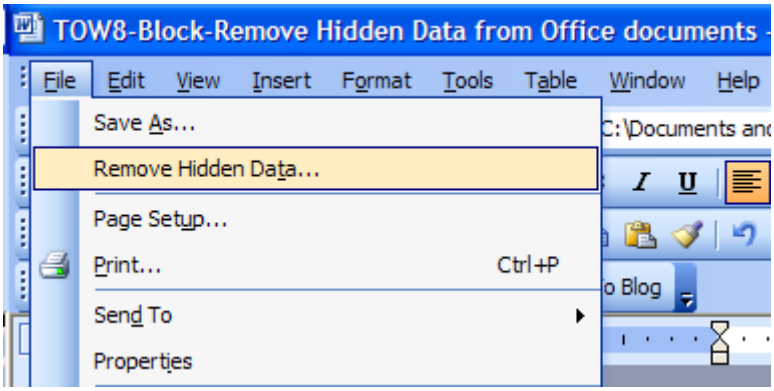
The IT Geek's
"Tip of the Week"

Remove Hidden Data from Microsoft Office Documents

Did you realize that you may be telling people things you really don't want them to know? Sensitive information that you deleted (or didn't know about) may be buried in Word, Excel and PowerPoint files that you create. When you send those files to other people, they can easily restore deletions and view comments that you previously removed. In addition, special programs can also be used to extract other hidden information.

To learn more about this problem and how to deal with it, go to www.google.com and search for "remove hidden data" (without the quotes). In addition to problems with Microsoft Office documents, you'll discover that JPEG (picture) files also contain hidden information.

A number of tools can be downloaded and installed to permanently remove hidden data (including changes, metadata, etc.) from Word, Excel and PowerPoint documents. One such tool is a free Microsoft download that can be used to clean **Office 2003** documents. It is available at http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyId=144E54ED-D43E-42CA-BC7B-5446D34E5360&displaylang=en . (To find out what version of Microsoft Office you are using, start Word and click on Help → About Microsoft Word). After installing this tool, you will see the new "Remove Hidden Data…" option under the File pull-down menu in the Word, PowerPoint and Excel applications as illustrated below.



We'd love to hear from you! Please send your questions and comments to HelpDesk@csum.edu. Previous tips are online at: http://www.csum.edu/itinfo/training/Tip-of-the-Week.asp .