Output data formats

Output format options, with **File>Save Data As**, are generally the reverse of input choices. The default is a PRIMER 7 (binary) file but data sheets (or resemblance matrices) can also be saved in earlier PRIMER 5 and 6 binary formats, and to Excel in current *.xlsx format or the older *.xls (with its restriction to < 255 columns). Text files can also be output in either rectangular or 3-column format, the separators then always being Tabs. The very early DOS PRIMER 4 text format can also be output (or input) but much of the associated information (e.g. species names, factors) is lost, and this format is likely only to be of interest at this stage in restoration of old archives. An example of the PRIMER 4 format can be seen in the file Tasmania copepods v4.pm1 below, which contains the same counts as Tasmania copepods.pri though cannot hold species names or factors in the same file. (Note that line 2 defines the number of samples, followed by the sample labels and then species counts separated by any combination of single or multiple spaces or tabs).

PRIMER 5 files did not have a defined data type (so are all read in by PRIMER 7 as Data type• Unknown/other). They also had no History box (defining standardisations, transformations etc. which may have been applied to obtain the current sheet). It follows that outputting PRIMER 7 files in PRIMER 5 format will lose the information on Data type and History. As noted at the start of the section, in contrast, differences between PRIMER 6 and 7 data formats are rather minimal (though workspace files are very different). However, PRIMER 7 is not backwards-compatible in general, so that PRIMER 6 cannot open files created in PRIMER 7 unless they have been explicitly saved to the earlier format. Naturally, PRIMER 7 is forwards-compatible and will automatically open any earlier data or v6 workspace files.

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