



GS1 GoScan

Trusted data the key to B2C applications

A survey conducted by GS1 Australia, with assistance from Anaphylaxis Australia and Nestlé Australia, has shown that accessing a trusted source of data on allergens contained in food products is of highest concern.

A small group of allergy sufferers were given access to the GS1 Australia GoScan iPhone application to assist them in identifying food products with allergens which concerned them. The survey showed that the participants had a great reliance on, and trust for allergen information provided by manufacturers, both via the product label and through customer support centres. It also showed that there was a much lower level of trust on data provided from other sources perceived not to originate with the manufacturer.

The results from the survey on the functionality of the GoScan iPhone application were very positive. Many participants said that the application assisted with their purchasing decision, with some even altering their purchase choice.

Further research on the issue of trusted data - *what consumers trust and from whom the data comes* - needs to be undertaken to ascertain what constitutes a trusted data source for Extended Labelling applications.

Background

Anaphylaxis is the most severe form of allergic reaction and is potentially life threatening. It must be treated as a medical emergency, requiring immediate treatment and urgent medical attention.

Triggers of anaphylaxis include foods and insect stings and bites. Foods such as milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, sesame, wheat, fish, crustaceans and soy are the most common food triggers, causing 90% of allergic reactions, however, any food can trigger anaphylaxis.

Anaphylaxis is almost always a preventable and treatable event. Knowing the triggers and avoiding them is the first step in prevention. To this end labelling of food products is critical for carers and allergy sufferers.

A report by Access Economics released by the Australasian Society for Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) in 2007 revealed that:

- 4.1 million Australians (19.6%) have at least one allergy
- The highest prevalence is in the working population, with 78% of those with allergy aged 15-64 years
- The average allergic person has 1.74 allergies. i.e. most people suffer from more than one condition at the same time. Eg. hay fever and asthma, or food allergy and eczema
- If current time trends continue, there will be a 70% increase in the number of Australians with allergies affected from 4.1 million now to 7.7 million by 2050, and an increased proportion affected from 19.6% to 26.1%
- The cost of allergies to the Australian economy is more than \$7 billion per year

iPhone application

GS1 Australia has developed an iPhone application, GS1 GoScan, to help support the needs for consumers for trusted and detailed product information, amongst them, allergic consumers' quest for allergen information on their favorite food products.

For the initial prototype, product data for food products from Nestlé Australia was uploaded into the GS1 Australia content database, which is accessed by the GoScan application via the internet.

This product data was sourced from GS1net, GS1 Australia's data synchronisation service. GS1net is used by the Australian and New Zealand food industry to communicate product master data. At the time of this report, over 800,000 product records from almost 1400 suppliers are available on GS1net.

GS1net data was further complemented with the content from Nutribank - the product labelling information database for all Nestlé food products in Australia.

Consumers can access this data by scanning the bar code on a product using the GoScan application. GoScan decodes the bar codes and uses the Global Trade Item Number (GTIN), or bar code number, to access the available product information, including allergens, and displays it to on the iPhone.

Research Project

Working with Nestlé Australia and Anaphylaxis Australia, a non-profit organisation that supports and assists those affected by food allergy and anaphylaxis, GS1 Australia invited 20 volunteers from Melbourne and Sydney to trial and evaluate the GoScan application. Volunteers had to be aged over 18 years and own an iPhone that supported internet access and an existing internet data plan with a service provider. A total of 17 volunteered to substantiate if the application provided the information needed to help support product purchasing decisions in the supermarket. Volunteers either had food allergies or had family members with food allergies.

As part of the survey they were asked to identify additional functions or information that potential users would consider valuable and to indicate their level of trust of the data provided.

Key Findings

- 71% found GoScan easy or very easy to use
- 86% said they trusted the product label as a source of allergen information
- 42% said they trusted the manufacturer's customer hotline as a source of allergen information
- 28% said they trusted GoScan as a source of allergen information
- 86% found that the data displayed on GoScan reflected what was on the product label, with a similar number finding reading the allergen information displayed as easy to understand
- 71% reported that the GoScan information assisted with their purchasing decision

Conclusion

While this research was conducted with a limited number of people, the outcomes reaffirmed the assumption that the source of the product data is a major concern to consumers with food allergies.

Even if a mobile phone application is easy to use, provides the functionality needed to aid the consumer in the purchasing process and provides clear and consistent ingredient and allergen information that is easily understood, consumers need to trust the information being provided in order to derive value.

Another finding from the research was the need to clearly convey the message that the data displayed by GoScan was unadulterated and straight from the manufacturers' database as this link was not evident during the trial.

This exercise also highlighted there is much to be learned on how consumers would use applications like GoScan in their daily shopping activities. During this trial, participants tended to scan every product they purchased in order to test the GoScan application and provide their feedback. As a result, some reported that this process increased their shopping times.

Further to this preliminary survey, GS1 Australia will undertake comprehensive research into the issue of trusted data. The aim will be to establish the level of trust placed by consumers on data for food products across different media and identify which sources of data consumers trust and what information they value to assist their purchase.



Research findings February 2011



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JB_1120_0211

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