

# Lincoln's Inn Library – Research Guide



## Finding archived versions of official publications

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## Introduction

Material published on the internet is not guaranteed to remain available forever. There are many reasons why content may be removed. Often the material has been updated and the superseded content removed to prevent people relying on out-of-date.

This can create problems if you need to access older material, e.g. to consult superseded version of guidance published by government departments and agencies

There are a number of websites which archive material which has been freely published on the web. They cannot archive every online document of course, but they are worth checking.

## Key resources

### Internet Archive (Internet Wayback Machine)

<b>URL</b>	<a href="https://archive.org/web/">https://archive.org/web/</a>
<b>Scope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Global, containing 330 billion web pages</li></ul>
<b>Date coverage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• From 1996</li></ul>
<b>Advantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This is the most comprehensive of the internet archive databases.</li><li>• Contains multiple archive versions of many websites and documents</li><li>• Includes very recent material</li><li>• Works very well if you know the original URL of the document</li></ul>
<b>Disadvantages:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You need to know the URL (web address) of the document you require. (There are a number of ways in which you can find URLs for superseded documents - see below).</li></ul>

### UK Government Web Archives (via the National Archives website)

<b>URL</b>	<a href="http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/webarchive/">http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/webarchive/</a>
<b>Scope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• UK government websites only</li></ul>
<b>Date coverage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• From 1996, more comprehensive coverage from 2003</li></ul>
<b>Advantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offers the ability to search by URL or by keyword</li><li>• Contains an A-Z list of all the government websites archived. This is a useful way of finding details of departments / agencies which no longer exist.</li><li>• This website also has a very helpful live chat help service.</li></ul>
<b>Disadvantages:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some of the early archived versions of the websites are of poor quality and some links are broken.</li></ul>

### UK Web Archive

<b>URL</b>	<a href="http://www.webarchive.org.uk/ukwa/">http://www.webarchive.org.uk/ukwa/</a>
<b>Scope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• UK websites</li></ul>
<b>Date coverage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• from 2004 (for websites which gave permission for inclusion),</li><li>• since 2013 more websites have been included under the terms of non-print legal deposit legislation.</li></ul>
<b>Advantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A useful additional source to check</li></ul>
<b>Disadvantages:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The selective nature of the 2004-2013 collection limits the numbers of useful documents.</li><li>• Not all material can be accessed – users can only access the full text of some websites if they are accessing the websites in one of the UK's copyright deposit libraries.</li><li>• Searching on URLs is not very accurate</li></ul>

## Which source to use

If you have a website address (URL)

- Internet Archive Wayback Machine
- UK Government Web Archive

If you only have a document title

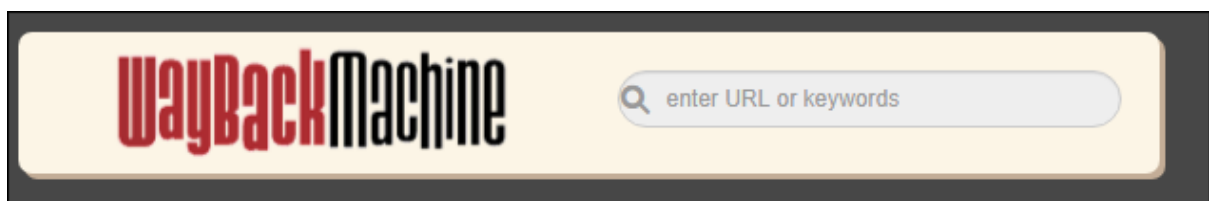
- Try finding a URL from a legal updating service (see section 4 below)
- UK Government Web Archive
- UK Web Archive

## 1. Searching the Internet Archive Wayback Machine

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

### a. Searching by the URL

This is where the site works well. Type/ paste the URL into the search box



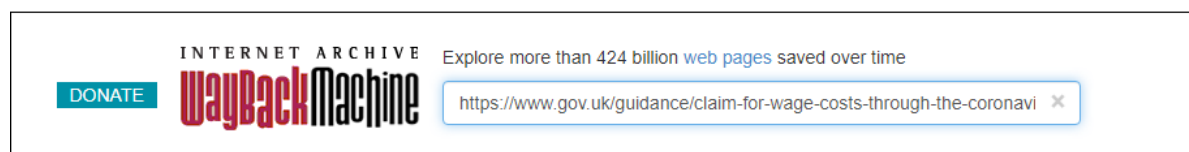
If the page has been archived, your search will produce a calendar indicating the dates on which a copy of the page was archived.

#### Example:

HMRC published *Guidance: Check if you can claim for your employees' wages through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme* on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020. This document was then revised repeatedly in the following weeks.

If you access this document on the UK Government site you can only access the current version. There is a short summary explaining how and when the document was updated, but not the full text of the different versions. You can access earlier version on the Internet Archive.

Copy and paste the current URL into the search box on the Internet Archive:



You will find that versions of the document were saved on a number of dates:

Saved **24 times** between [March 27, 2020](#) and [April 20, 2020](#).

If you click on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020 there is a link to one 'capture', which is the original version of the document. Clicking on the link for the 4<sup>th</sup> April provides a copy of the document containing the first amendments, with subsequent amended versions also captured.

**b. Searching archived versions of the whole website**

This type of search is usually more difficult than when you have a URL for a specific document, as not every page of a website will have been archived.

Go to the Internet Archive and type in the URL of the body which published the document. If versions of the website are indexed, you will see a calendar indicating the dates on which the site was archived. Click on one of the versions and you can navigate within the website, although not every link will work.

**Example:**  
 Finding a copy of the *Consultation on new regulations regarding employment agencies* issued by the Department of Trade & Industry in July 2002  
 Go to the Internet Archive and type in <http://www.dti.gov.uk> as the website of the (now disbanded) DTI.  
 In the calendar view, choose the version from a date after July 2002 – e.g. 12<sup>th</sup> August. This provides you with the DTI homepage as it appeared on that date. There is a link to Consultations in the right hand menu. Click on this to provide a list of consultations, which includes

23/07/02 **Employment agencies: consultation on new regulations.** The closing date for comments is 01 November 2002.

There are a number of relevant documents related to this consultation behind this link.

**c. Searching by keyword**

This is the least successful way of searching this database, due to the huge number of sites indexed. Probably only worth trying if you cannot find a URL for the document and you have not been able to find the document using keyword searches on the UK Government Web Archive or the UK Web Archive.

## 2. Searching the UK Government Web Archives (via the National Archives website)

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/webarchive/>

### a. Searching by the URL

Copy and paste the URL into the 'Find captures of a URL' box on the search page

<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/search/>

#### Example:

To check for a superseded version of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 3* type the URL into the search box

Find captures of a URL...

URL:  ?

The search results summarise the dates on which the document was archived

<http://www.planning.detr.gov.uk/ppg3/index.htm>

12 instances from 3 years

2002 - 3 instances	▼
2001 - 3 instances	▼
2000 - 6 instances	▼

Clicking on a year produces the dates on which the page was archived

2000 - 6 instances

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
			8	11	22		18		12		
			9								

### b. Searching archived versions of the whole website

You can navigate around an archived version of a website, by searching in the Find captures of a URL field or browsing the list of archived government websites

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/webarchive/atoz/>

#### Example

Finding a copy of the *Consultation on new regulations regarding employment agencies* issued by the Department of Trade & Industry in July 2002

Browse the list of government departments at <http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/webarchive/atoz/>

And choose the Department of Trade & Industry (DTI) and choose a date after July 2002

2003 - 2 instances	▼
2002 - 23 instances	▼
2001 - 12 instances	▼

You can then navigate round the archived site and access the links on the Consultation pages, including the employment agencies consultation.

### c. Searching by keyword

The database gives you the option to search across the full text of pages using keywords or an exact phrase. You are unable to limit your search to the title of a document, so searches tend to produce a large number of irrelevant results.

You can restrict your search to a particular website URL, e.g. [www.hm-treasury.gov.uk](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk) but bear in mind that it is not always clear which government department may have published the document. Once you have run your search you can filter the results to a particular year or years.

#### Example

Finding a copy of the *Consultation on new regulations regarding employment agencies* issued by the Department of Trade & Industry in July 2002

Add your keywords to the search box

Consultation regulations employment agencies july 2002



You can filter the results, but choosing a year or a number of years from the left hand menu, then clicking on **Refine** at the bottom of the page.

It might not find the exact document you want, but you may be able to navigate one of the archived sites from the results list. E.g. the following page (first result when you limit the search results to 2002) includes a link to the July 2002 consultation paper.

#### DTI Employment Relations - Employment Agencies

22/10/2002 text/html www.dti.gov.uk

Agencies Act 1973 and regulations. For a summary of the Act and regulations, see Employment Agencies Act

### 3. Searching the UK Web Archive

<http://www.webarchive.org.uk/ukwa/>

This source is very much a last resort.

It does contain a lot of useful content, but searches do not usually produce results as reliable as those on the Internet Archive or the UK Government Web Archive. For instance, if you search on a URL for a document it usually finds only approximate, rather than exact matches. (In such cases, limiting the search results by domain (e.g. gov.uk) and by date might produce the result you need.

It also does not archive web pages with the frequency of the other services and many of the results can only be viewed in the reading rooms of the UK deposit libraries.

## 4. How to find the URL of a superseded document

You might find a reference to the document complete with original URL in a legal current awareness service. The Current Awareness section of Westlaw is a good source to try, as are document references in Practical Law.

### EXAMPLES – Westlaw Current Awareness

#### 1. Finding a copy of *Planning Policy Guidance Note No.3: housing*, dated 8<sup>th</sup> March 2000)

Go to Westlaw > Current Awareness [link on top menu]

Run your search. The Advanced search option allows you to limit your search to 'Policy and guidance' under Document type.

The search list includes a summary of the guidance note and the following URL

<http://www.planning.detr.gov.uk/ppg3/index.htm> As this note is no longer current (and the DETR no longer exists as a department), the link does not work, but if you paste the link into the Internet Archive you can find a number of versions in the period 2000-2003.

#### 2. Finding a copy of *VAT Notice 708: Building and construction, as in force in 2008*

Go to Westlaw > Current Awareness [link on top menu]

Search for "VAT Notice 708"

The second search result contains a link to the 2013 version of this notice:

[http://customs.hmrc.gov.uk/channelsPortalWebApp/channelsPortalWebApp.portal?\\_nfpb=true&\\_pageLabel=pageLibrary\\_ShowContent&id=HMCE\\_CL\\_000513&propertyType=document](http://customs.hmrc.gov.uk/channelsPortalWebApp/channelsPortalWebApp.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=pageLibrary_ShowContent&id=HMCE_CL_000513&propertyType=document)

Copy and paste this URL into the Internet Archive. The calendar display provides a number of dates when previous versions of this document were archived, including one from 2008.

## 5. Factors which may prevent material being readable on the archive websites

- The original website's built-in search
- Content that can only be reached by a user logging in
- Certain navigational features, e.g. drop-down menus, tick boxes, some maps
- Flash animations and games, streaming media and embedded social media.
- Complex JavaScript
- POST functionality
- Content hosted on websites external to the target archived website, unless we know about it before we launch a crawl.

## 6. Contact the Government department

This is unlikely to be a quick way of locating a copy of a document, but if you are unable to obtain a document from any other source, you could try contacting the department directly. If you reference your enquiry as a Freedom of Information request, the department will have to reply within 20 working days. There is further information on the process at <https://www.gov.uk/make-a-freedom-of-information-request/how-to-make-an-foi-request> This page also contains a link to a searchable database of published requests for information. This is worth checking, as someone may have already requested access to the same information as you require.

## 7. Warning re: defunct government departments

If searching for government documents, bear in mind that older documents may have been published by departments which no longer exist. For instance, older tax documents will have been published by HM Customs and Excise or the Inland Revenue, before the 2005 of these two bodies to form HMRC. If you cannot find anything relevant under the current department it is worth checking Wikipedia to find out the background to the department's history.

## 8. Print sources for superseded guidance

Do not forget that superseded guidance might also be available from the following sources

- Lincoln's Inn Library contains print copies of many official publications, as do the other Inn libraries. Check the catalogues on the library websites.
- Textbooks - particularly for areas such as taxation, planning and construction., e.g. the guidance published by HMRC (and its predecessor bodies) included in the Tolley's Yellow and Orange Tax Handbooks.
- Looseleaf encyclopaedias – many of which have a section on non-statutory materials, e.g. the planning circulars in the Sweet & Maxwell *Encyclopaedia of Planning Law*.