



GS1 Position Paper on Barcodes for Mobile Applications

This position paper aims to give manufacturers, retailers and other existing users of the GS1 system guidance on what barcodes they should consider for mobile phone applications.

Because of the multitude of possible barcode formats available, many of them proprietary, GS1 recommends using only barcodes that are:

- approved by ISO and therefore public domain status declared
- approved by GS1 the GS1 Global Standards Management Process including due process with input from business users
- open standards (royalty free use, no patent exercised)
- proven by implementation (mobile or non-mobile)
- ready to be read by a consumer-available mobile device

GS1 recommendation

As a consequence, GS1 currently recommends using the GS1 EAN/UPC bar code used on millions of consumer products worldwide for mobile applications.



A standard EAN-13 barcode

Future perspectives

Linear bar codes

GS1 is testing other codes such as GS1 DataBar that are found on products to provide sound advice on how these can be read by consumer-available mobile devices and will develop implementation guidance.

Two-dimensional (2D) bar codes

For consumer goods, GS1 recommends using GS1 QR code or GS1 DataMatrix when brand-owners want to “hard code” a link to their website within a 2D bar code. GS1 QR code and GS1 DataMatrix support both GS1 identification keys (unique numbers to identify products) and GS1 application identifiers thus ensuring backward and forward compatibility with other barcode applications. GS1 is working with solution providers to ensure that these codes can be encoded and decoded by relevant software and mobile applications. For information about the relevant standards visit <http://www.gs1.org/gsm/kc/barcodes>.

For regulated healthcare items that may be purchased by a consumer or a hospital, only GS1 DataMatrix may be used.



A standard GS1 QR code



A standard GS1 Data Matrix code

RFID

GS1 is also working on a clear position relative to Near Field Communication (NFC) and is testing reading as more consumer-available mobile devices come to market.

Digital Product Information

GS1 aims to become the trusted source of data to support the communication of authentic product data provided by brand owners to consumers/shoppers, retailers, internet application providers and government using the internet and mobile devices. All GS1 standard barcodes described in this position statement will be able to link to brand-authorized information provided in this way. For more information visit www.gs1.org/b2c.

Questions / comments / reactions?

Contact Cameron Green at cameron.green@gs1.org



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About GS1

GS1 is a not-for-profit, neutral organisation that is driven and governed by its members. It manages and develops the most widely used system of supply chain standards in the world - used by over 1 million organisations in multiple sectors and in close to 150 countries.

Enabling visibility for a more efficient, safe and sustainable supply chain

GS1 is most well-known for the bar codes that companies put on their products and that are scanned by retailers at point-of-sale. However, GS1 standards are much more than the barcodes. They provide a framework for companies to identify, capture and share information which drives supply chain visibility. This allows companies to improve efficiency, safety and sustainability and to better collaborate with suppliers, customers and end-consumers.

GS1 and the internet world

In the digital world, consumers are making purchase decisions based on information they find on the internet. Sometimes this information is supplied directly by brands and retailers. Often consumers choose to use third-party services provided by internet and mobile companies; but information in these services is frequently missing or incorrect. For this reason, companies are asking GS1 to work on how to make product information available to consumers using digital channels.

GS1's vision for digital product information is that:

- Brand-owners can share relevant product information easily, thus building trust with consumers.
- Internet application providers (IAPs) can ensure they are delivering authentic data.
- Consumers can feel confident that the digital product information they access is accurate, no matter how or where they shop.

More information is available at www.gs1.org or www.gs1.org/b2c