**New Bar Codes and What do they do**

February 8th, 2011 by Michael Giuffrida

Recently FRAM Filters asked ForeSite to produce a website that would create awareness among consumers and educate them about how easy their products are to install. To make the education even more immediate, ForeSite suggested a Smartphone friendly website that would allow consumers to access product information and installation videos while standing at the product display in the retail store. The method for consumers to get this information will be a QR (Quick Response) Code added to the packaging of each filter on the shelf, as well as on a shelf-talker or other promotional collateral.

A QR Code is a mobile phone readable barcode that’s now gaining traction in consumer product marketing across the globe (see examples below). Manufacturers simply encode a URL into the QR Code and then consumers can point a Smartphone at the product. If the device has had QR Code decoding software installed on it, it will launch its browser and go straight to that URL. Codes can even track when and, approximately, where in the world your product was scanned. The technical specifications for a QR Code are standard so they are the same all over the world, and it doesn’t matter whether the QR code is upside down or wrapped around a curved surface, the message will still get through. And because QR Codes contain 30% redundancy in the design, designers can embed small logos or designs within the pixels.

**Go ahead, scan these images and see what happens…**

There are many uses for these codes, undoubtedly you have seen them in circulars in your Sunday newspaper, on in-store displays, on magazine advertising and business cards. But soon you may see them in some very interesting places doing some very interesting things. For example – tickets to movies, sporting events, and airlines, or real estate signs, web based parking control, and even temporary tattoos as proof of admission to an event or nightclub. Or, how about this novel idea, print your QR Code with personal contact information on a t-shirt and wear it to a bar one night to help you find a date.

Google has recently launched a new program called “[Favorite Places on Google](http://google.com/favoriteplaces)” in which they will send window decals to over 100,000 local businesses in the U.S. that have been the most sought out and researched on Google.com and Google Maps. Each window decal has a unique QR code to take you directly to that business’s website on your mobile phone. With your mobile phone and these new decals, you can easily go up to a storefront and immediately find reviews, get a coupon if the business is offering one or star a business as a place you want to remember for the future. Soon, you’ll be able to leave a review on the mobile page as well.

For your phone to be able to read QR Codes you will need to have QR Code barcode reading software installed on it. The following sites offer the option of downloading via PC and then transferring to your phone, or visiting with your with your Smartphone via browser for direct download and installation. Some also have the option of setting the application up on your phone as a device bookmark.

* [Optiscan](http://click.linksynergy.com/fs-bin/stat?id=zkFoRaEN7XM&offerid=146261&type=3&subid=0&tmpid=1826&RD_PARM1=http%253A%252F%252Fitunes.apple.com%252Fus%252Fapp%252Foptiscan-qr-code-scanner-generator%252Fid304099767%253Fmt%253D8%2526uo%253D6%2526partnerId%253D30) – The best QR Code scanner for iPhones.
* [I-Nigma](http://www.i-nigma.com/personal/GetReader.asp) – Probably the most popular decoder/reader application and works on most of the popular Smartphones.
* [Quickmark](http://www.quickmark.com.tw/En/basic/download.asp) – For most phones, but most noticeably has an Android version and a Windows Mobile version.
* [Barcode Scanner](http://code.google.com/p/zxing/wiki/GetTheReader) – Another good Android QR code reader. Available in the Android Market in the Applications/Shopping category.
* [Google Zxing](http://code.google.com/p/zxing/wiki/GetTheReader) – For the Android and iPhone plus quite a few others, but not Windows Mobile.
* [Blackberry Messenger](http://na.blackberry.com/eng/services/blackberrymessenger/) – Comes standard with most BlackBerrys these days.