
**Information technology — Automatic
identification and data capture
techniques — Bar code print quality test
specification — Two-dimensional
symbols**

*Technologies de l'information — Techniques automatiques
d'identification et de capture des données — Spécification de test de
qualité d'impression des symboles de code à barres — Symboles
bi-dimensionnels*

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Contents

Page

Foreword	iv
Introduction	v
1 Scope	1
2 Normative references	1
3 Terms and definitions	2
4 Symbols (and abbreviated terms)	3
5 Quality grading	3
5.1 General	3
5.2 Expression of quality grades	3
5.3 Overall Symbol Grade	4
5.4 Reporting of symbol grade	4
6 Measurement methodology for two-dimensional multi-row bar code symbols	5
6.1 General	5
6.2 Symbolologies with cross-row scanning ability	5
6.3 Symbolologies requiring row-by-row scanning	10
7 Measurement methodology for two-dimensional matrix symbols	10
7.1 Overview of methodology	10
7.2 Obtaining the test images	11
7.3 Reference reflectivity measurements	12
7.4 Number of scans	15
7.5 Basis of scan grading	15
7.6 Grading procedure	15
7.7 Additional reflectance check over extended area	16
7.8 Image assessment parameters and grading	16
7.9 Scan grading	21
7.10 Overall Symbol Grade	21
7.11 Print growth	22
8 Measurement methodologies for composite symbolologies	22
9 Substrate characteristics	22
Annex A (normative) Symbolology-specific parameters and values for symbol grading	23
Annex B (informative) Symbol grading flowchart for two-dimensional matrix symbols	38
Annex C (informative) Interpreting the scan and symbol grades	39
Annex D (informative) Guidance on selection of grading parameters in application specifications	41
Annex E (informative) Substrate characteristics	46
Annex F (informative) Parameter grade overlay applied to two-dimensional symbolologies	48
Bibliography	49

Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) and IEC (the International Electrotechnical Commission) form the specialized system for worldwide standardization. National bodies that are members of ISO or IEC participate in the development of International Standards through technical committees established by the respective organization to deal with particular fields of technical activity. ISO and IEC technical committees collaborate in fields of mutual interest. Other international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO and IEC, also take part in the work. In the field of information technology, ISO and IEC have established a joint technical committee, ISO/IEC JTC 1.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of the joint technical committee is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the joint technical committee are circulated to national bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the national bodies casting a vote.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO and IEC shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

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Introduction

The technology of bar coding is based on the recognition of patterns encoded, in bars and spaces or in a matrix of modules of defined dimensions, according to rules defining the translation of characters into such patterns, known as the symbology specification. Symbology specifications may be categorized into those for linear symbols, on the one hand, and two-dimensional symbols on the other; the latter may in turn be subdivided into «multi-row bar code symbols» sometimes referred to as «stacked bar code symbols», and «two-dimensional matrix symbols». In addition there is a hybrid group of symbologies known as «composite symbologies»; these symbols consist of two components carrying a single message or related data, one of which is usually a linear symbol and the other a two-dimensional symbol positioned in a defined relationship with the linear symbol.

Multi-row bar code symbols are constructed graphically as a series of rows of symbol characters, representing data and overhead components, placed in a defined vertical arrangement to form a (normally) rectangular symbol, which contains a single data message. Each symbol character has the characteristics of a linear bar code symbol character and each row has those of a linear bar code symbol; each row, therefore, may be read by linear symbol scanning techniques, but the data from all the rows in the symbol must be read before the message can be transferred to the application software.

Two-dimensional matrix symbols are normally square or rectangular arrangements of dark and light modules, the centres of which are placed at the intersections of a grid of two (sometimes more) axes; the coordinates of each module need to be known in order to determine its significance, and the symbol must therefore be analysed two-dimensionally before it can be decoded. Dot codes are a subset of matrix codes in which the individual modules do not directly touch their neighbours but are separated from them by a clear space.

Unless the context requires otherwise, the term “symbol” in this International Standard may refer to either type of symbology.

The bar code symbol must be produced in such a way as to be reliably decoded at the point of use, if it is to fulfil its basic objective as a machine-readable data carrier.

Manufacturers of bar code equipment and the producers and users of bar code symbols therefore require publicly available standard test specifications for the objective assessment of the quality of bar code symbols (a process known as verification), to which they can refer when developing equipment and application standards or determining the quality of the symbols. Such test specifications form the basis for the development of measuring equipment for process control and quality assurance purposes during symbol production as well as afterwards.

The performance of measuring equipment for the verification of symbols (verifiers) is the subject of a separate International Standard (ISO/IEC 15426, Parts 1 and 2).

This International Standard is intended to achieve comparable results to the linear bar code symbol quality standard ISO/IEC 15416, the general principles of which it has followed. It should be read in conjunction with the symbology specification applicable to the bar code symbol being tested, which provides symbology-specific detail necessary for its application. Two-dimensional multi-row bar code symbols are verified according to the ISO/IEC 15416 methodology, with the modifications described in Clause 6; different parameters and methodologies are applicable to two-dimensional matrix symbols.

There are currently many methods of assessing bar code quality at different stages of symbol production. The methodologies described in this specification are not intended as a replacement for any current process control methods. They provide symbol producers and their trading partners with universally standardized means for communicating about the quality of multi-row bar code and two-dimensional matrix symbols after they have been printed. The procedures described in this International Standard must necessarily be augmented by the reference decode algorithm and other measurement details within the applicable

symbology specification, and they may also be altered or overridden as appropriate by governing symbology or application specifications.

Alternative methods of quality assessment may be agreed between parties or as part of an application specification.

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Information technology — Automatic identification and data capture techniques — Bar code print quality test specification — Two-dimensional symbols

1 Scope

This part of ISO/IEC 15415

- specifies two methodologies for the measurement of specific attributes of two-dimensional bar code symbols, one of these being applicable to multi-row bar code symbologies and the other to two-dimensional matrix symbologies;
- defines methods for evaluating and grading these measurements and deriving an overall assessment of symbol quality;
- gives information on possible causes of deviation from optimum grades to assist users in taking appropriate corrective action.

This International Standard applies to those two-dimensional symbologies for which a reference decode algorithm has been defined, but its methodologies can be applied partially or wholly to other similar symbologies.

2 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 2859-1, *Sampling procedures for inspection by attributes — Part 1: Sampling schemes indexed by acceptance quality limit (AQL) for lot-by-lot inspection*

ISO 3951, *Sampling procedures and charts for inspection by variables for percent nonconforming*

ISO 7724-2, *Paints and varnishes — Colorimetry — Part 2: Colour measurement*

ISO/IEC 15416, *Information technology — Automatic identification and data capture techniques — Bar code print quality test specification — Linear symbols*

EN 1556, *Bar Coding — Terminology*

NOTE The Bibliography lists official and industry standards containing specifications of symbologies to which (*inter alia*) this International Standard is applicable.