

Beautiful coding—new University project develops next generation of QR codes

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A new innovation from The University of Nottingham is promising to transform the way we digitally interact with new products and services by developing the next generation of easier-on-the-eye QR codes.

Known as Aestheticodes, the initiative has evolved out of a joint project between designers and computer scientists at the University's Horizon Digital Economy Research institute and takes its name from the new technology it has created.

Aestheticodes aims to revolutionise embedded computer codes which allow the user to access more content digitally via their [smart device](#). It designs visually beautiful images and encodes them, resulting in the same interactivity of a QR code, while offering a more engaging and playful experience.

The technology offers businesses the opportunity for on-brand visual interaction for products, packaging and services and could offer a unique user interaction for museums, galleries and a range of other public spaces.

It uses an app which can be downloaded on to a smart device and can then be used to scan the aestheticcode—the app does not recognise the image but scans the topography of the image.

Richard Mortier, a Transitional Fellow at Horizon, said: "Here we allow everyday objects to become more interactive without compromising on their aesthetics. Graphic designers have produced a wide range of visually appealing motifs and patterns that can be used to trigger delivery of different information depending on the design and the app that reads it – for example, pointing your smartphone at the pattern on a menu in a restaurant could give you information on the special of the day."

Aestheticodes offers programming, [app](#) development and graphic design services and can produce a full bespoke branding and interactivity service. It will continue to implement the latest research and innovations to offer customers the most up-to-date service.

The original research underpinning the company was conducted in collaboration with academic partners Central Saint Martins and Brunel University and commercial partner Busaba Eathai.

The researchers are continuing to develop the technology through Horizon, where they are working with ceramic designers to explore the creation of new ceramic shapes, patterns and textures that are both aesthetically pleasing and digitally trackable.

Horizon is a research institute which undertakes digital economy research. Funded by Research Councils UK (RCUK), The University of

Nottingham and more than 100 academic and industrial partners, the institute comprises both a research hub and Doctoral Training Centre.

Building on the Digital Britain plan, Horizon research focuses on the role of 'always on, always with you' ubiquitous computing [technology](#). Its aim is to investigate the technical developments needed if electronic information is to be controlled, managed and harnessed, for example to develop new products and services for societal benefit.

More information: More information on aestheticodes can be found on the following [website](#).

Provided by University of Nottingham

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