Using QR codes in Museums and Galleries

Museums & Galleries of NSW

Since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of QR codes to check into businesses, venues and events (to assist in contact tracing) has become a simple process for most people.

QR codes can be used for multiple purposes such as directing a user to a web page or an application. In principle, they can also be used as an extension of a label in a museum or gallery, pointing a visitor to a web page for extended information about a physical object, a guest book or other digital content.

Historically, one of the biggest failings of QR code usage in museums was the need to download an app just to read the codes. However, most Android and iPhones now have ability to scan QR codes builtin as a feature of the phone. If your phone does not have a QR Code reader, there are a vast number of options available in app stores.

What is a QR code?

A QR code is an abbreviated term for Quick Response code. QR codes are a two-dimensional version of a barcode, with the ability to convey a wide variety of information almost instantly with the scan of a mobile device, such as a phone or tablet.

A barcode is a machine-readable optical label that contains information about the item to which it is attached. In practice, QR codes often contain data for a locator, identifier, or tracker that points to a website or application.

A QR code can be generated using an online QR code generator and can be scanned in both vertical and horizontal dimensions.

What can you use a QR code for in your Museum or Gallery?

- URLs – addresses of websites or specific web pages, for instance a web page with additional information about a collection object.
- Display an image
- Guest book or feedback collection
- Direct visitors to a signup page for your newsletter

- Surveys
- Dial a telephone number
- View a business location
- Send an email
- Link to an audio guide
- Link to an online booking site for events
- Direct visitors to social media pages
- Links to apps – found in app stores such as Google Play or Apple's App Store

Example QR Code that links through to M&G NSW website

Static QR codes vs Dynamic QR codes

A **static QR Code** once generated, cannot be changed or overwritten. It contains information that cannot be edited. Static QR Codes are used when the linked information will never need to be changed or updated.

A **dynamic QR Code** is editable, for example you can change the entire URL or content at any time. For example, you can avoid broken links when the destination link has been changed. Dynamic QR Codes mean that you no longer need to re-generate and reprint the QR Code.

Generate a QR code

There are a multitude of services that will generate a QR Code, we suggest that you do a search and find a service that suits your needs. We have collated a few to get you started.

QR Code Generator by TEC-IT

https://qrcode.tec-it.com/en

QR Code Chimp

https://www.qrcodechimp.com/

QR Code Generator

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

QR Code Monkey

https://www.qrcode-monkey.com/

QR code in use. Photo by David Dvořáček on Unsplash.

QR code in use. Photo by Albert Hu on Unsplash