

Short Web address market shrinks: tr.im trimmed

August 10 2009, By RACHEL METZ , AP Technology Writer

(AP) -- The market for shrinking Web addresses is itself shrinking.

The Web-address shortening service tr.im is shutting down after about a year in operation. Its founder wrote in a blog post announcing the closure that because of its growing popularity, the service needed "significant development investment and server expansion to accommodate."

No one would take over the site from Nambu Network, even for a "token amount of money," Nambu co-founder Eric Woodward wrote.

Although tr.im is no longer letting users shorten Web addresses, existing tr.im links will work through the end of the year. At that point, Nambu will decide whether to extend that deadline.

Services like tr.im convert super-long Web addresses into a handful of characters. That helps prevent those addresses from breaking into multiple lines when used in e-mails, news stories and other places. It also helps users stay within the 140-character message limits at the social-networking site Twitter.

But Twitter recently opted to use a rival service, bit.ly, as the default shrinker when users post long Web addresses. Twitter previously used TinyURL, a pioneer in the link-clipping space. In switching this spring, Alex Payne, one of Twitter's lead engineers, said Twitter had found TinyURL unreliable.

In an interview, Woodward said his company doesn't feel it's worth continuing with tr.im now that Twitter has made the switch. Before, he said, users who didn't like TinyURL would seek out alternatives like his. Woodward said that opportunity has now disappeared.

"You just can't stop them," Woodward said. "Unless [Twitter](#) opens up the option of using more than one shortener, there's just no way to compete against them."

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