

# A Natural Language URL-Shortener

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Hack and Tell  
eBay, New York  
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can be used to track visitors to the main site



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**easier to remember**

**short only if you get there first (tend to be long)**

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The trick to picking always-readable short URL-paths:

use the characters for the most common Chinese words.

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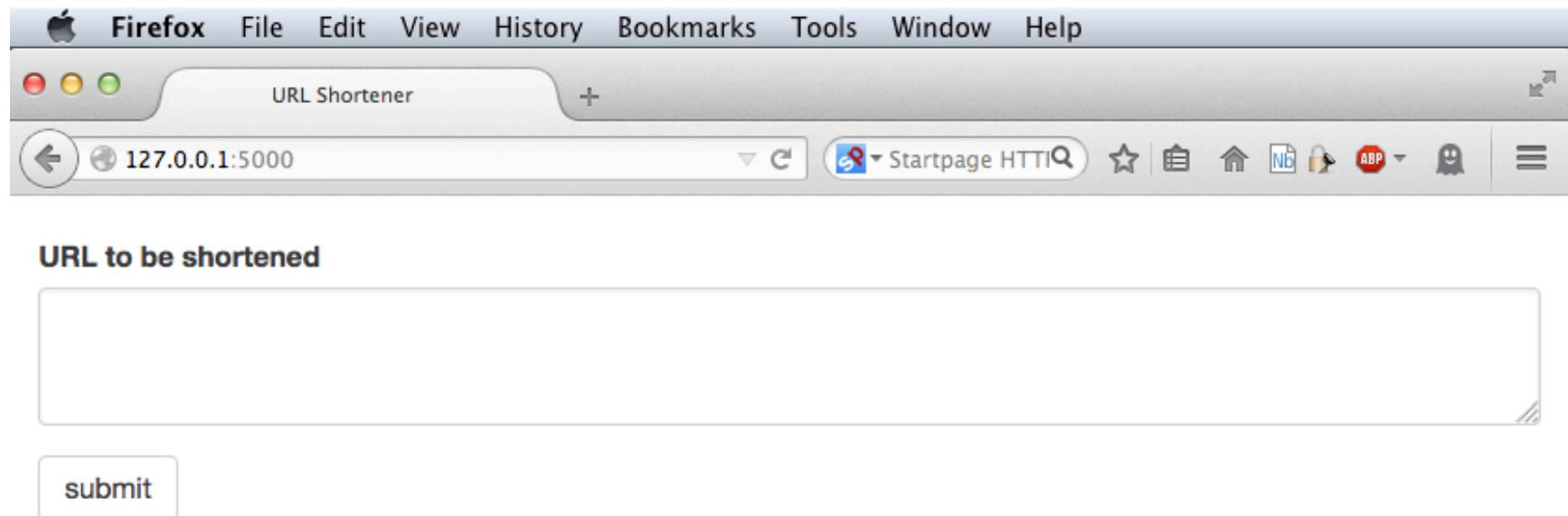
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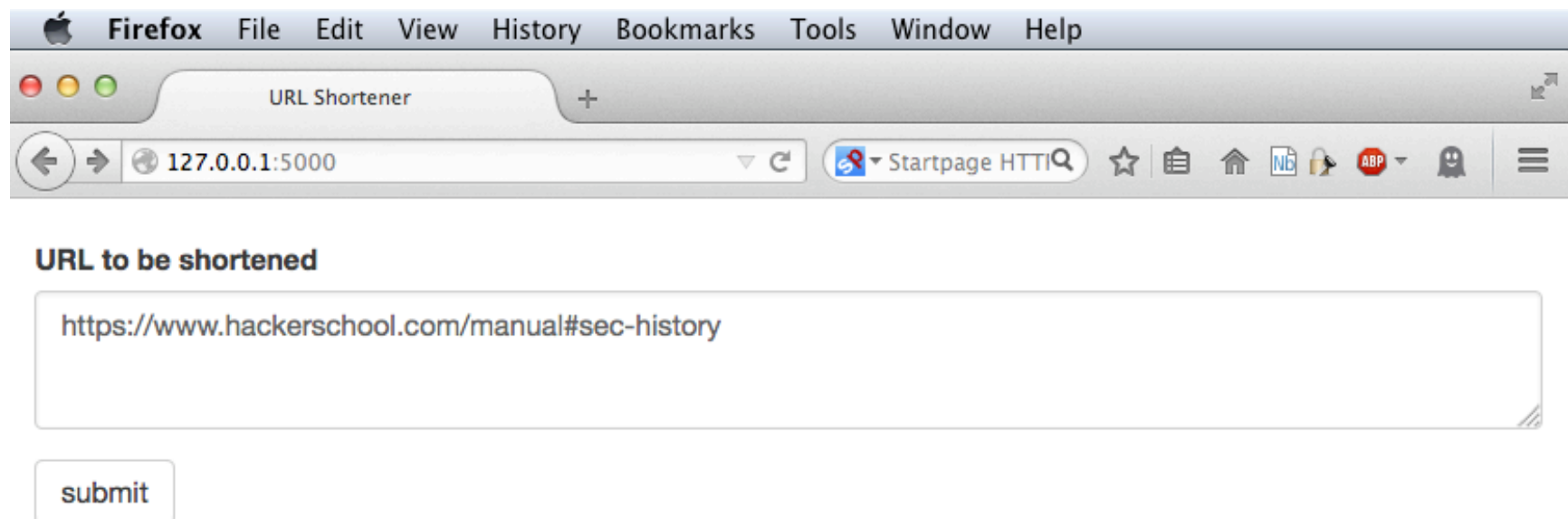
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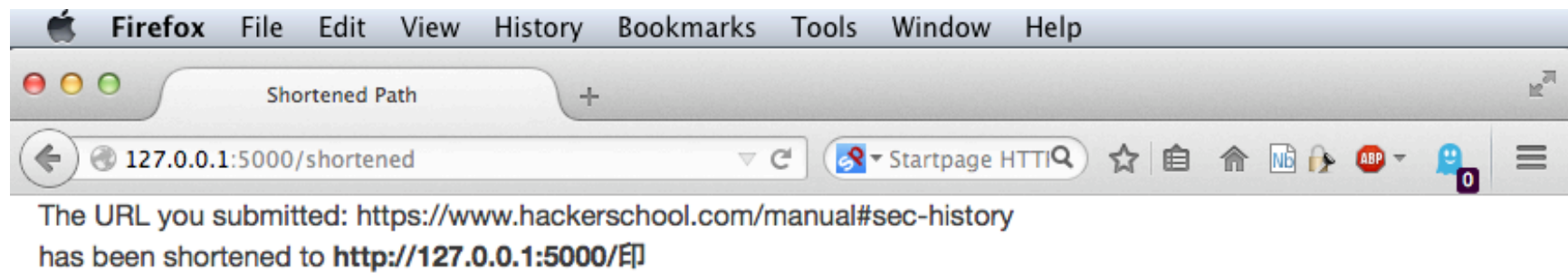
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readable?	guaranteed	probably not

Code for proof-of-concept on my public Git repository.



*Branner, A Natural Language URL-Shortener  
Hack and Tell, 20140610. p. 29/42*





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`http://127.0.0.1:5000/印`



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Next 18,609,625,000 URLs → three characters

`http://127.0.0.1:5000/天鼻歪`

Always readable

Always readable (may not make sense, since random...)

印: 'to print'; 厉吉: 'to pass through auspiciousness';

天鼻歪: 'Heaven's nose is crooked'

Note:

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Note: many custom shorteners allow Chinese characters:

<http://bit.ly/史> (史: 'history')

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Note: many custom shorteners allow Chinese characters:

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Also note:

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Also note: the advantage of shortening to Chinese does not mean bandwidth savings:

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Note: many custom shorteners allow Chinese characters:

<http://bit.ly/史> (史: 'history')

Also note: the advantage of shortening to Chinese does not mean bandwidth savings:

<http://bit.ly/史> may be sent from your browser as

<http://bit.ly/%E5%8F%B2>



One more thing to think about:

Someone commented that without knowing Chinese, she would find this system perhaps of limited use. Imagine!

An intermediate solution would be Korean Han'gŭl 한글, where fully pronounceable syllables are written in one-character-width glyphs composed of alphabetic subunits. There are 2100 recognized syllable-glyphs that can be built up of these sub-units by simple principles, although another 9000 are possible graphically. By no means all possible glyphs are meaningful, though. But learning the 40 subunits is a more manageable task than learning the two-plus thousand basic Chinese characters:

ㄱ ㅋ ㆁ ㄷ ㅌ ㄴ ㄹ ㅁ ㅂ ㅅ ㅈ ㅊ ㅌ ㅍ ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅜ ㅠ ㅡ ㅣ .  
ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅜ ㅠ ㅡ ㅣ .

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