Decision Records / Test external links in documentation

# Test external links in documentation

#### Context and Problem Statement

The JabRef repository contains Markdown ( .md) files documenting the JabRef code. The documentation contains links to external resources. For high-quality documentation, external links should be working.

### **Decision Drivers**

· Checking external links should not cause issues in the normal workflow

## **Considered Options**

- Check external links once a month
- Check external links in the "checkstyle" task
- Do not check external links

## **Decision Outcome**

Chosen option: "Check external links once a month", because it provides a basic quality baseline.

### Positive Consequences

Automatic notification of broken external links

## **Negative Consequences**

- Some external sites need to <u>be disabled</u>. For instance, GitHub.com always returns "forbidden".
- Contributors find it strange if external links are broken (example: user-documentation#526)

## Pros and Cons of the Options

#### Check external links once a month

- Good, because does not interfere with the normal development workflow
- Bad, because an additional workflow is required

## Check external links in the "checkstyle" task

- Good, because no separate workflow is required
- Bad, because checks fail independent of the PR (because external web sites can go down and go up independent of a PR)

### Do not check external links

- Good, because no testing at all is required
- Bad, because external links break without any notice
- Bad, because external links have to be checked manually