



ACQUISITION,
TECHNOLOGY
AND LOGISTICS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

3000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3000

JUL 28 2003

Mr. Ted Mason
Director, EPS Network Services & Emerging Technologies
Food Marketing Institute
655 15th St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Mason,

The U.S. Department of Defense is transforming its warfighting forces and supporting business practices. We've recently focused on improving the acquisition of services and equipment to be more responsive to our increasingly multi-national and coalition driven operational needs. Among other things, these efforts embrace capturing timely, accurate and reliable data on tangible items (i.e., property, equipment, reparables, and consumables) to improve life-cycle asset management and track items in Defense and Industry business systems for operational, logistic, and financial accountability purposes.

Automatic identification technology used in combination with standardized marking practices enables us to uniquely identify items. Recognizing the importance of this technology and its standardization benefits, we're undertaking implementation of a strategic vision for the unique identification of tangible items. Our collective goal in collaboration with our industry and international partners is to implement a set of policies for this purpose. We would like to rely to the maximum extent practical on commercial item markings and international standards.

I ask your forbearance as we implement the policy in the attached draft memorandum. This policy allows for the use of Text Element Identifiers (TEIs). Our aerospace suppliers account for nearly one third of the dollar value of our hardware procurements and use these identifiers extensively. Unfortunately, TEIs cannot be readily accommodated using existing ISO standards.

We have a strategic imperative to move forward, and with all due respect we must take this action now. It is not our intent to replace ISO, UCC or HIBCC standards, but to establish a surrogate collaborative solution that can be immediately implemented. As other international standards, preferably ISO standards, emerge supporting our needs, they will be adopted and likely be the preferred approach. We look forward to working with you to incorporate this collaborative solution into ISO standards. To this end, we plan to submit a proposal to ISO JTC1/SC 31 for consideration of the collaborative solution in October 2003.

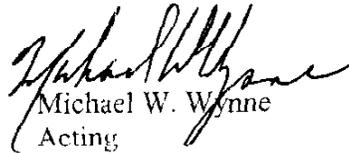


The unique identification policy precludes another policy for the mandatory use of radio frequency identification on all marked items we have targeted for issuance in July 2004. We will be fully engaged with industry, our international partners and international standardization bodies in the evolution of the particulars of this policy.

We're very fortunate to have industry, our international partners and representatives of international standardization bodies participating in our unique identification policy development. Their expertise and keen insights are greatly appreciated. Please feel free to share this letter with your colleagues.

The point of contact for Unique Identification (UID) standards issues is LTC Gregory Redick. Please address your questions to him at (201) 393-3273 or by email at gregory.redick@osd.mil.

Sincerely,


Michael W. Wynne
Acting

cc:

Government of Australia
Government of Canada
Government of Japan
Government of The Netherlands
Government of The Republic of Korea
Government of The United Kingdom