**[Saving the contents of a SQL Server XML column to a file](http://www.sqlskills.com/blogs/bobb/saving-the-contents-of-a-sql-server-xml-column-to-a-file/)**

By: [Bob Beauchemin](http://www.sqlskills.com/blogs/bobb/)

Posted on: July 12, 2012 11:41 am

While preparing for my TechEd talk on filetables and full-text search, I came across this tidbit that I thought was interesting.

With the advent of XML support in databases, specifically SQL Server's XML data type in SQL Server 2005, there has been two main ways to store XML; in files on the file system, and in a database. SQL Server has a built-in way to move XML data from files to the database, namely the OLE DB BULK provider and OPENROWSET SINGLE BLOB/CLOB/NCLOB. It looks like this

– Load XML from a file  
DECLARE @x XML;  
SET @x = ( SELECT \* FROM OPENROWSET( BULK 'C:\invoice1.xml', SINGLE\_BLOB) AS x);

– Or direct to table  
INSERT INTO dbo.invoice\_docs(invoice)  
SELECT \* FROM OPENROWSET(BULK 'C:\invoice1.xml', SINGLE\_BLOB) AS x;  
go

Because there is no corresponding built-in way to move XML from the database to files, I'd always referred to this asymmetry as "all your XML belong to us". Or, a bit more rudely, as "SQL Server is the roach motel of XML files, they get in, but they can't get out".

All joking aside, in SQL Server 2012, filetables provide a straightforward way to export XML column data (or any data for that matter) as files using only T-SQL. Suppose I have a filetable named Documents. This code stores the XML resume from the row with JobCandidateID of 1 to a file in the root directory of the filetable named "JobCandidate1.xml". To store this into a subdirectory using T-SQL, see the code in [this blog entry](http://www.sqlskills.com/blogs/bobb/sql-server-2012-filetables-in-t-sql-part-2-new-rows/). You can then copy the file to the file system location of your choice.

– get existing database blob into files  
declare @resume varbinary(max);  
declare @name varchar(40);

select @resume = cast(Resume as varbinary(max))  
        ,@name = 'JobCandidate' + cast(JobCandidateID as varchar(1)) + '.xml'  
from AdventureWorks.HumanResources.JobCandidate  
where JobCandidateID = 1;

insert dbo.Documents(Name, file\_stream) values(@name, @resume);

Now XML files can get out!

@bobbeauch

**Related Posts**

* [How To Return Document Property Values in Full-Text Search](http://www.sqlskills.com/blogs/bobb/how-to-return-document-property-values-in-full-text-search/)
* [Of filetables, full-text and semantic search, and docidmaps](http://www.sqlskills.com/blogs/bobb/of-filetables-full-text-and-semantic-search-and-docidmaps/)
* [SQL Server 2012 FileTables in T-SQL part 1: functions and methods](http://www.sqlskills.com/blogs/bobb/sql-server-2012-filetables-in-t-sql-part-1-functions-and-methods/)
* [SQL Server 2012 FileTable and T-SQL on AlwaysOn secondary replicas](http://www.sqlskills.com/blogs/bobb/sql-server-2012-filetable-and-t-sql-on-alwayson-secondary-replicas/)
* [SQL Server 2012 FileTables – AlwaysOn support and PathName()](http://www.sqlskills.com/blogs/bobb/sql-server-2012-filetables-alwayson-support-and-pathname/)

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**2 Responses to *Saving the contents of a SQL Server XML column to a file***

1. http://0.gravatar.com/avatar/ad516503a11cd5ca435acc9bb6523536?s=44*alzdba* says:

[July 12, 2012 at 12:35 pm](http://www.sqlskills.com/blogs/bobb/saving-the-contents-of-a-sql-server-xml-column-to-a-file/#comment-565)

Life is getting enhanced with SQL Server 2012, isn’t it ;-)

For the readers that don’t have SQL2012 available at this moment, please allow me to show a ref to an alternative using a little bit of Powershell <http://www.sqlservercentral.com/Forums/FindPost1173238.aspx>

Johan

1. http://0.gravatar.com/avatar/ad516503a11cd5ca435acc9bb6523536?s=44[*Justin Dearing*](http://www.justaprogrammer.net/) says:

[July 12, 2012 at 12:43 pm](http://www.sqlskills.com/blogs/bobb/saving-the-contents-of-a-sql-server-xml-column-to-a-file/#comment-566)

Bob,

That’s a pretty cool use of filetables. What would be more useful is if they added a CLR XmlDocument and XmlNode column types.