ProCite v. 3.4 for Windows and Its NetCite and Biblio-Link Components

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When ProCite was sold in 1996 to Research Information Systems (RIS), a division of the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), a collective shudder went through the loyal ProCite customer community. After all, Victor Rosenberg, creator of ProCite, wasted no time putting the ax to ProCite's major competitor, Sci-Mate, when he purchased that product from ISI founder Eugene Garfield several years ago. Thus, it was natural to assume that a similar fate awaited ProCite after Rosenberg sold that product to RIS. However, RIS has apparently decided to maintain both ProCite and its own Reference Manager, giving it two of the most powerful bibliography manager software packages on the market today.

A thorough review of ProCite 3 for Windows appeared in a recent issue of this journal.[1] Therefore, the present review will concentrate on ProCite's Internet capabilities and its data import facility via Biblio-Links.

Using the DOS version of ProCite, we had created a couple of fairly large databases (each with more than 2500 records). One of those contains records for chemistry reference tools. Conversion of that database to the Windows format was straightforward, and all data elements seem to have been transferred into their proper fields, as illustrated by a print of the five consecutive references below:

843. Standards & Specifications database; National Standards Association, Inc.: Bethesda, MD, 1950−.

844. Starting Salaries; American Chemical Society: Washington, DC.

845. Statistical Manual of the Association of Official Analytical Chemists. Washington: Association of Official Analytical Chemists; 1975.

846. Stereochemical Conventions in the Beilstein Handbook of Organic Chemistry. Berlin; New York: Springer-Verlag.

847. STN Express software; Chemical Abstracts Service: P.O. Box 3012, Columbus, OH 43210-9989. Phone: 614-447-3600.

Even on my 486 DX/2 66 PC at home, the database conversion of the 2500 records took just about 3 min. Conversion of a second database of similar size containing Indiana University Chemistry Department faculty publications took only 1.5 min on a Pentium 133 at work. DOS users of ProCite will find the look of the database records to be considerably different from what they are used to seeing. The Windows capability makes the transition very worthwhile, but I personally found odd the placement of the "Search" option under the "View" drop-down window.

One of the benefits of upgrading to the Windows version is the capability to create a database that includes Internet resources, with automatic capture of the URL and information included in the <TITLE> area of an HTML document. The NetCite component of ProCite allows you to pull in the relevant data elements from Netscape. Thus, the record will automatically capture information. The process is somewhat
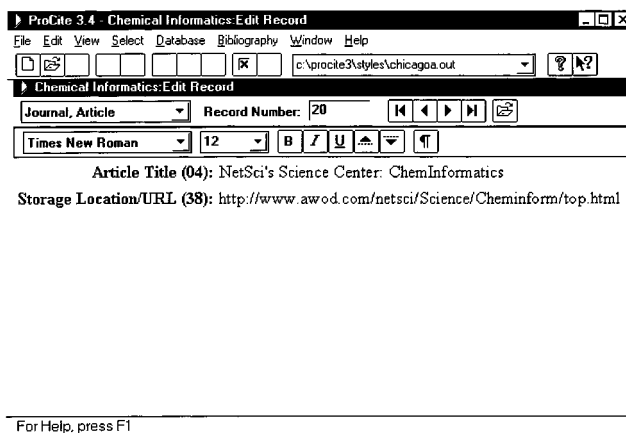

Figure 1. ProCite 3.4 edit record screen for a test database of chemical informatics Web sites.

slow, however. It seems to vary with the size of the page being viewed in Netscape. Therefore, one might find it quicker to simply cut and paste the relevant data. Below are some examples of data imported directly into a test database on chemical informatics.

Article Title: CINF: Division of Chemical Information
Storage Location/URL: http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/∼atbrooks/CINF/cinfhome.html
Article Title: ChemFinder WebServer
Storage Location/URL: http://chemfinder.camsoft.com
Article Title: NetSci's Science Center: Cheminformatics
Storage Location/URL: http://www.awod.com/netsci/Science/Cheminform/top.html

Unfortunately, you cannot use the "Capture URL" command to add a title and URL to an existing record; this creates only a new record. Furthermore, NetCite works only with Netscape at the present time. An attempt to import data from Microsoft Internet Explorer failed.

Once the data have been input to a local database, future connections to an Internet resource is as simple as clicking on the open file icon in the Edit Record screen (Figure 1). This invokes Netscape and loads the page from the remote site (Figure 2). Another method is to select the option "Open URL" from the "Database" menu.

Biblio-Link is the Windows program for importing data from commercial databases. Apparently RIS does not intend to upgrade Biblio-Link II, which was developed when ProCite was owned by Victor Rosenberg's Personal Bibliographic Software (PBS). The version received for review was v. 1.1, which dates from 1995. A Research Information Systems representative at the recent National Online meeting in New York hinted that the Reference Manager Capture program might instead be modified soon to work with both ProCite and Reference Manager. Import software can save tremendous time in building a local database, but it must be kept current with the offerings of the online vendors, so
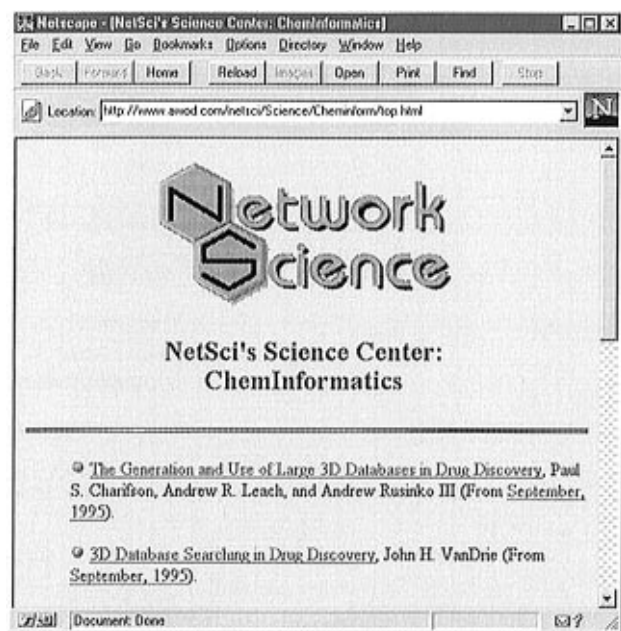
Figure 2. *Network Science* screen as seen on Netscape with connection made via ProCite.

ProCite users should press for either an upgrade or an alternative soon. It is, of course, possible to define your own format for such programs, but the available products vary considerably in their ease of doing so. The following comment was found on CHMINF-L: "The Capture Definition Editor [in Reference Manager] is the least easy to use of the three filter customizers that I have worked with (EndLink, BiblioLink II and Capture). It is very picky about spaces and field tag lengths." [2]

A service provided by RIS is the periodic publication of the booklet *How to Select Bibliographic Management Software*.[3] Far from being just an advertisement for its own products, the free 23-p booklet is full of points to consider before purchasing such software. Included is a comparison table that lists database capacity, entry/editing capabilities, database performance, wordprocessor compatibility, ability to import references from external databases, and bibliographic formatting characteristics. Students and faculty at Indiana University have found previous editions of the booklet to be a useful guide when purchasing bibliography manager software. Version 3.4 of ProCite provides impressive capabilities for creating a personal database, even allowing the capture of data from the Internet. With the network version, it is even possible to share databases among multiple users in an organization. I strongly recommend ProCite to those who need to maintain local records that occur in a variety of information formats.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

(1) Herbert, T. L. Review of Pro-Cite 3 for Windows. *J. Chem. Inf. Comput. Sci.* **1997**, *37*, 407−408.

(2) Running, B. Re: SciFinder and Reference Manager. CHMINF-L, the Chemical Information Sources Discussion List. 24 January 1997. (http://listserv.indiana.edu/archives/chminf-l.html).

(3) *How to Select Bibliographic Management Software; A Guide for Researchers, Librarians and Information Professionals*; Research Information Systems: Carlsbad, CA, 1997.

(4) ProCite v. 3.4 for Windows 95 or NT is priced at $345.95. Biblio-Link II alone is $95.95, but a ProCite and Biblio-Link II package is $395.95. Discounted academic and special student prices are available through university bookstores. Research Information Systems, 2355 Camino Vida Roble, Carlsbad, CA 92009-1572. Phone: 760-438-5526 Fax: 760-438-5573. E-mail: risinfo@risinc.com URL: http:www.risinc.com/.