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For good reasons, QR Codes are everywhere

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Not so long ago, I found out that in order to connect my cellphone and share information via apps like **Zapya** and **Xender**, it was actually faster if I scanned other devices' QR Codes. I learned it just yesterday, as the saying goes. However, in today's technological universe, time runs fast and one day may well mean millennia. Now, QR codes are everywhere and for good reasons.

In my city, Matanzas, the QR code helps in the purchase of staple products in these difficult times. The idea has been controversial, at least the way it should have been implemented in this or that area. There have been discontent regarding the defined frequency as it has not solved the huge problem of long lines in times of COVID-19. But one thing is pretty clear, every home has the right to buy staple products and in order to guarantee it: the QR code plays a very important role. To clear up doubts, people in Matanzas use an app that allows them to verify, before getting involved in tedious lines, if their QR code has the green light to buy the product they need.

Notary services in provinces like Holguín and Pinar del Río are just beginning to take advantage of this technological tool, which facilitates formalities and the request of documents in registers. With the use of a QR code, people may have immediate access to the request. A note released in the television in Pinar del Río confirmed that such possibility of scanning will take users directly to the forms, either via the Facebook profile of the Provincial Department of Justice, at the headquarters of Civil Registry or the Municipal Department of Justice. This way, people could request certificates of last will, criminal records, birth certificates, divorce...All in all, it makes formalities viable. The good news is that such option will be soon implemented in other provinces in Cuba.

The most recent Album launching I attended, it was precisely a QR code which allowed me to get all the information about the CD in question. I am talking about Raul Paz's El Puente, where his son Rafael contributed with a modern note: a very minimalist design and a code by which internet users could get access to all the information. And here it is again the technological tool, but now with an artistic, conceptual purpose. Just like music takes us to a journey to our inner world, you and I have to go on a journey into the QR world if we want details about the work and his author.

## What is a QR Code?

Perhaps we began at the end as I let myself go with the emotion of good news or that bedazzlement you feel once you find out —remember I am not a millennial nor I belong to the digital native generation— about a *“new miracle of technology.”* The first question should have been: what is a QR Code?

QR Codes are two-dimensional barcodes aimed to store encoded data, where QR stands for Quick Response. That is their main feature: they are codes that solve in seconds the problem of connecting the real and digital world.

It works in a similar way to that of conventional barcodes, but QR stores more information, which can be extended or reduced. It does not look so complicated to create one of these codes. There are a lot of webs where you can create QR codes by only adding the necessary information. We have also options: they can be printed or use them online.

This tool was created in 1994 by a Japanese affiliate of Toyota Group and years later, it was independent. To this point, I could not say if it is right to say “to be used...” or “to conquer the world.” The truth is that its functional nature gives rise to more spaces in contemporary life, while promising to expand, for good reasons.

## QR uses you may be shocked about

Connect to a Wi-Fi network by using QR, make payments over the Internet and connect mobiles, are some of the most common advantages of QR codes. But it is also common to attach it to our curriculum just to take us to out **Linkedin** profile or personal portfolio on the Internet, where a more comprehensive information about us is stored.

In some museums of the world, we can spot a QR code next to the pieces. It allows us to have access to the information about the pieces and their authors. Some gastronomic facilities also provide details about the nutritional facts of ingredients and even the menu. The same with the public transport, to provide information about routes and schedules.

As if that were not enough, I have seen tattoos with QR codes. Can you imagine? Well, it is a fact you can now scan the tattooed code and know what the person wants to share with you: important information such as the blood type, emergency contacts...and the Instagram profile?

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