

# How black and white squares create a living T-Rex

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## A start-up from Magdeburg breathes new life into QR Code

Whenever Daniel Anderson, managing director of 3DQR GmbH in Magdeburg, is asked about the new lease of life he has given to QR code, previously believed by many to have been consigned to the history books, his eyes light up and he can't stop talking. "It doesn't not really make much sense if a QR code doesn't contain more than one link to a web page. With just one link, an internet search is probably faster, or just typing the page into the browser on your mobile phone," explains the young man.

And this is exactly where the idea of the Magdeburg start-up steps in. The free app with the name "3DQR" has breathed new life into the small black and white grid – in the best sense of the words. Run the app, hold the camera over the QR code and a 3D dinosaur suddenly appears on display of the telephone or tablet. "Of course, the T-Rex is just one of many possible examples. We created it for an exhibition at the Museum of Natural History in Berlin in which the skeleton of a T-Rex went on display," explains Anderson. Yet sophisticated and complex tasks don't present any problems either: generators and switch boxes, as well as items of furniture and detailed aircraft engines have also been realised. "Augmented reality solutions of this kind have existed for some time. However, they were associated with a considerable amount of individual effort and were subject to certain technical limitations. "By linking up with the existing QR code technology, we have developed a solution which drastically reduces the amount of work required to create individual augmented reality content. With 3DQR, creating an augmented reality overlay is easier than creating a website. All we need is the 3D data as the basis," says Anderson. The programming work can usually be completed within a few hours and can be stored behind any current QR code. "There are no actual limits," highlights the degree-qualified mechatronics engineer.

## "Pokémon Go" and X-ray vision

"Pokemon Go, the world-famous – and infamous – mobile phone game, is the best thing that could have happened to us," says Daniel Anderson. "That game has made everyone realise how augmented reality is both straightforward and easy to use. The user simply holds up their phone to their surrounding environment, and the display expands the surrounding reality. The first AR glasses are now available on the market, and I think we are only at the beginning of the AR-era and we are now experiencing the first breakthroughs and changes. It has been Pokemon, however, which has really made people aware of AR." For 3DQR GmbH, developing a simple application which is able to bring a wide variety of different objects to virtual life was the initial goal. Daniel Anderson doesn't want to stop there, however. Similar to X-ray vision, the objects can be divided into their individual components and merged together again in the form of a so-called exploded diagram. 3DQR GmbH believes the application to offer uses in the area of marketing, whether for flyers, brochures or product presentations, but also for maintenance personnel who are charged with working on complex systems.

## Looking back – and then to the future

The 3DQR GmbH team has recently grown again and now numbers five young people. For Daniel Anderson, this is a good sign. "Even though you get to have quite a few sleepless nights as a young entrepreneur, we are already leading the market in Saxony-Anhalt – and we are the only company to offer this technology," says the young businessman with a proud smile. Before launching his idea in the form of a new business start-up, he had worked at the Fraunhofer Institute for Factory Operation and Automation in Magdeburg, where he researched the new possibilities offered by smartphones. "I carried the idea around with me for a long time – and it is now becoming a reality in the form of its own company," explains Anderson.

The company was officially launched a year ago with the help of an "ego" start-up loan from the Investment Bank of Saxony and two Business Angels. Anderson refuses to measure the success of his company on the basis of its initial orders alone, however – which have included the virtually-enhanced trade fair catalogue of the federal state of Saxony-Anhalt for the CEBIT 2016. "As a start-up in Saxony-Anhalt you also get plenty of support from and great access to the top people in the government ministries and at the Investment and Marketing Corporation of Saxony-Anhalt," highlights Daniel Anderson, discussing the location. He continues: "it can sometimes take quite a bit of effort to convince business leaders and potential customers in the region about the new opportunities, possibilities and advantages of the "virtual third dimension", though." In 2016, however, the new company's creativity and entrepreneurial spirit convinced the expert jury of the "Hugo Junkers Prize for Research and Innovation" of the Ministry of Economics, Science and Digitization of the State of Saxony-Anhalt straight away: it was awarded second place in the specialist category "Information and Communication Technology". The prize is proudly displayed in the offices of the young company. It is a tangible product, so to speak – if you want to experience the products of 3DQR GmbH, however, it is necessary to step into the virtual third dimension.

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