Cloning Column Properties

It is not uncommon for a research project to measure many of the same parameters at different locations, say, or in different contexts. In such cases, the same parameters can end up as data table columns in different tables and even different datasets. It is useful, then, to "clone" column properties from one table to another. ezEML provides such a capability. This is a convenience, but it is also a small step toward metadata standardization.

The ability to clone column properties from another table is also very useful in scenarios where you've modified a table by adding, deleting, or reordering columns, for example. When a table's *structure* has changed the **Re-upload** feature cannot be used, but you would like to be able to upload the modified table without having to re-enter the metadata for the columns whose properties are unchanged. Cloning the properties makes that possible.

Suppose, for example, we have created a dataset with a data table called Data_1, and we have entered all of its metadata. Then we upload another data table, Data_2, with most of the same columns. We want to clone a number of column properties from Data_1 to Data_2. Suppose our list of data tables looks like this:

We've already filled out all the metadata for Data_1, and we want to reuse its column properties in table Data_2. In this scenario, we will refer to Data_1 as the **source** data table and Data_2 as the **target** data table.

We click **Edit** next to Data_2, opening a page that contains the following (only part of the page is shown):

Columns:

YEAR_IN, PRIMARY_PRODUCTION, site, new_growth, ARM

> Edit Column Properties   Clone Column Properties from Another Data Table   ⑦

We click **Clone Column Properties from Another Data Table**. This brings up a page where we select the EML document containing the source data table:

Clone Column Properties from Another Data Table ⑦

Select a data package from which to clone:

Document Name

> sample.1.1 (current data package)   ⌄

> Open for Cloning   Cancel

For this example, we're assuming Data_1 and Data_2 are both in the current data package, which we've selected, but Data_1 is allowed to be in a different data package. Click **Open for Cloning**. This opens a page that contains:

Clone Column Properties from Another Data Table ⑦

Select a data table from which to clone column properties:

- ◉ **Data_1**
- ○ **Nitrogen data**

> Select Data Table   Cancel

We need to select which table will be the source table. (Table Data_2 is not listed as an option because it wouldn't make sense to clone a table onto itself.) We select Data_1 and click **Select Data Table**. This brings up a page that contains:

Clone Column Properties ⓘ

From source data table: **Data_1**

Select the columns whose properties you wish to clone: [Select All] [Clear All]

- ☐ **YEAR_IN**
- ☐ **PRIMARY_PRODUCTION**
- ☐ **site_name**
- ☐ **new_growth**
- ☐ **ARM**

[Select Columns] [Cancel]

We need to select the source data table's columns we want to clone. For the purposes of this example, let's suppose we want to clone all but PRIMARY_PRODUCTION. We can click **Select All**, and then click the checkbox for PRIMARY_PRODUCTION to de-select it. Alternatively, we can select columns by clicking their checkboxes one at a time. Now the page looks like:

Clone Column Properties ⓘ

From source data table: **Data_1**

Select the columns whose properties you wish to clone: [Select All] [Clear All]

- ☑ **YEAR_IN**
- ☐ **PRIMARY_PRODUCTION**
- ☑ **site_name**
- ☑ **new_growth**
- ☑ **ARM**

[Select Columns] [Cancel]

Click the **Select Columns** button. This brings up a page that looks like:

Clone Column Properties ⑦

From source data table: **Data_1**

To target data table: **Data_2**

Source Column → Target Column ⑦

Source Column	Target Column
YEAR_IN	YEAR_IN ⌄
site_name	- select target column - ⌄
new_growth	new_growth ⌄
ARM	ARM ⌄

[Clone Column Properties] [Cancel]

For each of the source columns, we need to select the corresponding column in the target data table. Note that the columns don't have to be named identically between the two tables, nor do they need to appear in the same order. Columns with matching names are pre-selected by default, since that is most likely what you will want, but you can change any of the selections. In our hypothetical example, all of the source columns have a matching target column except for the "site_name" column. After we select the target columns, we get something like:

Clone Column Properties ⑦

From source data table: **Data_1**

To target data table: **Data_2**

Source Column → Target Column ⑦

Source Column	Target Column
YEAR_IN	YEAR_IN ⌄
site_name	site ⌄
new_growth	new_growth ⌄
ARM	ARM ⌄

[Clone Column Properties] [Cancel]

We then click **Clone Column Properties** to cause the properties to be cloned. This is potentially a significant change, so you are asked to confirm the action before cloning takes place.

After cloning, the selected columns in the target data table will have the same properties as the corresponding columns in the source data table except that the column *names* are not changed. I.e., the target data table columns keep the names they have in the target data table's CSV file, so the metadata will match the CSV file.