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Word & Metadata

I don't usually use Word.

I'm about to send a Word document over the internet, and it probably has data (such as edits) that I don't want the person to see. Can I strip the meta data out, and if so, how?

Becki Fahle

I think there is a free download on the Microsoft website for a metadata scrubber add-on. However, rather than using that or any of the other metadata removal programs, I usually just print my Word document to PDF format and then e-mail the PDF. The drawback is if you want your recipient to receive the document in Word format so they can revise it.

Baker McClanahan

I've used it since it came out and can't give it a higher recommendation. Well worth the price.

Sharon D. Nelson

A "poor lawyer's" way of scrubbing metadata is to select all of the text in a document, copy it, open a blank document, paste everything into the new document and save it.

I would assume that the Microsoft metadata scrubber does a better job but if you don't use Word regularly, this might be quicker.

Jim Calloway

Converting to .pdf doesn't necessarily get rid of all the metadata (it might depend on the method used). I once put together a resume and gave it a sarcastic file name. I changed the name and then converted to .pdf. The previous filename was preserved in the metadata and could be easily read by hovering the mouse over the file's icon. It's a good thing I didn't send it out in that format, but I learned my lesson.

Chris Bumgarner

You're right - converting to PDF gets rid of "almost all" the metadata. Typically, it gets rid of everything an attorney would normally care about

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but you managed to create an unusual situation!

Sharon D. Nelson

Microsoft provides a free plug-in tool that lets you strip out the hidden data within Word. I use this and have never had problems with it.

http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=144E54ED-D43E-42CA-BC7B-5446D34E5360&displaylang=en

Craig Yankes

Can I ask a stupid question? What is the metadata in a Word document that you would want to "scrub"?

Elizabeth Robinson

There's a free download to strip metadata available from Microsoft here:

http://tinyurl.com/4mnrw

Mike Koenecke

FWIW, I've been using Payne Consulting's Metadata Assistant for about a year now. It's a great little program that scrubs metadata and also gives you the option of converting a document to PDF before mailing it. Tech support is top notch, too!

It's little spendy at $80, but given the risks associated with metadata, I haven't for a moment regretted spending the money.

http://www.payneconsulting.com/products/metadataretail/

Scott I. Barer

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metadata

Scott I. Barer

Fastest way is to PDF it if you don't have a metadata scrubber.

Sharon D. Nelson

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