

Technical Alert: MS Word changes affecting Perfectus - Thursday, October 07, 2010

It has recently come to our attention that certain patch updates to the Microsoft Office product suite can potentially remove important data from Perfectus packages/templates. Perfectus is releasing a patch designed to prevent the destruction of this customer data. A new version of Perfectus that bypasses this technical limitation is also scheduled for release shortly.

Background

Microsoft has been successfully sued for breach of patent by i4i, a company specializing in MS Office extensions and utilities. The case centered on the use of “customized XML tags” within MS Word documents. Perfectus uses these customized XML tags in its document assembly process when templates are created or maintained within IPManager.

Microsoft lost both the initial case and the subsequent appeal. Following the most recent Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit ruling, Microsoft is releasing patches in the US for MS Word 2003 (KB979045) and 2007 (KB974631) that strip MS Word documents of the customized XML tags when they are opened within MS Word. Microsoft has released a statement to this effect.

As the IPManager uses MS Word to display and edit documents, this change means any Perfectus package (*.ip file) opened on a system that has the latest versions of MS Word installed will lose all Perfectus-related “question” data. If the user then saves their package - and does not have a back-up - this data will be permanently lost.

Protection

Our first concern is to ensure that no customer data is affected by this change. To this end, we have created a patch ready for immediate distribution. This should be installed on any client machine using the Perfectus IPManager application. The patch stops IPManager from opening if Microsoft's XML tag stripping patch is present (typically, on versions of MS Word, released after 11-Jan-2010). Word is then unable to remove the custom XML elements from the

Perfectus package.

Please download the protect patch [here](#) , and contact us at support@perfectustechnology.com if you require any help apply this.

Solution

It has been known for some time that Microsoft Word 2010 will not support the customized XML feature as part of the product strategy to align MS Word with the latest open standards, such as XPS (XML Paper Specification). Support for Microsoft Word 2010 has been on the Perfectus Road Map for a number of months, and work is progressing well on the robust re-architected product. This is expected for release within the next 16 weeks.