QR Codes in the Library

Saskatchewan School Library Association

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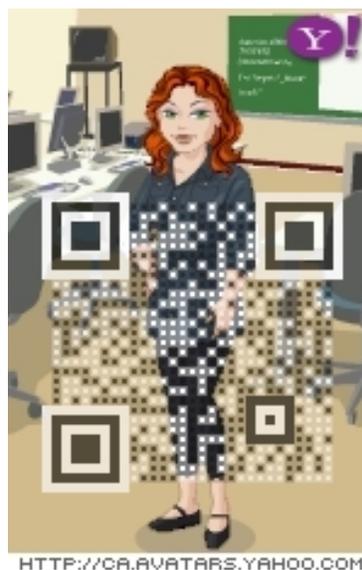
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When looking for ways to keep the school library current and trendy, a blog article from the Daring Librarian (Gwyneth Jones) regarding the use of QR codes for a scavenger hunt was noteworthy. The usual "Welcome to the library" tour I had traditionally provided was boring the middle years students completely. The QR Scavenger Hunt would perhaps be a great idea to try instead.

With my phone camera in hand, I took pictures of the books and places I wanted to use as clues. Not wanting to make it too easy, I wrote the clues so that once they found the book or place in the picture. they may have to look up a page or write down the call number. Hosting the pictures onto my Flickr account, I turned the pictures into QR codes. I used the QR code generator Kaywa (http://qrcode.kaywa.com) to create the codes, but after participating in the SSLA Learning Event with Naomi Harms, the website QR Stuff (http://qrstuff.com) or Visualead (http://www.visualead.com/) are other sites to generate the code. Visualead will use a picture to create the code, like the following example made with my Twitter account and avatar.

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To participate in the scavenger hunt, the students in grades 7 and 8 needed to download a free QR code reader to their smart phones. I also had a station set up with a laptop where they could use the camera as a scanner if they did not have a smart phone to enable equitable participation.

Using a PC laptop I found that QReader (http://dansl.net/qrreader/) worked well, but there were other sites available through a simple Google search. The students were excited to be able to use their cell phones at school. It was an excellent opportunity to have a conversation about cell phone etiquette and appropriate use of mobile devices in a school setting.

We now use QR codes on the books. The QR codes lead to book trailers or reviews created by students. A great place to find book trailers for students is a site called *Book Trailers for Readers* (http://www.booktrailersforreaders.com/), but another idea would be to have students create digital trailers as a class or school library project. Our book QR codes also lead to reviews created by grade 6 student. I created a website called *Our Book Lounge* (https://sites.google.com/site/ourbooklounge/) for the students to submit their reviews and to showcase their work. I found that a book suggestion has more weight with the students when it originates from their peers. Another idea to try is recording the students reading the books and link that to a QR code as showcased in the latest blog article on the SSLA website (http://ssla.ca/).

Using QR codes can be a fun way to engage the students in the school library using technology. The various kinds of information that can be converted to a QR code make it easy to share the versatility of our school libraries with its patrons.