



# Can mobile phones read barcodes?

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**Brussels, Belgium and Princeton, USA, 11 September 2008** - GS1 is the global supply chain standards organisation well-known for its barcodes that feature on millions of products sold in retail. It has membership from over one million companies worldwide, particularly manufacturers and retailers of consumer packaged goods.

GS1 Mobile Com is an industry-wide initiative started by GS1 in June 2007 to investigate the potential of businesses giving consumers access to product information via their mobile phones. Today, GS1 Mobile Com has released a position paper advising businesses to focus on GS1 standard barcodes for mobile applications. The aim is to prevent fragmentation in the current market for reading barcodes with cameraphones. The full position paper is available at [http://www.gs1.org/docs/mobile/GS1\\_Mobile\\_Com\\_Barcodes\\_Position\\_Paper.pdf](http://www.gs1.org/docs/mobile/GS1_Mobile_Com_Barcodes_Position_Paper.pdf).

Vanderlei Roque dos Santos (Nestlé), co-chair of the GS1 Mobile Com work group, said, "This is a major step forward in simplifying the choices manufacturers have to make to start enabling mobile services via their products. It will drive innovation not only on product packaging but across a number of communication channels that brands use to interact with consumers."

"Mobile barcodes are one of the ways that retailers can use to improve in-store experience for consumers. Having standards will make implementation easier and faster, across different markets," commented Olivier Raynal (Carrefour).

More and more consumers are equipped with camera phones that are technically capable of reading barcodes. As well as the existing barcodes on products packaging (called 1-dimensional or 1D barcodes), new barcodes specifically designed to be scanned by a camera (called 2-dimensional or 2D barcodes) are now becoming available. As the pictures below show, barcodes can be "scanned" by consumers to access:

- information currently on the pack in a personalized format (allergens, ingredients, nutrition facts).
- a wide range of information not currently available on packaging
- information that may be currently be handled on paper (such as coupons)



A consumer has a question about a product they are considering buying.



By using a mobile phone to interact with the pack they find the answer they need.



Satisfied consumers, deeper understanding, increased trust, better sales.

A typical mobile barcode application

As well as providing additional services to consumers, mobile barcode applications can play a role in improving supply-chain efficiency, particularly where smaller manufacturers and retailers are involved who do not currently use electronic standards and automated processes.

The GS1 Mobile Com group has completed a in-depth study of potential applications available in the GS1 Mobile Com White Paper available from [www.gs1.org/mobile/](http://www.gs1.org/mobile/).

GS1 is working to align this initiative with other mobile code efforts in the mobile industry and looks forward to working more closely with the mobile industry in the coming months and years.

**Additional quotes:**



"Until now, the lack of standards has been a major hindrance in the usage of 2D barcodes, hence compromising the development of win-win relationships between retailers and manufacturers based on maximizing the product information available for the consumers at the point of sale. The GS1 recommendation for the harmonization of the 2D code usage now opens a new area of collaboration which will translate into a better service to empower the purchase decisions of the consumers worldwide". Georges-Edouard Dias, E-Business Director, L'Oréal

"Global standards are going to revolutionise the way consumers and manufactures interact in store. The mobile phone will become an enabler to help provide consumers better information so they can make more informed purchasing decisions." Khurram Hamid, Global Head Mobile Marketing Innovation, P&G