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# WIRELESS SCANNING ON THE CHEAP: USING A PORTABLE BARCODE READER FOR INTERNAL USE STATISTICS AND INVENTORY

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**CipherLab CPT-8000** portable barcode reader with integral CCD scanner and IR/IRdA port, 1 MB program memory and 1 MB data memory. Uses 2 AAA batteries; estimated service time 100 hours.



## QUESTION

Can an off-the-shelf portable barcode reader be configured to work with Millennium's Count Use mode and Inventory Control module?

## METHODS

Barcode file formatting requirements researched and established.

Staff team collected data on portable readers, compared features and costs, then selected two for testing.

Two readers were configured using the application generator programs included with them. After successful tests with both, the CipherLab CPT-8000 was selected for purchase.

## For Count Use

The "Process File" method was tested successfully, but we discovered a more efficient procedure. By using keyboard emulation, we were able to upload the barcodes to Count Use directly, without any intermediate file transfer. This also eliminates the need for any prefixing or other manipulation of the barcode file.

## For Inventory Control

Keyboard emulation was not an option for the Inventory Control module, which can only process a file that resides on the Millennium server. For inventory projects, then, we upload a barcode file from the reader to a PC, drop it onto a network server, and then transfer it via FTP to the Millennium server.



Reader menu after customization using Application Generator

## DEVICE CONFIGURATION & DATA TRANSFER

The Application Generator program included with the CPT-8000 is used to download configuration files to the device and also to upload data from the device to a PC in a text file format.

For transfer of barcodes to the Millennium client, we had to slow the baud rate of the portable reader to 9600 bps; otherwise, Millennium would not process them. Even at this slow setting, though, the upload is completed in just a few seconds.

An infrared communication cradle with a serial connection was included with the reader. To achieve keyboard emulation, we added a Serial to USB converter and CipherLab's keyboard emulation program. The resulting connection combines the simplicity of a keyboard wedge with the speed of a USB port.

## Configuration done with the Application Generator

- Created separate forms for Inventory data & Count Use data
- Added menus
- Altered menu displays
- Selected barcode type and set min. and max. length
- Controlled display behavior during data entry sessions
- Selected various options for device behavior
- Determined field delimiters for text file output
- Selected communication method and options



## RESULTS

Written procedures were developed for the Circulation staff, which they were asked to study. This was followed up with hands-on training.

In four months of daily use, we have experienced no significant problems with the reader. Staff members like its small, lightweight design and ease of use.

The Circulation staff has already used the portable reader for a weeding and relocation project. Scanned barcodes were moved into Create Lists, then the location of the items changed with Rapid Update.

## CONCLUSION

The CPT-8000 portable barcode reader is meeting important needs of the Lewis Library—providing a portable, convenient, and efficient means of collecting barcodes for internal use statistics, inventory, and other collection maintenance projects. Millennium libraries can utilize a variety of off-the-shelf readers for these applications, and potentially for any other tasks that can be accomplished through keyboard emulation or the simple prefixing of barcodes.

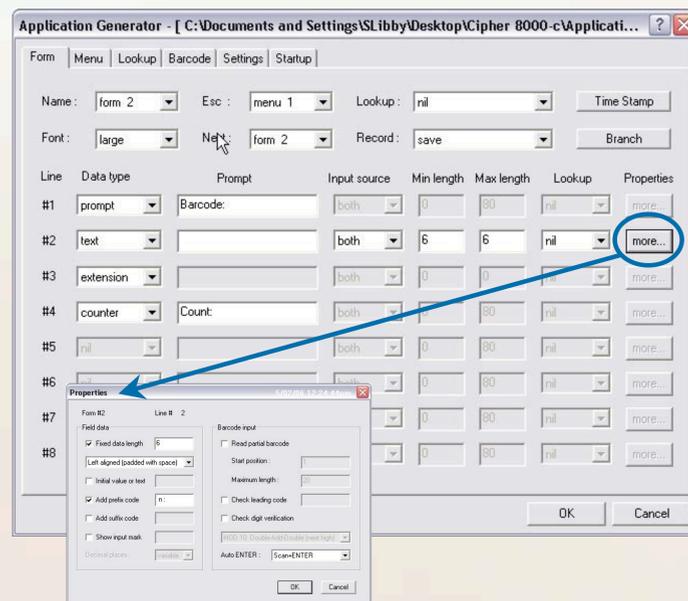
## REFERENCE

Ernick, Linda. "Floating Bibs and Orphan Bar Codes: Benefits of an Inventory at a Small College." *Library Resources & Technical Services* 49 (2005) : 210-216.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Barcode reader and Application Generator images used by permission of CipherLab USA.



Sample settings from Application Generator