

ChemSpider and the RSC: where next?

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Last Monday the [CHMINF-L](#) brought the news to me that [ChemSpider](#) was acquired by the [RSC](#) (not the [press release](#)). [Twitter](#) ([my Twitter post](#)) and [FriendFeed](#) (see [this series](#)).

Reading blogs used to be to get the news, but this has changed. Still, blogging gives more freedom, more space. Blogs did soon follow. [Chris](#) was the first to [blog about it](#):

This is great news and I'm confident that it will be a move to even more openness in chemistry and cheminformatics. It will also allow the RSC to use Tony fantastic tools for even more semantic markup of articles. I'm looking forward to talking to everyone about the implications. For now, congratulations, Tony, and congratulations, RSC, for this great deal.

I think [Tony](#) himself [was next](#):

This is good for us for a number of reasons. Specifically we will no longer have to deal with our very significant resource limitations but more than that it lends credence and validation to the work that we have been doing over the past 2 years. It seems so long ago now but ChemSpider was first unveiled to the world at the ACS Spring meeting 2007. What began then only as a hobby project is now being recognized by the community as one of the primary resources for internet chemistry.

His network and insight in required data curation is what I think made ChemSpider a success.

Later views followed from [Peter](#), [Rich](#) and [Neil](#). I have only congratulations, which I hereby join, and expect that only future will tell us if our cheers are correct.

Where next?

As Tony indicated, the deal will practically mean better support for ChemSpider in terms of computing power, making it easier for them to make upgrades, hence better uptime, etc. It may, indeed, also mean more data, provided from RSC archives, as [suggested by Neil](#). More practically, I can imagine seeing Project Prospect contributing *InChI-DOI* links to ChemSpider very soon.

And this would be one of the two recommendations I have to ChemSpider at this moment:

1. now linked to a publisher, and with both text mining efforts and expertise, focus on these InChI-DOI links, and, in particular, focus on those InChI-DOI links which involve papers that describe measured properties of the molecules;
2. with the increased support, finish the Open Data work done, by making it easy for people to download the ChemSpider-OpenData subset. This, I believe, is crucial for a wider adoption in the OpenData community, as OpenData which is practically made impossible to easily download is not Open enough. Previous priorities may have been focused on setting up a viable commercial alternative, but with the RSC backing, this can no longer be a reason to not do this.

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Once more, congratulations to the ChemSpider-team and the involved RSC people, and very much looking forward to seeing how this will change chemistry for the better!