**Effective Personal-Identity and Metadata Redaction Techniques
for E-Filing**

When you e-file a PDF document, you may be providing more information in that document than you can see via your PDF reader software. Some redaction techniques used when e-filing are ineffective, in that the text intended to be hidden or deleted can be read via a variety of techniques. And, because information about the document, called "metadata", is also stored inside the document, it is often viewable as well. Examples of metadata and hidden data include the name and type of file, the name of the author, the location of the file on your file server, the full-sized version of a cropped picture, and prior revisions of the text.

E-filers must use extra care to make sure that the PDF documents to be submitted to ECF are fully and completely free of any hidden data which may contain redacted information. The protection of sensitive data can be compromised if improper redaction techniques are used. Here are a couple of examples of sensitive-data visibility issues:

· Highlighting text in black or using a black box over the data in MS Word or Adobe Acrobat <u>will not protect</u> the data from being able to be seen. Changing the text color to white so it disappears against the white screen/paper is similarly ineffective.

· Previous revisions and deleted text may be able to be seen by manipulating an Adobe Acrobat file.

The best redaction method is to omit information from the original document and save the redacted version with a new name. For example, "FileName-REDACTED", then convert to PDF.

While the court does not endorse any specific method, and the responsibility for redacting personal identifiers rests solely with the parties. Commercially available software can be used to redact, not just hide, the sensitive information. Redax (www.appligent.com) and RapidRedact (www.rapidredact.com) are two examples of commercial products used by some. Adobe Acrobat Professional and Word both contain redaction tools. Search the web for references that may be useful to you.

Fortunately, there are effective means of eliminating metadata from electronic documents. The simplest method is to "Flatten" the PDF. Flattening a document will remove most meta-data and the interactive features from a PDF, this is accomplished by printing to PDF. Further review your final PDF Properties to make sure there is nothing displayed in description *(The Additional Metadata button rarely has anything of concern)*.