OpenAthens link generator

This page is about the link generator at https://go.openathens.net/generate

On this page:

What are OpenAthens links?

OpenAthens links are a marvellous thing. They allow you to link to a page via an authenticated route without the headache or hassle of long and complicated "Wayfless URLs". All you have to do is pop the target page (or DOI link, or Ebsco SmartLink) for a specific article at the end of a prefix that is specific to your organisation, and something called the OpenAthens redirector sorts it all out. Here's an example:

```
https://go.openathens.net/redirector/athensdemo.net?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdoi.org%2F10.1088%2F0143-0807%2F18%2F4%2F012
```

That link is made up of two parts:

1. The prefix part [`https://go.openathens.net/redirector/athensdemo.net?url=`]
2. and the target part [`https%3A%2F%2Fdoi.org%2F10.1088%2F0143-0807%2F18%2F4%2F012`].

(All those %this and %that bits in the target are called percent encoding and are used on characters like / and : when one web page is being passed another web address in the URL. They make sure that the webpage that is reading them doesn't get confused.)

What happens when you follow the link?

What happens is...

1. The redirector reads the organisation from the link [`athensdemo.net`]
2. The redirector checks if the user's location is covered by an IP address it has been told to treat as on-site / within network for that organisation
    a. If YES, then it simply forwards the user on to the target [https://doi.org/10.1088/0143-0807/18/4/012 >>> https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/0143-0807/18/4/012]. End.
    b. If NO, then...
        i. The redirector looks up the access URL format to use for the resource that target is part of
        ii. The redirector plugs in the relevant details to that access URL to bypass any 'where are you from' questions and sends the user via a being-signed-in route to the target [https://doi.org/10.1088/0143-0807/18/4/012 >>> https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/0143-0807/18/4/012]. End.

How to use the link generator

Since the links are specific to your organisation, and we don't know what that is yet, the first thing you need to do is tell the page where you are from. There's a search box that will find any OpenAthens organisation. If you don't find yours then it may be known by another name - for examples you may have entered GCC but our system only knowns it as Greendale Community College.

Once you've told the page which organisation to use, you can pop in the target link or links. You can just paste one or more in, as many as you need to - just make sure each one starts with http:// or https:// and is separated by a space, or is on a new line:

OK:

```
https://www.openathens.org https://www.friendface.org https://mytube.net
```

```
https://www.openathens.org
https://www.friendface.org
https://mytube.net
```

Not OK:

```
www.openathens.org
```

(... because one or more of the links does not start with http:// or https://)

```
https://www.openathens.org, https://www.friendface.org, https://mytube.net
```

(... because this is a comma separated list rather than spaces or new lines)

```
It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,
```

(... because none of these words are a URL)

Anything else I might want to know?

Bookmarks

Once you've selected your organisation, the address of the page changes to include its identifier. If you bookmark the page with this URL, you can skip the part where you search for your organisation on future visits.

Couldn't I just use a spreadsheet?

This link generator also checks that the resource the target link points to is compatible - every link it spits out should work - but once you know that a given resource works there's no reason not to use a spreadsheet if you prefer. Assuming the link were in cell A1 the formula to pop into B1 would be:

```
="https://go.openathens.net/redirector/YOUROPENATHENSDOMAIN?url="&ENCODEURL(A1)
```

(where YOUROPENATHENSDOMAIN matches what the link generator used in the prefix part)

This works in most spreadsheets, but some don't have the URL encoding command available.