



newsletter

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

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About now, Kodak 35mm films....

....are beginning to appear in the market place enriched with a display of machine-readable technologies. In an act of faith, but with a long-term vision of the future, the new codes are being applied to Kodacolor VR film. Eventually all popular Kodak 35mm film will be encoded. The designation 'DX' will identify film carrying the new code.

According to Norman Reeves of the Eastman Kodak Film Technical Services Division, here's what lies behind the new codes:

- There is a camera auto sensing (CAS) code, a checkerboard of 12 square bright metal or black insulated patches, which encodes the ISO film speed, number of exposures and the exposure range of the film. A probe within the camera will decode the information in the CAS code.
- An interleaved 2 of 5 bar code on the magazine will help photo processors identify and sort film by film product and number of exposures.
- A 12-hole raster pattern, punched into the leader, identifies manufacturer, film family, specific film product and generation.
- Latent bar code images, with two tracks of data along the frame number edge of the film at each half frame interval, identify the particular film manufacturer, family, type and generation. This information is fed into the print processing algorithm to interpret densities so that the finished print is optimised for specific film products.

As yet no camera has been marketed to read the CAS code and most of the photo finishing aids cannot be used. But the codes will provide photo finishers with benefits similar to the codes built into the Kodak disc film and take up is likely to be widespread.

Comment

With the probable incorporation of the EAN or UPC bar code on the outside of the consumer pack, Kodak have packed an enormous amount of machine reading technology into a tiny package. Well done Kodak!

Japan is now included....

....in the regular A C Nielsen study of source-marked grocery products. Nielsen's survey is based on the percentage of products source-marked in 14 common product categories. But these are for western tastes, and it was necessary to define different product categories for Japan.

When we last reported the figures (SCAN/IE Dec 82), only Germany was ahead of the 70% level. Now, Belgium, France and Great Britain are through that threshold. The 70% point has always been considered that level of source-marking necessary to make in-store scanning systems a profitable operation. Most countries are moving ahead of previous survey levels with those at the bottom of the table showing encouraging progress.

	<u>1981</u> <u>Jan/Feb</u>	<u>1982</u> <u>Jan/Feb</u>	<u>1983</u> <u>Jan/Feb</u>
Germany	66	77	86
Belgium	20	53	75
Great Britain	21	51	74
France	30	57	71
Ireland	16	43	64
Switzerland	NA	38	61
The Netherlands	6	29	59
Sweden	18	45	58
Austria	11	16	30
Italy	-	4	15
Japan	NA	NA	13

- less than 1%

NA survey not available

Over the 2 year period shown every country except Germany (which already had high figures) more than doubled the level of source marking. Of the EAN countries not shown, either there has been no significant bar coding at the source, or current information has not been reported.

We attended....

....the Article Number Association's TRADACOMS seminar in Bristol recently. Various industry speakers covered their practical experiences using the standards for electronic data exchange (SCAN/IE Nov 82) of orders and invoices. The TRADACOM standards provide a common legally acceptable means of transferring business information, using prescribed bridging techniques.

F W Woolworth plc have had the most experience with suppliers providing magnetic tape and floppy disk based invoices. Kieran Clarke stated that nearly 40 suppliers were live or under test, that this could double by year end, and is expected to double again next year. A major advantage of the system is that expensive clerical checking can be almost eliminated as suppliers improve their computer-linked systems.

Until now, the system has been for the 'big boys' and communications have been, by necessity, bi-lateral. The ANA believes that it is essential for business

to establish a network which can be used by all companies, large and small, to transfer data to all their trading partners in the same way. To this end, the Association has put out a tender to computer companies to establish a telecommunications bureau, or clearing house. Once established, a participant business will be able to send all its trading transaction data to one point using a telecommunication network. No paper, no mag tapes. The recipient of the data will plug into the system and obtain all the information from various senders.

The TRADACOMS standards appear to offer considerable potential for using the European Article Number (ie without the bar code). Over 200 delegates have attended the seminars to date. We saw a preview of a video on the subject which, when produced, the ANA will loan or sell to organisations. It explains the issues in a clear presentation. (We will give details when available.)

The Australian Product Number Association....

....(APNA) had some interesting news to report recently:

- A voluntary Code of Practice by the Australian Retailers' Association Food Division for the use of computerised checkouts was developed by the retail industry, government departments and the APNA. The Code defines minimum standards to protect consumers and provides a complaint and arbitration procedure. The standards cover: advance notification of conversion to scanning; current price information on shelf labels, at the checkout and on the receipt; and price changes. This last point requires retailers to keep records of all price changes, including date and time effective, for six months. A new body, the Association of Computerised Checkout Grocery Retailers Ltd, administers the Code of Practice. Procedures include a special tribunal with authority to levy fines of up to A\$5,000 for violations.
- A report that the Victorian State Government plans a study of the employment implications of new technologies on the retail sector. The official report is expected in September.
- Membership of the APNA stood at 874 as of 10 Mar 83. This includes the first non-Australian member, a food manufacturer, Magan Lal Jiwa & Sons Ltd of Fiji.

Australian Product Number Association, 11 Hampshire Road, Glen Waverley, Victoria 3150, Australia; Australian phone (03) 560 1055.

The Danish 'PLUS' numbering system....

....has come under heavy official criticism from the International Article Numbering Association Ean. The 'PLUS' (Price Look Up System) number started to appear on Danish products last year. Like the proposed Israeli system (SCAN/IE May 83) it was developed as a centrally assigned code from the block reserved for in-store use. Danish retail and wholesale organisations saw the introduction of the PLUS number (there is no associated bar code) as a cheap, quick way of achieving key entry point-of-sale data capture.

The number, 1 to 5 digits long, appears immediately by the EAN bar code, which itself follows the convention of identifying manufacturer and item code. PLUS

is being promoted by Dansk Varekode Administration, the Danish EAN affiliate. Member companies of other EAN national authorities have complained that Danish customers are expecting the PLUS code to be printed, together with the EAN bar code, on their packs.

The International EAN Association in a recent statement "regrets the implementation of the Danish PLUS system and considers it as being against the interests of EAN and of the free circulation of goods", citing specific points:

- It does not allow products to cross international borders without variation based on national standards.
- If EAN accepts the possibility of in-store coding on a national basis, trade barriers are created.
- Objections from EEC authorities can be expected.

The statement continues: "Since the principle of international compatibility must be guarded, the International EAN Association will acknowledge neither national variation to the EAN symbol marking system nor additions in immediate connection with the EAN symbol." Companies from other EAN authorities are advised to quote the statement in negotiations with Danish customers.

Belgium is another country....

....like the UK, where there is a strong intent to provide access to sales data from scanning systems. Under the auspices of the Belgian EAN Authority (ICODIF), the presidents of two major bodies, ICOD (the retailers and distributors association) and ICOF (the manufacturers association), recently signed a declaration of intent covering general principles and a programme for the exchange of information between retailers and manufacturers.

The intention is to use the services of a clearing house, probably a market research organisation, to process the information. As yet no particular organisation is favoured. Access to the service would be limited to members of ICODIF. Retailers and manufacturers would be able to enter bi-lateral arrangements, such as test marketing a product.

The next stage is for representatives of the manufacturer and retailer bodies to determine product grouping and regional boundaries and to examine how the data will be collected, processed and made available, and the basis on which the clearing house will charge for the service.

Service Codes Limited....

....is one of the ventures to emerge from the Photo Science (UK) shake out (SCAN/IE May 83). David Smith, Managing Director, has been involved with the film master business for some time. The new business specialises in the supply of film masters and the provision of technical advice. Service Codes will also distribute verification equipment.

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