Version Sleuth 2.0 Documentation

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Version Sleuth 2.0

About Version Sleuth   2.0

Version Sleuth 2.0 is a vast improvement over Version Sleuth 1.0. It has undergone several complete rewrites, so that it doesn't contain a single line of the original program. Version 2.0 allows you to both view and edit the version info and CE Info in any file.

Compatibility

Version Sleuth requires a Mac 512Ke, Mac Plus, Mac SE or Mac II computer. It runs under Multifinder, requiring about 70K of memory.

Shareware

This program is sold as Shareware. This means that you may give it to your friends and use it free of charge for one month. At the end of one month you must make a decision. If you like Version Sleuth and want to keep using it, you should send a registration fee of $5 to the address on page 5 of this documentation. If you do not choose to become a registered user, then please delete Version Sleuth from your disks, or better yet give it to a friend or users group.

File Comments

In order to understand what Version Sleuth does, it helps to begin with a little background on comments in files. In general, all files on the Macintosh can contain at least three different kinds of comments. The type you probably are most familiar with are the comments in the Get Info window in the Finder. There are also two other kinds of comments, version info and CE Info. Version Sleuth 2.0 can be used to edit these two types of comments.

Get Info Comments

The Finder stores the Get Info comments for a file in an invisible file on every disk called the Desktop file. Unfortunately, these comments are occasionally lost when the Desktop file is rebuilt. It can be rebuilt, for example, if you insert a disk into the drive while holding the option and command keys down. Get Info comments are also not copied when a file is copied to a new disk.

Finder 6.0

Finder 6.0 and later versions have attempted to remedy these shortcomings by using the version info (which will be discussed shortly) as the initial Get Info comments when the Desktop file is rebuilt. This is still, however, not an adequate solution. If you make any changes to these default comments, the changes are still put in the Desktop file. Thus, they will still be lost when the Desktop is rebuilt. Also, the Finder only recognizes the version info of applications and system files. All other files are not helped in the least.

Version Info

Version info does offer a good solution if handled properly by a program like Version Sleuth. Version info has historically been called the version data of a file. It draws its name from the fact that the version info usually contains the version number and copyright information for an application or system file. It can, however, be found in any file, and can contain any information. It can contain up to 255 characters of text, which is stored in each individual file. Version Sleuth 2.0 lets you edit the version info in any file, and then save your changes if you wish.   Version info can also be edited by several other public domain and shareware programs, allowing more people to read these comments.

CE Info

Another type of permanent comments is CE Info. It was created by CE Software for use in their Disktop™ desk accessory. Like version info, it lets you permanently store up to 255 characters of text in a file. It just puts the text into a different location in the file. Version Sleuth and Disktop are the only two programs which can currently edit CE Info. You should probably use version info instead of CE Info unless you know all the people reading the comments you create will have one of these two programs.

Using Version Sleuth

Version Sleuth is really very easy to use. To see the version info and CE Info for a particular file, select **Get File Information…** from the File menu. You can then choose a file from the dialog box. Once you have selected a file, you will see a dialog box containing the version info and CE Info of that file, if any. It will also show the file's type and creator information, and most of the time will also display the file's icon as well. You can click on the icon to see how the icon looks when highlighted, and click again to return the icon to its normal state.

Editing Info

You can edit the information, and cut and paste it using the Edit menu. Any text beyond the 255 character limit in each box will be ignored. If you make any changes to the version info or CE Info, you will be given a chance to save those changes when you open another file or quit.

The Edit Menu

The Edit Menu allows you to cut and paste in the normal way. Undo in Edit menu is provided for any desk accessories which may need it. Version Sleuth will turn it on and off as necessary, but it does not use it in any way. If a selection from the Edit menu beeps, then that means that the desk accessory in use does not support that particular Edit command.

The Options Menu

The Options menu provides three options to give you better control over the program. They are all initially turned off, and selecting the menu will toggle a check mark on and off to show whether or not the option is in use.

Use File Filter

The First option is **Use File Filter**. When selected, it will only allow you to open applications and system files. All other files will not appear in the opening dialog box. These are the files which typically contain version info. If you just want to read the version info already in files, this option will narrow your choices for you. Most other files don't have version info, so opening them would just be a waste of time. Disabling the check mark will show all files in the opening dialog box.

Use Special Cases

The second option, **Use Special Cases**, requires a bit of explanation. Older system files used to store their version info in a nonstandard location. The standard location simply contained the words "Macintosh Software." Finder 6.0 and System 4.2 and later versions have corrected this quirk, and store their version info in the standard location. However, if you try to look at the version info of an old Finder, System, or Macintalk file, you will just see "Macintosh Software." If this occurs, select the option, **Use Special Cases**, and open the file again. It will look in the old, nonstandard location for the version info if the menu is checked when the file is opened. These three files are the only ones affected by this option, and you shouldn't use it with new versions of these files.   If you save version info in these locations, you won't be able to read this info with any other application, or when this program when the **Use Special Cases** option is disabled. It won't do any harm, but it will uselessly make your files a few hundred bytes larger.   A final word of caution on this option: the new System files actually contain the info in both the new and old locations.   The new Finder, however, uses the new location when it rebuilds the Desktop, so make any changes there. As a rule, only use this option when looking at old system files.

Disable Editing

The final option is **Disable Editing**. When this option is enabled, you can only view the version info and CE Info, not edit it. This may seem to have very limited use, but it was included for a reason. Enable this option when you are making a screen dump of the information dialog, so that the blinking insertion point will disappear. It looks much nicer. You also could use this option if you don't want to worry about messing up the pre-existing version info or CE Info.

Version Sleuth
Commands

This section provides a brief summary of the commands in Version Sleuth, organized by menu.

⌘ Menu

About Version Sleuth… Shows a window of copyright information. This window also contains the address where you should send your shareware contributions.

File Menu

Get File Information… This allows you to open a file and see the version info and CE Info contained in it. This info can then be edited. You will be given a chance to save these changes before opening a new file or quitting.

Help… This shows several screens of helpful information.

Quit This gives you a chance to save any changes, and then returns you to the Finder.

Edit Menu
Undo This is only used by desk accessories.

Cut, Copy, and Paste These work in the standard way, allowing you to cut and paste information between info boxes and desk accessories.

Options Menu
Use File Filter When selected, only those files which are likely to contain version info are visible in the opening dialog box. When not selected, all files can be opened.

Use Special Cases When selected, Version Sleuth will look for version info in the old, nonstandard location of some files. This only affects old Finder, System, and Macintalk files. It should not be used on new versions of these files. Changing this menu option while one of these files is open will have no effect; it only affects subsequently opened files.

Disable Editing When disabled, it is possible to edit the version info and CE Info. It should be enabled to make prettier screen dumps.

Version Sleuth Technical Reference

The following section is for those who are interested in how this program works. It is somewhat technical, but you do not need to read or understand it to use Version Sleuth.

Resource Format
This program actually is finding the version data resource for a file as described in Chapter 1, Vol. 3 of Inside Macintosh. These resources are normally stored in a resource of the same variety as the file's Creator. For example, if you have Version Sleuth show information about itself, it will tell you that its creator is CWS◊. That means that the version info will be stored in a resource of type CWS◊.

ResEdit
To see the version info in ResEdit (a resource editing program available free from Apple) you should select type CWS◊ and choose **Open As…** from the File Menu and select or type "STR ".

Old System Files
Old versions of the Finder, System, and Macintalk files do not follow this pattern. All of these system files do contain a resource of type MACS as they should. However, all these resources read simply "Macintosh Software". The real resources are stored in different places.   If you chose **Use Special Cases**, Version Sleuth will look in the correct place of these system files, as summarized in the following table:

File Name:	Resource Type:	Resource ID:
System	"STR "	0
Finder	"FNDR"	0
Macintalk	"STR "	14

Registration Information

Please send your $5 registration fee to become a registered user to the following address:

Craig Schmidt
509 Harper Lane
Midland, MI 48640

(517) 830-0247 (voice)

CompuServe: 71450,1343

I would appreciate any comments, questions, suggestions, or bug reports on Version Sleuth 2.0. Please send me a note, I really like to hear from my users.

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