

## Get Started with QR Codes

Stephanie Obodda - 2021-09-07 - Comments (0) - Web Literacy

I'm sure you've seen one of these funky-looking squares. It's called a "QR code" and can encode information such as a web address, email address, or a digital business card.



### How to Read a QR Code

You can read a QR code with your smartphone using an app. Here are two we like:

- [QR Code Reader for iOS](#)
- [Google Goggles for Android](#) (this also identifies famous artwork and translates signs!)

Both of these work simply by opening the app and holding your phone in front of the QR code. Install one and try our code above!

### How to Create a QR Code

Many websites allow you to create a QR code for free, such as

<https://www.the-qrcode-generator.com>

Some best practices:

- Think about whether a QR code is appropriate for what you are trying to do. Many times people use them because they seem nifty, but they just end up confusing people. QR codes were trendy in the early 2010s, however now meaningful shortURLs are en vogue.
- In most cases, there is no need to include a QR code on a website, since you are already on the web. An exception would be encouraging your site's visitors to download a mobile app because they might be able to scan their computer screen with their phone. If you include a QR code on a website, always include a regular link, too.
- Don't assume that everyone knows what a QR code is. Many people do not!
- You should always have the information/URL that the QR code goes to under/near the QR code for those without QR readers.

- The longer your link, the more complex your code. If you're linking to a Brown website, you might want to use the "go" URL shortener: [Create a Go Link \(shortened Brown URL\)](#)
- QR codes should be printed at an [ideal size to be easy to use](#).
- If you're interested in tracking the use of a QR code to a Brown website, or want to do something complex with QR codes or just want to talk with someone about them, contact [WebServices@brown.edu](mailto:WebServices@brown.edu) to assist you.

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