Your name

Tutor's name

Course

Date

QR Codes

QR (Quick Response) code is a two-dimensional code that has become widespread in the last several years. Unlike traditional UPC barcodes, which are made up of a number of horizontal lines, a QR code can be captured more quickly and can contain more information. QR codes are machine-readable labels — computers can understand them much more easily than they can understand text. QR codes are used for everything from tracking products to identifying items — typical tasks where they function as improved UPC barcodes.

However, QR codes are not limited to tracking items in warehouses and scanning products at the checkout counter. They are also utilized in the consumer realm, such as in advertisements, business windows, product packaging, billboards on the side of the road, and even on some websites. QR codes are intended to be an expedient way to perform an action with one's phone. Unlike near-field communication (NFC), QR codes do not contain any high-level electronics or require special technology — they are composed of a simple grid of white and black printed on a piece of paper that can be captured with any camera (Hoffman). Typically, QR codes are captured with a scanner app on a smartphone. The app allows an individual to take a photo containing the barcode. Then it locates the barcode, analyzes the machine-readable data, and converts it into meaningful information for the user.

For example, one may see a barcode on a billboard, business window, or a product's packaging. After being scanned in this way, a typical QR code would probably take the user directly to the business's website. In this case, the QR code contains a website address (URL.) The point of the QR code is to allow one to easily access the website without typing any web addresses into one's phone. The user can access the website simply by scanning a picture.

BBC provides three reasons why QR codes can also be used for education:

- Inconspicuous as they may seem, QR codes can hold over 4000 characters of information. Instead of printing out a long web article for students, QR codes can provide them with direct and instantaneous access to the same resource in class or at home. Teachers and students can save time and simultaneously save a tree!

- They are very easy to generate. To create a QR code, one only needs to copy and paste the address of the web page into the QR generating software. Once the code has been generated, an individual can then transfer it to a teaching resource, or simply leave it on the interactive whiteboard for students to scan in class.

- QR codes can be printed on virtually anything: paper, textile, walls, even on one's skin as a tattoo for those teachers who are willing to show total commitment to their subject (!). Some schools use QR codes in the reception area to provide extra information about school events to students, parents, and visitors (BBC: QR codes in education).

However, there are some disadvantages in using QR codes. Here's what B.L. Ochman, an internet marketing strategist says about it:

The QR codes did have some brilliant and successful applications, like the mobile-code campaign for an independent music store in Hong Kong that sold music by allowing users to listen to and buy the tunes of 14 bands, half of which sold out their inventory. But more often, the codes were deployed poorly in spots where they couldn't be scanned, like billboards, or -- perhaps lamest ever -- on license plates. Some QR Codes require a proprietary scanner good only for that code, which few people are likely to want to download. And, while many people still have no idea what a QR Code is or how to use one, instructions rarely have been included.

In conclusion, though, QR codes can be used with great ease and efficiency for a number of purposes, including education.

Works Cited

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Hoffman , Chris. *QR Codes Explained: Why You See Those Square Barcodes Everywhere.* 2014.

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