

What's all this about metadata?

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Maybe you've heard the buzz about a thing called "metadata." Metadata is basically hidden information in a computer document. But just because we can't see it, doesn't mean it isn't a threat.

For example, a Word document emailed to clients or opposing counsel could contain potentially embarrassing (or worse) metadata – like edits, revisions and even comments. Because anyone with the inclination and a little know-how can look at the metadata, lawyers run a great risk sending Word documents via email. Payne Consulting makes a software product called "Metadata Assistant" that strips metadata from Word documents for around \$79.00.

www.payneconsulting.com

You aren't safe sending documents in WordPerfect either. WordPerfect contains some metadata and so do PDF files. It's a little easier to contend with the metadata in WordPerfect. For pointers on dealing with WordPerfect, see Dora Pontow's article in the June 2001 issue of *GP Solo*, available on-line at www.abanet.org/genpractice/magazine/june2001/june01_08.html.

Adobe Acrobat (PDF) remains the safest and securest format for transferring documents electronically.