



INFORMATION SHEET N°29

Scanner, QR code, barcode, PDF

Your phone is a scanner in your pocket

Pay a bill, compare a price, scan a document — all with your phone.

SENIORPHONE ADVICE

Your phone's camera does much more than take photos — it can read, scan and digitise in seconds.

You don't need to buy a scanner or barcode reader. Your phone can already do it all — you just need to know how.

Your phone has a camera that can read codes, scan documents and create PDFs. These features are free, already installed or easy to download, and can simplify your daily life.



The 4 main uses



QR code

A square of pixels containing information — a link, a text, a bill reference number. You scan it with the phone camera.



Barcode

The vertical lines on products in shops. You can scan them to see the price in other stores and compare.



Scan a document

Photograph a letter, prescription or form — your phone turns it into a clear image, ready to send.



Create a PDF

Turn several document photos into a single PDF file — handy for sending documents by email.



How to scan a QR code

1

Open your phone's camera

On most phones, the camera automatically recognises QR codes. No special app needed.



iPhone: open the normal "Camera" app. Android: same, or use Google Lens.

2

Point the camera at the QR code

Hold the phone about 15–20 cm from the QR code. Wait 2–3 seconds. A notification appears at the top of the screen.



No need to press anything — the phone detects automatically.

3

Read the notification before clicking

A notification shows the content of the QR code — a link, an address, a text. Read it before acting. If it is an unknown link, do not click.



See sheet N°2 (Security) for fraudulent QR codes — never scan a QR code received in your letterbox without checking.



The Swiss QR invoice — pay in 3 clicks

1

Find the QR code on your bill

Since 2022, Swiss bills have a QR square with a Swiss cross in the bottom right corner. This is the official QR invoice.

 *The Swiss cross in the centre of the QR code guarantees it is a genuine official Swiss bill.*

2

Open your banking app

In your e-banking app, look for the "Pay" button or the camera/scanner icon. Each bank calls it something different.

 *PostFinance: "Pay" button → "Scan". BCV: camera icon. UBS: "Pay a bill".*

3

Scan and confirm

Point the camera at the QR code on the bill. All the details fill in automatically. Check the amount and confirm.

 *That's it! No more need to enter an IBAN, amount or reference by hand.*

||| Scan a barcode — compare prices

1

Download Google Lens (if not already installed)

Google Lens is free and can scan any barcode to find the product and compare prices online.

 *Android: Google Lens is often already installed. iPhone: download it free from the App Store.*

2

Scan the product's barcode

Open Google Lens, point the camera at the vertical lines on the product. In a few seconds you see the product name and its price elsewhere.

 *Very useful in supermarkets to check if it is cheaper on Digitec, Galaxus or Amazon.*



Scan a document and create a PDF

1

Use your phone's built-in app

iPhone: the "Notes" app can scan directly. Android: Google Drive has a built-in scanner function. Free and simple.

 iPhone: open Notes → new note → camera icon → "Scan Documents".

2

Photograph the document

Place the document on a flat, well-lit surface. The phone automatically detects the edges and corrects the perspective.

 Good light = better result. Avoid shadows on the document.

3

Save or share as PDF

After scanning, you can save the document as a PDF, send it by email or save it in Google Drive or iCloud.

 Handy for sending a prescription, form or administrative document by email.



The best free apps



Google Lens

QR codes, barcodes, text, translation. All in one.

✓ Free



Adobe Scan

Document scanner, professional quality PDF creation.

✓ Free



Google Drive

Built-in scanner + cloud storage.

✓ Free



Notes (iPhone)

Built-in scanner on iPhone. Simple, fast, already installed.

✓ Free



Banking app

Scan QR invoices directly from your banking app.

✓ Free



QR & Barcode Scanner

Dedicated app for QR codes and barcodes.

✓ Free



SeniorPhone advice

To make the best use of your scanner:

- Good light and stable surface = quality scan — avoid shadows and reflections
- For QR invoices: always use your official banking app, not a third-party app
- Google Lens also recognises text — very useful for copying an address or phone number
- On iPhone, the Notes scanner function automatically creates multi-page PDFs
- Save important scans in Google Drive or iCloud — accessible anywhere
- Google Lens can also translate foreign text in real time — just point the camera



Mistakes to avoid

Watch out

-  Never scan a QR code received in your letterbox without verifying its origin (see sheet N°2)
-  Beware of scanner apps that request excessive permissions (access to contacts, SMS...)
-  Do not install unknown "QR code scanner" apps — Google Lens or the camera are sufficient
-  A QR code displayed in a public place may have been replaced with a fraudulent one

Key takeaways

- The camera is sufficient for most QR codes — no special app needed.
- Swiss QR invoice: Swiss cross in the centre → scan with your banking app to pay in 3 clicks.
- Barcode: Google Lens to compare prices in shops.
- Scan a document: Notes (iPhone) or Google Drive (Android) — free and simple.
- Always check the URL of a QR code before clicking — if unknown, do not click.

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Safety — Essential reminders



Never share your passwords or codes with anyone

Not by phone, not by email, not by SMS. Your bank and the police will never ask for them.



Hidden number — do not answer

A hidden number deliberately conceals its identity. Hang up without hesitation.



Unknown number — avoid answering

Let it ring, wait for a voicemail, call back only if necessary. Never call back a 0900 number.



Fake police or banker — hang up and call 117

The real police and your bank will NEVER ask you to hand over money or your PIN by phone.

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