



Mobile & Wireless Forum

September 29, 2023

Comments of the Mobile & Wireless Forum on the Consultation of Mexico’s Federal Telecommunications Institute Regarding Device Marking

The Mobile & Wireless Forum (“MWF”) is an international association of telecommunications equipment manufacturers with an interest in mobile or wireless communications, including the evolution to 5G and the Internet of Things.¹ The MWF has reviewed Mexico’s consultation on the required marking of devices with an IFT mark and submits these comments to advise Mexico’s Federal Telecommunications Institute (hereinafter, the “Institute”) of the manufacturers’ ongoing interests and concerns.

MWF understands that Mexico, along with many other sovereign nations, has legitimate and important interest in having its compliance mark be made available to consumers and enforcement officials in order to confirm that each device on the market has met Mexico’s device certification requirements. Nevertheless, there are significant problems with implementing yet another mark on the already crowded labels on devices. For this reason, MWF urges the Institute to utilize the advantages of electronic labeling (e-labeling).

MWF believes that such an interest can best be met by implementation of an e-labeling regime that will enable device manufacturers to fully represent the Institute’s IFT mark and its meaning without the limitations and issues attendant to application of a physical label on a device. Moreover, e-labeling is a more environmentally responsible, consumer and accessibility-oriented approach with the required information readily available within the device itself and retrievable in a digital format from the packaging via a QR code. As discussed below, the advantages of e-labeling are significant and outweigh any perceived benefits of a physical label requirement.

I. E-Labeling: A Basic Description

At its heart, e-labeling is the digital display of logos, marks and labeling information required to show that a device complies with the relevant national requirements for a given country. For globally produced products such as most mobile and other wireless devices, the existing physical labeling requirements can

¹ The MWF was established to represent manufacturers on a variety of device testing and certification issues. Further information on the MWF can be found on our website (www.mwfai.org).

take up a substantial amount of packaging surface – and in some cases also require certain logos and information to be printed or etched on the device itself. In both cases, the result is a crowd of labels that can be difficult to distinguish and hard for consumers to understand. In contrast, e-labeling designations – together with all-important accompanying explanations – can be accessed by a menu and digitally displayed. Such information is most easily accessed by means of a QR code. The features of a QR code – as explained in more detail below – render them easily understood and used by consumers. MWF, therefore, urges the Institute to adopt a QR code approach.

II. QR Codes Provide The Best Approach for E-Labeling

A QR code may be placed on packaging or, in some cases, direct the user to an appropriate online source of information where all required information may be stored and how this information can also be accessed and verified within the device. In addition, a menu can direct a user to additional information, such as an explanation of the meaning of a symbol or mark. Such an approach has the advantage of allowing the effective presentation of the required certification mark by providing complete information to the user.

A. E-Labeling Via QR Codes Provide Substantial Benefits

In the past few years, QR codes have moved from being unusual items to being used everywhere around the world. They are common items used in every corner of day-to-day living, including in restaurants to access menus, on information signs to give additional information or help to users, in airports to access airport information, and in a myriad of other places. Because of their widespread use, QR codes provide substantial benefits, as follows.

1. QR codes are easy to understand: For most consumers, QR codes are commonplace items and they understand how such codes should be used. No additional explanation is required.
2. QR codes are easy to use and efficient: There are no complex steps involved in using QR codes. It is a simple matter of pointing a device with a camera at them and clicking on the URL that comes up. Further, they permit accessing information without having to open a package.
3. QR codes are eco-friendly: Because QR codes access digital information there is no wasted resource such as paper.
4. QR codes increase accuracy: Information behind the code can be updated easily and explanations can be provided via additional embedded links
5. QR codes are a solution to legibility problems: a QR code provides a remedy for having a device label crowded with logos and information.
6. QR codes provide accessibility solutions: users with hearing or sight disabilities will have online information online that can be in an accessible format for them.

In addition to the foregoing benefits, QR codes can help with market surveillance and, at the same time, provide a measure of security against counterfeit devices.

B. QR Codes Aid In Market Surveillance And Counterfeit Device Prevention

Due to their ease of use, accessing e-labels by means of QR codes provides a benefit to market surveillance authorities (MSA's) by allowing the identification of certified devices without the extra step of opening a package. In addition, such an approach provides security against counterfeit devices. These features are unique to QR codes and should be considered as significant reasons why such QR codes should be used.

1. Market Surveillance

Market surveillance of wireless devices typically requires the MSA to determine whether a device being sold on the market has the proper certification and whether it has the proper accompanying consumer information. For example, the MSA may look for the device certification symbol (e.g., the IFT mark) and whether required information about RF exposure is available to the consumer. When e-labeling is accompanied by a QR code on the product packaging the MSA will be able to access the manufacturer's certification and the compliance information for that model. Further, the information will be available without the device or its packaging being opened.

2. Counterfeit Protection

It is an unfortunate fact that a printed compliance statement is relatively easy to fake. However, ensuring that the device information accessed by the QR code correctly appears on a manufacturers' website and is displayed in a way that is accurate for all markets is a more difficult challenge for counterfeiters.

III. Global Precedents for E-Labeling

Currently, several countries around the world have replaced traditional labeling requirements with the option to use electronic labeling for mobile phones. These countries include the following: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Pakistan, Samoa, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Global United Arab Emirates and the United States. The specifics of these requirements differ but all clearly recognize that e-labeling has advantages that make it superior to a physical label. Mexico has an opportunity to follow the example of these countries and adopt e-labeling.

IV. Conclusion

E-labeling can provide a means for the Institute to achieve its objective of having a distinct certification mark (IFT) for wireless devices and, at the same time, address the problem of an overcrowded and

illegible label. The manufacturers of MWF will embrace a new label that can be accessed by means of a QR code and e-labeling technology. The advantages of such e-labels are substantial and will benefit consumers and regulators as well as provide manufacturers with a superior process for implementing the labeling requirement.

For the above reasons, the MWF urges the Institute to adopt the QR code/e-labeling strategy.

Respectfully submitted,

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