A universal standard archive file for adsorption data

Jack D. Evans,* Volodymyr Bon, Irena Senkovska, and Stefan Kaskel

Department of inorganic chemistry Technische Universität Dresden Bergstraße 66, 01062 Dresden, Germany

E-mail: jack.evans@tu-dresden.de

Abstract

New advanced adsorbents are a crucial driver for the development of energy and environmental applications. Tremendous potential is provided by machine learning and data mining techniques able to identify an adsorbent for a particular application. However, the current scientific reporting of adsorption isotherms in graphs and figures is not adequate to reproduce original experimentally measured data. This report proposes the specification of a new standard adsorption information file (AIF) inspired by the ubiquitous crystallographic information file (CIF) and based on the self-defining text archive and retrieval (STAR) procedure, also used to represent biological nuclear magnetic resonance experiments (NMR-STAR). The AIF is a flexible, general and easily extended free-format archive file and is readily human and machine readable— simple to edit using a basic text editor or parse for database curation. This format represents the first steps toward an open adsorption data format as a basis for a decentralized adsorption data library. An open format is key to facilitate the electronic transmission of adsorption data between laboratories, journals and larger databases in the effort to increase open science in the field of porous materials for the future.

Introduction

It is important in many branches of science for there to exist a uniform and flexible method of archiving and exchanging data. The data presented in research contributions must be readily accessible and easily verifiable. Key to scientific discovery and innovation the use of good data management practices can provide significant knowledge through the reuse of original data by the community after the data publication process.[1] Unfortunately, the existing ecosystem surrounding scholarly data publication often prevents the research community extracting maximum benefit from published reports. This led to the foundational principles as discussed by Wilkinson et al.— Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability, and Reusability— that serve as a guideline to maximize the added-value gained by digital publishing.[2]

Porous solids are of important scientific and industrial interest owing to their impressive ability to interact with all manner of atoms, ions and molecules throughout the entirety of the solid, not only the surface.[3] This has led to many exciting applications for porous materials, including ion exchange, gas storage, separations and catalysis.[4] Measuring the interaction of gas with a material is crucial to understanding and comparing different porous materials. The quantity of gas adsorbed is measured in any convenient units, but for the presentation of the data, the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) has recommended that the amount adsorbed should be expressed in moles per gram of outgassed adsorbent.[5] To facilitate the comparison of adsorption data, the IUPAC also recommended that adsorption isotherms are displayed in a graphical form with the amount adsorbed (preferably presented using $\mathrm{mol\,g^{-}1}$ plotted against the equilibrium relative pressure (p/p_0), where p_0 is the saturation pressure of the pure adsorptive at the experiment temperature, or when the temperature is above the critical temperature of the adsorbing gas, against absolute pressure. However, in particular for microporous materials, this documentation leads to severe loss of information, as the pore filling occurs at a characteristic p/p_0 $<<$0.01 that is not retractable from the isotherm plot. Only a logarithmic plot can reveal the characteristicp/p_0 of pore filling, which is an important information to estimate

pore size distributions in the micropore regime. Similar aspects are also relevant for other branches/regions of the isotherm.

Rapid advances in computer simulations, and the quest for developing a digital data space for data mining through national and international networks,have fueled the need for a standardization of adsorption data beyond the current IUPAC recommendations. The variety and relative inflexibility of existing adsorption data formats and conventional graphical reporting inhibits the effective use of reported data. In particular, a comparison of experimental and computational data is obscured due to the poor documentation of explicit numbers. A general, flexible, rapidly extensible and universal file format protocol following the guidelines presented by Wilkinson et al. will boost the development of porous materials and reveal their application potential. Moreover, it enables to validate and advance theoretical methods as a wider and more precise database is openly accessible to validate, for example force field parameters, interactions potentials, isotherm models and more. As with other standard formats, such a format must be machine-independent and portable so that accessibility to data items is independent of their point of origin. It must also allow new data items to be incorporated without the need to modify existing files to enable an evolving format.

In this submission we outline our proposal for a new standard adsorption information file (AIF) and the clear advantages of this format compared to the currently accepted graphical deposition method. The AIF is free-format archive file that is readily human and machine readable, both simple to edit using a basic text editor or parse using computer programs. This represents the first flexible, general and easily extended format for representing the results of adsorption experiments and the first steps towards standardizing a format for archiving adsorption data.

AIF structure and syntax

The information contained within an AIF is arranged in a strict structural arrangement. Alternative data storage structures were considered, during the development the AIF, such as the comma-separated-value (CSV) file. The key, however, is that a universal data format must also include a well-structured record of metadata associated with the adsorption experiment. Without the metadata of, containing at the very least, what gas or temperature was used during the experiment the resulting adsorption data is meaningless. Metadata is also important in the development of databases. This is crucial to identify identical or related data, understand the evolution of databases over time, and also permit further examination for specific data items. As a result the STAR data structure was adopted,[6] which is famously used in the crystallographic information file (CIF) and biological nuclear magnetic resonance experiments (NMR-STAR).[7,8] An important property of the STAR format is that its syntax is defined by a few simple rules using an object/relational model. The data stored in a STAR file is self-descriptive as the underpinning data structure consists of tag-value pairs or data item. This data item is the combination of a data value with a data name, an identifying unique tag. This approach is flexible and able to represent. nested and repetitive data, which are particularly important for the collection of pressure and adsorbed amount that comprise an adsorption isotherm experiment.

The data structure of an AIF is comprised of comment lines and data blocks, which contains the required metadata and quantities related to the adsorption experiment, separated for adsorption and desorption (Figure 1). Files can contain any number of data blocks to represent multiple experiments. Fundamentally, a data block is a data cell containing a sequence of data items, data loops. It starts with a data block code statement (`data_example`) where a block code is a unique identifying code with in a file. A data block is closed by another either another data block code statement or the end of file. Comment lines can be placed anywhere in the file and are identified by a hash (`#`) symbol. As these comment lines do not necessarily represent structured data, which is able to be easily parsed, it is not

recommended to solely include important experimental conditions in this way. Single values or strings can be included within a data block using the data name and data value pairs. Data values are preceded by an identifying data name that is identify by an underscore character, for example `_temperature`. A data loop structure consists of a loop statement (`loop_`) followed by a list of data names and then a list of data, each of which contains data values that matches the data names in the list of data names. Though data loops can be nested at any level this is not necessary for the current implementation. Importantly, data values that follow the nested data declarations must be in exact multiples of the number of data names (which are referred to as loop packets). The data loops, as used here, are terminated by a new data item, a new data loop or an end of file. These data loops can thus straightforwardly represent the data recorded at each point of an adsorption and desorption experiment, for example the pressure and quantities adsorbed.

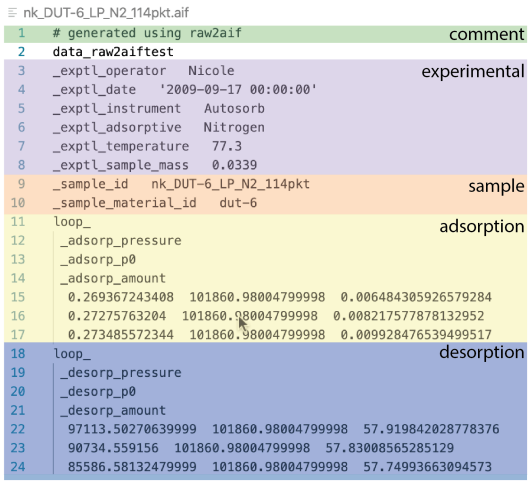

Figure 1: The structure of a typical adsorption information file (AIF) with the different data areas representing metadata (experimental and sample information) and the adsorption and desorption data.

The above data structures of the STAR format prove ideal for describing the detailed quantities relating to an adsorption experiment. An entire experiment can be described within a single data block. Initially, data name and data value pairs can be used to identify quantities relating to the whole experiment such as the date and time, temperature and

adsorptive. The data points for the adsorption and desorption branch can then be detailed in separate data loops. For each point, quantities such as the absolute pressure, relative pressure and amount adsorbed can be detailed. This leads us to the general data structure for the AIF (Figure 1).

AIF dictionary

Each data item within a data block is identified using a unique data name. The currently accepted AIF data names are listed and defined in Table 1. These data items form a first version of a core dictionary, which are intended for primarily reporting primary physisorption data for gas on porous materials. As a result the dictionary contains information about crucial experimental parameters, basic sample characterization, adsorption and desorption measures, each distinguished by a data name prefix (`_exptl_`, `_sample_`, `_adsorp_` and `_desorp_`).

Table 1: Core dictionary of data items

data name	description
`_exptl_operator`	name of the person who ran the experiment (string)
`_exptl_date`	date and time of the experiment (date-time string representation)
`_exptl_instrument`	instrument id used for the experiment (string)
`_exptl_adsorptive`	name of the adsorptive (string)
`_exptl_temperature`	temperature of the experiment (float)
`_exptl_sample_mass`	mass of the sample (float, gram)
`_sample_id`	unique identifying code used by the operator (string)
`_sample_material_name`	designated name for the material (string)
`_adsorp_pressure`	pressure of the adsorption measurement (float, pascal)
`_adsorp_p0`	saturation pressure of the adsorption measurement (float, pascal)
`_adsorp_amount`	amount adsorbed during the adsorption measurement (float, $\mathrm{mol\,kg^{-1}}$)
`_desorp_pressure`	pressure of the desorption measurement (float, pascal)
`_desorp_p0`	saturation pressure of the desorption measurement (float, pascal)
`_desorp_amount`	amount adsorbed during the desorption measurement (float, $\mathrm{mol\,kg^{-1}}$)

The goal of the experimental data names is to capture the information required to ac-

References

(1) Coudert, F.-X. Materials Databases: The Need for Open, Interoperable Databases with Standardized Data and Rich Metadata. *Advanced Theory and Simulations* **2019**, *2*, 1900131.

(2) Wilkinson, M. D. et al. The FAIR Guiding Principles for scientific data management and stewardship. *Scientific Data* **2016**, *3*.

(3) Davis, M. E. Ordered porous materials for emerging applications. *Nature* **2002**, *417*, 813–821.

(4) Sun, M.-H.; Huang, S.-Z.; Chen, L.-H.; Li, Y.; Yang, X.-Y.; Yuan, Z.-Y.; Su, B.-L. Applications of hierarchically structured porous materials from energy storage and conversion, catalysis, photocatalysis, adsorption, separation, and sensing to biomedicine. *Chemical Society Reviews* **2016**, *45*, 3479–3563.

(5) Thommes, M.; Kaneko, K.; Neimark, A. V.; Olivier, J. P.; Rodriguez-Reinoso, F.; Rouquerol, J.; Sing, K. S. Physisorption of gases, with special reference to the evaluation of surface area and pore size distribution (IUPAC Technical Report). *Pure and Applied Chemistry* **2015**, *87*, 1051–1069.

(6) Hall, S. R.; Spadaccini, N. The STAR File: detailed specifications. *Journal of Chemical Information and Modeling* **1994**, *34*, 505–508.

(7) Hall, S. R.; Allen, F. H.; Brown, I. D. The crystallographic information file (CIF): a new standard archive file for crystallography. *Acta Crystallographica Section A Foundations of Crystallography* **1991**, *47*, 655–685.

(8) Ulrich, E. L.; Baskaran, K.; Dashti, H.; Ioannidis, Y. E.; Livny, M.; Romero, P. R.; Maziuk, D.; Wedell, J. R.; Yao, H.; Eghbalnia, H. R.; Hoch, J. C.; Markley, J. L. NMR-STAR: comprehensive ontology for representing, archiving and exchanging data from

nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopic experiments. *Journal of Biomolecular NMR* **2018**, *73*, 5–9.

(9) Global Phasing Ltd,; CCP4, GEMMI - library for structural biology. 2020; `https://github.com/project-gemmi/gemmi`.

(10) Klein, N.; Senkovska, I.; Gedrich, K.; Stoeck, U.; Henschel, A.; Mueller, U.; Kaskel, S. A mesoporous metal-organic framework. *Angewandte Chemie International Edition* **2009**, *48*, 9954–9957.

(11) Rouquerol, J.; Llewellyn, P.; Rouquerol, F. *Studies in Surface Science and Catalysis*; Elsevier, 2007; pp 49–56.

(12) Rohatgi, A. WebPlotDigitizer. 2020; `https://automeris.io/WebPlotDigitizer`.

(13) Iacomi, P.; Llewellyn, P. L. Data Mining for Binary Separation Materials in Published Adsorption Isotherms. *Chemistry of Materials* **2020**, *32*, 982–991.

Graphical TOC Entry

The surrounding frame is 9 cm by 3.5 cm, which is the maximum permitted for *Journal of the American Chemical Society* graphical table of content entries. The box will not resize if the content is too big: instead it will overflow the edge of the box.