

---

---

# Refcat: The Internet Archive Scholar Reference Graph

2023-02-17 / [Martin Czygan](#), Internet Archive / Kompetenzzentrum  
Bibliometrie / Berlin / <https://bibliometrie.info>

---

---

# Martin Czygan

- /about: Open data engineer, Software developer
- /affiliations: [Internet Archive](#), [Leipzig University Library](#)
- /etc: [Open Source](#), [Writing](#), [Consulting](#), Teaching

Work presented by me, but collaborative effort at the Internet Archive with Bryan Newbold, Helge Holzmann, Jefferson Bailey (PI) and others.

# Background / Open is not forever

- Scholarly communications artifacts as critical archival subjects
- Since 2017, two projects at the Internet Archive (funded partially by the Mellon Foundation)

*Open is not forever: A study of vanished open access journals* ([10.1002/asi.24460](https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24460), 2021)

- Follow up issues, e.g. **citation integrity** (papers and beyond)

# Background / Implementation

## Implementation

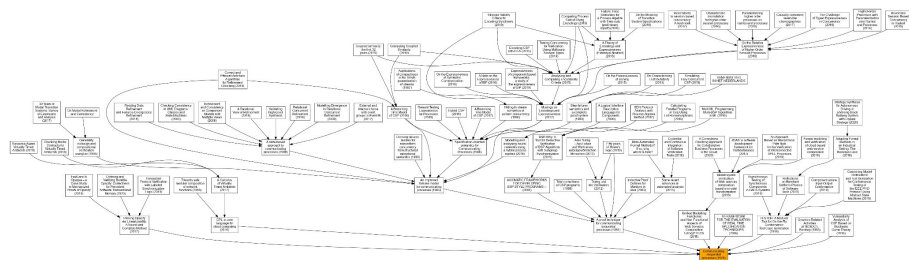
- collect and catalogue metadata (fatcat)
- archive full-text
- archive additional artifacts, like datasets
- access (<https://fatcat.wiki>, <https://scholar.archive.org>)

A set of harvesters, indexers and archiving workflows for **continuous updates** (<https://fatcat.wiki/changelog>) as well as targeted large-scale web-crawls.

- open source at <https://github.com/internetarchive/fatcat>,  
<https://github.com/internetarchive/fatcat-scholar>

# Background / Results

- Millions (and TBs) of papers, datasets preserved and catalogued (ongoing)
- **Internet Archive Scholar** <https://scholar.archive.org/> access site and search over 25M full-texts and 100M+ metadata records (since 03/2021)
- **Citation Graph** (refcat) as data derivation (v1 in 10/2021, v3 in progress)



# Refcat / Overview

- a **open citation dataset** derived from archived metadata and full-text analysis – using both **id-based** and **fuzzy matching** techniques
- download latest version via:  
[https://archive.org/details/ia\\_biblio\\_metadata?query=refcat](https://archive.org/details/ia_biblio_metadata?query=refcat)
- open source: <https://gitlab.com/internetarchive/refcat/>
- documented (v1) in preprint: <https://arxiv.org/abs/2110.06595> (2021)
- blog post:  
<https://blog.archive.org/2021/10/19/internet-archive-releases-refcat-the-ia-scholar-index-of-over-1-3-billion-scholarly-citations/>

# Refcat / Details

- currently (v2): 1,462,333,688 (doi-doi)
- most edges found via id-based matching
- about 5% of the edges come from fuzzy matching
- we include **outbound links** to [Open Library](#) (3M+ books; which books are referenced in papers?)
- we include **inbound links** from (en) [Wikipedia](#) (6M+ articles)

See also: [A tipping point for open citation data \(10.1162/qss\\_c\\_00138, 2021\)](#)

# Refcat / Paper Outlinks

- we analyzed links (URLs) found in papers
- in a sample (from 10/2021) of 364415 URLs found in papers **and** preserved at the Internet Archive, about 16% were not accessible on the live-web anymore
- preservation of scholarly communications artifacts critical for **citation integrity**



# Refcat / Process

The whole project used a mixed top-down (open metadata) and bottom-up (archived material) approach.

- essential data aggregators: crossref, datacite, doaj, ...
- specific data providers: arxiv, dblp, ...
- IR and journal harvesting: 70k+ endpoints ([metha](#))
- IA collections

A variety of datasets collected in the process:

[https://archive.org/details/ia\\_biblio\\_metadata](https://archive.org/details/ia_biblio_metadata)

# Refcat / Process

- find reference information in metadata
- use [GROBID](#) / [wapiti](#) to process raw PDF files to extract references
- combine all reference data into a single file, one line per reference (about 2.5B lines)
- get Open Library and Wikipedia snapshots
- analyze input data and synthesize citation dataset in a processing pipeline

# Refcat / Derivation

- use identifiers (doi, arxiv id, pubmed id, ...) - if no ID found to match, use **fuzzy matching** over title and various other fields (candidate generation and verification)
- large scale processing of billions of records (on a single machine, w/ [Go](#))
- released as a single file snapshot:  
[https://archive.org/details/ia\\_biblio\\_metadata?query=refcat](https://archive.org/details/ia_biblio_metadata?query=refcat)
- Latest snapshot: v2 (v3 in progress)

# Refcat / Observations

- Data is very messy
  - inhibits faster progress
  - data quality requirements (do not want bad links)
  - obscure ways to express a reference
  - manual verification process
  - balance between performance and matching techniques (scalable, yet lightweight solutions desired)
- Lots of little improvements possible
  - matching more Internet Archive holdings to catalog entities
  - experiment with new match-key algorithms
  - uncover and express reference patterns (“funnel approach”)

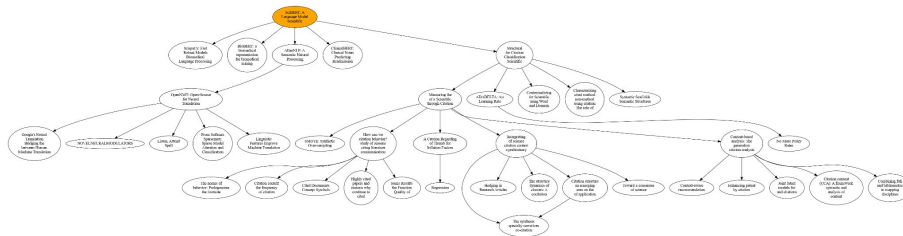
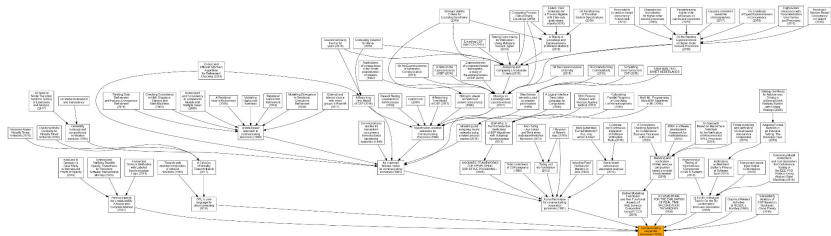
# Outlook

Ongoing and future tasks:

- Continuous metadata acquisition and harvesting of the web, referenced URLs and related content
- Citation graph derivations with data and processing updates
- Citations graph diversity: webpages, wikipedia articles, books, datasets and other referenceable entities
- Refinements of the matching process
- Detailed comparison of various open citation datasets (like OpenAlex, OpenCitations)

# Outlook / Applications

- Prototypical reference graph and library catalog merging at SLUB Dresden: [Project LABE \(talk\)](#)
- CLI utilities to render graphs (e.g. with graphviz)



# Thank you, contact us!

- we are committed to open source and the open data ecosystem
- other presentations:
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PARqfbYldXQ> (Perpetual Access Machines: Archiving Web-Published Scholarship at Scale - Jefferson Bailey)
- Martin Czygan, Open data engineer, [martin@archive.org](mailto:martin@archive.org)