Snap & Go! Library Service
Access Points Anywhere
You Can Stick a QR Code

Needs Assessment

As the winner of numerous awards, including 2 from the American Library Association Office for Information Technology Policy for Cutting-Edge Technology in Library Service, Contra Costa County Library is recognized as a leader among libraries implementing technology to improve service, reduce costs, and deliver on the promise of bringing people and ideas together. Released during the summer of 2010, Contra Costa County Library's Snap & Go, a robust mobile patron support system utilizing QR code technology, pushes new and existing library content and services literally into the hands of mobile phone users. The service is designed to satisfy the reading and information needs of County residents at times when their local community library is closed or when they cannot make it into a library building.

The challenge in marketing the Snap & Go project centered around the use of QR codes and their ability to give the Library a deeper reach into the community and provide services offsite such as instant access to downloadable eBooks from the bus, virtual museum passes, text-a-librarian service, library hours and locations, patron account and catalog search functions, information on book titles, including reviews, first chapters, and read-alike information. Another aspect to the marketing campaign included educating patrons and the greater community about QR code technology and the Snap & Go project.

With information delivery via mobile technology advancing toward the norm, libraries everywhere are rapidly moving to mobile platforms to offer their services and information to current and future patrons who are on the go. For Contra Costa County Library, a large suburban library located within the greater San Francisco Bay Area, its patrons are undeniably on the go. Propelled by its mission statement, “bringing people and ideas together,” Contra Costa County Library has actively and successfully implemented and marketed library services to commuters over the past several years. A 2006 Contra Costa Times article found that 40% of Contra Costa County’s million plus residents are commuting outside its borders to work.

By using QR codes on its promotional and marketing materials, Contra Costa County Library expanded its service access points by linking users directly to context-specific information on the Library’s mobile website. This new access point contributes to the Library meeting its goal of making its services relevant to the community -- where people are and when they need it.

Contra Costa County residents are above the national average for owning a wireless email device, use of wireless Internet, owning a cellular phone, and owning a smart cellular phone according to market profile information gathered from the Lifestyle Market Analyst. 67% of the population of the County is between the ages of 15-64, landing this population in the ‘sweet spot’ for mobile cellular usage. With this knowledge about its users and a $60,000 Bay Area Library and Information Systems (BALIS) Innovation grant, the Contra Costa County Library staff co-developed Snap & Go with library application consultants, Quipu Group.
Implementation and Creativity

Following the technical launch of Snap & Go, the Library developed a marketing campaign demonstrating to library patrons and to the greater library community, the infinite possibilities for creating library service access points anywhere you can stick a two-inch QR code—on buses, on books, in metro stations, on flyers, in newspaper ads, and on posters in public spaces where people gather. From a soft launch date of summer 2010 to a wide-spread publicity campaign during spring 2011, the Library campaigned to extend library services and information deeper into the community and to people on the go.

Contra Costa County Library staff designed advertising with customized QR codes directing users to the library service most relevant to them based on their current location. Offsite services that instantly became available from a QR code included access to downloadable eBooks from the bus, virtual museum passes, text-a-librarian service, library hours and locations, patron account and catalog search functions, information on book titles, including reviews, first chapters, and read-alike information. Marketing initiatives included a partnership with two regional transit authorities, Tri Delta Transit and WestCat, leading to a publicity campaign targeting passengers through posters placed inside buses and libraries. Advertisements were soon developed after initial meetings between partners. Messages promoting “En route Entertainment,” “Your personal HOV lane through the Library,” and “Transform your Commute, Download Free Audiobooks” were used throughout the campaign with the transit agencies.

All posters for this campaign included the Library’s and transit partners’ logos accompanied with a QR code and step-by-step instructions for scanning the code, selecting a title, and obtaining access to hundreds of downloadable audiobooks and eBooks for immediate enjoyment during commutes. The posters on the buses brought users to the eBook download page highlighting only those Library eBooks and audiobooks compatible with mobile phones.

Another campaign involved attaching QR codes to library materials for the purpose of readers advisory. As early adopters of technology, the Library targeted teens by placing QR codes on all library copies of the 26 titles for the Young Adult Library Services Association’s Teens Top Ten nominations. The codes linked readers to an interactive website where they could access reviews, see other nominees, place holds, and directly participate in picking the winners by casting their vote for their favorites. Other components of Contra Costa County Library’s multichannel marketing campaign to bring awareness of QR codes and library services to community residents included platform-level and billboard advertising for a period of 4-6 weeks at 6 local Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) stations. The graphic for the 2-sheet posters consisted of the Library’s logo, the URL to its mobile site, and a QR code surrounded by a colorful word cloud suggesting all of the things you can do when you Snap & Go to the library. Commuters traveling along Contra Costa County BART stations during the spring of 2011 received the message that library service is available right here, right now while they are on the go.
Evaluation

The promotional efforts to launch Snap & Go effectively achieved the goals of the campaign by developing a brand identity through attractive print materials such as posters in buses, rapid transit stations, and libraries that sparked interest and curiosity among the target audiences. Key collaborations with Tri Delta Transit and WestCat provided an exciting and unique opportunity for the Library to foster strong community partnerships and maximize outreach opportunities to other venues and audiences.

As a result of the communication efforts, library service expanded to our mobile patrons. From January through May 2011, the new fleet of hundreds of “digital bookmobiles” via Tri Delta Transit and WestCAT allowed commuters to wirelessly download 1,547 library eBooks and audiobooks directly to their mobile phones. Usage of the Library’s mobile site bumped up 11% during the first month of the campaign and awareness led to a sustained increase in usage of 16%.

As part of the educational campaign to inform patrons and the greater community about QR technology and the Snap & Go project, Virtual Library staff created a subject guide using LibGuides by Springshare. During the first year of the project, the guide received 7,900 views.

For the launch of Snap & Go, a QR code was attached to the 2010 Summer Reading Festival poster offering quick access to mobile web pages supporting this programming. Impressed by both the Library’s use of QR codes as a gateway to the Festival and as a method for providing a preconfigured SMS message to an on-call librarian who answers questions within a few minutes, an editor for a local community paper wrote in his blog: “You just have to love a library system that lunges for the future with technology firmly in hand.”

The publicity surrounding the Snap & Go Project created a buzz in the library community resulting in increased visibility for the Contra Costa County Library and its services along with prestigious awards and both local and national recognition. In addition to the 2012 Cutting Edge Service Award from the American Library Association’s Office for Information Technology Policy, Snap & Go has received attention from professional trade journals such as Library Journal and Computers in Libraries and Contra Costa County Library staff received an Emerald Literati Network 2011 Award for Excellence with the publication of their article, “Snap & Go: a QRreative case in point” in Library Hi Tech News. The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) honored Contra Costa County Library with a Merit Award for Snap & Go after receiving nearly 250 entries. An independent panel of judges, with expertise in county programs and challenges, selected the award recipients. Contra Costa County Library staff were recognized for their publicity of Snap & Go with a first-place designation for the California Library Association’s PRexcellence Awards for 2011.

Project Summary

Directed towards underserved residents, busy commuters, and early adopters of mobile technology, Contra Costa County Library’s Snap & Go supports the use of QR codes to deliver library materials and services to customers with mobile phones. Snap & Go offers services such as downloadable eBooks and audiobooks, virtual museum passes, and readers’ advisory to satisfy the reading and information needs of County residents at times when their local community library is closed or when they cannot make it into a library building. Appealing promotional materials were developed to effectively raise public awareness about Snap & Go.
Contra Costa County Library’s Snap & Go supports the use of QR (Quick Response) codes to deliver instant access to library materials and services to patrons with mobile phones.

Snap & Go QR Technology: Presented by WestCAT and the Contra Costa County Library.

Get access to over 600 audiobooks...Instantly!

It’s your personal HOV lane through the Library

With WestCAT’s new “Enroute Entertainment” you can now listen to over 600 audiobook titles on the bus with the Contra Costa County Library's Snap & Go mobile Library access. Wirelessly Download Audiobooks directly to your cell phone for FREE. It is a great way to pass the time on the bus.

Just snap and go!

Get access to eBooks instantly Snap & Go QR Technology Powered by WestCAT and the Contra Costa County Library
Library Poster at BART Stations
The Library recently engaged in an advertising campaign featuring a billboard with a colorful word cloud and a large QR code at BART stations along the Pittsburg-Bay Point line. The ad appeared at track level and at many stations starting at MacArthur station moving into Contra Costa County stops.

Library Poster in Action
Introducing Contra Costa County Library's Newest Bookmobile

Listen to over 500 Audiobooks on Tri Delta Transit Buses with Snap & Go!
SNAP & GO
10.17.2010 - 10.31.2010
SCAVENGER HUNT

READY
Download a QR Code reader to your phone at guides.ccclib.org/qr

SNAP
Snap this code with your phone to start playing the game

GO
Decipher the clues and find the QR codes to enter & win!

http://m.ccclib.org/?pg=lp&f=ktx

Play to win an Amazon gift certificate or Kodak EasyShare digital camera!
Read-alikes
We’re tagging very popular books with a QR code that leads you to other books you might like to read. So, please enjoy these read-alikes!

Teen’s Top 10
We tagged all copies of the 26 nominations for the YALSA Teens’ Top Ten with a QR code so you can Snap & Go to a webpage and find the other nominations, participate in a poll, etc.

Text-a-librarian

Text "ccc" and your question to

66746
Snap & Go
Tags: local, news, qr, technology
Last Updated: Jan 31, 2012
URL: http://guides.cclib.org/qr
Print Guide
R30 Updates
SHARE

Photos - Snap & Go in action!

Snap & Go is a project of The Contra Costa County Library, bringing library services to your mobile phone.

Use the Mobile Website:
http://m.cclib.org

Billboard @ BART
The Library recently engaged in an advertising campaign featuring a billboard with a colorful word cloud and a large QR code at BART stations along the Pittsburg/Bay Point line. The ad appeared at track level and at many stations starting at MacArthur station moving into Contra Costa County stops.

Comments (0)
Summer Reading Festival

JUNE 5th - JUNE 6th, 2010
EVENTS COUNTYWIDE

FEATURING

DAVE EGGERS

MAKE A SPLASH with

EVENTS COUNTYWIDE, SATURDAY, JUNE 5th.
DAVE EGGERS, LESHER CENTER FOR THE ARTS, SUNDAY, JUNE 6th, 1:00 p.m.

Visit your local library or http://guides.ccclib.org/srf for full schedule and ticket information.
QR Codes To Extend Library's Reach In Contra Costa, CA

Contra Costa County Library is betting two-dimensional hyperlinking barcodes will be the next wave in connecting mobile-savvy patrons to library services

Josh Hedro -- Library Journal, 01/14/2010

- $60,000 BALIS grant will fund year-long project
- QR codes will link patrons to read-alike materials, and events information
- Will dovetail with Library-a-Go-Go automated materials vending sites

Are QR codes—two-dimensional hyperlinking barcodes—the next wave in connecting mobile-savvy patrons to library services? Contra Costa County Library (CCCL), CA, is betting yes, as it embarks on a yearlong $60,000 Bay Area Library and Information System (BALIS)-funded QR code project.

The library will reach out to the community by attaching these increasingly popular symbols to library-related materials, as well as placing them in high-traffic areas, perhaps in partnership with local community centers and businesses. The labels themselves contain embedded information that can be decoded by a QR code reader on a mobile device.

This software then links users directly from the black-and-white images to a web site via a decoded URL, or reveals some other embedded information like a call number or small snippets of text.

QR code generators and the software necessary to decode the labels are by no means ubiquitous in the United States, though they’ve been popular in gadget-saturated countries like Japan for some time. As a result, an educational campaign will be required to inform patrons about these crossword puzzle-looking images.

Still, “the public is becoming more savvy about these things,” Cathy Sanford, Contra Costa deputy county librarian, told LJ. She also pointed to the recent rollout by Google to place QR codes in nearly 200,000 local businesses across the country, as well as pioneering library QR code service pilot projects such as the one from the Sacramento Public Library, CA, that sends users to text message chat info when they scan a code on the library’s blog.

Linking to RA and more
Once the CCCL project is in full swing, QR codes will be embedded across the range of services the library offers. Sanford said that popular collections will have barcodes that link directly to readers’ advisory materials online, including read-alikes; patrons are encouraged to check out. The library will also embed QR barcodes in its promotional and marketing materials, linking patrons directly to pages with location information, schedules, and related events.

Finally, QR codes will be attached to all materials served up by another of CCCL’s partially BALIS-funded technology innovations: its Library-a-Go-Go automated materials vending system. QR codes at these unstaffed locations will link patrons to the library’s text message (SMS) and chat reference services, as well as any other services available remotely. “It’s all designed for people on the go,” Sanford said, adding that the library’s goal is to make its services relevant to the community when and where they’re needed, not just within the confines of local branches.
The American Library Association (ALA) Office for Information Technology Policy (OITP) and the Library Information Technology Association (LITA) have selected programs at Contra Costa County Library in Pleasant Hill, Calif., New Canaan High School Library in New Canaan, Conn., New York Public Library in New York, and Scottsdale Public Library in Scottsdale, Ariz., as the winners of the association’s third annual contest to honor cutting-edge technologies in library services.

In November 2011, a joint OITP and LITA subcommittee serving under the OITP Program on America’s Libraries for the 21st Century (AL21C) issued its call for nominations for best library practices using cutting-edge technology to showcase libraries that are serving their communities with novel and innovative methods. Last year, four libraries were cited for their outstanding work.

“This year’s winners represent thoughtful and creative engagement with technology trends including QR codes, open-source software, social media, GIS, and mobile applications,” said Christina Lind Hage, Director, Rochester Hills Public Library, who chaired the selection subcommittee.

“The selection committee received nearly double the number of submissions than in previous years, so competition was very strong from around the country and all types of libraries. We are excited to recognize the best of the best and increase awareness of these innovative initiatives.”

About the Winners:

- **Snap & Go, Contra Costa County Library, California**
  Using QR (Quick Response) codes, Snap & Go serves as an innovative delivery mechanism for traditional library services. From local transit ads to posters to newspaper ads, Contra Costa County is delivering instant access to library materials and services to cardholders with mobile phones. By scanning the code with a reader on their phones, users are directed to downloadable e-books and audiobooks, virtual museum passes, interactive reference service, account and catalog search, and readers’ advisory tools. QR codes placed on popular titles take readers to “read-alike” lists created by library staff. Usage of the library’s mobile site has increased 16 percent since Contra Costa implemented Snap & Go. [http://guides.cccclib.org/qr](http://guides.cccclib.org/qr)

- **Participatory Platforms for Learning, New Canaan High School Library, Connecticut**
  New Canaan’s Participatory Platforms for Learning program strives to cultivate curiosity throughout the learning community and encourage experimentation with new tools for content creation, publication and participation. The program includes deploying the full complement of Google applications; advocating a culture of intellectual freedom; using Twitter for current events research; and using Facebook groups for students to record their research process and provide feedback to others in the group. The program emphasizes learning and the “real world” to teach students digital citizenship by encouraging them to become responsible information consumers, creators and contributors in the public domain. Their online portal is at: [http://nchlibraryannex.blogspot.com/](http://nchlibraryannex.blogspot.com/)

- **Map Warper Toolkit, New York Public Library, New York**
  The Map Warper toolkit allows staff and the public to virtually stretch (or geo-rectify) historical maps onto a digital model of the world like Google Maps or OpenStreetMap, transforming old atlases into interactive spatial environments. Participants also can go deeper, tracing and transcribing specific map features into a growing public database. The project adds to the historical and scholarly record while engaging library patrons in building digital resources. The service is managed by the NYPL Labs group, developed in collaboration with EntropyFree, an open source geospatial software firm. The tools are in the process of being published to an open code repository for other libraries, scholars and cultural heritage workers to use and build upon. [http://maps.nypl.org](http://maps.nypl.org)

- **Gimme Engine, Scottsdale Public Library, Arizona**
  The Gimme Engine mobile website helps customers find a great book to read based on a library staff's recommendation and review. Gimme combines library catalog MARC data, content enrichment service images and descriptions, and library staff book reviews on Goodreads.com to create a unique experience. Gimme, which was developed with monies received from an LSTA grant, was created to meet a need stated by both library and non-library users; they wanted book recommendations powered by library staff. The Gimme engine is a creative solution to meet these customer needs. You can use Gimme for yourself by visiting: [http://gimme.scottsdalelibrary.org](http://gimme.scottsdalelibrary.org)

AL21C Associate Director Larra Clark said ALA OITP will host a program about these four services during the ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim (June 21-26) and will make detailed descriptions of each available online in order to share successful models for delivering quality library service in new ways. Additional information is available at [www.al.org/cuttingedge](http://www.al.org/cuttingedge).

About LITA

Established in 1966, LITA is the leading organization reaching out across types of libraries to provide education and services for a broad membership of over 3,000 systems librarians, library administrators, library schools, vendors and many others interested in leading edge technology and applications for librarians and information providers. For more information, visit [www.lita.org](http://www.lita.org), or contact the LITA office by phone, 800-545-2435, ext. 4268; or e-mail: lita@ala.org

About ALA OITP

The Office for Information Technology Policy advances ALA’s public policy activities by helping secure information technology policies that support and encourage efforts of libraries to ensure access to electronic information resources as a means of upholding the public’s right to a free and open information society. It works to ensure a library voice in information policy debates and to promote full and equitable intellectual participation by the public. For more information, visit [www.al.org/oitp](http://www.al.org/oitp).
Transform your Commute, Download Free Audiobooks on WestCAT Buses

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- Snap & Go - All About QR Codes
- Audiobooks

Getting your audiobook is as easy as 1-2-3:
1) Download a free QR code reader to your phone from snapgo.cclib.org. You only need to do this once time only.
2) Scan the code from a library poster on WestCAT buses or wherever you see it posted.
3) Select an audiobook to download and enjoy the ride!

Here's the details...

WestCAT Transit is pleased to partner with the Contra Costa County Library to provide instant access to free audiobooks and library services on the bus. With WestCAT's new "En route Entertainment" you can now listen to over 600 audiobook titles on the bus with Contra Costa County Library's "Snap & Go" mobile library access. Wirelessly download audiobooks directly to your cell phone for FREE. It is a great way to pass the time on the bus.

To get started, riders will first need to download a QR reader to their cell phone (one time only). The Library has information and instructions located at https://snapgo.cclib.org. Once that's done you can scan the QR barcode with your camera phone and you'll automatically be connected to library services including hundreds of great audiobooks you can download for free.

Just look for the Quick Response (QR) Code on board all WestCAT Transit buses to access all your favorite titles. QR codes are available on an information poster located above the windows on most of the WestCAT Transit buses, in a smaller version in announcement holders inside the Lynx and Dial-A-Ride buses without overhead displays, and on the front desk at the WestCAT Administration office.

A valid library card is required to use Snap & Go. For information about obtaining a library card visit: https://ecard.cclib.org/index.php?id=english. For additional information about free audiobooks and Snap & Go contact the Contra Costa Library at 1-800-394-4036 or visit http://guides.cclib.org/qr

Well, wait, there's more! The Library has recently announced that riders will now also be able to download and read ebooks in the EPUB format in addition to the already available downloadable audiobooks. OverDrive just launched an updated version of their software which the Library announced on their website and newsletter. http://cclib.org/

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