



# newsletter

The management Newsletter for all industries involved with bar-code scanning and related technologies.

SCANNING, CODING & AUTOMATION NEWSLETTER • 11 Middle Neck Road • Great Neck, N.Y. 11021 • (516) 487-6370

## INTERNATIONAL EDITION

ISSN 0273-3080

Volume I Number 1

November 1982

### With this issue....

....we introduce SCAN/INTERNATIONAL EDITION. With SCAN subscribers and readers in 22 countries, we felt it was time to broaden and intensify our coverage of other parts of the world. Until recently, the major portion of the new technology and applications in bar code scanning originated in the U.S. That situation is fast-changing, and our readers need a more direct line to other developments world-wide.

We welcome Paul Chartier, Editor of the INTERNATIONAL EDITION. We suggest you contact him directly for any news outside North America (see bottom back page for particulars). In this edition Paul's primary coverage is of events in the UK -- future editions will have a broadened scope as he establishes news sources in other countries.

We will provide complimentary copies of the INTERNATIONAL EDITION to all SCAN subscribers with the November and December 1982 issues. Paid subscriptions start January 1983. Use the enclosed subscription card to receive this added coverage as the world of bar code scanning expands.

George Goldberg, Publisher

### Three hand scanners were on show....

....at EPOS 82 and the subject was covered in a conference session. The devices and their UK prices for a one-off end user:

Symbol Tech LS7000 (via Numeric Arts)	£995
TEC HS-100	£1,255 (including decode box)
Norand 20/20 (via Omron)	£800

Norand have now set up a UK operation, but Norand UK would not cooperate with the speakers and conference organizers. They have made it clear that they do not even want their address and telephone number published (neither are listed

in the UK). Not to be beaten, last minute modifications were made to the paper with the help of Omron Terminals who had the Norand product on their stand (obtained from another European source).

The TEC device was being displayed for the first time in the UK and TEC had no technical details available throughout the period of the exhibition. Spectra-Physics used EPOS 82 to announce that Real Time Control had been appointed as a UK distributor and that they would have a hand scanner on the market by the 3rd quarter, 1983.

Numeric Arts Ltd., Gardner Road, Maidenhead, Berks, SL5 7PP; (UK) (0528) 39753  
TEC (UK), 107/109 The Grove, Stratford, London E15; (UK) 01-474-4050  
Omron Terminals, 60-62 Coombe Road, New Malden, Surrey; (UK) 01-949-1032

#### A new point of sale system in the UK....

....threatens to turn the settled world of EAN source marking and scanning upside down. What remarkable technology is being used? Scanning!

The system is known as Tic Tag (The Instant Checkout). As goods are placed on display, they are labelled by a special Tic Tag labeller which produces an EAN bar code for each item -- even those already source marked. When the shopper enters the store she picks up her basket or trolley which is weighed and for which a bar code is produced. This is placed in a plastic cartridge. As she goes around selecting her groceries, the bar code label is removed from each item and placed in the cartridge. At the end of the trip round the store, the basket is placed onto scales and the cartridge loaded into a scanner.

Now the unique part. Each tag is scanned in a fraction of a second and the gross weight looked up along with the price for each item. The total gross weight, together with that of the shopping basket, is clocked up and compared with the weight on the scale. If the weights match to within 2 grams, that's it. Pay up, pack your shopping away (a common UK practice) and leave.

Bernard Hanning, who invented the system, did so out of sheer frustration from waiting in a checkout queue for too long. The system had patents granted back in 1975. The system depends on items having different gross weights. Hanning claims that only a few items have the same gross weight and different prices. He uses a colour banding system for the cheapest item of a given weight. The checkout operator looks for these tags (she has nothing else to do) and checks the groceries for the matching cheapo product. If she detects the expensive brand, something is wrong. If the weights don't match something is wrong.

#### Comment

*At first sight, the pundits were ready to criticize the scheme, as that of an English eccentric, when first exhibited at EPOS 82. But the system has some very clever features and has some backing from Riva (a UK POS equipment supplier) and Herbert & Sons, the weighing machine manufacturer. Some people doubt the claims made about the system's security features and we noticed a few delegates trying to crack the system.*

*The major weakness of the Tic Tag system is that it ignores source marking because of the special detachable labels it requires. The big question is will the store owner be prepared to shift his costs from the front end to*

*the back door? For certain applications it may be a winner, but it has been a hard enough struggle getting scanning off the ground in the UK; it will be interesting to see how it fares.*

More information on Tic Tag from Speed Systems (Electronics) Ltd, 326 Upper Richmond Road West, London SW14 7JN; (UK) 91-878-0326.

#### 1982 is information technology year....

....in the UK, and to commemorate the event, the British Post Office has issued two special stamps. The 26 pence denomination shows, among other new technology, a consumer product with an EAN bar code being read with a light pen.

#### Comment

*Eight out of ten to the Post Office for spreading the gospel. They do not get full marks because the standard letter rate stamp would have got the message into more homes. And not to carp too much, but the artist has got the structure of the EAN wrong.*

#### The Record Charts in the UK....

....are set to move from the era of the quill pen to the light pen!

Gallup, who have been awarded the British charts contract, have a very interesting approach to obtaining market research data from a scanning system. SCAN Newsletter has reported earlier this year on various American systems (SCAN May 82). The big problem has been to get a representative sample. Almost by accident Gallup have found an answer.

From January 1983, they take over the market research contract with the British Phonographic Industries (the association of UK record manufacturers). Gallup will use Data Recognition's President terminal, specially developed for the job, and based on their Dataport 5 Series portable terminal. Gallup will install this free of charge in 250 record dealer stores. Initially Gallup will rely on key entry data capture via the Data Recognition terminal.

The UK record industry is poised to adopt EAN/UPC bar coding (Editor's note -- to be covered more extensively in a future issue). Within a year or so, Gallup plan to make a quantum leap in the data capture method by using EAN light pens. This second stage is deliberately delayed to ensure that all UK record manufacturers have a fair chance to get their products coded so that the charts can be compiled mainly by using the light pen. Malcolm Mather, the director of Gallup concerned with the system, has said that the timing of the switch to bar code data capture is critical so as not to give an unfair advantage to bar coded products.

The contract is worth £1.2M over three years to Gallup who become the providers of the chart material. Dealers will be polled twice per week, Thursday and Saturday nights, and the charts will be ready the following Tuesday morning. The system will enable Gallup to produce six charts: 7" singles; 12" maxi singles, combined singles, LPs, cassettes, and albums (LPs and cassettes). Only combined singles and LPs are currently available.

Data Recognition will be selling additional systems to dealers not on the charts panel. The price for a single unit is £995. The fact that the units will be in both chart and non-chart stores, that dealers will want accurate sales and stock figures, plus a few clever sampling and other tricks, should discourage hyping. We understand that Gallup are actively discussing their system in other countries.

Social Surveys (Gallup Poll) Ltd., 202 Finchley Road, London NW3 6BL; (UK) 01-794-0461.

Data Recognition, Unit 18, Suttons Industrial Park, Earley, Reading RG6 1AZ; (UK) (0734) 664577.

#### The Article Number Association published....

....it's TRADACOM standards in October, titled Manual Of Standards For Electronic Data Exchange. It is the result of work undertaken by the Trading Data Communications Working Party. Trials have been going on for two years by leading UK retailers and suppliers on the electronic data exchange of orders and invoices. The TRADACOMS manual covers some last minute alterations which were made to enable the standards to be as up-to-date as possible with current EAN thinking.

The manual costs £45 to members of the ANA (£90 to others). Separate standards, Manual of Guidelines For Documentary Data Exchange may interest those not yet ready to take the plunge electronically. One copy is being sent free to ANA members (additional copies £10, £12 to others). Available from the Secretary, Article Number Association (UK) Ltd, 6 Catherine Street, London WC2.

#### Strobbe Graphic Systems have been appointed....

....sole UK distributors for the ERGI range of verifiers. These are the Ergilaser LC2000 with its video screen display of verified results, and the Ergicheck SL500 portable verifier which uses a light pen as the reading device.

Strobbe Graphic Systems Ltd., Terminus Road Industrial Estate, Chichester, Sussex. PO19 2TP; (UK) (0243) 781238. ERGI-Gesellschaft mbH, Otto-Rohm-Strasse 81, D-6100 Darmstadt, West Germany; (FDR) 06151/81695.

#### We could not resist....

....the following new nursery rhyme, seen in Lithprinter Week recently.

I had a little bar code, and nothing did it show  
But a set of numbers, all in a row.  
I read it with a light pen, stored it on a floppy  
Made a lot of profit for my Olde Corner Shoppe.  
The King of Spain's daughter goes shopping in our road  
And all for the sake of my little bar code.