2023 Canadian Chemical Crystallography Workshop

Crystallographic Information Framework and Validation

Volume 101, Number 3, May-June 1996

Journal of Research of the National Institute of Standards and Technology

[J. Res. Natl. Inst. Stand. Technol. 101, 341 (1996)]

CIF (Crystallographic Information File): A Standard for Crystallographic Data Interchange

Volume 101 Number 3 May–June 1996

I. D. Brown

Brockhouse Institute for Materials Research, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada The Crystallographic Information File (CIF) uses the self-defining STAR file structure. This requires the creation of a dictionary of data names and definitions. A basic dictionary of terms needed to describe the crystal structures of small molecules was approved in 1991 and is currently used for

become computer interpretable. This offers many possibilities for the automatic handling of crystallographic information.

Key words: crystallographic information; file structures: relational databases: STAR

1. Need for a Crystallographic Information File

Crystallography is rich in numerical information. An x-ray or neutron diffraction pattern of a crystal typically consists of several thousand diffraction peaks, the intensities of which are used to determine the several hundred parameters needed to describe the positions and motions of the atoms. These coordinates are not themselves interesting, but they can be used to calculate the bonding geometry or to display the arrangement of the atoms on a screen. It is therefore convenient to keep the information in an electronically readable form and for this purpose we need a file structure. If the file structure is widely accepted by the community, the information describing the crystal can be readily passed from program to program or from laboratory to laboratory.

Traditionally the results of a scientific investigation are printed in a journal. A crystal structure determination requires that all the atomic coordinates be printed (and, in principle, also the diffraction amplitudes, since they are the primary measurements). The process by

which the journal manually typesets extensive tables from a computer listing, and the reader of the journal subsequently keyboards the same numbers back into the computer, is very inefficient and error prone. Recognising this, the International Union of Crystallography (IUCr) decided in 1990 to accept structure reports for *Acta Crystallographica C* in an electronic form generated by the software used for the structure determination. The numerical values in this submission were to be computer checked for consistency and the paper typeset by computer, before the electronic file was passed on to the crystallographic databases for archiving. To facilitate this process the IUCr established the Crystallographic Information File (CIF) as a standard for the transmission of crystallographic data.

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First introduced in 1990's as a means of archiving and distributing structural information, as well as a means of formatting and publishing the same structural information (see Acta Crystallographica papers).



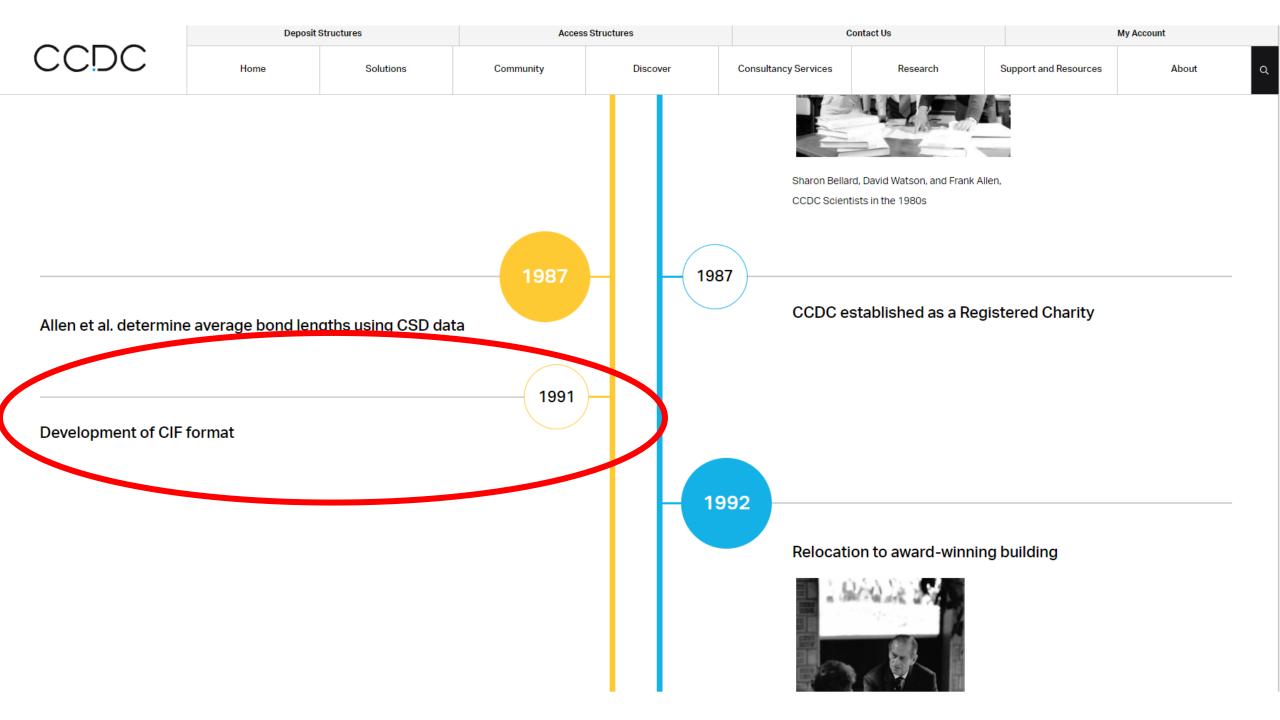
Crystal structures are essentially a collection of 3D atomic coordinates (and their ADPs) that define the asymmetric unit, combined with symmetry elements associated with a space group that we use to build the lattice. They are ideally suited to electronic handling and archiving.



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"The crystallographic community needed a common file structure that all crystallographic applications would recognize...the file structure had to be more than just a storage place for archiving the results of crystallographic determinations, it had to be a **crystallographic language** that could be used by computers to explore the wealth of information on crystal chemistry that was even then accumulating in electronic databases."

Brown and McMahon, *Acta Cryst.* (2002), B**58**, 317-324





What is a CIF?



A CIF is simply a text file!

Feel free to edit...



What is a CIF?

The CIF contains the most current information about your crystal (coordinates, ADPs) and the associated refinement data (R-values, residual electron density). It should also contain a complete a copy of the .res file and a list of structure factors. Most refinement packages (Olex2, etc) can generate new .ins and .hkl files directly from the CIF.

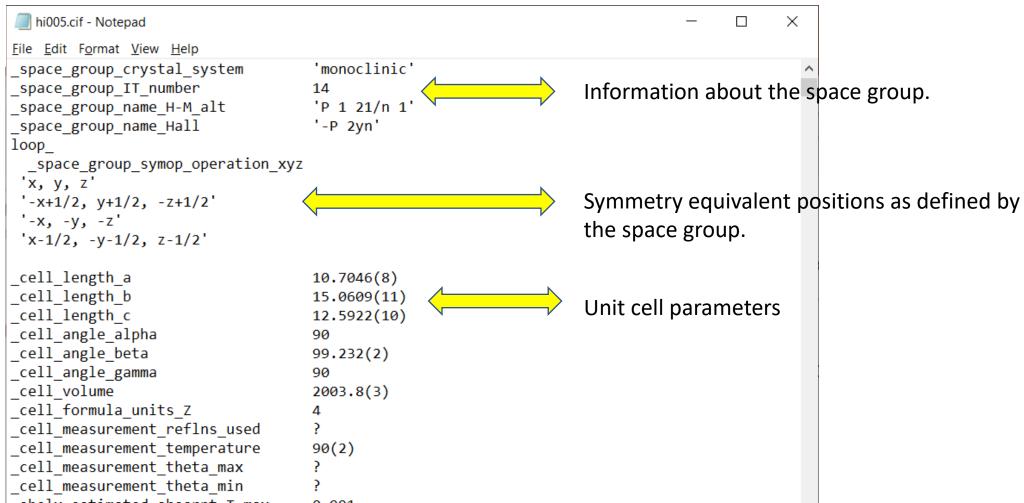
The CIF contains fields to be filled in with information about the crystal, its structure, and the refinement results. ShelXL (Crystals? Olex2.refine?) will fill in as many fields related to the refinement as possible, Olex2 (Shelxle? Crystals?) will fill in fields related to the crystal, the X-ray source, diffractometer, etc.

CIFs are generated at the completion of a refinement cycle when the command 'ACTA' is included in your .ins instruction file. In Olex2, if the ACTA tab is selected a new CIF will overwrite the previous CIF after each cycle.

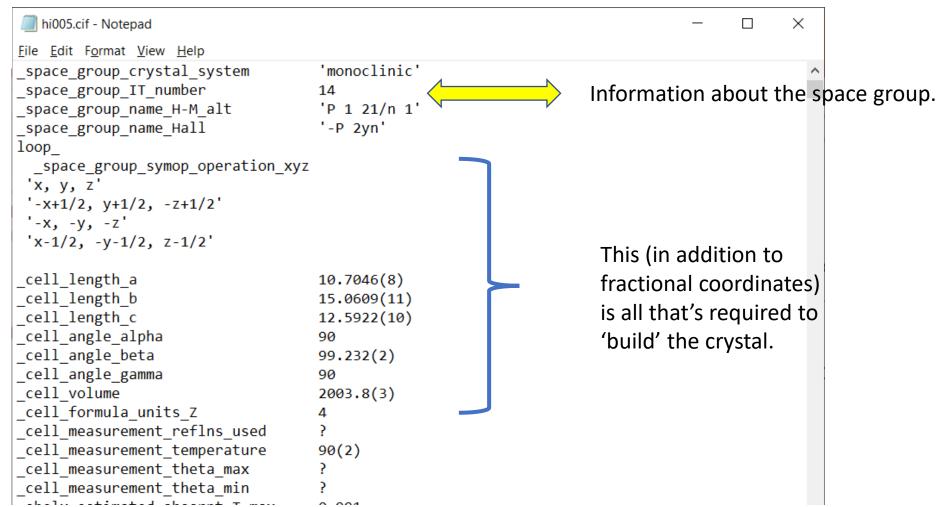


```
hi005.cif - Notepad
                                                                                     X
<u>File Edit Format View Help</u>
data hi005
 audit creation date
                                   2020-05-13
 audit creation method
Olex2 1.3
(compiled 2020.02.04 svn.rd84adfe8 for OlexSys, GUI svn.r6032)
                                                                           Software and versions
                                                                           used to compile the CIF.
 shelx SHELXL version number
                                    '2018/3'
 audit contact author address
 audit contact author email
 audit contact author name
 audit contact author phone
publ contact author id orcid
publ section references
Dolomanov, O.V., Bourhis, L.J., Gildea, R.J, Howard, J.A.K. & Puschmann, H.
 (2009), J. Appl. Cryst. 42, 339-341.
Sheldrick, G.M. (2008). Acta Cryst. A64, 112-122.
chemical name common
 chemical name systematic
 chemical formula moiety
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                                                                          Chemical formula input by the user.
 chemical formula sum
                                   'C25 H19 N O5'
 chemical formula weight
                                   413.41
 chemical melting point
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ni005.cif - Notepad
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File Edit Format View Help
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exptl crystal density diffrn
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exptl crystal density meas
exptl crystal density method
exptl crystal description
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                                   864
                                                                    Crystal stuff!
exptl_crystal_size_max
                                   0.2
exptl crystal size mid
                                   0.13
exptl crystal size min
                                   0.09
exptl transmission factor max
exptl transmission factor min
diffrn reflns av R equivalents
                                   0.0413
diffrn reflns av unetI/netI
                                   0.0396
diffrn reflns Laue measured fraction full 1.000
diffrn reflns Laue measured fraction max 0.999
diffrn reflns limit h max
                                   15
diffrn reflns limit h min
                                   -15
                                                                    Data stuff!
diffrn reflns limit k max
                                   18
diffrn reflns limit k min
                                   -21
diffrn reflns limit l max
                                   17
diffrn reflns limit l min
                                   -17
diffrn reflns number
                                   25355
diffrn reflns point group measured fraction full 1.000
diffrn reflns point group measured fraction max 0.999
diffrn reflns theta full
                                   25.242
diffrn reflns theta max
                                   30.104
diffrn reflns theta min
                                   2.124
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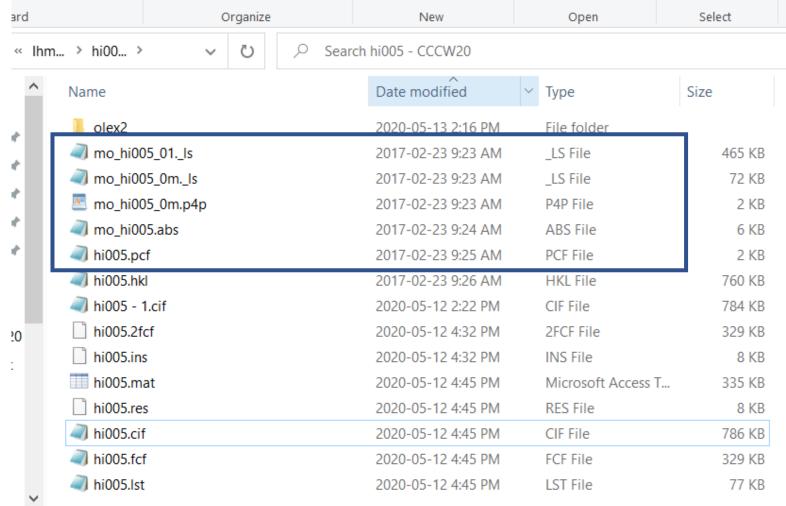


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ni005.cif - Notepad
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<u>File Edit Format View Help</u>
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_computing_data_collection
computing data reduction
_computing_molecular_graphics
                                    'Olex2 1.3 (Dolomanov et al., 2009)'
computing publication material
                                    'Olex2 1.3 (Dolomanov et al., 2009)'
computing structure refinement
                                    'XL (Sheldrick, 2008)'
computing structure solution
                                    'SHELXT 2014/5 (Sheldrick, 2014)'
refine diff density max
                                   0.389
refine diff density min
                                   -0.271
refine diff density rms
                                   0.055
refine ls extinction coef
refine ls extinction method
                                   none
refine ls goodness of fit ref
                                   1.009
refine ls hydrogen treatment
                                   constr
refine ls matrix type
                                   full
refine ls number parameters
                                   282
refine ls number reflns
                                    5889
refine ls number restraints
                                                               Refinement results!
refine ls R factor all
                                   0.0755
refine ls R factor gt
                                   0.0471
refine ls restrained S all
                                   1.009
refine ls shift/su max
                                   0.000
refine ls shift/su mean
                                   0.000
refine ls structure factor coef
                                   Fsqd
refine ls weighting details
 'w=1/[\s^2^(Fo^2^)+(0.0537P)^2^+0.8469P] where P=(Fd^2^+2Fc^2^)/3'
_refine_ls_weighting_scheme
                                   calc
refine ls wR factor gt
                                   0.1066
refine ls wR factor ref
                                   0.1202
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ni005.cif - Notepad
<u>File Edit Format View Help</u>
loop
 atom site label
                                                        Fractional coordinates for
 atom site_type_symbol
                                                        each atom! Your structure!
 atom site fract x
 atom site fract y
 _atom_site_fract_z
 atom site U iso or equiv
 atom site adp type
 atom site occupancy
 atom site site symmetry order
 atom site calc flag
 atom site refinement flags posn
 atom site refinement flags adp
 atom site refinement flags_occupancy
 atom site disorder assembly
 atom site disorder group
C1 C 0.43128(12) 0.30647(9) 0.76383(11) 0.0165(3) Uani 1 1 d . . . .
C2 C 0.42198(12) 0.35707(9) 0.66019(11) 0.0156(3) Uani 1 1 d . . . .
C3 C 0.36006(13) 0.31957(10) 0.56764(12) 0.0190(3) Uani 1 1 d . . . . .
H3 H 0.351510 0.256835 0.563392 0.023 Uiso 1 1 calc R U . . .
C4 C 0.30824(13) 0.37216(11) 0.47773(12) 0.0210(3) Uani 1 1 d . . . . .
H4 H 0.269297 0.344655 0.412902 0.025 Uiso 1 1 calc R U . . .
C5 C 0.31474(13) 0.46216(10) 0.48505(11) 0.0185(3) Uani 1 1 d . . . . .
H5 H 0.274686 0.497927 0.427314 0.022 Uiso 1 1 calc R U . . .
C6 C 0.38133(12) 0.50238(10) 0.57891(11) 0.0154(3) Uani 1 1 d . . . . .
C7 C 0.40503(12) 0.59003(9) 0.61100(11) 0.0149(3) Uani 1 1 d . . . .
C8 C 0.48317(12) 0.58793(9) 0.71290(11) 0.0138(3) Uani 1 1 d . . . .
C9 C 0.50967(12) 0.50118(9) 0.74238(10) 0.0135(3) Uani 1 1 d . . . . .
C10 C 0.46461(13) 0.21036(10) 0.76275(11) 0.0173(3) Uani 1 1 d . . . .
C11 C 0.39778(17) 0.15052(11) 0.81605(16) 0.0317(4) Uani 1 1 d . . . .
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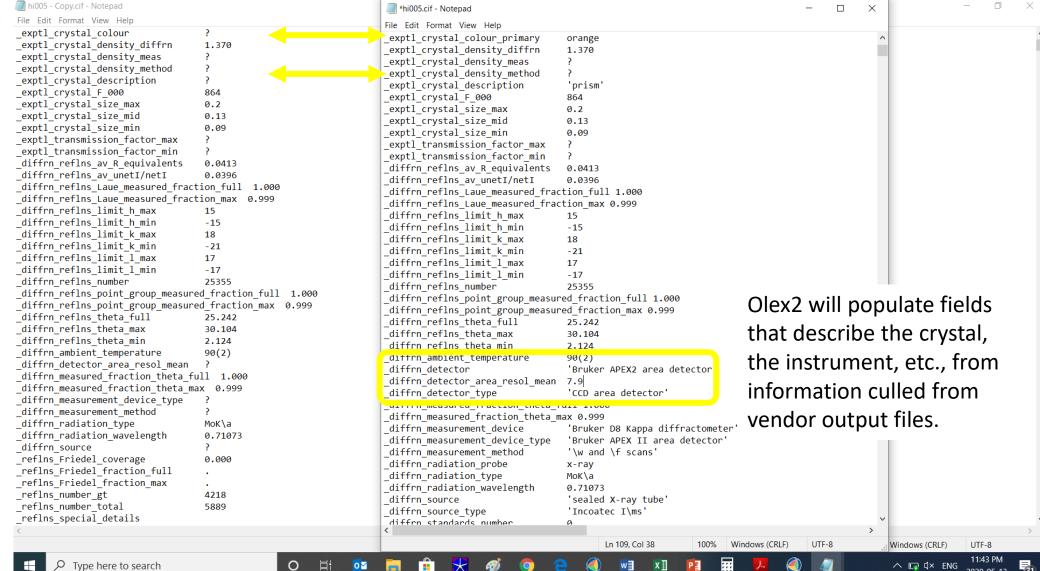


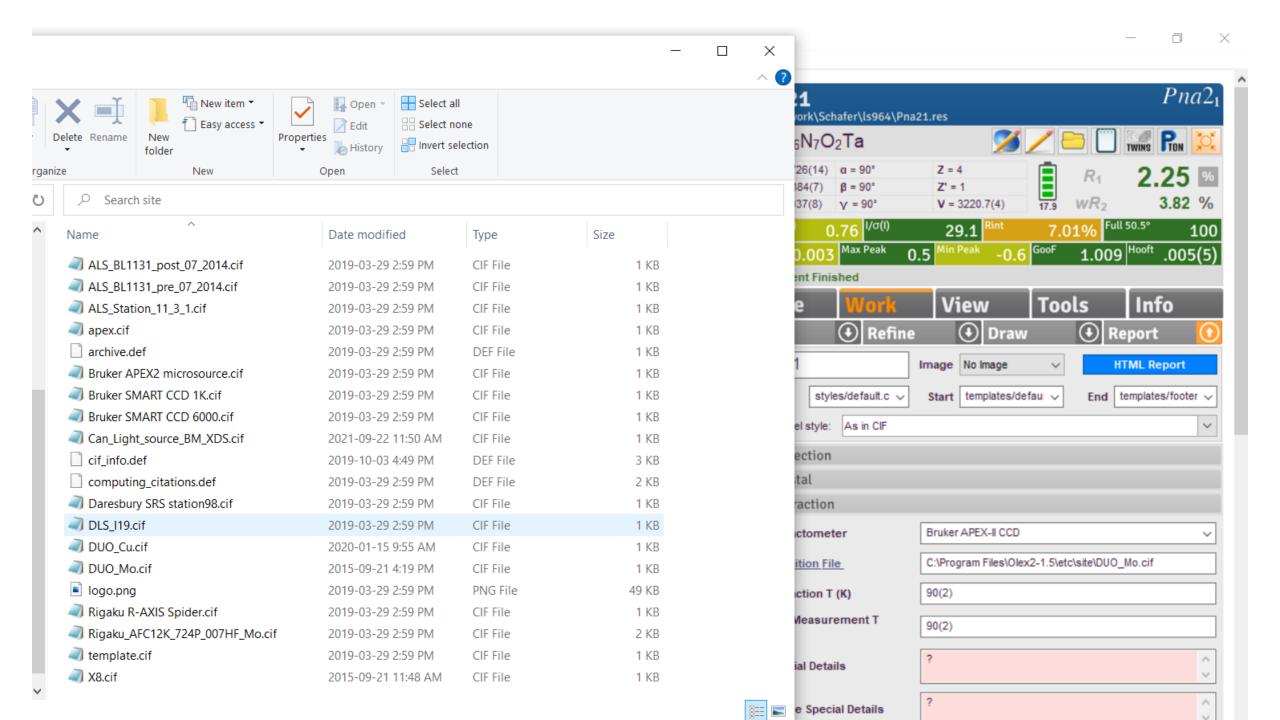


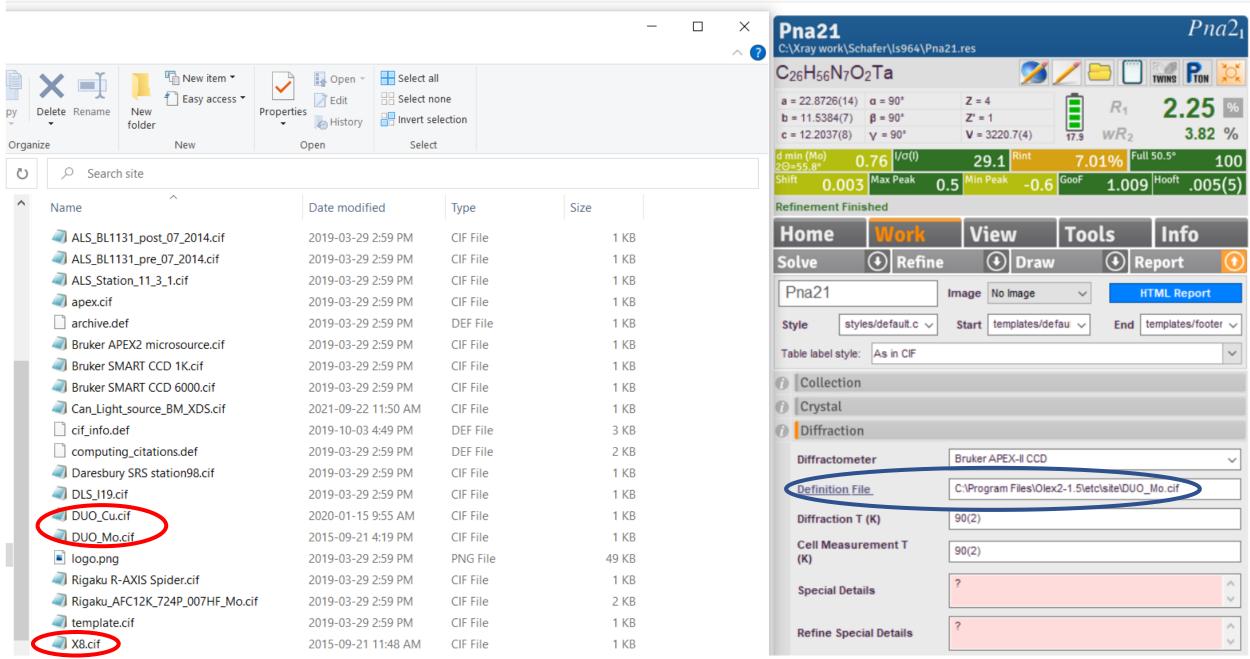
Without files

What information is found in a CIF?

With files









Structure validation / checkCIF checkCIF validation ALERTS: what they mean and how to respond

Anthony L. Spek*

The introduction of the CIF standard also opened the way for the automated checking of the archived data for their internal consistency and completeness, which was needed to handle the exploding number of structure reports. The International Union of Crystallography (IUCr) journal *Acta Crystallographica Section C* pioneered automated structure validation as a tool for authors, referees and readers. This

Acta Cryst. (2020). E76, 1-11



Hi Brian,

How are you doing?

I was working on this structure, there is a disordered Phosphorous fragment, I was hoping if you could take a look and help me with the checkcif alerts.

I am attaching the res, cif and checkcif files.

Thank you,

Thanks, Brian!

The structure looks a lot better now. I am expecting atleast one of the Oxygen atoms on P to be protonated. As the amine-N is protonated, for charge balance we need one more proton. And just to confirm that there is additional water molecule and not OH-, right?



CheckCIF:

Reads the CIF and performs a myriad of tests (>500) to assess the validity of the structure. These include, but are not limited to, tests for **missed symmetry**, **missed twinning**, **solvent accessible voids**, and **mis-assigned atom types**.

Accessible via the checkCIF website (checkcif.iucr.org) as well as via a stand-alone version available via PLATON.



checkCIF/PLATON report

Structure factors have been supplied for datablock(s) hi005

THIS REPORT IS FOR GUIDANCE ONLY. IF USED AS PART OF A REVIEW PROCEDURE FOR PUBLICATION, IT SHOULD NOT REPLACE THE EXPERTISE OF AN EXPERIENCED CRYSTALLOGRAPHIC REFEREE.

No syntax errors found.

CIF dictionary

Interpreting this report



Embedded links!!

Datablock: hi005

Bond precision: C-C = 0.0020 A Wavelength=0.71073

Cell: a=10.7046(8) b=15.0609(11) c=12.5922(10)

alpha=90 beta=99.232(2) gamma=90

Temperature: 90 K

Moiety formula C25 H19 N O5 C25 H19 N O5 Sum formula C25 H19 N O5 C25 H19 N O5

Mr 413.41 413.41 213.41 413.41 225 H19 N 05 225 H19 N 05

h,k,lmax 15,21,17 15,21,17 Nref 5895 5889

Tmin, Tmax 0.985, 0.991

Tmin' 0.981

Correction method= Not given

Data completeness= 0.999 Theta(max)= 30.104



Alert level A

EXPT005 ALERT 1 A _exptl_crystal_description is missing Crystal habit description.

The following tests will not be performed.

CRYSR 01

DIFF003 ALERT 1 A __diffrn_measurement_device_type is missing

Diffractometer make and type. Replaces diffrn measurement type.

PLAT183 ALERT 1 A Missing _cell_measurement_reflns_used Value	Please Do
PLAT184 ALERT 1 A Missing cell measurement theta min Value	Please Do
PLAT185 ALERT 1 A Missing cell measurement theta max Value	Please Do
PLAT699 ALERT 1 A Missing exptl crystal description Value	Please Do

Alert level C

PLAT052 ALERT 1 C Info on Absorption Correction Method Not Given Please Do !

Alert level G

PLAT883 ALERT 1 G No Info/Value for atom sites solution primary .	Please Do !
PLAT912 ALERT 4 G Missing # of FCF Reflections Above STh/L= 0.600	5 Note
PLAT941_ALERT_3_G Average HKL Measurement Multiplicity	4.3 Low
PLAT978 ALERT 2 G Number C-C Bonds with Positive Residual Density.	19 Info

- 6 ALERT level ${\bf A}$ = Most likely a serious problem resolve or explain
- 0 ALERT level B = A potentially serious problem, consider carefully
- 1 ALERT level C = Check. Ensure it is not caused by an omission or oversight
- 4 ALERT level G = General information/check it is not something unexpected
- 8 ALERT type 1 CIF construction/syntax error, inconsistent or missing data
- 1 ALERT type 2 Indicator that the structure model may be wrong or deficient
- 1 ALERT type 3 Indicator that the structure quality may be low
- 1 ALERT type 4 Improvement, methodology, query or suggestion
- 0 ALERT type 5 Informative message, check



Generates "...a report consisting of a list of ALERTS, with associated A, B and C levels of importance, for issues that needed to be addressed. It should be clear the ALERTS are not necessarily errors. They might also point to interesting feature is a crystal structure ... All ALERTS should be checked by the authors: a set of lower-level ALERTS may in combination point to a serious issue that needs to be addressed."

While all ALERTS need to be addressed or at least considered, that does not mean that they have to be eliminated (although that is the best outcome). The **Validation Response Form** (vrf) is used to respond to each ALERT.



More embedded links!!





Validation Response Forms



A service of the

International Union of Crystallography

checkCIF reports on the consistency and integrity of crystal structure determinations reported in CIF format.

Please upload your CIF using the form below.



File name:

Choose File jl329.cif

Select form of checkCIF report

- HTML
- O PDF
- PDF (recommended for CIFs that might take a long time to check)

Select validation type

- Full validation of CIF and structure factors
- Full IUCr publication validation of CIF and structure factors
- Validation of CIF only (no structure factors)

Output Validation Response Form

- Level A alerts only
- Level A and B alerts
- Level A, B and C alerts
- None

Send CIF for checking

Information about this version of checkCIF ...

Useful links

Prepublication check for submissions to IUCr journals

Details of checkCIF/PLATON tests CIF dictionary

Download CIF editor (publCIF) from the IUCr Download CIF editor (enCIFer) from the CCDC











Cut-and-paste the vrf into your CIF, edit in your own response at the '...', save and resubmit to checkCIF.org. Your new report will include your responses.

Validation Response Forms

```
0 ALERT level A = Most likely a serious problem - resolve or explain
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7 ALERT type 3 Indicator that the structure quality may be low
6 ALERT type 4 Improvement, methodology, query or suggestion
0 ALERT type 5 Informative message, check
```

Validation response form

Please find below a validation response form (VRF) that can be filled in and pasted into your CIF.

It is advisable to attempt to resolve as many as possible of the alerts in all categories. Often the minor alerts point to easily fixed oversights, errors and omissions in your CIF or refinement strategy, so attention to these fine details can be worthwhile. In order to resolve some of the more serious problems it may be necessary to carry out additional measurements or structure refinements. However, the purpose of your study may justify the reported deviations and the more serious of these should normally be commented upon in the discussion or experimental section of a paper or in the "special_details" fields of the CIF. checkCIF was carefully designed to identify outliers and unusual parameters, but every test has its limitations and alerts that are not important in a particular case may appear. Conversely, the absence of alerts does not guarantee there are no aspects of the results needing attention. It is up to the individual to critically assess their own results and, if necessary, seek expert advice.



Validation Response Forms

CheckCIF/Structure validation

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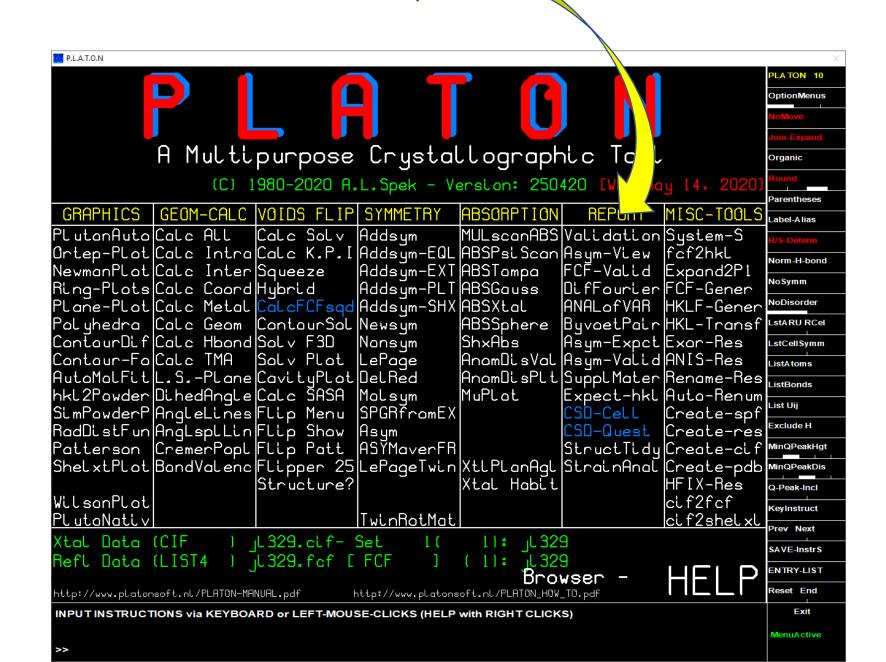


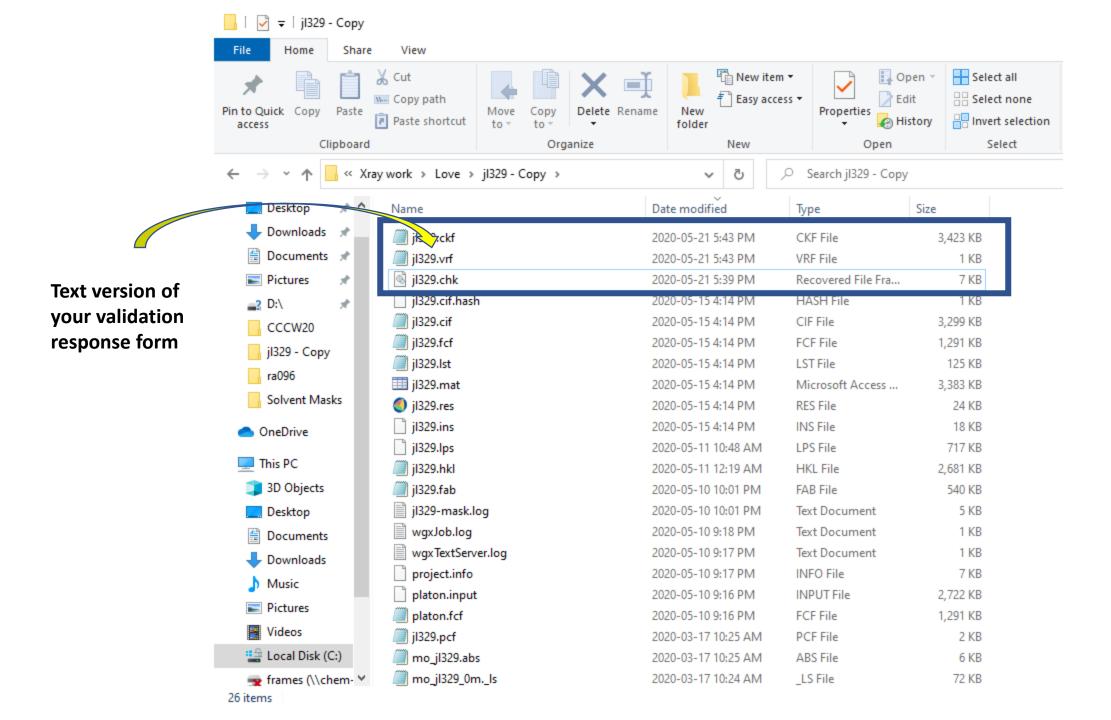
Validation Response Forms

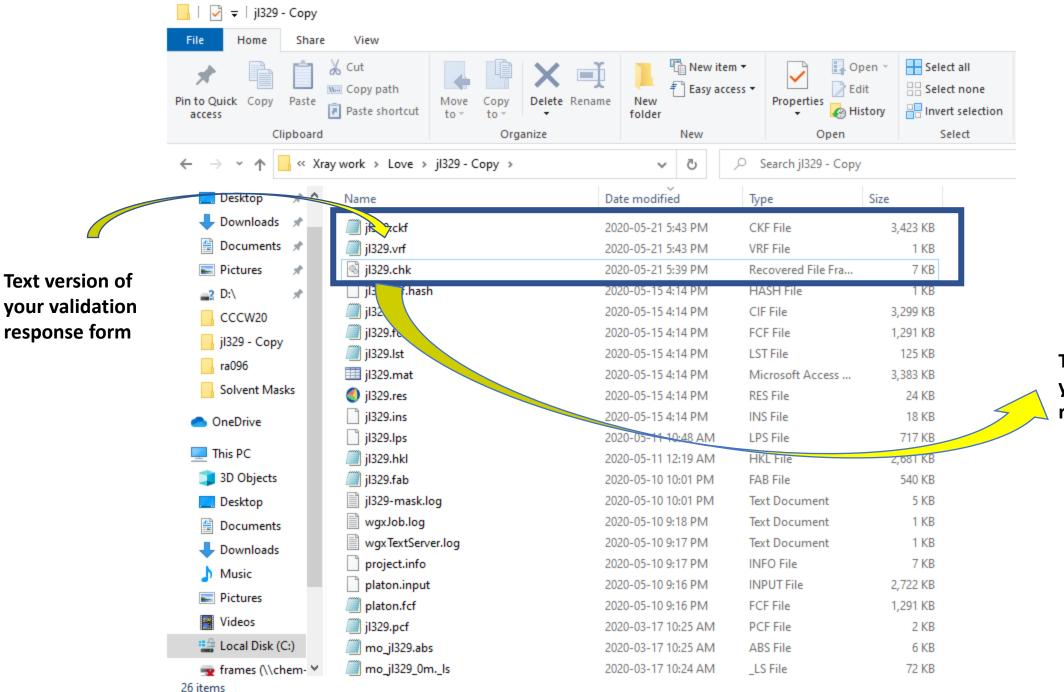
CheckCIF/Structure validation

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Can access checkCIF from PLATON directly





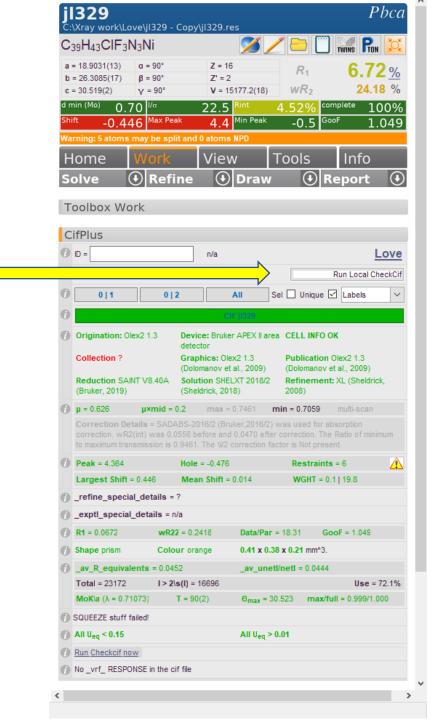


Text version of your checkCIF report



Run checkCIF from PLATON

Olex2 extension module <u>CifPlus</u>





CifPlus

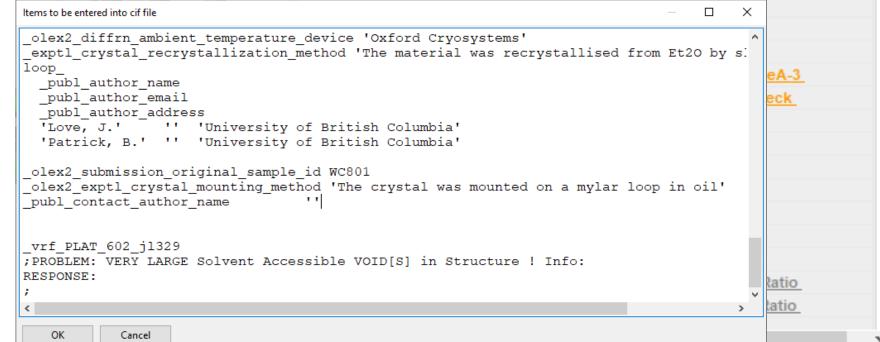
Click to edit directly into vrf!





Validation Response Forms



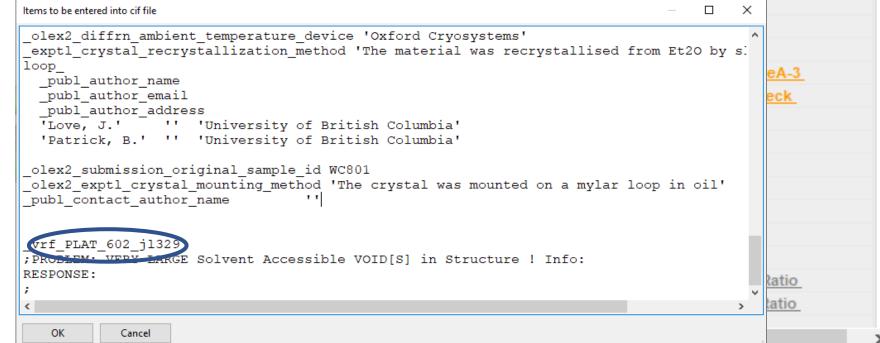




Validation Response Forms

The '_' in PLAT_620 is a syntax error! Horst is working on resolving this.

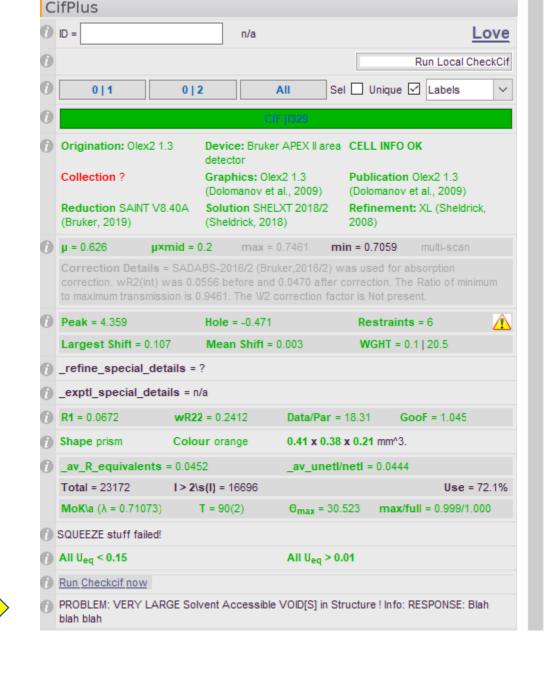




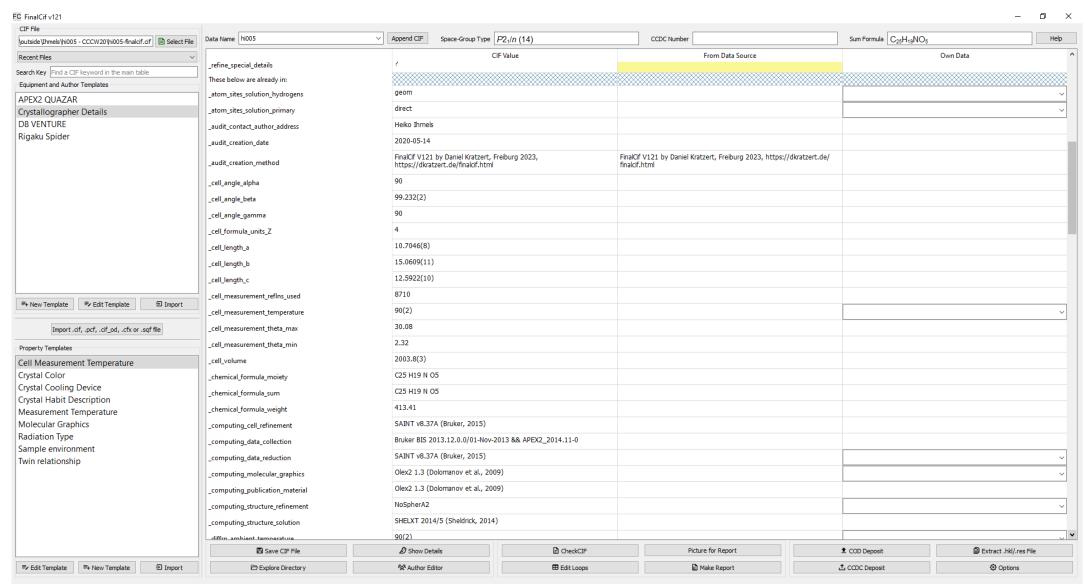


Validation Response Forms

Recorded response remains with CIF throughout.



New CIF editor – FinalCif https://dkratzert.de/finalcif.html



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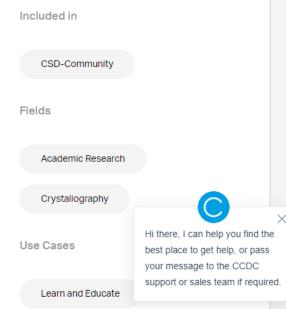
Safely Check and Edit Crystallographic Information Files (CIFs) without Compromising the Syntax

The Crystallographic Information File (CIF) is the internationally agreed standard file format for information exchange in crystallography. The CIF standard is supported, maintained, and developed by the International Union of Crystallography (IUCr) and most major journals require electronic data depositions in CIF format.

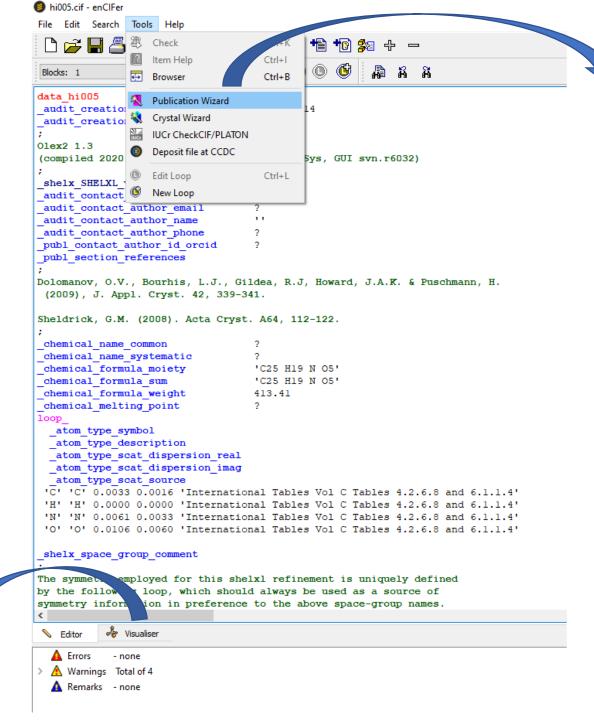
EnCIFer enables users to validate CIFs and ensure their files are format-compliant for deposition with journals and databases or for storage in laboratory archives. EnCIFer should also be used to add information safely to CIFs without corrupting the strict syntax.

EnClFer operates on single or multi-block CIFs allowing you to:

· Identify and correct syntax/format violations







Same visualizer as found in Mercury!

Publication wizard to input pertinent information about authors, institutions, etc.