ChemDraw and Office 2016 on Macs

"Round trip" editing ChemDraw figures embedded within Office 2016 documents sometimes does not behave as expected as Office versions change. Here's how to fix some problems

Why you need this page

On a Mac, sometimes round trip editing with ChemDraw to and from MS Office applications work great, including the release of MS Office 2016 v15.x. However starting at least with MS Office 2016 v16.12, it we discovered it started to fail with just PowerPoint. It still worked fine with MS Word. Such changes might occur in the future at any time so we here document a work-around we hope will still work in the future.

A solution

If pasting into ChemDraw from MS Powerpoint results in a non-editable version of the image:

- First **paste into Word**
- Copy and paste back into ChemDraw
- The image should now be editable by ChemDraw

As seen in the past, this solution may unfortunately change in the near future. There are many places (Powerpoint, Word, or ChemDraw) where this can change with a newest version release. This solution currently works for MS Office 2016 v16.12

Supporting Documentation

What we know

After viewing Clipboard information using Apple's ClipboardViewer, we found that image copied from ChemDraw, into Word, and back into ChemDraw contains the exact number of bytes, resulting in no quality loss. This was a concern as many posts on the internet had been reporting fuzziness, however this doesn't seem to be an issue for ChemDraw. Images are identical.

What we don't know

For some reason, when pasting into Powerpoint (either from ChemDraw or Word), the resulting image loses some bytes (in our test it went from 6835 to 4296). However, when pasting back into Word and subsequently ChemDraw, the original number of bytes are displayed. Perhaps MS Word converts the other remaining metadata from Powerpoint and rebuilds the original image? This tells us that even older images that have stopped working with roundtrip editing may be able to be "revived" by this Word conversion.

Blog post that gave some original guidance and introduced ClipboardViewer

- https://dgleich.wordpress.com/2017/01/16/fuzzy-pixelated-pdf-copy-paste-from-macos-preview/

Old ChemIT documentation - notes and history

- ChemDraw and Office 2016 on Macs debugging notes and history