The View of the Wholesaler

View and position of GIRP with regards to automatic product identification and patient safety

GS1 HUG
21st March 2006, Rome

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GIRP Secretary General

What is GIRP?

- Founded in 1960, GIRP is the umbrella organisation of pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers in Europe.

- The members of GIRP:
  - employ about 140.000 staff
  - hold products on stock from over 3.500 manufacturers
  - supply above 100.000 medicines
  - distribute medicines throughout the whole continent to more than 133.000 pharmacies

- GIRP and its members ensure that medicines are delivered in a timely, safe and efficient way and thereby guarantee the access to medicines for patients throughout Europe.

What is a full-line Wholesaler?

- Pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers...
  - Hold a full range of medicines, including seldom used, but vital medicines
  - Hold the necessary stock for their area of activity
  - Make medicines continuously available: 24 hours a day, 365 days a year (European average delivery time: 2-4 hours)
  - Deliver to ALL pharmacies in their region
  - Recognize a public service obligation to supply many slow-moving medicines which are often vital to meet the complete needs of patients

Full-line wholesalers ensure that even the most isolated patients can receive the most specialized medicines via their pharmacist in a safe and timely manner!

GIRP Membership

- Full Members
  - National associations of pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers and the 4 largest European companies/groups in EU and EFTA countries
- Associated Professional Members
  - National associations/companies of pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers in Europe
- Associated External Members
  - Companies/organisations whose business interests are related to the distribution of medicines

Full-Line Wholesalers: The trusted channel

- Pre-wholesale contracts with major manufacturers

- 133.000 pharmacies across Europe, including dispensing doctors
- Hospitals in some countries

Full-line Wholesalers: The trusted channel

Pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers…

… are the only reliable and trusted channel for the safe and continued supply of all medicines through pharmacies to patients!

Patient safety is our number one concern!

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The flow in a warehouse – an example

Stock entry

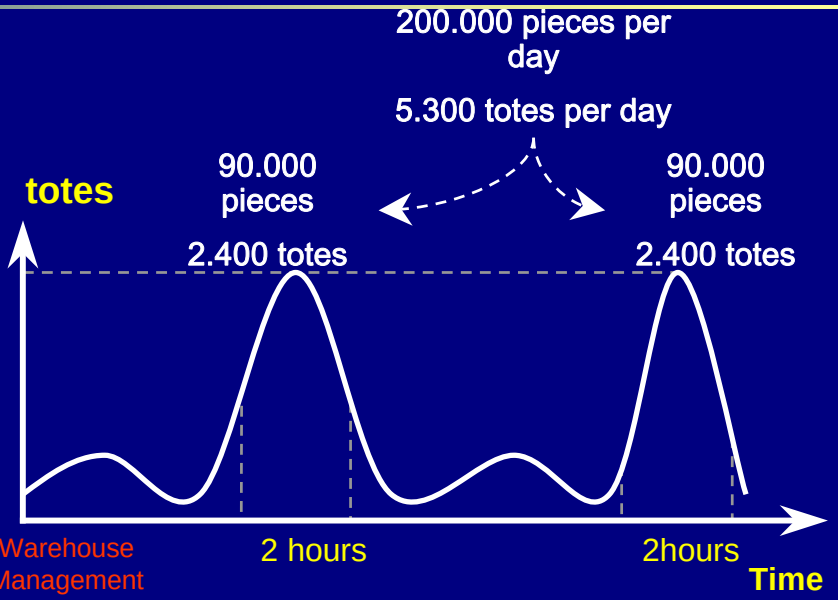
200.000 pieces per day

8 pieces per second

Check in

Bar Code Scanner

Warehouse Management System



12,5 pieces per second

1.200 totes per hour

either manual or automated preparation

Full-line Wholesaler's Warehousing

- Warehouse operations:
  - Receiving, un-packing, checking & storage
  - Order picking, checking, order preparation
  - Route planning, loading, delivery & invoicing
- We need a way to automatically identify products:
  - Bar codes and bar code scanners
  - Radio frequency tags, ...
- For a better identification and traceability of products, GIRP and its Members aim at the following:
  - Harmonizing product identification for pharmaceutical products
  - Agreeing within the pharmaceutical industry and all supply chain partners on standardized automatic product identification
  - Cost efficiency for all participants

Outcome of the GIRP Technical Conference, 19th January 2006, Vienna

« How modern technologies will support the changing environment of the pharmaceutical sector »

- Guarantee the safe, continuous and timely delivery of medicines to all citizens in Europe
- Consensus on keeping momentum with the fast pace of innovation
- Need to adopt practical and logical solutions to reach the ultimate aim of delivering the right medicines to the right place at the right time!

Basic information with regards to automatic product identification

- Current situation: no common possibility to read the product information by means of technical equipment
  - No homogenity (neither from manufacturer to manufacturer - nor from country to country)
- Pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers must have machine readable data for the safety of medicines, especially with respect to counterfeits.
- For pharmaceutical full-line wholesalers it is absolutely essential to have
  - **National product identification**
  - **Expiry date AND**
  - **Batch number**

… in a machine readable format

Automatic product identification

- GIRP and its Members are looking for a solution which is suitable for the pharmaceutical supply chain
  - Smooth integration of batch number and expiry date
  - European wide harmonization
  - Seemless use throughout the supply chain
  - Competitive costs of implementation

- Selection criteria for GIRP
  - Safety & reliability
  - Maturity degree
  - Costs

Automatic product identification

- Having assessed the impact of all technologies, GIRP and its Members are of the opinion that it needs to be principially applied
  - EAN 128 (which is sufficient enough for the content requirements), or
  - 2D matrix code, as it allows for further content expansion and it may cover additional needs of manufacturers and
  - RFID, as a future technology.

GIRP and its Members want to remain as up to date as possible, which involves finding a balance between advancing technologies and practical solutions.

What GIRP did so far

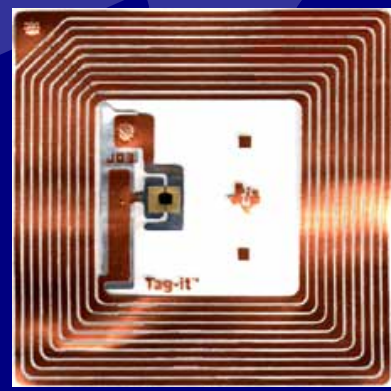
- European survey on packaging and labelling
- Internal analysis of the results and definition of a « wish list » referring to
  - Pallet labelling
  - Packaging labelling
  - Product labelling
- Business impact of traceability on the supply chain

Automatic product identification

GIRP's Technical Committee has examined the different technologies

Barcode versus **2 Dimension Codes**

versus **RFID**



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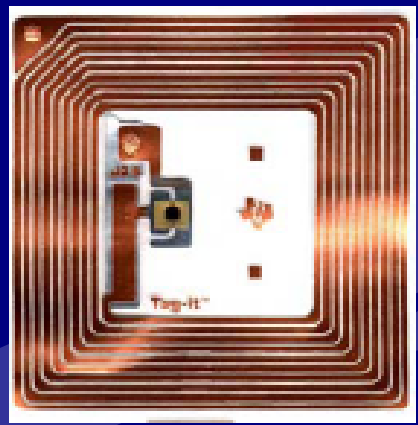
It is all about data

- An efficient solution:
  - We'll all have to work with and on data
  - It has to be avoided that data is sky-rocketing
  - Data must be carefully managed, because it must be avoided to get drowned
  - The quality of the company will be measured against the quality of its data

- Data must be treated with respect towards:
  - **Integrity**
  - **Security**
  - **Confidentiality**

1. RFID tests



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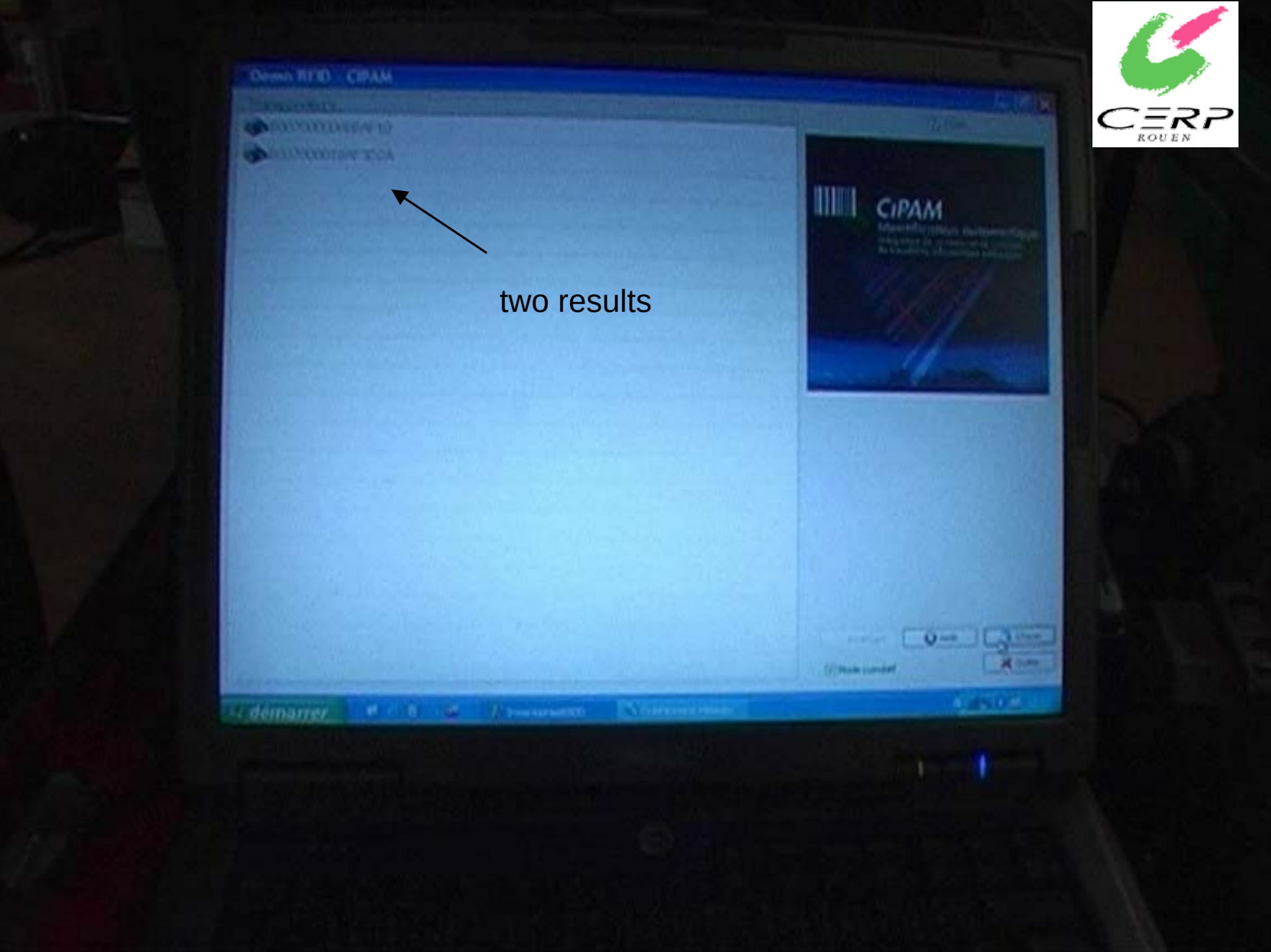
antenna
Packages with RFID tags


two results
CIPAM
CERP
ROUEN

Packages of medicines with RFID tags - CONCLUSION

- **Remarks on the tests:**
  - cardboard packs/no metal: read
  - container with aluminum: difficult
  - plastic bottle: read
  - glass bottle: difficult
  - metal container: difficult

  } **No mature technology**

- In the context of the tests, reading of medicines' packages while passing through a gantry crane happens incidentally, depending on the packages.
  → not reliable

- The accuracy of reading depends, for instance, upon:
  - tags with insulating layer from the metal
  - modifications of packages
  - position of packages during readings

2. 2D codes tests

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barcode

All products can be read

Packages of medicines with 2D codes - CONCLUSION

- **Possibility to include more information than**
  - Batch Number
  - Expiry Date
  - National Identification Number

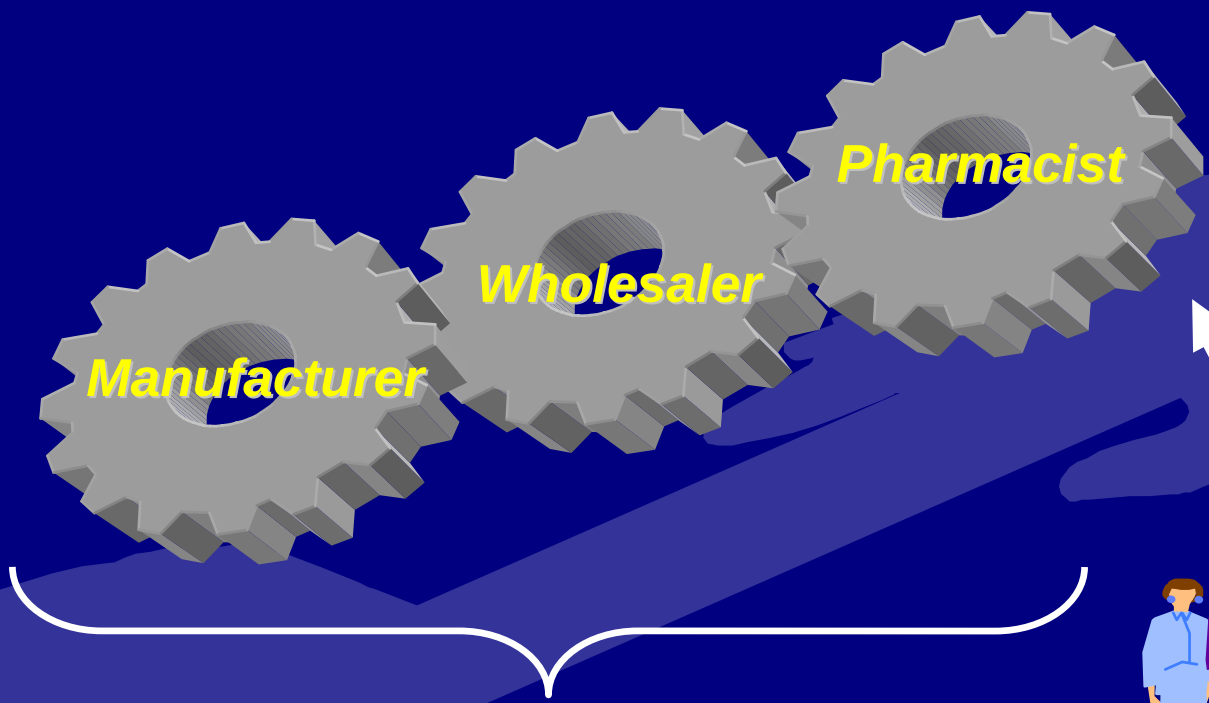
→ **Without losing the fast reading possibility!**

↓

The 2D code could be implemented as a very promising solution!

Conclusion

Every decision in order to be effective must comprise ALL partners in the Supply Chain!



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Thank you very much for your Attention!

GIRP

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