



# Xdata

## Version 4.2 / 6.2

### Samples Read Me

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Em Software, Inc.  
[www.emsoftware.com](http://www.emsoftware.com)

Welcome to a demonstration of the world of data publishing with Xdata!

The Xdata XTensions included in this demonstration package are exactly the same as what you receive in a commercial copy of Xdata, except that you use them in demonstration mode (by pressing the **Demo** button in the serial number prompt dialog at Xdata's first startup, instead of entering the serial number that comes with a commercial copy). In demonstration mode, Xdata's only limitation is that it won't import more than 50 records.

However, note that this software may not be the latest version available, so we encourage you to visit our web site at [www.emsoftware.com](http://www.emsoftware.com) to find the latest demonstration version of Xdata and our other data-driven publishing and publishing automation tools.

## Overview

Xdata—one of the data-driven publishing products from Em Software—automates the production of documents which contain repeating data units, such as catalogs, directories, price lists, and schedules. Xdata lets you write a prototype statement—including conditionals and loops—directly in your XPress document. Xdata evaluates incoming data and formats it, on the fly, according to the rules given in your prototype. Xdata supports both text and graphics.

Xdata is an XTension to XPress, automatically becoming part of the XPress publishing system once it is installed. It is not a stand-alone program, separate from XPress, and no special additional files are required. The documents

Xdata produces normal XPress documents that can be printed, edited, and saved like any other.

Xdata meshes well with Xcatalog, another of the Em Software product series, allowing you to build pages using Xdata with Xcatalog links in place, ready for later update from, or extraction to your database.

## Trying the sample files

Many of the samples included with the shipping Xdata product are included in this demonstration distribution (and most of them are elaborated in the manual). To try them, install Xdata (see the Read Me file in the main Xdata distribution folder), then follow the directions below for each. These samples really only begin to scratch the surface of what you can do with Xdata, but they give a quick flavor of the kinds of common uses Xdata is put to every day by thousands of people.

(Please keep the sample document folder structure as it came, or some of these samples won't work.)

In general (except for Avery Labels and Mail Merge), the data for each sample comes from a text box on the pasteboard, so you'll choose **Import from Pasteboard...** from the Xdata top-level menu; in normal use, you'll usually be importing from a file (like the Avery Labels samples). You may find that some of the files use fonts you don't have, and have document preferences that don't match your defaults (e.g., different frame data), but you can ignore all that for demonstration purposes and dismiss those warning dialogs.

For some of these samples, the input contains more than 50 records, so you'll get a message about not being able to import more than 50 records in the demonstration version. You can safely dismiss this alert dialog, and then review the results.

### Avery Labels

Inside this folder, open the appropriate template document (AV\_5160, etc.), place the insertion point (using the content tool) at the start of the first text box on the page, and then choose **Import from File...** from the Xdata top-level menu. At the file selection dialog, select the file Address.txt in the Avery Labels folder and Xdata will import the file.

These are real-world label layouts, pre-configured for the most common address labels. You may have to change the fields slightly to match your actual name & address data snapshot fields.

## Car Parts

Open the template document Car Parts, place the insertion point (using the content tool) at the start of the main text box (the large one with 3 columns), and then choose **Import from Pasteboard...** from the Xdata top-level menu.

This example, a car part price list inspired by a real-world use of Xdata, illustrates dealing with slightly irregular raw data using some of Xdata's scripting features.

The raw data records normally consist of a part number, two different note fields, a list price and a discount price, sorted by part number within each functional group. However, the groups are separated by records whose part number is actually the group name, with a special flag character (\*) in the first column. A better data design would have a separate field denoting the type of record, be it header or part number, but we'll assume this came from a source over which we have no control (as it did in the real-world case).

The prototype, using Xdata's scripting features, checks to see if the first character of the part number is the flag character, and, if so, formats the rest of the part number as a reversed header. The rest of the prototype is quite straightforward, just placing each field in a tabbed line of data, including dissecting the part number field in order to embolden just a portion of it.

The master page defines the 3-column layout, with fixed headers over each column.

The prototype, on the upper right pasteboard, has been designated as such by choosing **Use Story as Prototype** from the Xdata top-level menu with the prototype box selected.

## Detectives

Inside this folder, open the template document Detectives Directory, place the insertion point (using the content tool) anywhere in the main text box (the large one with 2 columns), and then choose **Import from Pasteboard...** from the Xdata top-level menu

This detective directory illustrates importing graphics along with text.

The raw data contains each detective's vital information—names, position, company, positions held and other memberships, career history, education, nationality, and address—along with a picture file name (in this case, what are purportedly black & white TIFF images (and which are low-resolution bit-maps to save space)), if the sleuth in question has a picture on file.

Pictures are imported along with text, using one or more anchored graphics boxes in the Xdata record prototype. You tell Xdata where to find each picture by setting the picture box's filename property with the **set filename of picture n**

**to** field statement (field is the name of the data field containing the picture's file system name).

In this case, the picture may or may not be included, so there's a conditional test right at the start: **if picfile <> empty**. When there is a picture, we place it in-line at a right tab up against the margin, and end its containing paragraph immediately. Then, any following text will wrap around it to the left. To align the person's name, title and company with the top of his or her picture (when we have one), we baseline-shift it all up 10 points. Otherwise, we simply include the name, title and company information unshifted, but with extra space above to compensate for the lack of a picture (whose paragraph normally supplies the extra space above).

The rest of the prototype simply formats the various fields, fully punctuated and suitably prefixed, and then includes one or more icons depicting the detective's specialties, using up to four anchored picture boxes with static picture filenames.

All but the last paragraph in the prototype have the paragraph format "keep with next paragraph" set, in an effort to control column breaks.

The early prototype statement **set pictureposition to aspectratiofit** tells Xdata to make each picture fill its containing box, but maintaining its original aspect ratio. You can also ask Xdata to just leave the picture as-is when it's imported (100%, upper left coincident), center it, or make it fit the picture frame exactly, distorting its aspect ratio as needed

## Features

Open the template document Features, place the insertion point (using the content tool) anywhere in the main text box, and then choose **Import from Pasteboard...** from the Xdata top-level menu.

This example shows the use of extensive, if simple, Xdata scripting to turn a set of raw data fields denoting the presence or absence of a feature (or its non-applicability)—"x", blank, and "n", respectively, in the raw data—into a fully-formatted feature chart—using bullets, blanks and "n/a", respectively, in the formatted data.

The prototype is repeated, once shaded (using a paragraph rule "behind") and once unshaded, separated by a "read" Xdata script statement, which tells Xdata to get the next data record but proceed with the prototype. The effect is to set every other line shaded, starting with the first.

## Houses

Inside this folder, open the template document Real Estate, place the insertion point (using the content tool) at the start of the upper left of the four main

boxes on the first page, and then choose **Import from Pasteboard...** from the Xdata top-level menu.

This (tongue-in-cheek) real estate guide is created using 4 equal-sized text boxes on the master page as the main text flow, using a next-box character at the end of each prototype record to advance to the next real estate box, unless there's no next record (detected by an empty **next picfile** field, to avoid advancing to a new box unless needed). (The prototype is on the left pasteboard.)

Each picture box in the prototype is nearly as wide as the four containing text boxes in the main text flow, and thus forces the accompanying descriptive text to flow below it.

Further, the descriptive text is interpreted as XPress-tagged text (by including it with **put styled description**), so it can contain local emphasis (in this example, bold and italic phrases, though all XPress Tags are supported).

## Mail Merge

Inside this folder, open the template document MM Template, place the insertion point (using the content tool) at the start of the main text flow box on the first page, choose "Import from File..." from the Xdata top-level menu, and then select the file Evaluees.txt in the mail merge sample sub-folder.

This example illustrates a case conditional structure: an **if-else if-else-end if** chain is used to treat incoming data records very differently based on the value found in the **key** field.

The prototype, found on the right pasteboard, produces evaluation form letters for employees of a fictional Poole Corporation (check its address for a chuckle). Based on the value in the **key** field, radically different letters result. Key values of 1 denote employees who are receiving the most favorable evaluation, values of 2 indicate a better than average performance review, values of 3 indicate a substandard evaluation, and all other values are interpreted as satisfactory. In the second paragraph of the prototype, only the key values 1 and 2 are treated in a special way.

The greeting line of each letter also uses a conditional statement to address recipients with key values of 1 by their first name.

## Spice Catalog

Open the template document Spice Catalog, place the insertion point at the start of the main text flow box on the first page, and then choose **Import from Pasteboard...** from the Xdata top-level menu.

This simple example illustrates typical catalog with prices and descriptions, using a conditional to place an in-line header before the first record and before any record that starts a new "run" of products.

## Legalities

This demonstration archive of Xdata is freely re-distributable, though you may not charge for it specifically, and you must always re-distribute the original, intact, unmodified archive. In particular, Em Software retains all intellectual rights to the software and its documentation. If you would like to include this demonstration version in your own collection (on a CD or as part of your web site, for example), you must first get permission from Em Software (email [marketing@emsoftware.com](mailto:marketing@emsoftware.com)).