

## Proposal for a change of EXFOR format

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Several features of EXFOR format were inherited from the 60-s and dictated by the information systems of that times and by FORTRAN as the main programming language of these days. These features are: 80-column lines, fixed size of data columns, maximum 6 values in a data line, right control columns with accession and line numbers (because of punch cards).

Some of this features are not really used by the modern software (like right control column), others cause unnecessary complications in software reading EXFOR files, the rest make text of EXFOR file difficult for eye checking, and many of them looks now really obsolete nowadays. Additional problem is growing possibilities in the dictionary 236 allowing a Reaction-string to be longer than 66 characters. So, probably we will see growing problems for software dealing with EXFOR files (e.g., CHEX and X4toC4 conflicting with continuation of reaction string to the second line), especially because some of the programs are very old and not easy for the updating.

Resolving of this issue can be achieved by implementation of the following proposals:

- 1) Remove right control column (Entry, Subentry, Line-No, Updating-code)
- 2) Unlimited size of line (or setting the limit to 500 characters)
- 3) Discard the limit of 6 values in a data line
- 4) Replace fixed length format for data section by introducing a value delimiter (“;”)

If these changes will be agreed, they can be announced and in advance of implementation (1-3 years), giving the possibility for those users who have programs dealing with EXFOR to adopt their software. For this period of time, retrieval system could produce output in both formats, and a converter from old to new format (and backward) can be offered.