



UTILIZING QR AND RFID CODES



Text AHEE to 55678



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How many people do you know who have an iPad, iPhone, laptop or smartphone with them at all times? Technology, a dynamic part of all of our lives—including those of funeral directors and memorial providers—allows us to stay in constant contact with our offices, clients and friends. This has led to the growth of what is known as Web 2.0. A Web 2.0 site allows users to interact and collaborate with one another. Examples of Web 2.0 include social networking sites, blogs, wikis and video sharing. Now we are at the beginning of another technology breakthrough and the names you will start hearing are QR codes, NFC and RFID.

QR codes are beginning to pop up in our everyday lives. QR, which stands for “quick response,” is a machine-readable matrix barcode designed to be read by smartphones. These barcodes consist of black modules arranged in a square pattern on a white background. The information encoded may be text, a URL or other data. But, how do you scan that bar code?



Step One

Go to the app store for your camera-enabled smart phone, typically Android Marketplace or the iTunes Store.

Step Two

Search for “QR” or “Scanner” and download a high-rated, free app. RedLaser and Scan are two good ones.

Step Three

Open that app and follow the instructions to scan. Try aiming your phone’s camera at the bar code in this article.

Step Four

The app should do one of two things: take you directly to a webpage or display a link for you to click.

Once you have a QR Reader installed, here are some tips on how to implement your own QR codes.

At your business: If you have a physical location, you can post signs with a QR code directing clients to your website where they can learn more about a featured product, get a special offer or sign up for your mailing list.

On Your Business Card: Your business card can only say so much about you, but a direct link to special content can help potential customers learn about your business right away.

At Your Events: With QR codes on printed materials, customers can access additional content or promotions during or after the event.

In your print ads: QR Codes provide an instant call-to-action that can tell your story beyond what can be included in a small ad and offer special rewards to those who scan it.

Real world applications of the QR code for funeral home directors and memorial dealers include the tribute scans. With tribute scan technology, memorializing loved ones goes beyond the monument. Visitors can scan a QR code on the headstone, urn or other memorial displays to be linked to an interactive, online memorial. A loved one’s details, photos and life story can be archived and accessible forever to future generations.

QR codes are also great for point-of-contact reference. This allows the user to have instant access to information such as manuals, instructional videos, standard operating procedures, work orders and so much more. QR codes are able to store information which could add to a visitor’s smartphone calendar items such as appointments, dates and times of memorial services and locations or directions to a funeral home, cemetery or memorial. The possibilities are endless.

Unlike traditional UPC barcodes and QR codes—which are read-only technologies, meaning that they cannot send out any information—radio-frequency identification

technology can send out any information—radio-frequency identification

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(RFID) tags are an improvement over barcodes because they are able to both send and receive information. Data stored on RFID tags can be changed, updated and locked. RFID technology uses radio waves to transfer data from an electronic tag attached to an object to a reader in order to identify and track the object. RFID tags can be passive, active or battery-assisted passive (BAP). A passive RFID tag does not use a battery, while an active RFID tag has an on-board battery that continuously broadcasts its signal. A battery-assisted passive RFID tag has a small battery that is activated when in the presence of a RFID reader. At a

basic level, each tag works in the same way. Data is stored within an RFID tag's microchip. Then the tag's antenna receives electromagnetic energy from an RFID reader's antenna. Using power from its internal battery or power harvested from the reader, the tag sends radio waves back. The reader picks up the tag's radio waves and interprets the frequencies as meaningful data.

The retail market is embracing a major implementation of RFID technology through payment systems that use Near Field Communication (NFC). It is estimated that by 2013 sales of NFC equipped phones will exceed \$75 billion. NFC technology is promising because it presents the next evolution of convenient payment with an added layer of security. Some credit cards have NFC chips embedded in them and can be tapped against NFC payment terminals instead of swiped, which eliminates the possibility that someone could steal your personal information via the magnetic strip. This same system works with mobile phones, too. Near Field Communication devices can read passive RFID tags and extract the information stored in them.

RFID tags are more prominent in your life than you may realize. Walmart and Best Buy are just two major retailers that use RFID tags for stocking and marketing purposes. Automated systems called intelligent software agents manage all the data coming in and going out from RFID tags and will carry out a specific course of action like sorting items.

RFID tags have been added to automatic toll-paying devices (with names like I-PASS, FasTrak and E-ZPass) that sit on dashboards and signal tollgates as cars drive through. Because of their ability to store data so efficiently, RFID tags can tabulate the cost of tolls and fares and deduct the cost electronically from the money the user places on the card. Rather than waiting to pay a toll at a tollbooth or tossing coins at a token counter, drivers use RFID chip-embedded passes like debit cards.

Exhibitors at the 2011 National Funeral Directors Association show in Chicago will also have the opportunity to use RFID technology in their booths. Antenna and barcode scanners are available for automated booth monitoring and reporting to enhance business lead. An attendee's ID

tag signals a receiver with a date and time stamp when the attendee simply walks into your booth or within one foot of it.

Other possibilities in the funeral service industry include placing a RFID bracelet on a deceased individual to verify that the correct procedures were performed and that the remains are routed to the correct location.

These technologies will be adapted by many industries, including the funeral industry. Why? Because our clients want it. It makes tracking and reporting quicker and more reliable. It provides instant access to information as it is needed. Just like when you purchase a new vehicle and notice more of that same vehicle on the road, do not be surprised if you start to notice the acronyms QR, RFID and NFC in shopping variety of industries and applications. **FBA**

Bryan Ahee is the IT Director for Fusion Tech Integrated Inc., Stainless Reflections and Snaptivation.com. TributeScan is a service that has been developed in collaboration with Stainless Reflections, a company that designs and creates a range of memorial products from Stainless Steel and is powered by Snaptivation technology. You may contact him at 309.774.4275, by email at bryan@snaptivation.com or by visiting www.snaptivation.com.

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