# Boingnet pURL Formats and Styles – Quick Reference Guide

## The Right pURL Structure Is Critical

It's very important to think through your pURL formats and styles during the planning and design phases of your campaign. The direct mail creative, the campaign timeline and the response rates can all be impacted by the decisions you make.

Personalized URLs or pURLs can be generated in a number of formats using Boingnet. pURL formats and styles are chosen by you based on your preference, data file structure, branding needs, access to domain technical settings and ease of deployment. Boingnet has created several tools that simplify the process while delivering the flexibility needed for many different types of campaigns.

## What are pURL Formats and Styles?

pURL formats and styles determine the way that a personalized URL is structured for a marketing campaign. The structure pURL can have a big impact on the user experience of the targets of a direct mail campaign. Ultimately the response rate - how many people respond via their pURL, can be impacted by the formatting and style decisions made during campaign setup.

There are several factors to consider when structuring pURLs:

- The campaign URL domain, and whether it reflects the brand or the campaign create (see Vanity Domain Best Practices for more).
- The font size and total space allocated for the printed pURL - larger fonts and fewer characters are easier
- Will the same pURL be used across multiple campaigns?
- Are there privacy concerns among the audience you are mailing to?
- Data file quality - is there full and correct information for each data field for each member of your audience?

## How To Structure pURL Formats and Styles in Boingnet

We'll break down the components of your pURL format and style into 3 parts - Domains, URL Formats and URL Ends:

**Domains**

Boingnet gives you the option of searching and buying a Vanity Domain from within the platform (see **Search, Buy and Configure Domains**), using a special reserved Boingnet subdomain (pages.boingnet.com) or using a domain that you've registered with a domain provider and set up in the Boingnet Domain Management Tool.

Why use the reserved Boingnet domain? It's fast, simple and done for you. If branding isn't important to your campaign, or if you want to create a test campaign quickly, this is the domain choice for you.

Most marketers will use a domain that they have bought through Boingnet and can control. Our fully integrated Vanity Domain search, purchase and setup tool makes it easy.  Others will use domains that

have previously been purchased and are registered at GoDaddy, Register.com, Network Solutions or other domain registrars.



## Why buy a vanity domain through Boingnet?

Because domain related technical issues can cause major problems in pURL marketing campaigns. Technical errors when modifying domain settings can bring down entire websites. Getting IT to actually implement technical settings necessary to run a pURL campaign can be difficult. Older domains that were acquired prior to the promotion being run may not reflect the campaign creative. **Domain related issues used to be our #1 customer service problem**, so we built a tool that eliminates the complexity!

## URL Formats

After you've decided on your domain, you next decision is to determine your URL Format. Boingnet offers two basic formats, with virtually unlimited variation choices within them.



## Friendly URL Strings

Most personal URL campaigns utilize what we call "Friendly URL Strings". These are URLs formatted to use information from the campaign data file to present a unique URL for each member of the campaign. You can choose from ANY two columns of the list that you uploaded to Boingnet, plus a "Dash -", "Underscore _" or "No Separator" to create a Friendly URL String.



The most popular choice is "First(name)Last(name)" with No Separator. This is a good choice when you have good data (not a data file with 50% missing last names!) and hope to convey familiarity between the brand and the target to optimize response.

Other Friendly URL Strings we see include combinations of partial name (First or Last), combined with Address, Company Name, or combinations using our User Defined columns (see Variable Data).

**pURL Best Practice - Name Before Domain**

After many years and thousands of Personalized URL campaigns, we've seen it all. We've learned that the most successful campaigns **place the personalization portion of the URL before the domain**. Why is that? Because when choosing a Friendly URL to personalize the pURL, a brand is **focusing the recipient's attention on their name**, rather than on the brand. There are far more effective ways to communicate the brand in a pURL campaign than by placing it before the person's name. Simply put, most people read from left to right. When people see their names first, the personalization sinks in.

**What about duplicates?**

As you know, duplicate pURLs cannot be generated for across any live pURL campaigns. Boingnet will automatically "de-dupe" Friendly URL Strings and add unique identifiers to the end of the URL to protect against duplication (johnsmith.yourdomain.com, johnsmith1.yourdomain.com, etc).

**Random URL Strings**

Another unique and powerful Boingnet feature is the **Random URL Strings** option. This choice will use a selected number of characters (4-15) that are:

- Random letters and numbers

- Random letters only

- Random numbers only



Your choices (# of characters and character types) will determine the number of unique combinations that can be generated. As long as your list have fewer contacts than the total combinations, you don't need to worry about duplicates. If you're close, just add a character.

**Why Use Random URL Strings?**

There are several scenarios where Random URL strings work best for pURL campaigns:

- Maximizing the font size on the printed piece is most important (since you know the exact # of characters, you can more precisely determine maximum font size). Imagine the potential printed font size difference between a Friendly URL of NBA Star [GiannisAntetokounmpo](.yourdomain.com) vs. a Random URL of NT3R.yourdomain.com

- You don't have great list data - you're better off with random characters than "John-SM12THGOOD" in a friendly URL

- Your audience has privacy concerns - we are seeing more healthcare and financial services campaigns that use Random URLs to alleviate any potential concerns about private information use.

- You have a huge list - with lots of duplicates. If you end up with tons of duplicates, you'll be printing the equivalent of Random URL Strings (johnsmith109.yourcampaign.com).

### URL Ends

Adding a "URL End" to a pURL is typically done to distinguish multiple campaigns that will be using the exact same Domain and URL Format. Technically, a URL End is a "Path" component of proper URL Syntax. Boingnet lets you add any combination of alphanumeric characters to the URL End to enable another layer of uniqueness and branding for a campaign.

The below example uses the URL end to denote a season and a year on a pURL Structure that will otherwise remain consistent from mailing to mailing.

| Domain * | URL End | Preview |
| --- | --- | --- |
| FirstLast . ❓ tryboingnet.com ▼ | / ❓ summer17 | http://FirstLast.tryboingnet.com/summer17 |

Depending on your pURL domain choice, your pURL strings can be formed in a number of ways. As you complete this section, the pURL preview will show you how the end result will look

You can easily see the sequence that will proceed (fall17, winter18, spring18, etc).

### Think It Through - Early In The Process

Boingnet has worked with thousands of marketers and agencies on personalized URL campaigns over the years, and can offer advice from all of that experience. Most importantly, we suggest that you spend time on the pURL formats and styles up front, before the campaign creative gets started. It can optimize your chances for success and eliminate unnecessary headaches. If you'd like to dig in with us - give us a shout!