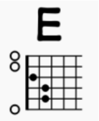
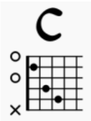
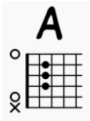
Concerning “open chord diagrams”

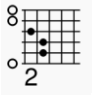


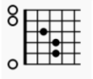
is one of the open chord diagrams. Let’s stick to this. Only two others 

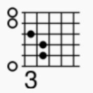
and 

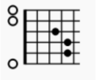
are prone to be offset on the fretboard (and of course, their minor and sept variations). For them all further explanation is valid analogously.

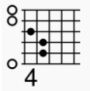
Mechanically increasing the fret number of the diagram would *not* change the depiction of the diagram. Only a little digit 2 would appear beneath the first fret stating it now be the second fret – and the thicker leftmost line representing the saddle would change in to a thinner one. The digit 1 never appears beneath the first fret, it is represented by that thicker line, that disappers while shifting. But in reality the three fingers of the open diagram are offset one fret to the right, which can also be put this way – it’s all the same:

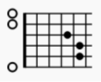




Further offset leads to 

= 

and 

=  That shall be enough.

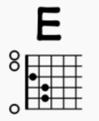
The status quo of musescore is that the name of the chord does not change, even if the diagram gets “shifted”. It keeps to be “E” even after an arbitrary number of moves. That’s obviously wrong. As obviously the idea behind increasing the fret number is, that after “shifting” the diagram the whole structure of the chord is preserved. Why would a guitarist move his fingers from an open E-major chord one fret to the right? He wants to play an F-major chord! He would call that an F-major chord, even if he forgets to place his index finger on the first fret as a barré. He would not forget it, however. It would sound horrible. The same he would do with the chord’s name or expect from an automatic feauture. And if he just increases the fret number of the open chord diagram he will immediately recognize that it is not the F-major diagram he expects. He would replace the diagram by a proper one or reshape it to fit to the F-major chord. An “E” should becom an “F” should become an “F#”, should become a “G”. In fact the single fingers shifted that way reflect exactly that – the form the triad (2nd inversion) of exactly the intended chord. Hence automatic renaming of chord names would meet the intention of the user even with shifting “open chord” diagrams.

However, the resulting diagram after having increased the fret number does not meet said intention, for Musescore preserves the open-string-indicators while the fret number is increased! Those open strings are fix and not affected by the shifting. The structure of the actual chord gets distorted and somehow stretched. The name received by the automatic renaming procedure does not fit to the true shape of the chord represented now by the diagram. But anyway, the original name, should it be unchanged, does neither! The problem is not the renaming but the undue preservation of open string-indicators. In fact, those should have been replaced by mute-string-indicators in the shifting process. Or they just should be deleted and an additional fret had to be inserted left of the original diagram, that would show a full barré of the index finger in order to imitate the function of the saddle in the original open chord diagram. You can think of the saddle in an open chord diagram being the index finger and an offset by one fret would shift that index finger onto the first fret.

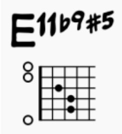
Musescore is by now not capable of changing the pattern of a diagram on its own. It is not even capable to recognize that a diagram contains open-string-indicators. That’s the gist of the matter. Otherwise, Musescore could inhibit increasing fret number for open chord diagrams, which would be the simplest and most correct solution. Everything would be fine. But I do not expect Musesscore to be capable of that. That would be really hard programming! Although, in the inspector, an open chord diagram is disassembled into all ist single elements. They could then manually be individually changed. This means, too, their existence could individually be recognized and theoretically also be changed by the program alone. No, I am far away from requiring that. Just rename the chord as if there were no open-string-indicators in the diagram because they are only erroneously preserved. Or more friendly said, "by the limitations of the system".

So far my discussion tried to follow the expectations and intentions that would emerge from practice. My further discussion describes something I would call abstract or formal or mechanical ideas with no or very little relation to real needs. For reasons of completeness I do it anyway.

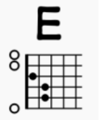
You can, of course, argue as well, that someone intentionally shifts the fingers to the right and wants the open-string-indicators to be preserved at the same time. That is, he really wants to create such a weird chord. Then the behavior of Musesscore would be exactly what he wants. (but let’s face the truth: Musesscore doesn’t want to make such weird intention possible, it just has limitations, because no one was willing to take the burden and write code to make open-chord-diagrams shiftable. I can understand that, though. Probably no one even saw a problem with it). Anyway, Such chords could be given a name, too. Because of the open strings being preserved all the way through, all the chord patterns would keep the root name of “E”.



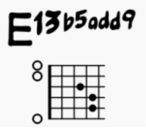
1 fret to the right results in



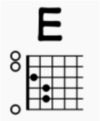
which also coud be called “$E^{sus4b9\#5}$”



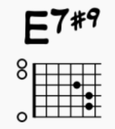
2 frets to the right results in



which also coud be called $E^{6/9b5}$



3 frets to the right results in



which as a chord is not so uncommon

Lets stop here. The principle should be clear by now. Musescore renders the resulting diagrams slightly different by leaving out the empty frets and placing the fret digits instead, but that’s simply a different way to display the same pattern.
You could give any chord a name … but this is mere theoretical playing around. I agree with you, these are rather exotic names and the chords created by shifting in the described way, no one would use. They make hardly sense. Even a not so uncommon $E^{7\#9}$ would be fingered in a completely different way, normally.

Any effort to find a correct name for those chords automatically would be a waste of time and resources. I know of sophisticated program features (from completely other programs than Musescore) that have never been applied by no user during the lifetime of the program – except by the programmer while testing the functionality. And it is much easier to have a separate, suitable diagram in the template section than making open chord diagrams “shiftable”. Musescore has them. That’s enough and no reason to further bother about someone who actually offsets an open chord diagram.