

# How can I prevent losing data in the PDR form?

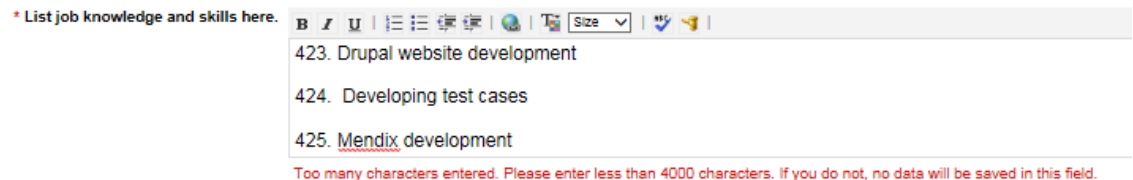
## How can I prevent losing data in the PDR form?

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### Pay attention to warning and error messages

1. **Stop working in the form** if you receive either of the following messages, as any further entries will be lost:
  - The system has **timed out** (in a pop-up window)
    - Log back on to the PDR system before continuing, and check whether any entries were lost.
  - **Auto-save failed** (beside the disk icon at the upper right of the form)
    - Immediately click **Save and Finish Later** or **Save and Close** at the bottom of the PDR form.
    - Re-open the form and check whether any entries were lost.
  - You have **exceeded the character limit** (beneath the field – see screenshot below)
    - [Address the character-limit issue](#) before moving ahead. The system will allow you to continue typing after warning you that you've exceeded the maximum, but the next time you log in to PDR, the additional text will be gone.



2. **Save frequently, and immediately after any long entry**, by clicking the disk icon at the upper right (which you may have to scroll up to see).

### Choose a data-entry method that works for you.

- To be absolutely sure that you won't lose data, follow the sure-fire method below.
- If you can accept a bit more risk to avoid the extra work, type directly into the form.

### The sure-fire, but arduous, data-entry method

1. Type the text for one field of the PDR form into a text editor (Notepad for Windows, or TextEdit for Mac).
  - Windows users: To open Notepad, click the **Start** button, type Notepad in the search box, and then, in the list of results, click **Notepad**.
  - Mac users: To open TextEdit, navigate to the **Applications** folder, select **TextEdit**, and click **Open**.
2. **Save the text file** for reference in case data is lost.
3. Copy and paste the text into the PDR form.
4. If, upon pasting, a message appears saying that you have **exceeded the character limit**, be aware that the system will save only the allowed number of characters, even though everything you pasted currently shows in the field. The additional text will continue to show on the form, but the next time you log in, it will be gone. To prevent losing the data, **shorten the text and save again**.
5. Immediately click **Save and Finish Later** or **Save and Close** at the bottom of the PDR form.
6. Re-open the form and verify that the full, desired text appears.
7. Repeat for the next field on the form.

### The background and status of this problem

- During the 2013-14 Year End Review, many PDR users experienced frustrating losses of data. The PDR system vendor, SuccessFactors, acknowledged the problem and made several system changes to address various causes of data losses.
- As of this writing (mid 2015), the PDR Tech team continues to hear reports of data loss from other SuccessFactors customers. The

problem occurs much less frequently at MIT than in early 2014, but because it is intermittent, we cannot predict with confidence how extensive the problem will be for employees and managers. We do see that users lose data when the system times out and they continue to work on the form.

- Note: There will always be some risk of data loss, as with any web application, when the connection between the user's computer and the vendor's server is interrupted. As in any system, the only sure-fire solution is frequent, manual saving.

## Related articles

- [What are the character limits in the PDR form? Why am I getting a character-limit error?](#)