

QR Codes: Quite Rubbish? !

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SKOPOS European Study Finds that QR codes ONLY work if they are understood, are simple/reliable to use and have a positive outcome!

QR codes (or mobile barcodes) are everywhere now helping you easily and quickly retrieve information on the go via your mobile, even advertising religion on the back of buses!!

Source: http://heavrinbrown.files.wordpress.com/2011/09/qr_code_back_of_bus_halfsize.jpg

SKOPOS looked into this some more via their study amongst Digitally Actives in the UK and Germany in March/April 2012!

In our study of "Digital Actives" (active users of web and mobile channels), Germans Have Tried QR Codes More than Brits. Yes, 24% of the German online population say they have ever used or tried a QR code, yet only 12% of UK digital actives say the same (in both countries higher amongst males than females and the young v older folk). This finding is supported by national statistics from 3G Vision placing Germany at number 2 in the World for QR Code usage, just behind the USA ! Source: <http://3gvision.com/pr29.html>

Darren Mark Noyce, MD & Chief Consultant at SKOPOS Market Insight, explains:
"From our extensive research and experience in both markets, we have established that Germans appreciate QR Codes more than the Brits because for starters, German-based brands heavily invested in and adopted QR Codes during 2010-2011 driving trial and usage through 2011 into 2012. This has also led to some "critical mass" with those not using mobile barcodes feeling that maybe they should be, or perhaps being recommended to by friends. Additionally, and as important, Germans are culturally MUCH more into mobile as a channel and tech per se. This contrasts say to the UK's love of Social Media; Brits are more open and Germans relatively more closed, and less into "sharing".

Users state that above all it eliminates the complicated input of a web address. They are most commonly sourced from Print Media (newspapers 26%, magazines 41%), but also from outdoor advertising, TV ads, the internet, etc. However, QR codes may only be a digital fringe phenomenon: Much of QR codes usage is only occasional, with only 4% in Germany being regular users.

We have recorded two key reasons for non-use and infrequent use/take-up across both markets!

1/. Disappointing and Poor Experiences!

It is quite clear that QR Codes often disappoint, with almost three-quarters (72%) of users in the UK not agreeing it was a good experience! Indeed, 1 in 4, 24% referred to it as a poor experience. The back of a bus is perhaps the start of such a poor experience!

2/. And Moreover, Many Have Simply Just Not Heard of Them!

One key reason for Non-Use is lack of awareness (over 50% overall claimed this in the UK) even with a clear explanation of the codes. Indeed, Non-Users of QR Codes (who are still actively online and have mobiles) also predominantly showed a lack of knowledge or understanding!

Phone has no capability - 39%,
Don't know how to - 30%.

In Conclusion!

In our view then, QR codes need further education, demonstration and promotion to take off; and a QR code should always be accompanied by a "performance-bond" (outcome guarantee) as concrete as possible. "What will happen and what will I get if I scan this code?" QR codes are most likely to be used when consumers know exactly what information they will receive, such as in timetables, nutritional information and recipes for food that downloads or specific product information.

Darren Mark Noyce, SKOPOS Managing Director (UK) says:

"Scanning a mobile QR code should be a shortcut to valued content or offers, not scary, nor an effort, nor a disappointment. Our study shows that even in 2012 many are unsure, and many still experience significant efforts in return for a Quite Rubbish QR code experience."

WIKIPEDIA: QR Code (abbreviated from Quick Response Code) is the trademark for a type of matrix barcode (or two-dimensional code) first designed for the automotive industry. More recently, the system has become popular outside the industry due to its fast readability and large storage capacity compared to standard UPC barcodes. The code consists of black modules (square dots) arranged in a square pattern on a white background. The information encoded can be made up of four standardized kinds ("modes") of data (numeric, alphanumeric, byte/binary, Kanji), or through supported extensions, virtually any kind of data.

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