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[Beagle Review](#)

Powerful desktop search application.

A user's personal file space is sacred and usually reflects that person. Can you remember how many times you found yourself in front of a desktop almost full of icons and other useless things? It's most likely for the rest of the file space to be the same, different types of files everywhere, disordered and scattered across the whole filesystem. But what if your own computer is like that? Wouldn't you need a powerful search tool to find that file you need so badly? You do, and therefore, you should really give Beagle a try. Beagle is a desktop search tool for Gnome but if you're a KDE user, you will be glad to know that you can also install Kerry, which is a KDE front-end for Beagle. To install both of them, open a root terminal and type: `apt-get/yum install beagle kerry`. (Drop 'kerry' if you're only using Gnome). As you're probably used to by now, installing software in Linux only takes a few moments, unlike on other operating systems, where you would need to go to some random website, download an installer, pray it doesn't have a couple hundred viruses included with the executable, double click the installer, click 'yes, I do agree with all these exaggerated license terms and I don't mind that it includes spyware and adware', click Next, Next, Finish and finally reboot the computer a few times. The whole idea behind Beagle is to make it easier to find certain files through thousand other insignificant ones. Once installed, the beagle daemon runs as an unprivileged user, and will actually refuse to run as root. It can search based on the file name, as well as on the contents of the many file formats it understands. And the whole searching process is unbelievably fast. You can also choose which type of files to search for. It can index your emails, documents, web history, RSS feeds and many more. The initial indexing doesn't take very long, but it mostly depends on the number of files your space consists of. And of course, on your system resources but it doesn't require that much. What makes Beagle quite impressive isn't the speed of searches, but its integration with other programs as well as with the Gnome desktop. The results are displayed in Google style, logged conversations over IM applications also mark the status of the conversation participants. There's also at least one plugin for Firefox that will index web pages as they are viewed, creating a massive web history index. Unfortunately, that's not the case with the search results. It's kinda missing stuff, like really obvious stuff.

Fortunately, only about one search out of ten or something like that. It appears that Beagle is using a pattern of some kind while searching for files but I couldn't find it during the exhaustive five seconds while I've examined it. Both search clients (Beagle search for Gnome and Kerry for KDE) can be a little customized. Except for choosing which category of files to show while searching, you can also choose how the results are sorted: by date modified, name or relevance. Moreover, you can open the Preferences window from the Search menu found in the main window. There aren't many options to change here. Related to search preferences, there are three options: whether to start searching and indexing services automatically, whether to index data while on batter power and if to automatically start searching after you've stopped typing. The index preferences include only two functions: first one allows you to choose which directory to search in and second, which to exclude from the search. The KDE client can also be configured to use global shortcuts for a couple of actions, thanks to the KDE integration. However, the main configuration of Beagle is done through the **beagle-config** executable. Some of the commonly used options are: - `beagle-config daemon AddStaticQueryable /path/to/index`: To query a static index (built using `beagle-build-index`), the path to the index needs to be added to `beagled`. - `beagle-config daemon DelStaticQueryable /path/to/index`: Removes the index from `beagled`. - `beagle-config daemon ListStaticQueryables`: Lists the static indexes added to `beagled`.

beagle-config daemon ToggleAllowStaticBackend: If enabled, the disable all static queryables, else vice versa.- *beagle-config daemon AllowBackend b*: Enable backend b.- *beagle-config daemon DenyBackend b*: Disable backend b.- *beagle-config daemon ListBackends*: List the currently enabled backends.- *beagle-config indexing AddRoot /path/to/root*: Add a directory tree (including subdirectories) to beagle for indexing.- *beagle-config indexing DelRoot /path/to/root*: Remove a root from the list of current roots.- *beagle-config indexing ListRoots*: Lists the current roots.- *beagle-config indexing IndexHome*: The home directory of any user is a root by default. This option can be used to toggle the setting.**How to search.** Beagle-search is a graphic interface (GUI) to the beagle-query command line tool. You can find it in the Gnome menu, more exactly in *Applications / Accessories / Search*. Kerry is a front-end for the Beagle search daemon as well, except it was written for the KDE environment. You can find Kerry under *Utilities* in the KDE menu. Both work in the same way, basically: type your query key words and click Find now. The searches are case insensitive. First 5 results will be displayed and for more results (if available), you'll have to click on the Show next results button. You can interact with each found item by right-clicking on it. Moreover, you can use advanced search syntax for any of your search attempts. For instance, to search for specific phrases, place the words in quotation marks ("search key words"), while to exclude a word or phrase from your search, prefix it with - (eg: Beatles -George will find items containing Beatels but not George). To indicate that certain words must be in the results, prefix them with +. And eventually, you can specify a file extension with ext:mp3 to search for mp3 files. **The Good** Beagle is a very useful tool that allows you to search both for files by their name, as well as by their content. It supports many file formats, it's very fast and can index things like emails, documents, web history (virtually any text file), as well as images and music files (by their meta data). **The Bad**Beagle searches through files by following a certain pattern. If you understand that pattern, you will be able to search in such a manner that you only get what results you need. If you don't get it, then you probably won't get the right results or any at all and you'll end-up thinking it's a week piece of software. Also, many of Beagle's options can be changed through the command line, which can be a little frightening for some users. **The Truth**Beagle is doing a great job at searching files, there's no doubt about it. But not many of us need a file searching tool to find what we are looking for. Moreover, Beagle was written in C++, using mono (a.k.a .NET), which uses a bit more resources than one would consider 'acceptable'. And finally, because it's an active piece of software (it's working most of the time - indexing files), it could empty your laptop battery a lot faster. *Check out some screenshots below:*