

KNOWLEDGE BASE · PUBLIC DOCUMENT

Outlook search does not find e-mails: rebuilding the index

E-mail

CODE

RLX-MZ-KB-2022

VERSION

v2026.10.16

COUNTRY · LANGUAGE

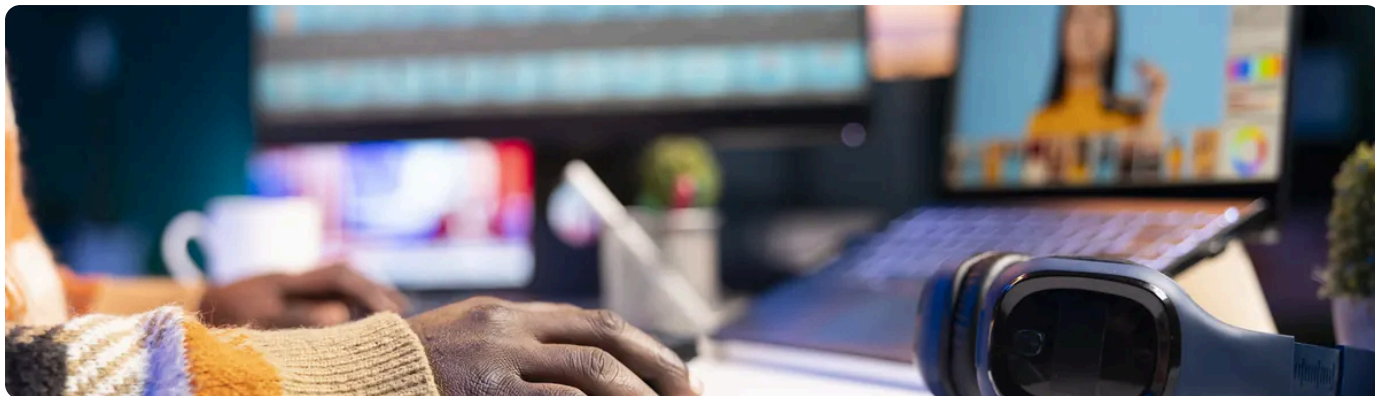
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RLX Holdings, S.A. · Group RLX Holdings

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<https://www.meu.interweb.co.mz/knowledgebase/2022>



The short answer: Outlook search does not look on the server: it looks in an **index** Windows builds of the mail on the computer. If the index is incomplete, half built, or switched off for Outlook, search misses messages that are there. It also misses what stayed only on the server, outside the period kept offline.

Why it finds nothing

Symptom	Most likely cause
“We could not find anything” for e-mails you can see in the folder	The index is incomplete or broken.
Finds only recent mail	Outlook keeps only a period offline; older mail is on the server. Move the “Mail to keep offline” slider further, or search in webmail.
Search says results may be incomplete	Windows is still indexing. With a lot of mail, it takes a while.
Finds nothing in any account	Outlook was removed from the indexed locations, or the Windows search service is stopped.

Rebuilding the index

1

Check the status: click the search box, then **Search Tools > Indexing Status**. If items are still waiting, let it finish with Outlook open.

2

Make sure Outlook is included: in **File > Options > Search > Indexing Options > Modify**, Microsoft Outlook should be ticked.

3

Rebuild: in the same **Indexing Options**, press **Advanced > Rebuild**. Windows deletes the index and builds it again; leave the computer on and Outlook open.

4

Repair Windows search: in Windows Settings search for “troubleshoot search and indexing” and follow the wizard.

5

Meanwhile, search in webmail: there the search runs on the server, across all the mail in the mailbox.

Rebuilding the index does not delete mail, but it leaves search incomplete for hours on a large mailbox. Do it at the end of the day and leave the computer on.

A damaged data file also breaks search. If rebuilding does not help, repair it: **repairing the Outlook data file**.

Search still finds nothing? Tell us your Outlook version and whether webmail finds the message.

[Open a support ticket](#)

SEE ALSO

Repairing the Outlook data file: damaged PST or OST, SCANPST and a new OST

Outlook is slow, freezes or will not open: safe mode, add-ins and a new profile

Outlook is not syncing: missing e-mails and folders that do not update

How to access your webmail

Webmail or an e-mail app: which one to read your mail with

Your mailbox is full: what to delete and how to stop it happening



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TAX ID (NUIT)	401 191 607
LEGAL ENTITY NO. (NUEL)	105 045 974
ECONOMIC ACTIVITY CODE (CAE)	62022
REGISTERED OFFICE	Bairro 7 de Setembro Vilankulo 1304 • CEP 0411-02, Inhambane, Mozambique
CONTACT	info@interweb.co.mz • +258 84 635 1111 • +258 86 635 1111 • www.interweb.co.mz
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