



Our Story

The journey to creating this service

The Birth of an Idea

I've watched the URL shortening and link management marketplace evolve with fascination since its origins in the early 2000s. It was obviously a useful *feature*, but never struck me as a full-fledged product. I always assumed it would get absorbed into broader platforms and in some cases, it has. But you might be surprised to learn that the URL shortening market has been reported at between \$1.1 and \$1.28 billion annually, with a CAGR between 10.2% and 15.5% and a forecasted value of approximately \$4 billion by 2035. Not bad for a "feature."

I've personally needed this kind of capability many times over the years for various odds-and-ends purposes, but none of them ever seemed to justify an ongoing subscription. Especially when it was so easy for me, a software engineer by trade, to spin up my own in a matter of minutes. No frills, entries managed in code, and zero recurring cost. I considered turning it into something more polished more than once, but honestly? The busywork never seemed worth it.

Fast forward to 2026. My 9-year-old son was working through an introductory economics book and firing questions at me faster than I could answer them. So I decided to give him a practical lesson through a real exercise: building a business from ideation to scale. Given the rapid emergence of AI coding tools, we decided to lean into that technology to cut down on time and labor. Using Anthropic's Claude and building on my existing work, we had a functional prototype in a day, a refined and expanded version in three days, and ironically, the hardest part was

wading through all the business, regulatory, compliance, and testing components, which took roughly two weeks.

At first, we were using it purely internally at my new venture, Tofu (<https://tofu.is>), to track sales and marketing campaigns. Then we noticed people had discovered the tool on their own and were using it without any outreach from us. So we decided to make it official and open it up to the public. Stub.is is now formally offered under the Tofu umbrella as a free service, with plans to operate it as a cooperative with all registered users having a voice in its direction.

The question we get most often is: *"How do you plan to monetize it?"* The honest answer is, we don't. The cost of serving thousands of simultaneous link requests is genuinely tiny (we're talking pennies a day). We may invite voluntary contributions at some point, particularly from high-volume users, but there's no paywall, no freemium trap, and no hidden agenda (we're not selling your data to 3rd parties). Stub.is fills a need we already have, and if it fills one for you too, we hope you enjoy it and maybe take a peek at some of our other offerings while you're at it.

Cheers,

Mike Mings CEO, Tofu LLC...[Creator at Stub.is](#)