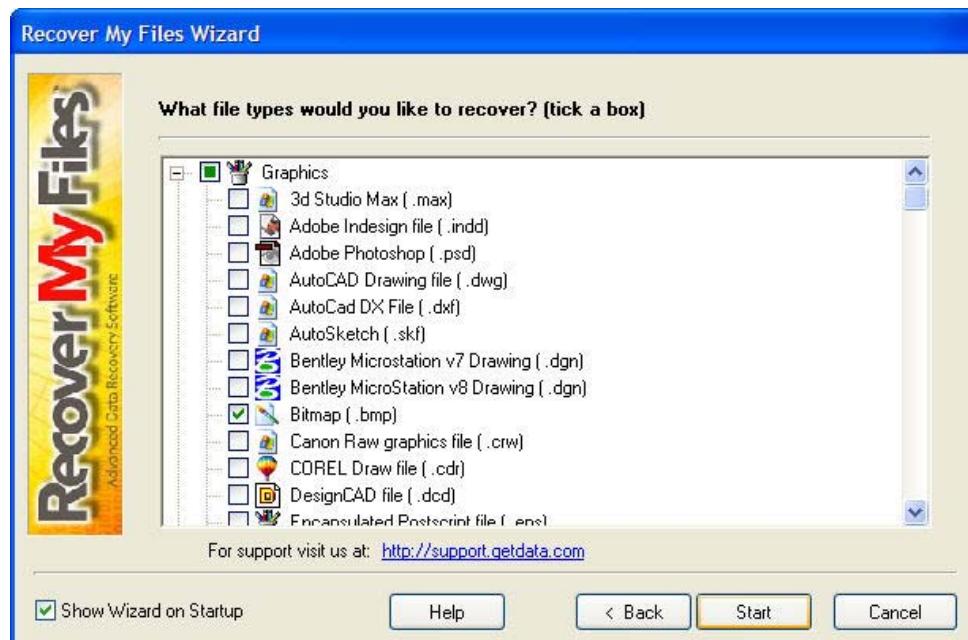
When search for deleted files that have been emptied from or bypassed the Windows Recycle Bin, it is best to select the drive letter, eg. C:\, from which the files were deleted.

[After trying the other search options, if you have not been able to locate a specific file, run a "Complete File Search" on the "physical" disk for the relevant file type.]

Step 3 - Select the File Types to Recover

The third step in the recovery process is to select the types of files that you wish to recover. A File Type is selected by clicking and placing a tick in the checkbox next to its name. Use the "+" drop down menu indicator to show all file types. Place a tick in the box next to the file type to select it in the search.

The number of file types selected will directly impact the speed of the search. **We suggest you select between 1 and 10 file types for any given Complete File Search.** MP3 and Text file types will slow the search down the most. Do a separate search for these file types.



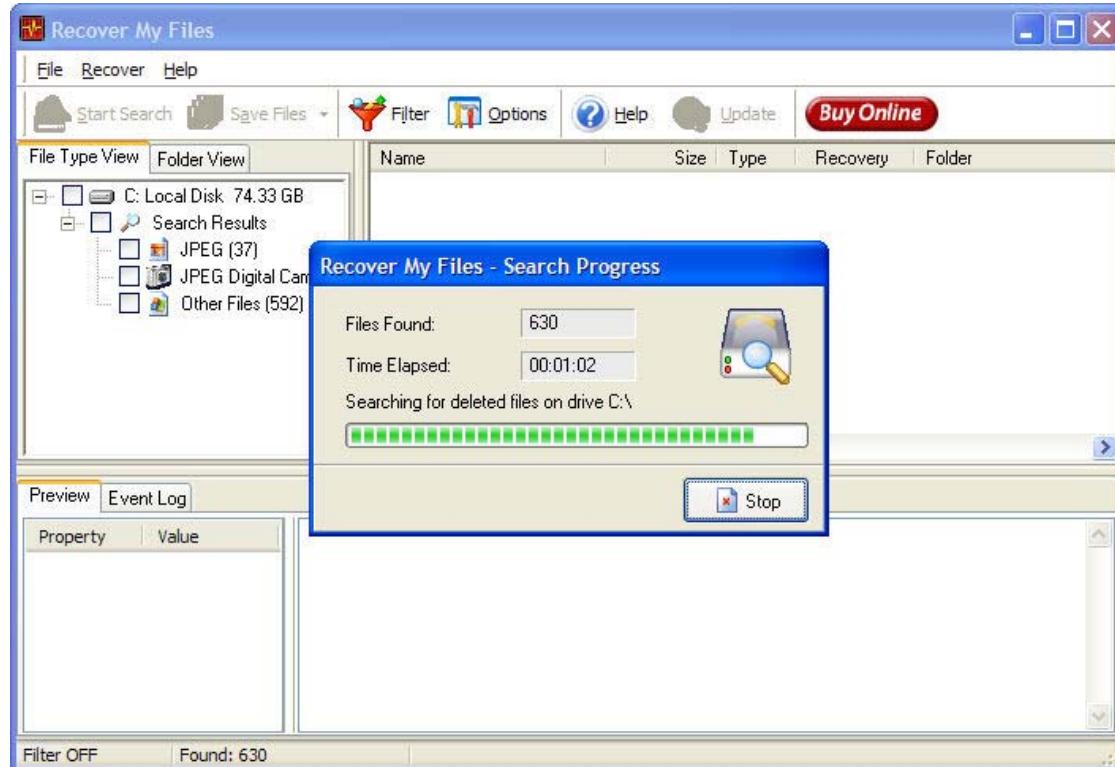
Once you have selected the relevant file types, click "Start" to start the search.

Step 4 - Running the Search

Once the search is started the progress bar will display the number of files found, the elapsed time and proportion of search remaining.

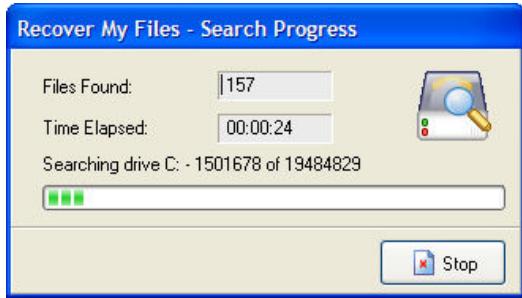
Note that in a "Complete File Search" there are two components to the search:

1. The search for "[Deleted Files](#)" (relatively fast). This is identified in the progress window as "Searching for deleted files on drive X:\\"
2. The search for "[Lost Files](#)" (a consecutive search of the entire drive for the header and footers of the selected file types. This is identified in the progress window as "Searching drive X:\ - 123456 of 999999999" (this represents the cluster number of the total number of clusters that the search is up to).



Important things to note about running a "Complete File Search" include:

- It is possible to **preview recovered files as the search is in progress**. Move the progress bar window to get access to the results window. Read the section below to understand how to view files in the results screen.
- You can add and remove selected File Types during the search process by using the "Options" button. If this is done, Recover My Files applies the new search criteria to the remainder of the search.
- You can stop the search anytime by pressing the **Stop** button. If stopped before completion, Recover My Files will show files found up until the point at which the search was stopped.
- It is possible to stop a "Complete File Search", save files, and start the search in the same position that the search was up to. To do this, before you stop the search, note down the cluster number that the search is up to, e.g. 1501678:



Now stop the search and save the files. To start the search again at cluster 1501679, click on the **Options** button on the main program screen, and in the **Advanced** tab, place a tick in the box for "prompt for start cluster/sector". Now when you run a "Complete File Search", when the Lost Files component of the search is reached, you will be prompted for the starting cluster number:



Step 5 - Understanding the "Complete File Search" Results

A Complete File Search will:

- Recover Full File and Folder names:

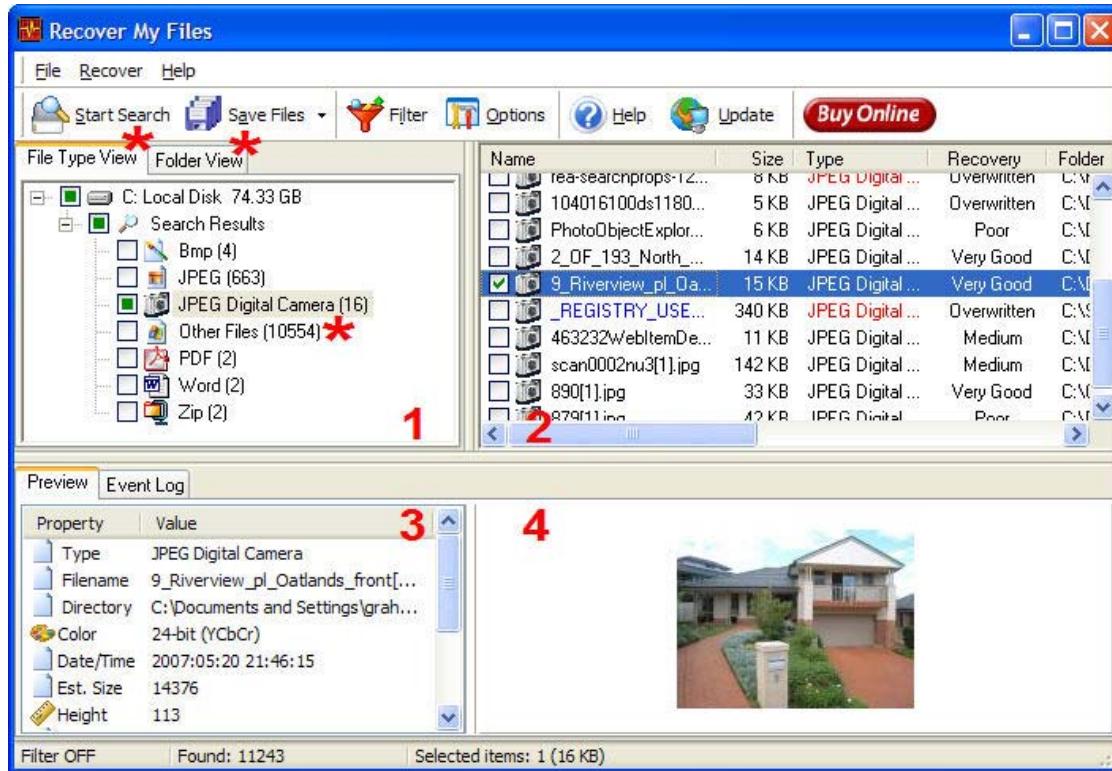
The search technology uses information stored by the computer Operating System (the File Allocation Table, or Master File Table) to find [Deleted Files](#) with full file and folder names.

- Recover Files with names like "Recovered_JPEG_1"

These are [Lost Files](#) which are found by their unique file header and footer. The original file and folder name of these files can not be recovered.

The "Complete File Search" Results Screen

The search results screen has four windows:



1. "File Type View" / "Folder View" (Window 1)

File Type View

File Type View shows the files that have been located grouped by the file types that you selected at the start of the search. All files located that were either:

- a). not a file type that you selected from the list, or
- b). not in the list of supported file types,

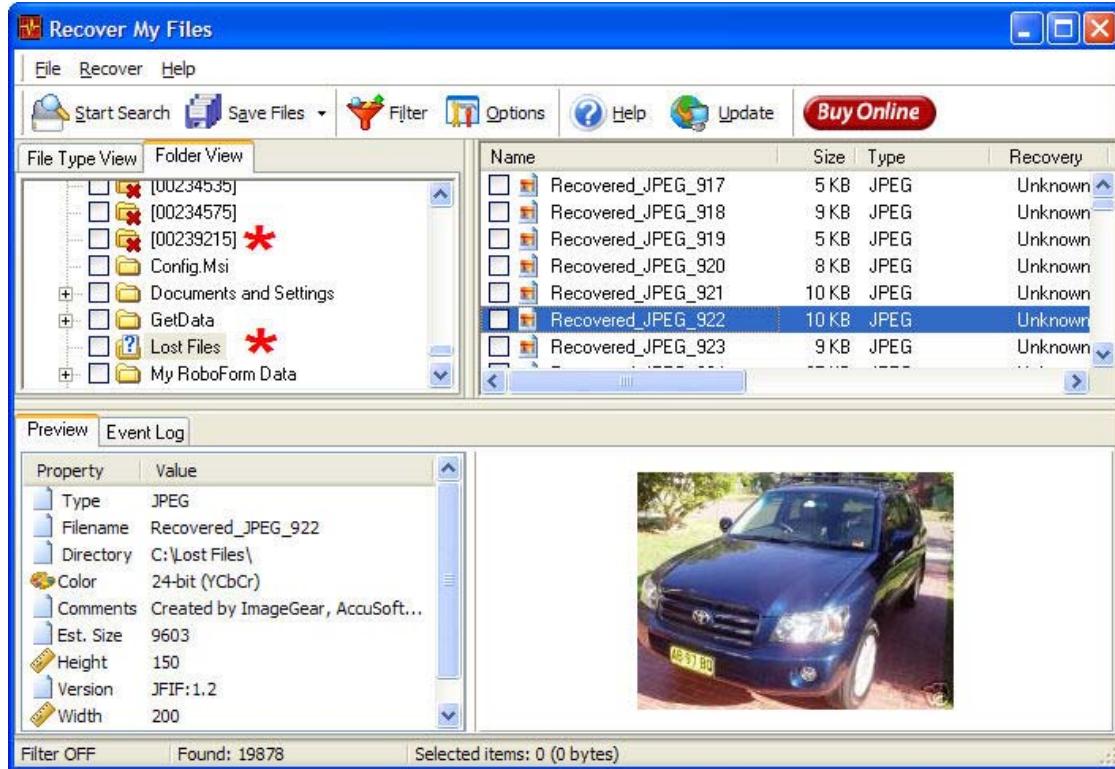
are grouped in the "Other Files" folder.

File Type View will contain files with names like "Recovered_JPEG_1" which are listed in the "Lost Files" folder. These are [Lost Files](#) which are found by their unique file header and footer. The original file and folder name of these files can no longer be recovered.

Folder View

Folder View shows the recovered file and folder structure. Folders shown a red have lost their original folder names. The folders can still be recovered, and sub folder names should be intact. Expand and examine the contents of these folders by clicking on the '+' folder expansion symbols.

Folder View also has the [Lost Files](#) folder, will contain files with names like "Recovered_JPEG_1". These are files which are found by their unique file header and footer. Because the file name is not contained within the actual file data, the file name is not recovered.



2. The File List (Window 2)

Click on the File Type (in File View) or Folder (in Folder View) to display the list of files found in top right hand window. Important aspects of this file list include:

- files can be sorted by clicking on the column headings;
- each file has a "[recovery rating](#)";
- the "path" indicates the original location of the file which will be used when the file is saved;
- clicking on a file in this list will display, if available, the properties of the file in Window 3 and a preview of the file in Window 4.

3. The Selected File Properties (Window 3)

- This window shows the selected files properties.

4. The Selected File Preview (Window 4)

- This window shows a preview of the file selected in Window 2.

Other important items in the search results screen are shown in the bottom bar of the program: The status of the Filter; The number of files found; The number of items selected to be saved and the volume of files selected to be saved.