



newsletter

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

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INTERNATIONAL EDITION

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SCAN-TECH Europe 84 is less than....

....a month away. To remind you of the details: 6-8 November at the RAI International Congress Center, Amsterdam. The seminar sessions are planned, papers written and possibly already rehearsed. What is more, the organisers are about to put the "sold out" notices on the exhibition space. As we go to press, booths have been booked by 51 companies from nine countries: Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Three countries (Germany, the Netherlands and the United States) account for over two-thirds of the space.

Although much of the equipment on show originates from the United States, there is a wide assortment of Japanese and European products making up the remainder. We previously listed those exhibitors who signed up early (SCAN/IE Jul 84). Since then, the roster has expanded to include the following companies:

Antonson Machines	Peekel Instruments
Barcodat	Philips
Brondi Telefonica	Pitney Bowes Marking
CS Computer Systems	Printronix
Electrotechnische Handelsonderneming	Recognition Equipment
Eitmark Etikettenfabrik	Saab Automation
Hand Held Products	Signode Europa
Kimball Systems	Societe IER
Logmar Inc	Welch Allyn
LXE	Xeno Logics Computer Systemen

Delegates are assured of seeing an unprecedented range and variety of equipment on show all at the same time at a European venue. Some equipment will be making its European debut.

The attractions are all but finalised: the conference, the speakers, the exhibitors, the equipment. There is still time for delegates to make their last minute decision to attend. Suppliers and exhibitors should be actively contacting all of their customers and prospects. An incentive for booking before 26 October is that the pre-registration price of 1150 Dutch florins (\$360) still appertains. Details of SCAN-TECH Europe 84 from: Ian Smith Marketing Ltd, The Old Vicarage, Haley Hill, Halifax, West Yorkshire, England HX3 6DR; UK 'phone (0422) 59161; Telex 517250 ISMARK.

How do you judge....

....the success of a major conference and exhibition like EPoS 84 held in London in September? Is it in terms of survival? growth in exhibitors and attendees? the number of deals done? On any of these counts EPoS 84 was more successful than its four predecessors: nearly 60 exhibitors, 1000 conference delegates, 4000 exhibition visitors.

There was no doubt that the larger exhibition area provided more space for visitors. There were fewer leaflet collectors and more serious prospects. Many people were there to visit the exhibiton for specific purposes and not just to wander around. More orders or serious enquiries are reported to have taken place than before. The EPoS Conference & Exhibition attracted delegates from all over Europe and elsewhere in the world and is a barometer of a wide interest and market.

EPoS 84 is dedicated to electronic point-of-sale in the retail sector and covered more than scanning or other machine-readable technologies. The related areas of data communications and software were featured to a greater extent than before.

Two conference sessions are worth a mention because they represent some key issues:

- EPoS systems for the general merchandise sector included many offerings for almost any size of retail organisation. Not all depended on bar code data capture. Software is considered a significant component of general merchandise systems; no simple replication of one supermarket checkout system here. Because of the trend away from large in-store controllers for general merchandise retailers, considerable product diversification is taking place. A number of suppliers are taking ideas -- and equipment -- from the personal computer area and using them in EPoS systems. Since no major research investment was required, there are a large number of suppliers in the market place with an installed base. Some suppliers have gained a reputation for being expert in a special area -- often by accident: having done the development work for one prospect, it becomes easier to market in that sector. One forecast is that estimated expenditures for front-end systems in the UK general merchandise sector by 1990 will be £300 million (\$400 million).
- In another retail area, diametrically opposed views were taken in the papers presented about source marking for UK chemists (drug stores). The PIPCode -- a non-significant product numbering system -- was introduced into this retail and wholesale sector in 1982. Some source marking of this eye-readable code has already taken place. Meanwhile the EAN system continues to spread. When Boots, the leading chemist with a thousand stores, asked suppliers to adopt EAN bar coding, EAN source marking accelerated. PIPCode may have a role as part of in-store systems, even an industry system, before the level of source marking of the EAN bar code increases. Some of the support systems associated with the PIPCode are easily converted to an EAN basis. It is difficult to predict the emerging winner in this important retail sector, but the Boots initiative will be a strong factor in favor of EAN bar coding.

The SAANA Newsletter,....

....published by the South African EAN affiliate, is the first to carry the ISSN/EAN symbol. The International Standard Serial Number, which can be assigned

to all periodicals throughout the world, has been linked directly into the EAN system using prefix 977 (SCAN/IE Jan 84; Feb 84). Coupling these two independent systems into one machine-readable code and symbol is significant.

The SAANA move is not a publicity stunt but the first step towards the adoption of the ISSN/EAN solution in South Africa. The ISSN was allocated in Paris by the international body responsible for the system. Shortly, this international body will have allocated ISSNs for all mass circulation publications. South African publishers, for example, will be encouraged to incorporate the new symbol on the front cover of each of their publications.

The United Kingdom is also opting for the ISSN/EAN symbol. The UK periodical industry, assisted by the British Library which is responsible for ISSNs in the UK, was the prime mover to get international approval for linking the two systems. Gencod, in France, has recently given prominence to an explanation of the options open to publishers in the EAN community: the ISSN/EAN solution or the conventional EAN numbering approach. Not all EAN authorities are honouring the spirit of the international agreement. Some are not giving the ISSN/EAN option the necessary publicity while others are playing down the need for the ISSN to appear in conjunction with the EAN bar code.

Within areas of publishing, and most of the library and bibliographic communities, the ISSN/EAN solution is seen to offer advantages:

- It preserves the link with the ISSN, while still providing all users with an EAN-13 symbol for scanning purposes.
- By isolating the ISSN within one particular prefix, it enables separate subsystems to be developed and implemented.
- With the printing of the ISSN above the bar code in OCR-A or OCR-B, it will allow some users to adopt that reading technology.

Esselte Meto has launched....

....the Meto 6520 thermal printer. This desk top printer can produce batches of EAN-13 or EAN-8 bar codes at up to 160 labels per minute. Additional information, such as price and department code, can be incorporated. Bar code height is 18 or 26mm. The Meto 6520 has a memory unit with the capacity to hold a hundred manufacturer prefixes (i.e., country code plus manufacturer number). An optional hand-held dispenser is available to speed up the application of quantities of the same item bar code.

Esselte Meto International GMBH, Postfach 1100, D-6932 Hirschorn/N., West Germany:
German 'phone: 06272/631: Telex: 04 66 806.

The capacity of the price look-up file....

....is going to be an important consideration for general merchandise retailers. The problem is compounded by the fact that many general merchandise stores will only require one or a few terminals per outlet and will not be able to justify the use of in-store controllers. Instead, they need standalone or master/slave systems which have to carry out all EPOS and related functions. As a result, equipment manufacturers have to trade off the capacity of the PLU file against other requirements.

One of the largest PLU capacities known to us is on the Omron RS81 scanning system. Up to 60,000 separate items can be handled using an external memory file -- a plug-in black box of 1 megabyte of dynamic RAM. The Omron RS81 is a master/slave system and the external memory file can be shared among up to 8 terminals. Our understanding of the facility is that the 60,000 items consist of EAN/UPC item code and price only. No description is possible, since adding descriptions reduces the overall capacity.

Omron Europe GMBH, Suderstrasse 16, 2000 Hamburg 1, West Germany: German
'phone: 040-237050: Telex: 41213403 OEG D.

This issue marks....

....the second anniversary of the INTERNATIONAL EDITION.

Like SCAN Newsletter, it was started with an emphasis on scanning in the retail sector which will still be important and newsworthy for some time to come. Over subsequent issues we broadened the scope as applications for bar coding in other industries expanded worldwide. There is a vast, and relatively untapped, market out there ready to be addressed by the bar code industry. The EAN bar code on consumer products (not just on groceries but on an increasing variety of goods) is creating a familiarity with the technology. This will lift the level of confidence of prospective industrial and commercial users to install systems based on bar code technology.

Over the two-year period, there have been a number of notable achievements. In October 1982, there were 342 scanning stores in the EAN community; now the figure is nearer 4,000, including at least one in a Comecon country. Also in the EAN/UPC field, we have seen the introduction of electronic communication and the extension of bar coding to general merchandise products and to outer cases.

More recently we reported the formation of new trade groups: AIM (UK) and Cobatech in France. Some form of an even broader-based international AIM organisation is just over the horizon. SCAN-TECH Europe is about to take place, a venture that would have been inconceivable two years ago. These are the signs that the industry is gaining in stature, in self esteem and in international outlook.

Bar coding is coming of age as a truly international phenomenon. There is an increasing need for everyone in the industry to be informed about developments everywhere. We are about to embark on the era when the technology lags between countries will be reduced from many years, to one or two, and ultimately to being imperceptible. In our small way, we hope to continue to adapt to the changing needs of the industry to meet these challenges.

Starting next month SCAN/INTERNATIONAL EDITION will no longer come to you as a separate section. Articles on worldwide bar code scanning events will be incorporated into one consolidated SCAN Newsletter, reflecting the global significance and integration of this important technology.

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