

Considerations & Peripherals for Mobile Apps

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This guide summarizes options for setting up the best configuration for using mobile apps in your facilities. It is intended for system administrators.

Note: Warehouse management is a complex field. We are happy to advise and assist, but aACE Software cannot provide detailed instructions for customer facilities.

For successful use of aACE mobile apps, it's vital to envision how your personnel will interact with the app and where they will use it. Work situations can be very different, so your setup will require planning for the optimal solution. In other words, even though the app itself is very usable, if the devices or locations are not considered, your personnel may struggle to use the app successfully.

For example, when deploying a barcode scanner, the environment where items will be scanned should guide your choice of scanning device:

- Low-volume, office environments — An iPhone native camera might be effective for small tasks because the device is small enough for use with one hand. An iPad camera might also work.
- High-volume, industrial environments — These situations usually benefit from a durable, Bluetooth scanner, paired with an iPad. This would allow you to hold the iPad with one hand and scan with the other. In addition, the scanner often runs faster than iPad image processing and can be easier to aim, increasing efficiency.
- Barcodes on the shelf or on product packaging — If the codes that need to be scanned are on the actual products, a scanner that simplifies targeting the barcode can make the task easier.
- Mobile or stationary environments — If your personnel will be walking around the facility, then a lightweight device may be more effective. In contrast, a stationary scanner can ensure that the device is always present when different team members need it.

Getting Started with Barcode Scanning Solutions

Modern scanning technology offers many solutions and new products are being developed all the time. As such, we can only offer a few specific recommendations based on feedback from our customers. Identifying the best solution for your organization will require some research. The following guidelines can help you get started.

aACE Barcodes and Device Camera

You can easily start implementing barcodes by printing them from aACE, then using an iPad / iPhone camera and FileMaker native scanning. This quick-start method can help you get a better sense of the scanning needs that will define your organization's ideal solution. This approach minimizes costs and lets you immediately start working with the aACE mobile apps.

You can print barcodes from aACE using CODE 128, a linear barcode that is supported by most scanners. To generate these codes, sort and filter the Line Item Codes module list view to display all the items that need barcodes. Then click Print > Open Report Selector > Avery or Thermal barcode options. By default, the barcode field is populated with the underlying aACE record ID. You can [update these barcodes](http://aace5.knowledgeowl.com/help/using-the-aace-inventory-counter-mobile-app#UpdatingBarcodes) to the numbering system that works best for your organization.

Shopping for Barcode Scanners

As you review barcode scanners, be mindful of these three key features:

- Bluetooth Enabled — Required to communicate with mobile devices
- Apple iOS Compatible — Required for use with aACE mobile apps
- Keyboard Wedge — Required for interaction with aACE data

Note: Keyboard wedge facilitates converting barcodes to alphanumeric strings that other software applications can work with. In contrast, some barcode scanners are sold as part of a closed, proprietary system where the scanner only works with that vendor's inventory control system.

Socket Mobile Bluetooth Scanners

Compatibility has been thoroughly verified for [Socket Mobile](https://www.socketmobile.com/) devices and aACE mobile apps. An outstanding feature they provide is the ability to easily switch between the USB scanner and your device's virtual keyboard. These scanners includes a toggle that turns off the scanner, activating the virtual keyboard so you can key in notes or other details.

Note: Socket Mobile does *not* offer resources for generating barcodes.

Barcode Options

If you want to print barcodes outside of aACE (e.g. a barcode font, tamper-evident labels, software to generate custom barcodes, or even digital labels that can be used in lieu of printing), make sure that your scanner supports the type of barcode you want to use.

For example, QR, datamatrix, PDF417, and Aztec codes are becoming more common; however, these codes often require a scanner specifically designed to read them.

Additional Equipment

Other options for installing a scanning device include:

- Mounting brackets to fix the device to a wall
- Modular arms and clamps to secure the device in the best position on a tabletop or mobile workstation
- Shoulder straps to keep the device easily accessible while moving through a warehouse
- Hand straps that can also secure the device on a person's forearm
This frees both hands for working with inventory objects, while the scanner is small enough to still use your fingers for working on the app.
- Mounting plates, cases, or wire racks to attach a device to a transportation tool (e.g. a utility cart)

Data Syncing

aACE mobile apps work offline, *not* using a real-time connection to your live data. Storing necessary data with the app minimizes data transfer, which enables the app to be more responsive. This is especially true for situations where connectivity may be less robust (e.g. using an app in a warehouse).
