

# An OPCUG Product Review



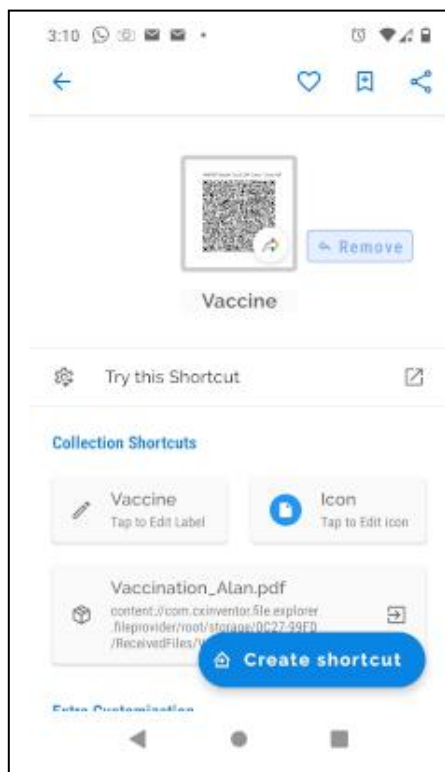
## Create Shortcuts to Files on an Android Smartphone

by Alan German

At a recent Q&A session there was much discussion about Ontario's vaccine passports and how to have the associated PDF files displayed on Android smartphones. Surprisingly, creating a shortcut on the home screen isn't built into the operating system. Consequently, various techniques were suggested, including using Google Drive, to achieve this. (See: [Enhanced vaccine certificates](#).) However, my preferred solution is to use an app.

*Shortcut Maker* is available on Google's Play Store. It has been downloaded more than a million times and has an overall rating of 4.3 stars out of five. In my view the app deserves this high rating. It is extremely easy to use and allows shortcuts to be produced for any type of file, and a number of other items such as contacts and websites.

One minor downside is that the size of the associated icon that can be produced is limited to that of a regular screen icon. This is a pity since being able to display a larger portion of a text file or image as the shortcut icon would assist in readily identifying the item to be loaded. However, to some extent, this deficiency is offset by the fact that any image can be cropped inside the app to create a custom icon. Various users have commented on the desirability of creating larger icons so perhaps the developer will include this feature in a future release.



Once installed, running the app provides a graphical menu of items for which shortcuts can be created. Selecting *Files* allows browsing in a file manager of choice to identify the desired file.

As shown in the screenshot, prior to clicking on the *Create shortcut* button, the user can try the shortcut and ensure that the file loads as expected.

There are also options to edit the label that will be displayed below the screen icon and to edit the default icon. For example, here the PDF file name, *Vaccination\_Alان.pdf*, which is used by default for the label (and is truncated) has been replaced with *Vaccine* (which displays in full).

The default icon can be replaced with text, an Emoji, a system icon, or an image file. If an image file is chosen, a crop tool allows just a portion of the image to be selected. The cropped region is limited to a pre-defined square but this is frequently sufficient to enable the icon to be much more meaningful than the default icon.

Note that, in this case, the icon to be used for the screen display is an image of a QR code which I would suggest is very appropriate since this code is the basis for the electronic proof of vaccination.

Bottom Line:

Shortcut Maker (Freeware)

Version 3.9

Rushikesh Kamewar

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=rk.android.app.shortcutmaker>

