

Serving shortDOIs

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The shortDOI service was launched by the International DOI Foundation (IDF) in May 2010. The service creates short versions of the often long DOIs, e.g. **10/dvq** instead of **10.1093/hmg/ddp202** – written as URL this would be <http://doi.org/dvq> instead of <http://doi.org/10.1093/hmg/ddp202>. shortDOIs started as a CrossRef Labs project in 2009 and were originally named TOI DOI – TOI stands for tiny object identifier. For a good introduction I recommend Eric Hellman’s blog post written in May 2010 when the shortDOI service was launched.

shortDOIs provide exactly the same service as normal DOIs, i.e. they redirect the user to the digital resource. They are convenient, particularly for email and Twitter where space is limited. Links to journal articles created by URL shorteners such as bit.ly or goo.gl look similar, but require two redirects (first to dx.doi.org, then to the journal article). But URL shorteners provide additional services to users, e.g. customized links and usage statistics.

As far as I can tell shortDOIs have not become popular since the service started more than a year ago. One important reason is certainly that publishers are not really using them for their journal articles. I don’t think many users will go through the extra steps creating a shortDOI just to use a DOI with Twitter – the Twitter URL shortener t.co will do this automatically for them. Michael Kuhn has created a bookmarklet that makes it a little bit easier to create shortDOIs. If we want shortDOIs to ever become popular, then we should ask journal publishers, bibliographic databases, reference managers and other places that currently use DOIs to enable them.

Starting yesterday ScienceCard is using shortDOIs instead of DOIs, and is also using the shortDOI to link to individual articles on ScienceCard, e.g. <http://sciencecard.org/articles/dvq>. Yesterday I’ve created about 750 shortDOIs for ScienceCard, and this probably already makes ScienceCard one of the larger shortDOI users. I will decide in the coming months whether shortDOIs have improved the ScienceCard service. A nice feature would for example be the announcement of newly published papers via Twitter.



Figure 1: