

USGS Publishing Standards Memorandum No. 2013.01

Date issued:	March 28, 2013 (revised May 29, 2014; August 21, 2017)
Sunset date:	August 21, 2022
Subject:	Interim Guidance for Use of Quick Response (QR) Codes on USGS Publication Series Products
Background:	<p>QR codes are matrix barcodes (faster and easier to read than UPC barcodes) that can be scanned by a code-reader application on a mobile device. The code connects the user to additional information on a website.</p> <div> </div> <p>The SPN has received an increasing number of requests from authors to include QR codes in printed USGS reports and on USGS maps so as to provide the user a link to the online version of the information product and to other information. An SPN team made recommendations for consistent placement of QR codes on a variety of information products, but additional issues were identified, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are QR codes appropriate in all types of USGS information products? • How many QR codes are appropriate per product? • If the QR code links to a web page or website, how long must that page or site be maintained given that printed products may have a shelf life of decades or longer? If the link becomes broken, who is responsible for fixing the broken link? • Are there Section 508 accessibility concerns with using QR codes? • Are there IT security concerns with regard to USGS QR codes? • Should the USGS use artistic QR codes? If so, what graphic(s) should appear? <p>The SPN is currently seeking input from other parts of the organization with an interest or a stake in the issue, including the USGS Library, the Publications Warehouse, the Web Re-engineering Team, and the Office of Scientific Quality and Integrity. In the interim, the SPN is issuing guidance only with regard to the numbers, placement and content of QR codes for technical and nontechnical USGS publication series products.</p>
Required Bureau procedure:	<p>Although use of QR codes is optional, consistent placement of the codes on USGS publication series products is required.</p> <p>For technical information products, there shall be only one QR code per product, and the code shall link to the online version of the product in the Publications Warehouse. Placement of this QR code shall follow the guidance shown in the SPN's guidance document at http://internal.usgs.gov/publishing/toolboxes/documents/DOI_ISSN_QRcode.pdf.</p>

Required Bureau procedure (continued):	For nontechnical information products such as fact sheets, circulars, and general information products (GIPs), more than one QR code may be used. The codes can link to the online version of the product in the Publications Warehouse and (or) to a USGS website of broad, national interest that is both stable and mobile-friendly. The URL represented by the code should also be shown.
Implementation:	<p>Design Considerations</p> <p>A QR code</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should not detract from the visual design of the information product, • must not interfere with or violate USGS Visual Identity System standards, • must be large enough to be scanned, and • must be placed on a background color that does not inhibit scanning (white space around the code is recommended). <p>Technical Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The URL must be printed near the QR code so that users without mobile devices can access the link as well. <p>Production</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authors wishing to incorporate a QR code in their USGS publication series product must inform the SPN before publication layout has begun. • The SPN will generate the QR code for the product and will test it to ensure that it works properly. • The SPN will place the QR code on the product.

Approved by: /s/ Leslie W. Jones, Chief, Science Publishing Network, March 28, 2013 (May 29, 2014; August 21, 2017)