

QR CODE USAGE GUIDE

WHAT IS A QR CODE?

A quick response code or QR code is a barcode that is scanned by a camera on a digital device, usually a smartphone, and directs the user to online digital content such as a webpage or a video. Each QR code contains data points that appear as a series of shapes such as squares or circles. The appearance of these shapes is purely stylistic.

QR CODE EXAMPLES



QR Code with Square Data Points



QR Code with Circle Data Points

WHEN TO USE QR CODES

When properly used, QR codes can be a useful method of directly providing digital content to your audience. Use the following guidelines to determine if a QR code is appropriate.

- Consider your audience. Is your audience familiar with QR codes? Does your audience know how to access digital content via QR codes?
- Use QR codes to directly send your audience to digital content such as a website, a webpage, a social media account, a video, a form, or a survey.
- Use QR codes on printed physical materials such as flyers, brochures, mail pieces, posters, and signs. Do not use a QR code as a substitute for listing a URL on printed materials. When using a QR code on a sign or a poster, consider your location carefully. Place the sign or poster in a safe and accessible location to passersby with access to WiFi and good reception.
- Do not use QR codes in emails, on website graphics, and on social media graphics. Do not use QR codes as substitutes for hyperlinks in emails, on webpages, or in PDF documents.
- Use QR codes, however, on PowerPoint slides for in-person presentations to direct attendees to additional content online or to an online survey. Use QR codes also on digital signage to direct your audience to additional content online.

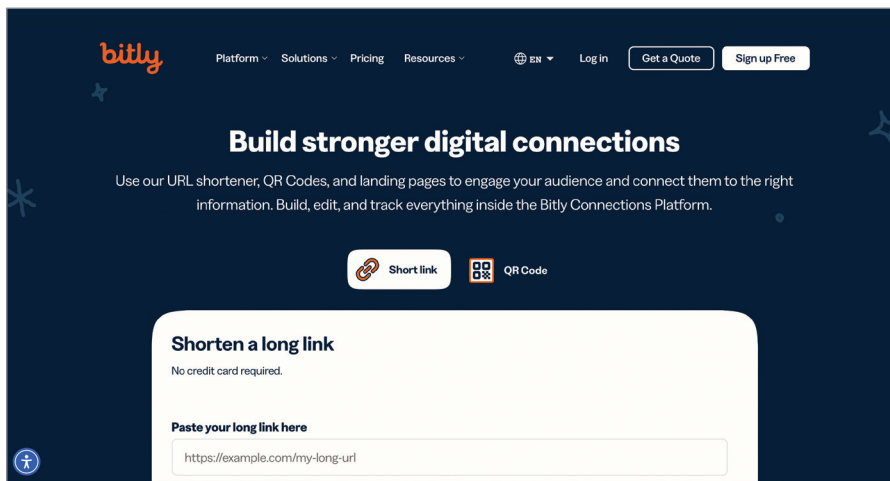
CREATING SAFE AND SECURE QR CODES

To generate QR codes safely and securely, **only use QR code services approved by the College's Office of Information Technology.**

QR code services can be used maliciously for phishing and malware distribution. Because QR codes are provided as downloads, using services approved by the College prevents the download, installation, and distribution of malware on College devices.

QR CODE SERVICE APPROVED BY THE OFFICE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

bitly



If you do not have a bitly account under Montgomery College's enterprise bitly account, refer to page 7 for information about how the Office of Information Technology can generate QR codes for you. Do not create a new account with bitly.

<https://bitly.com/>

BRANDED QR CODES—DATA POINTS

Montgomery College branded QR codes give visual consistency across the College's diverse range of materials.

DATA POINT STYLE

- A Montgomery College branded QR code has square data points.

INCORRECT



QR Code with Circle Data Points

CORRECT



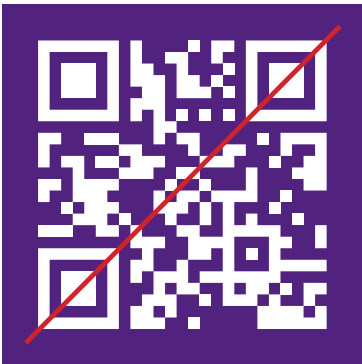
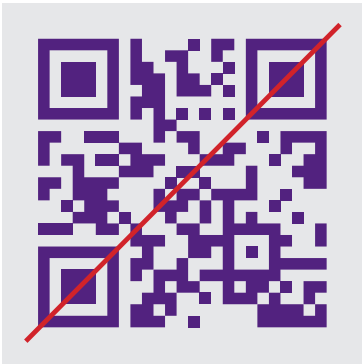
QR Code with Square Data Points

BRANDED QR CODES—DATA POINTS

COLOR

- A Montgomery College branded QR code has data points in black and a white background.

INCORRECT



CORRECT FOR PRINTED AND DIGITAL MATERIALS



Black

Data Points
Color Code
Hex: #000000



White

Background
Color Code
Hex: #FFFFFF

BRANDED QR CODES—MC LOGOMARK

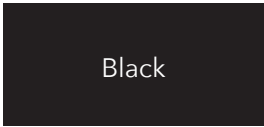
ADDING THE MC LOGOMARK

- A Montgomery College branded QR code can have the College’s logomark in the center **in black for printed materials and in purple for digital materials**.
- **A paid subscription plan with bitly is required to create a QR code with the MC logomark.** If you do not have a bitly account under Montgomery College’s enterprise bitly account, refer to Generating QR Codes on page 7.

INCORRECT



CORRECT FOR PRINTED MATERIALS



Black

Data Points
Color Code
Hex: #000000



White

Background
Color Code
Hex: #FFFFFF

CORRECT FOR DIGITAL MATERIALS



Purple

Data Points
Color Code
Hex: #51237F



White

Background
Color Code
Hex: #FFFFFF

GENERATING QR CODES

If you need to generate a QR code and do not have a bitly account under Montgomery College's enterprise bitly account, **submit a request by email to the Office of Information Technology Service Desk**. Email your request to itservicedesk@montgomerycollege.edu.

In your request:

- Provide a URL to your digital content.

Montgomery College URL Example

<https://www.montgomerycollege.edu/admissions-registration/application.html>

- Specify if you need a shortened URL to accompany your QR code. Always place a URL or a shortened URL beneath your QR code to provide your audience with an alternative to accessing your digital content. Shortened URLs can be easier for your audience to remember.

Sample Montgomery College URL

<https://www.montgomerycollege.edu/admissions-registration/application.html>

Sample Shortened URL Generated for the Montgomery College URL

<https://bit.ly/M4t6Lr8k>

- Specify if your QR code will be used for printed materials and/or digital materials.

Sample QR Code Generated for Printed Materials



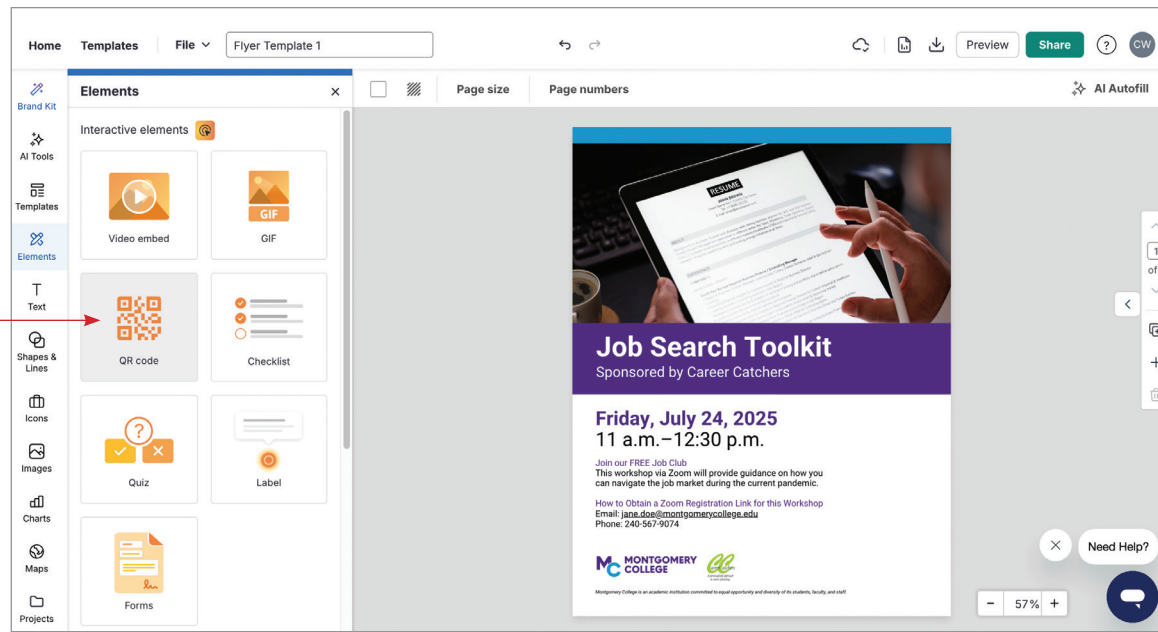
Sample QR Code Generated for Digital Materials



GENERATING QR CODES

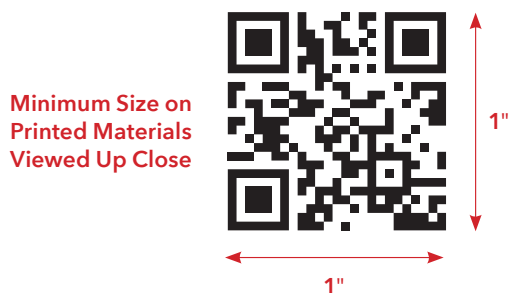
If you are currently a Venngage user under Montgomery College's enterprise Venngage account and will be using a QR code for print and/or digital materials without the MC wordmark, then you can use Venngage's QR code generator. If you will be using a QR code for print and/or digital materials with the MC wordmark, refer to page 7 for information about how the Office of Information Technology can generate this for you.

QR Code Generator
in Venngage



BEST PRACTICES WHEN USING QR CODES

- When generating your QR code, use a URL that begins with "https://". This ensures that data transmission between a web browser and a web server is encrypted and secure.
- When sizing your QR code, consider how your audience will be viewing it. Will your QR code be viewed up close such as on a flyer or will it be viewed from a distance such as on a PowerPoint slide? To ensure your QR code can be scanned by a QR code reader on printed materials viewed up close, do not make it smaller than one inch high by one inch wide.



- Always include a quiet zone around your QR Code. All QR codes must have a quiet zone that is a minimum of four square data points wide on all sides.



- Follow the color guidelines provided for Montgomery College branded QR codes to ensure good contrast between the QR code and its background. Do not invert the color schemes provided as this may render a QR code unreadable. Good contrast is essential for QR codes and QR code readers to function properly.
- Place text near your QR code that explains to your audience what will happen when they scan your QR Code. Use the page layout program, design program, or presentation program you used to design your printed material, presentation, or digital sign to add this.

Event Registration



- Place a URL or a shortened URL beneath your QR code to provide your audience with an alternative to accessing your digital content.

Event Registration



montgomerycollege.edu/events

Event Registration



bit.ly/2KEOXNx

BEST PRACTICES WHEN USING QR CODES

- Because QR codes are primarily used on printed materials, download your QR code at the highest possible image quality setting to ensure good print quality. A clear QR code with clean, sharp edges ensures that a QR code reader will have no issues reading it.
- Download your QR code in the file format that best suits your needs. The JPG and PNG file formats are best suited for digital materials. The EPS and PDF file formats are best suited for print materials.
- Always test your QR code to ensure your audience is being directed to the correct digital content. Use a QR code scanner app or a camera app with a QR code scanning feature on your smartphone or your tablet to test your QR code.