

GoodGuide iPhone App Scans Bar Codes for Environmental and Health Ratings

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When I first learned about [GoodGuide](#) last March, I was excited at the prospect of a Web site that lets consumers get detailed environmental, health, and social info on more than 50,000 products and companies. Then came the obligatory iPhone app to let people quickly get the scoop on orange juice brands and cleaning supplies while standing in the supermarket. And now GoodGuide has announced its most exciting innovation yet: an updated iPhone app that scans barcodes for health and environmental ratings.

The process is simple. You just hit the scan tab on the app, point the phone at a product's barcode, and voila, instant product ratings on baby shampoo, yogurt, and everything in between. So even the laziest among us have no excuse to slack on social responsibility. And did I mention that the app is free?

If you don't have an iPhone, GoodGuide offers a text messaging system. A text to "41411" saying "gguide shampoo," for example, will tell you that Tom's of Maine, Burt's Bees, and Nurture My Body are the top scorers in the category.

GoodGuide's product rating algorithm may not be foolproof, but it's pretty reliable--the company takes into account health performance (cancer risks, reproductive hazards, skin and eye irritation), environmental performance (emissions, natural resource impacts), and social performance (diversity, compensation, working conditions). Such ratings are difficult to assess for companies that remain mum on internal practices, but a lack of transparency is usually a bad sign anyway. And until another organization

comes along to challenge GoodGuide's work, the barcode scanning iPhone app might be worth a download.

[[GoodGuide](#)]