



Bringing Mobile Technology to Life

You've probably already seen a QR code - an example appears above with its square boxes. They're not actually new, and have been in use in manufacturing since 1994. However, it's only in the last two years that most of the public has seen them regularly, in magazines and on posters and on TV. QR codes are now also starting to appear at UK heritage sites, together with newer NFC tags and Augmented Reality.



In the UK, 94% of people own a mobile phone and over 50% have a more sophisticated smartphone or device, such as an iPhone, Android or Windows phone, iPad or tablet. Smartphones usually have a small built-in camera, enable you to browse the internet when you're out and about, and they allow you to download applications or 'Apps'.

### What are QR codes and how do they work?

A QR code is a 2D barcode. When scanned, QR codes link to plain text, web pages, pictures, audio, videos, map locations, interactive games or anything you can access over the web.

### Using QR codes in heritage and conservation

What has been recognised in the heritage sector is that there's great potential in the use of these QR codes to help people of all ages visiting UK heritage sites. An innovative research project on the use of QR codes has been completed as part of a Building Conservation MSc project at the Weald and Downland Museum. This research has established in detail exactly how QR codes can help provide interesting visitor information.

A QR code trial was run in the South Downs National Park, with the aim being to see how QR codes can enable visitors to gain better appreciation of our unique buildings, conservation and heritage, and to help people of all ages to understand our history and culture better. [See the QR research results here.](#)



### Scanning QR codes at the trial visitor sites



To scan most types of QR code you'll need just three things:

1. A phone or device with a camera you can point at the QR code
2. A small 'app' installed on your device to read the QR code
3. Access to the internet to go to the web page the code links to

If you haven't already got a QR code scanner app, then you can download one for free from mobile websites [www.i-nigma.mobi](http://www.i-nigma.mobi) or [www.qrstuff.com](http://www.qrstuff.com) which cater for almost all smartphones and device types.



Spot a Quick Response Code    Scan the code with a QR reader    Click the web link from the code

On your phone or device just select your QR code scanning app, which should start up and link with the built-in camera on your device. You'll usually see a square box in which you need to focus the QR code in front of you. As you get closer to the code, the QR reader should pick the code up.

Scanning a QR code takes you directly to a web page, or your device will ask you if you want to connect to the internet to go to the page. Scanning a legible QR code should usually take no more than 5 to 10 seconds.

If you haven't time to read a web page from a QR code link you can save it and read it later at your leisure.

## What are the advantages of QR codes in heritage and conservation?

Compared to features like visitor site interpretation boards QR codes are cheap to create and easy to site, for example on existing posts and way-markers, and can be easily stored and replaced if they get damaged.

Use your mobile - please scan the QR code to find out more



IT's in Conservation For more information on this Quick Response (QR) Code trial on the South Downs visit: [www.itsinconservation.co.uk](http://www.itsinconservation.co.uk)

The majority of interesting UK heritage sites, such as castle ruins or the South Downs National Park, can't always offer a visitor centre or access to a site expert throughout your visit. So, when you want more information about something you've discovered on your visit, you can use your mobile to scan a nearby QR code quickly and easily, to obtain more details about a particular point of interest.

In fact, used cleverly, QR codes can act as your personal tour guide, providing background details at key points all around a visitor site, in a quick self-service way. These codes can be produced to almost any size, so they're easy to spot, but their small size avoids any negative impact on your visual enjoyment of a heritage location. The mobile website pages each code links to can also be changed or updated with each season, or improved over time so they won't go out of date.

## Helping with our mobile interpretation research

Many ideas about how best to use QR codes are still new. We'd like you to help us with our research, to develop and improve mobile interpretation effectiveness, so it can be used at more UK heritage sites.

From October a second trial is starting at the South Downs National Park featuring QR codes and NFC Tags.



Each site will have links to download the QR reader, if you don't have it already, plus an opportunity to take part in our 5 minute QR code research questionnaire to share your QR experiences.

Thanks in advance for helping us understand about your experiences of using QR codes at heritage sites.

If you'd like to know more go to [www.itsinconservation.co.uk](http://www.itsinconservation.co.uk) and visit the 'QR NFC and AR' website page.

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See more about QR codes and how they work at the video on our YouTube channel: <http://bit.ly/QRITIC>