

## Surprising Familiarity with QR Codes

APRIL 4, 2011

### Two-thirds have seen a mobile barcode

QR, or quick response, codes, are being adopted by many marketers as a way to entice people into using their mobile phone to get more information about products and services or otherwise interact more deeply with advertising. Outdoor ads invite consumers waiting for the bus to scan a poster to reach a relevant website, catalogs integrate QR codes to hook directly into ecommerce sites and stores place codes next to products that direct shoppers to how-to videos online. But how much have consumers caught on to what mobile barcodes can do?

According to February 2011 research from agency MGH, awareness is high among smartphone owners. Nearly two-thirds have seen a QR code, and about half that number, or one-third overall, had used one.

The demographic breakdown of users who had seen vs. used a QR code was virtually identical. Smartphone users were almost evenly split by gender, and while users under age 55 were relatively few, the field was not dominated by 18- to 34-year-olds. Users who had seen or used QR codes tended to be more affluent and educated.

#### Demographic Profile of US Smartphone Users Who Have Used a QR Code, Feb 2011

% of respondents

<b>Gender</b>	
Male	51%
Female	49%
<b>Age</b>	
18-34	39%
35-54	48%
55+	13%
<b>Household income</b>	
<\$25K	6%
\$25K-\$50K	23%
\$50K+	71%
<b>Education level</b>	
High school or less	11%
College/associate	26%
University+	63%

Note: ages 18+; among respondents who had seen a QR code

Source: MGH survey conducted by Vision Critical, March 22, 2011

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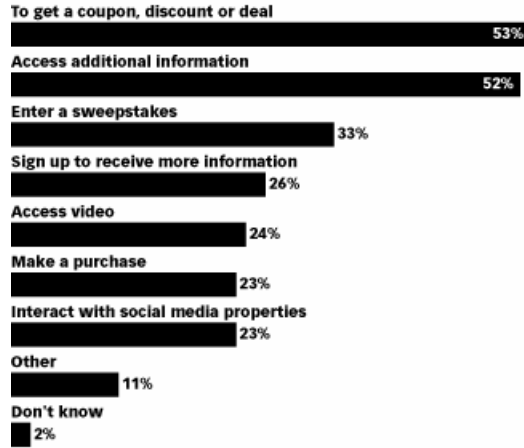
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Most respondents reported seeing QR codes on a product, followed by in a magazine or on a coupon. And they were typically used to get coupons or discounts, or to access information.

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**Actions for Which US Smartphone Users Have Used QR Codes, Feb 2011**

*% of respondents*



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*Note: ages 18+; among respondents who have used a QR code*  
*Source: MGH survey conducted by Vision Critical, March 22, 2011*

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Using a QR code once or twice to try it out, however, does not necessarily translate into regular use. MGH found that 70% of all respondents said they would be interested in scanning a QR code either again or for the first time, but the survey did not ask about how often they typically do so.

The [InsightExpress](#) "Digital Consumer Portrait" found that just a quarter of smartphone owners said they scanned QR codes always or almost always. And while the codes are newer and hipper than text messaging, SMS was the preferred way to receive mobile coupons, at 25% vs. 10%.

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