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ProCite and Biblio Link. Research Information Systems,

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When I had to write a review article for the History Micro Review on the combination of Biblio Link and ProCite, I decided to combine two things. To get a real good idea of the power of these programs, you have to work with a "real" amount of data, and I had since long had the idea to make the AHC-bibliography on History and Computing on line accessible with full search facilities. The AHC bibliography was made in IdeaList, a program which I do not know very well, but the run-time version that comes with the AHC-bibliography allows you to export the data in a number of formats. I chose the FAMULUS format, because I thought it would not be too difficult to make a configuration-file in Biblio Link to transfer these data to ProCite. (Biblio Link is a program [sold by PBS os Ann Arbor, which makes ProCite] which allows you to import data in all sorts of formats to ProCite: it has a number of pre-defined configuration files for a number of bibliographic services, but not for the FAMULUS format.) <p> After a long period of wrestling with Biblio Link, which proved to be a good program with a very poorly written manual, I finally succeeded in transferring the data to ProCite (about 4500 records). ProCite is a good bibliographic program with lots of facilities. One of these facilities is to make a "punctuation" file to export your bibliographic data in any required form. Different magazines ask for different punctuation, underlining, and italicization. I decided to abuse this facility to make a HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language) version of the bibliography, to make it available on the network via World Wide Web. <p> This was really very simple if you keep in mind what the end result had to be: we have a HP-unix system on which we run the Web-stuf. In unix (and there is a pc-version also) there is a utility "grep" which searches for patterns in a file and gives as a result all the lines of the file in which the pattern was found. It also allows you to look for one pattern or another (logical "OR" search) and the unix-piping facility makes it very simple to look for two patterns (logical "AND"). We decided that three search keys would be the maximum we would allow: this still caused us lots of trouble to get the grep-script correct and it is still not flawless, but we will not tell you where the mistakes are: have a look at it yourself and see if you can figure it out. So to have as a result of a query all the records one was looking for, every record should be on one line. To give an idea of the number of "hits" found, we did the grep routine twice: once with the -c switch, which only counts the number of found occurrences of the search-pattern, and once without this switch to get the records as results. <p> I decided that the nicest way to present the data would be the HTML-ordered list (NB: HTML pointed brackets have been replaced with square brackets in this text for programming purposes), which is started with [ol]; then come the items on the list which all start with [li], and the list is ended with [/li]. This provided the outer conditions for the grep script: in there, we would

echo the beginning ([ol]) and the ending of the list ([/ol]), and ProCite would have to produce the data in such a form that all records would start with [li]. That was not such a problem: all the entries start with the Author, so in the punctuation file you let the Author field start with the [li]. However, there is still a problem: some reports in the bibliography have no authors mentioned. There are two solutions to this problem: tell ProCite to include all fields for which there are no data, or just force ProCite to use the punctuation for the Author-field in all circumstances. This is what we did: there is a sign for the punctuation file (>) which says that all following punctuation should be used (no matter if the field is empty!), so starting the Author field with "[li]" would do the trick. <p> The rest is actually very simple. If you want a field to be italicized, then put [i] before and [/i] after; for bold use [b] and [/b]. You can use all the other punctuation and groupings you want if you just make sure that every start-tag is followed by an end-tag. I did this for all the formats that I needed for the AHC-bibliography: as soon as I have finished the punctuation for the other workforms, I will make this HTML-punctuation file for ProCite available for ftp from GHETA. <p> There is one other thing which you will have to keep in mind: ASCII is not good enough for HTML, so all the diacritics will turn out wrong in HTML. There are two solutions: just make all the diacritics to entities, so ASCII 130 becomes "é"; or change from ASCII to ISO Latin 1. Since there is a nice utility to do that in the public domain, I chose the last option. (The utility is called "pep" and you will need the conversion-table "ibm2iso"). This will take you just a few seconds and ascii is transformed to ISO Latin 1. (The script is: "pep -gibm2iso <source<cite>file>destiny</cite>file".) <p> Well that is about it. If you still have questions or need some advice, just contact me. If you want to have a look at how it all works, the url for the AHC-pages is: http://www.let.rug.nl/ahc <p>

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at https://www.h-net.org/~mmedia

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