

Introduction

This paper explains the relationship between the Global Data Synchronisation (GDS) Network and the EPCglobal Network™. It does not compare the relative merits of one network versus the other. We view both networks as key components in the transformation towards collaborative supply chains.

The GDS initiative seeks to align product and party information across all trading partners in the supply chain, providing a single version of the truth. GDS enables each participant in the supply chain to have accurate and up-to-date information about the products flowing through its supply chain.

Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology provides the capability to track an object (pallet, case, item, etc) realtime throughout the entire supply chain. The network to be used to support the management and secure exchange of the information, much of it captured using RFID technology, is called the EPCglobal Network. In order to identify each individual instance of a product within the supply chain, the EPCglobal Network will use the Electronic Product Code (EPC), a numbering scheme that incorporates existing numbering schemes.

Recent announcements by consumer products manufacturers and retailers about plans for EPCglobal and GDS Network adoption have led to a number of questions being posed:

- 1 What is the relationship between the GDS Network and the EPCglobal Network?
 - 1.1 What is the relationship between the GTIN and the EPC?
 - 1.2 What information do these two networks hold that is the same and what is different?
 - 1.3 What is the relationship between the GS1 Global Registry and the EPC Object Naming Service (ONS)?
 - 1.4 What is the relationship between a Data Pool and the EPC Information Services (EPC IS)?
 - 1.5 What is the synergy between the infrastructures of the two networks?
- 2 What areas should be explored to ensure the cost-effective development of the two networks?
- 3 Is Data Synchronisation a pre-requisite to EPC adoption?
- 4 What does an integrated roadmap for adopting GDS and EPC look like?

The Global Commerce Initiative (GCI) commissioned this paper to answer these questions and provide some clarity for companies being asked to consider adoption of both concepts. The report does not duplicate the content of previous reports that have been published by GCI on 'Creating the Business Case for Global Data Synchronisation' and the GCI EPC Roadmap. Further work on the Total Industry Business Case for EPC Adoption will be published by GCI in the fourth quarter of 2004.

The report is structured in the following way:

- I. A Brief Explanation of the GDS Network and the EPCglobal Network**
- II. An Integrated View of the GDS Network & EPCglobal Network – answers to questions listed above**
- III. Conclusions**

A list of references to industry publications and standards is provided at the end of this report.

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