Scholarly journals should use "Archived on" instead of "Accessed on"

Egon Willighagen ⬤

Citation

Keywords

Abstract

Publishing habits changes very slowly, too slowly. The whole industry is incredibly inert, which can lead to severe frustration as it did for me . But sometimes small changes can do so much.

Copyright

Publishing habits changes very slowly, too slowly. The whole industry is incredibly inert, which can lead to severe frustration as it did for me . But sometimes small changes can do so much.

Linkrot, the phenomenon that URLs are not persistent, has been studied, including the in scholarly settings (see 1998, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2014, 2015, 2000, 2021, and probably many more). Indeed, scholarly publishers started introducing the following: URLs should be accompanied with an "accessed on" statement. Indeed, you can find this in many bibliographic formatting standards.
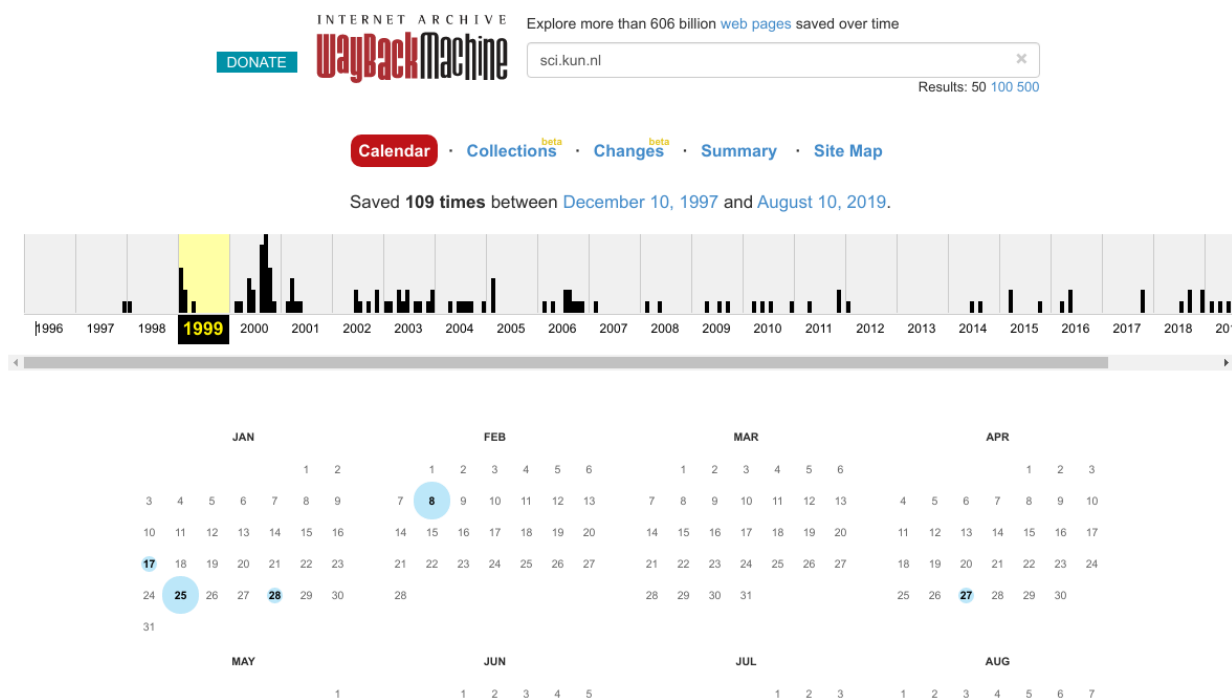
Indeed, this must change, and we already have a solution since 1996: the Internet Archive (tho the archive goes back much longer). I call all publishers to change their "Accessed on" to "Archived on". Two simpel solutions that can compliment each other:

Authors archive upon submission

This solution is simply introduced by updating author guidelines. Surely it will take a bit of time for bibliography software to be updated, and for the time being we still write "Accessed on" until there is proper support of "Archived on".

Journals archive upon acceptance

This solution looks for all URLs in journal articles and archives them. It doesn't matter if the author already did this, because the Internet Archive has no trouble handling this:

Screenshot of the WaybackMachine showing many captures of the sci.kun.nl domain.

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BTW, projects like Wikipedia have automated the process of archiving URLs and I see no reason why publishers could not do this.

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