

Update Bulletin

eWIC Planning and Releases

March 31, 2010

StoreNext is proceeding to bring eWIC capability to ScanMaster V2 and ISS45 V7 and V8. Development and planning have been underway and RoadMaps are now available for all releases.

EWIC, also known as “on-line WIC” or “mag-stripe WIC,” provides WIC benefits to the cardholder via a state’s host site, which stores the recipient’s authorized items and tracks benefits used in the current period. The POS and payment system are required to request authorization from this host for the specific WIC-able items in the order, and act accordingly given the return instructions. So eWIC combines traditional WIC functions and requirements with FSA-like hosted item-level operations – this makes eWIC the most challenging payment or WIC application yet seen.

Several states are moving toward eWIC implementations. Rollouts or pilots are operating in Michigan, Kentucky and Nevada with several other states lining up. The USDA is working to convince states to standardize their operation and hosting specifications, but up to now there have been significant differences which would have required developers to hard-code eWIC on a state-by-state basis, an economically impossible proposition.

The First Data “unified spec” provided a breakthrough, promising to front-end the individual state hosts with a single messaging interface between the payment application and the First Data host. The First Data host would then perform the necessary translations to handle the idiosyncrasies of the individual state hosts. Further, the USDA has lobbied individual states to keep their hosting requirements “in the box” and thereby enable the unified spec to cover their requirements.

This industry motion has given MTXEPS and StoreNext the first practical opportunity to provide an eWIC solution for the growing list of states moving in this direction.

PLANNING NOTES

- EWIC for ISS45 and ScanMaster require an electronic payment system. StoreNext is writing these POS interfaces exclusively to the MTXEPS interface code.
- The eWIC feature will be released with Connected Payments only. The MTXEPS effort to program eWIC is extensive, and they have no plans to code eWIC a second time for WinEPS.
 - MTXEPS is programming only to the First Data “unified spec.” So far as we know, no other processors have plans to support eWIC in a similar manner. If other processors step forward we will evaluate those plans, but no other processors have come to StoreNext or MTXEPS with any proposals, plans or specifications up to this point.
 - Remember that customers can retain their existing processor since Connected Payments makes it possible for merchants to direct their eWIC transactions to First Data while continuing to process credit, debit, gift cards etc. via an alternate processor if desired.

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- The system will require eWIC certifications with each participating state via First Data. The earliest date that certifications could begin is mid-June, when the MTXEPS production code for Connected Payments will be ready to go live.
- The First Data host must also be operational for certifications to start. We hope this will be the case, although some areas regarding the communication specification and implementation of the required Approved Product List (APL) structure and download remain open at this time.
- MTXEPS has provided extensive payments interface code and specifications to StoreNext, and StoreNext eWIC POS development has been in process. Dates for POS code readiness for first customer availability are:
 - *ISS45 V7* – eWIC functions and the new interface code for MTXEPS are expected to be complete in the 7.1.4.0-050 Spring Release, which will be available well in advance of the first availability for certifications in mid June. However, StoreNext is taking some development risks and assumptions: upstream changes at the host – for example to the eWIC APL architecture – could require rewrites and additional programming after the initial release.
 - *ScanMaster V2* – the Summer Release (2.7.1-050) will provide eWIC with first customer availability in early July. The same schedule concerns apply regarding late changes upstream that could require updates or recoding in the ScanMaster V2 eWIC system.
 - *ISS45 V8* – the Summer Release (8.1.5.1-050 will provide eWIC with first customer availability planned for early August. As with ISS45 V7 and ScanMaster V2, the same caveats may apply.

PRICING

Since eWIC will require Connected Payments, there will be no separate ScanMaster or ISS45 interface charges for the eWIC POS capabilities. Instead, the POS and electronic payments functions for eWIC will take the form of optional subscription features for Connected Payments, applying only to those users in eWIC states who wish to use the system for processing eWIC authorizations.

- Summit subscribers will be able to add the eWIC option for \$5 per week.
- Criterion subscribers will pay a \$10 per week rate.

