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SKU Part Numbers in Level 2 Transactions

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Krister Kittelson (<https://autocare.communifire.com/people/krister-kittelson>)



12/31/2019

While writing up the proposal for 0.8 I had a thought.

Updates in a Level 2 transaction in the current form can take be either at the SKU level or the Unique ID level.

Unique IDs provide important benefits like allowing mathematical comparison of datasets using their IDs alone.

However, SKUs just have part numbers and an owner. Already it's a dual primary key which isn't great, but it's also subject to things like character encoding, length restrictions, invisible characters, etc, that make it very hard to use deterministically. And further, I am basically just telling the receiver "Here's all of this type of data for this SKU" -- sounds a lot like a Level 1 transaction. Even if I do a delete and add, it's just manually telling the receiver to perform a complete replacement.

This also creates two completely different paradigms of operating within Level 2 and adds complexity.

What I was thinking is that maybe we should have a UUID assigned to the part as well. It would represent just the part number itself, not its data. It would be generated as an index via the PIM or preprocessor when the parts are created (similar to how we'd require an application record to have its UUID generated), and be a requirement for operating on the SKU in a Level 2 transaction.

This then puts the "assisted Level 1" at the human-grokkable and entry-level point of being able to window updates using part numbers, but allows us to make Level 2 much cleaner, leaner, and provable.

What do you think?

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Doug Winsby (<https://autocare.communifire.com/people/dougwinsby>) 

12/31/2019

:

Can we say with certainty that every saleable part (SKU) is uniquely identified by a Brand/PartNo? That's the assumption I usually make, but I'm not sure it is always true.

I ran into a manufacturer some years ago that had "versions" of parts. If I remember correctly, they could have multiple SKUs for a Brand/PartNo. I think it was either different suppliers, or maybe small engineering changes they needed to track. This might be more common than we think.

I like the idea of having a UUID assigned to every "Part Number". I'm just not sure it would make the unique key we were hoping for. Maybe **Jason Riegel** (<https://autocare.communifire.com/people/JRiegel>) would have some insight on this.

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Answer



Krister Kittelson (<https://autocare.communifire.com/people/krister-kittelson>) 

1/6/2020

:

Sounds like the UUID would be a good idea one way or another, and secondary to that, we have a need to say "what exactly is a part number?" I'll write up the UUID into the proposal draft anyways, we can always rip it back out.

To answer the question then: What is a part number? And what is a part creator (what I've been calling the owner in the document)?

Part Number: The unique identifier of a product among all the creator's products, as communicated to the general market and printed on labels. Includes all variation of a product if it is available in multiple configurations, colors, options, etc. For example, if windshield wiper ABC is available in black (referenced as ABC-BK) and grey (referenced as ABC-GR), the part number is not ABC -- this is properly a base part. Instead the part number is ABC-BK or ABC-GR. Similarly, if there are multiple revisions being supported simultaneously, the part number should reflect that if Sandpiper is expected to operate at that lower level -- so e.g. the part number would be ABC-BK1 and ABC-BK2.

Creator: The owner and controller of a product at the lowest reasonable level. For example, if Widgets Inc. is a subsidiary of multinational corporation Mechanical Products GmbH, which is itself owned by Mechanical Holdings LLC, but all the engineering and product management work is done by Widgets Inc. employees, then the owner should be Widgets Inc. and not its parents.

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