DocStyle

Are your Word documents dirty?

Ask yourself these three questions:

1. Have you ever worked on a Word document that was fairly large for example 100 or more pages with different numbering levels, charts, tables, you know the works, and it was perfectly fine until you got your hands on it and started editing and then, all of a sudden, the numbering is no longer consecutive and your paragraphs have shifted?

2. Have you ever had a pleading you were working on and needed to meet a court deadline and all that needed to be done is to update the Table of Contents but when you do, you get the dreaded **"No table of contents entries found"**?

3. Have you ever been working late at night on a document, making editing changes and for the life of you, you are unable to figure out why the paragraphs do not align with the prior paragraphs?

If you've answered **Yes** to any of these questions, it means you are the proud recipient of a "dirty" Word document.

What is a 'dirty' document?

A "dirty" document is a Word document that has been passed around from firm to firm and has picked up coding that can conflict with the way a Word document is supposed to function. These type of documents affect all Word users in your firm, staff and clients alike.

This is especially true for Word users who are not experts and cannot navigate through the many hurdles needed to be jumped in order to get the Word document to work properly.

DocStyle

It's a global problem

Unfortunately, dirty Word documents are not just a U.K. problem, it is a worldwide problem. Law firms are now operating globally with offices in different locations, which means this problem is not just local but global and with Microsoft Word being the number one-word processing application used, the problem is not going to go away anytime soon. So, what can you do to curtail this problem? The best way to help minimize dirty documents from surfacing and resurfacing in your firm is to know about them in the first place.

How do you fix a 'dirty' document?

You do not have to be a Word expert in order to recognize a dirty document. There are some steps you can take to minimize disruption in your editing process:

1. Check your document for unused styles by opening up the Styles pane **(Home tab – Styles)**

2. Ensure that your document is not using the same style name for both numbering paragraphs and text paragraphs by putting it in Draft view **(View tab – Draft)**

If you do not know how to do this, reach out to your in-house document specialists or check out the many resources the Document Excellence Group has to offer! These resources will help guide you in the right direction. Do not attempt to revise the document yourself if it is a "dirty" document as you may cause more harm than good. Reach out to your Word experts and get your document stable, clean and edit ready! You will be so glad you did!

About DocStyle

DocStyle focuses on two critical objectives, intelligently converting PDF files to Word documents and processing Word documents quickly with automated tools.