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Ten persistent myths about persistent identifiers

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<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/73m910w8>

### **Author**

Kunze, John

### **Publication Date**

2018-08-24

# Ten persistent myths about persistent identifiers

Twitter thread <https://twitter.com/jakkbl/status/1033059109346586624>

John Kunze (@jakkbl), 24 Aug 2018.

Here is a list of 10 persistent myths about persistent identifiers (PIDs), whether ARK, DOI, Handle, URN, PURL, or "Cool URL", based on my experience running [EZID.cdlib.org](http://EZID.cdlib.org) and [N2T.net](http://N2T.net).

Myth 1: PIDs guarantee access. Get real. All PID services run on evolving software/hardware that no vendor warranties. How could anyone, let alone poor non-profits, change that?

Myth 2: PIDs rarely break. Nonsense. Millions of PIDs are broken. Updating redirection tables is real work for you and your successors. (You do have a succession plan, right?)

Myth 3: PIDs must not be URLs. What a crock. PIDs not carried inside clickable URLs are irrelevant or only of academic interest.

Myth 4: PIDs aren't vanity URLs. Nope. Tons of PIDs contain organizational acronyms, making them nearly as fragile as vanity URLs.

Myth 5: PIDs, unlike URLs, are not locations. Wrong. No URL or clickable PID is a location. No expert can look at it and tell where the content is assembled, via what redirect chain, DNS routing tables, proxies, etc.

Myth 6: PIDs aren't needed, so just use "Cool URLs". Sorry. How do you know a URL is cool? The average URL breaks in 44 days, and most URLs shouldn't persist. Assigning a PID tells people there's hope.

Myth 7: PID resolver technology is hard. Fiddlesticks. Global resolvers have always been simple: table lookup plus HTTP redirection plus \$20 a year to rent a hostname. Every URL shortener is an identifier resolver.

Myth 8: PIDs require vendor lock in. Poppycock. No database system discriminates among identifier types unless directed to discriminate.

Myth 9: PIDs must be centralized. False. Any PID with a globally unique core after the "carrier" URL hostname is persistable. In fact if it cannot be served by other hosts, it cannot persist. No hostname or protocol lasts forever.

Myth 10: PIDs should be free. No. While you can choose a PID that avoids fees and vendor lock in, every PID is a service commitment involving at least some sweat equity.

Punchline: ARK identifiers don't fit the PID mold -- no fees, flexible metadata, [#DWebSummit](#) decentralized. Offered, not mandated, via the [n2t.net](#) resolver, which supports 700+ types of identifier. More at [ARKsInTheOpen.org](#).