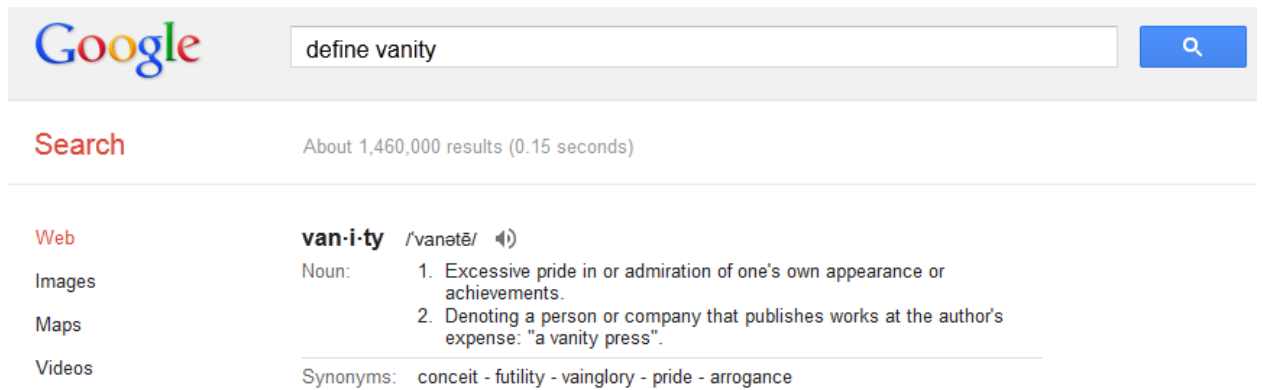


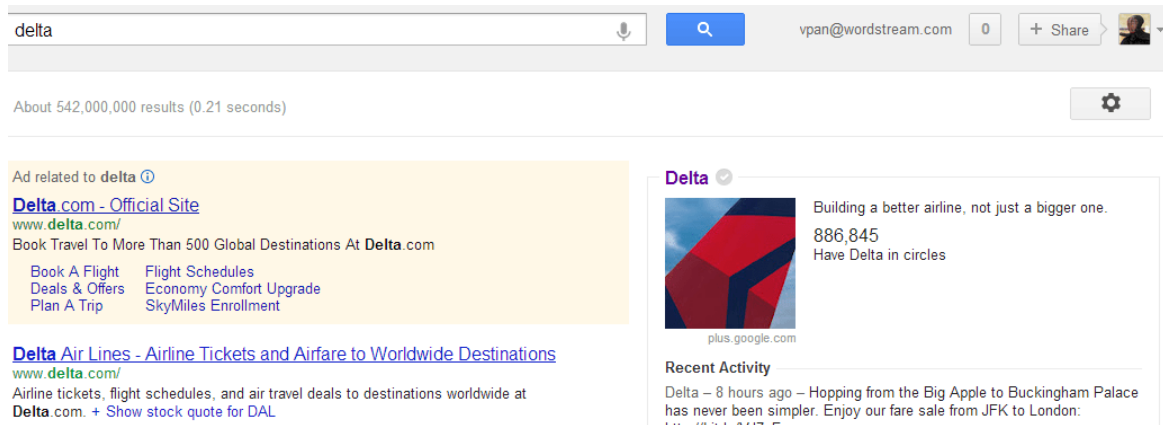
Vanity URL: What It Is & How To Get One



The screenshot shows a Google search interface. The search bar contains the text "define vanity". Below the search bar, the word "Search" is displayed in red, followed by the text "About 1,460,000 results (0.15 seconds)". The search results are categorized under "Web". The word "van-i-ty" is shown with its phonetic transcription "/ˈvænətē/" and a speaker icon. Below this, the word is defined as a noun with two numbered points: "1. Excessive pride in or admiration of one's own appearance or achievements." and "2. Denoting a person or company that publishes works at the author's expense: 'a vanity press'." Below the definition, synonyms are listed: "conceit - futility - vainglory - pride - arrogance".

Vanity URLs have been long misunderstood, for good reason

When we got our Google+ vanity URL before Wordstream Technologies, Wordstream Publishing, and Wordstream the game, it was a moment of celebration. We were about to get an *unfair* advantage over our competitors with our newly acquired gplus vanity URL.



The screenshot shows a Google search for "delta". The search bar contains the text "delta". Below the search bar, the text "About 542,000,000 results (0.21 seconds)" is displayed. The search results are categorized under "Ad related to delta". The first result is "Delta.com - Official Site" with the URL "www.delta.com" and the text "Book Travel To More Than 500 Global Destinations At Delta.com". Below this, there are links for "Book A Flight", "Deals & Offers", "Plan A Trip", "Flight Schedules", "Economy Comfort Upgrade", and "SkyMiles Enrollment". The second result is "Delta Air Lines - Airline Tickets and Airfare to Worldwide Destinations" with the URL "www.delta.com" and the text "Airline tickets, flight schedules, and air travel deals to destinations worldwide at Delta.com. + Show stock quote for DAL". To the right of the search results, there is a Google+ profile for "Delta". The profile picture is a red and blue geometric shape. The profile text says "Building a better airline, not just a bigger one." and "886,845 Have Delta in circles". Below the profile picture, there is a "Recent Activity" section with the text "Delta - 8 hours ago - Hopping from the Big Apple to Buckingham Palace has never been simpler. Enjoy our fare sale from JFK to London: ...".

Try searching any brand with a vanity Google URL and you will find that the Google knowledge graph will showcase you over other brands. i.e. Delta Airlines

What is a Vanity URL?

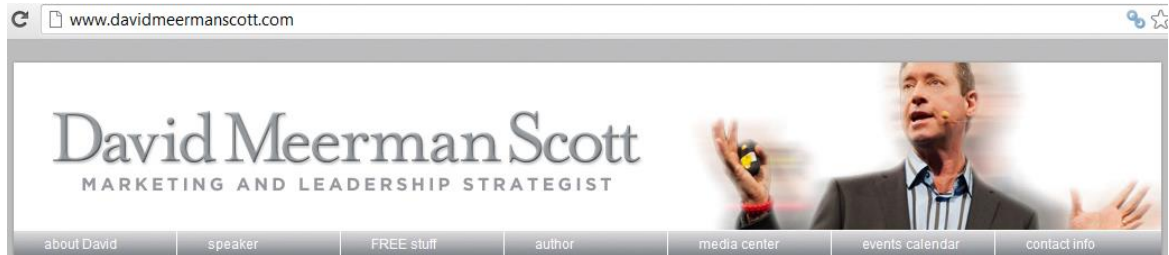
Vanity URL Definition: A vanity URL is a unique web address that is branded for marketing purposes.

Vanity URLs are a type of custom URL that exists to help users remember and find a specific page of your website. Therefore your vanity URLs should be easy to remember, use, and share.

There are many benefits to being the first to claim your vanity URL – and just as many setbacks if someone else beats you to it. Many social media websites such as Facebook,

LinkedIn, Twitter, and most recently, Google Plus offer users and brands the option to customize their gplus profile URLs.

Pro tip: Vanity URLs should not be confused with vanity domains, which are domains named after the owner's name. e.g.



My friend David was beaten to the vanity domain DavidScott.com – which may seem disadvantageous at first, but I think his pentasyllabic name sounds more catchy and memorable.

[7 Reasons Why Vanity URLs Are Awesome, Plus Actionable Examples](#)

To get your brains rolling as to how you can take online marketing offline and into the real world, I've highlighted 7 reasons and some creative ways to use vanity URLs. We'll be using our newly acquired Google plus vanity URL to showcase these vanity url examples.

Find us on Google Plus!

<https://www.plus.google.com/+WordStream>

VS

Find us on Google Plus!

<https://plus.google.com/b/110962037896041723674>

1. Easier to Remember

Have you ever recommended a website to someone but they were too lazy to Google it? Worse yet, have you ever found something cool on the web but can't get the right keyword combination to have it show up on search engines? With an easy-to-remember web address, potential website visitors are less likely to give up before they even reach your website. Plus (hah, get it?), it also looks a lot more pleasing to the eye. This is the reason why URL shortening services like bit.ly and tinyurl are so popular.

2. Builds More Trust

What's more pleasing to the eye also builds more trust. This is common sense not commonly applied here. Which of these two would I have second thoughts about clicking on?

Here's how I see it: there's irrefutable harmony in our new vanity URL – the call to action matches up with a beautifully honest URL. Without a vanity URL for Google plus, you would create a nasty case of cognitive dissonance to the user. Can I really trust a garbled mess of numbers to lead me to where you say it will? Hyperbole aside, establishing trust on the internet is hard stuff.

3. Easier to Share

By being obviously shorter, easier to remember, and more trustworthy, our GPlus vanity URL is also engineered to be more sharable than before. Because it's made up of words instead of random numbers, we can now share it verbally without reading out the numbers – heck, who would ever read out our old Google Plus URL? In most cases, people would resort to search to find it.

Pro-tip: Want to keep things shorter and simpler without losing trust? Here are the shortest links you can possibly create on the “big 4” of social media in order of brevity.

Google Plus: google.com/+WordStream

Twitter: twitter.com/wordstream

Facebook: facebook.com/wordstream

LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/wordstream

4. Easier to Use

Now that it's easy to remember, share, and evokes trust, we'll actually want to include our Google plus URL when we're offering options for our fans to follow us.

Thank You For Attending!



To learn more about WordStream:

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/WordStream>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/wordstream>

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/company/wordstream>

Google Plus:

<https://plus.google.com/b/110962037896041723674>

Something here is not like the others!

This is a rendition of what your thank you slides may've looked like.

If you've seen our webinar thank you pages, you might notice that we've never included a method to follow us on Google Plus – simply because it was hard to use. Font sizes or formats have to be changed to accommodate a URL which doesn't clearly represent what it does. If it's hard to use internally, it'll be hard to push out externally to customers. Now that it's easier to use, we'll make it available to our growing Google Plus fan base.

5. Empowers Online Sharing

Isn't it amazing? Just a small cosmetic change can have a huge impact on your marketing efforts. If you have a strong Google Plus brand presence and active community – or you plan to have one – then it's smart to build a supporting infrastructure around it. Here are some examples of what you can now do that was previously unfeasible because of one dinky, ugly-looking URL.

Corporate Emails

Ralph J. Folz
CEO
WordStream
rjfolz@wordstream.com

Visit Our Website: <http://www.wordstream.com>
Read Our Blog: <http://www.wordstream.com/blog>
Follow us on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/wordstream>
Become a Facebook Fan: <http://www.facebook.com/wordstream>
Circle us on Google Plus: <http://www.plus.google.com/+wordstream>

Press Releases



Media Contact:
Laura Taylor
VP Acquisition & Experience Design
WordStream, Inc.
617.849.6124
ltaylor@wordstream.com

Visit Our Website: <http://www.wordstream.com>
Follow us on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/wordstream>
Like us on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/wordstream>
Circle us on Google Plus: <http://www.plus.google.com/+wordstream>

Online Presentation Slides

slideshare Present Yourself

Search... Upload Browse

Email Favorite Save file Collect Leads Embed

Take Part in Live Blogging on Twitter / Google+

• Leave a comment on google.com/+WordStream to win a new iPad!

twitter Google+ LinkedIn facebook

WordStream 4

4 / 27

6. Enables Offline Sharing

We all know that there are tons of ways people find our website online – and you certainly don't have to be online to hear about a website. There are plenty of places where you can place your vanity URL on your offline promotional materials to encourage more social activity online. While it's true that companies are now spending less and less on traditional media ads, you'll never know for sure if there's an opportunity lost without testing your ideas out to see how effective they are!

Don't be surprised if these traditional Google advertisements also include a "Learn more on our Google+ Page" in the future since all of Google's efforts have to be tied to social!

Direct Mail



Get a \$100 free Google AdWords coupon when you add us on [Google.com/+Google!](https://www.google.com/+Google/)

Magazine Ads



Learn why at [Google.com/+Google](https://www.google.com/+Google/)

Newspaper Ads



Learn the newest updates at Google.com/+Google

Flyers



Imagine the following scenario: you're on national television and the host gives you the opportunity to [sell your business](#). Aside from your website, wouldn't it be sweet if you could capture and engage them through social media?

TV News



“You can learn more about WordStream on our website [wordstream.com](#), find us on [facebook dot com slash wordstream](#), or [google dot com slash, plus sign, WordStream](#)” – and if you're lucky, you'll have a little display pop-up show on TV. Let's not leave it to lady luck.

Radio

There's no trick here. You would never be able to say [www dot plus dot google dot com slash b slash one one zero nine six two zero three seven eight nine six zero four one seven two three six seven four](#) *deep breath* and expect your listeners to remember or write down the address AND visit your website.

There's just no way without an awesome vanity URL.

Word of Mouth

When you're a brand, you want methods to access your web properties or communities to be as frictionless as possible. The easier it is the more likely people will act on it. Vanity URLs are the start of easier word of mouth sharing, since your customers may choose to visit your brand not through your website, but your presence in social media.

8. Bonus Round: Dominate Your Branded SERP With Vanity URL SEO

It's no secret that when users are looking for a brand, Google loves to put Google Plus, LinkedIn, and Facebook on the search engine results page. Some SEO's will even argue that this is in part due to the exact keyword match that you've customized in the URL. By having the vanity URL to your brand on multiple web properties, you should be able to dominate your SERP with your own marketing message (and not what Wikipedia has to say about you!).

Pro-tip: If you have a verified Google Plus brand page, the Google Knowledge Graph will give it preference over Google Maps (if you're a business) or Wikipedia (if you're a person).

Great Scott, vanity URLs are certainly marketing enablers! *Just how did WordStream get one for Google Plus?* I'm glad you asked.

How To Get Your Google Plus Vanity URL

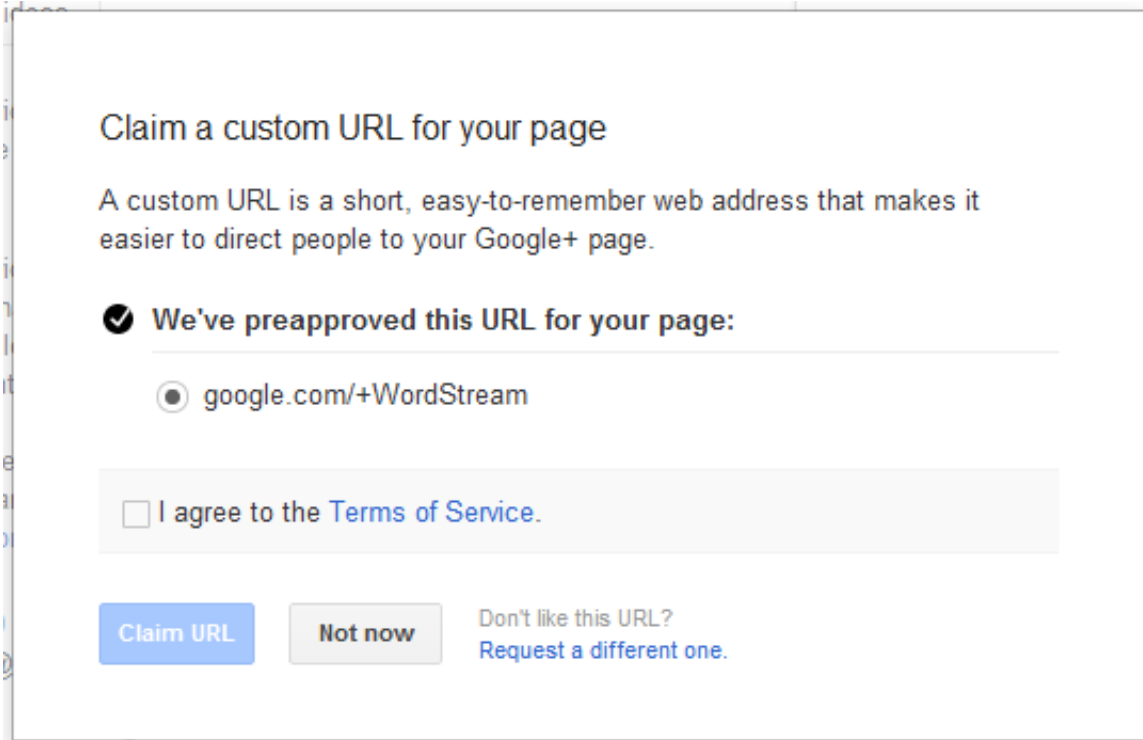
In order to be considered for Google's initial custom URL rollout, you first have to have a [verified](#), active Google+ page with user activity. I believe WordStream is currently the unofficial Guinness Book of World Records holder for obtaining a Google Plus branded URL with just 1054 plus ones – all challengers to his claim are welcome. There are, however, rumors that the minimal requirement is 100 followers, not plus ones.

Then, by the chance of counting your calendar days or **nicely asking your Google AdWords account rep if they know a Googler on the vanity URL project that could prioritize your brand**, you'll see this magical grey bar. Legends say that only the chosen few have the luck to access customized URLs on the fabled Gplus network.



Oooh, a delightfully bright blue button! When you click on it, wild glittery unicorns will appear and flash across your screen with amnesia dust.

UPDATE: As of 10/29/2013, Google+ Vanity URLs are now available to all brand pages as long as they meet these minimal requirements.



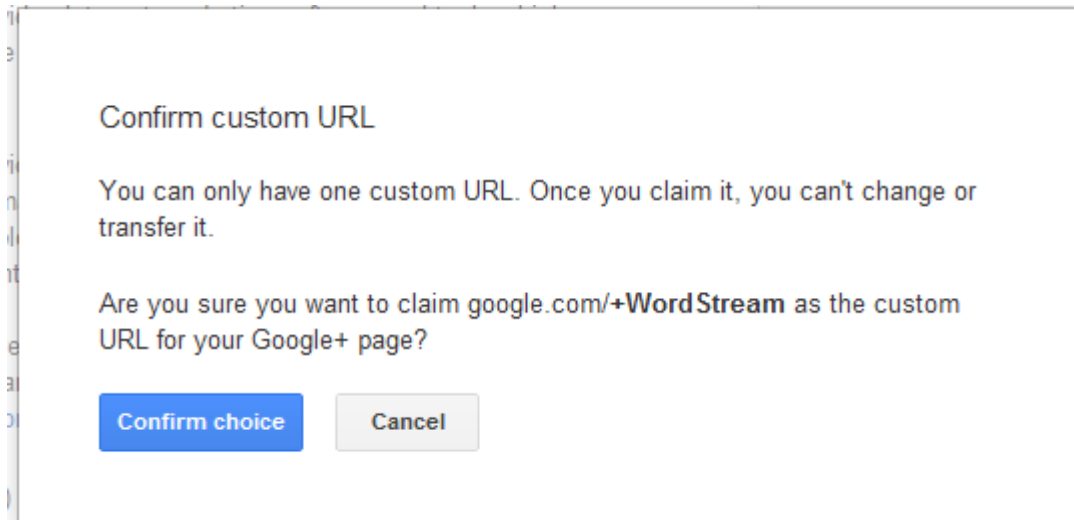
The screenshot shows a dialog box titled "Claim a custom URL for your page". Below the title, it explains that a custom URL is a short, easy-to-remember web address. A checkmark icon is followed by the text "We've preapproved this URL for your page:". Below this, a radio button is selected next to the URL "google.com/+WordStream". At the bottom, there is a checkbox for "I agree to the Terms of Service." and three buttons: "Claim URL" (highlighted in blue), "Not now", and "Don't like this URL? Request a different one." (with the latter text in blue).

Pro-tip: Note here that capitalization does not matter. If a visitor types in google.com/+wOrDsTrEaM (God have mercy on your soul if your visitors type in l337 Sp34K) they'll still reach our branded page.

We also noted two wacky points about Google+ custom URL's terms of service that were a bit fishy:

1. We reserve the right to reclaim custom URLs or **remove them for any reason, and without notice.**
2. Custom URLs are free for now, but **we may start charging a fee for them.** However, we will tell you before we start charging and give you the choice to stop participating first. (*Emphasis mine*)

These are extremely minor setbacks considering the benefits you'll be getting, so check that click-wrap agreement and click "Claim URL" unless you would like to [Request a different one](#). If you request a different URL, you'll have to wait for a verification e-mail from Google; otherwise you'll be directed to do a final confirmation. Remember, Google only allows one custom URL per page.



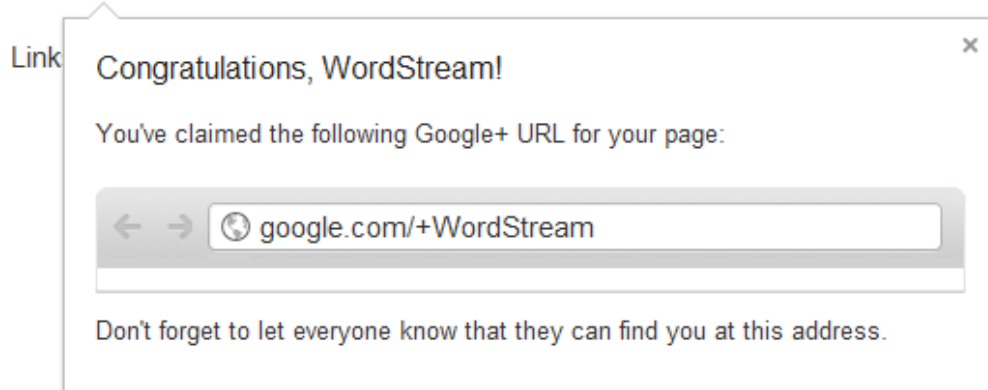
With the foresight that this experience could be a blog post, I took the risk for our readers and clicked cancel. The grey bar will still show up on the top of your Google+ page, so rest assured you're not suckered for not taking Google's sweet, sweet offer right away.

After confirming your choice, you'll be directed to google.com/+YourNewVanityUrl/about

Contact info Phone (617) 963-0555
Email info@wordstream.com [Verify](#)

Website www.wordstream.com ✓

Google+ URL google.com/+WordStream



Pro-tip: For the techy power web users who have a knack for breaking down the components of a URL because you're an extremely savvy online marketer, you'll also notice that...

www.google.com/+WordStream/photos takes you to the photo album,

www.google.com/+WordStream/videos takes you to videos

www.google.com/+WordStream/posts takes you to the brand's Google Plus page wall.

Those who didn't notice... well... now you can pretend that you knew this all along!

WordStream's Obligatory Google Custom URL Celebration

Hopefully by now we've convinced you how awesome it is to have your own vanity URL.

On August 13th, Google announced that shorter, customized, and easier to remember Google Plus URLs were going to be rolled out to verified profiles (people) and pages (brands and businesses) on a limited scale for those deemed most important. The first adopters were superstars like David Beckham, Hugh Jackman, and Britney Spears and brands like Hugo Boss, Toyota, and Delta Airlines.

I thought I'd take the opportunity to pat ourselves on our back and remind our "frienemies" (in the same manner iPhone 5 owners do) that we got our vanity URLs earlier than they did*. This also means that they're in threat of being unable to execute any of the benefits of vanity URLs I've just mentioned.

fan counts are approximations

Surprising Search Marketing Brand Pages Without Vanity URLs

Search Engine Watch	–	3,900	Google	plus	fans
Search Engine Journal	–	2,500	Google	plus	fans
State of Search	–	2,000	Google	plus	fans

(It's no wonder that Search Engine Land, which got their vanity URL, continues to take the lead with 39,603 Google plus fans)

SEO Brands With A Significant Google Plus Following Without Vanity URLs

HubSpot	–	13,000	Google	plus	fans
SEO Book	–	7,000	Google	plus	fans
Distilled	–	3,700	Google	plus	fans
Point Blank SEO	–	3,200	Google	plus	fans
Majestic SEO	–	2,800	Google	plus	fans

(I haven't seen any PPC Brands really leverage Google Plus – WordStream is one of the first to do so!)

SEO's I Wish Had Their Vanity URLs (Click [here](#) to apply)

[Rand Fishkin](#) – The CEO of SEOMoz
[Matt McGee](#) – Editor of Search Engine Land
[Dana Lookadoo](#) – (Do check out her super awesome presentation on [Structured Social Sharing](#))

Widely Followed PPC Experts on Google Plus Who We Think Will Get their Vanity URLs Soon

[Joanna](#)

[Lord](#)

[Brad](#)

[Geddes](#)

[John Rampton](#)

Want your name off of WordStream's list? Shoot me an email or tweet once you've received your vanity URL and you'll receive a mystery prize from WordStream.

Claiming your vanity URL is just as important as choosing the name for a brand. So what are you waiting for?