International Organization Licenses Microsoft's New Multicolor Bar Code Technology for Identifying Audiovisual Works

Consumers and businesses alike expected to benefit from information-bearing capability of new bar code format.

REDMOND, Wash., and GENEVA — April 16, 2007 — Microsoft Corp. and the International Standard Audiovisual Number International Agency (ISAN-IA) today announced an agreement whereby ISAN-IA has licensed Microsoft's new High Capacity Color Barcode (HCCB) technology developed by Microsoft Research to assist in the identification of commercial audiovisual works such as motion pictures, video games, broadcasts, digital video recordings and other media.

The ISAN-IA, which coordinates a globally recognized identification system for audiovisual works, will make the Microsoft®-developed bar code available to other organizations for use in tracking, helping protect and manage their audiovisual content. The new multicolor barcode is expected to start appearing on DVD media toward the end of 2007. ISAN-IA also said several of its registration agencies will use the innovative technology to help their customers derive more accountability and value from their media asset libraries.

"The capability of these new bar codes to store more data in a smaller space should provide a rich resource for the industry and consumers alike," said Gavin Jancke, director of engineering for Microsoft Research and inventor of the HCCB format. "The new code offers several advantages over existing black-and-white bar codes most people are accustomed to seeing on product packages, enabling new consumer experiences, more visual appeal where aesthetics are important and the ability to incorporate advanced security features."

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Current ISAN codes allow an audiovisual work to be uniquely distinguished from other works through a simple identification system, but they do not allow additional features or functions to be incorporated. Microsoft's new multicolor bar code will enable the inclusion of more data in the code itself, as well as the ability for consumers to interact with it by scanning the code with webcams and, eventually, cell phones with color cameras.

For audiovisual publishers, identification and tracking technologies will provide detailed data that can aid in royalty payments, anti-counterfeiting efforts, market analysis and a host of other business functions. For consumers, the new bar codes can be combined with Web services to offer enhanced information such as product versioning, ratings identification, parental control, product availability, special releases, contests, pricing and promotions. Software to be made available from Microsoft and ISAN-IA will interpret the bar codes and will be integrated with Web services to enable these interactions.

The services enabled by HCCB are expected to become more prevalent as lens quality advances in cell phones to capture these small bar codes. For existing cell phones to read a black-and-white bar code, a practice that is widespread in Japan, the code must be larger than 1.5 by 1.5 inches in size. The use of those codes is impractical in small spaces or where visual appeal is important. Eventually, consumers should be able to scan the new, smaller bar codes directly from television, phone or PC screens; movie posters; DVD and CD jewel cases; magazine ads; billboards; and a host of other platforms to retrieve additional information.

New security features can also be incorporated into Microsoft's multicolor bar code. DatatraceDNA plans to provide technology for anti-counterfeiting security protection features through nanotechnology that is invisibly embedded within the material and ink of the Microsoft bar code and product packaging.

This unique combination of technologies will allow ISAN-IA to offer media publishers the ability to connect to consumers using interactive services and provide counterfeit protection in a single package.

"The capabilities enabled by this combination of bar code technology and supporting software are important for everyone," said Patrick Attallah, chief executive officer of ISAN-IA. "This includes content owners tracking the use of their work and media publishers seeking to connect to consumers using interactive services and provide a combination of DatatraceDNA counterfeit protection in a single package. This technology provides a way to identify commercial programming and improve the consumer's experience. Secure Path Technology LLC, our Hollywood-based ISAN registration agency, will be the first organization to implement the HCCB format to deliver content identification, management and distribution capabilities to its customers in the entertainment industry across a variety of media."

Through this agreement, Microsoft continues to contribute to the innovation ecosystem by deploying new research technologies outside its products and services via its various licensing programs. More information about Microsoft intellectual property licensing programs is available at http://www.microsoft.com/IP.

About ISAN International Agency

The ISAN International Agency has the responsibility for the overall ISAN system maintenance and administration. As a service organization its mission is to implement ISAN, the ISO standard (15706-1 & 2), and ensure full compliance by itself and all Registration Agencies with the ISO norm. With thirteen international agencies and over 600,000 registered works, ISAN-IA is the world's leading registration system for commercial audiovisual works. More information is available at www.isan.org.

About Microsoft

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (Nasdaq "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software,

services and solutions that help people and businesses realize their full potential.

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