GS1 Australia

GS1 DataBar™ (RSS) Sunrise 2010

GS1 Global Office has announced a global sunrise date of January 2010 for all scanning systems to read GS1 DataBar (formerly know as Reduced Space Symbology – RSS) symbols on any trade item.

This adoption date sets the goal for all trade item bar code scanning systems to be capable of reading GS1 DataBar bar codes and handling GS1 Application Identifiers (AI) by 2010. While scanning systems must be able to understand AI's, the choice to use the additional data is at the discretion of individual organisations.

GS1 DataBar Background

GS1 DataBar was designed by GS1 Symbologists to answer the business needs of GS1 members in the fresh produce and healthcare sectors; however, GS1 DataBar can also help organisations comply with growing global concern over traceability, bioterrorism and increased international regulations for the establishment and maintenance of records.

GS1 DataBar is the first set of bar codes to be endorsed by GS1 for global for open (unrestricted) trade item identification since the EAN/UPC bar code was adopted globally in the mid-1970s.

Despite their smaller size, the GS1 DataBar symbologies are deceptively powerful and represent a breakthrough in theory and design. These new symbols print and scan well, carry more product information, and complement existing technologies and applications.

It is expected that expanding the availability of GS1 bar codes will open the door for identification solutions that support product authentication, traceability and quality.

In addition, GS1 DataBar can provide trading partners with access to more advanced data, making it an excellent migration path towards Electronic Product Coding (EPC) for retailers that may move to RFID in the future.

Whilst GS1 DataBar symbols are capable of encoding 14 digits, data restriction at retail point of sale will apply so that only GTIN-8, GTIN-12 or GTIN-13 can be encoded.

International Pilots and Rollouts

Fresh Produce: The North American Fresh Foods Pilot Team, launched in January 2006, included more than 50 retailers, suppliers, industry associations, and technology firms. Criteria for success included scan rates, shrink reduction, and faster, more accurate self-scanning.

The size of the traditional EAN/UPC bar code makes it impractical for loose fruit and other produce, resulting in the use of Price Look Up (PLU) numbers which are hand-keyed by cashiers. This process is subject to human error and provides only generic and limited product information.

To date, Loblaw and Wal-Mart have led the way with supplier implementation of GS1 DataBar in North America. Their apple and banana pilots involved several suppliers and listed benefits such as: decrease in out-of-stocks, improved shrink control, enhanced product replenishment, and increased customer satisfaction at the checkouts.

Following from these successes, Loblaw and Wal-Mart have begun to engage with other North American retailers to grow momentum for the rollout of GS1 DataBar.

GS1 Australia's Support

Representing your needs: GS1 Australia is closely watching the results from pilots in other countries and is representing the needs of Australian businesses, as part of the GS1 DataBar Global Task Force, to develop specific implementation guides for retailers and fast moving consumer good (FMCG) manufacturers.

Industry Engagement: The GS1 Australia Member & Industry Support team is working closely with several industry groups including grocery, healthcare, meat, fresh produce, and information and communication technology (ICT) to educate and determine the needs and impact that GS1 DataBar will have in the supply chain.

Retail Readiness: GS1 Australia has begun to work with Australian retailers to examine readiness: all retailers are expected to assess their state of readiness and determine internal priorities for GS1 DataBar deployment over the next three years.

Retailers that have upgraded their Point-of-Sale (POS) equipment in the last three to four years should already be GS1 DataBar compatible or able to easily upgrade existing equipment. GS1 DataBar test sheets are available to quickly confirm this.

GS1 DataBar verification service: GS1 Australia's bar code verification service is already capable of supporting members through the verification of GS1 DataBar against international guidelines and specifications.

The GS1 DataBar family consists of seven symbols divided into three groups:

Group 1

GS1 DataBar Omnidirectional and Stacked Omnidirectional: can be half the size of an EAN/UPC bar code. These work at retail point of sale and carry the GTIN, making them ideal for items such as loose fresh produce.

Group 2

GS1 DataBar Expanded and Expanded Stacked: roughly the same size of an EAN/UPC bar code, these carry up to 74 numeric or 41 alphabetic characters and can carry an SGTIN (GTIN + Serial Number). These also work at retail point of sale, making them ideal for variable measure products such as meat and deli items.

Group 3

GS1 DataBar Truncated, Stacked and Limited: the smallest in the GS1 DataBar family. They carry 14 numeric characters and the GTIN but are not omnidirectional. These won't work at retail point of sale; instead they are designed for items too small for any other bar code, such as healthcare items, and assist with traceability.

There are no plans to discontinue the EAN/UPC bar code. Brand owners will have the freedom to move to GS1 DataBar, if they choose to, when redesigning packaging or designing new products for market.

NB: GS1 DataBar symbols that are designed for Point of Sale (like the EAN/UPC) can also be scanned in a general distribution environment.

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Further information & Links: The GS1 Australia website provides information and useful links for manufacturers, retailers and solution providers. Visit *http://www.gs1au.org/products/gs1_system/data_carriers/databar/* to download the business case for adoption, FAQs, summary of symbol types or to access the online starter kits.

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