



Research Paper

Empowering Readers: How Libraries Can Utilize QR Codes

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Abstract:

This chapter focuses on the application of QR codes, particularly within libraries. QR code stands for Quick Response code. This technology is similar to barcode technology; however, a key distinction lies in their functionality. While barcode technology processes information solely in a horizontal manner, QR code technology can manage data in both horizontal and vertical orientations. QR codes serve as an effective means of conveying messages to end users. Libraries primarily utilize QR codes to promote their services. In recent times, many libraries have adopted QR code technology to facilitate quick access to their resources.

Keywords: Library, QR code, Basic navigation, Technology, Quick access, Smart phone, Technology tools

I. Introduction:

Mobile devices have become integral to our daily lives, serving as powerful tools for communication and information access. A study conducted between December 15, 2013, and January 15, 2014, involving 470 volunteer smartphone and tablet users, revealed that 85 percent of participants consider their mobile devices essential to their everyday activities (Salesforce 2014). While primarily used for voice communication, these devices also provide a wide array of services. Today, consumers can choose from a vast selection of mobile phones equipped with various features at affordable prices, including cameras and support for Android or Windows operating systems. The rise of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has transformed the traditional library model. Libraries are now acquiring electronic journals, magazines, CDs, and DVDs, and are offering online services, reference assistance, and RFID-based circulation systems. Recently, European countries have begun implementing QR codes within their library systems. QR codes are two-dimensional barcodes that, when scanned by a smartphone camera, direct users to a webpage or display multimedia content such as images, videos, or text (Kumar, Chikkamanju, and Mamtha 2014).

II. Review of Literature:

The utilization of QR codes is on the rise, particularly for marketing initiatives. The information encoded within these codes can be easily accessed using mobile devices (Sahu and Gonnade 2013). QR codes are commonly integrated into various print media (Kumar, Chikkamanju and Nayak 2014). These two-dimensional codes, known as Quick Response codes, have the potential to significantly enhance library services by facilitating instruction delivery, promoting services, and connecting patrons and financial supporters with information about library resources. According to Naik et al. (2015), QR codes provide a more convenient method for accessing information, thanks to the built-in QR scanners available on smartphones, eliminating the need for users to remember complex web addresses.

1. Ways to use QR codes in libraries

- a. Clarifying the purpose of QR codes
- b. Assisting library patrons in locating resources
- c. Enhancing engagement through interactive experiences
- d. Collecting feedback and suggestions
- e. Booking rooms for specialized use
- f. Initiatives for community engagement

It is likely that your library continues to utilize the Dewey Decimal System for organizing its collection. While this system is effective for categorization, it may not always provide clarity for visitors regarding the library's layout. To enhance the experience for library patrons, many institutions are transitioning to the Book Industry Standards and Communications (BISAC) system or similar alternatives. These newer systems tend to resonate more with users, as they create a browsing experience akin to that of a bookstore. Regardless of the organizational method employed, the primary objective remains to facilitate exploration and enjoyment of books. QR codes serve as practical tools that can assist visitors in navigating the collection and discovering special features, all without necessitating a complete overhaul of the library's structure. Additionally, QR codes can aid in managing library maintenance tasks that may not be addressed by existing software systems. This article will explore how QR codes can enhance visitor navigation of library resources and simplify the work of librarians.

a. Clarifying the purpose of QR codes

Clarifying the purpose of QR codes Many individuals perceive QR codes as advanced technological marvels, yet they are not particularly intricate. QR codes resemble barcodes, but there are two significant distinctions:

- Unlike barcodes, which necessitate a specialized laser scanner, QR codes can be scanned using a smartphone.
- QR codes can contain a substantially larger amount of information compared to barcodes.

While a barcode can accommodate up to 128 characters, a QR code can store thousands. This capability allows for the sharing of detailed text and lengthy web links through a single scannable code.

b. Assisting library patrons in locating resources

QR codes provide a versatile option to address the varied requirements of library patrons. Below are several examples to encourage your implementation of QR codes.

i. Basic navigation

To enhance visitor orientation, consider using a traditional library map displayed at the entrance. This can assist individuals in familiarizing themselves with the layout. However, as they navigate through various sections, they may find themselves needing to refer back to the map multiple times. A practical solution is to install QR codes throughout the library that direct users to digital maps. By simply scanning these codes, visitors can access a portable map to guide them during their exploration.

ii. Deeper navigation

After locating the general area of interest on the map, visitors may still encounter challenges in pinpointing books on specific subtopics. For instance, someone searching for resources on French cuisine might spend considerable time sifting through numerous cookbooks before identifying the appropriate section. To streamline this process, consider placing a QR code at the beginning of each aisle that links to an alphabetical list of topics available in that aisle, complete with corresponding Dewey decimal numbers. Additionally, you could provide a code that connects to a map of the subsections within each row or even position QR codes on individual shelves.

c. Enhancing engagement through interactive experiences

Numerous libraries highlight specific books during particular times of the year. For instance, it may be beneficial to showcase works by African-American authors during Black History Month or to present historical fiction related to World War II around Memorial Day. Traditionally, this has been accomplished by prominently displaying these themed books. By incorporating QR codes, libraries can provide insights into the importance of the collection and guide visitors to additional related titles. Additionally, they can feature books that focus on local history, notable landmarks, and hometown celebrities.

d. Collecting feedback and suggestions

Creating a QR code provides an efficient way to link to an online form where individuals can express their desire for specific books to be added to your library's collection. This interactive approach encourages patrons to participate in the selection process, giving them a sense of ownership over the library's offerings. By utilizing Jotform Tables, you can systematically organize and categorize these requests, making it easier to identify trends and preferences among your library visitors. This data will help you understand which new releases are generating the most excitement and interest within your community.

In addition to acquiring new titles, a QR code can also facilitate feedback collection regarding the overall library experience. You can design a form that invites patrons to share their thoughts on various aspects of the library, including the services provided by librarians, the quality of the facilities, and any suggestions for improvements. Jotform offers a dedicated template for this purpose, streamlining the process of gathering valuable insights from visitors. By taking these steps, you create a feedback loop that helps enhance the library's services and fosters a more engaged and responsive environment for all patrons.

e. Booking rooms for specialized use

If you are currently relying on traditional pen and paper methods to manage the booking of conference rooms and study areas, consider making a transition to a more efficient system by incorporating QR codes. These codes can simplify the reservation process significantly. By simply posting QR codes in visible and accessible locations, users can scan them with their smartphones, instantly connecting to online reservation forms. This approach not only saves time but also reduces the chances of errors that can occur with handwritten notes. A useful resource for this initiative is Jotform, which provides a wide range of over one hundred ready-to-use reservation form

templates. These templates can be customized to suit the specific needs of your organization, making it easy to get started with this streamlined method of room booking and study area reservations.

f. Community outreach efforts

Many libraries implement a bookmobile program to extend their reach and provide services to a larger segment of their community. This mobile library service helps bring books and other resources directly to those who may have difficulty accessing a traditional library due to distance, mobility issues, or busy schedules. However, managing the inventory and handling book checkouts while on the move can present significant challenges, particularly in areas with limited internet access.

To address these difficulties, Jotform offers effective solutions that streamline the processes of book checkout and inventory management through the use of mobile forms. This technology allows librarians to conduct transactions without the need for pen and paper, which can be cumbersome and prone to errors. Instead, with Jotform, staff can utilize a single form for checking out books and another for keeping track of inventory. This efficient method not only simplifies operations but also enhances the overall experience for both library staff and patrons. By adopting such innovative systems, libraries can ensure they continue to serve their communities effectively, even in changing conditions.

2. How to create QR codes with Jotform

But what if you want to create a QR code that doesn't link to a form or app in Jotform? Jotform still has your back.

Creating QR codes to easily share forms is simple and straightforward with Jotform. This tool allows users to design various types of forms quickly, making it ideal for gathering feedback. To illustrate the process, here is a step-by-step guide on how to create a feedback form and generate a QR code for sharing it.

First, begin by signing in to your Jotform account. Once logged in, navigate to the My Forms page where all your existing forms are displayed. To start a new form, click on the option labeled Create Form. You will then have the choice to either select a pre-made template or to build your form from scratch, depending on your preference and needs.

After selecting how you want to create your form, you can customize it to fit your requirements. Use the Form Elements menu located on the left side of the screen to add various fields, such as text boxes, multiple-choice questions, and rating scales. At the same time, take advantage of the Form Designer menu on the right side, which allows you to adjust the look and feel of your form to ensure it is visually appealing and user-friendly.

Once you are satisfied with the content and design of your feedback form, the next step is to share it. Click on the Publish tab at the top of the page to proceed to sharing options. Within the Publish section, look for the Share Form area, where you will find an icon resembling a QR code. By clicking this icon, you can easily generate a QR code linked to your newly created form.

When the QR code appears, you have options for how to use it. You can download the QR code as an image file to print it out for physical distribution, or you can copy a link or a code snippet to share it online through various platforms such as emails, social media, or websites.

However, if you find yourself in a situation where you need to create a QR code that does not link to a Jotform form or app, rest assured that Jotform offers additional capabilities to accommodate that requirement as well. This versatility makes Jotform a valuable tool for both form creation and QR code generation, allowing for efficient information sharing in many contexts.

Sharing a QR code within a form can be an effective way to enhance communication and gather feedback. For instance, imagine setting up a survey kiosk using a tablet where visitors can easily provide their thoughts and experiences regarding their visit. This setup not only engages customers but also allows them to express their opinions in a convenient manner. To further improve this process, you could incorporate a QR code within the survey itself. This QR code can link directly to important contact information, such as a customer's service phone number, enabling visitors to share their feedback or concerns directly with a staff member in real time. By integrating this QR code feature into your survey, you create a seamless opportunity for visitors to communicate, ensuring their voices are heard and adding value to their experience. This approach not only fosters a more responsive environment but also encourages ongoing interactions between the staff and guests.

III. Some final suggestions

Plain black and white QR codes, while affordable, often lack the visual appeal that can attract and engage visitors. To enhance their aesthetic quality, it is beneficial to either hire a professional designer or utilize the creative skills within your team. By incorporating various colors and graphics, you can develop QR codes that are not only functional but also visually interesting. However, it is important to maintain a balance; overly complicated designs may hinder a smartphone's camera from successfully scanning the code, which defeats its intended purpose.

For static content that remains unchanged over time, such as maps and other similar materials, it is advisable to incorporate QR codes onto sturdy items like plaques or bookmarks. These types of items can act as lasting references within a space, providing both utility and aesthetic value. For example, when QR codes are printed on bookmarks, they can link to a curated selection of recommended books. This feature allows readers to easily access information about new literature, encouraging them to explore a wider variety of reading options.

By integrating these QR codes, the bookmarks not only serve their primary purpose of marking a reader's place but also enrich the overall reading experience. They create a seamless connection between the physical act of reading and the digital world, leading readers to additional resources and information without any hassle. This method effectively enhances the enjoyment and engagement of readers, making their literary journey more interactive and informative while maintaining a visually appealing design. In this way, the inclusion of QR codes on durable items can transform static content into a dynamic tool for exploration and discovery.

IV. Conclusion:

Libraries are currently facing significant challenges due to the rapid advancement of various technologies. In today's environment, innovations such as QR codes necessitate a transformation in how information is managed within libraries. By utilizing QR codes, users can easily access the most up-to-date and relevant information pertaining to library resources. To ensure that the user community effectively utilizes QR codes, library professionals should implement awareness initiatives and orientation programs.

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