

The not so unique Global Trade Identification Number – Exploring inconsistencies in online product information sources

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Summary

Mobile shopping apps for consumers often identify retail products by Global Trade Identification Number (GTIN) using barcodes or RFID technology and rely on online data sources to provide basic product information. Several different sources exist, and reports show that the available product information in them is often inconsistent with implications for both retail businesses and consumers. In this paper we compare the product information provided by 10 different online sources for more than 82,000 retail products based on GTINs which were scanned by users of mobile barcode scanning apps. We find inconsistent information for nearly half of the products and report our results from analyzing these inconsistencies.