

SECURITY CONCERNS WITH METADATA

What is metadata?

- Metadata is data about data.
- Metadata describes how, when and by whom a particular set of data was collected, and how the data is formatted.
- Metadata is created when files are created and when edited. This information can contain revisions, comments, template information, file properties and summary information.
- Many programs create metadata (for example: Microsoft Office Products [i.e., Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.] and Corel WordPerfect Office [i.e., WordPerfect, Quattro Pro, Presentations, etc.]
- Metadata remains when files are finalized and distributed.
- Saving or printing to PDF does not eliminate metadata.
- If files containing metadata are distributed or shared in any electronic fashion (including PDFs, email attachments, floppy disks, portable devices [i.e., laptops, PDAs, PocketPCs, USB/Thumb drives], hyperlinks, etc.), that data can be accessed with publicly available software.

Examples of types of metadata which may be stored with a file:

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|---|--|
| • Username | • File Versions |
| • Initials | • Template Information |
| • Email Address | • Hidden Text |
| • Company/Organization Name | • Undo/Redo History |
| • Computer Name | • Macros |
| • Network Server Name or Hard Drive Name (where the file was saved) | • Comments |
| • File Properties/Summary Information | • Hyperlinks |
| • Names of Previous File Authors | • Routing Information |
| • File Revisions (including deleted text that is no longer visible on the screen) | • Non-visible Portions of Embedded OLE Objects |

Example of how metadata can be used: "12345" is data, and with no additional context is meaningless data. When "12345" is given a meaningful name (metadata) of "ZIP code," that information will be understood as a postal zip code address. As a postal zip code address, "12345" refers to the General Electric plant in Schenectady, New York. Through the use of metadata, a meaningless string of data is found to be referring to a specific location.

Metadata Removal:

Both Corel and Microsoft offer metadata removal tools.

- In Corel WordPerfect Office X3, this is a new feature which is available on the installed

software. There is also a Metadata Removal Patch which must also be installed. Refer to the chart below to verify the version number of WordPerfect X3 installed on your PC/laptop.

Applications and Components	Version Number of Initial Release	Version Number with Metadata Removal Patch
WordPerfect® X3	13.0.0.406 to 446	13.0.0.447
Quattro Pro® X3	13.0.0.406 to 446	13.0.0.406 to 446
Presentations™ X3	13.0.0.406 to 446	13.0.0.406 to 446

- Use the link below to download the Metadata Removal Patch:

<http://www.corel.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=Corel3/Downloads/Download&cid=1148936410976&pid=1047025942227>

- In WP X3, the feature is found under **File/Save Without Metadata**.
- In Microsoft Office 2003 / Office XP, this is not a standard feature. Microsoft does provide an add-in (Remove Hidden Data Tool), which works with both versions. This tool will enable you to remove metadata from your file.
- For further information about the Remove Hidden Data Tool and how to obtain it, visit the following site:

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=144e54ed-d43e-42ca-bc7b-5446d34e5360&DisplayLang=en#Instructions>

Further Information

- For further information on metadata and the security and privacy of electronic data, please refer to *Managing the Security and Privacy of Electronic Data in a Law Office – Part II* by Dan Pinnington

http://www.lawsociety.com.au/uploads/filelibrary/1120800219531_0.041167854864065545.pdf