

Ranke.2 Teaching Aid

The Interface of the Wayback Machine



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Last modified: 17 December 2020

This teaching aid is meant to guide you through the interface and the various features offered by the Waybackmachine to retrieve archived websites and webpages. It is part of the lesson ‘Websites as historical sources’, offered on the Ranke.2 teaching platform for digital source criticism. See: <https://ranke2.uni.lu>
We hope it can encourage you to use the WBM.

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The Homepage of the Wayback Machine

URL: <https://archive.org/web/>

The **Internet Archive** (IA) is the name of a non-profit organization whose goal is to provide free access to anyone in the world to a wide range of books, movies, audio files, and web pages, among others.

The **Wayback Machine** (WBM) is a searchable repository of snapshots of past web pages that have been collected by the IA and by other actors* that have a policy of preserving websites.

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INTERNET ARCHIVE
WayBackMachine

Explore more than 486 billion [web pages](#) saved over time

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Tools

- [Wayback Machine Availability API](#)
Build your own tools.
- [WordPress Broken Link Checker](#)
Banish broken links from your blog.
- [404 Handler for Webmasters](#)
Help users get where they were going.

Subscription Service

Archive-It enables you to capture, manage and search collections of digital content without any technical expertise or hosting facilities. [Visit Archive-It to build and browse the collections.](#)

Save Page Now

[SAVE PAGE](#)

Capture a web page as it appears now for use as a trusted citation in the future.
Only available for sites that allow crawlers.

[FAQ](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Terms of Service \(Dec 31, 2014\)](#)

*How the different people, organizations, and bots contribute snapshots to the WM is a complex process.

For more detailed information, see: [‘The Internet Archive and the socio-technical construction of historical facts’ \(Ben-David and Amram, 2018\)](#)

Various other media
branches of the
Internet Archive

URL: <https://archive.org/web/>

This is the search bar
to access the web
archives of the
Wayback Machine

You can search either
with keywords or
with a specific URL

The keyword function
is quite limited and
does not work like
most search engines

The screenshot shows the Internet Archive Wayback Machine homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links: ABOUT, BLOG, PROJECTS, HELP, DONATE, CONTACT, JOBS, VOLUNTEER, PEOPLE. Below this, the main header features the Internet Archive logo and the text "Explore more than 486 billion web pages saved over time". The central search bar is labeled "WayBack Machine" and contains the text "http://". To the right of the search bar is a "BROWSE HISTORY" button. Below the search bar, there's a row of thumbnail images representing various archived web pages. Further down, there are three main sections: "Tools" (with links to Wayback Machine Availability API, WordPress Broken Link Checker, and 404 Handler for Webmasters), "Subscription Service" (with a link to Archive-It), and "Save Page Now" (with a search bar, a "SAVE PAGE" button, and a description of the service). At the bottom, there are links for FAQ, Contact Us, and Terms of Service (Dec 31, 2014).

INTERNET ARCHIVE

ABOUT BLOG PROJECTS HELP DONATE CONTACT JOBS VOLUNTEER PEOPLE

INTERNET ARCHIVE Explore more than 486 billion web pages saved over time

WayBack Machine

http://

BROWSE HISTORY

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Tools

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Save Page Now

http://

[SAVE PAGE](#)

Capture a web page as it appears now for use as a trusted citation in the future.

Only available for sites that allow crawlers.

[FAQ](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Terms of Service \(Dec 31, 2014\)](#)

This feature lets you enter a
URL that you would like
saved and added to the
Wayback Machine's archive

If you search for a keyword like 'google', you will get a list of results in which the keyword appears in the URLs collected by the WBM

URL: https://web.archive.org/web/2019*/google

Clicking on one of the URLs will bring you to the most recent snapshot of that URL

Clicking on the number of captures will take you to the overall **Calendar** view of that

The different icons tell you how many different types of media (or formats) have been archived by the IA

The screenshot shows the Internet Archive WayBack Machine interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like ABOUT, BLOG, PROJECTS, HELP, DONATE, CONTACT, JOBS, VOLUNTEER, and PEOPLE. A search bar contains the word 'google' and shows 'Results: 50 100 500'. Below the search bar, the 'WayBackMachine' logo is visible. The search results list several items:

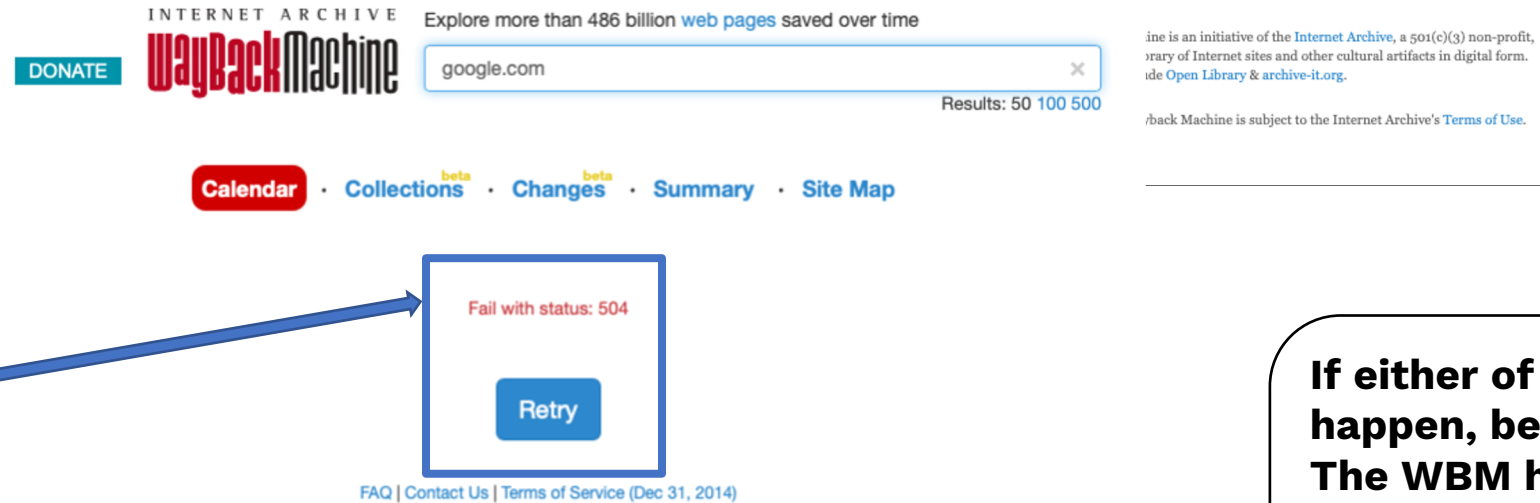
- http://google.com/**
google
176983965 18123480 13656 1431
311652232 capture(s) from 1998 to 2016 | Site stats
- http://plus.google.com/**
google+
25738575 343099 0 0
78051315 capture(s) from 2009 to 2016 | Site stats
- http://news.google.com/**
google news
7128862 293825 0 9
39386320 capture(s) from 2002 to 2016 | Site stats
- http://sites.google.com/**
google sites
3014399 2442541 0 0
9860074 capture(s) from 2007 to 2016 | Site stats

Blue arrows point from the text boxes on the left to specific elements in the screenshot: from the first box to the search bar, from the second box to the first search result, from the third box to the '7128862' capture count for Google News, and from the fourth box to the media icons (document, image, video, audio) for Google Sites.

Sometimes when you try to search for a URL or click on a hyperlink, the WBM servers can be quite busy and you will get an endless 'loading' icon (lasting longer than 30 seconds).



Other times, you may get an error message instead



If either of these happen, be patient. The WBM has nearly half a *trillion* web pages in its servers, so either refresh the page or try again later



The Wayback Machine is an initiative of the [Internet Archive](#), a 501(c)(3) non-profit, building a digital library of Internet sites and other cultural artifacts in digital form. Other [projects](#) include [Open Library](#) & [archive-it.org](#).

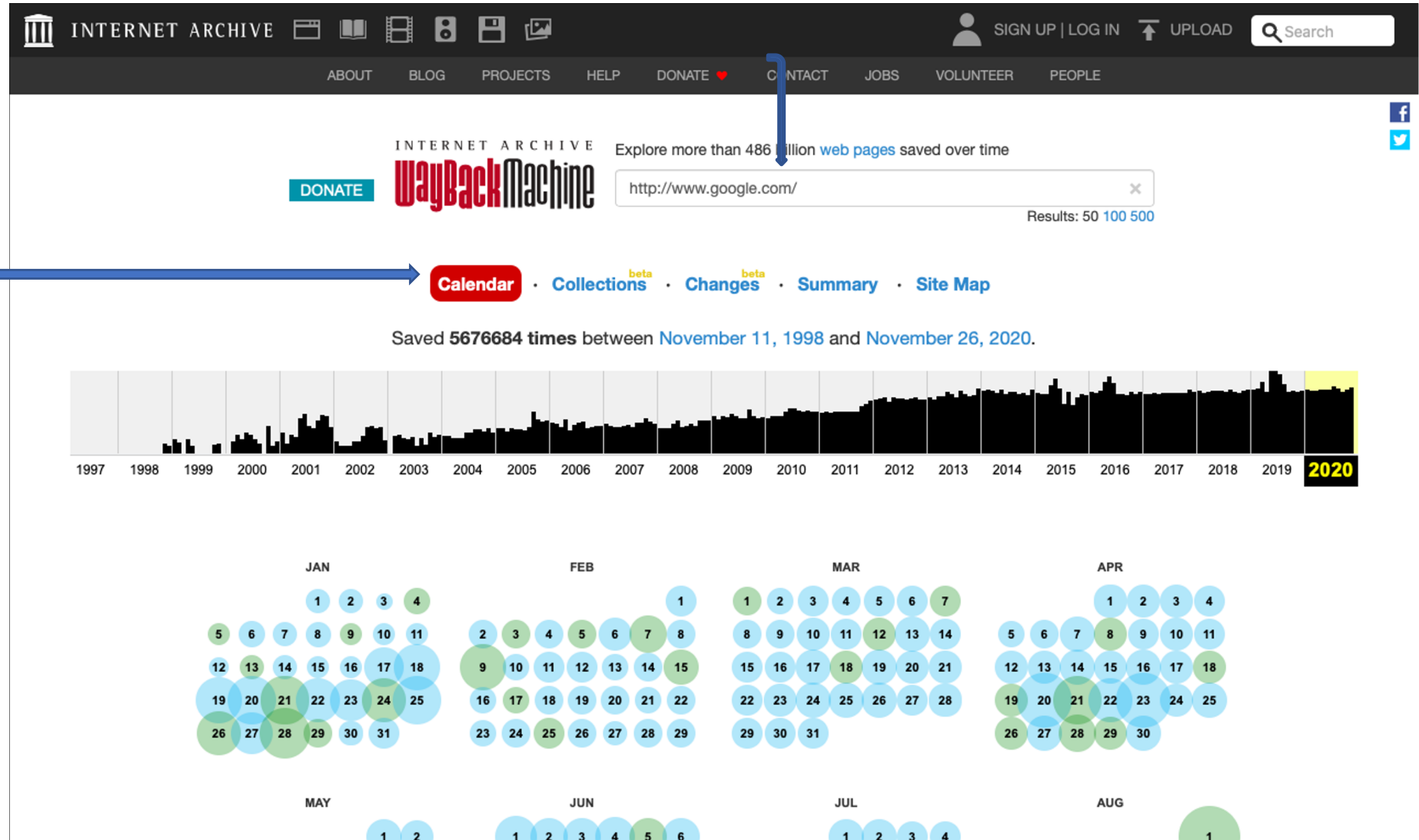
Your use of the Wayback Machine is subject to the Internet Archive's [Terms of Use](#).

URL: https://web.archive.org/web/*/https://google.com

If you search for a URL like '<https://google.com>', or select the number of captures from a keyword search, a menu will appear in which you are automatically directed to the default feature of the WBM: the **Calendar** feature

The other features are:

- **Collections**
- **Changes**
- **Summary**
- **Site Map**

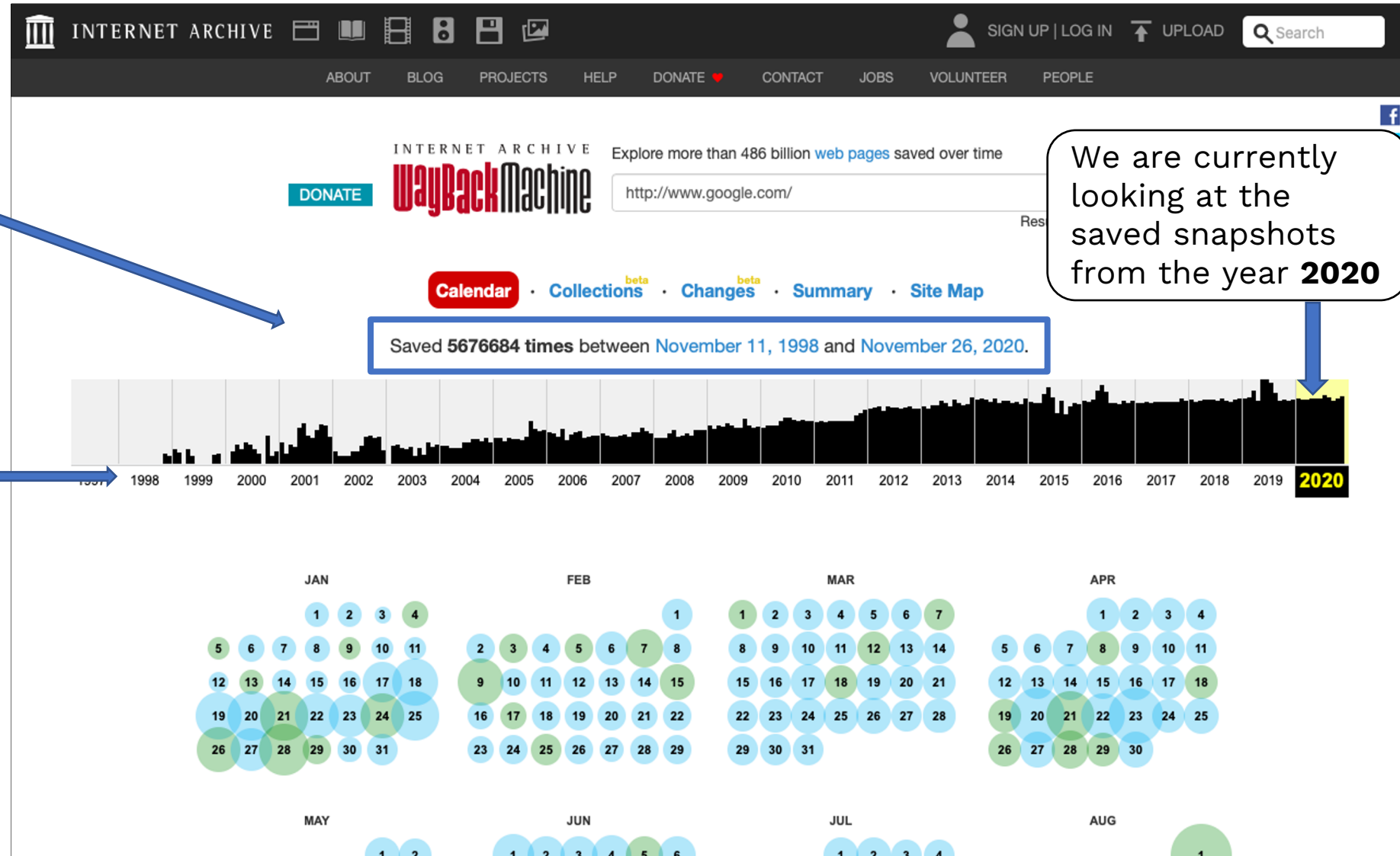


Calendar

URL: https://web.archive.org/web/*/https://google.com

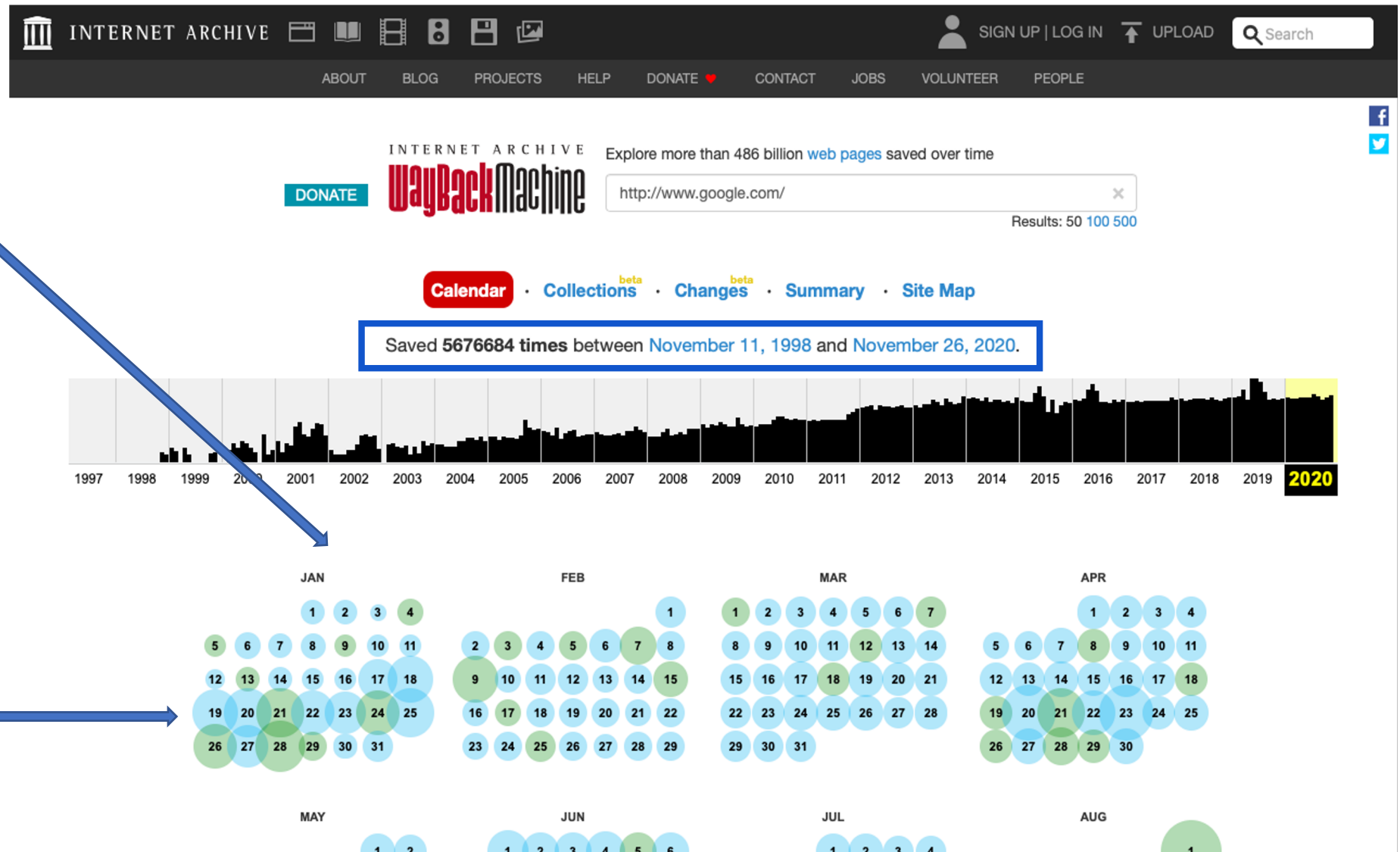
This indicates the number of times the searched URL has been saved by the WBM and the dates of the oldest and newest snapshot

The **Calendar** feature of the Wayback Machine shows you **a graph of the coverage of the website** throughout the years from the first to the last snapshot



URL: https://web.archive.org/web/*/https://google.com

Below, you can see a traditional calendar view with the specific dates and times a snapshot has been saved in a particular year



If a link or dot is **blue** it means that the web server result code the crawler got for the related capture was good. **Green** means the crawlers got a redirect, **orange** means the crawler got a client error, and **red** means the crawler saw a server error. Most of the time you will probably want to select the **blue** options

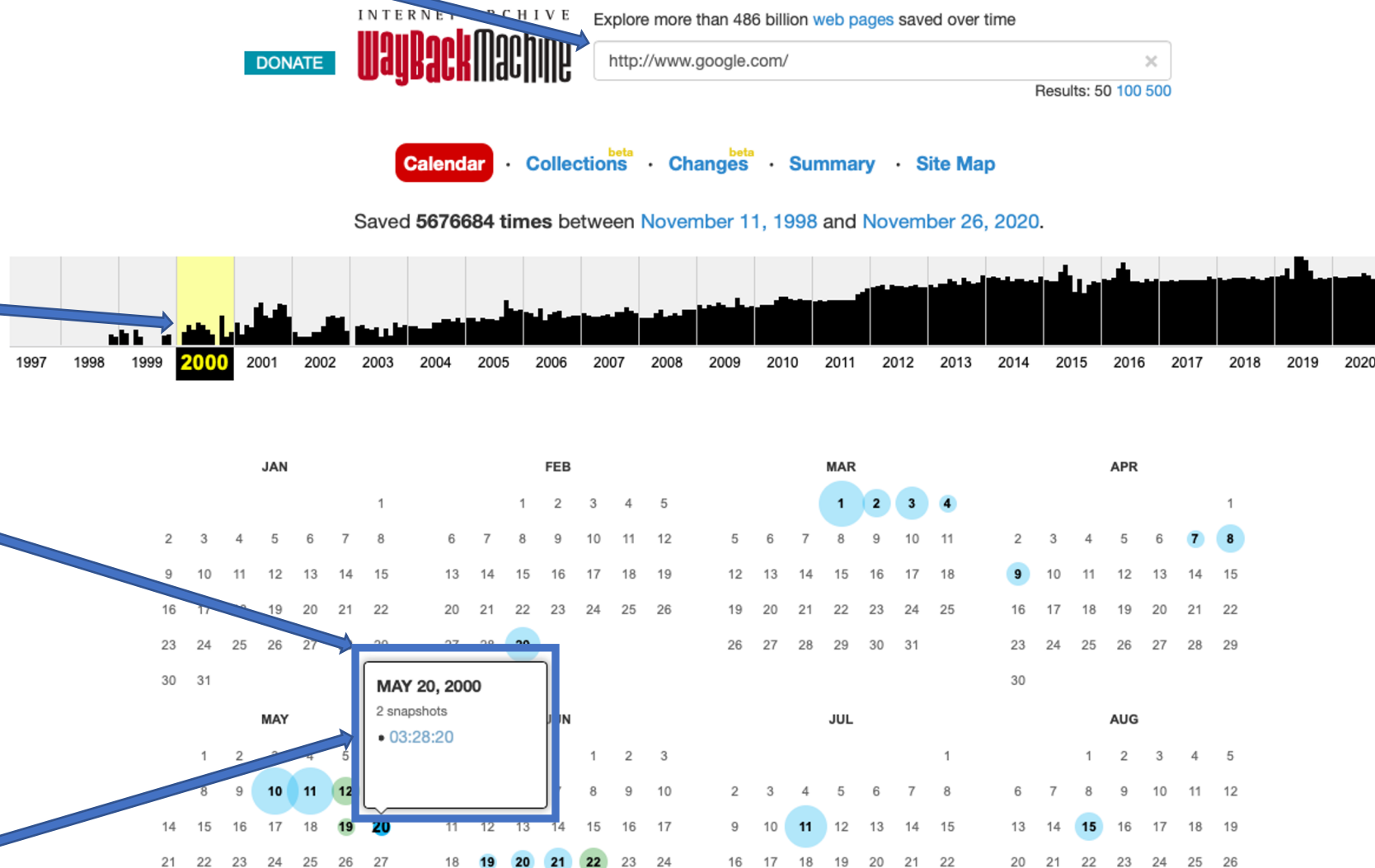
Location of the searched URL: <http://www.google.com>

URL: https://web.archive.org/web/20000901000000*/https://google.com

Within **Calendar** we are now looking at snapshots saved from the **year 2000**. You will notice there are far fewer saved snapshots in this year.

Hovering over a particular **date** (in this case, May 20, 2000) makes a small pop-up appear with a detailed listing of the date and times that a snapshot has been saved

Clicking on the specific **time** will bring you to that saved snapshot. (see next page)



This is a snapshot of the URL 'google.com' from May 20, 2000 at 03:28:20 GMT.

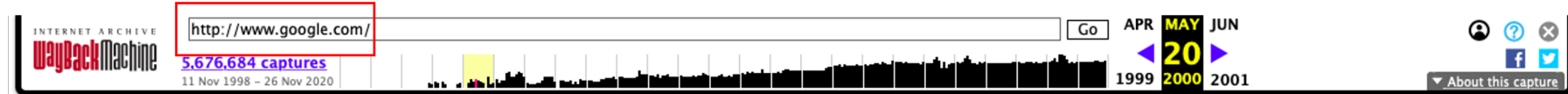
The date and time of the capture are shown in the URL: the date is listed first (2000) followed by the month (05) and the day (20). The time—always in GMT—is then listed, with hours (03) followed by minutes (28) then seconds (20).

You can see a mini version of the **Calendar** view and the relative location of your snapshot here in **yellow**, along with searched URL.

URL: <https://web.archive.org/web/20000520032820/http://www.google.com/>

Date

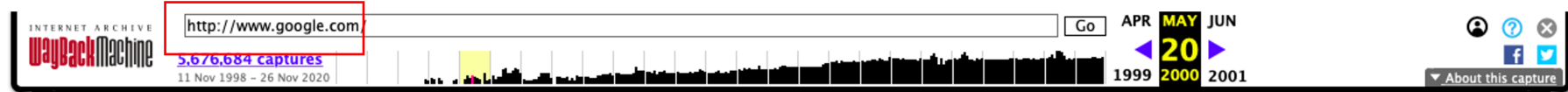
Time



URL:<https://web.archive.org/web/20000520032820/http://www.google.com/>

Date

Time



This is what the homepage of Google looked like on May 20, 2000



Sometimes, some of the hyperlinks from the snapshot are also archived. See for the result page 15

You can click on the button '**About this capture**' to get more information about this snapshot (see next page)

If you click on '**About this capture**', a field opens below the mini-calendar with information about **who** collected the snapshot of the webpage and at **what time**

Under the **COLLECTED BY** heading, you will see information about the organisation(s) that collected the snapshot

Under the **TIMESTAMPS** heading, you will see when different aspects of the page were crawled (collected) relative to the date of the snapshot itself

The screenshot shows the Wayback Machine interface for the URL <http://www.google.com/>. The top navigation bar includes the Wayback Machine logo, the number of captures (5,676,684), and a calendar view for May 2000. The main content area is divided into two sections: 'COLLECTED BY' and 'TIMESTAMPS'. The 'COLLECTED BY' section shows the collection name 'Institut national de l'audiovisuel' and a note that the data is not publicly accessible. The 'TIMESTAMPS' section shows the URL http://www.google.com/images/Title_HomPg2.gif and the time '-8 days 15 hours' relative to the snapshot. A blue arrow points from the 'COLLECTED BY' section to the text box above it, and another blue arrow points from the 'TIMESTAMPS' section to the text box above it.

INTERNET ARCHIVE
WayBackMachine

<http://www.google.com/> Go

5,676,684 captures
11 Nov 1998 – 26 Nov 2020

APR MAY JUN
1999 20 2001

COLLECTED BY

Collection: [Institut national de l'audiovisuel](#)
Crawl data from [Institut national de l'audiovisuel](#) in France. This data is currently not publicly accessible.

ina.fr

from Wikipedia:
The Institut national de l'audiovisuel (or INA, French for National Audiovisual Institute), is

TIMESTAMPS

http://www.google.com/images/Title_HomPg2.gif –8 days 15 hours

Enter your search terms...

We can see in this case that the crawl was performed by the **INA (Institut national de l'audiovisuel)**, a French archive organisation that focuses on audio-visual information

If you click on the hyperlink indicated on page 11, it takes you to a snapshot of a completely different URL:

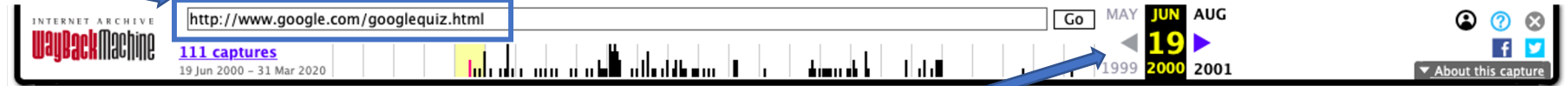
[‘http://www.google.com/googlequiz.html’](http://www.google.com/googlequiz.html)

However, it is important to note that this snapshot is not from the same date as the previous one, May 20, 2000 but instead from **June 19, 2000**, *almost an entire month later*

You can click on all the hyperlinks from a snapshot in the WBM, **but the archived pages they will take you too will not all be preserved at the same time or even the same date as the original one you found** (and sometimes they’re not archived at all)

URL:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20000619111644/http://www.google.com/googlequiz.html>



Google Search

Home About Google

Take the Google Father's Day Quiz

Honor your father and father figures everywhere by taking our special Father's Day Quiz. Knowledge may be its own reward, but completing the quiz also gives you a chance to win a Google t-shirt for yourself or the dad-like person of your choice. If you do win a shirt and would like to pass it on to someone else, enter their address instead of your own and check the "gift" box on the form. We'll include a nice note telling the recipient how they came to receive official Google garb.

When you take the quiz, you'll find some answers in the results of your first search. Others may require you to do a second search using terms revealed in the first set of results. Don't despair. As Dad always says, "If something's worth doing, it's worth doing right."

How it works:

1. First, you must have cookies enabled on your browser. If you haven't intentionally turned them off, they should be on by default and you don't need to do anything.
2. There are three categories in our quiz and five questions in each. If a question stumps you, you can choose to skip over it and move on to the next one.
3. The questions will appear in the bottom of your screen, with a Google search box above them. Use this search box to find the answer. If you get lost, use the back button on your browser to return to the Google search box page.
4. If you must tear yourself away in the middle of the quiz, fear not. You can pick up where you left off by going back to the quiz category in which you began. You can choose to start the quiz over or continue from the last question you answered.
5. Your score will appear at the end of the quiz.

And now, [on to the Google Quiz...](#)

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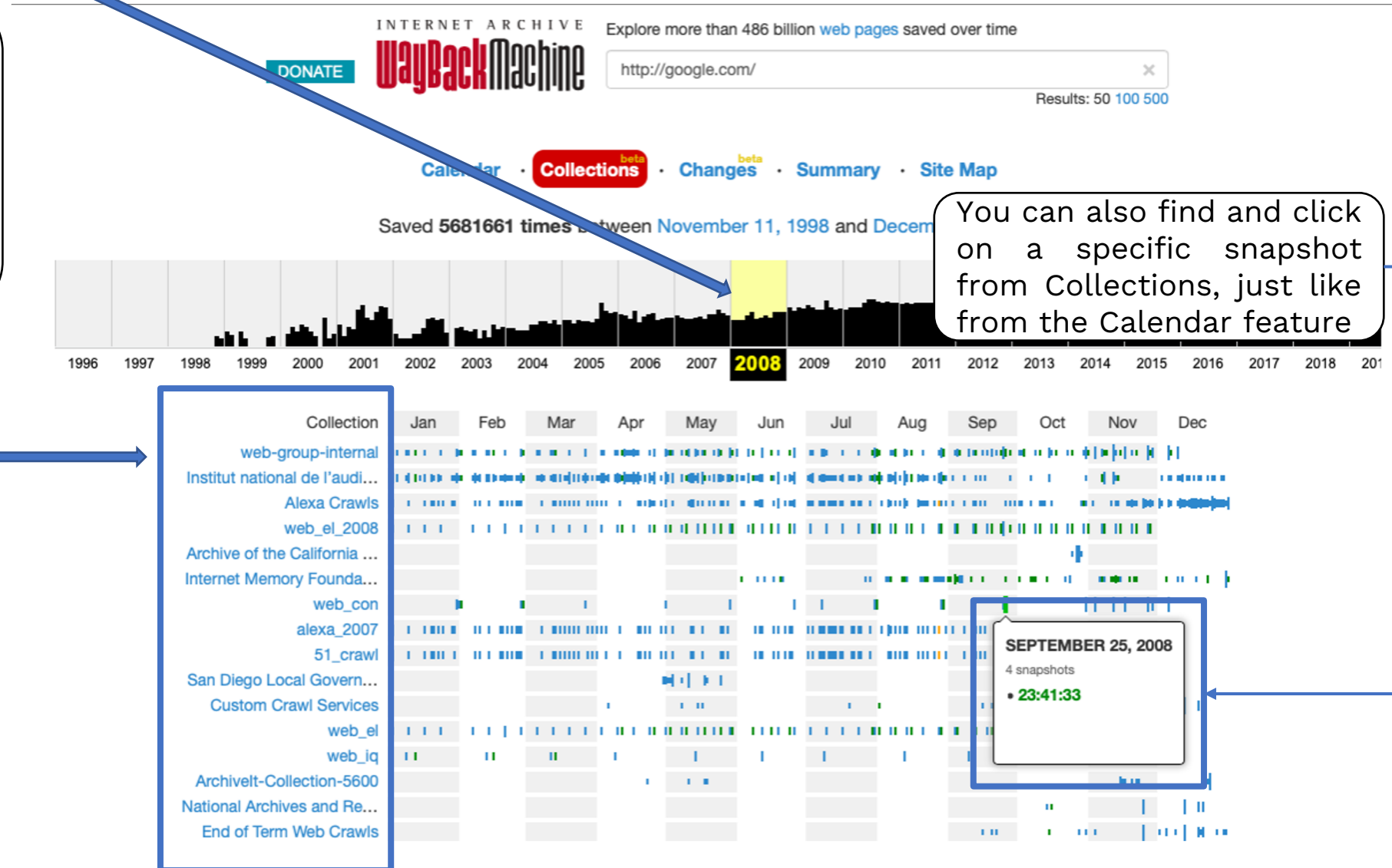


This is now a view of the snapshots archived in 2008

Whereas the Calendar feature gives an overview of all the snapshots archived, **Collections** lets you sort and differentiate by the collection the snapshot belongs to

On the left the names of the various collections that these snapshots are a part of, starting with those that archived the most snapshots of the searched URL. By clicking on one you are directed to a page with more information about that particular collection

URL: https://web.archive.org/web/collections/2008*/http://google.com/



Note from the URL that this page no longer focuses on archived snapshots of Google


URL: https://archive.org/details/top_news

Clicking on one of the links on the left in **Collections** brings you to a short information page about that Collection.

INTERNET ARCHIVE

SIGN UP | LOG IN | UPLOAD

ABOUT | BLOG | PROJECTS | HELP | DONATE | CONTACT | JOBS | VOLUNTEER | PEOPLE



Top News

A daily collection of hundreds of the world's top news sites.

Share
Favorite
RSS

ABOUTCOLLECTION

118,262 RESULTS

SORT BY VIEWS · TITLE · DATE ARCHIVED · CREATOR

Search this Collection

☒ Metadata
☐ Text contents (no results)

Part Of


Focused Crawls

Media Type

- ☐ collections 306
- ☐ web 117,900
- ☐ movies 56


Year

- ☐ 2020 16,589




worldpress.org

463 ITEMS




vkontakte.ru

319 ITEMS




nytimes.com

1,057 ITEMS




foxnews.com

983 ITEMS




latimes.com


588 ITEMS




guardian




bbc.com



cnn.com



reuters.com



thehindu.com

A short description and image of the Collection can be found here

Different contributors to the Collections are shown here

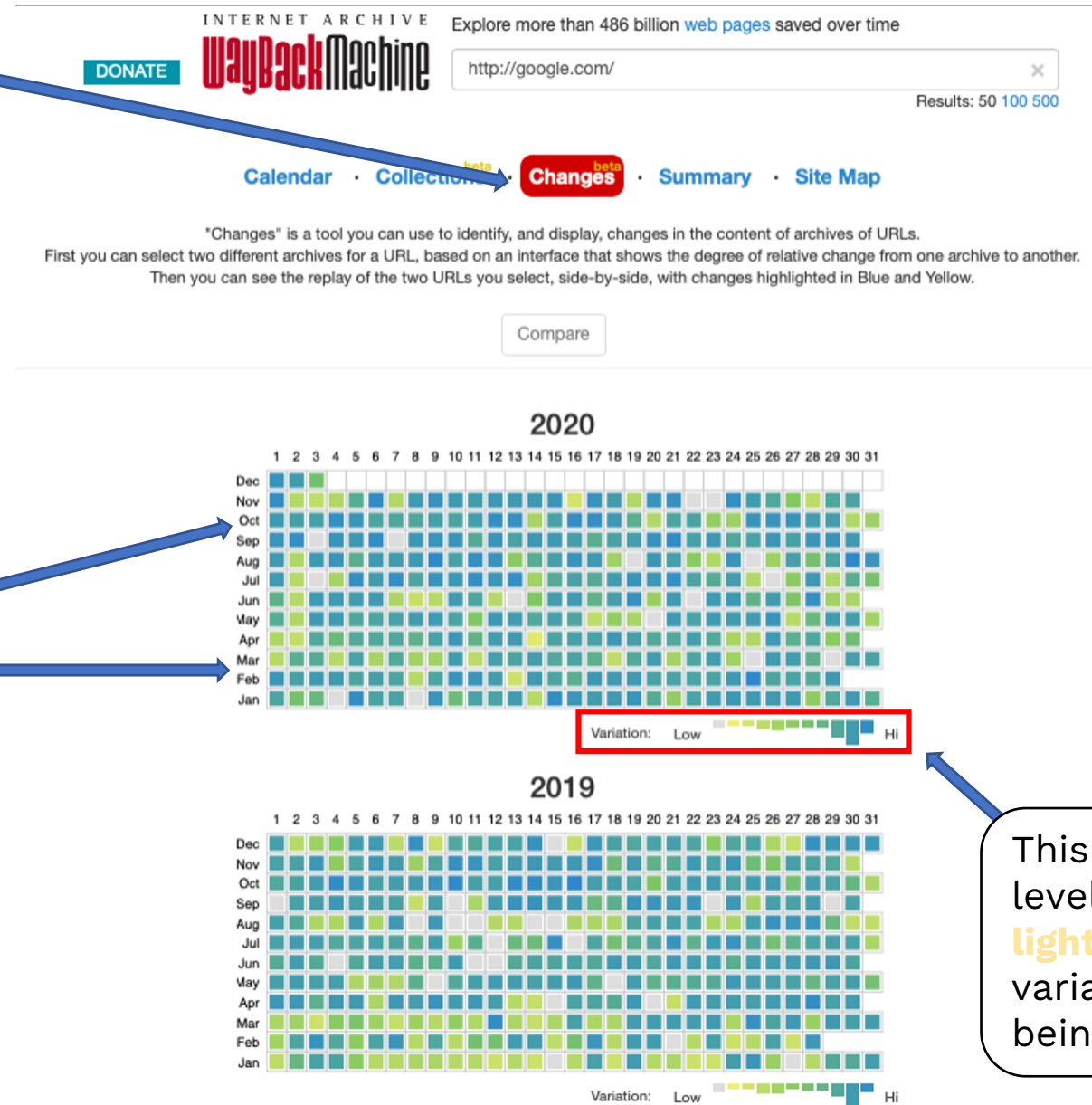


This is the **Changes** feature of the Wayback Machine

With this feature you can identify the changes in different archived versions of the same web page side-by-side

You start by **selecting two snapshots**, either from different years, months, days, or even within the same day, noting that the color of the snapshot indicates the degree of relative change from one to another

URL: <https://web.archive.org/web/changes/http://google.com/>



This scale indicates the level of variation, from **light yellow** being minor variation up to **dark blue** being major variation

URL: <https://web.archive.org/web/changes/http://google.com/>

The two snapshots selected in this example are:

After selecting the two snapshots press the 'Compare' button in the middle

Thu, 02 Jul 2020 at 20:00:54 GMT

and

Fri, 20 Dec 2019 at 10:05:04 GMT

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WayBackMachine

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[Calendar](#) · [Collections](#) ^{beta} · [Changes](#) ^{beta} · [Summary](#) · [Site Map](#)

Changes is a tool you can use to identify, and display, changes in the content of archived URLs. First you can select two different archives for a URL, based on an interface that shows the degree of change from one archive to another. Then you can see the replay of the two URLs you select, side-by-side, with changes highlighted in Blue and Yellow.

Thu, 02 Jul 2020 20:00:54 GMT Compare Fri, 20 Dec 2019 10:05:04 GMT

2020

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

Dec
Nov
Oct
Sep
Aug
Jul
Jun
May
Apr
Mar
Feb
Jan

Distance: Close Far

2019

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

Dec
Nov
Oct
Sep
Aug
Jul
Jun
May
Apr
Mar
Feb
Jan

DECEMBER 20, 2019

3 snapshots

- 00:00:14 @ ≠
- 10:05:04 @ ≠
- 20:00:19 @ ≠

Distance: Close Far

Clicking on the 'Compare' button displays the differences between the snapshot from **Thu, 02 Jul 2020 20:00:54 GMT** on the left and **Fri, 20 Dec 2019 10:05:04 GMT** on the right

Changes allows us to see the changes from one version of the snapshot to the other. Note the linguistic differences with the English language interface on the left and the German on the right, as well as the tab running along the top with other Google applications on the left while this feature is absent from the 2019 snapshot on the right

As indicated at the bottom, **Yellow** indicates content deletion while **Blue** indicates content addition.

URL: <https://web.archive.org/web/diff/20200702200054/20191220100504/http://google.com/>

Compare any two captures of <http://google.com/> from our collection of 5 681 665 dating from Wed, 11 Nov 1998 to Thu, 03 Dec 2020.

Please select a capture

2020 (3000) July (3000) **Thu, 02 Jul 2020 20:00:54 GMT** Please select a capture

Fri, 20 Dec 2019 10:05:04 GMT December (3000) 2019 (3000)

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Google

[Google-Suche](#) [Auf gut Glück!](#)

[Deutschland](#)

[Datenschutzerklärung](#) [Nutzungsbedingungen](#) [Einstellungen](#) [Sucheinstellungen](#) [Erweiterte Suche](#) [Meine Daten](#)

[Hilfe zur Suche](#) [Feedback geben](#) [Werbeprogramme](#) [Unternehmen](#) [Wie funktioniert die Google-Suche?](#)

Yellow indicates content deletion. **Blue** indicates content addition.

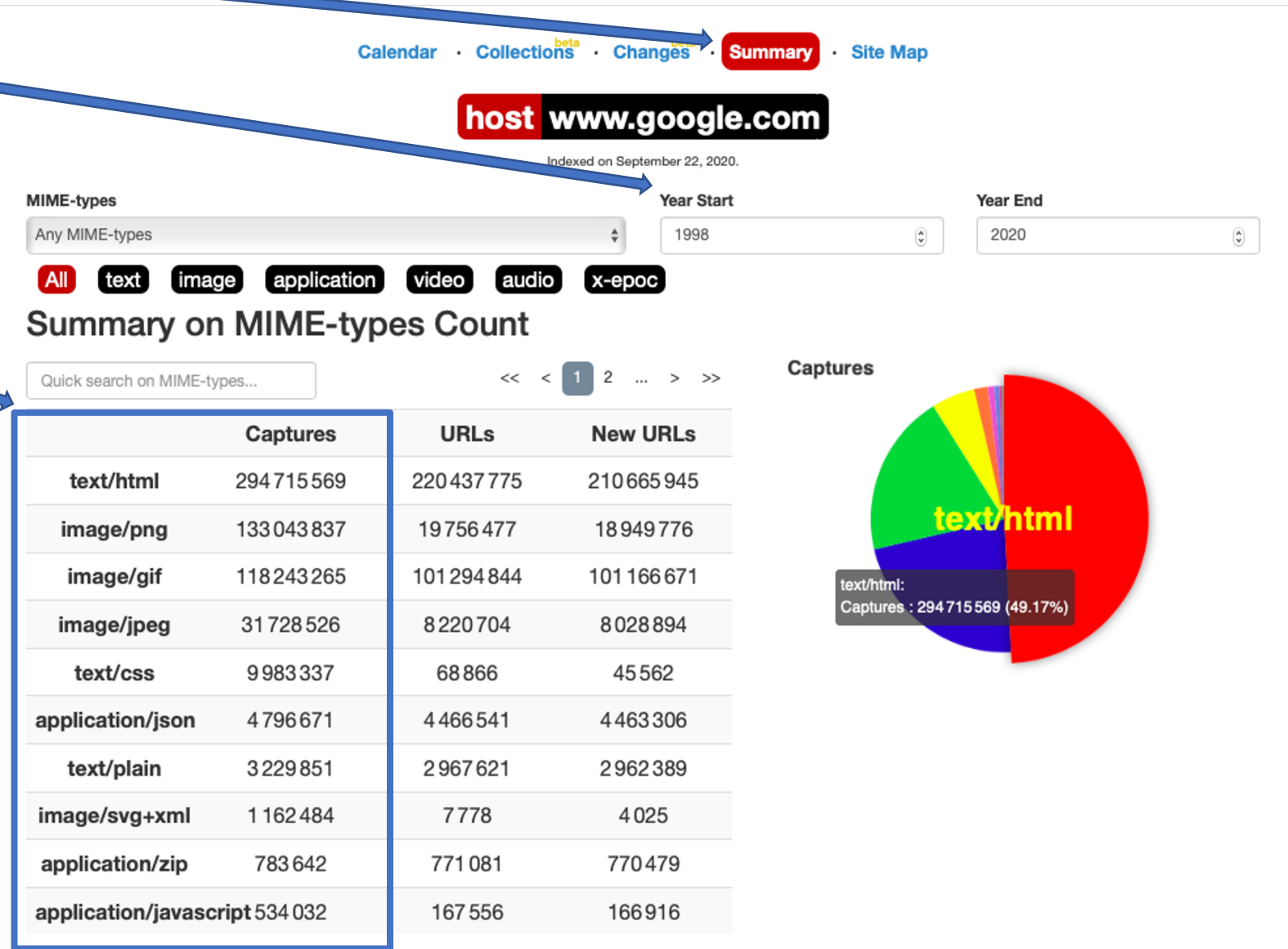
Summary

The **Summary** feature shows which parts of the web page were archived in the given year range. The default is the entire range possible.

The first section gives you a list of the **MIME-types** of all the different parts of the web page saved and how many captures the types have been saved in. The most saved appear at the top.

MIME-type (Multipurpose Internet Mail Extension) is a way of classifying the content of files on the internet. It consists of two parts: 'type' and 'sub-type'; **image/png**. After **text/html** the second-most common MIME-type for 'www.google.com' is **image/png**. You can see from the list that sub-type **image/jpeg**, is far less frequently captured.

URL: <https://web.archive.org/details/http://google.com/>



URL: <https://web.archive.org/details/http://google.com/>

[Calendar](#) · [Collections](#) ^{beta} · [Changes](#) ^{beta} · [Summary](#) · [Site Map](#)

host **www.google.com**

Indexed on September 22, 2020.

MIME-types

Any MIME-types

Year Start

1998

Year End

2020

All **text** **image** **application** **video** **audio** **x-epoc**

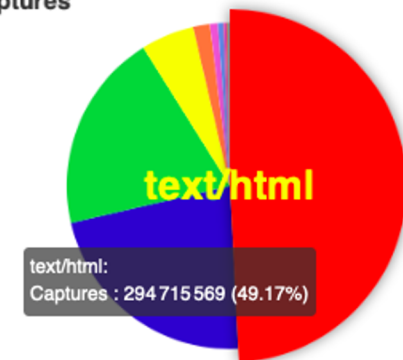
Summary on MIME-types Count

Quick search on MIME-types...

<< < 1 2 ... > >>

| | Captures | URLs | New URLs |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| text/html | 294 715 569 | 220 437 775 | 210 665 945 |
| image/png | 133 043 837 | 19 756 477 | 18 949 776 |
| image/gif | 118 243 265 | 101 294 844 | 101 166 671 |
| image/jpeg | 31 728 526 | 8 220 704 | 8 028 894 |
| text/css | 9 983 337 | 68 866 | 45 562 |
| application/json | 4 796 671 | 4 466 541 | 4 463 306 |
| text/plain | 3 229 851 | 2 967 621 | 2 962 389 |
| image/svg+xml | 1 162 484 | 7 778 | 4 025 |
| application/zip | 783 642 | 771 081 | 770 479 |
| application/javascript | 534 032 | 167 556 | 166 916 |

Captures



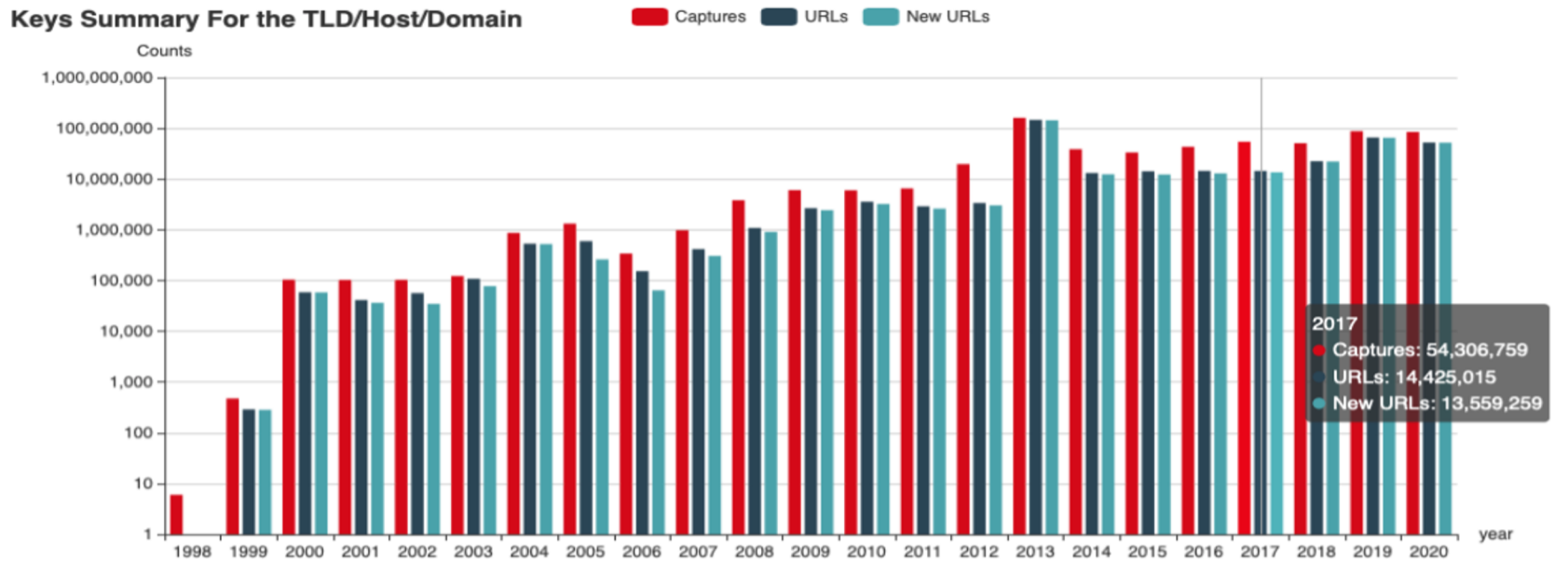
When hovering over the different sections of this pie chart, the percentage breakdown of the different MIME-types that have been archived for the searched URL is shown. Currently 'text/html' is being hovered over.

The second section of **Summary** shows two bar graphs. While 'Captures' refers to the number of snapshots that were conducted in the selected date range, 'URLs' refers to the number of elements that were identified within these captures. 'New URLs' refers to the number of new elements added to these captures.

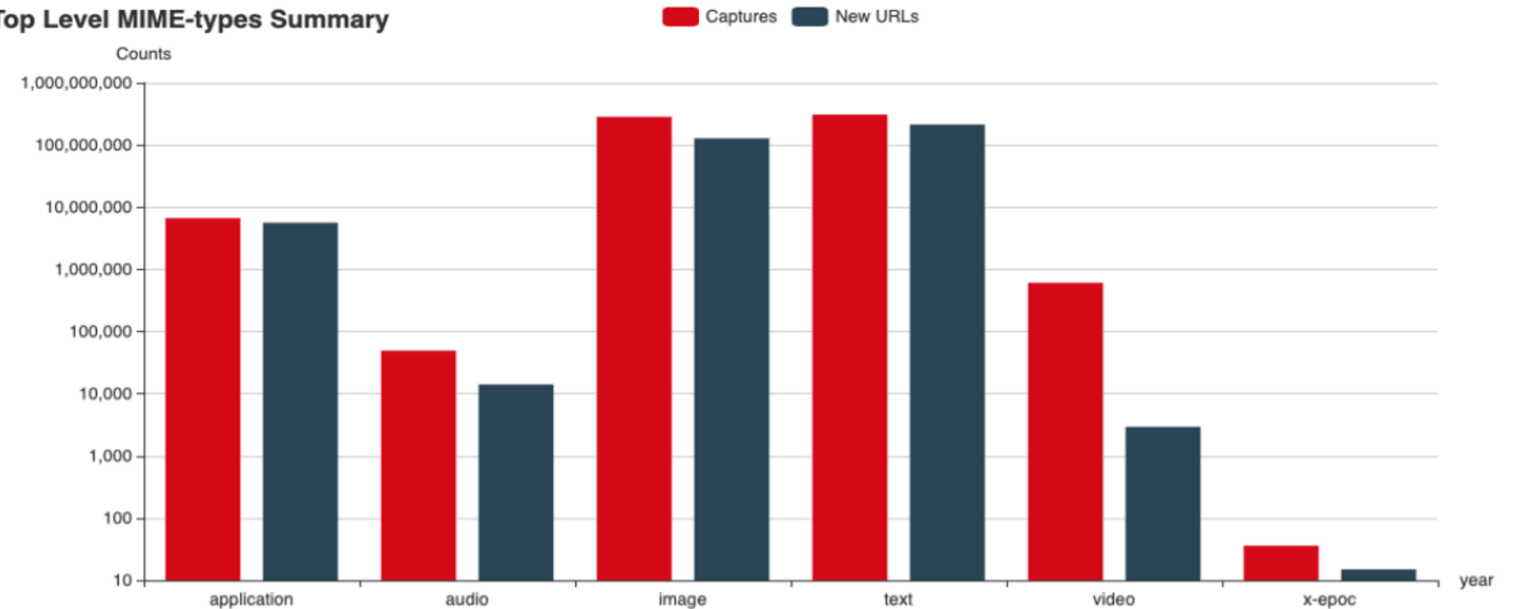
With regard to the term **'URL'**, note that it is commonly known as the definition of a web address, yet in web archiving, **'URL' also stands for a single element on a webpage that was captured.**

URL: <https://web.archive.org/details/http://google.com/>

Keys Summary For the TLD/Host/Domain

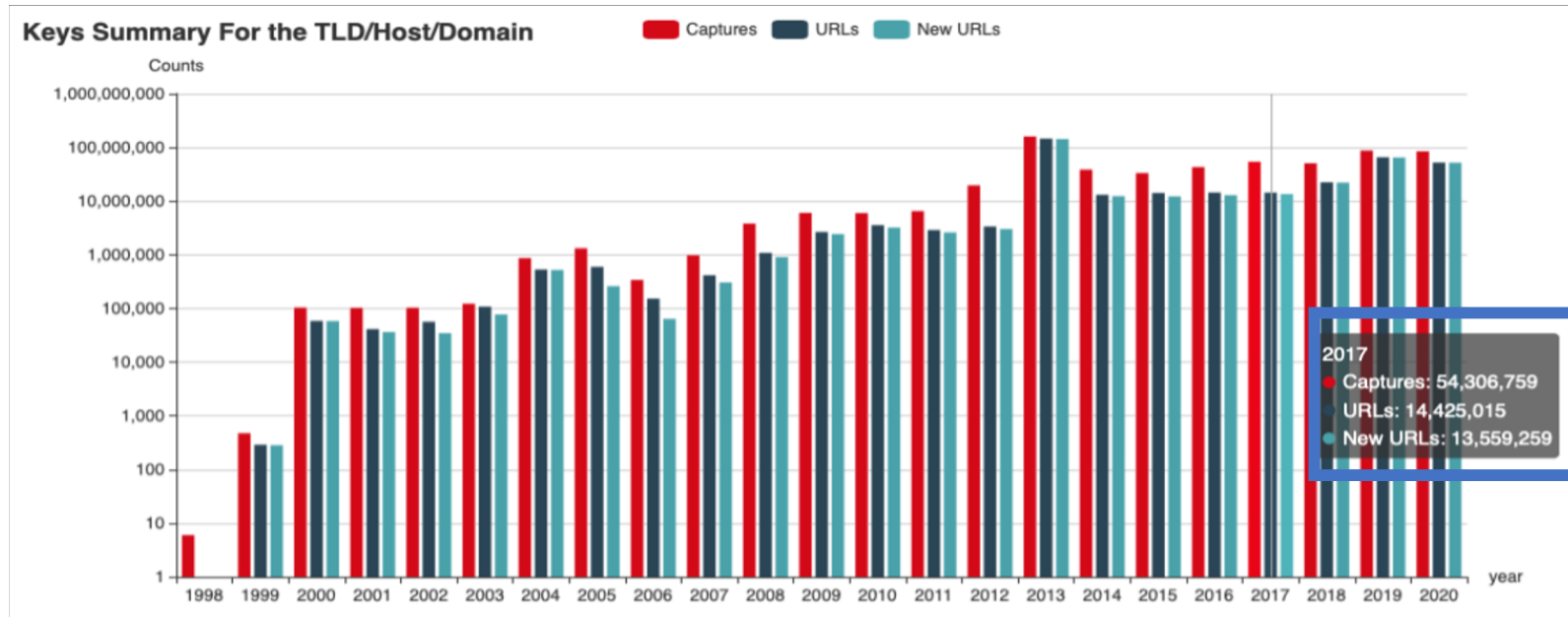


Top Level MIME-types Summary

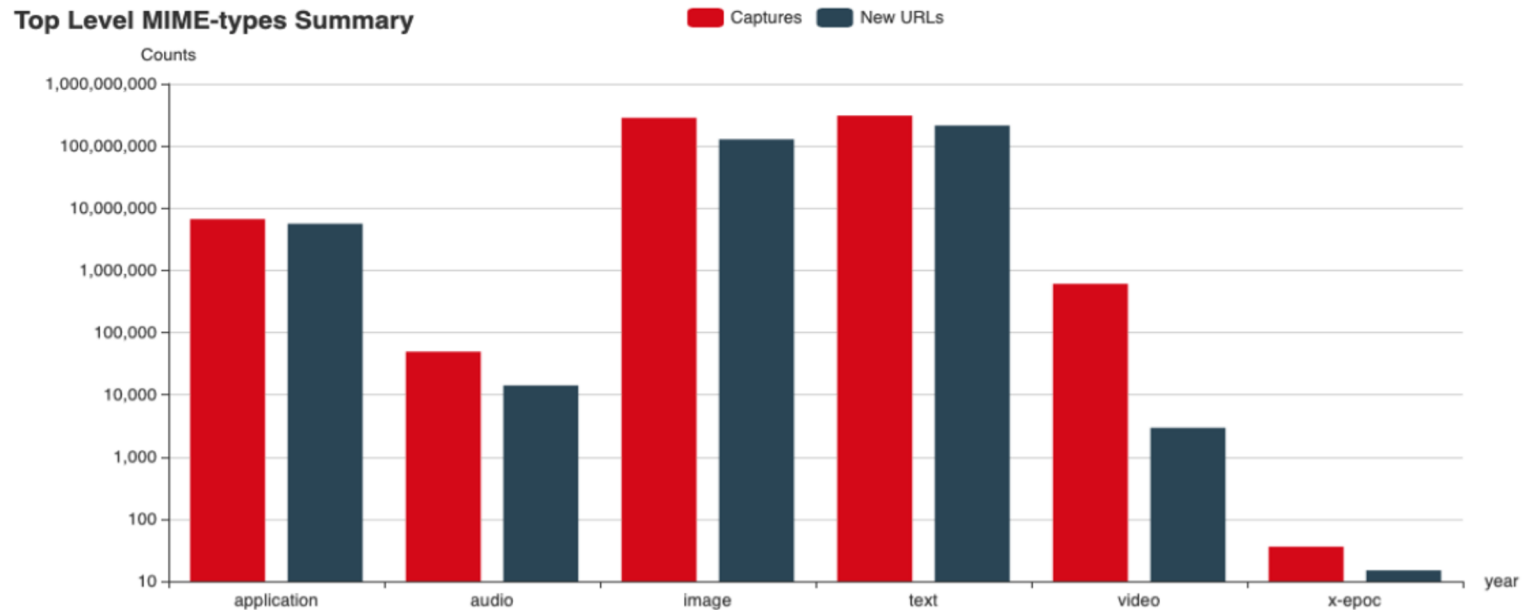


URL: <https://web.archive.org/details/http://google.com/>

The first graph, shows the comparison between the number of captures, URLs, and new URLs for each year in the date range.



The second graph shows the comparison in absolute terms between the total number of captures made and the number of new elements added to those captures over the date range.



When hovering over the different bars in the graph, the numbers of the three categories for that year are shown

Site Map

This is the **Site Map** feature of the Wayback Machine

URL: <https://web.archive.org/web/sitemap/http://google.com/>

This “Site Map” is a visualization of the captured data. It groups all the archives we have for a particular website by year, and represents them in the form of a radial-tree graph.

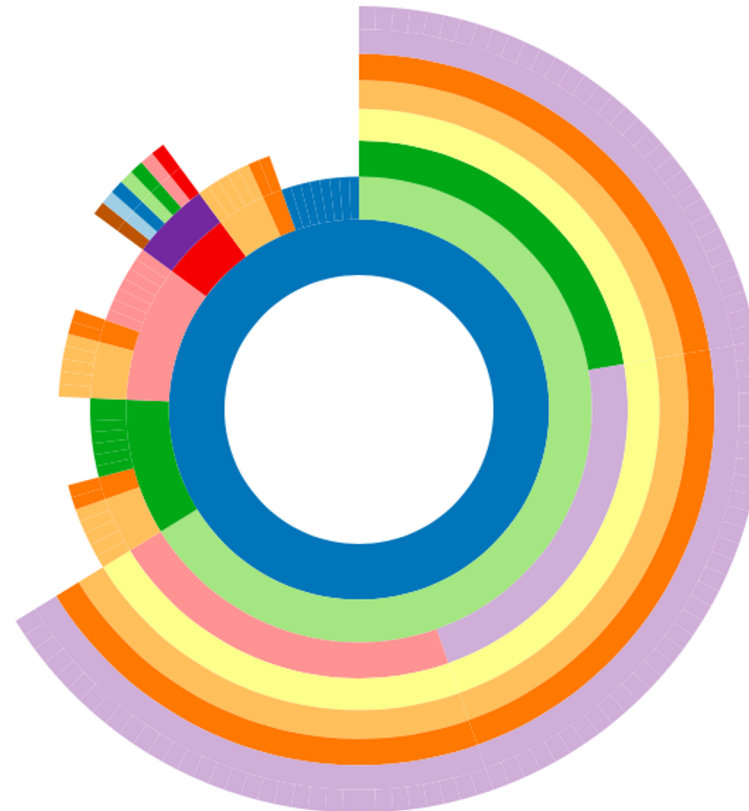
The center circle is the “root” of the website and the successive colored rings represent pages from the site. Moving from the center to the outer edge of the circle this visualization offers an overview of the whole website and the evolution of its architecture, deepness, entries, etc. It is also an entry point. As you hover over the rings and cells the corresponding URLs show at the top. By clicking on any of the individual pages you are directed to the archive of that URL.

[Calendar](#) · [Collections](#) · [Changes](#) · [Summary](#) · **Site Map**

host ranke2.uni.lu

This “Site Map” feature groups all the archives we have for websites by year, then builds a visual site map, in the form of a radial-tree graph, for each year.
The center circle is the “root” of the website and successive rings moving out from the center present pages from the site.
As you roll-over the rings and cells note the corresponding URLs change at the top, and that you can click on any of the individual pages to go directly to an archive of that URL.

2018 2019 2020



We hope this was useful for your understanding of the Waybackmachine. If you have any comments on the content do contact us at <https://ranke2.uni.lu/contact-us/>

The present Ranke2 team

Image Credits

Wayback Machine logo - https://www.infodocket.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/2020-09-17_13-07-36-1.png

References

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<https://stackoverflow.com/questions/3828352/what-is-a-mime-type>.

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