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Specnique Improvements

Specnique's new version (last September) included long-anticipated enhancements such as:

- an ability to include custom Table of Contents entries (for non-specification documents such as Drawings or Schedules or Legends),
- a project section cross-referencing tool, such as checking for accuracy of specification section cross reference numbers (see further commentary - refer to the next news category below),
- a number of user-interface improvements to make the software even easier to use.

We have created a new "subscription" pricing strategy to serve our customers better. Digicon will be requesting updates to subscriptions every year - in return, we will be re-investing this income into new software improvements at a faster rate than before, and speed the adoption of this new generation software.

One of the significant advantages to Specnique is that the software code uses database technology to manage the text, overcoming limitations imposed by word processor software. This means that Specnique is a prime candidate for adopting the newer BIM (Building Information Management) technology. Finally, connecting specifications to drawings (and any other kind of construction data) is becoming a reality – and Specnique can respond directly to that need.

To help this transition along, both Digicon Information Inc. and our SPEX.CA partners at Construction Specifications Canada (CSC) are now directly involved internationally in the development of information standards and libraries to feed into this emerging technology.

Our Specnique developers are already using operational software on pilot projects in Norway. Meanwhile, Digicon is migrating its master specification database into a more BIM-friendly format. Together, we intend to help the Canadian marketplace move into this new medium of 3D, 4D (time), and 5D (costs). By developing to evolving BIM standards, our software will automatically be compatible with standards-compliant BIM CAD applications. Stay tuned for more updates on these developments.

SpecSuite 2007-Q1 Update (January)

All CMS and MiniSPEC Sections Updated

In this calendar quarter, we have updated ALL sections from Canadian Master Specification (CMS) and MiniSPEC (MS). This update addresses all internal specification section cross referencing. Several of our subscribers advised us of some errors to sections that either didn't exist or were number referenced incorrectly.

We also had a global problem with MS Word and its management of a "page number of number of pages" in a specification section. When beginning to edit a spec section, the page header might read "Page 1 of 15". After editing the section, the page header still had the 15 pages noted but there were now only 9 pages in the section. We found that after editing (and shortening) the spec section, MS Word would not update the total number of pages designation consistently or accurately. We have now reverted to single page numbers.

We have, for the history of CMS (about 30 years) used the expression "... conform to manufacturer's instructions." We were made aware in a recent Canadian legal dispute, that a manufacturer might offer verbal instructions on a project site – which were not provable or substantiated at a later date. We have changed this statement to "... conform to manufacturer's written instructions." All CMS sections were updated accordingly.

We chose to update all specification sections in our two primary specification libraries. These updates sometimes also address section internal cross references in MiniSPEC.

ALL CURRENT CMS and MiniSPEC SUBSCRIBERS: Log in to SPEX.CA and sign-in to your account (name/password) and download updated master specification sections as they apply to your current subscription.

Plus Sections Updated This Quarter

In addition to the above global update to all CMS and MiniSPEC Sections, the following is a summary of specific sections with internal technical changes and corrections – as listed below:

Spec	Section Number	Section Title	Discipline* Packages	Status
CMS	01 10 00	Summary of Work	All	Update
CMS	01 12 00	Multiple Contract Summary	All	Update
CMS	01 19 00	Specifications and Documents	All	Update
CMS	01 19 10	Electronic Model Database	All	New
CMS	01 42 00	References	All	Update
CMS	05 41 00	Structural Metal Lightweight Framing	A,L,S	Update
CMS	05 50 00	Metal Fabrications	A,L	Update
CMS	05 51 00	Metal Stairs	A,L,S	Update
CMS	05 52 00	Metal Railings	A,L,S	Update
CMS	05 53 00	Gratings and Floor Plates	A,S	Update
CMS	05 59 13	Roof Safety Restraints	A,L	Update
CMS	05 71 13	Fabricated Metal Spiral Stairs	A	Update
CMS	07 54 11	Single Ply TPO Roofing – Mechanically Attached – Conventional	A,R	New

Spec	Section Number	Section Title	Discipline* Packages	Status
CMS	08 11 13	Standard Metal Doors and Frames (a new combined door and frame section)	A,I	New
CMS	08 12 13	Standard Hollow Metal Frames	A,I	Update
CMS	08 13 13	Standard Hollow Metal Doors	A,I	Update
MS	01 60 00	Product Requirements	All	Update
MS	05 50 10	Metal Fabrications	A	Update
MS	05 51 10	Metal Stairs	A	Update
MS	08 11 00	Standard Metal Doors and Frames (a new combined door and frame section)	A	New
MS	08 11 10	Standard Hollow Metal Frames	A	Update
MS	08 11 11	Standard Hollow Metal Doors	A	Update
OS	05 50 50	Metal Accessories	-	Update
OS	08 10 10	Doors and Frames	-	Update
* Discipline package codes: A = Architectural, C = Civil Engineering, E = Electrical, H = Heritage, I = Interiors, L = Landscape, M = Mechanical, R=Roofing/Waterproofing, S=Structural				

CCDC 2 Status

Our continual checking with the powers that be, on the status of the (still) forthcoming CCDC 2 (Canadian standard form of contract for stipulated price), has been frustrating for the industry to say the least. The industry is still handicapped with a 12 year old contract form that was deemed needy of updating 12 years ago. Wake up guys and gals – the industry is still waiting.

Division 01 Section to Address Model (BIM) Drawings

Digicon developed a new CMS Division 01 section that addresses BIM (Building Information Model) subjects affecting electronic specifications and CAD drawings. Section 01 19 10 – Electronic Model Database as of this update is now part of CMS Division 01. This document focuses on the administrative and application aspects of this new legally perplexing issue, affecting Consultants who develop drawings (and virtual models). This particular specification section addresses:

- recognizing exclusive copyright ownership by a consultant-of-record, of a project’s design interpretation as expressed on project drawings in a 2D or 3D database,
- the acknowledged practice of copying (sharing) these electronic drawings to contractors (and subcontractors) for their use during the construction processes,
- permitting contractors, subcontractors, and suppliers to expand these drawings to create detailed shop drawings and erection drawings,
- recognition of a contractor’s (and subcontractor’s) developed portion as their respective contribution, and
- continuation of a consultant’s copyright of the project design, in association with these involved parties.

Formal contract documents (like CCDC documents) associated with BIM subjects have yet to be seen in the Canadian construction industry – but they will happen (soon we hope). Digicon has been exploring and testing this relatively new subject and will be developing specific specification sections accordingly, for the exclusive benefit of our subscribers.

CSC And CSI Sign "IFD Library" Letter of Intent

The IFD Library is a library of building construction terms, designed to be compatible with the quickly evolving buildingSMART (BIM) standards being developed internationally. In Washington, DC, David Watson of Digicon (representing CSC) and Roger Grant (representing CSI) signed a letter of intent to develop this construction library of terms with the founding IFD Library members from Norway and The Netherlands.

The next IFD Library meeting will be held in Ede, The Netherlands in early March 2007. That meeting will be attended by David Watson and Mary Friesen, representing CSC. The purpose of the meeting will be to establish a business model for the new consortium, and lay out a development plan to populate the IFD Library with terms and definitions from our respective countries (and languages).

This topic of a terminology library hits close to the heart, for both CSC and Digicon and our related publications. In addition to enabling us to standardize on terminology, IFD Library will be compatible with BIM standards and bring us closer to true seamless interoperability within our industry and between countries (and languages).

For more information, review the IFD Library web site (<http://www.ifd-library.com>).

BrandedSPEC - Quality Proprietary Specifications!

Digicon is building a database of proprietary master specifications fully compatible with our generic offerings, and best of all ... it's **FREE** to users (check out the first BrandedSPEC files at our [BrandedSPEC Page](#) online!

BrandedSPEC is a compilation of branded (proprietary) master specifications that have been specially written to specify a particular manufactured product. The cost of development and maintenance of BrandedSPEC sections is borne by the manufacturers themselves, and offered to the construction public, **FREE** – that means no cost.

The BrandedSPEC offering is a better solution than existing specifications offered by manufacturers themselves (or those offered by popular internet portals), because the file organization (MasterFormat 2004), specification grammar, and automated text formatting will be 100% compatible with the existing Digicon editing software options. In addition, Digicon will be enforcing our high quality standards for text content before they are offered to the public.

Digicon plans to encourage product manufacturers to develop CSC endorsed **ProductFormat** documents for their individual products, which enable specifiers to accurately specify their products for a project using the matching BrandedSPEC documents. Manufacturers should contact Digicon at sales@Spex.ca or phone us if they wish to participate in the BrandedSPEC program.

Standardized BIM

Digicon has been involved with ICIS from its beginning (initially as a CSC rep, and then joining ICIS itself), and has been following standardization closely. We believe that the BIM (Building Information Modelling) standards are sufficiently matured, and pilot projects using software tools compatible with the buildingSMART BIM standards have been executed, to prove that the standardized BIM concept really works!

BIM is a concept which is not new, and in fact proprietary methods have been developed and used in the past. However, proprietary solutions will always be limited in adoption to only corporations interested in partnering with the proprietary owner. This limits its usefulness to the needs envisioned and supported by the one vendor and their

partners, which normally limits the number of disciplines that can take advantage of the technology, and thus the number of countries willing to support it.

Standardized BIM is a solution whereby the information created by one application is able to "reliably" communicate design data to another application that is compliant with the standard. This means that a CAD vendor from Hungary can create a BIM project model, which could be read and interpreted accurately by a specification vendor in Canada (and back again). The two compliant companies need never meet!

The primary standard being adopted in international circles is the buildingSMART (formerly Industry Foundation Classes, or IFC) standard, developed by the International Alliance for Interoperability (IAI). Complementary standards (such as the IFD Library discussed earlier) are being developed to enhance the usefulness of buildingSMART. As we write this article, many major CAD vendors have either adopted the standard, or have made a commitment to adopt the standard in their software products.

Digicon is researching this standard, for the purpose of building a specification solution based on it. The result will enable Digicon subscribers to use Specnique to open a buildingSMART-compatible building model and automatically generate specifications based on the objects in the model. Word processors do not presently have the capabilities to move into this future with this technology, so Specnique will be the software tool adopted by Digicon.

Relevant URL Links

This section will not evolve into a network of links everywhere, but to serve to link readers to topics which are included in our newsletter.

- BrandedSPEC (<https://secure.spex.ca/index.php?page=branded/index.php>)
- CCDC Documents: (<http://www.ccdc.org/home.html>)
- Construction Specifications Canada (<http://www.csc-dcc.ca>)
- Construction Specifications Institute (<http://www.csinet.org>)
- Digicon Information Inc. (<http://www.digicon.ab.ca>)
- IFD Library (<http://www.ifd-library.com>)
- International Alliance for Interoperability (IAI) (<http://www.iai-international.org>)
- OmniClass (<http://www.omniclass.ca> and <http://www.omniclass.org>)
- Spex.ca (<http://www.spex.ca>)

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