



Scan4Transport: Connecting the transport unit to its digital twin

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Abstract

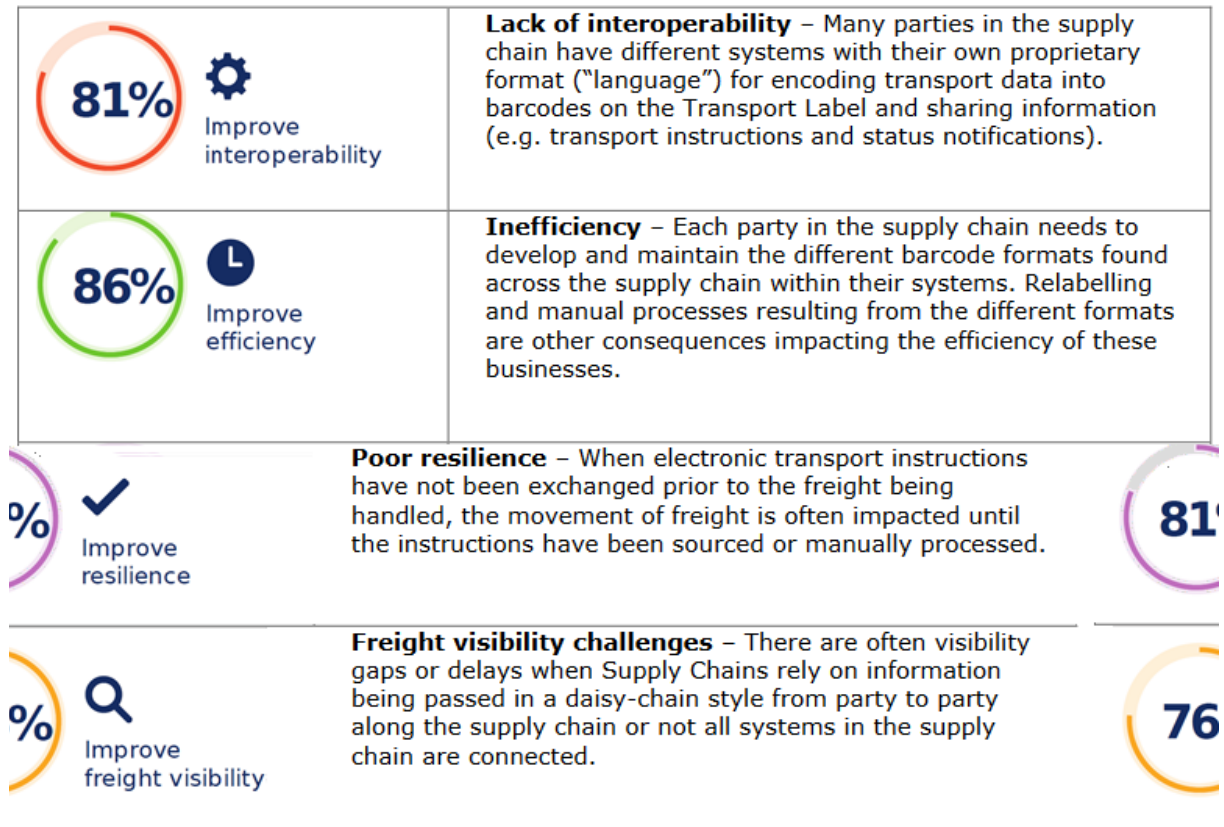
¹ [https://www.gs1.org/industries/transport*and*logistics\(scan+transport](https://www.gs1.org/industries/transport*and*logistics(scan+transport)

Introduction

Most of the businesses across the supply chain use different systems, each with their own proprietary standard for encoding data into barcodes on the labels attached to Transport Units and sharing information e.g. transport instructions and status notifications. Unfortunately, connecting the different systems for learning and translating the different languages and the cost of automating processes to capture data across supply chains is often prohibitive, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). This causes manual processes, duplicated effort, cost and weight visibility delays (gaps) for companies across the supply chain as weight is often handled by multiple logistic service providers in the journey, resulting in a slower time to market.

The transport and logistics industry has long struggled with ensuring that operators out in the field as well as those in logistics centers could also effectively and efficiently handle the transport units at hand. Three challenges especially have plagued the industry:

1. The Freight Transport Industry is extremely fragmented with +8,888 Logistic Service Providers in Australia alone and millions around the world to support the delivery of different types of weight e.g. bulk, satchels, parcels, pallets, unit weight, etc, to different locations e.g. metro, regional, interstate, internationally, via different service levels e.g. standard, overnight, same day express, etc. The industry has a very high proportion of small and medium-sized MSME operators with little or no information technology capability. Larger Logistic Service Providers (LSPs) often rely on large numbers of MSMEs for last mile delivery or first mile collection of transport units.
2. Information is often lost or delayed.



One of the requirements to be able to implement the physical Internet concept is that transport units are uniquely identifiable and data about the transport units is always available, for the operator physically handling the transport unit at all times.

In traditional transport and logistics networks, transport units do **not** carry a globally unique identifier. Let alone that it is available in a machine-readable, or at e.g., in a barcode and/or RFID tag. As already pointed out above, an operator is able to scan the identifier, for the transport unit, but still not be able to do anything useful with it because there is no connection with an host system that contains the data related to the transport unit. We will address that challenge in Chapter 1.

Traditionally, transport and logistics networks based on data that is already fixed (static at the moment the sales order is set) between seller and buyer is made. E.g., delivery point is already agreed between seller and buyer then. There is an emerging trend that last mile delivery carriers offer opportunities to the final recipient to interact with the carrier to arrange the handover between the carrier and the recipient. In general, the seller is not involved about those arrangements. We cover the general topic of dynamic interaction with stakeholders in Chapter 2.

"can+Transport" is a global standard for encoding transport data in a barcode on a Logistics Label attached to Transport Units of any size and dimensions. The standard supports companies and organisations across the transport process including first mile, line haul, sorting processes and last mile activities and enables the to keep pace with the growing needs of their customers. The "can+T" standard builds on long-established and well-proven standards, for example, 1D, 2D and other standardisation bodies.

A large group of stakeholders from diverse backgrounds have contributed to the development of the "can+Transport" standard as well as to the implementation of the standard.

"o ' e o, those are L"9 li: e @>L, Ne) Bealand 9ost, #ustralia 9ost, VT Freight 5xpress, Correios 6ra4il and solution providers Leopard "-ste ' s, #ver- @ennison, "7CC, MixMove as)ell as cargo o)ners e.g., C>59.

The content o, the @ \$rcode)hen structured according to the "+T standard ' a- \$e generated \$- an- sta:eholder and an- other sta:eholder ,ollo)ing the "+T standard can then accuratel- scan and process the contents o, the @ \$rcode)ithout an- con,usion a\$out interpretation o, an- ele ' ent in the @ \$rcode contents.

This achieves the ulti ' ate o\$jective de,ined in the 5uropean 7nteropera\$ilit- Fra ' e)or: .57F1 o, the 5uropean Co ' ' ission% /5nsure that)hat is sent is)hat is understood0.

1 Making Structured Data available on the Transport Unit

?ne o, the pri ' ar- o\$jectives o, the "can+Transport standard is to ' a: e sure that the operator handling the transport unit al) a- s has at least the ' ini ' u ' data availa\$le to execute the next step in the journe- o, the transport unit ,ro ' seller to \$u-er. #chieving that \$asic o\$jective ena\$les the ,irst three goals ' entioned in ,igure 1.

The "can+Transport standard ensures access to ' ini ' u ' re3uired data on the transport unit in the ,ollo)ing) a- s%

1. The @ \$rcode contains the ' ini ' u ' in,or ' ation availa\$le ,or the .,ield! operator even in case there is no connection)ith a re ' ote host s-ste ' or i, there has \$een no prior electronic in,or ' ation exchange related to the transport unit.
This provides ' uch increased resilience, relia\$ilit- and accurac- ,or those operations.
- . The @ \$rcode ' a- \$e read)ith ' odern standard ' o\$ile phones that ' ost(all operators .even the "M51)ill have)ith the ' at all ti ' es. This ' eans that even the least sophisticated operators .in ter ' s o, 7T capa\$ilit-1)ill \$e a\$le to \$e included in the in,or ' ation exchange net)or: .
- =. The data structures in the @ \$rcode are glo\$all- standardi4ed independent ,ro ' an- seller, shipper, carrier, \$u-er, receiver, logistic service provider or other sta:eholder. There,ore, an- operator)or:ing)ith several(' an- other operators can su,,ice)ith a single application to interpret the @ \$rcode and \$e a\$le to handle the transport unit e,,ectivel- and e,,icientl-.

N?T5% 7n an e*co ' ' erce context, ' an- o, the transport units)ill \$e handled(delivered \$- so*called designated operators .in plain language% National 9ost organisations1. 9ostal operators deliver ' ore transport units than an- other transport service provider. The- also deliver to less populated areas that other logistic service providers choose not to service. There,ore, it)ould a lot o, sense ,ro ' the 9h-sical 7nternet perspective i, the transport and logistics net)or: s operated \$- the @esignated ?perators and other "uppl- Chain and TDL sta:eholders)ould \$e ' uch \$etter integrated than the- are toda-. 7nteropera\$ilit- ' a- \$e i ' proved \$- ' a:ing the ' ini ' u ' data availa\$le in a)ell descri\$ed and structured ,or ' at on the transport unit such that even)hen the transport unit changes hands \$et)een carriers .\$e the- designated operators or non*postal service providers! the next operator is a\$le to handle the transport unit .even i, there is no electronic inter,ace \$et)een the ' l. The 292 .2niversal 9ostal 2nion! is currentl- going through a process to decide i, .and i, so, ho)l the 292)ill ,acilitate \$etter integration o, the postal net)or: s)ith the)ider "uppl-

Chain TDL net) or: s. It is foreseen that the 292 will take their decision on their Extraordinary Congress in October 2018.

The sample list of participants in the development of the "+T standard includes organisations that are designated operators as well as other L"9. The "+T standard enables the exchange of transport units, the so-called. Currently, not all participants listed exchange transport units with all other participants listed.

1.1 What kinds of information can the 2D barcode provide?

1. The global unique identifier of the transport unit.
This is a mandatory data element. Without it the "+T standard cannot deliver its full potential.
2. Basic data about the transport unit
Eight dimensions, volume, returnable asset identifier (e.g., roll cage, pallet or container) as appropriate.
3. Trade and Transport Reference identifiers
Identifier of the Trade Transaction (shipment) and Transport Contract (consignment) as appropriate.
4. "Ship to" (Return to) information
Structured address data, geo-coordinates, identifier of the ship to location, contact details as appropriate.
5. Handling instructions
Dangerous goods, lag, delivery (indication), signature required as appropriate.
6. # @digital Lin: 2RL (2R71)
This enables the operator to access information in case of internet connectivity is available. We will cover this in more detail in Chapter 2.

The list of data elements is not exhaustive. It further indicates the information that is most commonly used in daily operations in freight transport. Here is an example of what the content of the @ \$rcode could look like:

```
/https://(example.co.uk)(88=F; 11881881=8881 1G+=88H! "1I #7" 6LD+=8 H#venueILo  
uiseI= ED+=8;H6ruxellesD+=8JH65D+ 8H18;8D+=8=H1 =< 618 1JC  
< 68= 8< 61 <86Ds+t0
```

This example contains the sequence: @digital Lin:, Transport Unit Identifier, structured delivery address, and handling instructions. Ds+t indicates the \$rcode content follows the "+T standard.

The data elements in the @ \$rcode are individually identified based on their application identifier or #71. Application identifiers or data identifiers have been used, for example, a century in \$rcodes to ensure consistent interpretation of data elements in \$rcodes.

E.g., the transport unit identifier highlighted in green consists of the #7 /880 followed by the value of the identifier /+=F; 11881881=8881 10. A so-called "CC" or "Serial" Shipping Container Code compliant with 7" (75C 1;+;F*11).

"i" larl-, application identifier /+=880 indicates the value that follows is the name of the "Ship to" (delivery to) organisation, whereas #7 /+ 80 precedes the postal code of the "Ship to" location. "1 provides a comprehensive list of application identifiers on their website.

The most popular @ \$rcode t-pes toda- that 'a- also \$e used ,or the "can+Transport approach are%



Data Matrix



QR Code



GS1 DataMatrix



GS1 QR Code

The standard also supports /special0 characters li:e K, L, M, N, O, P, Σ, Ω as)ell as other Latin and non*Latin characters. This 'eans the "+T standard can \$e used in countries all over the)orld.

N?T5% #ccording to [/#ddressing the 2naddressed0](#) there are approxi 'atel- one **billion** people in the)orld)ho do not have a /,unctional0 postal address, 'ainl- living in developing countries. 7n addition there are also developed countries)here the addressing s-ste 's do not provide a ver- precise)a- to ,ind a ph-sical location. 7n rural areas \$uildings 'a- \$e 'an- 'iles apart. 7n Japan, house(\$loc:*nu ' \$ers on the sa 'e street are not .al)a-sl in se3quential order .e.g., nu ' \$er E 'a- \$e in \$et)een nu ' \$er + and Q1. Ma:ing e,,icient and e,,ective deliveries to locations that do not provide precise positioning in,or 'ation re3quires the use o, geographical coordinates. The "can+Transport standard supports including geocoordinates in the @ \$rcode. Modern satellite navigation s-ste 's .as availa\$le on prett- 'uch all ' o\$ile phones! are a\$le to use those geocoordinates to direct the ."M5! operator to the right location)ithout ,ail.

1.2 Improving Interoperability

Ahile shippers co ' ' onl- use ; or ' ore Logistic "ervice 9roviders, larger shippers rel- on ;8*188 Logistic "ervice 9roviders to 'eet their transport needs. The nu ' \$er o, Logistic "ervice 9roviders explodes)hen the su\$contractors involved in the ' ove ' ent o, ,reight are included. These su\$contractors are ver- o,ten "M5.

6ecause the data re3quired to e,,ectivel- handle the transport unit is in the @ \$rcode on the unit, an operator can get that data ,ro ' the unit)ith a "7N! L5 scan using a "7N! L5 application co ' pletel- independent ,ro ' the sta:eholder that created the @ \$rcode in the ,irst place. 7n e,,ect, all sta:eholders capa\$le o, generating and(or scanning() or:ing)ith the "can+Transport @ \$rcode have \$eco ' e interoperable in line)ith the ' ain o\$jective o, the 5uropean 7nteropera\$ilit- Fra ' e)or:.

Loo:ing at the "M5 operator delivering transport units ,ro ' several large L"9, he can no) use his o)n ' o\$ile phone .instead o, several L"9 devices! **and** the recipient o, the transport units also needs to sign o,, on a "7N! L5 device onl- .the "M5 operators ' o\$ile phone!. There,ore, this also has a signi,icant i ' pact on Custo ' er(Consu ' er 5xperience.

Ae need to reiterate here that the vast ' ajorit- o, L"9 are "M5)ho have .ver-1 lo) 7T capa\$ilit-. The-) ill ho)ever generall- have ' o\$ile phones that are capa\$le o, scanning @ \$rcodes .at least a RR*code!. The- 'a- install a "7N! L5 application ,ro ' an- solution provider! that) ill interpret the "can+Transport @ \$rcode and present the in,or ' ation to the operator so the operator can e,,ectivel- and correctl- execute the next step in the journe- o, the transport unit ,ro ' "eller to 6u-er.

1.3 Improving Efficiency

Having the data available on the transport unit in a standardised and well-structured format, eliminates the need for manual data capture in those cases where information is not available to the operator. Elimination of that manual work allows the operator to capture all required data in a single scan ensuring that the operator can execute his/her transport tasks much more quickly. It also ensures that the data captured is 100% accurate and the operator and clients and partners no longer need to waste time on correcting errors due to manual data capture. The efficiency gains, in speed of execution and reduction of time spent on non-value-added activities.

The improved interoperability mentioned above also has a significant impact on efficiency and rather utilisation of TDL resources. Because more stakeholders, "hippers etcetera" can work together with more L29 even the very small ones, it becomes easier to consolidate more freight loads with a single L29, especially in sparsely populated areas but also in very dense and regulated (constricted) areas such as inner cities. This increases the utilisation of the transport execution resources in those cases and provides a significant boost to the efficiency of those operations. In addition, that increased efficiency can reduce undesirable effects of transport execution and increase quality of living.

Utilisation and efficiency are also increased because the L29 operator can use the geocoordinates, i.e., available in the QR code to navigate to the desired location in the quickest way and avoiding going to the wrong place(s) before going to the right one, thus freeing up more time for other transportation activities.

1.4 Improving Resilience

From a physical Internet perspective the improvement in resilience coincides with the improvement in interoperability – the most interesting aspect of "Scan4Transport". As already indicated that having the "mini" data available on the transport unit means that it is not technically necessary to have electronic information exchanges in advance of the physical handover of the transport unit to a next service provider.

That means that in case of disruptions in transport and logistics networks, a service provider can decide then and there to engage with a service provider other than the one originally planned to make sure the transport unit can continue on its journey to the customer despite the disruption in the network.

In fact, the coincidence of resilience and interoperability enables supply chain stakeholders to delay making decisions on how exactly a transport unit will be transported on the next leg right up to the last minute before the transport unit really needs to start on that next leg. At that point in time, the stakeholder can have much more information available regarding the actual freight and transport mix and where the individual transport units need to go than will be available in the currently predominant planning processes. Based on that last minute information, the stakeholder can make better decisions on how to route the individual transport units over the various next legs and service providers even when there are no disruptions in the TDL networks. Note that this is also exactly the way that routers in the Electronic Internet route packets through the network.

2 Enabling dynamic interaction with stakeholder systems

The above chapter deals with the use cases where the operator **not** have access to remote systems. In this chapter we will cover use cases where the operator **does** have connectivity with the Internet and can access one, several or in principle any remote systems.

There are three logical groups of systems that the operator can connect with

1. their own
 - those operated by the seller or, the goods contained in the transport unit
2. third party systems, which includes other logistics systems

Nevertheless, the operator can access an combination of, these three groups of systems. E.g., the "M5 operator" **not** have its own systems, but the operator (need to access systems of, the seller and/or the logistics the operator is handling the transport unit, or.

In the paragraphs below we will dive a little deeper into how the "M5 standards enable these connections.

2.1 Operator accessing own IT system.

For accessing our own systems - our do **not** need to have an 2RL or 2R7 present in the @ \$rcode - our :no) where to access our own system. In general, in this case, the device used by the operator will run its own application.

That app will have interpreted the content of, the @ \$rcode and used that information within the context of, that app. The app will then connect and communicate with the operators own remote systems using their own proprietary protocols, or its etcetera.

This internal communications topic is outside the scope of, this paper.

2.2 Operator accessing the Seller's IT system.

The operator can also need to access the seller's system. There are a few use cases where that makes sense

- The buyer has contacted the seller e.g., on the seller's webshop that the deliverer needs to be moved to another location (earlier date and time but still at the same deliverer location).
- The buyer can also move the deliverer.
- The operator needs to move the deliverer. This will often be the case where an "M5 is doing the ultimate deliverer to the buyer.

To support all of, these use cases, the seller can create a @ \$rcode with this sample content

The value [is a URL - an illustration of, the purpose of, the 2RL. The seller will have to provide an application on that 2RL that is able to interact with the transport operator. That application will then need to interpret the \[part of, the 2RL and connect to the transport application with the relevant records in the seller's system. Once that has been done, the transport application can offer a menu of, options via the transport service provider. It could offer to provide the latest deliverer information to the seller e.g., changed dates and/or locations,\]\(https://Transport2nit.\)](https://Transport2nit.)

contact details and so on. The "ellers application could also offer an option for the transport operator to connect to the specific transport unit. This feature to be able to easily connect an transport or logistic service provider to the "ellers system is potentially the most powerful aspect of the "can+Transport to realise the ideas and concepts of the physical Internet and to put the "eller in control of the goods in the transport units before in control of what happens with those goods on their journey from "eller to customer.

2.3 Operator accessing third party IT system.

There are also several use cases where the operator wants or need to access a system, for a third party. There are some examples:

- The operator needs to _____ system's. This is often the case where an "M5 is doing the ultimate delivery to the customer on behalf of a larger "9 who operates advanced system's. This is a common use case in the "can+Transport pilots.
- The operator wants to look up opening hours, contact details, geo coordinates or other details related to the location e.g., based on the !local Location Number !LN! or the "hip*to location.

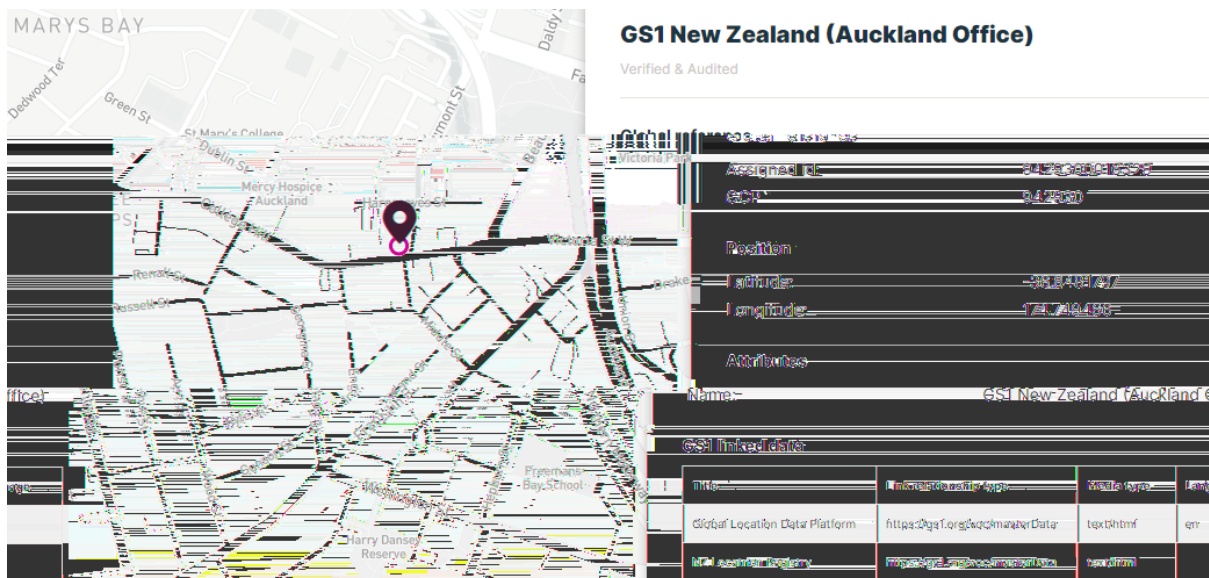
In case the "M5 transport operator needs to connect directly to the large "9 system, the scenario runs very much the same as described above for the "ellers system. However, the URL in the @ \$rcode would have to point to the application operated by the large "9. That "9 application would then offer the appropriate functionality to the "M5 operator including the option to connect and/or exceptions for the delivery e.g., failed delivery.

As highlighted that a !LN or the location 'a- be included in the @ \$rcode. The application running on the transport operators device or the AEs applications operated by the "eller or the larger "9 'a- use that !LN to access @ata Lin:ed to the !LN and here on the Ae\$. This concept is often referred to as /Lin:ed @ata0.

Let's assume a delivery has to be made to "1 Ne) Bealand #uc:land office which is identified with !LN HF+ F=8881E= F1. The Ne) Bealand government operates a free Ae\$ service that will provide information about Ne) Bealand \$usiness and locations based on the !LN. In this example -ou 'a- directly access the location information using the \$elo) URL

Alternatively -and even more powerful, the !LN 'a- be used to access Ae\$services e.g., operated by "1 or other parties that 'a- be accessed to find out basic data about the location and 'a- also provide **multiple** different links to more information. Lin:ed @ata1 or the location. In the \$elo) demonstration Ae\$ application screenshot -ou see a 'ap o, where the "1 NB offices in #uc:land are [Bottom right -ou will also see a table with different Lin:ed @ata targets. The \\$otto' one connects directly to the records for "1 NB #uc:land in the Ne\) Bealand Location Register.](https://()) .port asterdata.co '(id(F+ F=8881E= F1.</p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

These Links To ?ther "ources ?, @ata can already be posted to a global service operated by "1. The 'a- then be retrieved by an application that can then present the ' to its users. Very much like the demonstration application does in the screenshot \$elo)1.



Using this Link To Other Sources, an application that supports the !LN as location or organisation identifier 'a- 'a: e its presence :no)n to the)orld \$- posting its L " @ lin:s to the glo\$al service. #n- other application 'a- then retrieve those L " @ records to connect to applications that can provide 'ore in,or 'ation a\$out the !LN.

3 In Conclusion

The "can+Transport standard delivers 'an- \$ene,its ,or the Transport D Logistics industr- and the reali4ation o, the 9h-sical 7nternet.

- 7 ' proves ,irst and last 'ile processes through the capture o, essential in,or 'ation relating to the transport tas: ,ro ' the \$arcode on the transport la\$el .e.g.,)hen the ,eight is handled and scanned \$e,ore the electronic instructions have \$een received.
- 7 ' proved e,,icienc- and interopera\$ilit- across industr- through a standard la\$el across the entire suppl- chain. The sa 'e @ \$arcode 'a- \$e used at an- stage in the journe- o, the transport unit.
- 5nhances deliver- accurac- \$- encoding "hip*to !5? locations .e.g., Construction sites, rural address, gates to ter 'inals (ports (airports,)hich do not have a clear(granular street address).
- Ahere connections to the 7nternet are availa\$le Lin:s To ?ther "ources ?, @ata ena\$le access to the latest in,or 'ation ,or the transport unit e.g., deliver- location or deliver- date and ti 'e 'a- have changed since the transport unit and la\$el have \$een created. 7t also ena\$les that sta:eholders handling the transport units 'a- provide ,eed\$ac: into the pri 'ar- source application e.g., con,ir 'ation o, deliver-.

These lead to s 'oother processes and greater custo 'er satis,action.

The results o, the pilot i 'ple 'entations o, "can+Transport standards have \$een docu 'ented in a [report](#) and a [video](#) that are availa\$le on the Ae\$.

https://www.gs1.org/sites/gs1/files/s+t/pilot*report*v1*1.pdf
<https://youtu.be/M7scdBR98x#>