



GS1 DataBar Frequently Asked Questions

Last Updated: 12 February 2007

GS1 DataBar™ Sunrise 2010

Is GS1 DataBar a new name for RSS?	Yes! The barcode formerly referred to as Reduced Space Symbology, or RSS, adopted its official new name GS1 DataBar on February 12, 2007.
What did the GS1 Board endorse as it relates to GS1 DataBar?	The GS1 Board endorsed a GS1 DataBar adoption proposal from a Board appointed Task Force that can be summarized as “GS1 DataBar symbols and GS1 Application Identifiers shall be available in all trade item scanning systems beginning Jan 1, 2010.”
Will EAN/UPC bar codes be replaced by GS1 DataBar?	Not always, as it will be left to the brand owner (party responsible for specifying package design) to decide. If no new data is required and the package has adequate space for a full EAN/UPC symbol, then there is no need to change unless the brand owner wants to recover package space for consumer communication. If the package is large enough to print a full size EAN/UPC symbol and all that is required in the bar code is GTIN-12 or 13 then EAN/UPC remains an appropriate solution. This allows the brand owner to switch when graphics are being revised for other reasons and therefore can be made with little or no increased cost
When will GS1 DataBar be used?	GS1 DataBar is already used today in the healthcare industry but the adoption date allows its use on any trade item beginning Jan 1, 2010 and this includes retail Point-of-Sale (wherever trade items are scanned). With the decision announced, GS1 Work Groups will form to develop, test, and standardize the best way to use it by "use case" or application.
Do I have to wait until Jan 1, 2010 to use GS1 DataBar?	Not always. Where GS1 DataBar is being used today (healthcare or other items not scanned at retail POS), it remains appropriate for use today. There is no need to delay current implementation of current global application standards that exist.



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<p>GS1 DataBar can carry GTIN-14 & additional data, but these are not used today at retail POS. Are these approved for use at retail POS in 2010?</p>	<p>Not yet. Use of GTIN-14 or additional information (such as serial numbers, lot numbers, expiration dates) will be approved when individual business cases are validated Rationale: Inevitable investments in new internal systems must be built on business cases that GS1 DataBar enables.</p>
<p>There is a complementary 2D bar code called Composite Component that can be used with GS1 DataBar. Is this a part of the 2010 Sunrise?</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>Will GS1 DataBar be used to carry the SSCC used on logistics units?</p>	<p>No. The Task Force did not recommend this as they felt the current GS1-128 bar code met the need (carries the additional data just like GS1 DataBar and SSCCs are not scanned at retail POS) and because EPC would evolve quickly here.</p>
<p>Will GS1 DataBar be used in logistics?</p>	<p>Yes, but only on trade items. For example, many large items (Televisions) will be scanned during transport and at retail. Also many retailers scan trade items as they move from distribution centers to store sortation. Finally, other sectors such as healthcare are already using GS1 DataBar on trade items scanned in logistic phases.</p>



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GS1 DataBar Comparisons to EAN/UPC

Is GS1 DataBar harder to print and scan than EAN/UPC?	No. Printing and scanning both bar codes is very much the same.
Does GS1 DataBar provide the accuracy and performance of EAN/UPC?	Yes. Major scanner OEMs on the BarCodes & Identification Technology Group (formerly called Global Symbology Committee) assisted in providing side-by-side evaluations to validate GS1 DataBar will meet or exceed the performance of EAN/UPC.
Is it true GS1 DataBar is smaller than EAN/UPC?	Yes, GS1 DataBar is over 50% smaller than EAN/UPC so it can be used for smaller or hard to mark products.
Can GS1 DataBar and EAN/UPC carry GTIN-14?	Yes. GS1 DataBar can carry all GTIN-14 where EAN/UPC cannot
Can GS1 DataBar and EAN/UPC carry additional information like serial or lot numbers?	GS1 DataBar Expanded can be scanned at retail Point-of-Sale (POS) and hold data in addition to GTIN (e.g. serial, batch, expiry date) where EAN/UPC cannot.
Are the GS1 DataBar symbol's bars and spaces smaller than EAN/UPC?	No, GS1 DataBar and EAN/UPC must be printed at the same target size and range of sizes because the scanner optics have been designed per these specifications for over 35 years and so printing quality can be maintained. .
If the bars and spaces are the same, then why is GS1 DataBar smaller?	When GS1 DataBar was designed, the "symbologists" of the GS1 BarCodes & Identification Technology Group (formerly called Global Symbology Committee) had 25 years of evolution to tap and without getting too techy, they figured out a way to make it smaller. If you want to get techy, well, then you better look into the specifications. They are available in GS1 General Specifications Section 5.5 available from GS1 Member Organizations (MO). To contact your local MO, visit http://www.gs1.org/contact/worldwide.php



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GS1 DataBar & EPC

<p>With EPC on the horizon, why adopt GS1 DataBar now?</p>	<p>GS1 DataBar and EPC make a new horizon of product information visible in the supply chain for increased collaboration between trading partners. EPC brings a step change in functionality, full visibility of goods in the supply chain, that is already being leveraged by many companies. GS1 DataBar is a simple solution for trading partners who look for more advanced information sharing and cannot justify the additional investment. GS1 DataBar provides a good migration path to EPC for those companies in the near future.</p>
<p>How are GS1 DataBar and EPC the same and how are they different?</p>	<p>In some ways GS1 DataBar and EPC are the same. They can both be used at retail point-of-sale if the equipment is in place. They can both carry information beyond GTIN like serial numbers. In other ways, GS1 DataBar and EPC are different. EPC does not require an operator to scan the bar code, can be read many tags all at once, and some tags can be rewritten. GS1 DataBar costs less to mark, is supported by the majority of scanner hardware today, and can be incorporated into PLU stickers on produce. In summary, the main thing they share is their ability to provide more product information to the supply chain and while both will co-exist, the choice between them will be made based on what is best for the application.</p>
<p>Which costs less, GS1 DataBar or EPC?</p>	<p>GS1 DataBar, as any bar code, is cheaper to apply to a product than an RFID tag, but two important factors must be considered. First, EPC tag costs are decreasing rapidly. Second and most importantly, cost is only half of the story. The opposite side of cost is benefit so they cannot be considered separately. The cost to benefit analysis between GS1 DataBar and EPC depends on what the business requirements are as EPC can do some things that bar codes will never be able to do. For example with a bar code you can scan what comes in and out to determine inventory levels, but with RFID you have the potential for real-time inventory views through the reading multiple tags at once.</p>
<p>Do GS1 DataBar and EPC complement each other?</p>	<p>Yes. GS1 DataBar and EPC are natural partners because both can carry more information about products. GS1 DATABAR will enable retailers to move from identifying fresh food using commodity codes to using vendor-based identification (GTIN). GS1 DataBar, like EPC, can carry serial numbers to give trading partners product visibility at the next level (individual items). GS1 DataBar can also serve as a backup to the EPC Tag just as the text below the bar code acts as a back-up to bar codes. On other important factor to consider is GS1 DataBar gives brand owners an alternative to move from the small EAN-8 bar code that is not EPC compatible.</p>



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GS1 DataBar Technology

<p>Are there different kinds of GS1 DataBar Symbols?</p>	<p>Yes, there are 7 different bar code "symbols" in the GS1 DATABAR "family". Four, DataBar-14, DataBar-14 Stacked Omni, DataBar Expanded, and DataBar Expanded Stacked were designed specifically to work at retail POS (omni-directional "slot" scanners). The remaining three, DataBar-14 truncated, DataBar-14 Stacked, and DataBar Limited, will not work at retail POS and were designed for very, very small products.</p>
<p>Why are there four different kinds of GS1 DataBar symbols for retail POS?</p>	<p>DataBar-14 and DataBar-14 Stacked Omni are the smallest, but can only carry GTIN. DataBar-14 is wider and shorter and DataBar-14 Stacked Omni is tall and narrow. This means the choice between the two can be made depending on how the package design wants to make space available for the bar code. DataBar Expanded and DataBar Expanded Stacked are larger but can carry up to 74 numeric or 41 alphanumeric data characters in a single row or up to 11 stacked rows. They can carry a SGTIN (GTIN + Serial Number) in about the same space as an EAN/UPC bar code.</p>
<p>Where can I find out some basic information about GS1 DataBar?</p>	<p>The GS1 BarCodes website contains this information: http://www.gs1.org/productssolutions/barcodes/</p>
<p>Where can I find detailed technical specification about GS1 DataBar?</p>	<p>The GS1 General Specifications Section 5.5 contains GS1 DataBar technical specifications. GS1 DataBar Specifications are in the final approval process in ISO/IEC SC31. Publication is expected by September 2006.</p>
<p>What data does DataBar-14 contain?</p>	<p>DataBar-14 can contain any of the 4 GTIN types: GTIN 8, 12, 13, or 14. DataBar-14 actually stores 13 digits, calculates the check digit, and implicitly contains the application Identifier "01". Upon decoding, software can deliver the actual GTIN format required by an application.</p>
<p>Doesn't DataBar Expanded always require an application to manage all the data it contains?</p>	<p>No, the advantage of Application Identifiers is that data is used only where it is required. System software will deliver only the data required in an application. This is an important point that enables applications requiring additional data to be installed as users are ready.</p>



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Application Identifier System

What is the Application Identifier (AI) System referred to in the adoption?	The GS1 Application Identifier System is a set of data elements that are specifically designed for use inside bar codes and tags. There are a little over 100 of them. About 10 of them are called "keys" because they are used to look up or register information. The rest are attributes of the keys like serial numbers, lot numbers, expiration dates, weights, and measures.
What GS1 carriers can carry AIs?	Bar Codes: GS1 DataBar, GS1-128, Composite Component, and Datamatrix. RFID: EPC.
Why not use one of the other bar codes at retail Point-of-Sale to carry the additional AIs?	GS1 DataBar is the only bar code that carries AIs that was specially designed to work with omni-directional scanners at retail Point-of-Sale (POS).
Where can I find more information on the Application Identifier System?	Visit http://www.gs1.org/productssolutions/barcodes/technical/application_identifiers.html or contact your GS1 Member Organisation (MO). The definitions are found in GS1 General Specifications Section 3 available from your local GS1 MO. To contact your local MO, visit http://www.gs1.org/contact/worldwide.php
Is the GS1 Application Identifier System ISO-recognized?	Yes, see ISO/IEC JTC1 SC31 15418.



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Next Steps for Retailers

Read our GS1 DataBar Retailers Starter Kit	Visit www.gs1.org/starter_kits for information!
Read our GS1 DataBar Buyers Guides	Visit www.gs1.org/buyers_guides for information!
Work with a GS1 member Organisation (MO) to develop a solid GS1 DataBar Implementation Plan	To contact your local MO, visit http://www.gs1.org/contact/worldwide.php Remember the first priority is to know of any area where a buying decision for hardware or software might be impacted by GS1 DataBar adoption as these purchases are meant to last for years.
Work with/follow GS1 Work Groups	Stay tuned to the GS1 BarCodes Web site in the GS1 DataBar section (www.gs1.org/databar) to see where and when standards development or pilot activities begin. To be certain, let GS1 know you are your company's' contact (send a mail to databar@gs1.org) and you'll be notified automatically when a Work Group is formed.