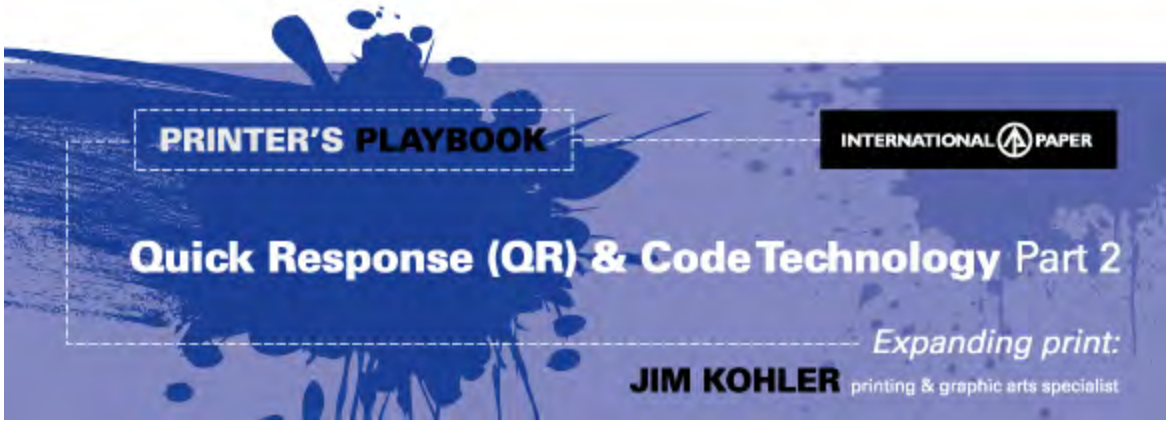


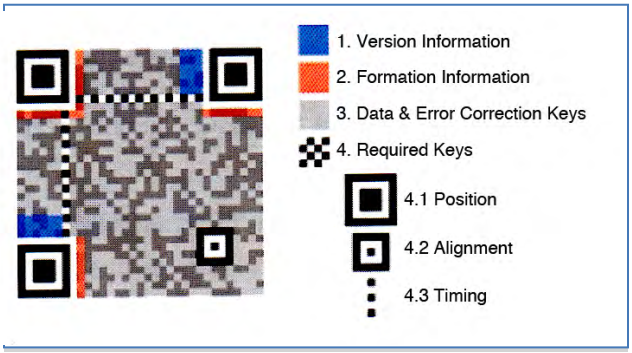
QR and Code Technology – Part 2

QR code and other code technologies offer printers a way now to ***expand*** print. While print does a fantastic job of communicating about a product, item, etc., it does have a limit in todays fast moving technology. By adding QR Codes to printed pieces the advertiser or printers client can now add value for their customer. These Codes can store contact addresses, web URLs, text, video, and much, much more. They can appear in magazines, on signs, busses, business cards, books, or any printed object where advertisers or clients might need to take you to for additional information.

QUESTION: So how does a QR code really work when you scan the code with a smart phone camera? How does the smart phone application translate the code?

ANSWER: The QR Code information such as placement, positioning, etc is built into the code. For example, the large blocks are for positioning, so if the phone is on an angle, the code can still be scanned and the information recognized. The code also contains version information, alignment, etc.

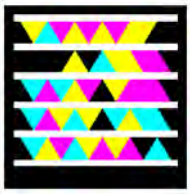
The following image shows how the code is deciphered:



Due to the high amount of error correction, you can sometimes put a small logo or text in the middle of the code. However, you must make sure to test the code out if you do.

While the code looks complicated to create, it is not the software (app or computer software) takes care of that for you.

While the QR code dominates today there is another code technology that is rivaling the QR Code and this is the Microsoft Tag. Yes, Microsoft has entered the game. As shown the Microsoft Tag is quite a bit different in appearance than the QR code; however, all things being equal, the Tag does the same things as the QR code. While similar, there are some differences – the Tag looks entirely different and the code can be highly customized.



The Image on the left is the standard Microsoft Tag whereas the image on the right is a customized Tag. There are other differences between the Tag and the QR Code. These include the following:

1. While there are many Apps or software to generate the QR Code you have to generate the Microsoft Tag from the Microsoft Tag website (doing a search on the Microsoft site will lead you to the tag site).
2. You must have or create a Microsoft Live account, which is free, to create Tags.
3. Like with QR Codes Microsoft has a smart phone App to scan and read their Tags. The App is available from the Microsoft site or from the smart phone App store for a free download.

There is yet another code technology that has come upon the scene. This is the SnapTag. Consumers use camera equipped phones to snap and send a photo of the SnapTag to a designated short code via SMS message or an email address. No App is needed to recognize the code. The SnapTag response is returned to the consumer via a text or multimedia message response. The return messages can deliver marketing materials that enable entry into promotions, the distribution of videos, mobile commerce, and the initiation of a mobile relationship. SnapTags, being a different type of technology, can contain company logos, different designs, etc. Like with Codes or Tags, SnapTags can be used on any printed material.

Now that Tablets have made it on the scene with larger screens and cameras, the code technology could even be more powerful for marketers. Just think of the possibilities that code and tag technology will offer for printers and advertisers! Google searches on the QR Code, Microsoft Tag and the SnapTag will provide you much more information.