Humanitarian Leadership Academy

The potential of QR stickers to provide just in time learning

Digital Learning Lab Case Study

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Digital Learning Lab Case Study #QR01

As part of a new series in 2024, our Digital Learning Lab will be regularly publishing case studies of how new technology and approaches are helping to transform the humanitarian and development sectors. Our easy to read guides will show you how you can start to solve real-world problems.

The Problem/Learning need

Aid and supplies often arrive without accompanying training content. When training materials are available, they are usually separate physical assets like manuals, which may not be accessible at the point of need. This can cause misunderstandings and inconsistencies in application of training content.

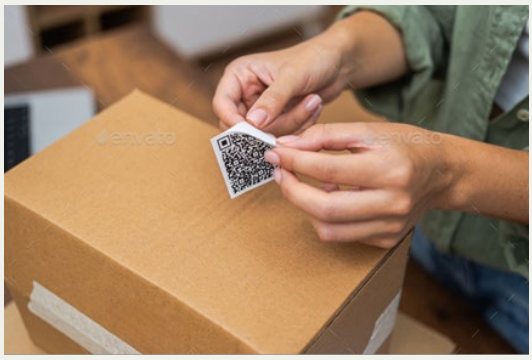
What is a QR code?

Quick Response (QR) codes, are two-dimensional barcodes that can store a variety of data types including text, URLs, and other information. QR codes have since become widely used for various applications due to their quick readability and large storage capacity. They are created using a variety of online tools and software applications by entering the desired location (like a website). In this case study we used Adobe Express QR Code generator. Activation is simple by scanning them using modern smartphones. Most have in-built QR code readers or can be opened via the camera app.

How can QR be the solution?

QR codes linking to an online resource can be generated and mass printed as stickers. These can then be attached to the supplied item and triggered by anyone with a smartphone. In this fictional example, multiple personal hygiene kits delivered to Nepal are labelled with QR codes linking to a series of training videos on Vimeo and a document on WASH Guidelines.

The relative ease of production and logistics could augment access to relevant training content localised by language, response type and other contextual factors like needs based on gender, disability, or age.



Alternatively the same solution could be used to link to an online survey, changing the content-push to a content-pull relationship. This would have application when there is a need to collect feedback to assess the quality of a product or training intervention.

What did we do?

To test basic QR code functionality we used Adobe Express to create a link to the Paediatric Blast Injury Field Manual [PBIFM online page-per-age card]. Scanning this QR code brought up a carousel view with the short microlearning element displayed.

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How did we test it?

We shared the QR code with subject matter experts (SMEs) who contributed to the PBIF manual and colleagues within the HLA. They accessed content using various Android and Apple devices and provided feedback.

What went well?

The QR code link was quick to produce and scanned successfully. As a solution to signpost to content, this could be an easy solution in many different scenarios. Their flexibility make them quick to print, affix and disseminate to any tangible object (mannequin, medical device, manual, emergency supplies etc.).

What could be improved/next steps?

Adding explanatory information to the QR code itself, such as "SCAN ME for information use using this item," and including language labels in multilingual settings could enhance usability. The technology still relies on the recipient's mobile signal strength, making data-heavy options like videos less feasible. Next steps include

partnering with printers and developing a process to ensure correct QR code application in the supply chain.

Key contact

This case study was published in June 2024 by the Humanitarian Leadership Academy's Digital Learning Lab. For more information please email digitallearning@savethechildren.org.uk.

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Related case study code: *#AR01, #APP01*