

SHORT AND CLEAN URLs FOR TRACKER ITEMS BY DEFAULT (DON'T PUT THE TITLE INTO THE URL)

Status

🟡 Pending

Priority

3 Want

Task

Short and clean URLs for tracker items by default (don't put the title into the URL)

Add a timesheet

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Description

No bug tracker that I know of (GitHub, GitLab, Bugzilla, Mantis, Trac, RedMine, Phabricator, etc.) dumps the title into the items' URLs. That's just cruft, visual noise that nobody can re-type from memory or when "shouted across the room during a hackfest or by a coworker in the next cubicle", and SEO doesn't matter as much for tracker items (they are not the same intended usecase as wiki pages and such).

The current behavior has the following problems:

- Ludicrously long URLs whenever you paste them somewhere, or in the source code of wiki pages, which looks terrible
- You can't shout the URL at somebody "across the room" unless you know the secret backend implementation detail that the "item####" part is the only required part, which probably nobody knows.
- It breaks web browsers. Web browsers' bookmark managers rely on the URLs to recognize already bookmarked pages when visiting them. Whenever someone changes the title of a tracker item/ticket, it changes the URL, which means you are breaking everybody's browser bookmarks.

If you want to *render* fancy stuff with titles within wiki pages, then expose the title through opengraph metadata and have Tiki look for that metadata when rendering the links on-the-fly in pages.

Tiki already only considers the `$tracker_name$item_number` part to be the only canonical part, so truncating to only that by default would not break anything anyway. The Discourse forums software exposes titles in URLs (possibly for SEO) but they do have automatic redirects all over the place and the canonical part is still the numbers, not the words, and frankly I don't really see why they bother with that words cruft in the URLs.

Ideally, Tiki's URLs format should be `$tracker_name/$item_number` (with a clean "/" visual separation) rather than all stuck together with no separator (which looks/feels unpolished), or `$grouping_or_project_name/$tracker_name/$item_number` (ex: "cypht/issues/435"). This is how I've seen it done nicely elsewhere. I would tend to think it should be simple & clean by default, and if you have an option for the elongated version, then that can be the optional (non-default) behavior, because the only case where I can imagine this being a feature is SEO, and it's a very niche usecase that I'm not even sure is valid except in some corner cases.

Files

1. [Tiki URLs Vs Bookmarks](#) 🔍

Emails

Assigned to
merci.jacob

Assigned by
jeff.fortin-tam

Also visible to
1- Visible to Anonymous (Public content)

Related

Created
Monday 15 of August, 2022 12:08:51 EDT
by Jeff Fortin T.

LastModif
Friday 05 of July, 2024 07:57:52 EDT

Comments



Hi @jeff.fortin-tam

merci.jacob 2024-07-04 11:38

I came to realize that there is the preference "feature_sefurl_title_trackeritem" which permits appending the tracker item title to the URL when switched on. However, this preference is off by default, which might be the intended behavior. Maybe there has been an update on that part.



"Whenever someone changes the title of a tracker item/ticket, it changes the URL, which means you are breaking everybody's browser bookmarks."

[Marc Laporte](#) 2024-07-04 12:59

These three lead to the same place, to changing title of tracker item doesn't break links:

[item81936](#)

[item81936-Short-and-clean-](#)

[item81936-Short-and-clean-URLs-for-tracker-items-by-default-don-t-put-the-title-into-the-URL](#)

And the current one because the canonical URL in html:



```
<link rel="canonical"
href="https://avan.tech/item81936-Short-and-clean-URLs-for-tracker-
items-by-default-don-t-put-the-title-into-the-URL">
```



Demonstration of how it breaks browser bookmarks

Jeff Fortin T. 2024-07-04 13:24

Watch the video demonstration attached above to see how your URL scheme breaks browser bookmarks in various web browsers.

Shouldn't the short number-only URL be the "canonical" URL anyway? Why put the whole title in the URL, while that is not the point of a URL (that's why we have the "title" HTML element)?



Interesting

Marc Laporte 2024-07-04 14:12

First thing: As @merci.jacob indicates, the default behavior is what you want. [Rule #3](#) is helping us here. Then, only when preference "feature_sefurl_title_trackeritem" is activated where it diverges from your expectations.

"SEO doesn't matter as much for tracker items"

I get the impression it does help SEO for finding bugs on dev.tiki.org but I can't prove this.

A problem: If a tracker item title is changed, the bookmark is no longer correct. Maybe browsers should bookmark the canonical URL? https://bugzilla.mozilla.org/show_bug.cgi?id=502418

"unless you know the secret backend implementation detail that the "item####" part is the only required part, which probably nobody knows."

Agreed. We should add a search box for searching item number. Maybe with an auto-complete preview of the title. Reminds me of [item81686-Search-usability-not-easy-to-run-a-titles-only-search-within-wiki-pages-only-or-tasks-only](#)



Shouldn't the shortform be the canonical URL?

Jeff Fortin T. 2024-07-05 00:07

Fair point, however:

- The shortform ID-only URL variant is the only invariant form that always works in all circumstances, and therefore should be declared as the canonical URL in the metadata in all circumstances, no? (and this would also

ensure bookmarks would never break unless the domain changes)

- I sometimes wonder, why does it not do an actual HTTP redirect when hitting a variant of the URL?
- Isn't it cleaner, for autocompletion and in-code linking, to always use the shortform (like in other similar tracking systems where you just cite the #id_number or tracker_project#id_number and it auto-links to the corresponding item)? And this would also go along with the discoverability aspect of this (i.e. normal users not knowing the easter egg detail that the shorthand form is valid)

(Sure, browsers should support canonical URLs for bookmarks handling; but after 15 years, I'm not holding my breath on seeing that happen in Firefox. I filed an enhancement request [in Epiphany](#) for this too.)



"Shouldn't the short number-only URL be the "canonical" URL anyway?"

[Marc Laporte](#) 2024-07-04 14:22

hmmm, maybe.

@merci.jacob Please read up on Canonical URL and advise.



@merci.jacob Please read up on Canonical URL and advise.

[merci.jacob](#) 2024-07-05 04:50

I think @jeff.fortin-tam is right about using the short form as the canonical URL. His demonstration video clearly illustrates why it should be so.

I think this applies as well to blogs and articles.
I'm going to raise a merge request with this slight modification.



We have got it
merci.jacob 2024-07-05 07:57

https://gitlab.com/tikiwiki/tiki/-/merge_requests/5355