

Downloading Data From Paritech

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Pulling in the Data

Technical trading technologies have advanced in the past decade at a rapid rate, and now there are several programs available that specialise in handling EOD data, and presenting this on the screen in a range of forms, but the usual displays are in 'bar' graphs, 'candlesticks' and as 'line' data for the EOD prices, and a spike chart below for the volume traded during the day.

Virtually all these programs work in a similar fashion in that there is a database loaded on your personal computer that holds the historical security prices and volumes for particular stock exchanges. Some programs are Internet based and as such they do not download the database, but just the data for a particular stock, and over a specified limited historical range to minimise the download size.

Each of these securities has a name, and an associated acronym that it is known by. For example: Coles Myer Ltd has the acronym CML, Paladin Resources Ltd has the acronym PDN, Telstra has TLS, it ain't mind blowing, but I think that the Australian Stock Exchange (ASX) should have worked with a four letter code instead of as three letter code.

In Australia there are about 1800 listed companies, so each of these companies would have a three letter acronym for the base security for their listed company. Beyond that, there is a whole raft of extended acronyms with up to six letters/numbers – but starting with the initial three base letters to describe Options to purchase full priced securities, Notes to be converted to full priced securities at some future date, and Warrants that are in effect betting derivatives of the full priced security. In all there are typically about 7000 listed acronyms in the ASX alone, and the ASX is about 4% of the total world market!

The MetaStock Data Format

Most databases for these purposes are usually broken down to 26 different folders (alphabetic A...Z) so that the sheer number of files – upwards of 7000 for the ASX – can be pre-sorted by the first letter of each security and put into the relevant folder. That way the number of files per folder becomes far more manageable and data access is significantly speeded up into two searches, the first is one of 26, and the second is one of say 50 to 500 depending on the security acronym.

Some databases (eg MetaStock) have a master file in each folder A...Z that has an index / pointer to each of the securities in that folder, again speeding the access and retrieval of data. That way, as the acronym comes in, the master file immediately identifies the associated file and opens it as a common file entity.

Other databases merely keep the acronym filename and the search identifies the filename for opening. (This stuff is petty unless you really want very fast access, and with computers these days – that is hardly an issue as it was back in the mid 1985 era, when the personal computer clocking rate was 4.77 MHz as opposed to the 2004 typical clocking rate of more than 1.4 GHz, and that is at least 300 times faster!)

Every day (usually in the evening well after trading has finished), data is usually downloaded from data agents on behalf of the stock market(s) onto your computer.

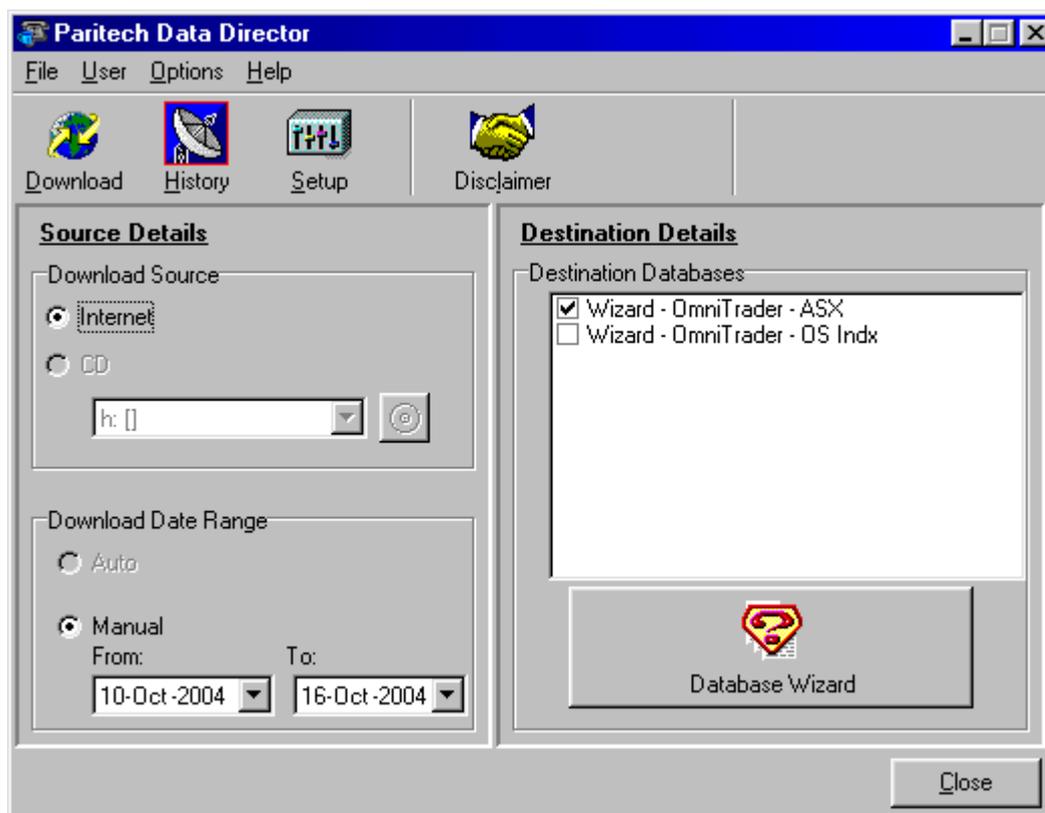
This can be automatic with some systems, but in most cases the data download process is a manual operation. The usual process is to call the data supplier (via Internet) and when it connects, the data supplier interrogates your computer and establishes that you are a valid (and paid) client. The program then interrogates your data, or download history, and sets up to download the new data to a holding area in your personal computer – this takes a couple of seconds.

For EOD data this file is typically about 35 kbytes to 70 kbytes in size, so it takes a few seconds to transmit. Now the fun begins, as the data needs to be distributed. In earlier systems this was not automated and it was originally done by hand – and took hours, then more recently a separate program would distribute the data to the correct data files – in the correct data folders.

These days virtually all data distributors have got this issue all under one program, and fully automated, though in some instances it is necessary to hold the hand and update corrupted files. The distribution process usually takes between one and two minutes per day and compared to the data download it can seem like an eternity!

Downloading Data from Paritech

Here is an example of an automated download file from Paritech, and it is very easy to run!



Paritech have a very nice little program that is called Data Director. This program needs to initially set up so that it points to the right places in your computer (ie yopur current stock Exchange data files), and have the right options on which data to download from Paritech.

From that point running the program is almost too easy. Simply click on the Icon (put into your “Quick Launch Toolbar area) and it does the following.

- Connects to the Paritech FTP site and makes the connection.
- Checks the most recent data in your computer
- Sets up the FTP link to download.
- Downloads the EOD data files from the relevant stock exchanges
- Closes the FTP link
- Opens your relevant Historical Data file
- Updates the EOD data for that day and closes that file
- Steps onto the next day and repeats the updating process as above
- When finished, waits for manual control to shut it down

The picture below shows the count of Securities etc downloaded and updated into the local historical database.

Nr	Date	Data Folder	Count	Expiry	Month
1	11-Oct-2004	Ctry/Au/Asw/Equities	4920	31-Jul-2005	64
2	11-Oct-2004	Ctry/Au/Asw/Indices	20	31-Jul-2005	64
3	12-Oct-2004	Ctry/Au/Asw/Equities	4941	31-Jul-2005	63
4	12-Oct-2004	Ctry/Au/Asw/Indices	20	31-Jul-2005	63
5	13-Oct-2004	Ctry/Au/Asw/Equities	4968	31-Jul-2005	62
6	13-Oct-2004	Ctry/Au/Asw/Indices	20	31-Jul-2005	62
7	14-Oct-2004	Ctry/Au/Asw/Equities	4988	31-Jul-2005	61
8	14-Oct-2004	Ctry/Au/Asw/Indices	20	31-Jul-2005	61
9	15-Oct-2004	Ctry/Au/Asw/Equities	5007	31-Jul-2005	60
10	15-Oct-2004	Ctry/Au/Asw/Indices	20	31-Jul-2005	60

08:11:31 Press Close to continue

Finished ZYL 0:07:00

It is simplicity in itself! Bring up the program, as shown on the left, check the download dates, and click on “Download”, and wait. On the right hand side picture, the history of the downloaded data is shown and the bar graph across the bottom is representative of the data downloaded, or distributed.

Paritech have been doing this for several years and now have the process well in hand. It took several years for the business to build in reliability, but these days the chance of the system failing on download is fairly rare.

Adjusting the Data

We are almost there! But wait there is more! Having now received the data and stored it in your Personal Computer, some data needs ‘adjustments’ – that is – now that the data has been saved, the directors of some companies may have changed the allocation of shares.

For example, they may (from a specified date) have replaced every 10 full priced option (FPO) shares valued at say \$0.01 with one share valued \$0.10. This is a “1 for 10 offer” and the volumes also have to be changed (reduced by 10 times) to reflect this change too.

There are several other reasons for adjusting the FPO prices, as well as the security acronym, the company names, and the life of Warrants, Notes and Options.

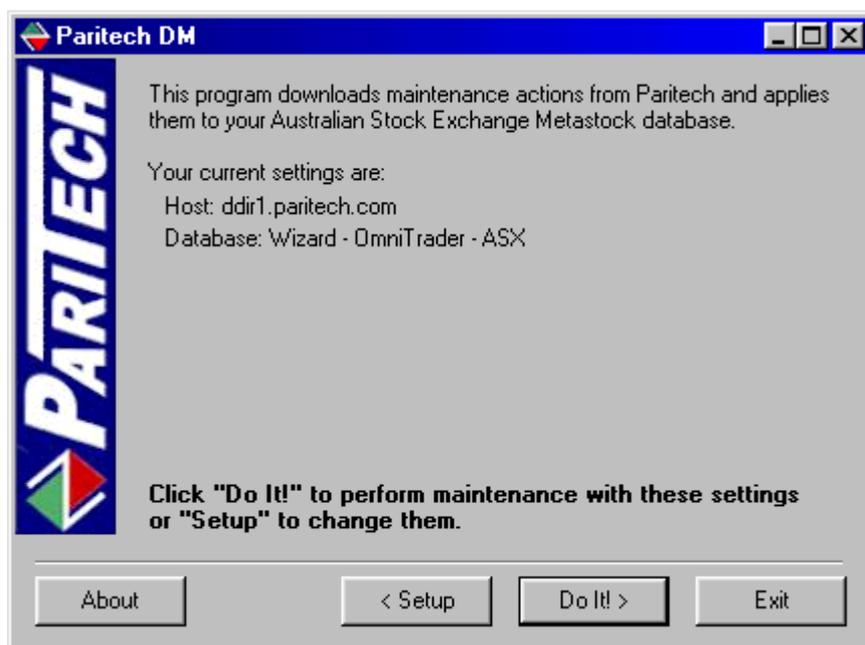
Currently most of these changes are done through a second downloaded data set that manipulates the prices, and volumes of particular securities, and changes acronyms, names and location of files in the database, as well as adjusts the database master files.

This is not a job for the faint hearted, and it takes a certain degree of discipline to update the database on a regular basis. After all – if the data is corrupt, then there is little use in using it!

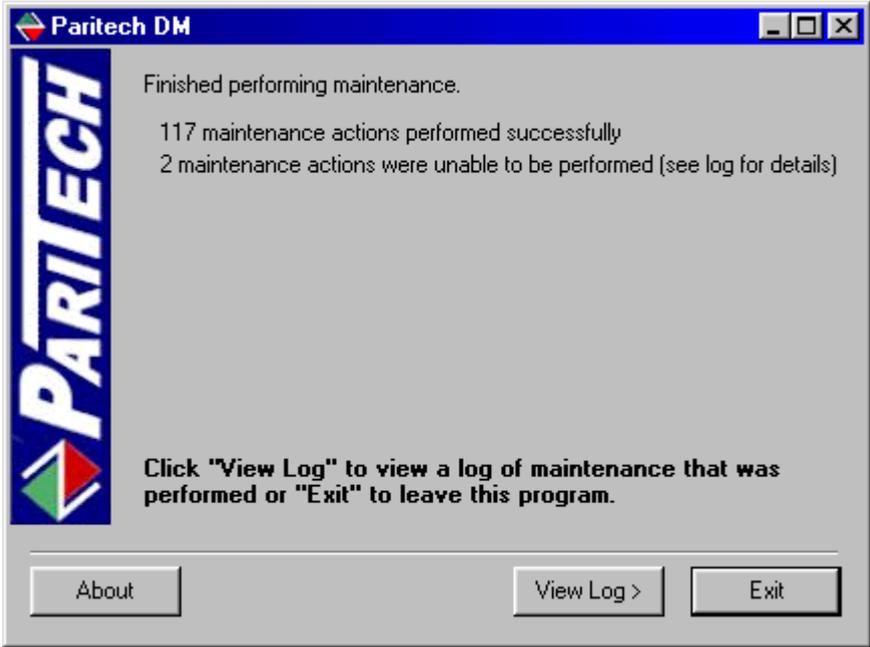
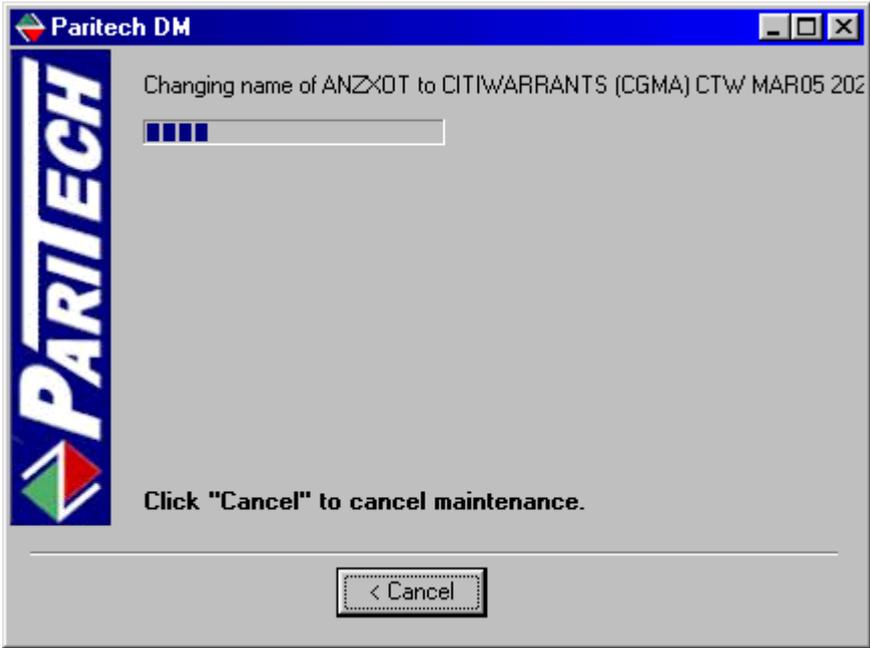
In this case you then need a third program to manage the data in your personal historical stock price/volume database. The MetaStock people (Equis) developed one called ‘The DownLoader’, which was anything but a DownLoader but was much more of a friendly stock data manipulator, and after a few dozen lost weekends on this you begin to get good at it,

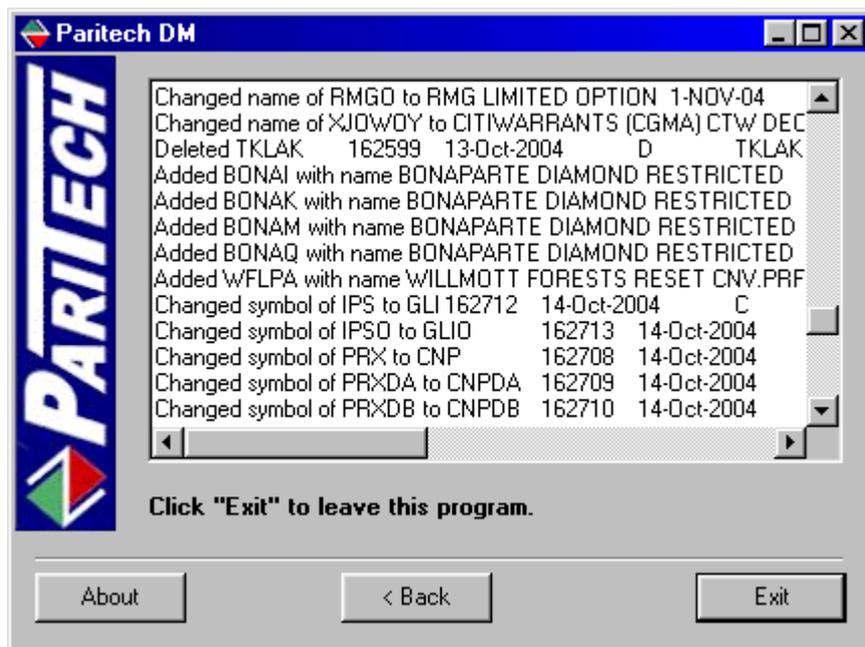
It took hours every weekend and the results were never that good, and you would always come across some share that you could see have had a ‘split’ or allocation because of the step in values. The choice was simple. Do it now, or add it to the list and do it in the evening, but if you don’t do it now, that data and the indicators associated with it will be inaccurate.

With some data download programs it is entirely automated into the download process and with others this is a separate maintenance role – but it is automated and it is not at all difficult! Again this is another example from Paritech using their Data Manager program - below.



The two screen shots here show the opening pane and the results pane so you can see what it does – can you imagine doing this by hand?





To complicate matters a little not every stock market technical analysis program had the data stored in the same fashion (obviously for commercial reasons), so then it would be essential to download the data for other programs in the same way – and individually manage the data changes in a similar fashion.

This then begs the question – “Why have more than one stock market analysis program?” The answer is not that simple but it comes down to using one program and after some time finding out what it does not do that is the problem and there is no way that you can get a program changed to sit your personality or to address issues that you see as severe shortcomings.

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