# Where does SharePoint store its data?

One of the things that confuse me about SharePoint is exactly where the data is held and I asked the question on my MOSS 2007 enterprise search course this week - this is what I found.

For each shared service provider (SSP), SharePoint has three main locations for data storage:

* The full text index catalog is a flat file. Created by index server(s), it consists of a list of keywords and document identifiers, along with mappings as to which keywords exist in which documents. This high level of abstraction between keywords and links allows the full text index catalog to typically be around 5-12% of the size of the data being indexed.
* The document identifiers in the full text index catalogue point to the document URLs, stored in the search database, a SQL Server database that is usually named *sharedserviceprovidername*\_Search\_DB.MDF. As its name suggests, this literally stores information relating to searchable content on a per-SSP basis, including URLs, access control lists (ACLs) and managed property information. On a WSS system this is named WSS\_Search\_*computername*.MDF.
* The third location is the search configuration (or content) database, which contains configuration information relating to items such as crawl rules, content sources and the definition of managed properties. On a WSS system this is named WSS\_Content.MDF.

In addition to the above, there are a number of other elements to the SharePoint solution:

* The SharePoint Central Administration content database (itself implemented as a WSS web application), named SharePoint\_AdminContent\_*guid*.MDF.
* SharePoint\_Config\_*guid*.MDF, a database containing SharePoint configuration information.
* The individual web (.aspx) pages and configuration files, along with XSLT transformations and other supporting files (generally XML-based).

Finally, the actual content that is indexed by SharePoint remains where it always was - i.e. in the file shares, document libraries, web sites, business systems, etc. that SharePoint is being used to search across.

(This information relates to WSS v3 and MOSS 2007 - other SharePoint versions may differ.)