

saved properties without having to understand the native file format of an arbitrary editing program.

As a further illustration of representing the native document settings of an application in a markup language, a schema is provided as follows:

The above specification, examples and data provide a complete description of the manufacture and use of the composition of the invention. Since many embodiments of the invention can be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention, the invention resides in the claims hereinafter appended.

We claim:

1. A computer storage medium having computer-executable components, comprising:

a first component that is arranged to edit an electronic document comprising automatically generated document properties;

a second component that is arranged to prompt and receive custom properties for the electronic document from a user; and

a third component that is arranged to encode in a markup language (ML) format the electronic document, the automatically generated document properties, backwards compatibility properties, and the custom properties received from the user.

2. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the electronic document is a word-processor document.

3. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the electronic document is a spreadsheet document.

4. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, further comprising a fourth component that is arranged to generate the backwards compatibility properties in response to a version number of the computer-executable component.

5. The computer-readable medium of claim 4, further comprising a fourth component that is arranged to generate application environment properties in response to an application environment of the computer-executable components, and wherein the third component is further arranged to encode the application environment properties in an ML format.

6. The computer-readable medium of claim 5, wherein the application environment properties comprise a zoom element.

7. The computer-readable medium of claim 4, wherein the backwards compatibility properties comprise a Justification element.

8. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the automatically generated document properties comprise a LastAuthor element.

9. The computer-readable medium of claim 1, wherein the custom properties comprise a Married element of type Boolean.

10. A method for handling electronic documents, comprising:

editing an electronic document comprising automatically generated document properties;

prompting and receiving custom properties for the electronic document from a user;

generating backwards compatibility properties in response to a version number of the computer-executable component, and encoding the backwards compatibility properties in an ML format; and

encoding in a markup language (ML) format the electronic document, the automatically generated document properties, and the custom properties received from the user.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the electronic document is a word-processor document.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein the electronic document is a spreadsheet document.

13. The method of claim 10, further comprising generating application environment properties in response to an application environment of the computer-executable components, and wherein the third component is further arranged to encode the application environment properties in an ML format.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the application environment properties comprise a zoom element.

15. The method of claim 10, wherein the automatically generated document properties comprise a LastAuthor element.

16. The method of claim 10, wherein the custom properties comprise a Married element of type Boolean.

17. The method of claim 10, wherein the backwards compatibility properties comprise a Justification element.

18. A computer system for displaying and modifying electronic documents, comprising:

an electronic document file that comprises automatically generated document properties;

an editor that is arranged to prompt and receive custom properties for the electronic document from a user and to generate backwards compatibility properties in response to a version number of the computer-executable component, and wherein the editor is further arranged to encode the backwards compatibility properties in an ML format; and

an encoder that is arranged to encode in a markup language (ML) format the electronic document, the automatically generated document properties, and the custom properties received from the user.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein the electronic document is stored in a proprietary format.

20. The system of claim 18, wherein the electronic document is a word-processor document.

21. The system of claim 18, wherein the electronic document is a spreadsheet document.

22. The system of claim 18, wherein the editor is further arranged to generate application environment properties in response to an application environment of the computer-executable components, and wherein the third component is further arranged to encode the application environment properties in an ML format.

23. The system of claim 22, wherein the application environment properties comprise a zoom element.

24. The system of claim 18, wherein the automatically generated document properties comprise a LastAuthor element.

25. The system of claim 18, wherein the wherein the custom properties comprise a Married element of type Boolean.

26. The system of claim 18, wherein the backwards compatibility properties comprise a Justification element.