

# Simple approach to classification

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## Overview

The IFC model contains good support for classification, and the support has gotten better with each release. However, classification is a concept that is not found in most of the existing IFC implementations. Now why is that?

In my experience CAD programs don't have good support for classification and CAD software vendors are reluctant to add support for it to CAD programs. When CAD programs don't create IFC files containing classification information down stream applications don't support it either.

The purpose of this document is to suggest a simple approach to classification that could be quite easily supported by existing CAD programs, and that would provide value for the down stream applications.

## Providing the possibility

Really supporting classification would be a heavy decision for CAD programs. CAD programs are trying to be as international as possible, and classification is always local. Supporting classification on a level where the user can select the classification information of the building components from a sophisticated user interface would require substantial localization effort.

However, support can easily be implemented on a simpler level. The users won't like this as much, but at least they have the possibility to use this feature. This would also open up classification for 3rd party developers, and these developers could well be interested in providing local solutions.

## The technical solution

To make it very simple classification can be captured using two strings; the classification notation and the classification source.

The classification source tells which classification is being used.

The classification notation is a string containing a notation defined in the classification source.

CAD programs should provide a very simple property UI for entering this data and should read/write this data into the IFC file. Once the data is in the IFC file it does not matter how good the UI for entering the data was. With this minimal classification data the down stream applications could start testing and using classification, which in turn should lead to a demand for more sophisticated solutions.