

# Network 10.2.0.0. User Guide

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## Preface

In this version of the user guide, I have added some suggestions on next generation sequencing (NGS) data analysis, on the beta-version of our VCF2RDFconverter, and on SARS-CoV-2 data analysis.

Like nearly everyone else in most parts of the world, our work and lives have been severely affected by the unprecedented events and countermeasures. We thank everyone who continues to support our community-funded Network software by purchasing Network Publisher and DNA Alignment. Specifically, I would like to suggest that those who have sufficient funding could upgrade their Network Publisher lab license to a Network Publisher university license. We would welcome more funding to keep our equipment and commercial software developer licenses up to date and cover the ever increasing overhead costs.

There are now two versions, Network 10 for current Windows systems, and Network 4 for older Windows systems. Network 4 hits memory limits faster and comes with minor display problems on some modern computers, but will also run on current Windows if you ignore the warning messages. This user guide still contains screen snapshots from an old Network version which have not changed, except in their Windows appearance, in the new versions.

We generally try to answer your emails, but sometimes we get bounce-backs. Before you think that we are ignoring you, please bear in mind that your email providers may be blocking our email answer to you.

Looking back, Network has come a long way since we released the first DOS version in January 2000. The network reduction strategies described in this user guide are even more relevant today than in 2000, when data sizes were generally smaller and “hairballs” were not yet a general problem. If you run into a problem, we hope that this updated user guide will continue to help you to get a meaningful network out of your data.

Looking forward, I wish everyone a rapid return to normal conditions.

Michael Forster, 30 December 2020

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## 1. Overview

### 1.1 Scope of application

Network is used to reconstruct phylogenetic networks and trees, infer ancestral types and potential types, evolutionary branchings and variants, and to estimate datings.

The algorithms are designed for non-recombining bio-molecules. Successful applications include mtDNA, Y-STR, amino acid, RNA, virus DNA, bacterium DNA, some effectively non-recombining autosomal DNA, and non-biomolecule data such as linguistic data. By contrast, recombining bio-molecules will deliver high-dimensional networks which will be difficult to interpret. Work flow including data preparation and interpretation of results is described in detail in the next chapters.

### 1.2 Network building options

The Network software was developed to reconstruct *all possible shortest least complex* phylogenetic trees (all *maximum parsimony* or *MP* trees) from a given data set. Two different network-building options are included which can be used independently of each other.

The *reduced median* or *RM* network algorithm RM requires *binary* data (example: at nucleotide position 16092 each taxon must have either T or C). To allow interpretation of complex data, a reduction parameter is available. If the reduction threshold  $r$  is set to a sufficiently high number, RM will yield a full median network containing all MP trees.

The *median-joining* or *MJ* network algorithm allows *multi-state* data (example: at nucleotide position 16092 there can be A, C, G, T, and ambiguities such as N). For larger data sizes, the parameter epsilon can be set low to calculate sparse networks quickly, or incrementally increased to calculate higher-resolution networks at the cost of longer run times and increased network complexity. If epsilon is set to a sufficiently high number, MJ will yield a full median network (software and memory limits permitting). Optionally, MJ allows external rooting of the network using an outgroup.

We recommend MJ for general use as first choice. If verification of the MJ results is an issue, we recommend that RM is then also run on suitably prepared data (nucleotide FASTA data are easily prepared with the DNA Alignment software).

### 1.3 Further complexity reduction options

The star contraction option can simplify complex data. The MP option deletes non-MP links from the network, i.e. links which are not used by the shortest trees in the network. For STR data or RFLP data, or binary data, a combined RM-MJ calculation may be performed to simplify the network.

### 1.4 Complementary options

Network includes a data editor and a graphics program. FASTA files can be imported and prepared for Network using Fluxus' DNA Alignment software. Higher-quality graphics of Network's results files can be prepared using Fluxus' Network Publisher software.

## 2. Work Flow

### 2.1 Overview of the general work flow and the RM-MJ work flow

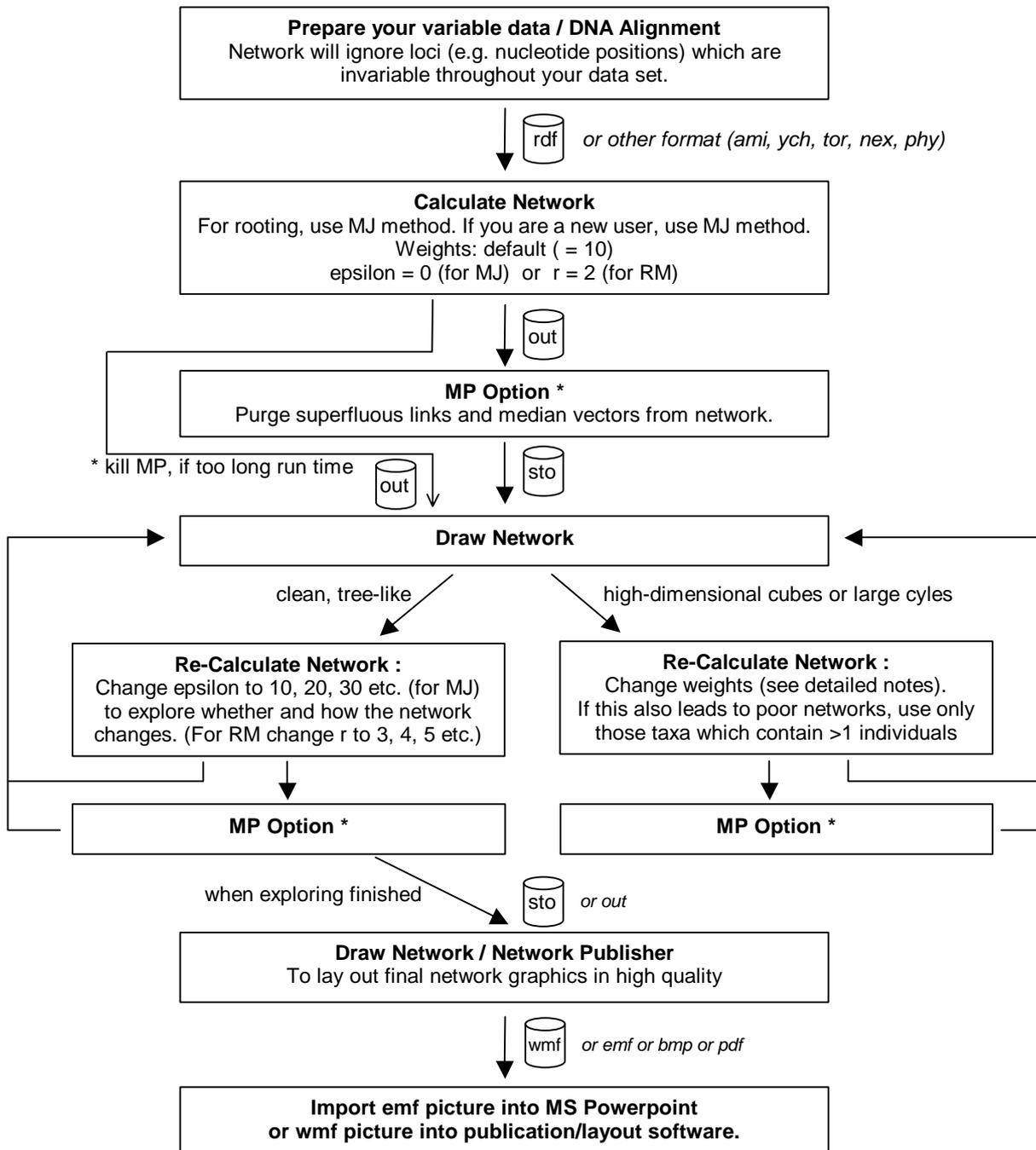
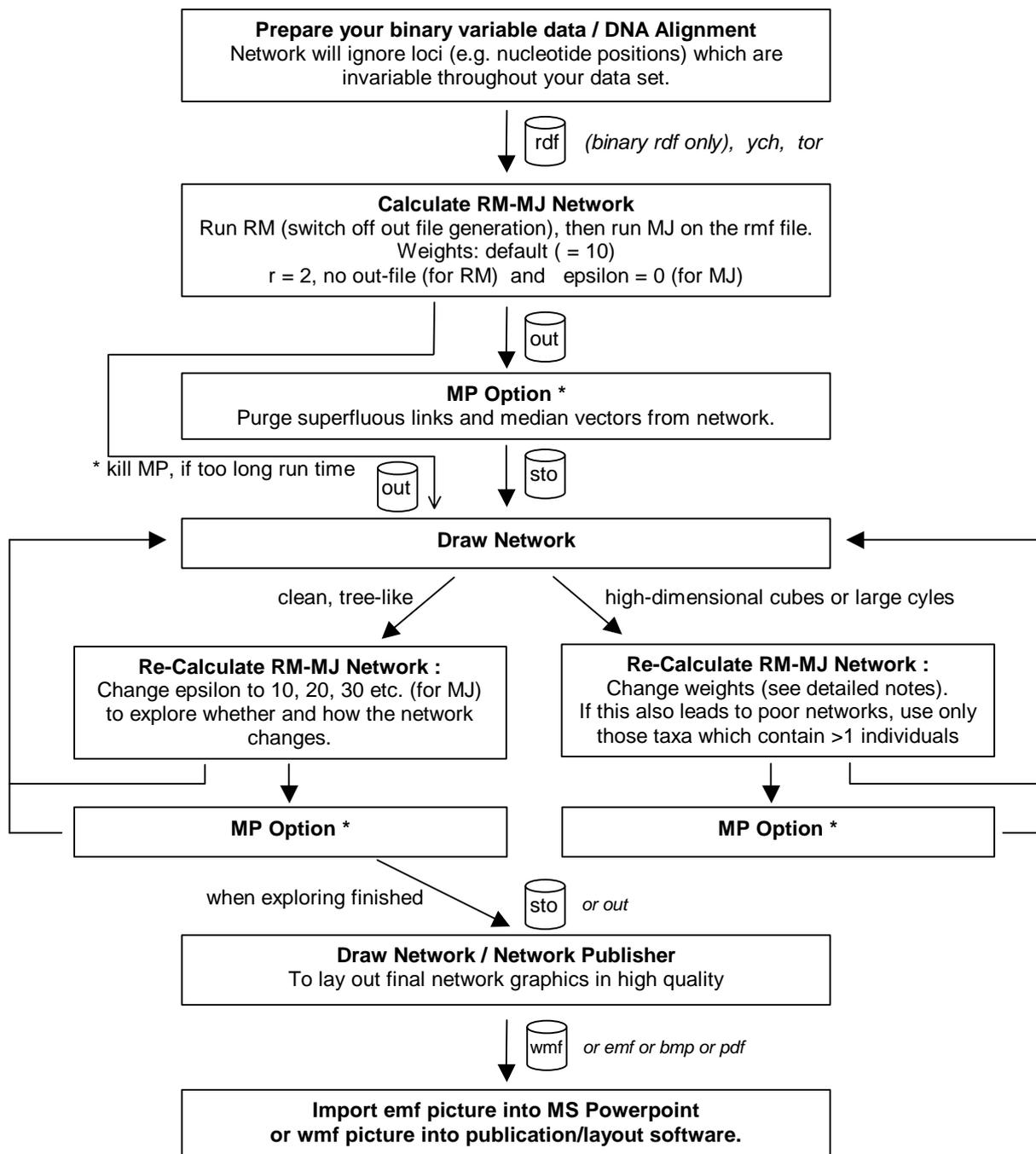


Fig. 1a: General overview of the work flow



**Fig. 1b: Specific work flow for the RM-MJ network calculation**

### 2.1.1 Variable data

Network will use only the *variable* data from your data file or manually entered data set. Network will ignore invariable data if your file or your manually entered data contains such data. What do we mean by variable data?

*Definition of variable data:*

By variable data we mean a genetic nucleotide position, or a genetic locus, or a trait, or a linguistic feature, or more generally a "character", which allows you to separate your individuals into at least two groups.

*Example 1, variable data:*

You have an mtDNA data set, and your sequencing range included nucleotide position 16092 for all individuals. In your data, some individuals are C, others are T at np 16092. This means that nucleotide position 16092 holds variable data (for your set of data).

	16091	16092	16093	16094	16095
Alice	T	C	G	A	G
Brenda	T	T	C	A	C
Chris	G	T	G	T	G
Doug	T	C	G	T	C

*Example 2, some in-variable data:*

All individuals in your data set have C at np 16092. So nucleotide position 16092 is useless for differentiating between the individuals in your data set. This means that *np 16092* holds in-variable data for your set of data. You can leave away np 16092. You only need to enter nps 16091, 16093-16095.

	16091	<b>16092</b>	16093	16094	16095
Alice	T	<b>C</b>	G	A	G
Bruce	T	<b>C</b>	C	A	C
Clarissa	G	<b>C</b>	G	T	G
Doug	T	<b>C</b>	G	T	C

### 2.1.2 Preparation of variable data sets for Network

You can enter small data sets using Network's data editor (Start Network / Data Entry menu / Manual / then select the data type you wish to enter).

*Example 3: Network's data editor*

Consider the data set in Example 2. You can enter these data in 4 different ways:

1. with the option "DNA nucleotide data", and nps 16091-16095
2. with the option "DNA nucleotide data", and nps 16091, 16093-16095
3. with the option "Binary data", and nps 16091-16095
4. with the option "Binary data", and nps 16091, 16093-16095

For cases 1. and 3., the network-building algorithm will ignore np16092.

*Case 2. Choose the option "DNA nucleotide data" / Continue.*

Sequences: 4 (i.e. Alice, Bruce, Clarissa, Doug)

Number of characters: 4 (i.e. 16091, 16093, 16094, 16095)

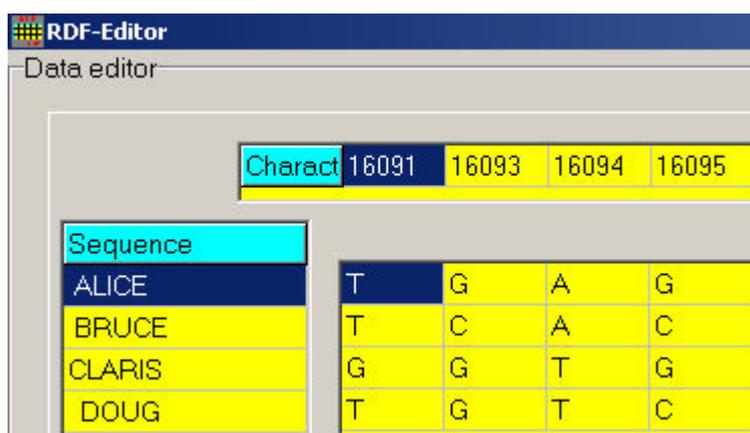
Create.

Double-click into the "Charact" and "Sequence" cells to enter the np-names and sequence names.

Note that the Network data editor limits entry of the Character names to 8 (older Network versions: 6) and Sequence names to a length of 15 (old: 6).

For STR data: the Locus name length limit is 6 (old: 5).

Click into the table cells to enter the nucleotides: You can use the keyboard keys for editing and for moving up/down/left/right. Alternatively, you can right-click a table cell and use the context menu to edit the nucleotide.



**Fig. 2: Network's Data Editor with dna nucleotide data**

*Case 4: Choose the option "Binary data" / Continue.*

Continue as for case 2 on the previous page, but enter the *nucleotide states compared to the first sequence*. For example, Doug does not have G at 16095, so enter 0 into his 16095 cell.

The screenshot shows the 'RDF-Editor' window with a 'Data editor' tab. A table is displayed with the following data:

Sequence	16091	16093	16094	16095
ALICE	1	1	1	1
BRUCE	1	0	1	0
CLARIS	0	1	0	1
DOUG	1	1	0	0

**Fig. 3: Network's Data Editor with binary data**

The maximal number of characters allowed in the data editor is 1000.

For long sequences with sequencing ranges  $> 1000$  it becomes necessary to leave away non-variable characters (here: np 16092). But note that for large data sets manual data entry and manual alignment is error-prone.

For larger data sets in FASTA files, we request you to use Fluxus' DNA Alignment software.

#### *Example 4: DNA Alignment software*

DNA and amino acid FASTA files can be imported and prepared for Network using Fluxus' DNA Alignment software. This software has a limit of 99999 on the number of characters and no limit on the number of sequences. The DNA Alignment software can be run with or without the auto-alignment option.

Alignment algorithms vary in quality, and poor auto-alignment results will lead to poor network results.



### 2.1.3 Weights

#### *Introduction: Genetic Distances and Weights*

A fundamental concept within network-building algorithms is the genetic "distance" between two sequences in a data set. This is calculated by the number of different characters between these sequences. To explain the genetic distance, let us look at two sequences:

	16091	16092	16093	16094	16095
Alice	T	C	G	A	G
Bruce	T	C	C	A	C

Bruce differs from Alice in two characters, 16093 and 16095. The genetic distance is 2.

To take into account that some characters can be more important than others, Network applies a weight to each character. Consider the example with Network's default weight of 10:

	16091	16092	16093	16094	16095
Alice	T	C	G	A	G
Bruce	T	C	C	A	C
Weight	10	10	10	10	10

Bruce differs from Alice in two characters, 16093 and 16095. The weighted distance is 20.

Let us assume that there are 100 more sequences in the data set and that character 16095 is hypervariable within the data set. A frequently changing character is less valuable for network construction than infrequently changing characters. Therefore we downweight 16095:

	16091	16092	16093	16094	<b>16095</b>
Alice	T	C	G	A	<b>G</b>
Bruce	T	C	C	A	<b>C</b>
Weight	10	10	10	10	<b>5</b>

Bruce differs from Alice in two characters, 16093 and 16095. The weighted distance is 15.

For first network-building calculations with a new data set, we suggest that you leave the default weights. If your network turns out to be poor (containing high-dimensional cubes or large cycles), you can change the weights for the next runs as explained on the following pages.

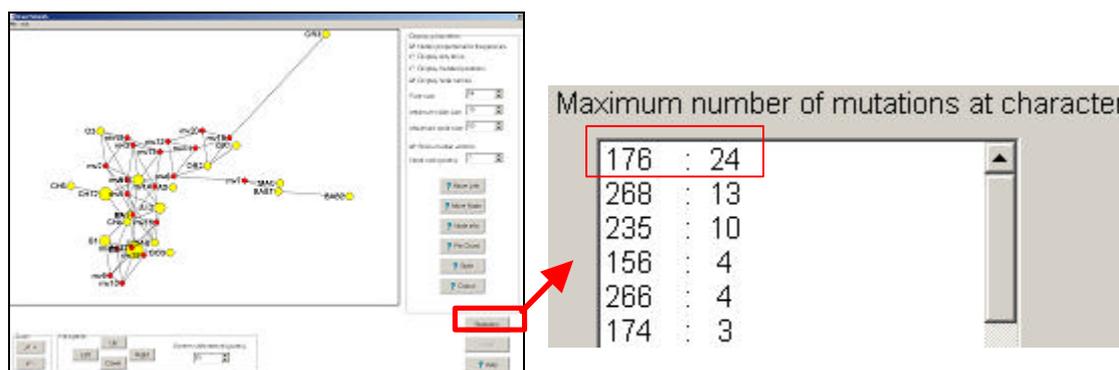
#### *Types of weight in Network:*

In Network, you can change two types of weights:

1. weights of characters. This value may range between 0 and 99. A value of 0 instructs Network to ignore the character. 10 is the default value.
2. in MJ only: weights of single nucleotide mutation types (transversions, transitions). This weight may range from 1:50 to 50:1. The default is 1:1.

*Guidelines for changing weights, if the calculation with defaults is unsatisfactory:*

1. Increase the weight for events that might be much less likely to happen, because they are significant when they do happen.
2. Decrease the weight for events that might be much more likely to happen.
3. For characters in which deletions or insertions have occurred, we suggest a double weight (weight value 20)
4. For human mtDNA data, we suggest transversions to be weighted three times as high as transitions. (Transversions occur about 20x less often than transitions in human mtDNA, see Fig. 8)
5. For hypervariable sites/characters (including length/repeat mutations in mixed data), we suggest downweighting the character to 5 or even 0. To identify a hypervariable or fast-mutating character within your network, draw the network and press the statistics button (see fig. 5, character 176)

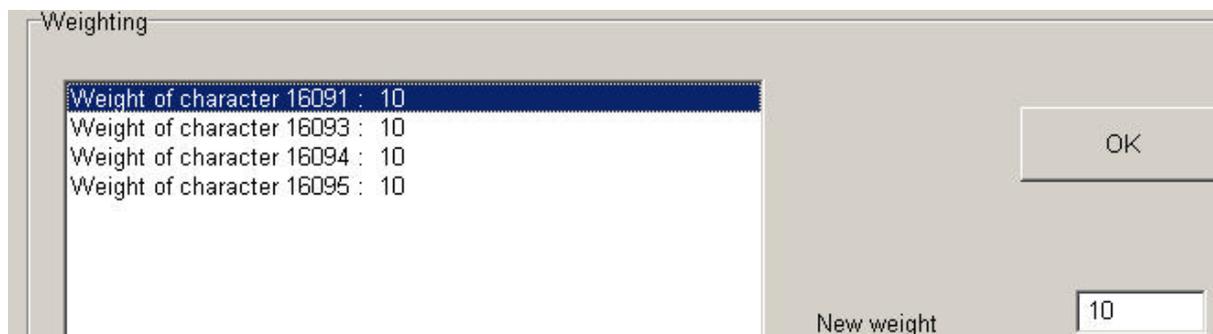


**Fig. 5: Statistics-button to identify fast-mutating character for downweighting**

Before you change weights, decide whether you want to save the changed weights or not.

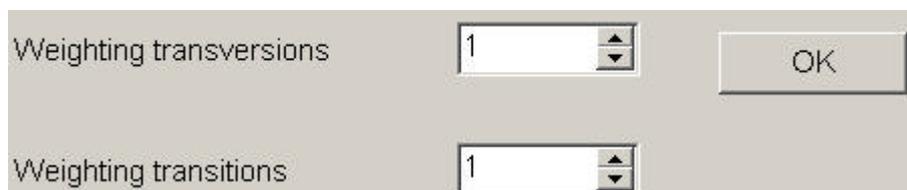
Note: For all data, including STR data and "mixed" data, you can save changed weights (from Network 4.5.0.0 upwards).

To change weights without saving, go into the Network Calculations main menu, into either the Reduced Median (RM) option or the Median Joining (MJ) option. Then open the rdf file, open the Parameters menu, Change weights (see Fig.6). Click onto the line for which you want to edit the weight, and a "New Weight" entry field will appear with the current weight. Edit this weight and click OK.

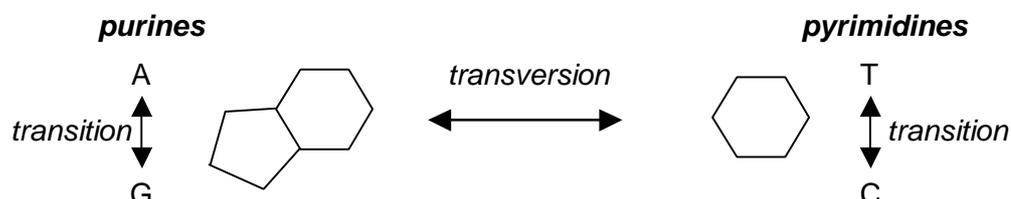


**Fig. 6: Editing character weights in Network's Calculation / Parameters**

In the Median Joining option, for non-binary nucleotide data, you can additionally apply a transversions/transitions weight globally to all characters. For example for mtDNA you can enter 3 for "Weighting transversions" and 1 for "Weighting transitions". This weighting will be interpreted additionally to character weights, e.g. a character with the character weight 20 and containing transversions will be weighted  $20 * 3 = 60$ .



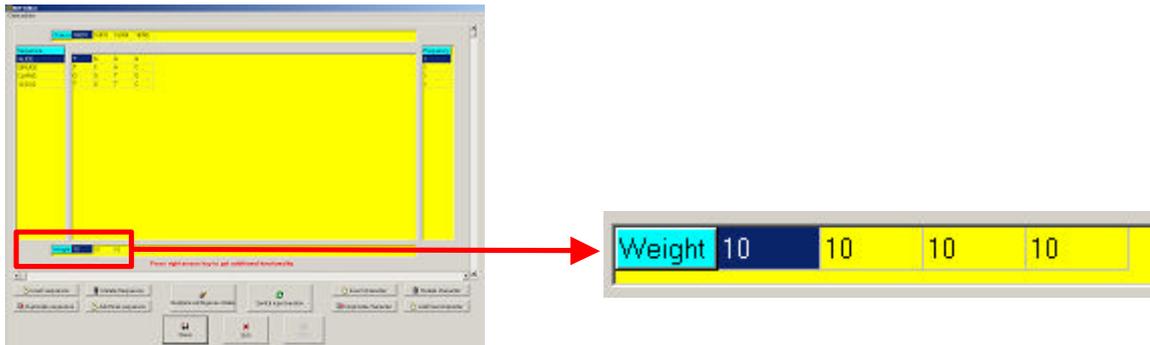
**Fig. 7: Editing transversion weights in Network's (MJ) Calculation / Parameters**



**Fig. 8: Transitions are chemically more likely to occur than transversions in human mtDNA**

To edit weights and save the changes, to into the Data Entry main menu, Import rdf file, specify the file type, and click Continue. This will load the file and open Network's Data editor. To edit a weight, click into the cell (see Fig. 8), type a value, and confirm by hitting the <Enter> key or clicking into a different cell. Finally, click the Save button to update the rdf file, and Exit.

Note: For STR data, you can now also edit weights in the Network STR editor and save the weights in the new ych format. (From Network 4.5.0.0 upwards.)



**Fig. 9: Editing character weights in Network's Data Editor**

### 2.1.4 Frequency

#### *Definition of "Frequency" in Network's data editor*

The "frequency" value allows you to specify the number of times that a sequence or STR profile occurs in your data set.

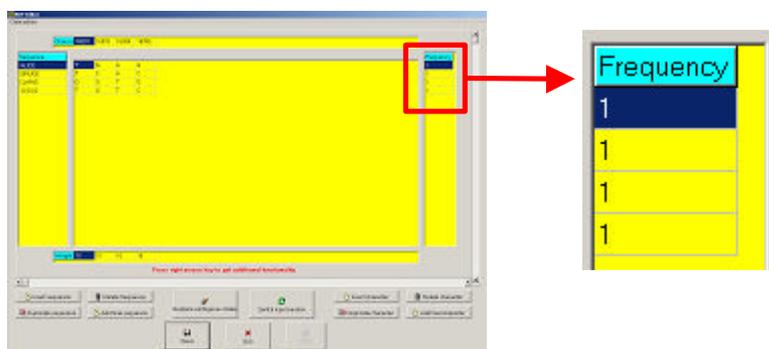
#### *Fasta files: Frequency value in files generated by the DNA Alignment software*

The frequency value is 1 in the rdf-files generated by the DNA Alignment software.

This means that one sequence entry corresponds uniquely to one taxon (i.e. to one individual) in the rdf-files generated by DNA Alignment, if the sequence names are unique within the FASTA file. DNA Alignment can create duplicate taxa with identical names when truncating long names (longer than the name length 6 permitted by Network), but Network will issue a warning message when such a file is imported.

#### *Manual data entry: Frequency value*

If the same sequence (or STR profile) occurs several times in your data set, you do not need to enter this several times in Network's Data Editor. Instead, you can click into the cell in the Frequency column (see Fig. 10) and type a value (i.e. the number of times that the sequence or profile occurs in your data set), and press the <Enter> key or click into a different cell. Duplicated sequences (and profiles) with different names are allowed.



**Fig. 10: Editing sequence frequencies in Network's Data Editor**

Note that duplicate taxa (i.e. identical sequences with identical sequence names) are allowed by the DNA Alignment software when importing FASTA and saving as rdf. Such rdf files can be opened by the Network Data Editor, but cannot be processed by the Network Calculation. There will be a warning message and you can correct the problem in the Network Data Editor.

### 2.1.5 Epsilon (in MJ), Connection Cost / Greedy FHP (in MJ) / MJ square option

The Median Joining algorithm will build a sparse network if the parameter epsilon is set to zero (default) or other "low numbers". This can cut run-time for large data sets significantly, allowing a first approximate impression of the network within a short run time. For special cases, an epsilon value of zero or other "low numbers" may be sufficient to create a complete network.

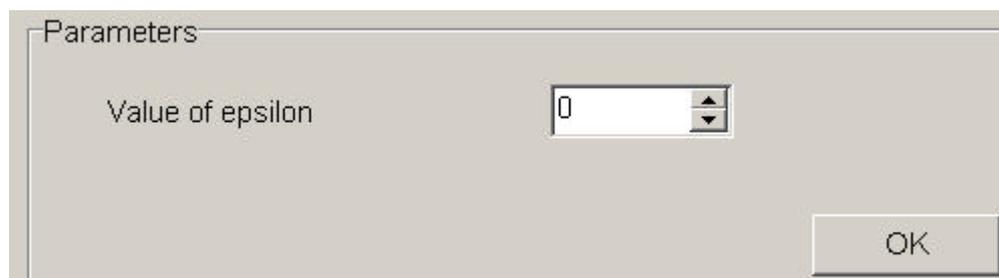
The full median network will be calculated when the parameter epsilon is sufficiently high, but for large data sets this calculation may take a very long time or hit the software's internal limits. Furthermore, a full median network may look very complex and may be difficult to interpret, for data sizes larger than non-trivial data sets. For this reason, we suggest to experiment with epsilon-settings of 0, 10, 20, etc., to see how the network develops.

Note that epsilon is a weighted genetic distance measure. Therefore, epsilon increments should be consistent with the weight settings. For example, epsilon settings of 1,2,3,..9 are not useful, because they will give identical networks if the character weights are 10 or greater. Conversely, epsilon settings of 10, 20, 30, etc can be useful if the character weights are 10 or greater.

Our experience suggests that epsilon-values of 0 or 10 normally result in a good network. For small and clear networks, we suggest that more MP links can be found by activating the "MJ square option".

#### *Setting the parameter epsilon:*

The parameter epsilon is set in Median Joining, Parameters menu / Change epsilon (see Fig. 11), after the data file has been opened (File menu / Open). To change the value of epsilon, type a number, or click the <up> or <down> button, and click OK. Epsilon values may range from 0 to 231. All parameter settings are logged in the first lines of the network calculation \*.out file. (The Median Joining option is accessible from the Calculate Network main menu / Network Calculations / Median Joining.)

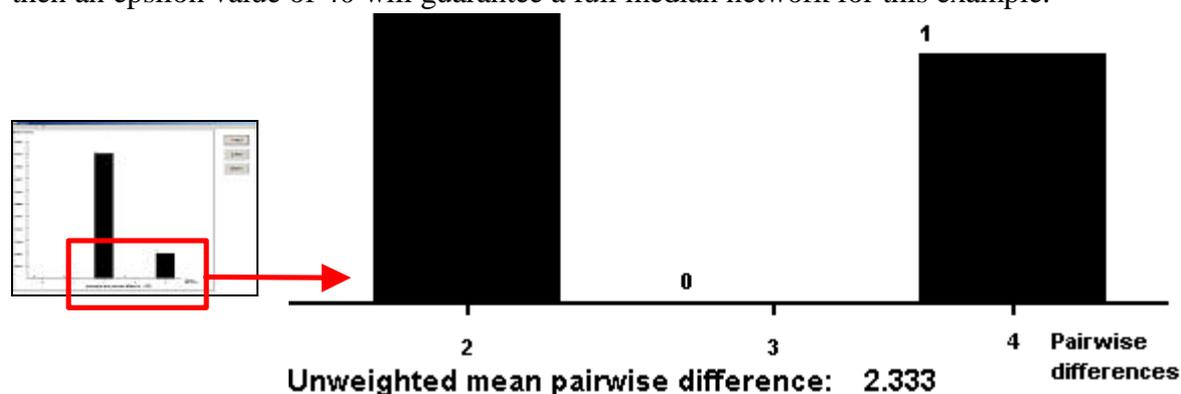


**Fig. 11: Setting epsilon parameter in Calculate Network / Median Joining**

### What does epsilon mean?

The parameter epsilon specifies a weighted genetic distance to the known sequences in the data set, within which potential median vectors may be constructed. If epsilon is set less than the greatest weighted genetic distance within the data set, then there is a theoretical possibility that the MJ network will not contain all possible shortest trees. If epsilon is set equal to (or greater than) the greatest weighted genetic distance, the MJ algorithm is guaranteed to yield a full median network. Usually we find epsilon=10 to be sufficient.

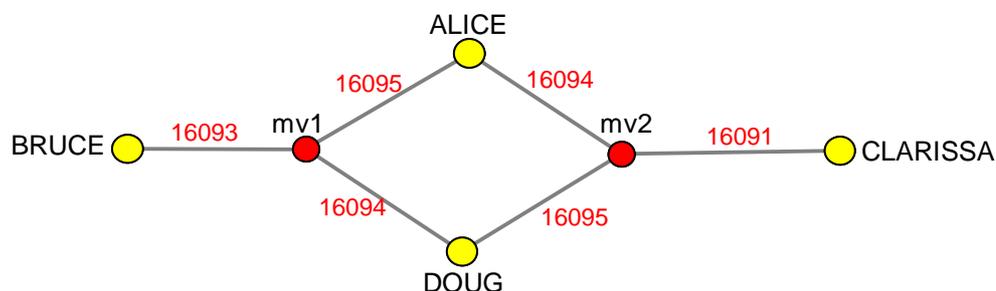
The range of (unweighted) genetic distances can be calculated and displayed with Network's Tools / Mismatch Distribution (Fig. 12). In this example, the maximal pairwise difference is shown as 4. If all character weights are 10 and the transversion/transition weighting is 1:1, then an epsilon value of 40 will guarantee a full median network for this example.



**Fig. 12: Calculating genetic distances in Network's Mismatch Distribution Tool**

### What is a median vector?

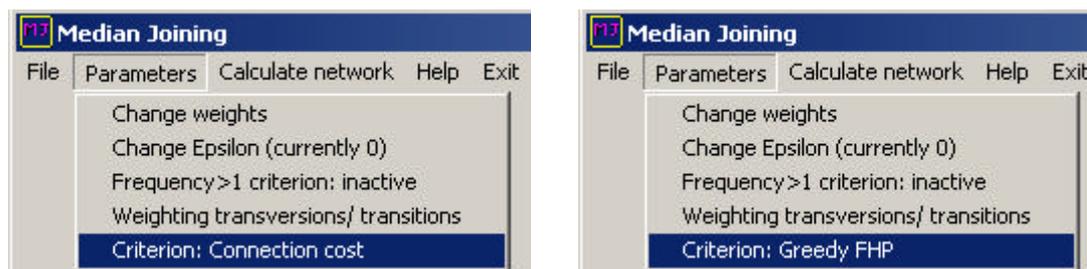
A median network consists of nodes, and links which connect the nodes. The nodes are either sequences from the data set, or median vectors. The links are character differences. A median vector is a hypothesised (often ancestral) sequence (see Fig. 13, mv1 and mv2) which is required to connect existing sequences within the network with maximum parsimony. Without the median vector, there would be no shortest connection between the data set's sequences.



**Fig. 13: Median network showing median vectors mv1 and mv2**

*Switching the distance calculation method between Connection Cost and Greedy FHP:*

The switch between the two available distance calculation methods (default "Connection cost" method of Röhl et al, alternative "Greedy FHP" method of Foulds, Hendy, Penny et al) is set in Median Joining, Parameters menu / Criterion (see Fig. 14), after the data file has been opened (File menu / Open). To change the distance calculation method, click onto the "Criterion" line in the Parameters menu. This will change the method and close the menu. When you re-open the Parameters menu, the currently active method is shown (e.g. "Criterion: Greedy FHP").



**Fig. 14: Distance calculation method. Click "Criterion" line to change from the default "Connection cost" method (left) to the alternative "Greedy FHP" method of Foulds, Hendy, Penny (right)**

### 2.1.6 Reduction threshold $r$ and out file option (in RM network option)

The Reduced Median algorithm will build a reduced network if the parameter  $r$  is set to 2 (default) or other "low numbers greater than two". The reason for "reducing" a full median network is to improve clarity for data sizes larger than trivial data sets, because a full median network can easily contain too many links and median vectors to visualise and interpret.

The full median network will be calculated when the parameter  $r$  is sufficiently high, but this network may be difficult to interpret. For this reason, we suggest to experiment with  $r$ -settings of 2, 3, 4, 5, etc., to see how the network complexity increases.

Note that  $r$  is a weighted genetic distance ratio for the likelihood of parallel mutations (see Fig. 16).

#### *Setting the parameter $r$ :*

The parameter  $r$  is set in Reduced Median, Parameters menu / Changing reduction threshold (see Fig. 15), after the data file has been opened (File menu / Open). To change the value of  $r$ , type a number and click OK. All parameter settings are logged in the first lines of the network calculation \*.out file.

(The Reduced Median option is accessible from the Calculate Network main menu / Network Calculations / Reduced Median.)

The reduction threshold value is a real number which should be set to at least 2. For human mtDNA control region sequences, the value 2 works ok. Sensible values for other data need to be determined experimentally by increasing  $r$  and seeing whether shorter MP trees are then generated. Generally, the longer the branches in the data set, the higher the  $r$  setting should be.



**Fig. 15: Setting Reduction threshold parameter in Calculate Network / Reduced Median**

*What does the Reduction threshold  $r$  mean?*

The Reduction threshold  $r$  is a parameter for deleting parallel mutations in ladder-like meshes (Fig 16, right) from a full median network. The reasoning is that parallel mutations (Fig. 16, character 19101) are more likely to have occurred between existing sequences (Kay – John, Mary – Nat) than between an existing sequence and a median vector (Lucy – mv1).

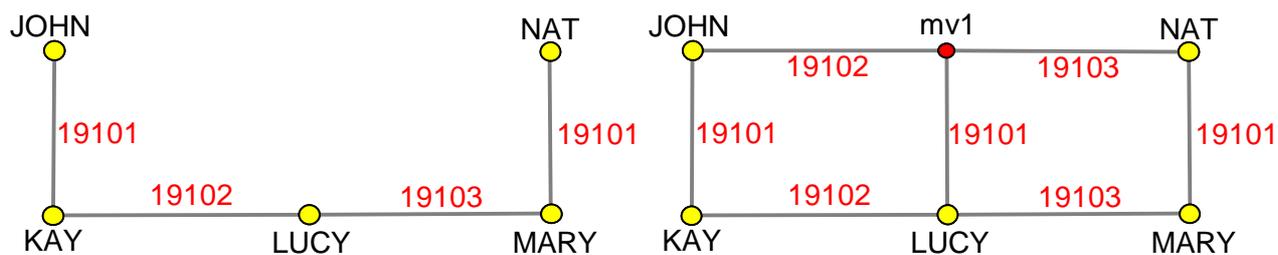
In this example the weights of characters 19101, 19102, and 19103 are 10. If the sum of weights on the long side of the ladder (characters 19102 and 19103) is greater or equal  $r$  times the weight of the parallel mutation (character 19101), the reduction algorithm deletes the parallel mutation between a median vector (mv1) and the other side of the ladder (existing sequence Lucy):

$$\text{sum}(\text{character weights}_{\text{long side of ladder}}) \geq r * \text{character weight}_{\text{parallel mutation}}$$

In this example the sum of weights on the long side of the ladder is 20.

For  $r = 2$ ,  $r$  times the weight of 19101 is 20, so mv1 and the links are deleted (Fig 16, left).

For  $r = 3$ ,  $r$  times the weight of 19101 is 30, so mv1 is not deleted (Fig 16, right).



**Fig. 16: RM network with  $r = 2$  (left) and full median network with  $r = 3$  (right)**

*Option for not generating an out file (New in Network 4.5.1.6)*

The RM network calculation produces an rmf file with split loci in a first step, and an out file with a network in the second step. Optionally the second step can be switched off (checkbox "Generate list of links (out file for drawing)"). The rmf file can then be used for the MJ network calculation. This combines the advantages of both methods: Locus splitting of RM, and improved speed and memory management of MJ.

### 2.1.7 MP option to clean up networks

A full median network (parameter epsilon in MJ-calculation or parameter  $r$  in RM-calculation set sufficiently high) contains all possible shortest (MP or Steiner) trees. However, the network calculations can also produce unnecessary median vectors and links (see fig 18, mv5, mv8-mv18). The MP option (Polzin et al, see fig 19) identifies the unnecessary median vectors and links, which can be switched off in the results display (see fig 20).

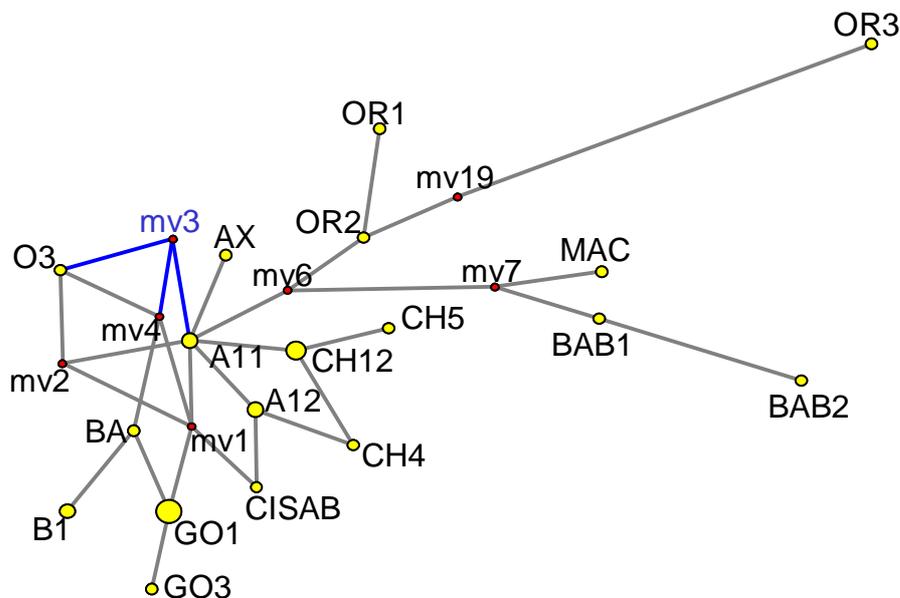


Fig. 17: ExampleAminoAcids.ami, MJ with epsilon=10, cleaned up with MP

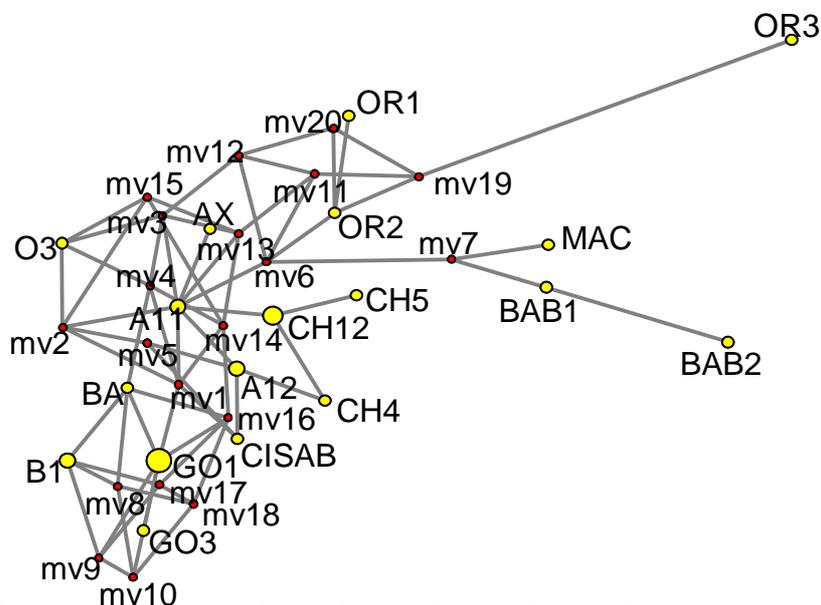
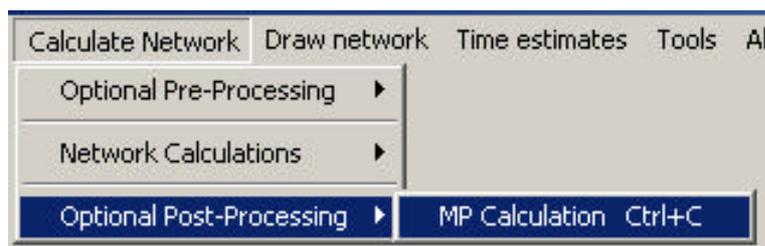


Fig. 18: ExampleAminoAcids.ami, MJ with epsilon=10

Note: After MJ-calculation of ExampleAminoAcids.ami with epsilon=0, the network looks identical to fig 17, except that the blue links and mv3 are missing, meaning that trees are missing. MJ with epsilon=10 finds all trees (fig 18), and MP cleans up the network (fig 17).

### *Running the MP calculation*

We recommend that the MP calculation is generally run on all \*.out files produced by the MJ or RM network calculations. In the main window of Network, select the "Calculate Network" menu, select "Optional Postprocessing" / "MP Calculation". The MP calculation options window will appear. Leave the default radio-button active ("Network containing all shortest trees, and list of some shortest trees sufficient to generate this network"). Click the "Start" button to select the \*.out file and run the MP calculation. The MP calculation results are saved into the same folder, into a file with the extension \*.sto.



**Fig. 19: MP Calculation (Polzin et al) is recommended after every network calculation**

### *Displaying the results*

Select the Network Draw subprogram, or start the Network Publisher software. File menu, Open, select the \*.sto-file. At the pop-up window, click the "No" button, if you are interested to compare the original network with the cleaned-up network. When the network graphic is completed, you can compare the cleaned up network with the original network by switching between the radio buttons "Network" and "Original Network".



**Fig. 20: Draw subprogram**

After activating the radio button "Tree(s)", you can interactively display a list of shortest trees. This list does not contain all shortest trees in the network. The list only contains all shortest trees which are sufficient to define all the network nodes and links (see chapter 2.2.3 for a graphic example).

### 2.1.8 Star Contraction option: Use for network simplification, or for identification of population expansion events

Complex networks containing many sequences, taxa or Y-profiles can be very difficult to interpret at first glance. One option to reduce complexity is the star contraction algorithm, another option is described in sub chapter 2.1.9.

Historic demographic expansion events are characterised by star-like clusters of nodes around a founder population node. The star contraction algorithm identifies such clusters and shrinks the nodes of a cluster back towards the founder node. The star contraction algorithm therefore has two separate uses:

- to help analyse networks for historic demographic expansion events, and
- to help simplify complex networks into "skeleton" networks for a first overview.

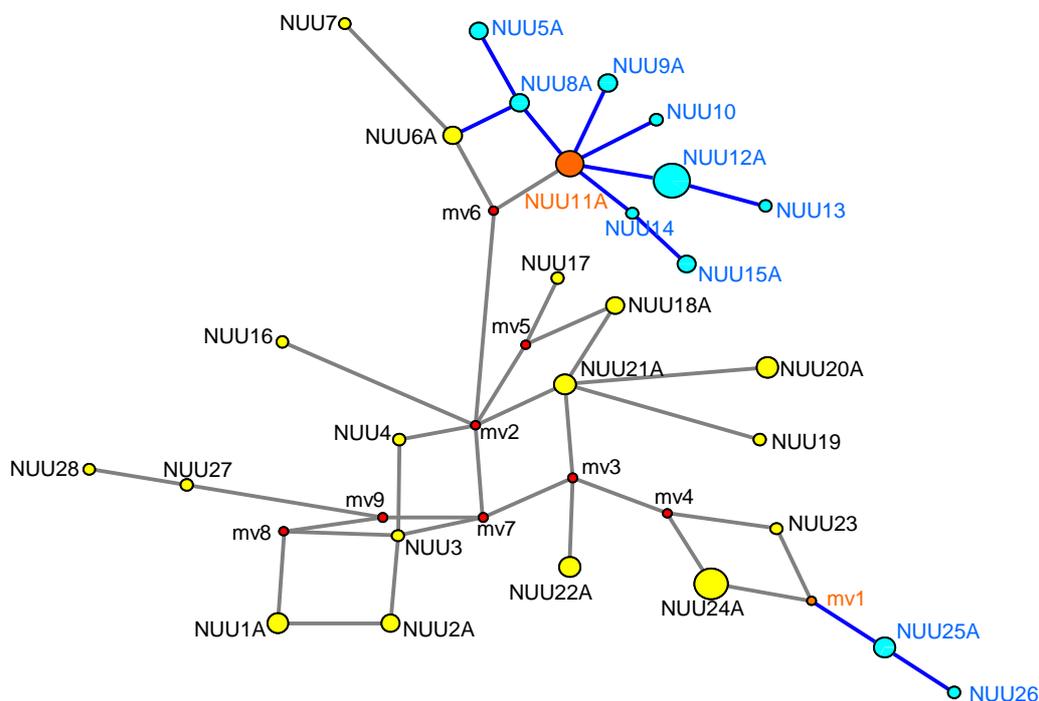


Fig. 21: ExampleDNAMultistate.rdf : Star-like cluster around founder node NUU11A

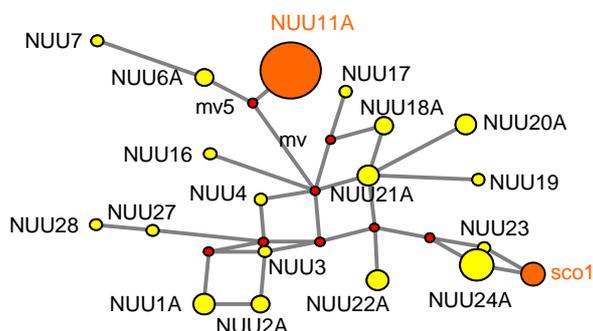
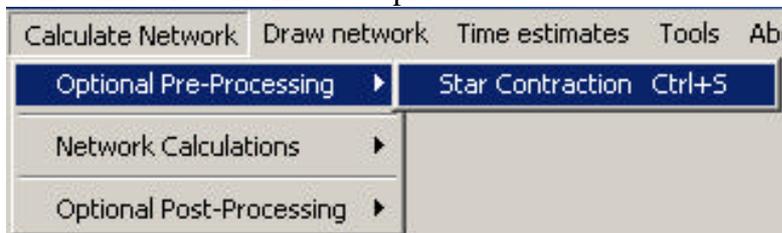


Fig. 22: Same data with star-contraction preprocessing (mv1 renamed to sco1)

## Running the star contraction calculation

Star Contraction is run before running the network calculation (MJ or RM).

In the main window of Network, select the "Calculate Network" menu, select "Optional Preprocessing" / "Star Contraction". The Star Contraction window will appear. Click onto "File" and select the file to be processed.



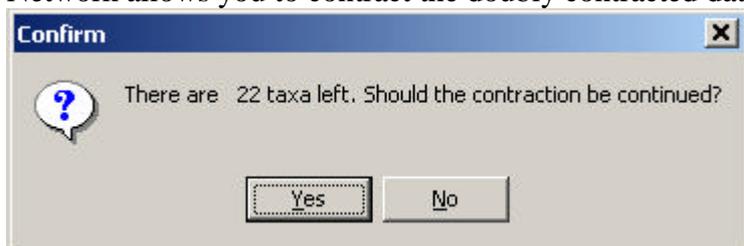
**Fig. 23: Star Contraction is used before Network calculations**

You can then click on "Parameters" and change the star contraction radius – this is measured in number of mutated positions. For STR/microsatellite data the number of mutated positions is not the number of repeats, but the number of network characters (to see the difference, run a network calculation and display the "mutated positions" in the graphics).



**Fig. 24: Star Contraction radius (delta), in number of mutated positions**

After setting the maximum star radius, click on "Calculation" to run the star contraction. Network will suggest a name for the protocol file \*.pro. After a first round of the star contraction calculation, Network will ask whether to continue the contraction; click yes if you want the contracted data to be contracted again. After the second round of contraction, Network allows you to contract the doubly contracted data a final time.



**Fig. 25: Star Contraction can be run up to 3 times on the loaded data set**

Finally Network suggests a name for the star contraction results file \*.sco.

The \*.sco file can be used for the network calculation (MJ or RM).

After the network calculation, the results file \*.out can be used for the MP option to clean up the contracted network.

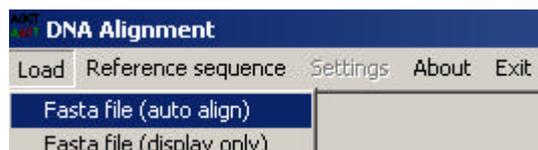




## 2.2 DNA nucleotide sequence data

### 2.2.1 Data entry

Small data sets can be entered manually and saved into a file using Network's Data Editor (Start Network / Data Entry menu / Manual / DNA nucleotide data / Continue). See chapter 2.1.2 for details.



**Fig. 29: Loading FASTA data into DNA Alignment with or without alignment option**

Larger data sets should be imported into the DNA Alignment software in FASTA format, aligned (if required), checked (see chapter 2.1.2), and exported for Network in rdf-format. This allows longer sequences to be analysed than with Network's manual data entry. The DNA Alignment software (Fig. 30) can easily export character/multistate data (Fig. 2 / chapter 2.1.2) rdf files or binary data (Fig. 3 / chapter 2.1.2) rdf files from the same FASTA file, allowing both MJ and RM to be run on the same data. After the MJ analysis, RM can be run on the binary data file if an independent verification of the MJ results is required, as the two algorithms are distinctly different.



**Fig. 30: Save as character/multistate data (left) or binary data (right) in DNA Alignment**

Note: Please do not use the phy or nex import formats unless you know what you are doing, because Network does not perform any checks and may calculate incorrect results. The phy and nex formats exported by the DNA Alignment software (Fig. 31) are interpreted correctly by Network; prior data checking within DNA Alignment (see chapter 2.1.2) is mandatory.

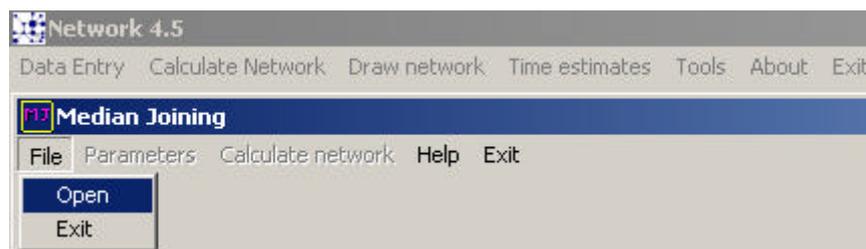


**Fig. 31: Saving sequential Phylip (left) or Nexus (right) formats in DNA Alignment**

## 2.2.2 Network calculation using the MJ algorithm with optional external rooting

### *Calculating the initial network*

In Network (Fig. 32): Calculate Network menu / Network Calculations / Median Joining. File / Open / DNA data file (rdf). Select the rdf file which you manually created in the Network Data editor or exported from the DNA Alignment software. After opening the file, the calculation parameters can be viewed and changed (Parameters menu), see chapters 2.1.3 – 2.1.5 for details on the parameters. After changing the parameters, the calculation can be started (Calculate network) and the result file is saved (\*.out).



**Fig. 32: Opening the rdf data file for MJ network calculation**

We recommend to run the MP option on the out-file to delete all superfluous median vectors and links which are not contained in the shortest trees in the network (Calculate Network menu / Optional Postprocessing / MP Calculation / Network containing all shortest trees, and list of some shortest trees sufficient to generate this network / Start / Open Network output file [out]). The MP results are saved as \*.sto file format.

The sto-file can be opened, viewed and analysed in the Draw Network option (See Fig 32, first menu line), or in the Network Publisher software (Fig. 33). Alternatively, the out-file can be opened. Save a screen snap (bmp) or – from Network Publisher only – a vector graphic (emf/wmf/pdf) of the network.



**Fig. 33: Opening the sto-file or the out-file for visual display and analysis**

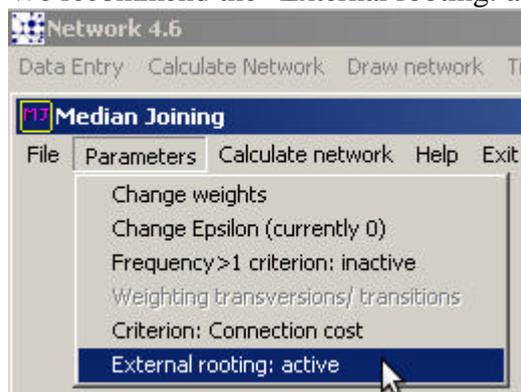
Re-run with different settings (see Fig. 1 in chapter 2.1). For example if the network is messy, identify nucleotides which have mutated frequently within your data set (see Fig. 5 in chapter 2.1.3), downweight these nucleotides (see chapter 2.1.3), calculate the MJ-network, and save the results under a new name (e.g. DNA\_multi\_MJ\_2.out).

When your network looks clean, keep the successful weight settings and increase the parameter epsilon (see chapter 2.1.5) to identify where new median vectors are added to the network. Experiment with increasingly higher epsilon settings and each time save the results under different names (e.g. DNA\_multi\_MJ\_2\_epsilon\_20.out).

### *Rooting the network, ancestral node, root proxy node*

The process of determining the ancestral node is referred to as "rooting the network". The ancestral node of a network can be determined by comparing the network nodes with suitable outgroups. For example, to (manually) find the ancestral node of a network of domestic horses Jansen et al used zebra and wild asses as outgroups (Jansen T, Forster P, Levine MA, Oelke H, Hurles M, Renfrew C, Weber J, Olek K. Mitochondrial DNA and the origins of the domestic horse. *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA*. 2002 Aug 6;99(16):10905-10.).

We recommend the "External rooting: active" parameter in the MJ network calculation.



First, you need to add your outgroup to the intraspecies \*.rdf file. This procedure is facilitated by the DNA Alignment software version 1.3.2.0 (for release in January 2011) which allows you to merge an outgroup-alignment (\*.ali file) into an intra-species alignment (\*.ali file) and export this as an \*.rdf file.

We recommend users to first align the intra-species sequences without the outgroup, because the automatic alignment algorithm is designed for closely related sequences. We recommend aligning just the outgroup sequence to the reference sequence in a new session, to minimise manual editing work. Finally, merge the \*.ali files using the "Import alignment" function in DNA Alignment 1.3.2.0, which can introduce additional insertions and deletions. After manually checking that no alignment problems occurred in this merging step, export the \*.rdf file.

The outgroup sequence must be named "ROOT". The network calculation will ignore ROOT during network construction with the parameter "External rooting: active". After network construction, the algorithm will search for the root proxy node, i.e. the nearest existing network node to the ROOT sequence, taking the specified character weights into account. Note that the actual network root may lie within an adjacent (multi-mutation) link and some mutation re-ordering along this link and the generation of a new median vector may be required. Generation of a new "root" median vector and re-ordering of mutations has not been implemented due to significant computational complexities.

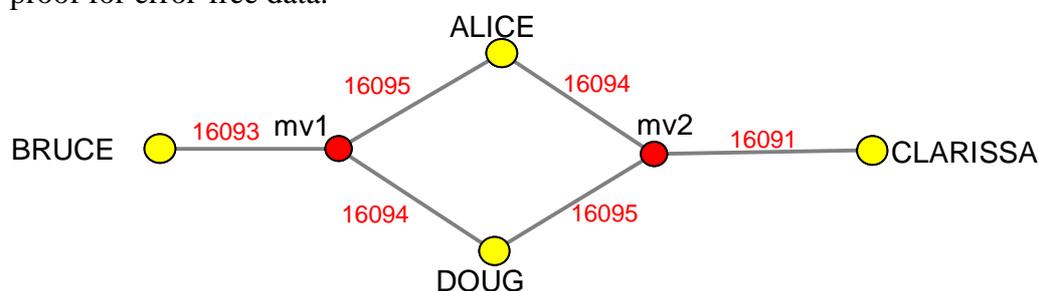
Network Publisher 2.0.0.0 is able to highlight the root proxy node, which is a useful feature in very complex networks.

### 2.2.3 Discussing, analysing, and interpreting network results (MJ and RM)

#### *Homoplasy, cycle, reticulation, cube, hypercube*

Mutation of a genetic site can occur at different times and independently of previous evolution. Figure 34 below shows characters 16094 and 16095 occurring twice in the network; this is referred to as parallel mutations or homoplasy. In this special case, the characters in the network form a cycle (cycles may have more than 4 sides) or reticulation. Box-like cycles are sometimes referred to as a cube (or hypercube in the case of a 4-dimensional box or more).

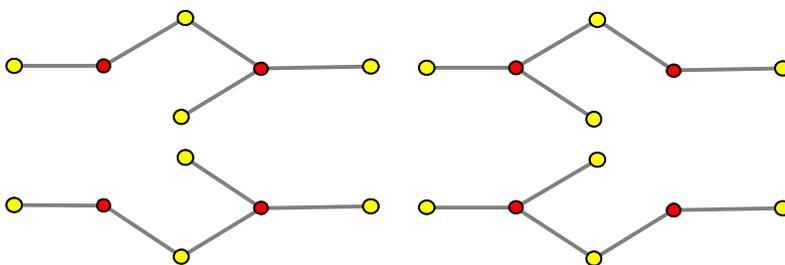
Cycles within the central regions of a network are not uncommon. Peripheral cycles are not necessarily incorrect, but they sometimes point at problems in sampling, lab processing, data alignment, or data entry. Conversely, networks without peripheral cycles are not sufficient proof for error-free data.



**Fig. 34: Network showing homoplasy in the form a cycle (reticulation)**

#### *Shortest trees in network*

Full median networks are designed to contain all possible equally shortest trees for a given data set. The network in Fig. 34 contains 4 such trees, see Fig. 35 below. Networks may contain superfluous links which are not required for any of the possible equally shortest trees. Network's MP option should be run to delete these superfluous links, esp. if the network contains homoplasies such as hypercubes or large cycles. (Note: Network's MP option does not find all shortest trees in the network, it only finds the shortest trees required to build the network; for example, only 2 of the 4 trees below are required to define the network.)



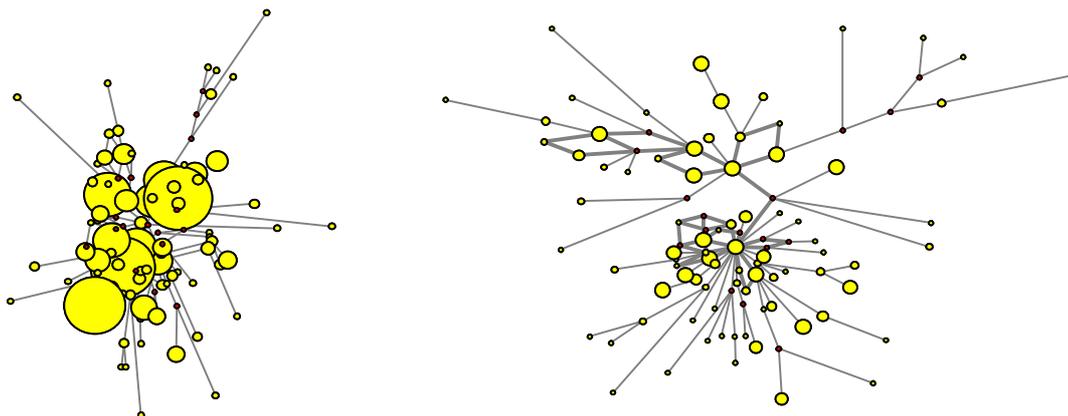
**Fig. 35: The 4 equally probable shortest trees contained in the example network**



## 2.2.4 Graphical layout of results

Finally, when you are satisfied with your network, spend some time in the Draw Network option or in the Network Publisher software to lay out your results clearly and attractively, and save a definitive picture of the results.

To move nodes of the network, click and drag them. To move a link, click it and drag a node of the link. To change the style (colour etc.) of nodes, right-click a node. To change the style of links, right-click a link. Use the display options to produce a clear and clean-looking graphic.



**Fig. 37: Network graphics before (left) and after manual editing of layout (right)**

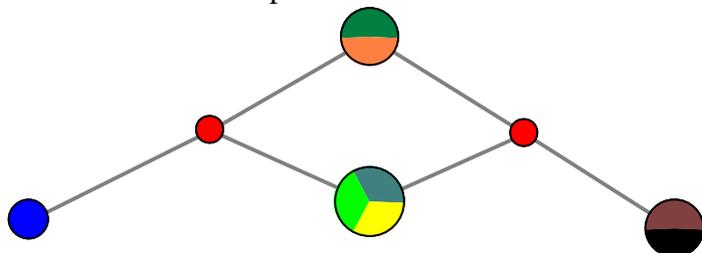
Finally, save the laid-out work in fdi file format (for opening again in Draw Network or in Network Publisher). You can also save it in bmp or bitmap-pdf format (standard Network) or in emf/wmf or vector-pdf formats (Network Publisher). The bmp file can be imported into MS Office or layout software as a limited-resolution non-editable graphic.

The emf file can be imported into MS Office or layout software as a high resolution, editable graphic. After importing the emf or wmf graphic, ungrouping the graphic object is normally required. Font sizes and graphic re-scaling will depend on the application. For example Powerpoint may not handle the graphic identically to Word, Corel Draw, or Adobe Illustrator, therefore plan to spend some time on tweaking the graphic after import. The reward for using emf or wmf or vector-pdf is the high resolution: to see the striking difference in resolution, magnify Fig. 36 or Fig. 37 and compare this to the bitmap in Fig. 5 at high magnification.

Note: In the current software version, the fdi file is saved specific to the display setting of the computer on which it was saved. This means that the size and position of the network graphic may change if the file is opened on a different computer. If you plan to exchange fdi files during a project, it would make sense to agree on a consensus setting and to put this information into the file name (e.g. DNA\_multi\_MJ\_2\_epsilon\_20\_display1400x1200.fdi).

### 2.2.4.1 Node and pie chart colouring in Network Publisher 2.0.0.0

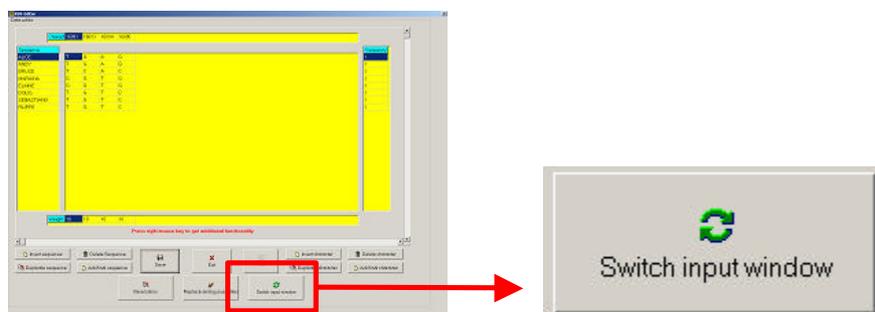
Node colouring and pies are increasingly used within network graphics to display additional information in a network, for example geographic affiliation, haplogroup, or ethnic affiliation of each sequence or STR-profile. Colour-coded nodes and pies can also be used to help analysis and interpretation, for example whether the geographic origins of sequences correlate with their relationships within the network.



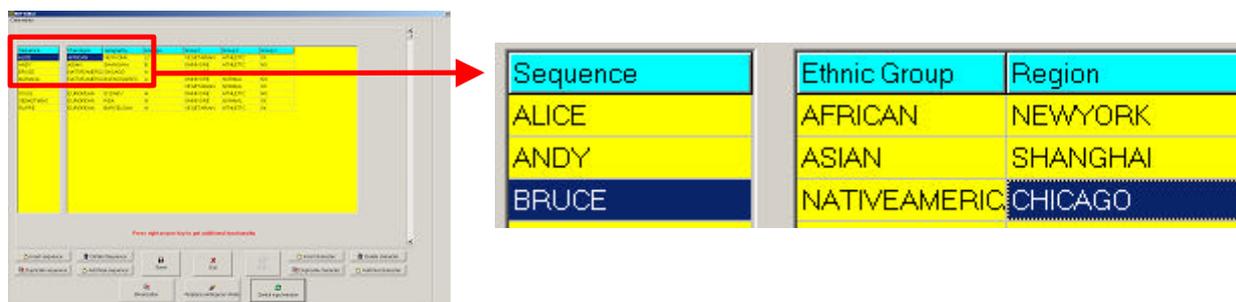
**Fig. 38: Network graphic with colour-coded nodes (for geography, lineage etc.)**

In Network Draw it is possible to define colours and pies after right-clicking a node. However, this is a lot of work, and furthermore this work must be performed again after every network calculation (for example when different calculation parameters are explored).

In Network, colour-coding information may be entered in the Network data editor (Start Network, Data Entry menu, Import rdf file) before running a network calculation: Click the "Switch input window" button (fig. 39) and enter the information for each sequence in max 15 characters length (fig. 40). Note that you can also use these attributes for storing other information such as home town, food preferences, metabolic disorders, etc.

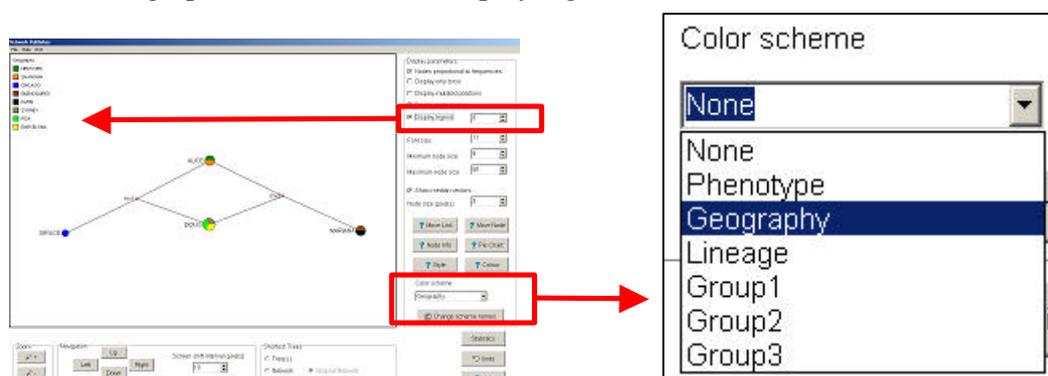


**Fig. 39: In the data editor, switch between sequence entry and attribute entry**



**Fig. 40: Entry of attributes for later colour-coding (Network 4.5.0.0 or later versions)**

In Network Publisher, displaying colour-coded nodes and pies is made easier and faster for network calculation files which contain attributes: After importing the network calculation results, select an attribute type from the "Color scheme" pull-down menu, assign a colour for each attribute, and display the network. Your colour assignments are saved with the network graphic, when you save in \*.fdi format (Tip: you may want to cut and paste the 6 last lines defining the colour scheme into other \*.fdi files). To display the color scheme explanation within the graphics, activate the "Display legend" checkbox.



**Fig. 41: The Network Publisher pull-down menu for colour-coding of nodes**



**Fig. 42: The Network Publisher menu for colour assignment**

To rename the color schemes "Group1 – Group 3" in Network Publisher, use the button "Change scheme names". Renaming is only possible in Network Publisher, not in the Network rdf / STR editor.

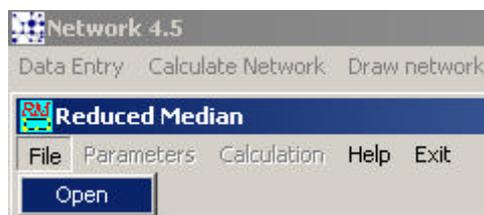
Attributes can also be imported into a Network Publisher 2.0.0.0. session from Excel or a csv-file. First column: sequence names. Second column: attribute information which is used for the color scheme. Example csv file (separator: semicolon):

```
S001 ; FEMALE
S002 ; FEMALE
S003 ; MALE
S004 ; FEMALE
```

Note: Network Publisher is an add-on which can be ordered for a fee.

## 2.2.5 Verification using the RM option

The RM algorithm is a separate and different algorithm to the MJ algorithm. This makes the RM option suitable for verifying MJ networks.



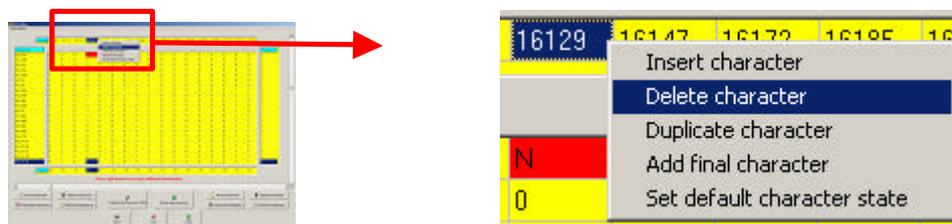
**Fig. 43: Opening the rdf data file for RM network calculation**

In contrast to MJ, RM can only work with binary data (see Fig. 3). If the data set for MJ consists of binary data, the same file can be used for RM. Otherwise the data set needs to be binarised. For manual data entry, see chapter 2.1.2, example 3, case 4.

For FASTA file data, binarisation is automatically carried out by the DNA Alignment software when saving as "Network binary data format" (see Fig. 29, right). The DNA Alignment software will write "N" into some positions, when the character is multistate. Network RM will give a warning message and automatically replace these Ns in a "greedy" manner minimizing the distance to all other sequences within the dataset, when the file is opened (Fig. 43). You can also import this binary rdf file (Data Entry / Import rdf file / Binary Data / Continue / select the file and open) into the Network Data Editor. A warning message appears and Ns are highlighted red. To see how Network replaces each N with either 0 or 1 use the "Replace" and "Undo" buttons (Fig. 44). If there are more than 5 characters with N, we suggest to delete these characters in the Network Data Editor by right-clicking the cell in the "character" header row and choosing "delete character" (Fig. 45); then save and exit.



**Fig. 44: Binary rdf files containing "N", and button to replace the Ns**



**Fig. 45: Delete characters containing "N" in the Network Data Editor**

### Verification using the RM option (continued)

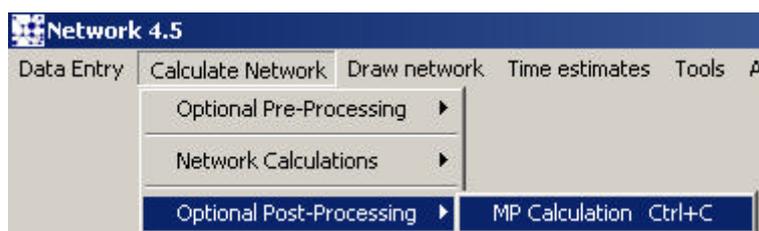
To run the RM network calculation algorithm: In Network (Fig. 43): Calculate Network menu / Network Calculations / Reduced Median / File / Open / DNA data file (rdf). Select the rdf file which you manually created in the Network Data editor or exported from the DNA Alignment software. After opening the file, the calculation parameters can be viewed and changed (Parameters menu), see chapters 2.1.3, 2.1.4, and 2.1.6 for details on the parameters. After changing the parameters, the calculation can be started (Calculate network) and the result file is saved (\*.out).

We recommend to run the MP option on the out-file to delete all superfluous median vectors and links which are not contained in the shortest trees in the network (Calculate Network menu / Optional Postprocessing / MP Calculation / Network containing all shortest trees, and list of some shortest trees sufficient to generate this network / Start / Open Network output file [out]). The MP results are saved as \*.sto file format. Note that for some data sets the MP option may take a very long time to run (up to several days); in this case, kill the MP option.

The sto-file can be opened, viewed and analysed in the Draw Network option, or in the Network Publisher software (Fig. 33). Alternatively, the out-file can be opened. Save a screen snap (bmp/bitmap-pdf) or a vector graphic (emf/vector-pdf) of the network.

Re-run with different settings (see Fig. 1 in chapter 2.1). For example if the network is messy, identify nucleotides which have mutated frequently within your data set (see Fig. 5 in chapter 2.1.3), downweight these nucleotides (see chapter 2.1.3), calculate the RM-network, and save the results under a new name (e.g. DNA\_binary\_RM\_2.out).

When your network looks clean, keep the successful weight settings and increase the parameter  $r$  (see chapter 2.1.6) to identify where new median vectors are added to the network. Experiment with increasingly higher  $r$  settings and each time save the results under different names (e.g. DNA\_binary\_RM\_2\_r\_5.out).



**Fig. 46: MP option to delete superfluous median vectors and links from networks**

See chapter 2.2.3 for discussion, analysis and interpretation of networks, and chapter 2.2.4 for graphical layout of results.

## **2.3 RNA nucleotide sequence data**

### **2.3.1 Data entry**

RNA nucleotide data currently needs to be entered with a minor work-around:

For data containing just the standard 4 rna bases (A, C, G, U), use the dna data entry options (manual entry or DNA Alignment software) replacing U by T; this will have no adverse effects on the alignment calculations or the network calculations. Before importing FASTA file data into DNA Alignment, use a text editor to search and auto-replace all occurrences of "U" by "T" (check the sequence names afterwards for auto-replacements within the sequence name!). For detailed instructions on the network calculation steps, see chapter 2.2 on dna nucleotide data.

For data containing modified rna bases, resort to the amino acid data entry as a work-around (see chapter 2.4).



## **2.4.2 Network calculation, analysis, interpretation, and graphics**

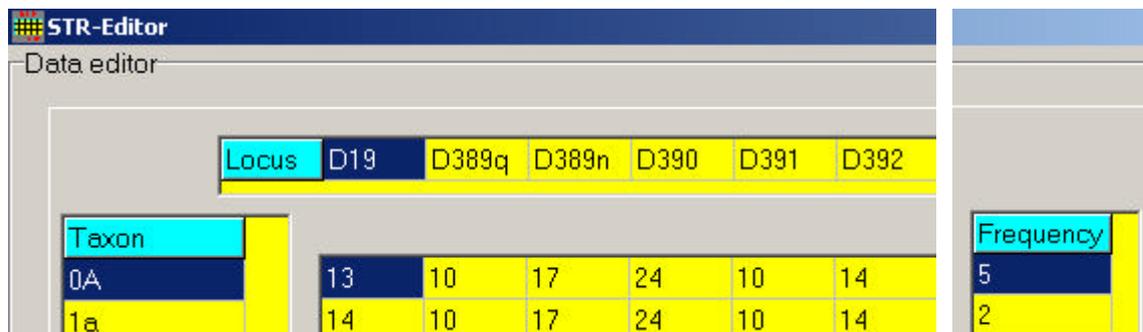
The ami-files can be opened with the Network Calculation options (Star Contraction, Reduced Median, Median Joining).

For detailed instructions on the network calculation steps, see chapters 2.2.2 and 2.2.5. For detailed instruction on analysis, discussion and interpretation, see chapter 2.2.3. For detailed instructions on graphical layout of results, see chapter 2.2.4.

## 2.5 STR data (short tandem repeat, microsatellite data)

### 2.5.1 Data entry

Small data sets can be entered manually and saved into a file using Network's Data Editor (Start Network / Data Entry menu / Manual / Y-STR data / Continue).



The screenshot shows the STR-Editor window with a data entry table. The table has columns for Locus, Taxon, and Frequency. The data is as follows:

Locus	D19	D389q	D389n	D390	D391	D392	Frequency
Taxon							
0A	13	10	17	24	10	14	5
1a	14	10	17	24	10	14	2

**Fig. 48: Network's Data Editor with STR data**

When the editor is opened for new data entry, the taxa and loci names are defaults; to edit these, click into the cells and edit. (For STR data of individual persons, we suggest to enter each individual's - abbreviated - name as a taxon, and leave the frequency value at 1.)

Note: Human Y-STR loci 389I and II cannot be used for network analysis, as they together comprise the 4 independently mutating DNA stretches 389m, 389n, 389p, 389q which can each be used for network analysis (see Forster 2000). If only 389I and II are available, these must be left away.

To enter the number of repeats, click into a cell and edit, or use the right mouse button.

To edit weights (for network calculations), click into a cell and edit.

To assign attributes to each taxon (for node and pie colouring in Network Publisher), click the button "Switch input window".

The data is saved in new ych file format (not compatible with Network 2.1 for DOS or Network 4.2).

Note that the old ych file format can be used by all Network versions, including Network 2.1 for DOS. However, weights and taxon attributes are not available in old ych format files.

Details on the Data Editor: see chapter 2.1.2.

*Example for old ych file format (see ExampleYSTR.ych from Forster 2000 re Bianchi 1998):*

```
D19 ,D389q ,D389n ,D390 ,D391 ,D392 ,D393
```

```
0A
13 ,10 ,17 ,24 ,10 ,14 ,13
5
```

Line 1: list of loci  
 Lines 4-6: definition of taxon 0A  
 Line 4: name of taxon  
 Line 5: 13 repeats of D19, 10 repeats of D389q, etc.  
 Line 6: 5 = number of individuals in this taxon

Note: all line ends are defined by <CR> <LF>

## **2.5.2 Network calculation, analysis, interpretation, and graphics**

The old and new ych files can be opened with the Network Calculation options (Star Contraction, Reduced Median, Median Joining).

For detailed instructions on the network calculation steps, see chapters 2.2.2, 2.2.5 and 2.1.10. For detailed instruction on analysis, discussion and interpretation, see chapter 2.2.3.

### *Locus names in data editor and mutated position names in network graphics*

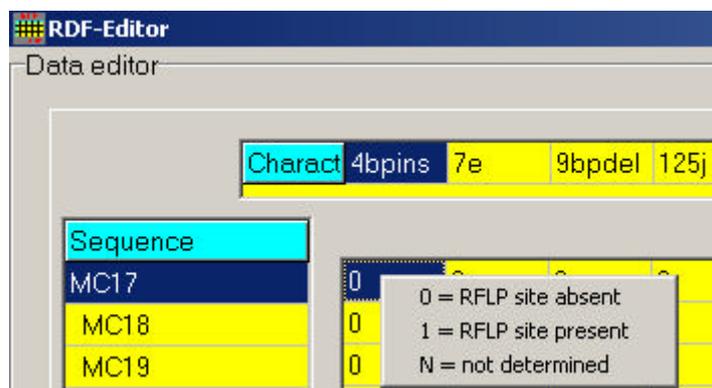
Activating the "Display mutated positions" checkbox in Network Draw or Network Publisher, will display the mutated position names along the network links. Two characters are appended to the locus name (e.g. "D19aa") to distinguish between repeat-numbers (e.g. "aa"=10 repeats, "ab"=13 repeats, depending on data file).

For detailed instructions on graphical layout of results, see chapter 2.2.4.

## 2.6 Endonuclease data (RFLP, restriction fragment length data)

### 2.6.1 Data entry

Small data sets can be entered manually and saved into a file using Network's Data Editor (Start Network / Data Entry menu / Manual / Endonuclease (RFLP) data / Continue).



**Fig. 49: Network's Data Editor with RFLP data**

When the editor is first opened for new data entry, the character and sequence names are defaults; to edit these, click into the cells and edit. To enter end, click into a cell and edit, or use the right mouse button. The data is saved in rdf file format. For further details on the Network Data Editor see chapter 2.1.2.

Alternatively, tor files can be imported into the Network Data Editor (Start Network / Data Entry Menu / Import rdf file / Endonuclease (RFLP) data / Continue / Open tor file) and saved in rdf format.

*Example for tor file format (see ExampleRFP.tor from Forster, Torroni, Renfrew, Röhl 2001):*

```
MC17
-4990a -5584a +15412k
1
```

Lines 1-3: definition of sequence MC17  
 Line 1: name of sequence  
 Line 2: -4990a : no cut at position 4990 (AG.CT), where the RS was cut  
 Line 2: -5584a : no cut at position 5584 (AG.CT), where the RS was cut  
 Line 2: +15412k : cut at position 15412 (GT.AC), where the RS was not cut  
 Line 3: 1 = number of individuals with this sequence

RS Reference Sequence. For this example file, the Cambridge RS (CRS) was used.

## **2.6.2 Network calculation, analysis, interpretation, and graphics**

Both the rdf and tor files can be opened with the Network Calculation options (Star Contraction, Reduced Median, Median Joining). However, we suggest to import tor files into the Network Data Editor (see 2.6.1), check the data import, and save them as rdf before continuing with the Network Calculation options.

If no Ns are present in the manually entered data or after import from the tor file, the rdf file will consist of binary data. These data can be used for RM and for MJ network calculation. If Ns are present in the file, they will be automatically replaced by 0 or 1 (see chapter 2.2.5) before the RM or MJ calculation is carried out.

For detailed instructions on the network calculation steps, see chapters 2.2.2, 2.2.5 and 2.1.10. For detailed instruction on analysis, discussion and interpretation, see chapter 2.2.3. For detailed instructions on graphical layout of results, see chapter 2.2.4.

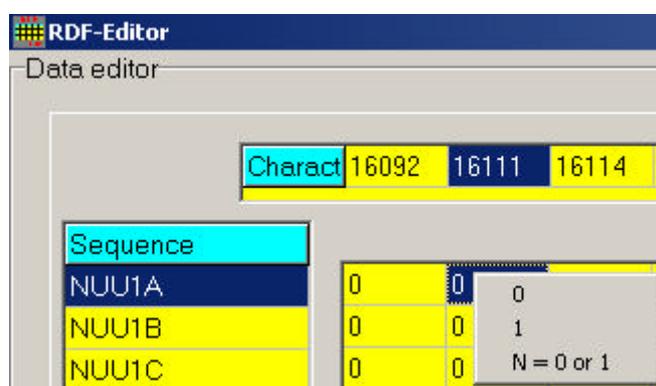
## 2.7 Binary data

A binary character has only the 2 states 0 or 1. See chapter 2.1.2 and Fig. 3. Binary data can be used both by the RM and the MJ network calculation options.

Note that ambiguous character states are denoted with N. The RM and MJ network calculation options automatically replace these Ns with either 0 or 1 (see chapter 2.2.5) before the RM or MJ calculation is carried out.

### 2.7.1 Data entry

Small data sets can be entered manually and saved into a binary rdf file using Network's Data Editor (Start Network / Data Entry menu / Manual / Binary data / Continue).



**Fig. 50: Network's Data Editor with binary dna sequence data**

Larger data sets should be imported into the DNA Alignment software in FASTA format, aligned (if required), checked (see chapter 2.1.2), and exported for Network in binary rdf-format. This allows longer sequences to be analysed than with Network's manual data entry.

### 2.7.2 Network calculation, analysis, interpretation, and graphics

For detailed instructions on the network calculation steps, see chapters 2.2.2, 2.2.5 and 2.1.10. For detailed instruction on analysis, discussion and interpretation, see chapter 2.2.3. For detailed instructions on graphical layout of results, see chapter 2.2.4.

## 2.8 Time estimates

The Time estimates sub-program is applied to the finished network (i.e. the network must first be calculated, laid out as a tree-like structure in the Draw sub-program or Network Publisher, and saved in fdi format). There are two conceptual steps in the time estimates sub-program: First, the mutation rate must be obtained (usually by calibration). Then, the ages of nodes within the network can be estimated.

### 2.8.1 Calibration of network mutation rate with a known event

The Time estimates subprogram can be used to calibrate the network mutations with a known event (e.g. deglaciation, colonisation of an island, crossing a new land bridge to a previously unpopulated region, archaeologically dated remains). This calibration is necessary if a calibration has not already been performed for exactly the **same species**, **same data type** (e.g.: DNA sequences, as opposed to RFLPs), and the **same loci** (for example, sequence range 16054-16365, as opposed to 16024-16400).

For a discussion of calibration and age estimation, see "(c) Genetic dating" on pages 256-257 of P Forster (2004) Ice Ages and the mitochondrial DNA chronology of human dispersals: A review.

The software operation steps are explained in the following example: First, load an fdi file. The program will display the network similar to Network Draw (due to a minor bug, the node coloring is changed). The buttons and controls are located in the bottom right corner (Fig. 51, highlighted box).

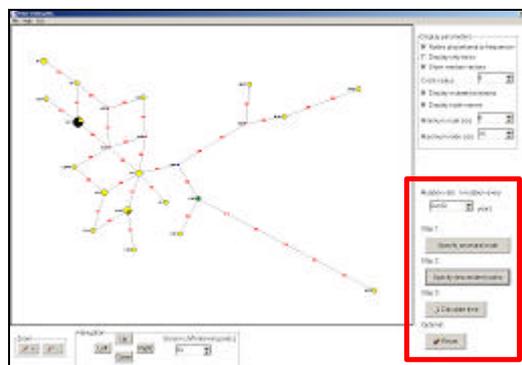
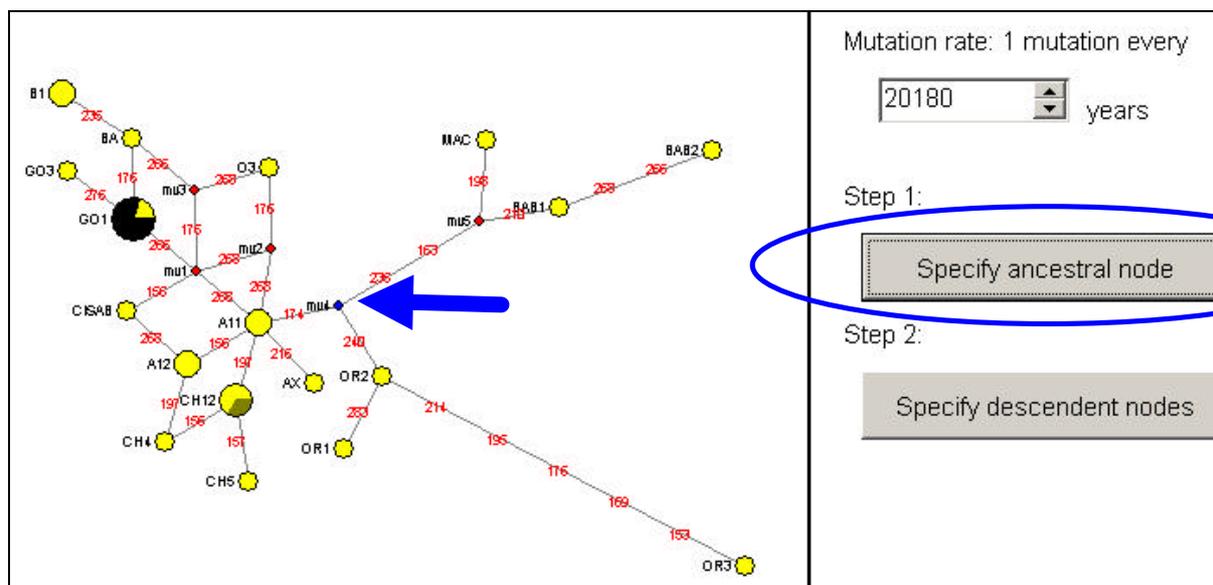


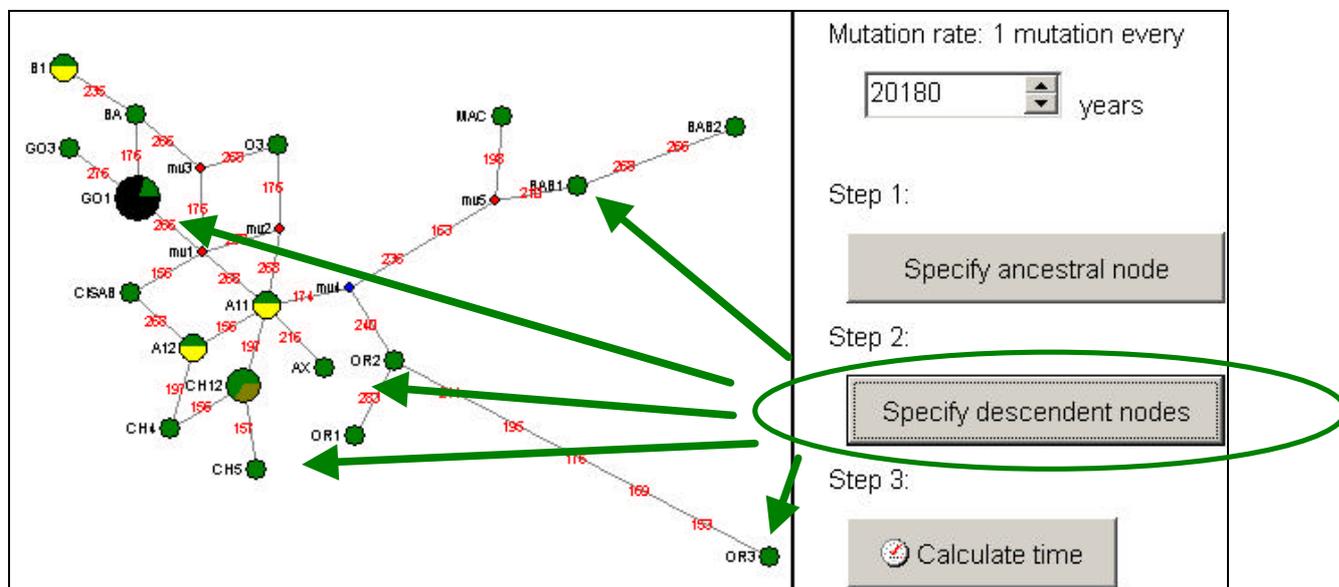
Fig. 51: Layout of Time estimates program

Step 1: Click button "Specify ancestral node", then click onto the ancestral node (in Fig 52 example: mv4).



**Fig. 52: Calibration step 1: specify ancestral node of known age**

Step 2: Click button "Specify descendent nodes" (see Fig 53) and then click all descendent nodes. To un-select a node, click it again. The selected nodes are coloured green. Due to a colouring bug, some pie slices are not coloured green correctly. Optionally, median vectors can also be selected to specify the true tree (if known) within the network.



**Fig. 53: Calibration step 2: specify descendent nodes**

Step 3: Click button "Calculate time" (Fig 53) and ...(see next page)...

Step 4: Calibrate the calculated age (Fig 54) with the known age. For example if the ancestral node mv4 is known to be 25000 years old, not 59045 years, then the mutation rate needs adjustment from 1 mutation in 20180 years to 1 mutation in  $25000 / 59045 * 20180 = 8544$ .

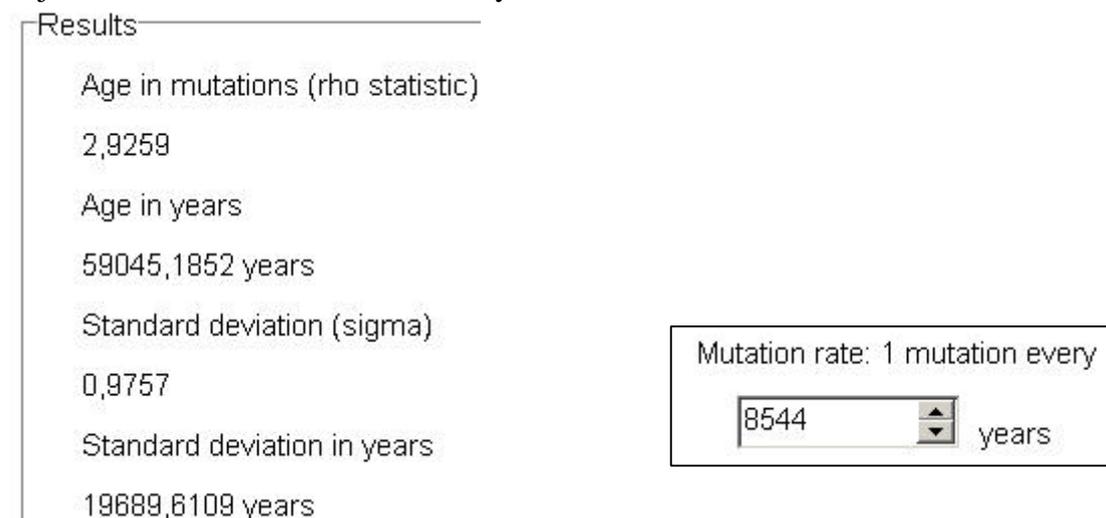


Fig. 54: Calculated time.

Step 4: adjust mutation rate to fit known age

After entering the corrected the mutation rate (Fig 54), click the OK button. Then proceed to estimate the ages of nodes within the network.

## 2.8.2 Age estimation of a node in the network

Step 1: (example Fig 55), click button "Specify ancestral node", then click onto node OR2.

Step 2: Click button "Specify descendent nodes" and click onto nodes OR1 and OR3.

Step 3: Click button "Calculate time".

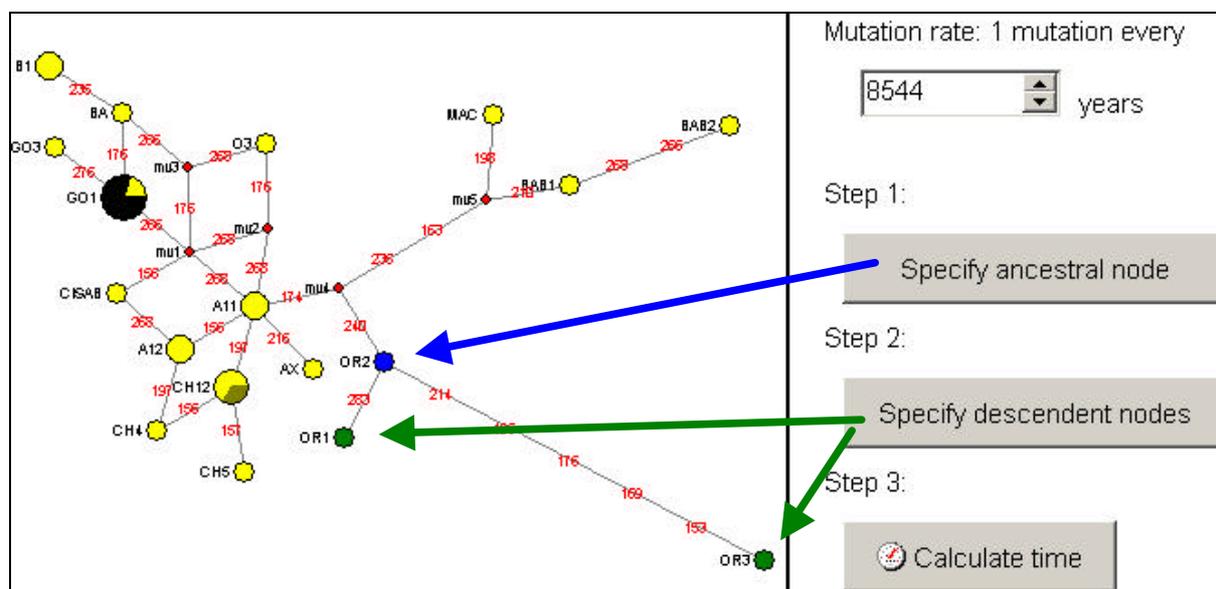


Fig. 55: Specify the node for which the age is to be estimated and its descendants

The rho age estimation (Fig 56) is independent of demographic parameters. However the standard deviation is highly dependent on demographic history and the resulting tree shape. The standard deviation calculation in the example of Fig 56 yields 6976 years (or 0.8165 mutations).

Results	
Age in mutations (rho statistic)	2
Age in years	17088 years
Standard deviation (sigma)	0,8165
Standard deviation in years	6976,14679 years

**Fig. 56: Estimated age of taxon OR2 and standard deviation in mutations and in years**

### 3. Software Limits in Network 10.2.0.0

#### *Network Data Editor:*

Data lines (taxa, sequences):	3000
Data columns (characters, loci, nucleotide positions):	2500 *
Frequency:	999

#### *rdf files from DNA Alignment:*

Data lines (taxa, sequences):	30000
Data columns (characters, loci, nucleotide positions):	35000
Frequency:	999

#### *Network Calculations:*

Data lines (taxa, sequences):	30000 *
Data columns (characters, loci, nucleotide positions):	35000 *
Nodes (haplotypes, median vectors):	40000 *
Links:	500000 *

\* Note that data from Y-STR (ych format) files can lead to locus splitting and very complex networks. The practical limit for the number of loci may therefore be reached at 500 loci or less, depending on the number of STRs involved. For RM calculations, limits are much lower than for MJ or RM-MJ calculations, e.g. for typical RM calculations ca 1500 taxa.

#### *Network Draw:*

Max number of mutations displayed on a link:	1000
Max number of links:	10000

#### *Mismatch Distribution Tool:*

Max distances:	100
----------------	-----

## 4. Network 10.2.0.0.: Present and Future

Network has been freely available since January 2000. New versions are usually released at the beginning of each year. Some interim releases were made in response to urgent requests.

Although Network includes a data editor and a graphics program, fast-growing data sizes and enhancement suggestions from our user base motivated the development of two additional software products which are available for a small fee:

- DNA Alignment is useful for importing and preparing FASTA files for Network.
- Network Publisher is useful for producing higher quality network graphics and for displaying node and pie colours depending on "attributes" (additional information for each sequence or taxon, defined in the Network Data editor: Phenotype, Geography, Lineage, and the generic Group 1, Group 2, Group 3 which can be renamed). A compare tool in Network Publisher helps compare two completed network diagrams (fdi files) and locate nodes or mutations in very obscured networks.

### *Implementation of future developments*

We are currently working on data import from next generation sequencing (NGS). As NGS is complex, users will probably need to buy additional dedicated software from third parties, and we aim to provide free data converters. See also Chapter 6 on the beta-version of our VCF2RDFconverter.

Extensions to Sanger sequence data import for Network will be implemented within DNA Alignment. Extensions to graphics for Network will be implemented within Network Publisher.

Continued availability of the software should be no problem for the next decades if user interest and community funding remains. Lars Kraemer joined our team in 2012 and has since reprogrammed the user interfaces of Network Publisher, DNA Alignment and Network 10.2.0.0., and Tobias Polzin updated the MP calculation sub-executable for the Windows 10 operating system in spring 2020.

## 5. Feedback: Bug Reports and Enhancement Requests

Feedback between software users and software suppliers is important. We read all emails and reply to most. We are always happy to read emails from users who simply wish to express their gratitude – keep these up.

### *Bug Reports:*

Sometimes a reported problem is not quite clear to us, leading to delays and question/answer emails going back and forward. So before sending your email to us, please take the time to check whether you have included all information needed to understand and reproduce your problem. Checklist for your bug report:

1. Describe what happens.
2. In which module, menu, and button or command?
3. With which data file or with which manually entered data (zip/stuff any file before emailing, to prevent the possibility of email corruption)?
4. Reproducibility: Does this happen every time, or did it happen after you did certain things? If it does not happen every time, can you remember what you did before this happened? Did you manage to reproduce this once?
5. Screen setting reproducibility: Is this a graphics problem? If so, under what screen resolution does it happen?
6. Hardware Reproducibility: What computer did you use (CPU, graphics chipset, RAM memory size, free memory on hard disk)? If you have more than one computer: Does this happen only on one computer or do you see it on others too?
7. Operating-system reproducibility: What operating system did you use? ? If you have more than one operating system: Does this happen only on one operating system or do you see it on others too? Are you running Windows in a virtual machine on Mac or Linux?
8. Folder problems: Did you forget to unzip the Network download? Is your computer connected to a remote folder, and if so, were you working on your own computer or in the remote folder?

### *Enhancement requests ("user wishes"):*

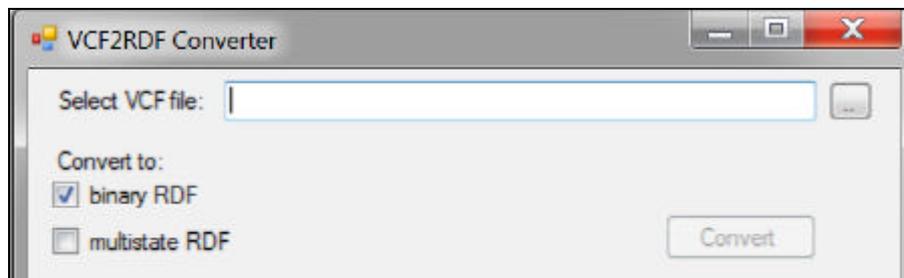
We are happy to hear from you about enhancement requests.

If you would like us to program a specific enhancement within a specific time frame on your organisation's budget, please mention this in your email. Otherwise we will simply add your enhancement request to our list.

Contact: Network development team, nw [at] fluxus-technology [dot] com

## 6. Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) suggestions

### 6.1 VCF2RDF Converter



**Fig. 57: Screenshot of VCF2RDF Converter**

The Network 10 download includes the separate executable VCF2RDFconverter.exe that can help convert NGS data into Network format. **This converter is a beta version and currently has its bugs and restrictions, as discussed below.** But we hope that with a few updates and your feedback and comments it will become bug-free.

The VCF format from next generation sequencing is a highly customisable data format for listing genomic variants that were found during the complex sequence analysis. Depending on the NGS software, the VCF format can have different formatting conventions; which is a major pain. A VCF file may contain genomic variants from a single individual or from a set of individuals. For Network, a multi-sample VCF file is required; this VCF file can be exported e.g. from the third party software GenSearchNGS (see Chapter 6.2). VCF is a text format, allowing it to be edited in a text editor. For an introduction and a description of the fields mentioned below (CHROM, POS, REF, ALT), see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Variant\\_Call\\_Format](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Variant_Call_Format)

The current version of VCF2RDFconverter.exe works correctly, if

1. the genomic variants in the VCF file are homozygous, and
2. the variants are not in genomic regions that have recombined, at least not within the set of individuals; examples for valid regions are mtDNA, the y-chromosome, bacterial genomes, viral genomes, other haploid genomes, cancer mutations within the same individual (e.g. normal DNA vs primary tumor DNA vs liver metastasis DNA vs lymph node metastasis DNA vs lung metastasis DNA vs cell free circulating DNA), and
3. the genomic variants are single nucleotide substitutions, and
4. there is no more than one VCF line per genomic coordinate.

In other words, before using the converter, you must create a manually edited version of the VCF file, as follows:

1. Non-haploid genomic regions: If your VCF files contains non-haploid genomic regions from multiple individuals, delete the VCF lines referring to the non-haploid regions.

2. Deletions: In the VCF file, edit the VCF lines containing deletions as follows: The REF field should have a single nucleotide, the ALT field should have a “-“ (a minus, without the inverted commas).
3. Complex indels or complex substitutions: In the VCF file, edit the complex variant such that the REF field contains exactly one nucleotide and the ALT field contains exactly one nucleotide or “-“ (a minus, without the inverted commas).
4. Multiple lines containing the same genomic coordinate: In the VCF file, edit the genomic coordinate lines such that the CHROM field plus the POS field are a unique combination, e.g. edit chr1 1234 into chr1 1234a in the first line, chr1 1234b in the second line, chr1 1234c in the third line, and so on.

Finally, you can use our easy-to-use converter to select the VCF file and export a binary RDF file for Network or a multistate RDF file for Network. The converter will take the base file name from the VCF file and add “\_binary.rdf” or “\_multistate.rdf” for the exported RDF files.

Because our converter is not widely tested yet, we urge you to inspect the resulting RDF files in a text editor and report any undocumented bugs to us.

*New RDF file format:*

When you open the RDF files in a text editor, you will notice that they are different from previous versions of the RDF files:

1. The first line contains a “2” instead of a “1”
2. The second line contains long names consisting of the genomic positions as defined in your VCF file, e.g. “chr1\_1234a” (but without the inverted commas)
3. The third line contains a sequence of numbers, starting from 1.

When you import this RDF file into Network calculations, line 2 will be ignored and line 3 will be used to obtain the short name for each genomic variant in your VCF file. When you display the network graph, only the short name of the genomic variant will be displayed. In the future, we want to enable the display of long names in Network Publisher by allowing the original rdf file to be imported.

Currently, if you want to get back to the original genomic coordinate in the VCF file, you will need to

1. manually edit line 3 in the new RDF file before running Network calculations, or
2. mentally convert short names into original VCF genomic coordinates, using lines 2 and 3 as your name conversion table.

## 6.2 GenSearchNGS

NGS sequence alignment and variant-calling used to be the work of linux experts. We here include mention of GenSearchNGS because it is so user-friendly that it can be used by everyone on Windows, Mac or Linux computers. My colleagues and I have used it routinely for 5 years. The software costs about €5000 per user, but this cost is well justified, as it was developed within a European consortium by a team of clinical testing NGS experts. We find that their product support is responsive, professional and helpful.

For generating VCF files that can be converted into RDF files for Network, you should

1. import the NGS sequences into GenSearchNGS and align them, or import the aligned BAM files into GenSearchNGS
2. select all individuals and run the variant-caller over all individuals (joint variant calling)
3. open the list of variants in all individuals
4. perform quality filtering and manual inspections of the variants
5. save the joint variant list of filtered inspected variants as multi-sample VCF format
6. Then you can use our VCF2RDFconverter and generate the RDF files for Network as described in Chapter 6.1.

Please note that we are users (not agents) and that we do not offer advice or support or training for GenSearchNGS, as this is done by their support team. Weblink:

<https://www.phenosystems.com/www/index.php/products/gensearchngs>

## 6.3 SARS-CoV-2

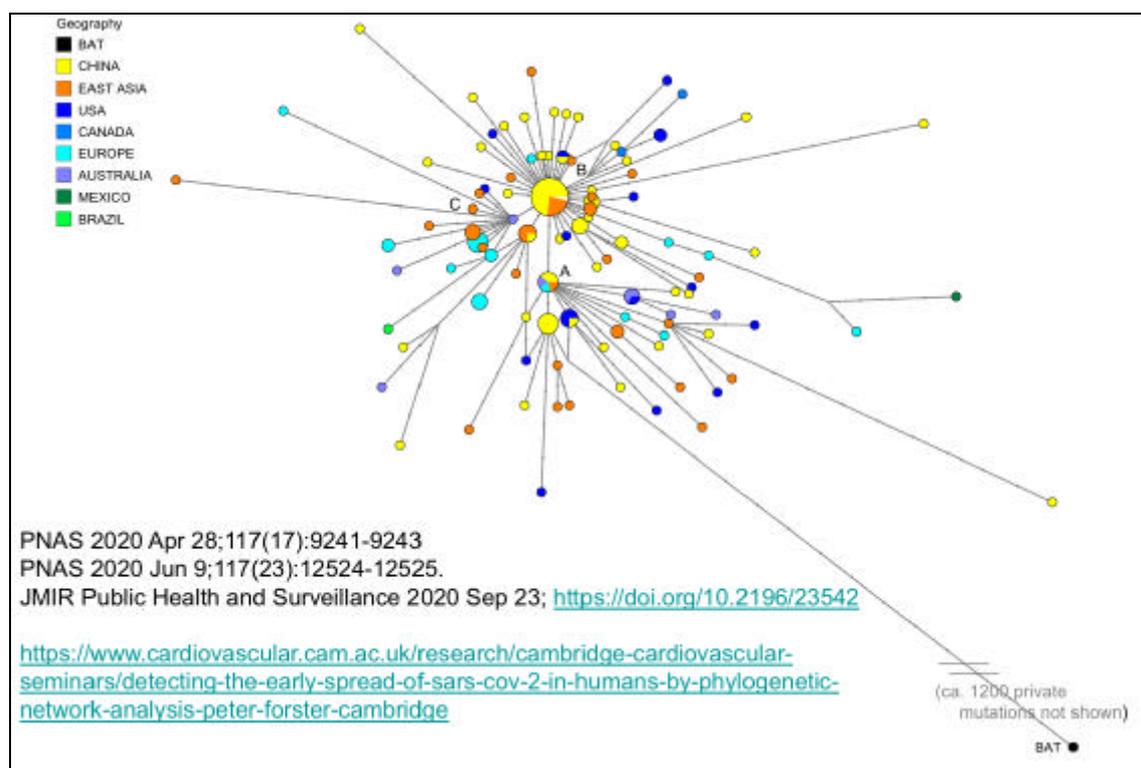
In this section we would like to share some experience that may help in the wet lab or in the data analysis and interpretation.

### 6.3.1 Private mutations of bat coronavirus in (PNAS) network

Users have occasionally sent us networks with very very long links in them. Therefore this chapter may be of general interest beyond SARS-CoV-2.

In phylogenetic graphs with large distances (e.g. many mutations) between sequences, you may encounter two problems:

- (1) The graph is impossible for a human to read because the links are several meters long if their lengths are drawn proportional to the number of mutations.
- (2) There is something that we call a “long branch artefact“, where a very long genetic distance on a single link may in some cases outweigh the genetic distances on the shorter links and may lead to strange results.



**Fig. 58: Phylogenetic network of early stage of SARS-CoV-2 pandemic**

A strategy to avoid ultra-long links in Network phylogenies (but not in distance-based networks or distance-based trees!) is to leave out private characters, i.e. characters (or mutations) that occur only in a single individual. This strategy works because the Network calculations use the individuals' discrete characters (mutations) to separate the individuals into distinct nodes in a graph. In the SARS-CoV-2 graph that we published in PNAS, the bat

coronavirus node would have been about 10 meters outside the figure if we had included the ca. 1200 private bat corona virus mutations. Therefore we did not use these private bat coronavirus mutations, and instead we just used the shared mutations and the private human coronavirus mutations.

The strategy seemed obvious to us and the reviewers, but raised some eyebrows from some readers who had not found any explanations in the previous version of this user guide.

An alternative to removing the private mutations of the outgroup individual could be to use the rooting options (i.e. call the outgroup “ROOT”, see Chapter 2.2.2 (Network calculation using the MJ algorithm with optional external rooting). This rooting option would compute the least distant node in the network and the graph would join the least network node to outgroup node. However, we decided to include the outgroup (minus its private mutations) into the network calculation so that ancestral (median vector) nodes are generated if appropriate. Figure 58 shows that the bat coronavirus node is not connected directly to a single node of the human coronavirus network, but equally to different two human coronavirus nodes via a shared median vector (reconstructed ancestral node).

### **6.3.2 Suggestions for adding virus genomes to early stage (PNAS) network**

Researchers who are analysing the genomic diversity of current virus genomes are faced with the difficulties of which references to include. If no references are included into a phylogenetic network of current virus genomes, then the evolutionary relationships may be misleading if the current virus genome sample is a mix of different lineages. In the spring of 2020, we added new human coronavirus sequences to our early stage (PNAS) network and could identify the lineages of regional outbreaks very well.

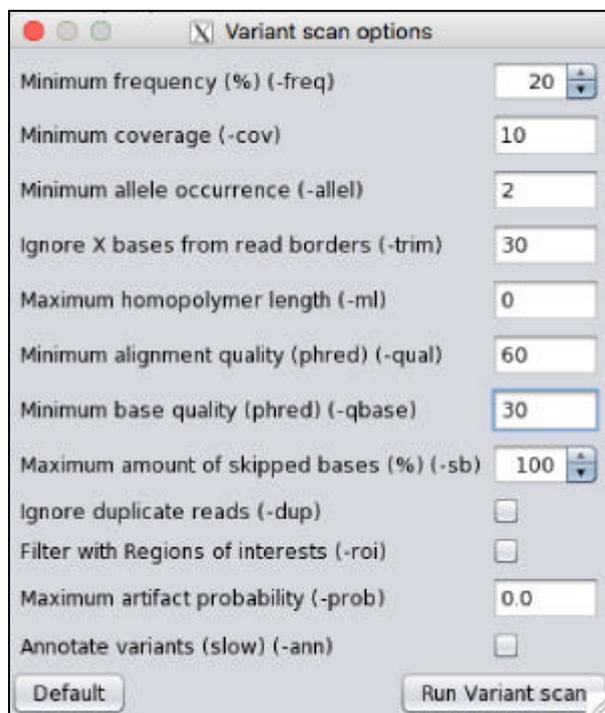
More than half a year later, we suggest to leave out the bat coronavirus outgroup (because the human coronavirus ancestral nodes are identified), and to experiment with just the highest-quality current genomes of interest and then with closely related highest-quality intermediate genomes to try to fill in the gaps. If too many genomes are included indiscriminately, then one will run into “hairball” problems despite the anti-hairball strategies documented in earlier chapters of this guide, and where a simple PCA plot may become preferable to a phylogenetic hairball.

### **6.3.3 Suggestions for alignment of virus genomes**

Swabs from routine PCR testing contain a very low fraction of virus RNA compared to human RNA, therefore human sequences may be aligned to the virus genome unless precautions are taken. One easy precaution is to align the sequences to a combined reference consisting of a human reference genome plus the SARS-CoV-2 reference genome.

### 6.3.5 Suggestions for variant-calling in virus genomes

When PCR amplicons are used (the ARTIC primers are frequently used to generate short-range amplicons), it is important to ignore primer artefacts. This can be done either by trimming the primer sequences from the sequences before alignment, or by using only the middle part of each sequence when calling the mutations.



**Fig. 59: Suggested variant scan settings for GenSearchNGS for SARS-CoV-2 (ARTIC)**

When long-range PCR amplicons are used, then it is possible that random artefacts may occur between the primer regions of an amplicon.