

facebook

twitter

You Tube

SMART

SOCIAL MEDIA AND RELATED TECHNOLOGIES

GROUP

flickr™

Linked in

URL Shorteners

The Benefits Of Using URL Shorteners

By: Jason Hemsoth

September 2010



This summary is an original report researched, produced and released by BMG to help construction and related equipment manufacturers understand social media and related technologies. © Barlow Marketing Group – All rights reserved.

URL Shorteners

The Benefits of Using URL Shorteners

We've all been excited about discovering something new on the Internet. A lot of times, we immediately want to share it with our friends, family or colleagues. In the past, this would mean copying and pasting a very long web address into an e-mail and sending it off.

Sometimes the links are so long and cumbersome and appear to have strange code in them, that they make users are wary about clicking on them. And with its 140-character limit, forget about posting it to Twitter. URL Shorteners can fix that.

What Is A URL Shortener?

The concept behind a URL shortener is very simple: convert a very long, complicated-looking web link, to a very short, manageable link that is easy to share. There are several services that do this, with TinyURL being the first in 2002. Others include tr.im, ow.ly and NanoURL.

One of the most popular URL shorteners is bit.ly. Along with other similar services, bit.ly provides users with many benefits beyond just shortening a URL. The most important of these benefits is the ability to easily track the links and access statistics about how many times the link was clicked on, when it was clicked on and which entities were the top referrers. These statistics update instantly.

Bit.ly Link Example

The following link was created using bit.ly: <http://bit.ly/bx9GLX>. If you choose to, you can create an account to login and view the link's statistics. There is, however, a very easy way to see these statistics without creating an account. Simply by placing a "+" directly after the link (in this case: <http://bit.ly/bx9GLX+>), you can access a page with the up-to-the-minute stats, charts and information about your link. This information allows you to easily track how articles are passed along between friends and colleagues. For businesses, it can be an integral tool for tracking an article's or a campaign's success.

Other URL Shortening Services

Today, several websites have rolled out their own shortening services. Here are a few of the competitors:

- Facebook (fb.me)
- ESPN (es.pn)
- WordPress (wp.me)
- Google (goo.gl)
- YouTube (youtu.be)
- Twitter (t.co)
- Your own domain (awe.sm)

The next time you share a link on your company's blog or share a big announcement on Facebook, consider using a URL shortener service. There's a much better chance it will be shared, as you can fit more links and content in less space and it allows you to give more valuable information about your message, which is crucial in today's world of smartphones, texting and mobile Internet.