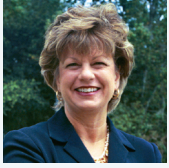




Metadata - What You Need to Know



Elizabeth M. Smith
President
Technology Services Group, Inc.

Do you ever.....

...retrieve a letter you wrote to a client last year to use it as a template for a new client matter? You delete and replace client-specific information and save the document as a new file and then send it on to your new client. Perhaps you weren't aware that the original document had Tracked Changes saved to it. Your client was able to view the original (client-confidential) contents of the document. Uh-oh.

...collaborate on a document, using the Comments feature in Adobe Acrobat® to document your thoughts. Before printing the document, you hide the comments. You send the PDF on to a number of clients and associates without removing the comments. A savvy client turns on the View Comments option in Acrobat and is able to review all collaboration comments.

... delete text in a WordPerfect® document. Save and send the document on to your client. Did you know WordPerfect can be configured to retain deleted text with the document, so that the "Undo" feature will work over multiple revisions?

Sound like a possible nightmare?

"Metadata" is hidden data contained in computer-generated documents. Metadata is simply data about data. Every time a file is created, edited or saved, metadata is added to it. This information is transmitted every time a document is e-mailed or posted to a web site. Originally intended to facilitate collaboration and retrieval capabilities in document management applications or web search engines, metadata can be a major data security issue when not managed properly.

There are essentially two types of metadata - **system data** and **document data**. System data is data recorded by the operating system, such as file creator, time and date of creation, size, location, time and date of modification, who modified, etc. Document data is hidden or embedded data that may result from multiple revisions of a document, such as tracked changes, deleted text and comments. Metadata about e-mail messages includes information about the sender, recipient, cc and bcc addressees, date, internet route and time stamps.

Some metadata is viewable through various user interfaces of windows applications, such as the properties window, optional view screens, etc. Other data, such as deleted data and hidden comments, is accessible only through more technically complex actions, such as searching the registry or even using a binary file editor.

TSG is currently evaluating options for removing confidential metadata from documents. One such option is using the "Metadata Assistant" application from Payne Consulting. You will be hearing more about this in the near future. For now, please be aware that such a threat exists and think carefully before sending documents outside your firm.

For more information about metadata visit:

www.law.umich.edu/library/news/topics/alito/nyt/november/bewareofyour.pdf
office.microsoft.com/en-us/assistance/HA010776461033.aspx

www.metadatarisk.org/document_security/dangers_of_docmetadata_overview.htm



TSG is a technology services firm focused on providing outstanding information technology solutions and graphic design to small to medium-sized business enterprises in North Florida and South Georgia. Our expertise has developed over many years of service to professional organizations, associations and small businesses. Our team of industry certified professionals are personally committed to delivering the most creative and effective solutions to our clients. For more information please visit our web site:
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