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**Louis H. Kauffman\*** (kauffman@uic.edu), Math UIC, 851 South Morgan Street, Chicago, IL 60607-7045. *The Virtual Quandle*. Preliminary report.

We define a virtual quandle invariant for virtual knots and links that is stronger than the standard quandle. The virtual quandle,  $VQ(K)$ , for a knot or link  $K$  is defined by the usual quandle relations at classical crossings and a new relation at the virtual crossings defined by operating on incoming elements with a special element of the quandle. The resulting invariant is stronger than the standard quandle and, and for classical knots and links it is the free product of the standard quandle with a one-generator free quandle. There is a group associated with the virtual quandle in analogy with the association of the fundamental group with the standard quandle. We will discuss representations and applications of this structure. (Received January 22, 2014)