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Information technology –
Automatic identification and data capture techniques –
PDF417 bar code symbology specification (ISO/IEC 15438:2006);
English version EN ISO/IEC 15438:2010

Technologies de l'information –
Techniques automatiques d'identification et de capture des données –
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Nationales Vorwort

ISO/IEC 15438:2006 wurde vom Technischen Komitee ISO/IEC/JTC 1 „Information technology“ der Internationalen Organisation für Normung (ISO) erarbeitet und als EN ISO/IEC 15438:2010 vom Technischen Komitee CEN/TC 225 „AIDC Technologien“ übernommen, dessen Sekretariat vom NEN gehalten wird. Das zuständige deutsche Normungsgremium ist der Normenausschuss Informationstechnik und Anwendungen, Arbeitsausschuss 31 „Automatische Identifikation und Datenerfassungsverfahren“.

DIN EN ISO/IEC 15438 legt die Anforderungen fest für die als PDF417 bekannte Strichcodesymbologie. Die Norm spezifiziert Charakteristika der Symbologie, Zeichencodierung, Symbolformate, Dimensionen, Regeln für die Fehlerkorrektur, einen Referenz-Algorithmus für die Decodierung, sowie eine Reihe von Anwendungsparametern.

Nach den geltenden DIN-Kriterien für einen möglichen Verzicht auf die deutsche Sprachfassung wurde auf eine Übersetzung weitgehend verzichtet und lediglich zur Erleichterung des Verständnisses Abschnitt 3 Begriffe übersetzt. Dabei wurde die Benummerung aus ISO/IEC 15438:2006 beibehalten. Siehe Nationaler Anhang NA.

Für die in diesem Dokument zitierten Internationalen Normen wird im Folgenden auf die entsprechenden Deutschen Normen hingewiesen:

ISO/IEC 15415 siehe DIN EN ISO/IEC 15415

Änderungen

Gegenüber DIN EN ISO/IEC 15438:2003-10 wurden folgende Änderungen vorgenommen:

a) ISO/IEC 15438:2006 wurde im Vergleich zur Vorgängerausgabe ISO/IEC 15438:2001 grundlegend überarbeitet und umstrukturiert.

Frühere Ausgaben

DIN EN ISO/IEC 15438: 2003-10

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Nationaler Anhang NA
(informativ)

Begriffe

3.1
Basiskanalmodell
Standardsystem für die Codierung und Übertragung von Strichcode-Daten, bei dem vom Decoder nur Datennachrichten-Bytes aber keine Steuerinformationen über die übertragene Nachricht ausgegeben werden

ANMERKUNG Ein Decoder, der diesem Modell entspricht, arbeitet im Basiskanalmodus.

3.2
Strich-Lücken-Sequenz
Folge, die die Modullänge der Elemente eines Symbolzeichens darstellt

3.3
Gruppierung
eine der drei Teilmengen von PDF417-Symbolzeichen, die sich gegenseitig ausschließen; die Symbolzeichen in einer vergebenen Gruppierung entsprechen den besonderen Strukturregeln, die bei der Decodierung der Symbologie verwendet werden

3.4
Komprimierung
einer von drei Datenverdichtungsalgorithmen in PDF417 (Text-, numerischer und Byte-Verdichtungsmodus), die genutzt werden um 8-Bit-Datenbytes auf PDF417-Codewörter abzubilden

3.5
E-Distanz
Abstand von der führenden Kante eines Elementes bis zur führenden Kante des nächsten gleichartigen Elementes, oder von der schließenden Kante zur schließenden Kante

3.6
Fehlerkorrekturwort
Codewort, das einen Wert nach dem Fehlerkorrekturwort-Algorithmus codiert, um Decodierungsfehler aufzufinden und je nach Fehlerkorrekturgrad zu korrigieren

3.7
Erweiterte Kanalinterpretation (ECI)
Verfahren in einigen Symbologien wie auch PDF417, mit dem die Standardübersetzung durch eine andere Übersetzung zuverlässig ersetzt wird

ANMERKUNG Die Übersetzung, die der Erstellung des Symbols vorausgehen soll, kann nach Decodierung des gelesenen Symbols abgerufen und die Datennachricht in ihr ursprüngliches Format zurückverwandelt werden.

3.8
Erweitertes Kanalmodell
System zur Codierung und Übertragung von Datennachrichten-Bytes sowie Steuerinformation über die Nachricht; die Steuerinformation wird unter Verwendung der Escape-Folgen der erweiterten Kanalinterpretation übertragen

ANMERKUNG Ein Decoder nach diesem Modell arbeitet im erweiterten Kanalmodus.

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3.9
Steuercodewort
Codewort, das innerhalb einer Symbologie einen bestimmten Ablauf auslöst, z. B. Umschaltung zwischen Datencodierungssätzen, um ein Verdichtungsschema aufzurufen, das Lesegerät zu programmieren oder die erweiterten Kanalinterpretationen aufzurufen

3.10
Globaler Markierungsidentifikator (GLI)
Verfahren in der Symbologie PDF417, das sich gleich der erweiterten Kanalinterpretation verhält

ANMERKUNG Das GLI-System ist der PDF417-spezifische Vorgänger des von der Symbologie unabhängigen ECI-Systems.

3.11
Macro-PDF417
Verfahren in der Symbologie PDF417, um Daten logisch von einer Computerdatei auf eine Anzahl zugehöriger PDF417-Symbole zu verteilen

ANMERKUNG 1 Das Verfahren erhöht die Datenkapazität beträchtlich über das eines einzelnen Symbols hinaus.

ANMERKUNG 2 Dieses Verfahren entspricht der strukturierten Verkettung in anderen Symbologien.

3.12
Moduswechsel-Codewort
Codewort, das verwendet wird, um von einem Modus zum anderen zu wechseln, der solange gültig bleibt, bis ein weiteres Wechsel- oder Umschalt-Codewort indirekt oder direkt eingebracht wird oder bis das Ende des Symbols erreicht ist

3.13
Modusshift-Codewort
Codewort, das verwendet wird, um zur Darstellung eines Codewortes von einem Modus in einen anderen umzuschalten; danach kehrt die Codierung wieder in den ursprünglichen Modus zurück

3.14
Zeilenindikator-Codewort
PDF417-Codewort neben dem Start- oder Stoppzeichen einer Zeile, das Informationen über die Struktur des PDF417-Symbols hinsichtlich Zeilenerkennung, Gesamtanzahl von Zeilen und Spalten und Fehlerkorrekturgrad enthält

3.15
Symbolgrößenindikator
erstes Codewort in einem PDF417-Symbol, das die gesamte Anzahl von verdichteten Codewörtern im Symbol codiert

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Nationaler Anhang NB
(informativ)

Literaturhinweise

DIN EN ISO/IEC 15415, *Informationstechnik — Automatische Identifikation und Datenerfassungsverfahren — Testspezifikation für Strichcode-Druckqualität — 2D-Symbole*

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Information technology — Automatic identification and data capture techniques — PDF417 bar code symbology specification (ISO/IEC 15438:2006)

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Informationstechnik — Verfahren der automatischen Identifikation und Datenerfassung — Spezifikation der Strichcodesymbologie PDF417 (ISO/IEC 15438:2006)

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Foreword

The text of ISO/IEC 15438:2006 has been prepared by Technical Committee ISO/IEC JTC 1 “Information technology” of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and has been taken over as EN ISO/IEC 15438:2010 by Technical Committee CEN/TC 225 “AIDC technologies” the secretariat of which is held by NEN.

This European Standard shall be given the status of a national standard, either by publication of an identical text or by endorsement, at the latest by February 2011, and conflicting national standards shall be withdrawn at the latest by February 2011.

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

This document supersedes EN ISO/IEC 15438:2003.

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Endorsement notice

The text of ISO/IEC 15438:2006 has been approved by CEN as a EN ISO/IEC 15438:2010 without any modification.

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Introduction

The technology of bar coding is based on the recognition of patterns of bars and spaces of defined dimensions. There are various methods of encoding information in bar code form, known as symbologies, and the rules defining the translation of characters into bars and space patterns and other essential features are known as the symbology specification.

Manufacturers of bar code equipment and users of bar code technology require publicly available standard symbology specifications to which they can refer when developing equipment and application standards. It is the intent and understanding of ISO/IEC that the symbology presented in this International Standard is entirely in the public domain and free of all user restrictions, licences and fees.

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1 Scope

This International Standard specifies the requirements for the bar code symbology known as PDF417. It specifies PDF417 symbology characteristics, data character encodation, symbol formats, dimensions, error correction rules, reference decoding algorithm, and a number of application parameters.

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/IEC 646:1991, *Information technology — ISO 7-bit coded character set for information interchange*

ISO/IEC 8859-1, *Information technology — 8-bit single-byte coded graphic character sets — Part 1: Latin alphabet No. 1*

ISO/IEC 15415, *Information technology — Automatic identification and data capture techniques — Bar code print quality test specification — Two-dimensional symbols*

ISO/IEC 15424, *Information technology — Automatic identification and data capture techniques — Data Carrier Identifiers (including Symbology Identifiers)*

ISO/IEC 19762-1, *Information technology — Automatic identification and data capture (AIDC) techniques — Harmonized vocabulary — Part 1: General terms relating to AIDC*

ISO/IEC 19762-2, *Information technology — Automatic identification and data capture (AIDC) techniques — Part 2: Optically readable media (ORM)*

ISO/IEC 24723, *Information technology — Automatic identification and data capture techniques — EAN.UCC Composite bar code symbology specification*

AIM Inc. International Technical Standard: ITS/04-001, *Extended Channel Interpretations — Part 1: Identification Schemes and Protocols*[1)]

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO/IEC 19762-1, ISO/IEC 19762-2 and the following apply.

3.1
basic channel model
standard system for encoding and transmitting bar code data where data message bytes are output from the decoder but no control information about the message is transmitted

NOTE A decoder complying with this model operates in Basic Channel Mode.

3.2
bar-space sequence
sequence which represents the module widths of the elements of a symbol character

3.3
cluster
any of three mutually exclusive subsets of PDF417 symbol characters; the symbol characters in a given cluster conform with particular structural rules which are used in decoding the symbology

1) Published by AIM Global, 125 Warrendale-Bayne Road, Suite 100, Warrendale, PA 15086, USA.

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3.4
compaction mode
any of three data compaction algorithms in PDF417 (Text, Numeric and Byte Compaction modes) which are used to map 8-bit data bytes efficiently to PDF417 codewords

3.5
e-distance
distance from leading edge of an element to leading edge of the next similar element, or from trailing edge to trailing edge

3.6
error correction codeword
codeword which encodes a value derived from the error correction codeword algorithm to enable decode errors to be detected and, depending on the error correction level, to be corrected

3.7
Extended Channel Interpretation
ECI
procedure within some symbologies, including PDF417, to replace the default interpretation with another interpretation in a reliable manner

NOTE The interpretation intended prior to producing the symbol can be retrieved after decoding the scanned symbol to recreate the data message in its original format.

3.8
Extended Channel Model
system for encoding and transmitting both data message bytes and control information about the message, the control information being communicated using Extended Channel Interpretation (ECI) escape sequences

NOTE A decoder complying with this model operates in Extended Channel Mode.

3.9
function codeword
codeword which initiates a particular operation within a symbology, for example to switch between data encoding sets, to invoke a compaction scheme, to program the reader, or to invoke Extended Channel Interpretations

3.10
Global Label Identifier
GLI
procedure in the PDF417 symbology which behaves in a similar manner to Extended Channel Interpretation

NOTE The GLI system was the PDF417-specific precursor to the symbology-independent ECI system.

3.11
Macro PDF417
procedure in the PDF417 symbology logically to distribute data from a computer file across a number of related PDF417 symbols

NOTE 1 The procedure considerably extends the data capacity beyond that of a single symbol.

NOTE 2 This procedure is similar to the Structured Append feature in other symbologies.

3.12
Mode Latch codeword
codeword which is used to switch from one mode to another mode, which stays in effect until another latch or shift codeword is implicitly or explicitly brought into use, or until the end of the symbol is reached

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3.13
Mode Shift codeword
codeword which is used to switch from one mode to another for one codeword, after which encoding returns to the original mode

3.14
Row Indicator codeword
PDF417 codeword adjacent to the start or stop character in a row, which encodes information about the structure of the PDF417 symbol in terms of the row identification, total number of rows and columns, and the error correction level

3.15
Symbol Length Descriptor
first codeword in a PDF417 symbol, which encodes the total number of data codewords in the symbol

4 Symbols, operations and abbreviated terms

4.1 Symbols

For the purposes of this document, the following mathematical symbols apply. There are some cases where the symbols below have been used in a different manner in an equation. This has been done for consistency with a more general use of the notation and is always clearly defined in the text.

A	symbol aspect ratio (height to width) of a PDF417 symbol
b	element width in a symbol character
c	number of columns in the symbol in the data region (excluding start, stop and row indicator codewords)
d	data codeword including all function codewords
E	error correction codeword
e	edge to similar edge dimension in a symbol character
F	row number
f	number of substitution errors
H	height of symbol including quiet zone
K	cluster number
k	number of error correction codewords
L	left row indicator
l	number of erasures
m	number of source data codewords prior to the addition of the Symbol Length Descriptor and any pad codewords
n	total number of data codewords including Symbol Length Descriptor and any pad codewords
p	pitch or width of a symbol character
Q_H	horizontal quiet zone
Q_V	vertical quiet zone

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R right row indicator

r number of rows in the symbol

s error correction level

W width of symbol including quiet zone

X X-dimension or module width

Y module height (also called row height)

4.2 Mathematical operations

For the purposes of this document, the following mathematical operations apply.

div is the integer division operator, rounding down

INT is the integer value i.e. where a number is rounded down to its whole number component, ignoring its decimal fractions

mod is the positive integer remainder after division. If the remainder is negative, add the value of the divisor to make it positive. For example, the remainder of –29 160 divided by 929 is –361 which when added to 929 yields 568.

4.3 Abbreviated terms

For the purposes of this document, the following abbreviated terms apply.

ECI Extended Channel Interpretation

GLI Global Label Identifier

5 Requirements

5.1 Symbology characteristics

5.1.1 Basic characteristics

PDF417 is a bar code symbology with the following basic characteristics:

a) Encodable character set:

1) Text Compaction mode (see 5.4.1.5) permits all printable ASCII characters to be encoded, i.e. values 32 – 126 inclusive in accordance with ISO/IEC 646 (IRV), as well as selected control characters.

2) Byte Compaction mode (see 5.4.3) permits all 256 possible 8-bit byte values to be encoded. This includes all ASCII characters value 0 to 127 inclusive and provides for international character set support.

3) Numeric Compaction mode (see 5.4.4) permits efficient encoding of numeric data strings.

4) Up to 811 800 different character sets or data interpretations.

5) Various function codewords for control purposes.

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b) Symbol character structure: (*n, k, m*) characters of 17 modules (*n*), 4 bar and 4 space elements (*k*), with the largest element 6 modules wide (*m*).

c) Maximum possible number of data characters per symbol (at error correction level 0): 925 data codewords which can encode:

1) Text Compaction mode: 1 850 characters (at 2 data characters per codeword).

2) Byte Compaction mode: 1 108 characters (at 1,2 data characters per codeword).

3) Numeric Compaction mode: 2 710 characters (at 2,93 data characters per codeword)

At the minimum recommended error correction level, there is a maximum of 863 data codewords which can encode:

4) Text Compaction mode: 1 726 characters (at 2 data characters per codeword).

5) Byte Compaction mode: 1 033 characters (at 1,2 data characters per codeword).

6) Numeric Compaction mode: 2 528 characters (at 2,93 data characters per codeword).

d) Symbol size:

1) Number of rows: 3 to 90.

2) Number of columns: 1 to 30.

3) Width in modules: 90X to 583X including quiet zones.

4) Maximum codeword capacity: 928 codewords.

5) Maximum data codeword capacity: 925 codewords.

Since the number of rows and the number of columns are selectable, the aspect ratio of a PDF417 symbol may be varied when printing to suit the spatial requirements of the application.

e) Selectable error correction: 2 to 512 codewords per symbol (see 5.7).

f) Non-data overhead:

1) Per row: 73 modules, including quiet zones.

2) Per symbol: a minimum of 3 codewords, represented as symbol characters.

g) Code type: continuous, multi-row two-dimensional.

h) Character self-checking: Yes.

i) Bi-directionally decodable: Yes.

5.1.2 Summary of additional features

Additional features which are inherent or optional in PDF417 are summarised below:

a) **Data compaction**: (inherent) Three schemes are defined to compact a number of data characters into codewords. Generally data is not directly represented on a one character for one codeword basis (see 5.4.1.5 to 5.4.4).

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b) **Extended Channel Interpretations**: (optional) These mechanisms allow up to 811 800 different data character sets or interpretations to be encoded (see 5.5).

c) **Macro PDF417**: (optional) This mechanism allows files of data to be represented logically and consecutively in a number of PDF417 symbols. Up to 99 999 different PDF417 symbols can be so linked or concatenated and be scanned in any sequence to enable the original data file to be correctly reconstructed (see 5.13).

d) **Edge to edge decodable**: (inherent) PDF417 can be decoded by measuring elements from edge to similar edge (see 5.3.1).

e) **Cross row scanning**: (inherent) The combination of the following three characteristics in PDF417 facilitates cross row scanning:

— being synchronised horizontally, or self clocking

— row identification

— being synchronised vertically, by using the cluster values to achieve local row discrimination.

This combination allows a single linear scan to cross a number of rows and achieve a partial decode of the data so long as at least one complete symbol character per row is decoded into its codeword. The decoding algorithm can then place the individual codewords into a meaningful matrix.

f) **Error correction**: (inherent) A user may define one of 9 error correction levels. All but Level 0 not only detect errors but also can correct erroneously decoded or missing codewords (see 5.7).

g) **Compact PDF417**: (optional) In relatively ‘clean' environments, it is possible to reduce some of the row overhead to improve the symbol density (see 5.12).

NOTE In earlier specifications of PDF417, Compact PDF417 was called Truncated PDF417. Compact PDF417 is the preferred term to avoid confusion with the more general use of the term ‘truncated'.

5.2 Symbol structure

5.2.1 PDF417 symbol parameters

Each PDF417 symbol consists of a stack of vertically aligned rows with a minimum of 3 rows (maximum 90 rows). Each row shall include a minimum of 1 symbol character (maximum 30 symbol characters), excluding start, stop and row indicator columns. The symbol shall include a quiet zone on all four sides. Figure 1 illustrates a PDF417 symbol encoding the text: PDF417 Symbology Standard.

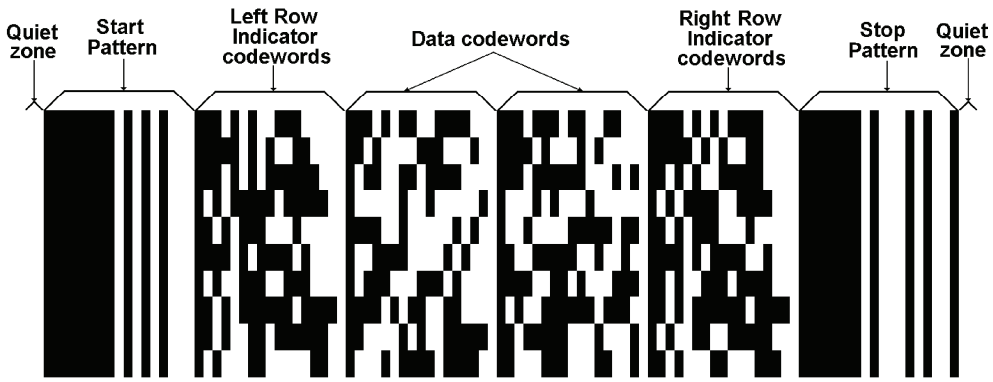

Figure 1 — PDF417 symbol structure

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5.2.2 Row parameters

Each PDF417 row shall comprise:

a) leading quiet zone

b) start character

c) left row indicator symbol character

d) 1 to 30 symbol characters

e) right row indicator symbol character

f) stop character

g) trailing quiet zone

NOTE The number of symbol characters (or codewords) defined in item ‘d’ above is equal to the number of data columns in the PDF417 symbol.

5.2.3 Codeword sequence

A PDF417 symbol may contain up to 928 symbol characters or codewords. Symbol character is the more appropriate term to refer to the printed bar/space pattern; codeword is more appropriate for the numeric value of the symbol character. The codewords shall follow this sequence:

a) The first codeword, the Symbol Length Descriptor, shall always encode the total number of data codewords in the symbol, including the Symbol Length Descriptor itself, data codewords and pad codewords, but excluding the number of error correction codewords.

b) The data codewords shall follow, from the most significant encodable character. Function codewords may be inserted to achieve data compaction.

c) Pad codewords to enable the codeword sequence to be represented in a rectangular matrix. Pad codewords may also be used to fill additional complete rows to achieve an aspect ratio desired or as specified by the application.

d) An optional Macro PDF417 Control Block.

e) Error correction codewords for error detection and correction.

The codewords are arranged with the most significant codeword adjacent to the Symbol Length Descriptor, and are encoded from left to right and from top row to bottom. Figure 2 illustrates in layout format the sequence for a symbol like that shown in Figure 1. In Figure 2 an error correction level of 1 has been used and one pad character was needed to completely fill the symbol matrix.

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S T A R T	L_1	d_{15}	d_{14}	R_1	S T O P
	L_2	d_{13}	d_{12}	R_2	
	L_3	d_{11}	d_{10}	R_3	
	L_4	d_9	d_8	R_4	
	L_5	d_7	d_6	R_5	
	L_6	d_5	d_4	R_6	
	L_7	d_3	d_2	R_7	
	L_8	d_1	d_0	R_8	
	L_9	E_3	E_2	R_9	
	L_{10}	E_1	E_0	R_{10}	

Figure 2 — PDF417 Example of Symbol Layout Schematic

Where

L, R, d and E are as defined in clause 4;

d_{15} = Symbol Length Descriptor (in this example, with a value of 16);

d_{14} to d_1 = encoded representation of data;

d_0 = pad codeword.

The rules and advice for structuring the matrix are included in 5.9.

5.3 Basic encodation

5.3.1 Symbol character structure

Each PDF417 symbol character shall consist of four bar elements and four space elements, each of which can be one to six modules wide. The four bar and four space elements shall measure 17 modules in total. PDF417 symbol characters can be decoded by measuring the e-distances within the character.

Each symbol character is defined by an 8-digit bar-space sequence which represents the module widths of the eight elements of that symbol character. Figure 3 illustrates a symbol character with the bar-space sequence 51111125.

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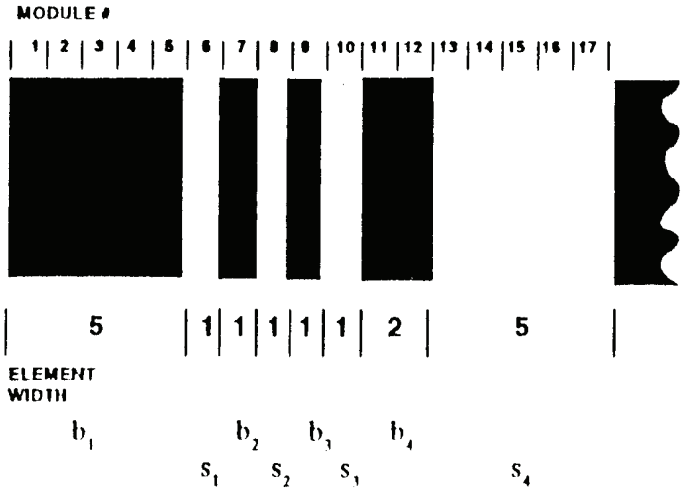

Figure 3 — A PDF417 symbol character

There are 929 defined symbol character values (codewords) numbered from 0 to 928.

The codewords are represented by three mutually exclusive symbol character sets, or clusters. Each cluster encodes the 929 available PDF417 codewords into different bar-space patterns so that one cluster is distinct from another. The cluster numbers are 0, 3, and 6. The cluster definition applies to all PDF417 symbol characters, except for start and stop characters.

The cluster number K is defined by the following formula:

$$K = (b_1 - b_2 + b_3 - b_4 + 9) \bmod 9$$

Where b_1, b_2, b_3 and b_4 represent the width in modules of the four bar elements respectively.

The cluster number K for the symbol character in Figure 3 is:

$$K = (5 - 1 + 1 - 2 + 9) \bmod 9 = 3$$

The codewords and the bar-space sequences for each cluster of symbol characters are given in Annex A.

5.3.2 Start and stop characters

The start and stop characters shall be composed as defined in Table 1 and illustrated in Figure 4:

Table 1 — Bar-space sequence for Start and Stop Characters

Character	Bar-space sequence								
	B	S	B	S	B	S	B	S	B
Start	8	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	
Stop	7	1	1	3	1	1	1	2	1

NOTE 1 The PDF417 stop and start characters are unique in having elements more than 6 modules wide.

NOTE 2 The stop character has one extra single module bar element.

The start and stop characters shall have the same bar-space sequence for all rows.

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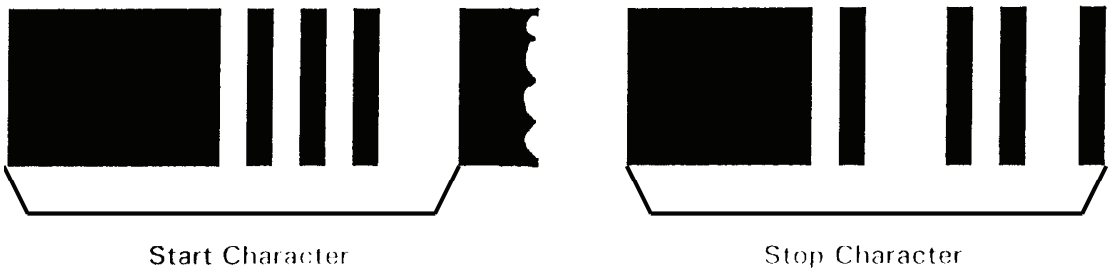

Figure 4 — PDF417 Start and Stop Characters

5.4 High level (data) encodation

High level encoding converts the data characters into their corresponding codewords.

Data compaction schemes shall be used to achieve efficient high level encoding. Three modes are defined below, each of which defines a particular efficient mapping between user defined data and codeword sequences. PDF417 has three data compaction modes:

— Text Compaction mode (see 5.4.1.5).

— Byte Compaction mode (see 5.4.3).

— Numeric Compaction mode (see 5.4.4).

A given string of data bytes may be represented by different codeword sequences, depending on how the encoder switches between compaction modes and sub-modes. There is no single specified way to encode data in a PDF417 symbol.

900 codewords (0 to 899) are available in each mode for data encodation and other functions within the mode. The remaining 29 codewords are assigned to specific functions (see 5.4.1) independent of the current compaction mode.

PDF417 also supports the Extended Channel Interpretation system, which allows different interpretations of data to be accurately encoded in the symbol (see 5.5).

5.4.1 Function codewords

Codewords 900 to 928 are assigned as function codewords as follows:

— for switching between modes (see 5.4.1.1)

— for enhanced applications using Extended Channel Interpretations (ECIs) (see 5.4.1.2)

— for other enhanced applications (see 5.4.1.3 and 5.4.1.4).

At present codewords 903 to 912, 914 to 917, and 919 are reserved. Table 2 defines the complete list of assigned and reserved function codewords. Their functions are defined in 5.4.1.1 to 5.4.1.5. See 5.4.6 for the treatment of reserved codewords.

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Table 2 — Assignments of PDF417 function codewords

Codeword	Function	Refer to subclause
900	mode latch to Text Compaction mode	5.4.1.1
901	mode latch to Byte Compaction mode	5.4.1.1, 5.4.3.1
902	mode latch to Numeric Compaction mode	5.4.1.1
903 to 912	Reserved	
913	mode shift to Byte Compaction mode	5.4.1.1
914 to 917, 919	Reserved	
918	linkage flag to associated linear component, in a composite symbol (other than an EAN.UCC Composite symbol)	5.4.1.5
920	linkage flag to associated linear component, in an EAN.UCC Composite symbol	5.4.1.5
921	reader initialisation	5.4.1.4
922	terminator codeword for Macro PDF control block	5.13
923	sequence tag to identify the beginning of optional fields in the Macro PDF control block	5.13
924	mode latch to Byte Compaction mode (used differently from 901)	5.4.1.1, 5.4.3.1
925 to 927	identifier for an Extended Channel Interpretation (ECI)	5.5
928	Macro marker codeword to indicate the beginning of a Macro PDF Control Block	5.13

5.4.1.1 Function codewords for mode switching

In one PDF417 symbol it is possible to switch back and forth between modes as often as required. Advice about selecting the appropriate modes is given in 5.4.5.

A Mode Latch codeword may be used to switch from the current mode to the indicated destination mode which stays in effect until another mode switch is explicitly brought into use. Codewords 900 to 902 and 924 are assigned for this purpose. Table 3 defines their function.

The Mode Shift codeword 913 shall cause a temporary switch from Text Compaction mode to Byte Compaction mode. This switch shall be in effect for only the next codeword, after which the mode shall revert to the prevailing sub-mode of the Text Compaction mode. Codeword 913 is only available in Text Compaction mode; its use is described in 5.4.2.4.

Table 3 — Mode Definition and Mode Switching Codewords

Destination Mode	Mode Latch	Mode Shift
Text Compaction	900	
Byte Compaction	901/924	913
Numeric Compaction	902	

NOTE The table identifies the codeword to be used to switch to the defined mode.

The switching rules between the three modes are defined in Table 4 and shown schematically in Figure 5.

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Table 4 — Mode Transition Table, Showing Codewords and Their Function

Original Mode	Destination Mode		
	Text	Byte	Numeric
Text	900 mode latch	913 mode shift 901 mode latch 924 mode latch	902 mode latch
Byte	900 mode latch	901 mode latch 924 mode latch	902 mode latch
Numeric	900 mode latch	901 mode latch 924 mode latch	902 mode latch

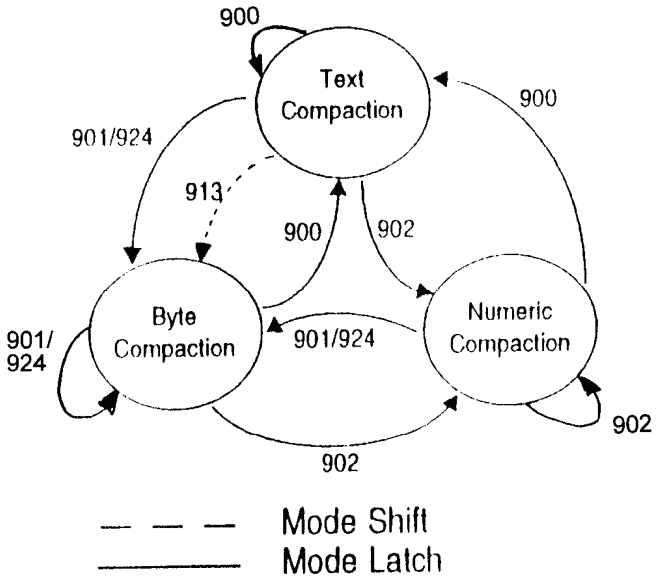

Figure 5 — Available Mode Switching

The switching rules into Byte Compaction mode are more fully defined in 5.4.3.1.

5.4.1.2 Function codewords for switching to Extended Channel Interpretations

An ECI codeword can be used to switch to a particular interpretation, which stays in effect until another ECI codeword is explicitly brought into use or until the end of the data. Codewords 925 to 927 are assigned to this function (see 5.5).

5.4.1.3 Function codewords for Macro PDF417

Macro PDF417 symbols (see 5.13) shall use codeword 928 at the start of the Macro PDF417 Control Block. Codewords 922 and 923 are used for special functions in Macro PDF417.

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5.4.1.4 Function codeword for reader initialisation

Codeword 921 shall be used to instruct the reader to interpret the data contained within the symbol as programming for reader initialisation. Codeword 921 shall appear as the first codeword after the Symbol Length Descriptor. In the case of a Macro PDF417 initialisation sequence, Codeword 921 shall appear in every symbol.

The data contained in an initialisation symbol, or sequence of symbols, shall not be transmitted by the reader.

5.4.1.5 Function codewords for linkage flags in composite symbols

Codeword 920 shall be used as a linkage flag to signal the presence of an associated EAN.UCC linear component in accordance with ISO/IEC 24723.

Codeword 918 shall be used as a linkage flag to signal the presence of an associated linear component in any other composite symbology.

When used, the 918 or 920 codeword may appear in any position in the symbol. The applicable composite symbology specification may define a specific position of the linkage flag.

Readers supporting the indicated composite application should decode and transmit the data from all components as specified in the relevant composite symbology specification. Readers not supporting the indicated composite application may treat the 918 or 920 codeword as a reserved codeword (see 5.4.6). In addition, readers not supporting the indicated 918 composite application may have an option to ignore the two-dimensional composite component and transmit only the data from the associated linear component.

5.4.2 Text Compaction mode

The Text Compaction mode includes all the printable ASCII characters (i.e. values from 32 to 126) and three ASCII control characters: HT or tab (ASCII value 9), LF or line feed (ASCII value 10), and CR or carriage return (ASCII value 13). The Text Compaction mode also includes various latch and shift characters which are used exclusively within the mode.

The Text Compaction mode encodes up to 2 characters per codeword. The compaction rules for converting data into PDF417 codewords are defined in 5.4.2.2. The sub-mode switches are defined in 5.4.2.3.

5.4.2.1 Text Compaction sub-modes

The Text Compaction mode has four sub-modes:

— Alpha (uppercase alphabetic)

— Lower (lowercase alphabetic)

— Mixed (numeric and some punctuation)

— Punctuation

Each sub-mode contains 30 characters, including sub-mode latch and shift characters.

The default compaction mode for PDF417 in effect at the start of each symbol shall always be Text Compaction mode Alpha sub-mode (uppercase alphabetic). A latch codeword from another mode to the Text Compaction mode shall always switch to the Text Compaction Alpha sub-mode.

All the characters and their values are defined in Table 5.

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Table 5 — Text Compaction Sub-Mode Definition

	Text Compaction Sub-Modes							
Base 30	Alpha		Lower		Mixed		Punctuation	
Value	Char	ASCII	Char	ASCII	Char	ASCII	Char	ASCII
0	A	65	a	97	0	48	;	59
1	B	66	b	98	1	49	<	60
2	C	67	c	99	2	50	>	62
3	D	68	d	100	3	51	@	64
4	E	69	e	101	4	52	[	91
5	F	70	f	102	5	53	\	92
6	G	71	g	103	6	54	]	93
7	H	72	h	104	7	55	_	95
8	I	73	i	105	8	56	‘	96
9	J	74	j	106	9	57	~	126
10	K	75	k	107	&	38	!	33
11	L	76	l	108	CR	13	CR	13
12	M	77	m	109	HT	9	HT	9
13	N	78	n	110	,	44	,	44
14	O	79	o	111	:	58	:	58
15	P	80	p	112	#	35	LF	10
16	Q	81	q	113	-	45	-	45
17	R	82	r	114	.	46	.	46
18	S	83	s	115	$	36	$	36
19	T	84	t	116	/	47	/	47
20	U	85	u	117	+	43	“	34
21	V	86	v	118	%	37	|	124
22	W	87	w	119	*	42	*	42
23	X	88	x	120	=	61	(	40
24	Y	89	y	121	^	94	)	41
25	Z	90	z	122	pl		?	63
26	space	32	space	32	space	32	{	123
27	ll		as		ll		}	125
28	ml		ml		al		‘	39
29	ps		ps		ps		al	

al = latch to alpha
as = shift to alpha
ll = latch to lower
ml = latch to mixed
pl = latch to punctuation
ps = shift to punctuation

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NOTE The Char columns above show the default interpretation of ECI 000003 of the byte values shown in the adjacent ASCII columns. Each table entry represents half a codeword, i.e. the value range from 0 to 29 (see 5.4.2.2)

5.4.2.2 Compaction rules for encoding in Text Compaction mode

In Text Compaction mode, pairs of data characters are represented in a single codeword. The values assigned to the data characters are in the range 0 to 29 (i.e. base 30) and are defined in Table 5. For each pair of base 30 values, the first or left value shall be designated the more significant value *h*, the other shall be designated the less significant value *l*.

The encoded PDF417 codeword is defined using the following formula:

$$d = h \times 30 + l$$

where

d is as defined in clause 4.

The formula shall also apply to the base 30 values for shifts and latches within the Text Compaction mode. Appropriate latch and shift values shall be used between sub-modes. If the encoding of the character sequence does not result in an even number of base 30 values, see 5.4.2.4 for the specific mechanism to use.

The following example illustrates how compaction is achieved in Text Compaction mode.

EXAMPLE Data to be encoded: **PDF417**

Table 6 — Example of Text Compaction Encoding

Character Pairs	*h*	*l*	$h \times 30 + l$	Codeword
P D	15	3	$15 \times 30 + 3$	453
F ml	5	28	$5 \times 30 + 28$	178
4 1	4	1	$4 \times 30 + 1$	121
7 ps	7	29	$7 \times 30 + 29$	239

NOTE 1 **ml** (latch to mixed sub-mode) is used to switch to encode the numeric characters

NOTE 2 **ps** is used as a pad value in this example, other shift and latch values can be used (see 5.4.2.4)

The data **PDF417** is represented by codewords 453, 178, 121, 239

5.4.2.3 Text Compaction sub-mode switching: latch and shift function

Switching from one sub-mode to another within Text Compaction mode shall be through the latch and shift values defined for the sub-mode in effect prior to the switch.

A sub-mode shift shall be used to switch from one Text Compaction sub-mode to another for only one data character. Subsequent codewords revert to the sub-mode being used immediately prior to the shift (except when **ps** is used as a pad, see 5.4.2.4). The shift functions are as follows:

— **ps** = shift to punctuation sub-mode

— **as** = shift to uppercase alphabetic sub-mode

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A sub-mode latch shall be used to switch from one Text Compaction sub-mode to another, which stays in effect until another latch or shift is explicitly brought into use. The latch functions are as follows:

— **al** = latch to uppercase alphabetic sub-mode

— **ll** = latch to lowercase alphabetic sub-mode

— **ml** = latch to mixed (numeric and other punctuation) sub-mode

— **pl** = latch to punctuation sub-mode

A limited set of latch and shift functions is available within each Text Compaction sub-mode. Those which are available are listed in Table 5. Table 7 shows the transition table between Text Compaction sub-modes; Figure 6 shows this schematically.

NOTE A sub-mode latch may be followed by another sub-mode latch or sub-mode shift; but a sub-mode shift may not be followed by either a sub-mode shift or sub-mode latch.

Table 7 — Text Compaction sub-mode transition table

Original Sub-Mode	Destination Sub-Mode			
	Alpha	Lower	Mixed	Punctuation
Alpha		ll	ml	ps
Lower	as		ml	ps
Mixed	al	ll		ps pl
Punctuation	al			

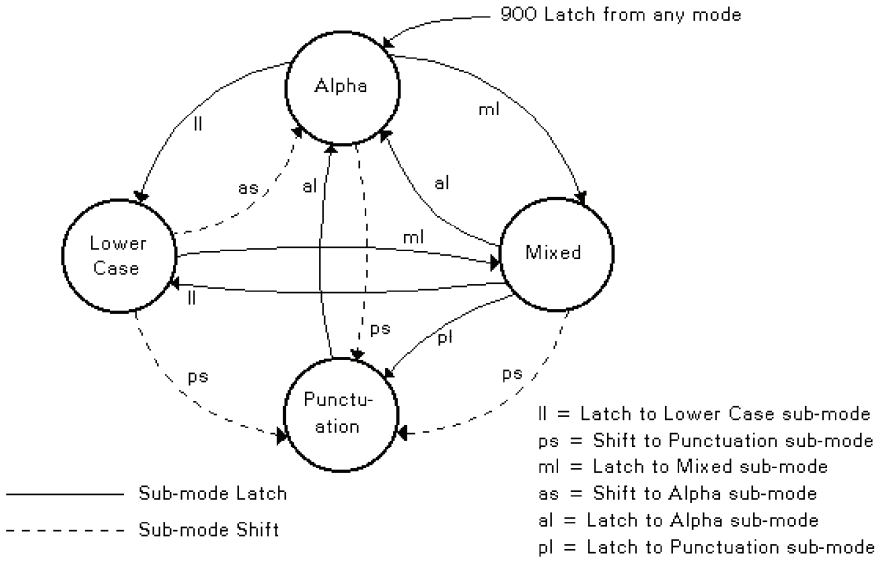

Figure 6 — Text Compaction Sub-Mode Switching

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5.4.2.4 Mechanisms for using a pad in Text Compaction mode

If the Text Compaction character sequence does not result in an even number of base 30 values, a pad shall be added to the end of the character sequence. An example is illustrated in Table 6. As there are no specific null functions in Text Compaction mode, the sub-mode shift and latch shall be used in accordance with the mechanisms defined for the following cases.

The cases are as follows:

a) If the character sequence continues to the end of the data, or the Text Compaction mode character sequence is followed by latching to another compaction mode, then the pad can be any of the sub-mode shifts or sub-mode latches.

b) If the Text Compaction mode character sequence is followed by a byte shift (codeword 913) to encode a single Byte Compaction mode character, two mechanisms can be used depending on the Text Compaction sub-mode being used prior to the Byte Compaction shift:

   1) If the Text Compaction sub-mode is other than punctuation, then base 30 value 29 (**ps**) should be used if encodation is intended to revert to the same Text Compaction sub-mode. The decoder shall ignore a **ps** immediately preceding codeword 913.

   2) If the Text Compaction sub-mode is punctuation, then base 30 value 29 (**al**) shall be used. The decoder shall not ignore the (**al**), and therefore will return to the Alpha sub-mode.

5.4.2.5 Switching from Text Compaction mode

Text Compaction mode may be terminated by the end of the symbol, or by any of the following codewords:

— 900 (Text Compaction mode latch)

— 901 (Byte Compaction mode latch)

— 902 (Numeric Compaction mode latch)

— 924 (Byte Compaction mode latch)

— 928 (Beginning of Macro PDF417 Control Block)

— 923 (Beginning of Macro PDF417 Optional Field)

— 922 (Macro PDF417 Terminator)

The last three codewords only occur within the Macro PDF417 Control Block of a Macro PDF417 symbol (see 5.13.1). Text Compaction mode is also affected by the presence of a reserved codeword (see 5.4.6).

If the decoder is in the Text Compaction mode and encounters codeword 913 (Byte Compaction mode shift), it decodes the codeword following codeword 913 as a single binary byte and then returns to the Text Compaction mode. The sub-mode to which the decoder returns is the most-recently-latched sub-mode that was in effect prior to codeword 913; a **ps** sub-mode shift immediately prior to codeword 913 is ignored.

If the decoder is in the Text Compaction mode and encounters codeword 900 (Text Compaction mode latch), the decoder reinitialises to the Alpha sub-mode.

5.4.3 Byte Compaction mode

The Byte Compaction mode enables a sequence of 8-bit bytes to be encoded into a sequence of codewords. It is accomplished by a Base 256 to Base 900 conversion, which achieves a compaction ratio of six bytes to five codewords (1,2:1).

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All the characters and their values (0 to 255) are defined in Annex B. This shall be treated as the default graphical and control character interpretation. When ECIs are invoked (see 5.5) this interpretation is defined as ECI 000003 (see 5.5.2).

NOTE In previous PDF417 specifications, the default character set corresponded to ECI 000002 (a code page of the MS-DOS operating system). The interpretation of byte character values below 128 is unchanged and the operation of PDF417 printing and scanning equipment is unaffected. New applications that use byte character values above 127 should assume the ECI 000003 default interpretation for broadest compatibility with current systems. Existing applications utilizing values above 127 may continue to encode and process data as before. Applications that rely upon the prior default interpretation of values above 127 may encode ECI 000002 explicitly if they wish to signal this interpretation.

5.4.3.1 Switching to Byte Compaction mode

When in either Text or Numeric Compaction mode, to switch to Byte Compaction mode, it is necessary to use one of the following codewords:

— **mode latch 924** shall be used when the total number of Byte Compaction characters to be encoded is an integer multiple of 6

— **mode latch 901** shall be used when the total number of Byte Compaction characters to be encoded is not a multiple of 6

— **mode shift 913** can be used instead of codeword 901 when a single Byte Compaction character has to be encoded

5.4.3.2 Compaction rules for encoding a single Byte Compaction character (using mode shift 913)

To encode a single Byte Compaction character, the codeword shall be the decimal value (0 to 255) of the character as defined in Annex B.

5.4.3.3 Compaction rules for encoding longer Byte Compaction character strings (using mode latch 924 or 901)

The following procedure shall be used to encode Byte Compaction character data

1) Establish the total number of Byte Compaction characters.

2) If a perfect multiple of 6, mode latch 924 shall be used; else mode latch 901 shall be used.

3) Sub-divide the number of Byte Compaction characters into a sequence of 6 characters, from left to right (the most to least significant characters). If less than 6 characters go to Step 7.

4) Assign the decimal values of the 6 data bytes to be encoded in Byte Compaction mode as b_5 to b_0 (where b_5 is the first data byte).

5) Carry out a base 256 to base 900 conversion to produce a sequence of 5 codewords. Annex C defines an algorithm and illustrates a worked example.

6) Repeat from Step 3 as necessary.

7) For the remaining Byte Compaction characters when mode latch 901 is used, (i.e. when the last group is less than 6 Byte Compaction characters) the codeword(s) shall be the decimal value(s) (0 to 255) of the character(s) as defined in Annex B, the most to the least significant.

NOTE Byte Compaction mode following mode latch 901 assumes that the total number of bytes to be encoded is not a multiple of six. If the number of bytes to be encoded in Byte Compaction mode happens to be an integer multiple of six, then either a 901 or a 924 Byte Compaction Latch shall be encoded, placed at any point in the symbol that would create a correct encodation according to these encodation rules. For example, a 924 codeword as either the first or second

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codeword would identify the following stream of Byte Compaction mode codewords as encoding a multiple-of-six number of bytes. Alternatively, a 901 could be placed at any position within the Byte Compaction mode codeword stream that would split that stream into two segments, neither of which encodes a multiple-of-six number of bytes.

If additional encodation is required in Text Compaction or Numeric Compaction modes, the appropriate latch characters shall be used (see 5.4.1.1).

5.4.3.4 Switching from Byte Compaction

Byte Compaction mode may be terminated by the end of the symbol, or by any of the following codewords:

— 900 (Text Compaction mode latch)

— 901 (Byte Compaction mode latch)

— 902 (Numeric Compaction mode latch)

— 924 (Byte Compaction mode latch)

— 928 (Beginning of Macro PDF417 Control Block)

— 923 (Beginning of Macro PDF417 Optional Field)

— 922 (Macro PDF417 Terminator)

The last three codewords only occur within the Macro PDF417 Control Block of a Macro PDF417 symbol (see 5.13.1). Byte Compaction mode is also affected by the presence of a reserved codeword (see 5.4.6).

Re-invoking Byte Compaction mode (by using codeword 901 or 924 while in Byte Compaction mode) serves to terminate the previous Byte Compaction mode grouping of 6 Byte Compaction characters as described in 5.4.3.3, and then to start a new grouping. This procedure may be necessary when an ECI assignment number needs to be encoded (see 5.5.3.2).

During the decode process for Byte Compaction mode, the treatment of the final group of codewords differs depending on whether Byte Compaction mode is invoked with codeword 901 or 924.

If Byte Compaction mode is invoked with codeword 924, the total number of codewords within the compaction mode shall be a multiple of five. If this is not the case, the symbol is invalid. All the 5-codeword groups are decoded into 6-byte groups.

If Byte Compaction mode is invoked with codeword 901, the final group of codewords is interpreted directly as one byte per codeword, without compaction. Therefore, if the last group consists of five codewords, the group is interpreted as 5 bytes, rather than 6.

5.4.4 Numeric Compaction mode

The Numeric Compaction mode is a method for base 10 to base 900 data compaction and should be used to encode long strings of consecutive numeric digits. The Numeric Compaction mode encodes up to 2,93 numeric digits per codeword.

5.4.4.1 Latch to Numeric Compaction mode

Numeric Compaction mode may be invoked when in Text Compaction or Byte Compaction modes using mode latch 902.

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5.4.4.2 Compaction rules for encoding long strings of consecutive numeric digits

The following procedure shall be used to compact numeric data:

1) Divide the string of digits into groups of 44 digits, except for the last group, which may contain fewer.

2) For each group add the digit 1 to the most significant position to prevent the loss of leading zeros.

EXAMPLE original data 00246812345678

after step 2 1 00246812345678

NOTE The leading digit 1 is removed in the decode algorithm.

3) Perform a base 10 to base 900 conversion. Annex D defines an algorithm for this and illustrates a worked example.

4) Repeat from Step 2 as necessary.

The following rules can be used to determine the precise number of codewords in Numeric Compaction mode:

— Groups of 44 numeric digits compact to 15 codewords.

— For groups of shorter sequences of digits, the number of codewords can be calculated as follows:

Codewords = INT (number of digits / 3) + 1

EXAMPLE For a 28 digit sequence

INT (28 / 3) + 1 = 9 + 1 = 10 codewords

5.4.4.3 Switching from Numeric Compaction mode

Numeric Compaction mode may be terminated by the end of the symbol, or by any of the following codewords:

— 900 (Text Compaction mode latch)

— 901 (Byte Compaction mode latch)

— 902 (Numeric Compaction mode latch)

— 924 (Byte Compaction mode latch)

— 928 (Beginning of Macro PDF417 Control Block)

— 923 (Beginning of Macro PDF417 Optional Field)

— 922 (Macro PDF417 Terminator)

The last three codewords only occur within the Macro PDF417 Control Block of a Macro PDF417 symbol (see 5.13.1). Numeric Compaction mode is also affected by the presence of a reserved codeword (see 5.4.6).

Re-invoking Numeric Compaction mode (by using codeword 902 while in Numeric Compaction mode) serves to terminate the current Numeric Compaction mode grouping as described in 5.4.4.2, and then to start a new grouping. This procedure may be necessary when an ECI assignment number needs to be encoded (see 5.5.3.4).

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During the decode process for Numeric Compaction mode, the result of the base 900 to base 10 conversion shall result in a number whose most significant digit is a '1'. If the base 900 to base 10 conversion does not result in a number beginning with '1', the symbol shall be treated as invalid. The leading '1' is removed to produce the original number.

5.4.5 Advice to select the appropriate compaction mode

All basic implementations for printing and scanning PDF417 symbols shall support the three modes: Text Compaction, Byte Compaction and Numeric Compaction. The default character set for Text Compaction shall be as defined in Table 5; and that for Byte Compaction shall be as defined in Annex B. Text Compaction mode is usually more efficient than Byte Compaction mode for encoding standard ASCII text files because of its better compaction of ASCII character values 9, 10, 13 and 32 to 126.

The Numeric Compaction mode should be used for long numeric strings.

Advice about switching between modes to minimise the number of codewords is provided as an algorithm in Annex N.

5.4.6 Treatment of PDF417 reserved codewords

5.4.6.1 Overview

PDF417 symbols intended for use in open systems should not employ any of the codewords that are listed as reserved (see 5.4.1) in the current edition of this standard. However, decoding equipment should support the transmission of reserved codewords using escape sequences as defined in 5.17.4. Decoding equipment may also support an option of treating such symbols as invalid, as would be the case when operating in Basic Channel Mode.

Receiving systems should discard data containing any escape sequences using reserved codewords, unless the system is aware of a new definition for a previously reserved codeword.

5.4.6.2 Making future use of reserved codewords

Any new function codewords, to be defined in future revisions of this standard, shall have their encoding rules specified to provide backwards compatibility with pre-existing equipment. Specifically:

— When a new signalling codeword (as opposed to a new compaction mode codeword) is encoded, it shall immediately be followed by an appropriate compaction mode latch so that the subsequent data codewords are interpreted and transmitted as a byte stream, rather than as a series of escaped uninterpreted codewords. This approach will achieve the desired results with decoding equipment conforming with both the original and this PDF417 standard, regardless of whether that equipment employs the original or the new transmission protocol.

— At the receiving system, the ECI decoder will process the signal ECIs (i.e. Macro Control Blocks and escaped uninterpreted codewords) before the encodable ECIs (such as character sets). Thus, the encoder should take into account the order of operations as follows:

1) The Macro Control Block ECIs, if present, will be used to assemble the complete byte stream in the proper order.

2) The escaped data codewords will be translated by the ECI decoder according to the rules of the new compaction mode or signalling ECI, and the resulting data bytes will be inserted into their proper place within the byte stream.

3) Finally, the character set and other encodable ECIs will be applied to the resulting byte stream.

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