Bringing QR Codes Back

Saskatchewan School Library Association

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When I attended the ISTE conference this past year in Philadelphia one of the sessions I attended was one on QR codes titled _What Are You QR-ious About_? I wanted a bit of a refresher on QR codes and hoped to pick up a few new ways I could use them more effectively in the fall and it is an easy tool for staff and the community to use. Well it turns out I had much more than a refresher as I learned quite a bit from this session facilitated by Russ and Melissa Brown a husband and wife team. Below is my summary of their session with a link or qr code to their slides.

https://sites.google.com/site/iste2015brown/home/what-are-you-qr-ious-about

What are QR codes?

A QR code (quick response code) is a type of 2D bar code that is used to provide easy access to information through a smartphone. Once scanned the QR code will give you the information associated with them – they can take you to a website, open up the note, or import the contact information. And this is where I began to learn.

There are three types of QR codes. The first I was familiar with the other two I was not.

- static

- This type of QR code is the one I was familiar with and when you scan the QR code it takes you to a URL or text. The actual destination website URL is placed directly into the QR code and can't be modified.

- dynamic
  - This is where a QR code can be repurposed. For example you have a QR code set-up and in the morning it directs you to one URL and then you can change it to reroute to a different URL in the afternoon. This would be handy to those who teach a variety of grades or classes.

- rotating
  - This gives you one code but every time someone scans it with the **same** device it loops thru a series of urls

Things to Note about QR codes

When you use a qr code it takes the url address and converts it into the 3D image that your device can scan. The more detailed the url the denser the qr code becomes. For example the url link for this Google doc is:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1r_lebbEMQHEkjDGBOsznA8J0bnbQ0ROlcLMlszKDDX8/edit

When converted into a qr code it looks like this:

Often with long links, individuals will use link shorteners such as bit.ly.com or tiny.url. When I take the same url for this document and place it into a link shortener and create the qr code it now looks like this:

When you compare the two qr codes you can see the difference in the density of the codes and the one using the shortener url link will be easier to scan BUT if your division filters shortener links you may not be able to see the url.

In order to utilize dynamic and static types of QR codes you do need a server. There are many servers that will allow you to have this type of qr code for free such as qrstuff and zxing.appspot.com/generator.

A management tip to remember when using a dynamic qr code is to ensure that the qr code has completed the entire rotation if devices are being used by multiple students or classes.

How can I use QR codes in my library/classroom?

Now that you know the different types of qr codes you can now decide which qr code type to use and begin sharing with students, teachers and your community

Static

- contact information for you (email, Twitter account, blogs etc.)
- link to calendar events
- link to webpage, review

- link to specific answer one side there is a question and qr -code provides the answer (multiplication tables, unit review etc)
- links to videos or websites reviews for books
- links for directions
- playground safety videos
- QRvoice.net - translate into different languages

Dynamic

- one code could be used to change for different classes
- one code could be used for promoting special events in and around the school
- latest newsletters that can be scanned by parents or students
- make hallway displays interactive with audio clips of students
- view film of demos and then proceed to activities

Rotating

- scaffolding assignments/directions
- center or small group instruction or assignments
- providing information and then a poll/survey

These are just the tip of the iceberg of ways that you can use a very simple tool to add to your classroom or library. If you wish to learn more about how to use qr codes here are a few additional resources.

[Edutopia Twelve Ideas for Teaching with QR Codes](#)

[QR Codes in Education](#)

[Kathy Schrock's Guide to QR Codes in the Classroom](#)