

# I want my QR CODES!



By Mary Lynn Wagner

**Q**R Codes or *Quick Response Codes* were originally created in Japan and are becoming increasingly more prevalent in the United States. They can be found in magazines, on business cards, product shelf tags, conference name tags and even in the yards of houses that are for sale. The codes are similar to bar codes and are comprised of three black-and-white boxes along with a pattern of black-and-white lines and dots.

QR codes are used to display text, URLs, e-mail addresses, coupons and any other type of information as defined by the creator. Individuals can create their own QR codes by using one of the many free sites available that generate the codes.

SPARQCodes are similar to QR codes except that they will link you directly to the mobile content and can even be programmed to invoke an app on your mobile phone. This new feature known as ‘Connect N Share’ is “very straightforward — it makes it easy for businesses to generate QR codes that link to the business’s presence on Twitter and/or Facebook.”<sup>1</sup> These features are specifically designed to help businesses and individuals generate more social interaction among users. “According to Jumpscan, QR code scanning increased by 1,200 percent from July to December, 2010. Social media users are a key driver of this growth with 57 percent of Facebook and Twitter users reporting that they’ve scanned at least one QR code in the past year.”<sup>2</sup>

There are a number of free websites that can be used to generate QR codes and SPARQCodes such as Jumpscan,

Kaywa, Moongate and Sparqcode Generator. In order for the codes to be deciphered, you will need to download a reader that is compatible with your phone. Mobile-BarCodes.com contains a list of some of the most popular readers as well as a list of supported mobile phones in order to determine which readers are most compatible with your phone. For example, if you own a Blackberry Storm 2, the most compatible readers are Blackberry Messenger, BeeTagg and NeoReader. Once a reader



has been downloaded to your camera, you can then use your camera phone to scan or take a picture of the QR code. The software will automatically read the code and open the information on your phone. *Note: QR code readers will not scan all QR codes in the same fashion. You may want to download multiple readers for scanning codes. When creating a QR Code, be sure to test it on several different readers so you know how it will be viewed*

*by others.*

There are also a number of tracking services available for QR codes. You will have to think about how you want to track the traffic generated by your QR code and then decide which service or application best meets your needs. There’s an excellent article on RedClay Interactive<sup>3</sup> that provides a step by step guide on how to track using Google Analytics and the URL shorteners bit.ly and goo.gl.

Although this technology is just becoming popular in the United States, Google announced March 31 that it would be phasing out support for generating QR codes and focusing on Near-Field Communication (NFC) technology. “NFC technology offers much of the same functionality as QR codes but with increased efficiency. Instead of pointing your phone at QR codes and waiting for the code to be deciphered, you will be able to wave your phone over NFC chips embedded in signs and devices to obtain the encoded information.”<sup>4</sup>

Some of the most popular and compatible QR Code readers are listed below:

**BeeTagg** is an excellent QR-Code reader which can be directly downloaded to your phone. After opening the reader, point your camera at the code and click the picture button. The reader will scan the code and decode the message. The reader “is compatible with over 50 mobile phones including major brands such as Apple, Blackberry, Motorola, Nokia, Palm, Samsung, and SonyEricsson.”<sup>5</sup>

**NeoReader** is considered to be one of the best universal readers due to the wide range of phones that are supported. NeoReader must be downloaded from your mobile phone's browser using the URL for the service. After downloading the reader, it will automatically detect the manufacturer of your mobile phone. "The NeoReader QR-Code software is compatible with a number of popular handsets including Apple, Blackberry, Motorola, Nokia, Samsung and Sony Ericsson."<sup>6</sup>


**Quickmark** requires registration before downloading the software. Many people believe this is the best and easiest code reader available. After opening the reader, point your camera at the barcode and QuickMark will automatically scan the code. When the scan is successful, QuickMark will decode the information and allow you to generate barcodes, post the data to social networks, view the information in plain text and transfer

the data from one cell phone to another. QuickMark is compatible with Apple, AT&T, LG, Motorola, Nokia, Panasonic, Samsung, Sony Ericsson, Sprint and T-Mobile.

The **i-nigma** reader can be downloaded directly to your phone and supports over 250 types of phones. After downloading the reader, it will automatically detect the manufacturer of your mobile phone. "i-nigma is an easy-to-use application. "Start the app, click "Scan code" and the reader scans the barcode. The sound of a bell alerts you that the scan was successful."<sup>7</sup> The app will provide you with the option to go online and view the decoded message. i-nigma is compatible with LG, Motorola, Nokia, Palm, Samsung, Sony Ericsson, T-Mobile, Cingular, Sprint, Verizon, etc.

If you have a BlackBerry, you may already have **BlackBerry Messenger** which is a built-in QR code reader. If this is not currently on your BlackBerry, you

can download it for free from BlackBerry App World. The QR reader can be accessed by opening BlackBerry Messenger and choosing "Scan a Group Barcode." Place the barcode in the middle of your camera screen and hold it steady until the software registers a successful scan. You will then be asked if you want to open the results.

Once you've downloaded a QR code scanner, try scanning the code in this article to see the message I created. 

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- 1 <http://techcrunch.com/2010/12/08/sparqcode-makes-it-a-snap-for-local-businesses-to-use-qr-codes>
- 2 <http://mashable.com/2011/03/04/qr-codes-infographic>
- 3 <http://blog.redclayinteractive.com/how-to-track-qr-codes-in-google-analytics>
- 4 [www.ibtimes.com/articles/129307/20110331/google-qr-codes-nfc-google-places.htm](http://www.ibtimes.com/articles/129307/20110331/google-qr-codes-nfc-google-places.htm)
- 5 [www.mobile-barcodes.com/qr-code-software](http://www.mobile-barcodes.com/qr-code-software)
- 6 id
- 7 [www.cellphone-barcode.com/qr-code-readers/index.html](http://www.cellphone-barcode.com/qr-code-readers/index.html)

## QR Code Generators:

### Jumpscan

[www.jumpscan.com](http://www.jumpscan.com)

*Jumpscan requires a free registration before a code can be generated.*

*Generates codes for URL's, text, phone numbers and SMS.*

### Kaywa QR-Code generator

<http://qrcode.kaywa.com>

*Generates codes for URL's, text, phone numbers and SMS.*

### Moongate

[www.moongate.ro/en/products/qr\\_code-vcard/](http://www.moongate.ro/en/products/qr_code-vcard/)

*Online generator for vcard files, QR Code and Data Matrix images.*

### Sparqcode Generator

[www.sparqcode.com/static/maestro](http://www.sparqcode.com/static/maestro)

*Generates codes for maps, phone numbers, SMS, text, URL's, vcard files and apps.*

## Readers

**Bee Tagg** <http://get.beetagg.com>

**NeoReader** [www.neoreader.com](http://www.neoreader.com)

**i-nigma** [www.i-nigma.mobi](http://www.i-nigma.mobi)

**QuickMark** [www.quickmark.com](http://www.quickmark.com)

**Blackberry App World** <http://us.blackberry.com/apps-software/appworld>

## URL Shorteners

**Bit.ly** <http://bit.ly>

**Google URL** <http://goo.gl>

**Tiny URL** <http://tinyurl.com>