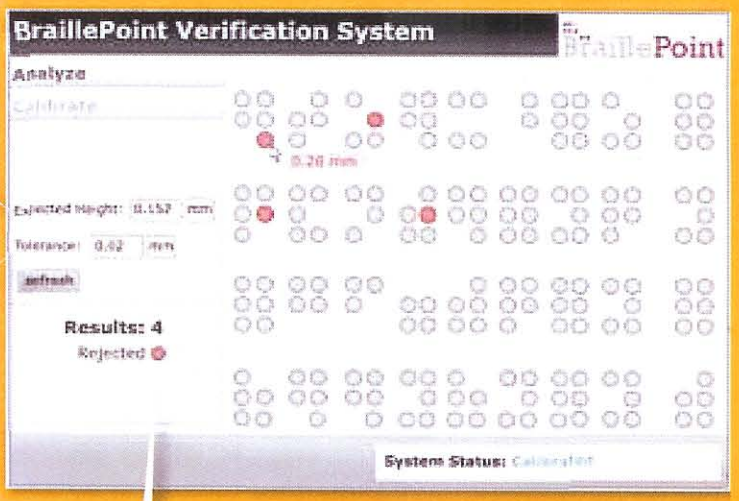
To Use BraillePoint Tool

The movement towards Braille in Europe is clearly under way. From October 2005 on, the 25 member states of the EU are required to have legislation in place in conformance with the EU Directive 2001/83/EC : this will require that all products authorized after October, 30, 2005 need to carry Braille identification, and specify the deadline by which all the existing products must be foreseen with Braille (January 2010).



Set expected do height

Set tolerance levels based on quality standards

Identify dot discrepancies

BraillePoint is an easy to use dot measurement tool. The operator just has to set expected dot height and tolerances based on quality standard to identify dot discrepancies.
According to Global Vision, BraillePoint will set the standard for Braille inspection on cartons and labels. The new system will alleviate all stresses associated with ensuring compliance to Braille standards and will ensure an accurate read for the end user.

Special embossing tooling is required and additional time taken to set up the machine and to monitor Braille during production. This transformation also questions Braille's dot height which is the most important aspect to measuring its tactility.

How to Measure Braille Height

As stated by the EMEA, the European pharmaceutical authorities, the dot height must be uniform and great enough for the blind to accurately decipher using their finger tips. With heights as minimal as 0.2millimiters, how does one accurately measure the height? A common approach has been to use a tool such as a micrometer. This tool allows users to measure each individual dot for height. In practice, the method requires the user to measure each dot individually and consistently. «Four lines of Braille can have approximately 300 separate dots to measure, notes David Perlis, COO of Global Vision, specialized in quality control vision systems. Assuming a skilled operator could inspect each dot in 10 seconds, total inspection time per four lines of Braille would be just under 1 hour.» In an already resource strained environment, adding an hour of inspection time to each check is nearly impossible. In addition, there are several other systems on the market, which claim to accurately measure dot heights. «These systems use scanners as a means to acquire the Braille as a two dimensional image and determine Braille height based on shadows created by the dots on the image, explains Perlis. In a perfect world, these systems would be an eloquent and convenient way to solve quality inspection needs. But how can one expect to be confident relying on a flat image to determine the height of an object?» Global Vision was approached by a large international pharmaceutical company to investigate this problem, and find a solution to replace their manual and time-consuming inspection of Braille on medicine drug cartons. The targets were clearly to gain in speed and quality of inspection. After evaluating many methods, the Global Vision R&D department concluded that employing scanners, lasers and various other imaging methods for dot measurement is far from perfect. «Factors such as lighting distance from the source and thickness of the carton and labels all impact the shadows and therefore the interpreted height, notes Perlis. Even the background color can skew results, as some colors absorb more light than others.» Ironically, as is usually the case, the simplest method worked the best. Blind people read through contact with the dot, not through vision, so would not a contact based approach make the most sense. Aligned with its pharmaceutical clients and their blind council board members, Global Vision is currently finalizing the development and release of such a system for June 2008. ■

MARION BASCHET-VERNET.