

14.5 Things



You Need to Know About QR Codes.



Sunbelt
Graphic Systems

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14.5 Things You Need to Know About QR Codes.

1 A QR Code is a 2D Barcode.

QR codes are a 2-dimensional barcode image resembling a square-like maze. Unlike a 1-dimensional UPC code, a 2-dimensional barcode stores data in both directions and can be scanned vertically or horizontally to be decoded.



2 2D Barcodes Can Store a Variety of Data.

A traditional 1D barcode (UPC/EAN) stores up to 30 numbers, while a 2D barcode (QR) can store up to 7,089 alphabetic and numeric characters. The additional storage capacity accommodates a variety of data beyond numbers including:

- Text
- Hyperlink
- Telephone number (Phone call)
- SMS/MMS message
- Email (Send message)
- Contact entry (vCard or meCard)
- Calendar entry (vCalendar)

Storing a hyperlink presents a myriad of possibilities beyond just loading a web page -- play a video, download a mobile app, check-in on Foursquare, update a Twitter status, “Like” a Facebook page, display map directions, and more.

3 Read/Decode a 2D Barcode by Scanning it With a Smartphone.

(A 2D barcode reader app is required to decode the encoded data. See chart at #7.)



4 2D Barcodes Can be Placed in and on Nearly Any Location.

Once the barcode image is created, it can be printed on nearly any surface and location -- newspapers, TV ads, billboards, temporary tattoos, product packaging, clothing labels, cake frosting, and more. This enables you to drive traffic, interaction, and conversion from anywhere. 2D barcodes excel at bringing non-digital media to life.

Note: Use caution placing barcodes online. They should always enhance the user experience. If a user could click a hyperlink, don't make them scan a code to complete the same task.

Bear in mind the location must be easily scannable. Plastic frames and packaging can reflect light. Lighting can cast shadows, and hillsides and subways can block Wi-Fi access. Consider all contextual factors that could impact the scanning experience.

5 Mobile Barcode Scanning is on the Rise.

- *2D barcode scanning outnumbered 1D (UPC) scans in Q1 2011.*
- [ScanLife's Q1 2011 Trend Report](#)
- *Mobile barcode scanning grew 1,600 percent in the year 2010.*
- [ScanLife's 2010 Trend Report \(PDF\)](#)
- *QR barcode scanning was up 1,200 percent in the second half of 2010.*
- [Mobio's Naked Facts Report](#)
- *22 percent of the Fortune 50 have already used mobile barcodes.*
- [Burson-Marsteller Report](#)

QR codes can be used for nearly any function (logistics, advertising, customer service, etc.) for B2B and B2C across a variety of industries:

- [Best Buy](#) uses QR codes on in-store price tags for quick access to online reviews.
- [Golf Digest](#) uses Microsoft Tag in their magazine to accompany tips with interactive video.
- [Real estate agents](#) use QR codes on “for sale” signs providing prospective buyers access to virtual tours.
- [Libraries](#) are using QR codes to facilitate learning via interactive scavenger hunts.

6 QR Isn't the Only Type of 2D Barcode.

The most popular 2D barcode formats are QR code, DataMatrix, ScanLife EZcode, and Microsoft Tag (Tag).



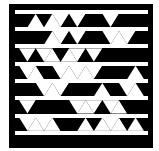
QR Code



DataMatrix



Scanlife EZcode



Microsoft Tag

There are several key differences in these code formats.

QR and DataMatrix are open standard formats, while ScanLife EZcode and Microsoft Tag are proprietary formats which can only be created and decoded by their unique proprietary software.

A [Google Trends analysis of these 2D barcodes](#) shows “QR code” dominates by far from a search popularity perspective. QR has become a common term used to reference a 2D barcode (2D code, mobile tag, mobile barcode, etc.) even when codes are technically a different format. Even [@MicrosoftTag](#) uses the [#QRcode](#) hashtag on Twitter.

7 Tools to Generate and Read 2D Barcodes are Free.

Tools are available for all major smartphones. To run a 2D barcode campaign you'll need to following:

1. 2D barcode generator (available online at [sunbelt-usa.com](#))
2. 2D barcode reader (Mobile app)
3. [Optional] 2D barcode management/tracking tool (See #8 for details and resources)

Generators:

Different generators have varying features. Choose a generator based on the options for:

- Code Format (i.e. QR, EZcode, Tag, etc.)
- Stored Data (i.e. hyperlink, meCard, SMS, etc.)
- Output (i.e. color, size, download file type, etc.)

[QRstuff.com](#) is a comprehensive QR generator providing a variety of stored content, color, size, and output options. ScanLife's generator creates their proprietary EZcode as well as QR and DataMatrix formats. Microsoft Tag only generates Tag.

Note: To generate a code on the ScanLife or Microsoft Tag sites, you'll first need to create an account. (Tag requires providing personal info like birth date, gender, etc.)

Readers:

Microsoft Tag and ScanLife EZcode are proprietary codes, and can only be decoded by their respective reader apps. Because of the open standard for QR codes, dozens of reader apps are available. (DataMatrix is usually supported on most QR readers.) Some mobile handsets come with a reader app pre-installed.

The following 2D barcode reader apps work on most smartphones.

Reader App	Code Formats	Download Link (from your mobile phone)
RedLaser	QR, UPC/EAN	redlaser.com
BeeTagg Reader	QR, DataMatrix, BeeTagg	get.beetagg.com
AT&T Code Scanner	QR, DataMatrix, UPC/EAN	scan.mobi
ScanLife	EZcode, QR, DataMatrix, UPC/EAN	getscanlife.com
Microsoft Tag	Tag	gettag.mobi

RedLaser and AT&T Code Scanner also have geolocation features for local price comparison shopping.

8 Management Tools are Available to Track Scanning Analytics.

For comprehensive scan tracking, you'll need to use a barcode generator tool that includes tracking analytics. (These tools are not independent.) Some management tools will merely track the number of scans while others provide detailed metrics like demographics, repeat scans, geolocation, and more. Collected analytics depends on the reader app used for scanning, so data results may vary.

Management tools are relatively inexpensive and sometimes free. Paid plans typically have a free trial with fees based on the number of scans.

2D Barcode Management & Tracking Tools:

- Microsoft Tag (Tag)
- ScanLife (EZcode, QR, DataMatrix, UPC)
- Tappinn (QR, UPC)
- Paperlinks (QR)
- QReateBUZZ (QR)
- BeQRious (QR)
- SPARQCode (QR)
- QReate and Track (QR)

9 2D Barcode Content Should Provide Special Value for the Customer.

It's work to scan a barcode, so users have higher expectations as to what content they will find. Reward the user with discounts, exclusive content, or useful tips relevant to the code's context. Consider scenarios that leverage smartphone features (email, SMS, phone call, video, map, apps, etc.) to save the user time.

For example, including a QR code on a business card that links to a meCard would be a lot easier than the user manually entering the contact record. In contrast, a QR code that links to a website homepage adds limited value.

Note: If you link to a web page, make sure that it's mobile-friendly. (See #14 for more information.)

10 Small or Complex QR Codes Can't be Scanned by Phones With Lesser Quality Cameras.

Complex 2D barcodes (a lot of information) are more challenging and time consuming to scan. In the case of QR codes, more stored content forces a larger code size. In general, it's best to minimize data stored in 2D barcodes. Always use a URL-shortener to shrink hyperlinks. (Add analytics tracking parameters before shortening the link.)

Warning: Small, complex QR codes are the biggest mistake currently being made by marketers. (Microsoft Tag and EZcode formats generally don't have this issue.) Smartphone cameras with resolution less than 4-megapixels can't scan a QR code smaller than about 1"x1". Moreover, without the auto-focus (AF) camera feature, a complex QR code will have the same scanning issue, even if the code is larger. The iPhone 3GS and Blackberry are popular handset examples that lack both of these camera features. Unscannable codes kill and delay the adoption rate for 2D barcode campaigns.

Tip: Always provide a back-up (i.e. hyperlink, SMS text message, etc.) option for users to retrieve info within the code. A back-up enables non-smartphone users to also participate.

11 Consumers Need Guidance to Scan 2D Barcodes.

The variety of code types, readers, and different terminology is confusing to consumers. Nielsen Company estimates that only 40 percent of U.S. mobile devices are smartphones as of Q1 2011, growing to almost 50 percent by Q3 2011. That means there are a lot of smartphone rookies that barely know how to use their phone, much less distinguish differences in mobile barcode formats and reader apps. As long as 2D barcodes are a novelty concept, always include a brief step-by-step guide with the context of your code.

Logical steps:

1. Download a reader app to your mobile phone.
2. Open the app and scan the code with your mobile device.
3. View the results.

Tip: For the reader app download, include a URL link or SMS shortcut to expedite the process. This step is imperative when using proprietary Microsoft Tag or ScanLife EZcode formats since only one reader is capable of scanning their codes.

Steps two and three can be combined as a call-to-action. Example: "Scan to ____." (... watch a video, download our app, call customer support, etc.)

12 2D Barcodes can be Customized Artistically.

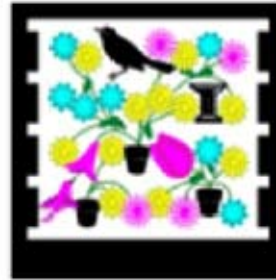
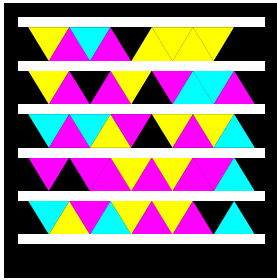


QR codes include an Error Correction Level (ECL) that enables "damaged" codes to still be scanned. The error level tolerance (set by the code generator) can be as high as 30%. As a result, creative license can be used to create designer QR codes from a variety of colors or materials (i.e. jelly beans, sand castles, product packaging, etc.) as long as there is adequate contrast to read the code.

When it comes to advanced QR code graphic design, it's harder than it looks. If you want to get really fancy, we recommend connecting with QR art experts at QRarts.com or Delivr.com.

Tip: Some artistic design is fun and good to see; however, don't go overboard. The most important function of a QR code is its scanability. It's also important that users easily recognize a scannable code from a distance.

Microsoft Tag also allows for artistic codes. Their custom tag tool allows users to generate art from codes or even overlay codes on top of photographs.



13 Testing Scanability is Imperative.

Before you mass print or distribute barcodes be sure to test for scanability. Testing factors:

- Scan context (i.e. lighting, shadows, surfaces)
- Reader apps
- Scan distance
- Smartphone cameras (resolution/auto-focus)
- Scan timing

14 Seek Expertise to Ensure Successful Campaigns.

Before you begin adding QR codes to your company literature, stationery, signs and labels, it would probably be a good idea to speak with someone who can help you understand the technology and strategic applications for incorporating QR codes into your marketing. Technology, trends, and tools in this arena are rapidly changing. That's why we're here. We can provide you with the information you need to adopt QR code technology to maximize your efforts, optimize campaigns for success, and avoid unnecessary embarrassment for poor implementation.

Next Steps...

Are you ready to jump start a QR code campaign, or add a mobile website? What questions do you have about the technology, tools or tactics? Please feel free to contact us for information, ideas and solutions. We're here to help.

14.5 QR Codes Are Designed to Link Smartphone Users to Your Website.

QR codes can automatically redirect smartphone users from your main (desktop) site to an interactive mobile website designed to be easily viewed on a smartphone. Mobile sites also contain links to email, sms, driving directions, facebook, twitter, linked-in, phone, and other links to make a smartphone responses simple, and allow you to get the most from every visitor.



The simple purpose a QR Codes is to be scanned by smartphones and move people on mobile phones from printed media to your site on the internet. A interactive website designed to be viewed on a smartphone will provide a more appropriate landing page than one designed for a desktop computer, and it will increase responses by allowing responders to link to you via their smartphone.

For information about QR Codes, mobile websites and mobile marketing please visit us online at SunbeltMobile.com, scan this QR code with your smartphone, or call us at 770.460.0242.

A Few Ideas **for Using QR Codes to Drive Traffic to Your Website**

Professional Firms:

QR Placement: Business Cards, Print Collateral, Promotional Materials, Marketing Initiatives.

When Scanned: An employee business card can provide a bio and then connect to the rest of the organization; a brochure can connect to an online view of company services or corporate videos; a marketing piece can connect to a newsletter subscription, or registration for an event.

Retail:

QR Placement: In-Store Shelf Tags, Product Labeling, Direct Mail, Flyers, Brochures, Print Advertising, Window Sign.

When Scanned: Access product information or catalog, drive and connect with social media, join newsletters, check store hours...

Manufacturing/Agriculture:

QR Placement: Product Packaging and Print Collateral.

When Scanned: Assembly Instructions, Social Media, Product Information, Product Registration, Product Catalogs or Videos.

Hotels:

QR Placement: Key Jackets, Proposals, Print Collateral & Advertising.

When Scanned: Booking, Address & Room Details, Conference Information, Menus, Amenities & Outlet Information, Pool Hours...

Restaurants / Bars / Lounges:

QR Placement: Menu's, Table Talkers, Coasters, Print Collateral and Advertising.

When Scanned: Ingredient Information, Take Out Menu, Welcome Videos, Event Calendar, Promotions, Social Media, Server Bio...

Tourism / Festivals / Events:

QR Placement: Direct Mail, Brochures, Signage, Business Cards.

When Scanned: Promotions, Social Media, Event Calendars and Details, Join Mailing List, Welcome Videos...

Sports Teams:

QR Placement: Game Day Programs, Posters, Flyers, Banners, Direct Mail...

When Scanned: Player Interviews & Bios, Game Highlights, Social Media, Game Schedule, Promotional Coupon...

Real Estate / Home Builders:

QR Placement: Business Cards, Direct Mail, Print Advertising, Signage.

When Scanned: Listing Catalog, Listing Details, Newsletter Sign-Up, Free Home Evaluation Forms, Floor Plans, Video Home Tours...

Auto Dealers:

QR Placement: Vehicle Tags, Flyers, Direct Mail, Print Advertising, Business Cards.

When Scanned: Vehicle Details and Videos, Booking Test Drives, Associate Information, Hours of Operation, Financing Details and Applications...

Financial:

QR Placement: Print Collateral, In-Window Signage, Print Advertising, Client Communication Material.

When Scanned: Applications, Product and Service Offerings, Community Involvement, Promotions...



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The Mobile Marketing Opportunity

- There are currently about 3.2 billion mobile subscribers in the world.
- Mobile phones are more prevalent than cars or credit cards.
- The total number of iPhone devices currently in use is over 51 million units.
- One out of every seven minutes of media consumption takes place on mobile devices.
- 1/2 of local searches are done on mobile devices.
- By 2014 mobile browsing will surpass desktop browsing.

A mobile web presence is an effective way to present relevant information to users on the go, and properly designed mobile web sites are a practical solution to this need. Websites designed for desktop use do not display or function well on mobile devices. Mobile sites also offer contact links unavailable on desktop sites.

Mobile Websites Can Help You

- Capture Leads • Showcase Products & Services • Engage with Visitors/Customers
- Take Orders • Link to Promotional Videos • Provide User Instructions • Register Events
- Drive Social Media • Distribute Mobile Coupons • Connect with your Community

Sunbelt Mobile Website Features

- Auto-Detect Code links smartphone visitors to mobile site. • Unlimited Pages
- Unlimited Monthly Bandwidth • Email / Call / SMS / Social Media Buttons
- 5,000 Device Optimization & Support • Google Mapping • Custom Domain
- Embed You Tube Videos, and Other Media • Custom Form Templates • Event Calendar
- Product Catalog • Google Analytics Report • Unlimited Employee Directory

Simple, Economic Pricing

Our Mobile Site start up fee is \$450.

This fee includes creation of your customized five page mobile website with all of our current features. Future features will be added automatically as they come online. Our mobile sites are intuitive and easy to update, so future site revisions can normally be handled by clients. However we will be available to answer questions and offer solutions at no cost as part of our ongoing service, and we can provide additional fee based design services if requested.

We created three hosting term options to meet the various needs of our clients:

- 3 month hosting service: \$105.
- 6 month hosting service: \$180.
- 12 month hosting service: \$300.



For More Information About Mobile Marketing

Use your smartphone to scan the QR code at the end of this line, visit us at SunbeltMobile.com, or call us at 770 460 0242.