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**Cedric Chauve\*** ([cedric.chauve@sfu.ca](mailto:cedric.chauve@sfu.ca)), Dep. Mathematics, SFU, 8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6, Canada, and **Eric Fusy**. *Enumeration of distance-hereditary graphs*. Preliminary report.

We propose a combinatorial specification of distance hereditary graphs based on the split decomposition tree of this family of graphs and classical tools of enumerative combinatorics. We then use this specification to enumerate this family of graphs according to the number of vertices and to study the structure of their decomposition tree. (Received August 06, 2008)