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Title: Friendly databases

Document for: information

During the Chairman's survey recently conducted by MCC, several TSG / WG officials commented that the [Specs Status database](#) and the [Change Request database](#) were too complex. I accept this criticism in the case of the status database, but find it hard to believe that the CR database could possibly be simplified, consisting as it does of a single table whose structure has remained almost unchanged for three years.

In the case of the Specs Status database, I agree that the size and number of tables and queries is a little daunting at first sight, especially if you try to use it under a version of Microsoft Access other than 97 SR1. This complexity is justified by the fact that this database is the master source of almost all information relating to the management of the 3G project. Indeed, the Change Request table contained in the CR database is in fact a copy of the master CR table in the Specs Status database.

For those who want an extremely simple, flat table, of the specs status, this exists in a [separate, very simple, database](#). [Sorry, Word does not permit you to open an Access database directly: copy the hyperlink behind the foregoing text and past it directly into your browser.] However, the simplicity of this table limits its application to rather primitive uses.

Nevertheless, it is accepted that some simplification of the main Specs Status database is desirable, and some weeding out of obsolete queries is possible. Believe it or not, I do make periodic forays into this minefield, and do discard elements no longer required. It is anticipated that MCC will move to Access XP later this year, and it will be necessary to upgrade the Specs Status database to run under XP. Due to a backwards-incompatibility problem with the embedded Visual Basic rules between version 97 SR1 and XP, the conversion is not a trivial exercise. Nevertheless, the opportunity will be taken to do further pruning of dead wood. Not only will the database become less complex, it might even decrease slightly in size, although this trend is likely to be offset by a corollary of the [second law of thermodynamics](#).

And now the good news ...

If your need is simply to see the contents of the Specs Status database, rather than to manipulate the data or to run queries, then the essential contents is now available in HTML on the 3GPP web site.

- The table on page <http://www.3gpp.org/specs/numbering.htm> which describes the specs numbering scheme now contains hyperlinks to individual tables of each **series of specs**. See for example <http://www.3gpp.org/ftp/Specs/html-info/22-series.htm> for the 22.-series.
- The specs series tables list each spec (including withdrawn ones) in that series, and provide a hyperlink to the administrative **details of that spec**. See for example <http://www.3gpp.org/ftp/Specs/html-info/22067.htm> for 22.067.
- For each spec, the page gives the history of that spec from Release to Release and gives a hyperlink to **each available version**. It also shows family tree, in the case of 3rd generation specs created from 2nd generation antecedents (and vice versa).
- For each new version of a spec created at a meeting, a hyperlink will take you, via a list of all 3GPP **plenary meetings** (and also meetings of ETSI TC SMG and CEPT GSM) - <http://www.3gpp.org/ftp/Specs/html-info/PlenaryMeetings.htm> -, to the area of the file server in which that **meeting's documents** are to be found. See for example http://www.3gpp.org/ftp/tsg_sa/TSG_SA/TSGS_16/ for TSG SA meeting number 16.

- Furthermore, a hyperlink is provided to the list of **Change Requests** for the spec. See for example <http://www.3gpp.org/ftp/Specs/html-info/22067-CRs.htm> for the CRs to 22.067.
- To help decipher the implications of the work item code associated with each CR, the CR page includes a hyperlink to a further new page which presents the current 3GPP **work plan**, <http://www.3gpp.org/ftp/Specs/html-info/GanttChart-Level-2.htm>. For those who only want an overview of the work plan without all the fine details, a view collapsed to Feature-level tasks only can be selected (<http://www.3gpp.org/ftp/Specs/html-info/GanttChart-Level-1.htm>).
- For most **Features**, there is a link to a page containing an informal, largely non-technical, description of the benefits that Feature is designed to bring to the 3GPP system. See for example <http://www.3gpp.org/specs/WorkItem-info/WI--32023.htm> for LCS phase 2.

The work plan page is also available from a hyperlink on the main 3GPP work plan page, <http://www.3gpp.org/Management/WorkPlan.htm>.

All these pages are extracted from the Specs Status database on a regular basis (normally daily), so can be relied upon to provide up to date information.

In summary, the chairmen's remarks have been heeded, and I and my colleagues in MCC are doing our best to provide you with the information you want in an as easily accessible way as possible. Of course, constructive criticism of these services is very welcome, and is essential in tuning our activities to reflect the needs and wishes of *you*, the people active in the Project, and your paymasters.