

QR as.... phones?

Nigel Barnett

What connects an advertising campaign by *Northwest Airlines* in Tokyo with a *BBC* documentary called '*Coast*' on popular seaside walks in Britain? The answer is a mobile phone, or more precisely a particular type of bar code that can be photographed and decoded by a camera phone to obtain extra information. Called QR code (for **quick response**), it is composed in the form of a matrix and was developed by Denso-Wave, a Japanese company, to enable the rapid decoding of text or simple images. QR codes are an ideal way of avoiding the tedious task of keying in information like that found on business cards into mobile phones. The example on the right contains the full OSTIC name for example.



In Tokyo giant QR codes up 10 meters in size were put up by Northwest Airlines on billboards and in underground stations to promote the (somewhat ailing) carrier. Snap happy Japanese were able to photograph the code and thereby gain access to games where flight coupons could be won. In a far more discrete manner the BBCs QR codes were placed on plaques beside the seaside walks which, once photographed, permitted the downloading of a two minute recording to the phone that contained descriptions of places of interest and landmarks in the surrounding countryside.

QR is common in Japan but it may well not make it to Europe because already a next generation system has been launched in South Korea. Called *ColorCode* from the *ColorZip* Company, it takes the process one step further, offering greater possibilities with the addition of colour. This time the information is not directly incorporated in the QR code but gives access to information stored on a remote server, which means that the square is now free to display recognizable information like letters and symbols. By integrating ColorCode into a trademark or logo companies will enable camera phone users to gain access directly to a website offer or promotion. As Newsweek magazine says, it is an advertisers dream comes true, watch this square!¹

[WWW . OSTIC . INFO](http://www.ostic.info)

Télécommunications ~ Électronique ~ Informatique ~ Médias ~ Internet ~ Applications
Ce document est sous licence creative commons

**OSTIC
2005**



¹ See the Newsweek article <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/10756956/site/newsweek/>