

Owning your own domain is important in building your brand and [Platform](#). As sharing has increased in importance over the last few years through services like Facebook and Twitter having a custom URL to share you information has also become helpful. The limited number of characters allowed by Twitter make services like [bit.ly](#), [goo.gl](#) popular to save precious characters.



CAUTION: This is complicated stuff for some people so I take zero responsibility if you mess something up on your domain. Use a domain that you use for nothing else.

UPDATE: One user had their URL updated and functioning in 20 minutes today. Mine took over 24 hours. So be patient and let me know if you get it to work!

You can now create your own custom short URL to extend your branding throughout your own site and social media reach. One ALTERNATIVE to this process is to use a subdomain to your domain if it's short enough. My friend

Cliff Ravenscraft uses l.gspn.tv for his vanity URL which works well because his gspn.tv URL is so short. I created atraub.us to use as my vanity URL. Here's an example of what a Twitter message could look like with three different URLs and how many characters each one totals.

No custom URL

How to fix your nag of a wife

<http://www.takepermission.com/babh-podcast/how-to-fix-your-nagging-wife-babh-016/>

Characters - 114

Bit.ly custom URL

How to fix your nag of a wife – <http://bit.ly/xLgHsx>

Characters - 52

Self-hosted custom UR

How to fix your nag of a wife – <http://atraub.us/yoKmZX>

Characters - 55

The last link starting with <http://www.atraub.us> was created with the following tools.

- Domain purchased from NameCheap or GoDaddy (you can use any domain service)
- Hosting of the domain at [Bluehost](#) (affiliate). You can use any host but I use Bluehost for several of my sites.
- [Bitly.com](#) Custom Short Domain.

Once you have set up your custom short domain you can connect it with several different services [Hootsuite](#), Tweetdeck or [Buffer](#), that post to your social media accounts. At last check you cannot use custom URLs with the free version of Hootsuite. You can also use the shortener on your mobile apps. I suggest [TweetBot](#) for iOS users.

The most difficult/confusing part of the process is changing something called a DNS A record so that [bit.ly](#) has the appropriate permission to access your URL. So here are the steps that I used along with screen shots.

Step #1 Buy a domain and connect to your hosting service

I use GoDaddy, you can use any service you want. Where you buy your domain isn't as important as where you [host your domain](#). You are going to make a change with your host so you'll need access to them. I use [Bluehost](#) as my host which you can actually point to while you're purchasing your domain. Just look for the "set name servers" option when you're purchasing your domain. Once you have purchased your domain and connected it to your host the next step is to find the DNS settings.

2. Your Domain Settings

Your Domain Names (1) atraub.us View and Edit All Domains	Registration Length 5 yrs	Registration Contact Andrew Traub 220 S. Phillips Avenue Sioux Falls, South Dakota 57104 United States (605) 610-8324 andytbusiness@gmail.com Edit	Certified Domain <input type="radio"/> Certified Just \$4.99/yr <input checked="" type="radio"/> Uncertified
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Hosting these domains elsewhere? [Set nameservers](#)

If you're hosting these domains elsewhere, enter up to 4 nameservers below.

1 *	NS1	BLUEHOST	COM	2 *	NS2	BLUEHOST	COM
3				4			

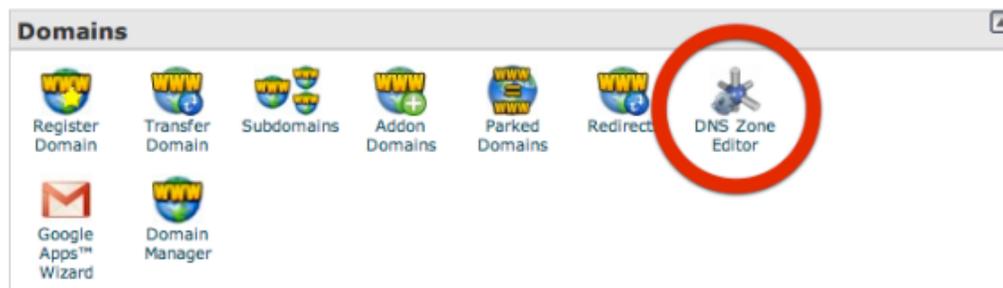
* A minimum of two valid nameservers are required.
[Park my names at GoDaddy.](#)

Includes FREE Auto-Renew Protection. [Click here to change to Manual renewal](#)

[Next >](#)

[† Click here for product disclaimers and legal policies](#)

Step #2 Find the DNS settings panel. In Bluehost's Control Panel the Domains tab has a DNS Zone Editor button.

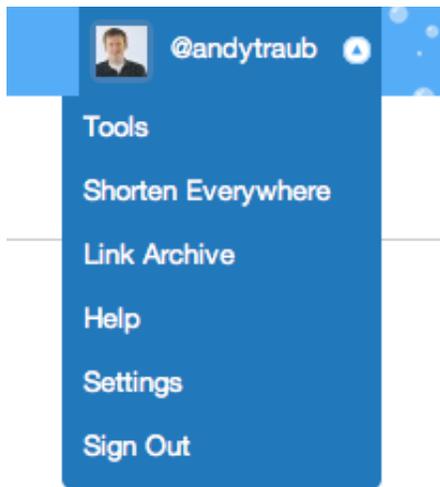


Step #3 – Choose your custom URL and edit the “@” host record in the DNS Zone Editor.

The screenshot shows the 'DNS Zone Editor' interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with buttons for 'cPanel', 'Domain Manager', 'Upgrades', 'Postini', 'Dedicated IP', 'SSL Certificates', 'Profile/Billing', and 'Checkout'. Below this, the 'DNS Zone Editor' title is displayed. A text block explains that zone files control DNS functions and provides a link to a 'Google Apps Wizard'. The 'Select a Domain' section shows a dropdown menu with 'atraub.us' selected and a 'Reload' button. A large red text overlay reads 'Choose your domain'. Below this is the 'Reset Zone File' section with a 'more >' link. The 'Add DNS Record' section contains form fields for 'Host Record', 'TTL' (set to 14400), 'Type' (set to 'A'), and 'Points To', with an 'Add Record' button. The 'Zone File Records' section features a table with columns for 'Host Record', 'Points to', 'TTL', and 'Action'. The table contains three records: '@' pointing to '69.58.188.49', 'localhost' pointing to '127.0.0.1', and 'cpanel' pointing to '66.147.244.190'. Red circles highlight the '@' host record and the 'Edit' button in the 'Action' column. A large red text overlay reads 'Edit your @ host record'.

Host Record	Points to	TTL	Action
@	69.58.188.49	14400	Edit Delete
localhost	127.0.0.1	14400	Edit Delete
cpanel	66.147.244.190	14400	Edit Delete

Step #4 – Sign up for an [bit.ly https://bitly.com](https://bitly.com) account. NOTE: If you use Twitter to sign up for your account your username will be random set of number/letters/characters and can be found in the “Settings” in your account panel. Go to “Settings” in your profile once you’ve signed up for [bit.ly](https://bitly.com).



Step #5 – Go to the Custom Short Domain area and click on “Add a Custom Short Domain” This will open up a new window.

Custom Short Domain [What's This?](#)

A custom domain name will replace "bit.ly" when creating short links.

* Example: The New York Times uses "nyti.ms" as their short domain.

[Add a Custom Short Domain](#)

Choose your default short domain:

Step #6 – Enter your URL and click “ADD”

Custom Domain Settings

[Cancel and Return to Settings](#) > [Step 1: Enter the short domain](#) > [Step 2: Verify the short domain](#)

Please enter the custom short domain you wish to use with bitly.

A custom short domain helps you personalize and brand the links you share with bitly; you will have the option of using this domain in place of "bit.ly," "bitly.com" or ".j.mp" when creating shortened links. (For example, the New York Times uses the short domain "nyti.ms" and TechCrunch uses the custom short domain "tcrn.ch.")

The custom domain you enter must be a domain that you have already purchased and fully control, since you will have to change the domain's DNS settings to complete this step. Need help finding purchasing a custom short domain? We recommend starting your search at [101domain.com](#) or [domai.nr](#).

Step #7 – Copy the DNS A record number they give you Example – 68.38.284.59. Mine is greyed out in the image below.

Custom Domain Settings

[Cancel and Return to Settings](#) > [Step 1: Enter the short domain](#) > [Step 2: Verify the short domain](#)

You have set your custom short domain as: **atraub.us**.

* To enable this custom short domain, you need to configure [domain name service \(DNS\)](#) settings for your domain.

Setting up your DNS

Set the DNS A record for **atraub.us** to point to 69.198.198.59

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If you are using a subdomain for your custom short domain, set a CNAME in your DNS record that points **atraub.us** to **cname.bitly.com**

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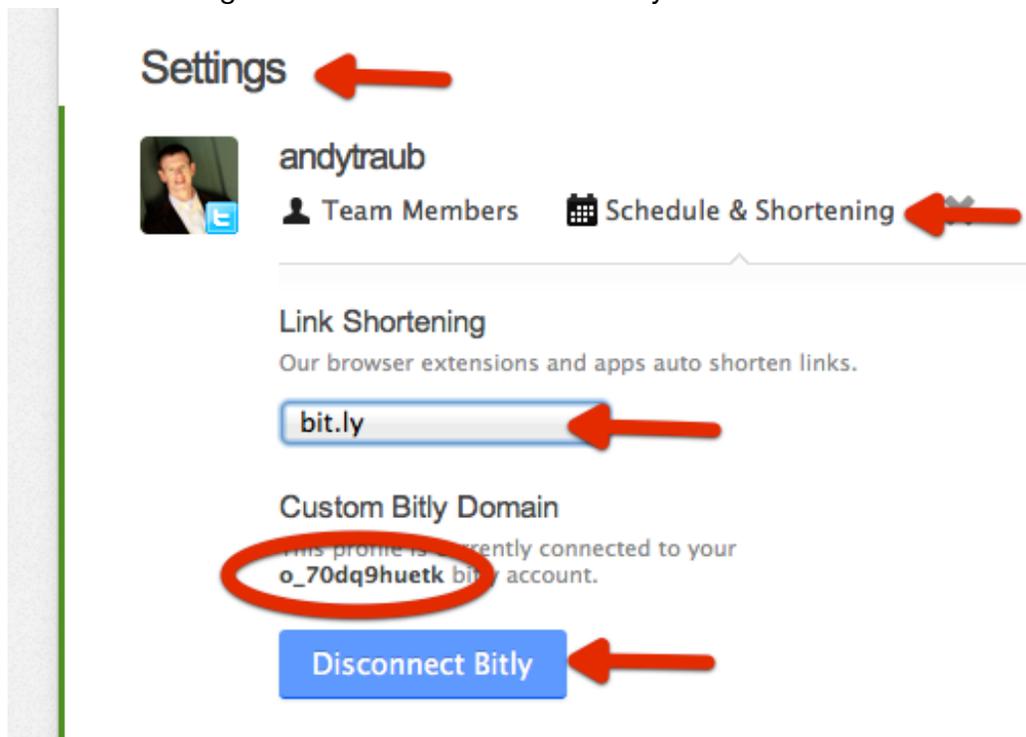
Need to i

Step #8 – Go back to your Bluehost DNS zone editor and enter in that number. Return to [bitly.com](#) the next day to check and see if your custom URL is connected to your [bit.ly](#) account. You need to RETURN to [bitly.com](#) to the same "Custom Short Domain" area to tell bitly use the custom URL instead of the [bit.ly](#) domain. This is done in the "settings" area of your bitly account.

Now whenever you use that [bit.ly](#) account in another service (Hootsuite, TweetDeck, Buffer) it will automatically change your URLs to your custom URL. [Bitly.com](#) does this for you so if [Bitly.com](#) ever goes out of business then you will have a lot of broken links out there.

Step #9 Setting up your custom vanity URL on [BufferApp.com](https://bufferapp.com)

Settings – Schedule & Shortening – Link Shortening – Connect Bitly. NOTE: If you signed up for Bitly using Twitter you'll need to go find your unique customer ID to sign in to Bitly within [Buffer](https://bufferapp.com). You need to repeat this for EVERY social media account you have in your [Buffer](https://bufferapp.com) account to use the shortener. This means you can use more than one shortener in the same [Buffer](https://bufferapp.com) account as long as you're using them with separate social media accounts. So you could manage different custom URLs for different businesses using the same Buffer account. Pretty cool!

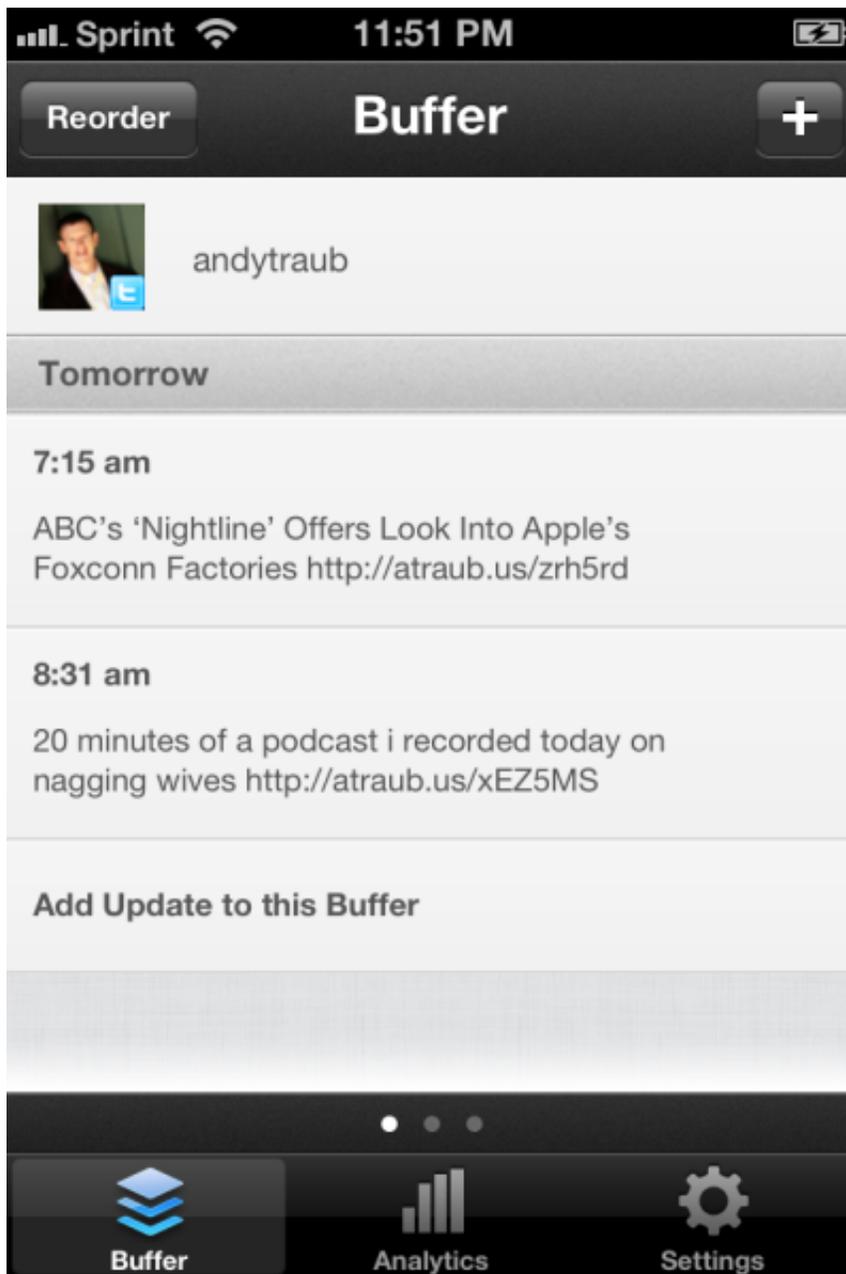


Mobile setup for your custom vanity URL using TweetBot and [Buffer App](https://bufferapp.com)

In [TweetBot](https://tweetbotapp.com) simply find your way to the settings of any of your Twitter accounts and click on the “URL Shortening” option button. Choose [bit.ly](https://bufferapp.com) Pro and sign in. Viola...custom URLs in Tweetbot!



If you happen to use the [Buffer App](#) on your iOS device you can see the custom URL's in your cue, waiting to be sent out and clicked on. If you use the Buffer bookmarklet in Safari on your device your URLs will also be shortened using your custom URL.



Remember that the DNS record change can take up to 48 hours so be patient on that change. If you get stuck on that step contact your hosting company.

Questions: Head to the Digi How To Forum

