How do I remove the “extended attributes” on a file in Mac OS X?

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I have an AppleScript script that runs a stress test. Part of the test is to open, save, and close certain files. Somehow, the files have picked up some "extended attributes" that prohibit the files from being saved. That causes the stress test to fail.

How do I remove the extended attributes?

67

osx attributes

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edited Jul 19 ’14 at 21:29
Peter Mortensen
11.2k 16 76 109

asked Jan 28 ’11 at 21:04
tames
854 2 8 4

Extended attributes can't prevent a file from being saved. Are you sure it's not a permissions problem, or an ACL? – Kevin Ballard Jan 28 ’11 at 21:19

Did you just upgrade to 10.7.3? It seems there is a bug where many GUI apps (including TextEdit, but also other apps - including one I wrote myself which doesn't do anything strange) will now set the quarantine bit on files. As @Bavarious said, you can remove it using @xattr@. Look into TextWrangler, which is free, and I think has good AppleScript support. I'm told it doesn't set the quarantine bit. – Abhi Beckert Mar 3 ’12 at 9:01

4 If the below worked, you should accept the answer - it helps to make this website a good knowledge-base :-) – Graza Apr 11 ’12 at 18:53

4 Answers

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Use the `xattr` command. You can inspect the extended attributes:

```
$ xattr s.7z
com.apple.metadata:kMDItemWhereFroms
com.apple.quarantine
```

and use the `-d` option to delete one extended attribute:

```
$ xattr -d com.apple.quarantine s.7z
$ xattr s.7z
com.apple.metadata:kMDItemWhereFroms
```

you can also use the `-c` option to remove all extended attributes:

```
$ xattr -c s.7z
$ xattr s.7z
```

`xattr -h` will show you the command line options, and xattr has a man page.

share improve this answer

edited Apr 19 at 21:10
Joël
627 8 18

answered Jan 28 ’11 at 21:20
Bavarious
57k 14 133 153

Thanks! That worked. – tames Jan 28 ’11 at 21:38

2 Apple has a man page for it available online: developer.apple.com/documentation/Darwin/Reference/ManPages/... – Quinn Taylor Oct 19 ’11 at 3:45

It appears that the -c option was removed in Mountain Lion (10.8). xattr -h no longer lists -c and produces "-c not recognized" when used. Very painful now to remove extended attributes one by one. – helioz Jan 29 ’13 at 2:39

2 @helioz -c is definitely working for me on OS X 10.8.3 – José Luis May 10 ’13 at 11:12

3 With Xcode installed on my 10.8.5 system, `xattr -c` works fine for me (and successfully stripped all metadata). – Doktor J Nov 20 ’13 at 19:55

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Removing a Single Attribute on a Single File

See Bavarious's answer.

To Remove All Extended Attributes On a Single File

Use `xattr` with the `-c` flag to "clear" the attributes:

```
xattr -c yourfile.txt
```

To Remove All Extended Attributes On Many Files

To recursively remove extended attributes on all files in a directory, combine the `-c` "clear" flag with the `-r` recursive flag:

```
xattr -rc /path/to/directory
```

A Tip for Mac OS X Users

Have a long path with spaces or special characters?

Open `Terminal.app` and start typing `xattr -rc` , include a trailing space, and then then drag the file or folder to the `Terminal.app` window and it will automatically add the full path with proper escaping.

share improve this answer

edited Jan 23 ’14 at 3:02

answered Jul 5 ’13 at 14:49
cwd
21.9k 34 129 173

3 +1 for the drag and drop thingy with Terminal.app – Benoit Duffez May 14 ’14 at 21:04

1 `-c` fails on OS X 10.5: ***`option -c not recognized`*** . We use one for testing on Apple's PowerPC. It looks like the downlevel version of OS X supports `-l` , `-p` , `-w` and `-d` . – jww Mar 5 ’16 at 18:28

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Try using:

```
xattr -rd com.apple.quarantine directoryname
```

This takes care of recursively removing the pesky attribute everywhere.

share improve this answer

edited Mar 25 ’13 at 14:45
Jesse
5,735 7 29 52

answered Mar 25 ’13 at 14:24
venkat
151 1 2

4

Another recursive approach:

```
# change directory to target folder:
cd /Volumes/path/to/folder

# find all things of type "f" (file),
# then pipe "|" each result as an argument (xargs -0)
# to the "xattr -c" command:
find . -type f -print0 | xargs -0 xattr -c

# Sometimes you may have to use a star * instead of the dot.
# The dot just means "here" (whereever your cd'd to
find * -type f -print0 | xargs -0 xattr -c
```

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answered Sep 22 ’15 at 10:39
bob
2,317 14 21

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