

Staying Safe Doesn't Get Any Easier

Everything helpful these days may not help.



This is a functional QR (quick Response) code. You see them almost everywhere. They're usually helpful, saving time and typing effort. If you have a smart phone and want to scan this one, go ahead. The author guarantees it's safe. But out in the world, or received in an email or text message, it might not be.

Anyone with a computer can make these codes. Used in marketing, leading you to a firm's website, and quick data verification, e.g. an airline boarding pass, or setting up a new TV, etc., utilizing these codes can be valuable time saving tools.

But this is also another tool that scammers use to do their filthy work. Directing you to web sites that steal your data is one way these are useful to those without souls.

OK, we hope that most folks know about Phishing scams and don't open links to unknown and potentially dangerous sites. But now, a useful tool is being used to seed confusion that when scanned, may take us to a place we all need to avoid.

During, and after, the pandemic, many restaurants used QR codes so that patrons could read menus without having to touch anything. Some restaurants still do and some clever scammers have pasted their own QR code stickers over the legitimate ones.

In retail stores, some valid QR codes can have illicit stickers pasted over them. Beware! If you see a QR code that looks like it was just "stuck" on, again, beware.

And if, scanning a QR code, you don't recognize the URL it's guiding you to, then remember the discussion regarding phishing that you've seen in this space before. Once you've landed on a phishing site, everything might look perfect. Ask yourself questions and check the URL. It's probably different from what you're used to seeing. At this point, the advice from Monty Python, "Run away, run away" is the rule to follow.

And

We think of scammers as those without souls and mostly that's true. One of the nastiest scams, **The Pig Butchering Scam**, a variation on the Rebound or Elder Romance scam, takes advantage of lonely folks who are in a vulnerable position. One senior recently took his own life after having watched his life savings disappear.

But there's more to the story. Many of the scammers are themselves victims. Basically incarcerated, beaten and tortured in the process of this ungodly enterprise. It is a nasty growth business, thriving in places like Burma (Myanmar to you youngsters).

In these "scam" articles, there's a limit to how much we can share in the allotted space. There is much published on the Internet covering these threats in great detail. (*The author is happy to help in locating some of these valuable resources.*) While some of these stories are horrifying, it is important to educate ourselves and learn how to practice safety.

And remember. **Don't talk to strangers!**

*Any Comments, clarifications or questions should be directed to the author at jgf6217@gmail.com.
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