

This Issue

QR Codes	1-2
.....	
Tips & Tricks	3
.....	
Q & A	3
.....	
Idea Corner	4
.....	
A Vocabulary of the Graphic Arts	4
.....	
The Advantage of Digital Printing	5
.....	
The Ogilvy Layout	5
.....	
New Reply Card & Envelope Requirements	6-7
.....	
Award Winning Work!	8
.....	

101 Uses for Quick Response (QR) Codes!



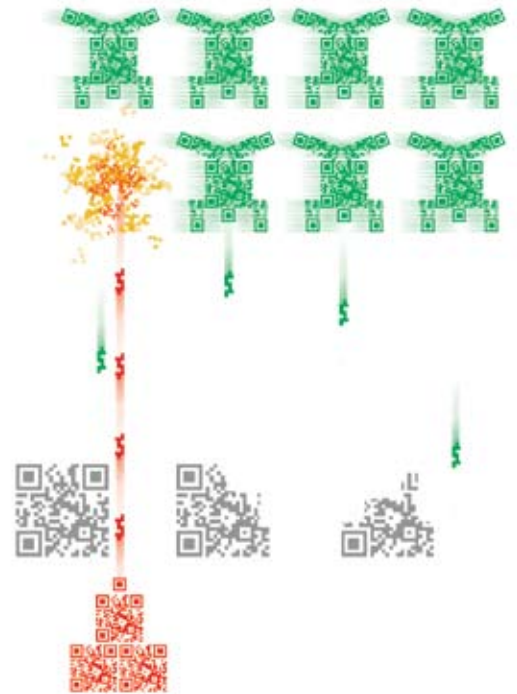
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QR Codes:

Here They Come, Ready or Not...

Regular readers of the Visions Idea File will remember our first issue on Quick Response (QR) codes in which we introduced what was then a very new idea in cross promotional marketing. Since then, QR codes have been popping up in television ad campaigns, in magazine display ads, on real estate signs, and even on menus. And now that major corporations have begun using QR codes, public perception is accelerating. We expect that some time in the next 12 months, we'll reach the tipping point where QR codes become firmly established as an information source.



To remind you: QR codes are a two-dimensional (2D) graphical representation of information — often of a URL, but also phone numbers, e-mail addresses or other bits of data. Developed in 1994 by the Japanese manufacturer Denso-Wave, the first use of QR codes was inventory tracking of vehicle parts. Early on Denso-Wave, who holds the patent and name trademark, freely shared the code specification, allowing others to expand the use of QR codes to other applications. The specifications for QR codes were adopted as ISO Standard 18004 in 2000.

In the United States and Canada, the introduction and adoption of QR codes has been slower than in Japan and Europe, mainly due to immature technology for mobile communication. Compared to Japan and Europe, there are a smaller number of camera phones as a percentage of all mobile phones. Also, QR reader software must be obtained from third-party vendors (rather than coming installed in mobile phones) and is device-dependent. According to a survey conducted by North American Technographics of a randomly selected sample of 42,792, less than 1% of mobile phone owners used a 2D barcode scanner in Q2 of 2010.

Predictions are that this is about to change. In 2010, some major U.S. marketers, including Calvin Klein, Chevrolet, Allure Magazine, Verizon Wireless, Heineken, Entertainment Weekly, The Weather Channel, Starbucks, Nike and Warner Home Video, all had campaigns based around QR codes. And as camera phones increasingly replace older mobile phone instruments, the use of QR codes will spread.

Uses for QR codes

Not long ago, QR codes were a novelty, attracting attention mainly because of their unusual appearance. But during 2010, the use of QR codes by a growing number of marketers has raised the public perception of how to use the codes and the value they bring to a buying decision.

A QR code is a different kind of marketing tool. Not only does a QR code store data of all types — text, numbers and graphics — in a compact manner, it also provides a means of measuring response rate. A QR code is a mobile hyperlink to additional information that frees the information seeker from his desktop computer, and allows the marketer to reach potential buyers anywhere, any time.

The QR code glyph is so versatile that it can be deployed in small versions on business cards, brochures and post cards, and in large versions on buildings, billboards and large-screen television. The glyph is forgiving enough to be readable when printed on a t-shirt or on a delivery van.

QR codes can be used for event ticketing and tracking, contests, trade show management, surveys and couponing. They can be incorporated into a direct mail marketing campaign, menus, in-store display or e-mail marketing. They can direct the audience to a personalized URL, an online instruction manual or a recipe that uses a particular ingredient. QR codes can take users to an online testimonial video, to YouTube, or to a short commercial.

Provide a QR code on a trade show name badge, and other attendees will gain access to contact information without having to exchange business cards. Include a QR code on static advertising like a magazine display ad and take readers to a multimedia site.

Add a QR code to each product listing in a catalog and link to complete product specifications or a demonstration video of the product. A QR code on an in-store display can include a coupon for a discount or promotion on a related item. Put a QR code on a product label and link to a recipe that uses the product.

QR codes appearing inside a book cover can link readers to reviews or a website about the author. A QR code on a prescription drug label can provide dosage information and warnings about side effects.

Here are some recent uses of QR codes:

- In 2010, the Fox Television Network sent promotional messages for its popular shows Lone Star, Fringe and Glee, all leading up to the fall premiers. Users were given access to insider content, videos, first-look photos, show secrets, behind-the-scene footage and exclusive cost interviews, all displayed on mobile phones.
- Lake County Tourism & Business Relations in Groveland, Florida uses a QR code on billboards, magazine ads and direct mail. The codes can be customized to the audience. For example, an ad in a fishing magazine incorporates a QR code that takes the reader to a podcast showing fresh water fishing in Lake County.
- Ralph Lauren includes “How to shop from your phone” with instructions under the QR tag in a display ad or on a direct mail piece. The QR code is connected to an e-commerce site where visitors can shop directly from their phones, view the Ralph Lauren collection, and read articles in RL Magazine.
- In September 2009, Dick’s Sporting Goods broadcast a QR code on the JumboTron during a football game at the Dallas Cowboys stadium. Fans who took a picture of the QR code were taken to a mobile website and offered \$10 off a \$50 purchase.
- In 2006, McDonald’s began using QR codes on its packaging in Japan. Using the code provided nutritional information — calories, sodium, fat, carbohydrates and possible allergens — on the meal.
- Google uses QR codes as part of its program Google Places. In 2010, 100,000 businesses selected by Google as a Favorite Place were sent a QR code printed on a decal to display in their

window. A viewer who uses the QR code is taken to the business’s Google Place Page — a way for people to get information about the business, even if it is not open. And with Google promoting QR codes, they could become important in search marketing. Google suggests that if your website contains a QR code, search engines will see a new image and index it, and might in the future index the content in the image.

Why QR codes are important to local organizations

To date, most QR code use is by large, national advertisers who are combining mobile communication with traditional print and other media. These advertisers are breaking new ground and developing the information base that will later filter down to local businesses and organizations.

Right now this is an emerging technology with some barriers to use, so it is difficult to predict how long adoption will take. But one thing is certain — QR codes are destined to become part of the marketing tool kit.



In October and November of 2010, the advertising firm of Austin & Williams Unplugged conducted a survey to determine how aware consumers are of QR codes. The survey was conducted using both online and offline methods and included 400 respondents. Most respondents were adults aged 25-54 living in the United States; 41% were male and 58% female.

Here are the findings of the survey:

- 52% of respondents had seen or heard of QR codes.
- 28% had scanned a QR code with their mobile phone.
- 33% of respondents stated they “almost never” scanned a QR code.
- More than 40% had seen a QR code in these places: on the Internet (40%); printed on ads (48%); printed on brochures (45%); in newspapers or magazines (45%).
- 62% scanned a QR code to go to a website; get information or a coupon (30% each) or get contact information.
- 6% said that use of the QR code led directly to a sale.

The findings of this survey confirm that though it is still early in the development of QR codes for advertising, public perception is rising.



What do I need to read a QR code?



Your ability to read a QR code and thereby gain access to the information it represents depends on two things: a camera phone and a software application for it.

Camera phone: camera phones may be either fixed- or auto-focus. For reading QR codes, auto-focus is best. A fixed-focus camera may require holding the phone at the right angle and distance from the QR code, while an auto-focus camera will adjust to the situation.

To ensure a good read, the QR code itself contains positional alignment indicators and internal orientation calibration as well as code redundancy. This means that a QR code can be read whether right side up, upside down, rotated 90 degrees, or even wrapped on a curved surface.

Software application: camera phones require QR code reader software to decode the QR code. Newer versions of the Google Android and Nokia Symbian operating systems come with a QR reader application installed; other phones require the user to locate the app on the Internet and install it.

Since there is no universal standard or complete consistency across all camera phone operating systems, mobile phone owners must determine the best reader for each individual device. Two websites; <http://getreader.com> and www.mobile-barcodes.com — have a list of readers. Enter the URL into the browser of the camera phone and a self-detecting utility will identify and download the best reader for that specific device.



A QR code is a type of 2D code with a wide range of uses, including displaying text, initiating e-mail or SMS text messages, opening a browser on a mobile phone that leads to a specific website, and track the download of an audio track or video stream. All these activities have potential applications for marketing and advertising.

- Display text: send information to a mobile phone. Example information is a coupon, a promotional announcement, or a location.
- Initiate e-mail: send an e-mail that is prepopulated with text.
- Initiate an SMS message: display a message with an instruction or suggestion for action.
- Initiate a browser session: link directly to a specific website home page, and track who visits the site and what they do while there.
- Initiate a download of an audio file or video stream: provide information or entertainment directly to the mobile phone handset.

One important thing to remember is that since the content will be viewed on a mobile phone, it may be necessary to adjust the graphic display and amount of text accordingly.



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2D code: a two-dimensional barcode; the dimensions are horizontal and vertical. 2D codes can store up to 7,089 characters, as contrasted with 1-dimensional barcodes that store 20 characters.

Barcode: a sequence of vertical bars and spaces that represents numbers and symbols. A bar code typically consists of five parts: a quiet zone, a start character, data characters (including an optional check character), a stop character and another quiet zone.

EZcode: a proprietary quick response code developed by The Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH Zürich) and exclusively licensed to Scanbuy in 2006. Also known as ScanLife.

Microsoft Tag: a proprietary quick response code developed by Microsoft. Microsoft Tag can be published in a colorful format, black/white, and also in a custom format, and it provides an interface to manage all generated tags and track consumer activity.

Module: the smallest square dot (pixel element) of a QR code.

Quiet area: a four-module wide buffer of white space surrounding a QR code. Promotes readability of the code.

QR code: an acronym for Quick Response; a two-dimensional barcode symbology that is the world's most widely adopted open standard.

ScanLife: a mobile communications application and web-based code management platform. The code management platform allows users to create and manage their 2D codes, including tracking codes to see number of scans, users, location and other data.

SMS: an acronym for short message service, the method of sending text via a mobile phone or other mobile communication device. SMS is the most widely used data application in the world.

URL: an acronym for universal resource locator, the address on the Worldwide Web

ZXing: an acronym for Zebra Crossing, Google's open-source, multi-format 1D/2D barcode reader library implemented in Java. Used to support decoding of QR codes among other 1D and 2D codes.

The Advantage of Digital Printing

One of the principal advantages of digital printing is that it can economically be used for variable data printing, a term that describes various levels of document personalization. The levels are:

- Personalized printing where the document includes some information specific to an individual. A simple example is mail merge, where an individual's name and address appears as an inside address of a letter. Personalized printing may also include personal information throughout the text of a letter.
- Versioned printing refers to printed materials that share much of the same information and design, but introduce some variation based on specific criteria. An example of versioned printing is a membership brochure where the photographs and featured services change depending on the age range of the individual.
- One-to-one printing refers to printed materials that are completely customized to a single individual, with changes in graphs, charts, images and text depending on the characteristics or demographic information of the individual. The changes are dictated by data collected in databases. An example of one-to-one printing is an insurance benefits booklet or a postcard inviting the recipient to use a Personalized URL (PURL).



We provide variable data printing services at Visions. If you are interested in learning more about how variable data printing can benefit your sales and marketing or human resources departments, please contact **Tim Salwei** at **763-496-2813**.

The Ogilvy Layout



Advertising legend David Ogilvy, founder of Ogilvy & Mather advertising agency and creator of well-known copy ("At 60 miles an hour, the loudest noise in this new Rolls Royce comes from the electric clock") and characters (the man in the Hathaway Shirt; Schweppes and Commander Whitehead), developed an ad layout formula so successful that it became known as the Ogilvy. The formula adheres to the order in which researchers tell us readers typically look at ads:

- Visual (photograph or graphic)
- Caption
- Headline
- Copy
- Signature (advertiser's name and contact information)

Here is a basic Ogilvy layout: The basic Ogilvy layout can be altered to include a coupon (set ad copy in a three-column grid and place the coupon in the third column); headline moved above the visual (when the headline carries more weight than the visual); or copy set in a two-column grid and the headline moved to the right of the visual.

Need some photographs or illustrations to improve your layout?

Call us and we'll browse our collection of stock photography for something appropriate. For Web photos, check-out our Facebook posting: [50 Places To Find Web Photos For Next To Nothing](#).

Current Postnet Barcodes Will Become Obsolete in 2011

How to Acquire a USPS Intelligent Barcode Mailer ID

To create an IMb account for your organization:

- Go to the bottom-right corner of the www.USPS.com Website screen and click the grey, underlined link to Business Customer Gateway. This link will take you to the log-in page.
- Find the "Log-In Box": New users should click "Sign-Up" at the bottom. Returning Users with existing usernames and passwords may "Sign-In".
 1. New User Sign-Up Screen: Create a Username and Password. Click "Continue."
 2. Profile Account Type Screen: Select "Business." Click "Continue."
 3. Business Profile Screen: Red asterisks indicate required information. Click "Continue."
 4. Company Profile Summary: Verify your Company Account Information by clicking "Edit" or "Continue."
 5. Agree to the Privacy Act Statement. Then click "Continue."
 6. Select a Business Service Screen: Look for the "Design & Prepare" Boxed section, Select "Mailer ID." Click "Continue."
 7. Select Business Locations Screen: Check your location and Click "Next."
 8. Add a Service Screen: Click "Confirm". NOTE: The CRID # listed here is NOT your Mailer ID number!
 9. Business Service Administrator (BSA) Page: Read the information and then CHECK "I certify...", then click "Yes."
 10. Business Service Administrator (Access Granted) Page: Click "Continue."
 11. Business Customer Gateway Opening Page will re-open. Click "SIGN-OUT" at the top of page.

To create your Mailer ID once you have an account:

- If you just signed-up: Go to your email and open the USPS email. Scroll down & Click "Sign-in and get started link".
- If you've signed-in before: Go to the bottom-right corner of the www.USPS.com Website screen and click the grey, underlined link to Business Customer Gateway. This link will take you to the log-in page.
- Find the "Log-In Box" and "Sign-In" with your username and password
 1. Find the "Design & Prepare Box": Click on Mailer ID.
 2. Welcome to the Mailer ID System Screen: In the "Mailer ID Search Box, click "Request a MID" by clicking the red circular button at the bottom of the box.
 3. Apply for a Mailer ID Screen: Beside the "MID Type/Company Name" line, use drop down arrow to select 9-digit MID. Beside "# of MIDs Requested" input 1. Click Request MIDs.
 4. Mailer ID Program Option Details Screen: Select "Automatically generate this Mailer ID" on the left, and select "Full/Basic Service" on the right. Click Request MIDs.
 5. Program Options Screen: System will issue your new Mailer ID #. Record this number and sign out. This number is your Mailer ID number.

If you have any questions regarding Intelligent Mail Barcodes or specific information about the Programs & Services associated with this new service, please go to <http://ribbs.usps.gov/>



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This Issue

QR Codes	1-2
.....	
Tips & Tricks	3
.....	
Q & A	3
.....	
Idea Corner	4
.....	
A Vocabulary of the Graphic Arts	4
.....	
The Advantage of Digital Printing	5
.....	
The Ogilvy Layout	5
.....	
New Reply Card & Envelope Requirements	6-7
.....	
Award Winning Work!	8
.....	

Award Winning Work of International Renown!

Visions received ten (10) awards in the 36th IAPHC International Gallery for superb printing. Four (4) entries earned the coveted Gold.

Thank you for trusting us
 with your projects and we
 look forward to serving
 you in 2011.



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