

BARCODING FOR BEGINNERS

Buyer's Guide



Start with Software Selection

Since each software package follows its own barcode rules and regulations, it is best to determine which software you will be using before selecting your barcode types and styles.

Symbology Insights

Three basic symbologies are supported by most software packages:

- **Codabar**

- o Typically features up to 16 numbers and four letters
- o Clear spacing makes this barcode symbology easy to read

- **Code 39 (Code 3 of 9)**

- o Character set includes numbers, uppercase letters, and other symbols
- o Easy to use

- **Interleaved 2 of 5**

- o Classic symbology, first used in 1972
- o Features alternating narrow and wide bars
- o Compact; reliable

Look Closely

Most software packages use a pre-designated numerical or alpha character to verify that an item is not accidentally used as a patron or student number. Be sure to identify any such character for future reference.

Choose Your Style: Single, Double, or Pairs?



Single Barcodes

- Single barcodes are used on the outside or inside of an item.

Double Barcodes

- One barcode is "live," while the other (the eye-readable "strip") is used for shelf identification and inventory management, indicating a specific item in your library collection.

Pair Barcodes

- Consist of two "live" labels (one for outside or inside, and another that is used for shelf identification and inventory management).
- Improve tracking efficiency and accuracy

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Digital vs. Thermal

- Digital barcodes are imaged on 4-mil 60-lb. white paper with a 1-mil permanent archival-safe acrylic adhesive.
- Digital barcodes feature 100% guaranteed first time read-rate, higher print-contrast ratio than photocomposed, archival quality, no change in adhesive, greater abrasion resistance than all other technologies, and lower maintenance cost.
- Thermal laser barcodes are produced on a 1200 dpi printer, on 24-lb. smudge-proof paper with a gloss or matte laminate coating for durability.
- Digital barcode equipment has greater upfront cost, but lower maintenance cost.
- Thermal barcode equipment costs less initially, but features higher long-term maintenance costs.

Always

Request a barcode sample to verify quality and ensure a good "read."

- o Some production methods may produce voids in the inked area (bars) that may be misinterpreted as a space by the scanner. Also, the ink may "overspray" into the space between the bars, causing a misread.

Never

Apply hand lotion before applying barcodes.

- o Depending on barcode print quality and the substrate material of the label, hand lotion may cause ink to smear. Lotion may also cause the protector (if used) not to adhere properly to the label or create grease spots that interfere with readability.

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Funding/Grant Support

When it comes to financing, you have options.

There is no shortage of funding opportunities for libraries and schools. Many free or low-cost digital tools are available to help enhance your fundraising efforts, and resources are out there to guide you in building an effective fundraising plan that suits your needs. You can also find creative ideas for unique fundraisers that go beyond traditional approaches.

For up-to-date information on grants, be sure to check local, state, and private resources in your area. They can help point you toward funding opportunities that align with your goals.

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