Adobe® XMP Technote: Deleting Internal Properties

This technical note addresses a problem that arises when Adobe Creative Suite® 4 applications make increased use of internal (read-only) XMP properties, allowing XMP Packets to grow bigger than those in CS3 workflows. For some formats, it is only possible to update XMP data until the XMP Packet has reached a given size; after that, further updates are not possible.

If you are saving a file of such a type, you would see an error message indicating that the application cannot update the metadata in the file. When this occurs, you may need to reduce the size of the XMP Packet manually, as described in this note, before you can save the file.

This only occurs for formats that do not have "smart handlers" in the XMP Toolkit; for the supported file types, provisions are made for increasing size of metadata. However, a user might still want to use this technique to trim the size of the XMP Packet.

The new Dynamic Media schema and smart handlers for supported file types are documented in the CS4 updates of the *XMP Specification*; *Part 2, Standard Schemas* and *Part 3, Storage in Files*.

How does the problem occur?

In CS4 , XMP introduced the Media Management schema, which includes the ability to track the editing history of a document in the XMP metadata. This event history is stored in the `xmpMM:History` property, an internal property. When CS4 applications are used to modify documents, they add events to this property, which grows continuously.

However, some applications do not make any provision for limiting or trimming the history. In time, it can become necessary for users to remove the contents of this internal property.

What are internal properties?

XMP uses the terms internal and external to distinguish read-only properties from those whose values can be modified by users. According to the *XMP Specification*:

➤ Internal metadata must be maintained by an application. It can include system-level information (such as modification date) or information that an editing application has access to (such as the number of words in a document). Users should not be allowed to change the values of such properties.

➤ External metadata must be set by a user, and is independent of the contents of the document. External modifications should be displayed by the editing application but are not acted upon. Unless changed by the user, external properties are preserved on output.

How can I fix it?

You can use the Advanced panel of the File Info dialog (after you have configured it correctly, as described below) to remove the history events and reduce the size of the XMP Packet. You can delete the History property altogether, or remove some of its values to address this specific problem.

You can delete any internal properties or their values from the metadata in this way, in order to shrink the XMP Packet to a minimum size. Whether it is safe to do so depends on the application.

➤ Dynamic-media applications such as Adobe Premiere® depend on internal properties to determine whether a file has been changed.

➤ Adobe Photoshop® recreates the internal properties it needs, so the XMP Packet can never be completely removed. (This might be true of other applications as well.) If you are using Photoshop, you can access the File Info dialog through Adobe Bridge in order to delete such properties.

Configure the File Info dialog to delete internal properties

Because internal properties are meant to be maintained by applications, and not to be modifiable by users, the File Info dialog does not allow you to delete internal properties in its default configuration.

You can use the Advanced panel to examine all properties, including hidden ones. You can, by default, delete external properties. To delete internal properties, however, you must change a setting in a configuration file, using these steps:

1. Make sure that the File Info dialog is closed.

2. Find the File Info preferences file in the location for your operation system:

   IN WINDOWS XP: `C:\Documents and Settings\`*`user`*`\Local Settings\Application Data\Adobe\XMP\File Info\2.0\work\FileInfoPrefs.xml`

   IN WINDOWS VISTA: `C:\Users\`*`user`*`\AppData\Local\Adobe\XMP\File Info\2.0\work\FileInfoPrefs.xml`

   IN MAC OS: `/Users/`*`user`*`/Library/Preferences/Adobe/XMP/File Info/2.0/work/FileInfoPrefs.xml`

3. Open the file in a text editor.

4. In the first line, after the open tag `<xfi:fileinfo`, add the attribute `includeIntProperties="true"`. Leave spaces before and after the atttibute specification:

   `<xfi:fileinfo `**`includeIntProperties="true"`**` ...`

5. Save the preferences file.

After making this change, the next time you open the File Info dialog you will be allowed to delete internal properties in the Advanced panel.

It is recommended that you remove the `includeIntProperties` flag from the preferences file after correcting the problem; otherwise, internal properties can be removed or overwritten while working with templates.