Why does the DOI Tool require that my Location URL for my landing page be unique?

ANSWER: Digital Object Identifiers are intended to be a permanent bookmark to a unique product; in the case of DataCite DOIs, they are intended to point unambiguously to the specific online landing page of data product. Potential end users who discover a data product of interest, usually from a catalog or as a citation, rely on the DOI to take them directly to the online location of that product. There should be no ambiguity for the user that the DOI, when clicked, delivers him/her to the specific access point for that product of interest. Taking the user to a home page of a project, program, metadata record, or other catalog is a disservice to the user, because it requires that user to browse or search, and re-identify, the original, known item of interest, and defeats the entire purpose of a persistent, unique identifier. Significantly, it introduces the risk that the user will either fail to locate that item of interest, or mistake a different item for the one originally sought.

The DOI Tool enforces the principle that a unique DOI delivers a user directly to a location where that specific product can be accessed. If an exact Location URL file path already exists in the database because a previously published URL is already pointing to it, you will not be able to use that exact Location URL path for a subsequent DOI.

Trusted Digital Repositories should always support a unique landing pages, so all USGS data releases should be able to meet the requirement of a DOI Location URL that is unique.

This rule was not enforced in early versions of the USGS DOI Tool. For DOIs published prior to enforcement, a ‘grandfather’ exception was made, and those DOIs will continue to resolve until they are opened and edited for any type of update. Upon an edit action, the Location URL uniqueness requirement will go into effect, and you will need to provide the full and unique Location URL path to successfully update any field in the record.