

PLU QR Codes – Guide

What are QR codes?

Quick-response (QR) codes are two-dimensional barcodes of black and white sequences within an image/graphic that can be quickly scanned and read by an imaging device (usually a phone) to provide data. It is like a barcode for directing web traffic, although it can store other data. This is how we use them at PLU.

There are more than 30 types of QR codes. For PLU's purposes we are going to limit the overview to QR codes related to web direction.

The two that we must stay aware of are Standard and Dynamic. Standard QR codes are used to create a fixed image of a URL (web address). A Dynamic QR code is a fixed image, but within the system it is built the target URL may be changed dynamically.

What type of QR codes does the PLU web content management system generate (CMS)?

The type of QR code that is generated within the PLU CMS are all Dynamic. The reason for this is so that the intended URL the QR code is directing a user to, can be changed.

How are QR codes generated in the PLU CMS?

The process for creating a QR code is within the 'Redirect' function of the PLU website backend. A 'Redirect' (also known as an 'Alias' or 'Vanity') URL is created with a URL target (the intended web address). When published a QR code is generated that reflects the redirect URL. This allows us to change the target URL as needed.

Once generated the QR code can be downloaded and shared as needed. The QR code will work as long as the redirect URL is active.

NOTE: a redirect cannot be a target URL. For example: a redirect of /admission could not be created because there is a target URL of /admission that already exists.

Why do we use our own QR code generator?

PLU uses its own QR code generator with the web CMS because QR generators that are available can have limitations. Typically Standard QR codes remain as long as the URL is active, but Dynamic QR codes can have usage limitations and can expire based on those generators' storage capacities and rates.

By generating QR codes within the PLU web CMS we control the target, lifespan and usage of the QR code.

Can QR codes be tracked?

Yes. Within the 'Redirect' function of the PLU web CMS there is a function that can add UTM parameters to the target URL of the redirect. By default this function is not active. When activated it provides options for UTM parameters of Campaign Name, Campaign Medium and Campaign Source (there are additional options if more details are needed).

The UTM parameters are added to the end of the target URL and can be tracked within Google Analytics because it is now a unique URL. Because the QR code that is generated is a reflection of the redirect and not the target URL with UTM parameters, the target URL and UTM parameters can be changed dynamically.

To activate this, it must be known that tracking is needed. We do this for various campaigns. If it is not activated the QR code will only be tracked with all other traffic of the target URL and not specific to the QR code.

How should QR codes be requested?

QR codes should be requested through the PLU web team directly, either through the Redirect/Alias request form or directly from who oversees a specific website.

If it is a QR code that requires to be at the highest level – plu.edu/REDIRECT, then the request should come to the PLU web team.

QR codes that can use plu.edu/department/REDIRECT can be generated through that department's Web Deputy. Assistance from the web team is available.

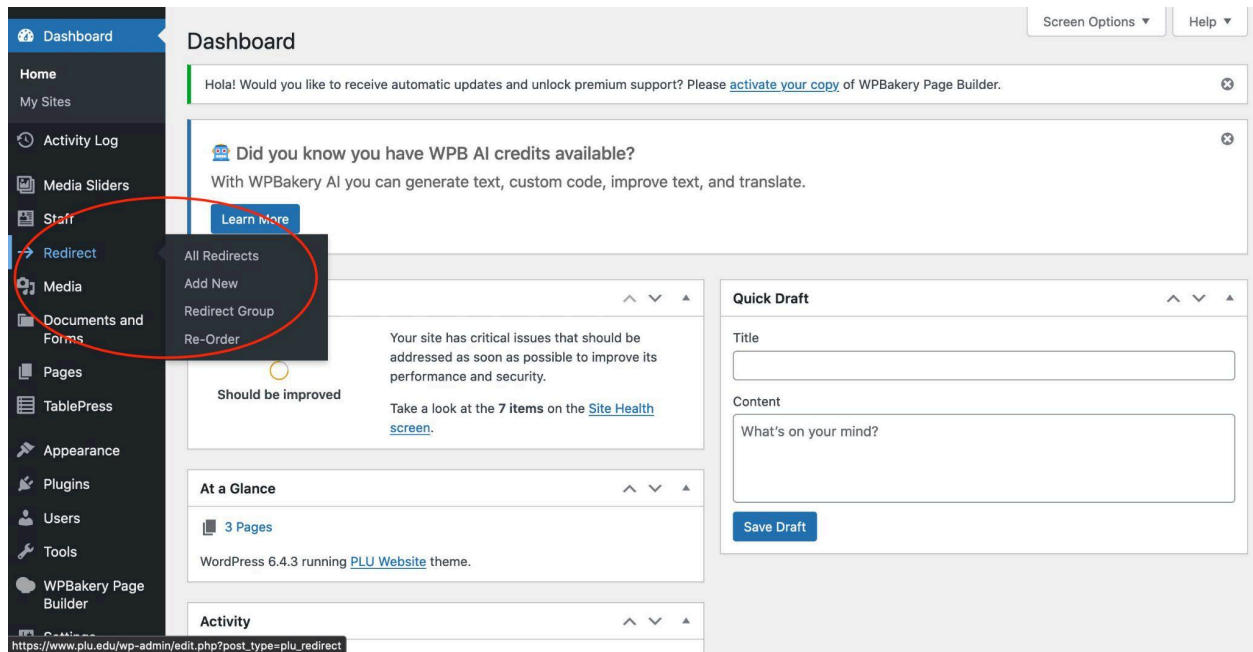
Always test

QR codes should always be tested before final production as part of the proofing stage.

QR codes that are included on Print and Copy requests should be tested. They may not have been updated using this system or could be using an outside source. If it is a PLU department, it should be generated through the PLU web CMS. Student organizations may not be part of this process.

Creating a QR Code in the PLU Web CMS

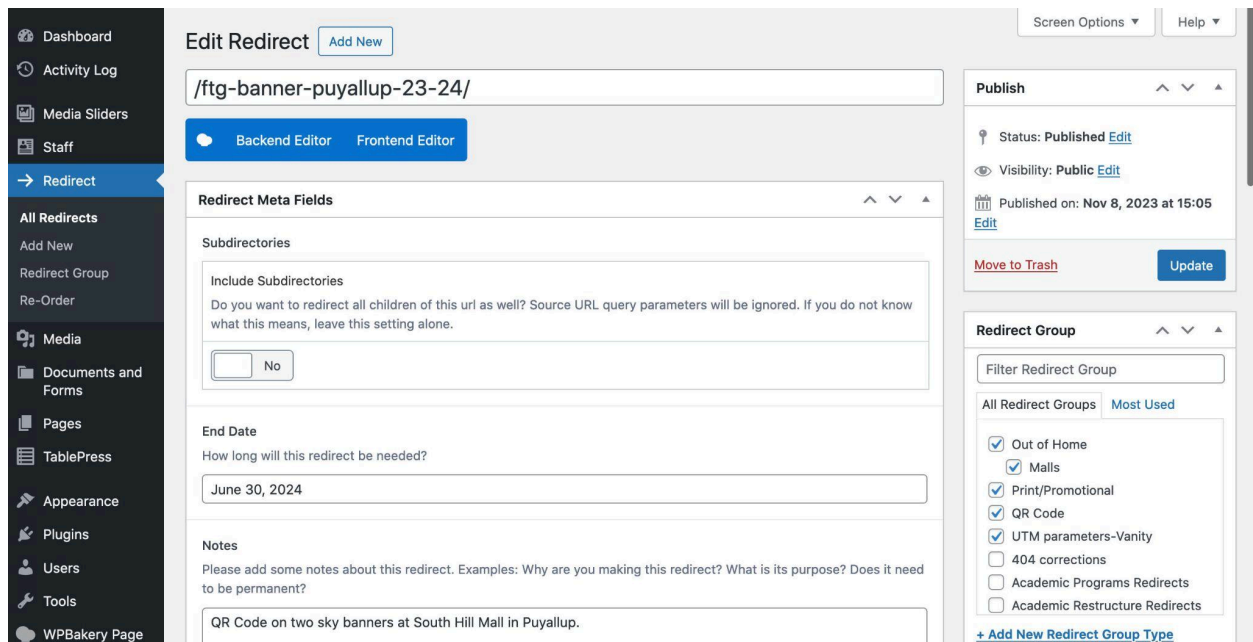
Step 1: After logging into your website on wordpress go to the 'redirect' area of the site.



Step 2: Add in your 'redirect' it should start with your website title.

For example, /admission/survey

(/department-url-title/redirect-title)



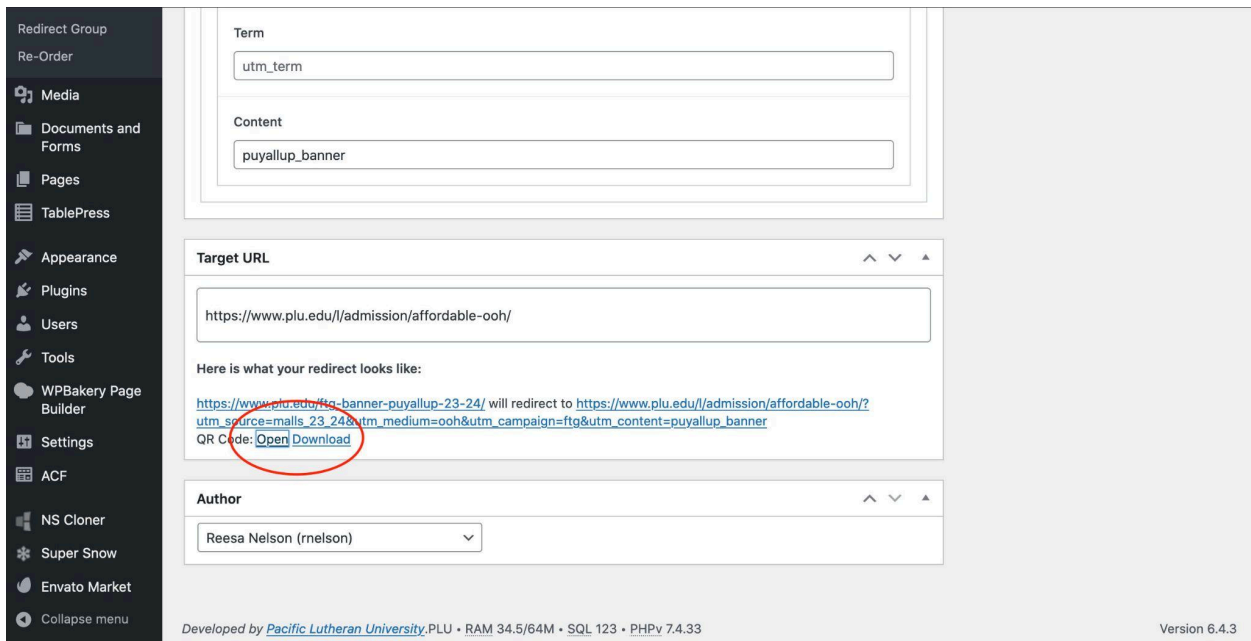
In the 'Redirect Group' (right side) create a group called 'QR Code' and check the box. (

This may need to be created if it has not already by typing in the name and clicking '+Add New Redirect Group Type'. It will help in organizing the 'redirects' you create.

You can also put in a timeframe you would like this in place. It does not expire, but gives a reminder about if it is needed any longer. There is also an area you can put notes in about the 'redirect'.

Step 3: Add your 'Target URL'. This is where you put in the URL you intend the redirect to go to. This area can be changed without changing the redirect or qr code.

Once this is complete publish the redirect. A QR code will be generated to download below the 'target' URL area (at the bottom of the page). Download the QR Code.



Redirect Group
Re-Order

Media
Documents and Forms
Pages
TablePress
Appearance
Plugins
Users
Tools
WPBakery Page Builder
Settings
ACF
NS Cloner
Super Snow
Envato Market
Collapse menu

Term
utm_term

Content
puyallup_banner

Target URL
https://www.plu.edu//admission/affordable-ooh/

Here is what your redirect looks like:
https://www.plu.edu/ftg-banner-puyallup-23-24/ will redirect to https://www.plu.edu//admission/affordable-ooh/?utm_source=malls_23_24&utm_medium=ooh&utm_campaign=ftg&utm_content=puyallup_banner
QR Code: [Open](#) [Download](#)

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Tracking: If you want tracking on the redirect enable the UTM parameters. This creates a unique URL to this redirect to be tracked within PLU's Google Analytics.

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Analytics

Enable
Yes ☐

Fields

Source
malls_23_24

Medium
ooh

Campaign
ftg

Term
utm_term

Content
puyallup_banner

If you need a redirect that is shorter without the department web title included, you can make a request through the [Web Redirect Request Form](#). If you need a QR code with that redirect request check the QR code section of the form.