CLAIMS

1. A method for embedding covert data in a text document, the method comprising:

providing the document having a first word including a first character and a second characters ;

determining a horizontal space distance between the first and second characters to define an inter-character distance;

altering the inter-character space distance by reducing the inter-character distance by one pixel when the inter-character distance exceeds two pixels, to produce an altered space distance between the charactersfirst word and a second word, wherein the altered space distance represents the embedded covert data; and

formatting the document to produce a formatted document based on the altered spacedistance.

2. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the document has multiple characters that include the first and second characters, and a space distance between each pair of the multiple characters that are horizontally adjacent to one another is altered to represent the embedded covert data.

3. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the document has multiple characters that include the first and second characters, and a space distance between selected pairs of the multiple characters that are horizontally adjacent to one another is altered to represent the embedded covert data.

4. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the document has multiple characters that include the first and second characters that form words, and a space the distance between the first word and the second words , the second word being adjacent to the first word, defines an inter-word distance, and wherein the inter-word distance that are horizontally adjacent to one another is altered to represent the embedded covert data.

5. A method as claimed in claims 1-4, wherein the first character is a left character relative to the second character, the second character is a right character

relative to the first character, and the ~~space~~ distance is determined by a horizontal distance between a right-most point of the left character and a left-most point of the right character.

6. A method as claimed in claims 1-5, wherein the characters are formed along a straight horizontal line.

7. A method as claimed in claims 1-5, wherein the characters are formed along a curved horizontal line.

8. A method as claimed in claims 1-7, further comprising decoding the formatted document to reveal the embedded covert data based on the altered ~~space~~distance.

9. A method as claimed in claims 1-8, wherein the embedded covert data is a user name.

10. A method as claimed in claims 1-8, wherein the embedded covert data is a global identifier.

11. A method as claimed in claims 1-10, wherein the altered ~~space~~ distance represents a binary sequence.

~~12. A method as claimed in claim 11, wherein the binary sequence is two bits.~~

~~13. A method as claimed in claims 1-12, wherein the space is an inter-character space within a word.~~

~~14. A method as claimed in claim 1-12, wherein the space is an inter-word space between horizontally adjacent words.~~

~~15. A method as claimed in claims 1-14, wherein the space is determined in pixels.~~

~~16. A method as claimed in claim 1-14, wherein the altered space is expressed in pixels.~~

~~17. A method as claimed in claims 1-14, wherein the space is determined in pixels and the altered space is expressed in pixels.~~

~~18. A method as claimed in claims 1-17, wherein the space and the altered space differ in horizontal distance by a single pixel.~~

12~~19~~. A method as claimed in claims 1-11~~18~~, wherein the characters in the formatted document are visually apparent to a user ~~and a difference between the space~~ and the altered ~~space~~ distance is essentially visually hidden from the user.

13~~20~~. A method as claimed in claims 1-12~~18~~, wherein in the document and the formatted document the characters are visually apparent to a user and a difference between the document and the formatted document is essentially visually hidden to the user.

14~~21~~. A system for embedding covert data in a text document, the system comprising:

a data encoding processing device that receives the document having a first word including a first character and a second character~~s~~, wherein the device includes a memory and a processor;

the memory stores the document and a predetermined ~~horizontal~~ distance; and

the processor determines a ~~horizontal space~~ distance between the first and second characters to define an inter-character distance, alters the inter-character ~~space~~ distance by reducing the inter-character distance by one pixel when the inter-character distance exceeds two pixels to produce an altered ~~space~~ distance with the predetermined ~~horizontal~~ distance between the ~~characters~~first word and a second word, and formats the document to produce a formatted document based on the altered ~~space~~distance, thereby embedding the embedded covert data in the document based on the altered ~~space~~distance.

1522. A system as claimed in claim 1421, wherein the document has multiple characters that include the first and second characters, and a ~~space~~ distance between each pair of the multiple characters that are horizontally adjacent to one another is altered to represent the embedded covert data.

1623. A system as claimed in claim 1421, wherein the document has multiple characters that include the first and second characters, and a ~~space~~ distance between selected pairs of the multiple characters that are horizontally adjacent to one another is altered to represent the embedded covert data.

1724. A system as claimed in claim 1421, wherein ~~the document has multiple characters that include the first and second characters that form words, and a space~~ the distance between the first word and the second word~~s~~, the second word being adjacent to the first word, defines an inter-word distance, and wherein the inter-word distance ~~that are horizontally adjacent to one another~~ is altered to represent the embedded covert data.

1825. A system as claimed in claims 1421-1724, wherein the first character is a left character relative to the second character, the second character is a right character relative to the first character, and the space is determined by a horizontal distance between a right-most point of the left character and a left-most point of the right character.

1926. A system as claimed in claims 1421-1825, wherein the characters are formed along a straight horizontal line.

2027. A system as claimed in claims 1421-1825, wherein the characters are formed along a curved horizontal line.

2128. A system as claimed in claims 1421-2027, further comprising a data decoding processing device that decodes the formatted document to reveal the embedded covert data based on the altered space.

2229. A system as claimed in claims 1421-2128, wherein the embedded covert data is a user name.

2330. A system as claimed in claims 1421-2128, wherein the embedded covert data is a global identifier.

2431. A system as claimed in claims 1421-2330, wherein the altered space distance represents a binary sequence.

32. A system as claimed in claim 31, wherein the binary sequence is two bits.

33. A system as claimed in claims 21-32, wherein the space is an inter-character space within a word.

34. A system as claimed in claim 21-32, wherein the space is an inter-word space between horizontally adjacent words.

35. A system as claimed in claims 21-34, wherein the space is determined in pixels.

36. A system as claimed in claim 21-34, wherein the altered space is expressed in pixels.

37. A system as claimed in claims 21-34, wherein the space is determined in pixels and the altered space is expressed in pixels.

38. A system as claimed in claims 21-37, wherein the space and the altered space differ in horizontal distance by a single pixel.

2539. A system as claimed in claims 1421-2438, wherein the characters in the formatted document are visually apparent to a user and a difference between the space and the altered space distance is essentially visually hidden from the user.

2640. A computer program product comprising:

a computer readable medium having computer program code means which, when loaded on a computer, makes the computer perform a method for embedding covert data in a text document, the method comprising:

providing the document having a first word including a first character and a second characters ; determining a horizontal space distance between the first and second characters to define an inter-character distance;

altering the inter-character space distance by reducing the inter-character distance by one pixel when the inter-character distance exceeds two pixels to produce an altered space distance with a predetermined horizontal distance between the charactersfirst word and a second word, wherein the altered space distance represents the embedded covert data; and

formatting the document to produce a formatted document based on the altered spacedistance.

2741. A computer readable medium having a program recorded which, when loaded on a computer, makes the computer perform a method for embedding covert data in a text document, the method comprising:

providing the document having a first word including a first character and a second characters ;

determining a horizontal space distance between the first and second characters to define an inter-character distance;

altering the inter-character space distance by reducing the inter-characater distance by one pixel when the inter-character distance exceeds two pixels to produce an altered space distance with a predetermined horizontal distance between the charactersfirst word and a second word, wherein the altered space distance represents the embedded covert data; and

formatting the document to produce a formatted document based on the altered spacedistance.

28. A system as claimed in claims 14-24, wherein in the document and the formatted document the characters are visually apparent to a user and a difference between the document and the formatted document is essentially visually hidden to the user.

29. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the altered distance has a predetermined horizontal distance between the first word and a second word.

30. A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the altered distance bears a predetermined relationship to a chosen reference space.