

Suggested changes for MediaStar 920 schedules page.

There is reasonable agreement on the Australian DTV forums that the “schedule listing” page for the MediaStar 920 has some design features that could be significantly improved. Feedback from you reported to the forum seems to indicate that you do not understand the various requests or see their relevance or importance. Therefore I have attempted to give my personal viewpoint on what I see as the most important deficiency in the user interface, which is otherwise quite good.

My usage pattern is that at least 90% of my families recording are regular weekly ones – only a small fraction are one-off events. All our schedules have an identifying name given in the schedule, so that we can easily identify the recorded files later. The problem with usability comes, for me, at two main times:

1. deleting or modifying weekly schedules, and
2. resolving reported conflicts (where the system reports a possible timing conflict, even though it is often wrong)

We typically have at least 20, sometimes 30 different schedules

Here is an image of a typical page, with some suggested changes that I will describe in detail below. As you can see, I currently only have a small analogue TV.



Firstly, it seems redundant to me to identify which favourites/main list is being recorded – by all means put it in the full page for the individual entry, but I can see no use for it in this page. Also, I am not sure if the “TV” or even the line number serves much useful purpose.

The column showing Off/Rec... will be redundant if you follow my suggestion for including the file name...

Including file name is most important single issue for me and for several other users. I often have the situation where I want to delete a schedule but it is not clearly identified on the main list. This is

especially true in the 19:30 to 21:00 time range, where there are often many recordings starting at similar times, but on different days of the week. The issue is that, with the currently displayed information, *it is often impossible to uniquely identify the required item*. Now, I do not want to delete the wrong one, so I patiently go into each of the possible entries, look at the file name and then exit and hope I am on the right entry when I delete it. If I think about it I will bump the starting time by a minute so I get a unique time. This is far more button presses than should be necessary.

A similar thing applies if I need to adjust a setting – for example if a special even delays the starting time, or I later extend it to catch the following program.

The best way to improve the usability of this page is to include the user-specified filename. Even if you do not have enough characters for the whole name, including just the first, say, 10 or 12 characters would be great. You could use special file names like “**off**” and “**remind**” to indicate non-recording schedules.

The other area where insufficient information is on the list is when we need to resolve clashes. We will *always* have entries that look like clashes on the main list because it does not show the day of the week of the schedule. There are many entries covering the prime viewing times, so we have to go into each individual entry to see the day of the week and the duration. It gets tedious and error-prone trying to work out if recordings are clashing. I would suggest you remove the work “week” and replace with some indication of which days of the week are scheduled. This could be one of two ways:

1. 7 columns with a tick for the selected days. This would need a floating header so we could still tell what the days were as we scrolled through the list, or
2. the letters “smtwtfs” as initials for the days of the week, displayed in a dark grey colour if they are not scheduled and the highlight colour if they are scheduled for that day. The reason for using grey letters for unscheduled days is that it makes the shared initials, “S” and “T”, unambiguous.

My other suggested addition would allow an indication of recording duration and overlap. I have included in the image green bars indicating recording start-finish. The entire line could be scaled from midnight to midnight and the green bar represent the active recording duration. That way overlap between conflicting recordings would be easy to visualise.