Global Standards Management Process

GS1 URI Structure
Mission-specific working group

Call to Action

What business challenges are being solved?

Consumers regularly seek product information on the web, especially via their mobile devices. Today, manufacturers often respond to this demand by connecting consumers to such information via the scan of an additional barcode on the product (often a QR code) which encodes the address of a web page where product and marketing information is available.

As a sign of the growing use and familiarity of QR codes, it is notable that iOS devices now include QR code scanning as a core function. However, the use of QR codes in addition to 1D barcodes on packaging can cause confusion and complication across supply chain, mobile scanning and POS experiences.

The short-term goal of this work is to reduce the need for multiple codes on packs, while ensuring that we develop a glide path with industry toward a future where a single 2D barcode could serve the needs of all parties.

Background

There is a need to bring structure and consistency to the use and representation of GS1 Keys (and sub-identifiers) on the web (in HTTP URIs). This work will enable brand owners to use a variety of barcodes, including DataMatrix and non-GS1 QR codes, to enable all of the actors in their product's lifecycle (including retailers, distributors, POS systems and consumers) to leverage GS1 unique identifiers to serve multiple purposes.

This work will have zero impact on the original functionality or intention of any marketing or nutritional barcode that has been placed on a consumer pack. Rather, this work will serve to ensure that ALL barcodes on a consumer pack are able (using a standards-based approach) to contain a consistent unique identifier (the GTIN).

The Mission-Specific Working Group (MSWG) will define a standard structure for URIs that enables reliable encoding of GS1 identifiers and sub-identifiers, regardless of domain name, such that those keys can be extracted without looking up information on (or even being connected to) the web.

The GSMP is a community-based forum for businesses facing similar problems to work together and develop standards-based solutions to address them. Active GSMP participants represent industries ranging from retail and consumer goods to fresh foods, healthcare, transport and logistics, government and more—a healthy mix of business and technical people from nearly 60 countries.

4-step consensus-driven process
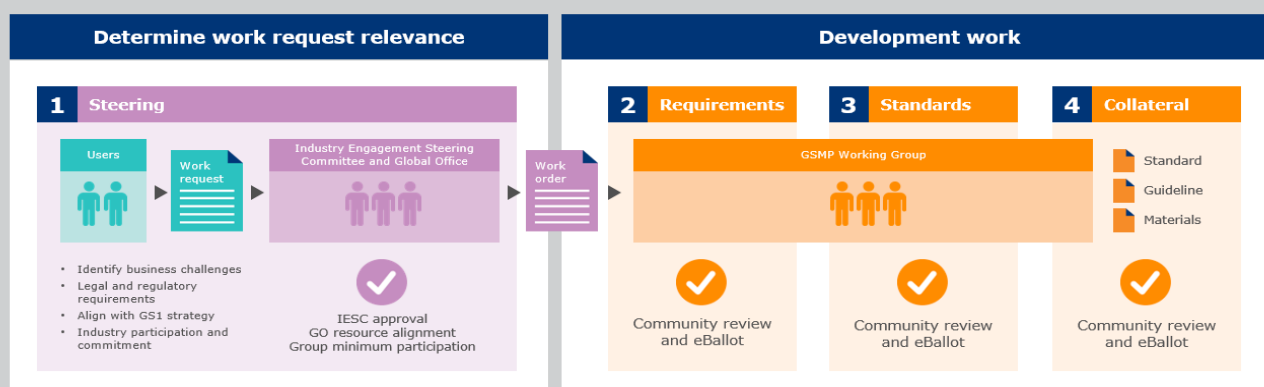
The deeper benefit

The immediate business need focuses on the simplification of on-pack codes. The deeper benefit is that GS1 identifiers will be represented consistently within web addresses, such that a single identification approach will be able to support both product identification and a link to online material.

It is this dual functionality and enormous flexibility that is currently not available when brand owners embed unstructured web page addresses in QR codes. The authoritative URI, also known as the "canonical URI", of the GS1 identifier for any product or service can be established via the data.gs1.org domain.

As a result of this work, GS1 identifiers will become linkable for the first time, enabling users to link to them or from them on the web. It will complete the connection between GS1 identifiers and the digital world.

Working group objectives

The objectives of the GS1 URI Structure MSWG are to:

- Collect and clarify the use cases for encoding GS1 Keys in HTTP URIs;

- Define a standard structure for URIs that reliably encode GS1 identifiers and sub-identifiers, regardless of domain name, such that those keys can be extracted without looking up information on (or even being connected to) the web;

- Apply the term 'canonical URI' to the set of identifiers that follow the structure on data.gs1.org, and define, in broad terms, the responses to be given when a canonical URI is looked up.

Who should join this working group?

Senior-level merchandising and marketing decision-makers in brands, retailers, solution providers and content marketing companies who can:

- Provide insights into customers' online behaviour;

- Work towards consensus around a common approach;

- Communicate that consensus within their own organisation that may require some compromise;

- Commit to an accelerated, high-energy project.

What is needed from GS1 Member Organisations

This particular work is of relevance to merchandising and marketing teams in brands, retailers, solution providers and content marketing companies. The MSWG will be successful if business/industry engagement staff act to:

- Socialise this *Call to Action;*

- Identify the right persons from industry and digital marketing companies to encourage their participation in the working group;

- Commit to a fast-paced standards development process.

How will the working group operate?

This working group will follow GS1's improved standards development process:

- **Propose and validate business needs**— analyse business needs from industry input as described in the work order and collect additional feedback to ensure that industry objectives as defined in the work request are met

- **Develop guidelines**— industry experts will draft a guideline and present it to industry for confirmation and approval

- **Ratify and publish**— guidelines are approved by the standards development community, ratified by GS1 governance bodies and published

Next Steps

1. Join the working group: https://www.gs1.org/standards-development-work-groups#URI

2. Attend the group kick-off meeting on on Thursday, 18th January, 17:00 (UTC)

3. Register for the GS1 URI Structure meeting at the **Standards Event in Jersey City on Tuesday 20th March 2018:** https://standards-event.gs1.org/

> Help or questions? Please contact: Phil Archer, Director of Omni-channel Retail, GS1 Global Office (phil.archer@gs1.org)