

A Hyperlink In Print - QR Curious?

Mon, Oct 26, 2009 | Posted by [Liz Ayers](#)

I knew before I went on holiday to Japan that my husband is concerningly excited about QR codes but I was impressed to see just how much more excited he could get with every turn in the shopping malls as more and more QR codes appeared round every corner.

He is a creative/designer, mainly for print and is massively excited at the potential that QR codes can add to any advertising and marketing campaigns. Now having seen these QR codes in action, whether be on leaflets, carrier bags or billboards, I can't help myself to join in the excitement.



For those of you who don't know, QR codes (Quick Response Codes) are two dimensional barcodes which can hold more data than the usual barcode and can be read by many mainstream cameras on phones, like the iPhone, providing particular reader software is installed. Here is an example of what a QR code that links to the iCrossing website looks like.

QR codes can be used to hold a variety of information, including hyperlinks and can prompt web pages to load as a result of taking a photo of the QR code. When used in conjunction with offline marketing material these QR codes can provide quick access to online material on the same subject.

Japan is using QR codes everywhere on their print material to send traffic to their online domains, whether it is for further information or via promotions. At the Muji clothing store, they were using a QR code for discount offers, sending traffic to their online store whilst visitors are browsing their high street stores, owning both your physical and virtual self at that very same moment in time.



There is no doubt that QR codes will blur the lines between on and offline marketing material, crossing the usual boundaries of a non-synergised cross platform marketing campaign. A change which I welcome and believe is long overdue in many businesses.

The increasing widespread of QR codes on marketing materials will have an impact on future marketing campaigns. On and offline material will require closer collaboration, which is still rare in even the largest of organisations today. The points below are my thoughts on what the impacts will be.

The Benefits:

- ? It will help to track the success of offline campaigns by tracking QR code traffic online
- ? Print costs will be driven down by being able to provide further information offline and a simple route to access it
- ? Transition between print and online information is immediate, easy and seamless
- ? Further information can be accessed on the spot reducing the time for people to move on and forget about the marketing
- ? Lower dropout rate during the search for further information phase

The effect on site traffic:

- ? Brand searches will see a slight decrease as visits prompted by offline material will turn into direct site traffic
- ? Site traffic will increase
- ? Increased traffic to site from mobile devices

Areas for attention:

- ? Sites performance on mobile devices
- ? Mobile search

Here are a few ideas how key verticals could apply QR codes to their print material to increase site traffic, conversions and revenue:

- ? Insurance Companies could send people directly to a quote page
- ? Hotels Companies could send people to Google Map identifying property locations
- ? Travel Companies can send people to the Google Map locations of destination imagery
- ? Retail clients can send traffic to product pages and the point of sale
- ? Finance clients can send traffic to the current interest rate pages to provide real time quotes/information, impossible to do in print

I would recommended any company to start to use QR code on their offline marketing material and support the activity online with relevant content on site. Google has the capability of reading QR code data and would be able to use the information as part of their ranking methodology when they feel is time and worthwhile.

Expand your online marketing campaigns offline and get direct links from print material, increasing your online traffic, sales and revenue.
