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ISO/IEC 8484

Dear Fellow WG1 Experts

I have asked all major manufacturers that I am aware of, who make magnetic stripe passbook reader/writers, about the requirements for a HiCo standard. I only got one positive response. The response was from a manufacturer who supplies a lot of HiCo magnetic stripe passbook reader/writers to Japan and a lot of LoCo magnetic stripe passbook reader/writers to Europe. The manufacturer was very aware of the importance of head to magnetic stripe contact with HiCo tape and this is reflected in the difference in smoothness between the backing/tape selected for HiCo and LoCo magnetic stripe passbooks.

There is a HiCo/LoCo magnetic stripe passbook market and I think ISO/IEC 8484 should provide a standard reflecting those market requirements. This means that ISO/IEC 8484 should also contain HiCo specified parameters with a specification for the profile and maximum surface roughness of the stripe. We would not specify how the required profile and surface roughness be achieved, that would be up to the passbook manufacturer.

My own view is that as we have HiCo and LoCo for cards we should do the same for passbooks, and as we have used information from ISO/IEC 7811-2 for LoCo passbook magnetic stripes we could do the same using ISO/IEC 7811-6 for HiCo passbook magnetic stripes with a note added stressing the importance of the enclosed HiCo magnetic stripe's profile and maximum surface roughness.

I am sending this e-mail prior to our October meeting so that you have an opportunity to discuss the subject with fellow national body experts and your national bodies. This way I hope we can reach an informed decision at our meeting in Sun City.

Regards

David