

Tip of the Week

December 27, 2004



Taming Long URL's

How many times has this happened to you? You want to send someone a cool web address you just found, so you copy the link and email it to them, only to find that the link doesn't work for them because the email split it into two pieces. Driving directions are a good example. If I copy the Yahoo directions for driving from Pittsburgh to Palatine that originally looks like this:

http://maps.yahoo.com/dd_result?ed=64LuWeV.winumBs4YQK1ux0TOv3qQPvJay6MYOdBJ7pX24DiWZcldSgxzic-&csz=Pittsburgh%2C+PA+15205&country=us&tcsz=Palatine%2C+IL+60067&tcountry=us

...Outlook decides to break the link like this instead:

http://maps.yahoo.com/dd_result?ed=64LuWeV.winumBs4YQK1ux0TOv3qQPvJay6MYOdBJ7pX24DiWZcldSgxzic-&csz=Pittsburgh%2C+PA+15205&country=us&tcsz=Palatine%2C+IL+60067&tcountry=us

You can get around this quite easily by using a site called [TinyURL.com](http://tinyurl.com). In the above example, I can convert the directions into a very short address in one simple step using tinyurl.com:

<http://tinyurl.com/459dv>

Pretty cool.

One side effect in doing this is that the conversion makes the actual address invisible to the recipient, so they have no idea where they are being directed to until after they click it. Depending on how you look at it, this can either be an advantage or a disadvantage. It certainly opens the window for a few pranks.