

What you Never Knew about Microsoft Word



Everyday millions of people send Microsoft Word documents to each other via email, blissfully unaware of the hidden information these documents contain. The hidden information that a Word file contains is:

- The name of the person who created the file.
- The names of the last 10 people to have edited the file.
- Any comments made by the document's authors that were not intended for publication.
- A complete list of changes, including the recovery of all information that was subsequently deleted from the finished copy.
- The total time the file has been open for edition, i.e precisely how long the file has taken to produce.

Many I.T savvy journalists and lawyers are well aware of this weakness in Word. Whenever, they receive documents, press releases, white papers or product manuals electronically, the first step is often to review the document in a text editor and to turn on the *View Changes* feature. This additional information is known as metadata.

If you are involved in a business that is involved in sending confidential Word documents to your clients, business partners, suppliers or customers consider adopting a policy on metadata.

To remove metadata from *Word*, *Excel* and *Powerpoint* files. You can download the *Hidden Data Removal Tool* from the Microsoft website. Or, if you are running Office 2003, you can take advantage of a feature built into the application that allows you to remove the metadata automatically. In Word 2003, go to Tools > Options> Security and tick the box that says "remove personal information for file properties on save".