

Chinese Citizens Find Ways to Circumvent Covid-19 Censorship

Mary Huber

<https://medium.com/good-systems/chinese-citizens-find-ways-to-circumvent-covid-19-censorship-e8934e978158>

Platforms, Community Archives and Remembering the Pandemic

Amelia Acker

<https://globalmedia.mit.edu/2020/06/09/platforms-community-archives-and-remembering-the-pandemic>

Presented by Peter Foytik

12/3/2020

Outline

- Alternative platforms used for archiving
- Chinese censorship
- Chinese censorship Covid-19
- Github and Chinese Covid-19
- Challenges moving forward

Alternative platforms used by communities to archive

- Twitter*
 - Instagram* (Facebook owned)
 - Google drive*
 - Dropbox
 - Github (Microsoft owned)
 - Telegram
-
- Platforms are typically chosen for access and ease of use

(*) Source blocked by China https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_websites_blocked_in_mainland_China

ATX Barrio Archive celebrates Austin's black and brown neighborhoods and reaches community members using Instagram



atx_barrio_archive • Follow
Montopolis

atx_barrio_archive Residents of East Austin and Montopolis use a free transit service offered through the Model Cities Program 🌟 a federal urban aid program developed as part of President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society and War on Poverty. 📁: Your Model Cities Directory of Services (1972).

1w



atx_barrio_archive • Follow

atx_barrio_archive Condolences to the family of Austin music legend Vicente "Chente" Alonzo, longtime bajo sexto player and vocalist with Johnny Degollado y su Conjunto. Q.E.P.D. 🙏 Special s/o to @compadresmusic for keeping the family memories and music alive 🎶



atx_barrio_archive • Follow
El Lago

atx_barrio_archive Throwback to fresh tortillas and chips at El Lago 🌮 Beloved East Side tortilla factory and supplier of masa for tamales ❤️ 📁: Southern Living, November 1995.

3w

randya512 How times have change in that area! ❤️



atx_barrio_archive • Follow
Gene's New Orleans Style Poboy's and Deli

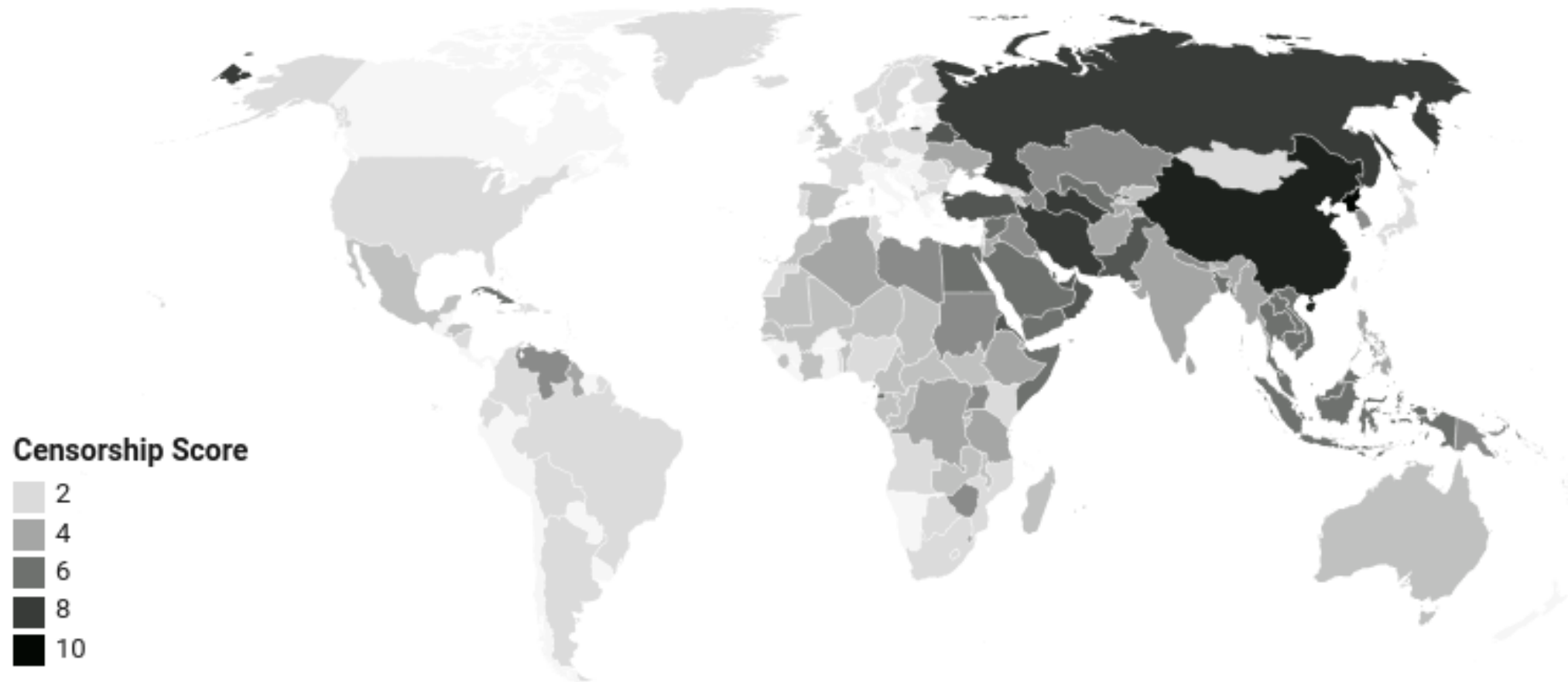
atx_barrio_archive Claudia Conner-Tumbs and Gene Tumbs pictured outside their restaurant, Gene's New Orleans Style Poboy's & Deli, two years after opening at 1209 East 11th St. 📁: Austin American Statesman, February 24, 2002.

69w

https://www.instagram.com/atx_barrio_archive/?hl=en

Internet access restrictions across the world

Countries with the Worst Online Censorship in the World



<https://www.comparitech.com/blog/vpn-privacy/internet-censorship-map>

Chinese censorship

- Implemented by the Peoples Republic of China's ruling party, the Chinese Communist Party
- Chinese Government produced whitepaper describing the control of Internet censorship within the country of China in 2010
- "Laws and regulations clearly prohibit the spread of information that contains content subverting state power, undermining national unity [or] infringing upon national honour and interests,"
- China still maintains that its people have unfettered access to the Internet. "Chinese citizens fully enjoy freedom of speech on the Internet," <https://web.archive.org/web/20190701023627/http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8727647.stm>

Media censored by the Chinese government

- Television
- Print media
- Radio
- Film
- Theater
- Text messaging
- Instant messaging
- Video games
- Literature
- Internet

Chinese historically censors based on keyword searches, Covid-19 censorship facilitated by keyword searches on platforms

Date	Number of Keywords Found Blocked
January 2020	162
February 2020	645
March 2020	501
April 2020	628
May 2020	238
Table 13: Number of keywords found blocked.	

<https://citizenlab.ca/2020/08/censored-contagion-ii-a-timeline-of-information-control-on-chinese-social-media-during-covid-19>

Github as platform to circumvent censorship

- Chinese government works and trades with Microsoft (owner of Github)
- Chinese software developers use Github regularly
 - Source version control of software projects
 - Access and build open-sourced tools
 - Participate with the world in software development

Difficulty for China to censor content on Github

- Cannot block service (developers need access)
- To remove specific content must convince Microsoft to remove it
- The ability and ease of distribution of content to communities
- The ability and ease to fork and clone repos

Sources of archives of the novel coronavirus from Jady Liu, a freelance journalist in China

← Thread

 **Jady Liu** @JadyWhitesand

A friend is asking about archives of the novel coronavirus, so here's a list:

Real-time and categorized news:
t.me/nCoV2019

Bilingual news:
docs.google.com/document/u/0/d...

Voluntary projects:
2020.bottledream.com/app/#/page/p2-2

And much more:
mp.weixin.qq.com/s/roT5rJ8iUYEZ...

#COVID19 #SARSCoV2



2019-nCoV疫情实时播报
2019-nCoV 相关资讯实时播报 投稿请将消息发给 @nfnf2046bot (请提供可信新闻链接来源) 点击即可查看相...
t.me

2:22 AM · Feb 13, 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

1 Retweet 2 Likes



Jady Liu @JadyWhitesand · Feb 13

Replying to @JadyWhitesand

And some smaller projects:

News, nonfiction and personal accounts:

github.com/2019ncovmemory...

Timeline:

github.com/Pratitya/wuhan...

Mainland news:

shimo.im/docs/vj38GdGpq...

#COVID19 #SARSCoV2

<https://twitter.com/JadyWhitesand/status/1227855444749758464>

China Covid-19 Github archives

- 2 repos, both of which popped up in late January at the crux of the COVID-19 pandemic in China.
- /nCovMemory
 - <https://github.com/2019ncovmemory/nCovMemory> (Taken down April 25 2020)
 - <https://2019ncovmemory.github.io/nCovMemory/> (github pages for repo)
 - <https://github.com/memeshk/nCovMemory>
 - <https://github.com/memeshk/nCovMemory-en>
- /Wuhan2019
 - <https://github.com/lestweforget/wuhan2019>

/2019nCovMemory archive availability for the Github repo and the github.io page

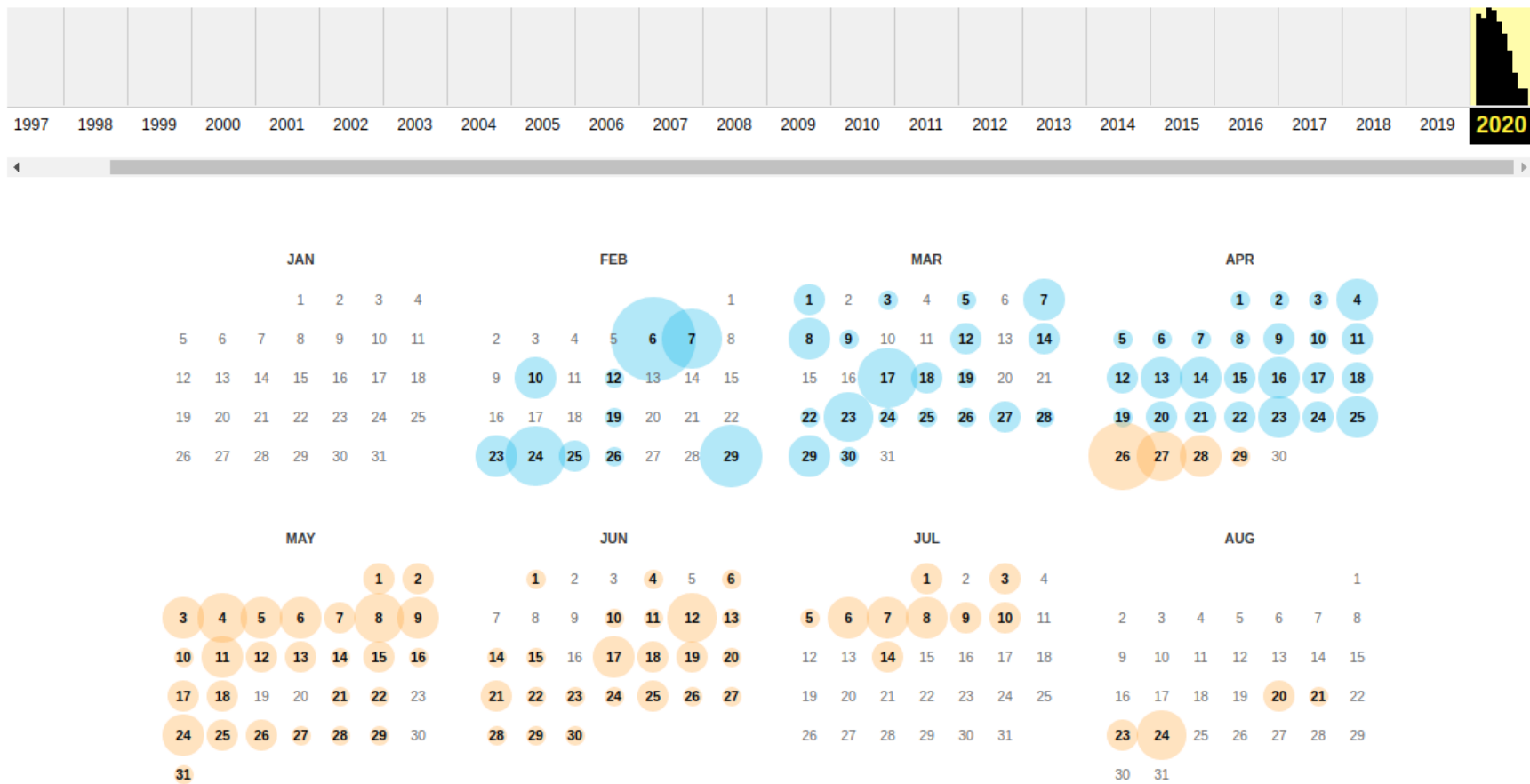
```
curl -s http://memgator.cs.odu.edu/timemap/link/https://https://github.com/2019ncovmemory/nCovMemory | grep  
datetime | awk '{print $1}' | awk -v FS=/ '{print $3}' | sort | uniq -c | sort -n
```

268 web.archive.org

```
curl -s http://memgator.cs.odu.edu/timemap/link/https://2019ncovmemory.github.io/nCovMemory/ | grep datetime | awk  
'{print $1}' | awk -v FS=/ '{print $3}' | sort | uniq -c | sort -n
```

3 wayback.archive-it.org
10 archive.md
148 web.archive.org

/nCovMemory summary from web.archive.org





http://web.archive.org/web/*/https://github.com/2019ncovmemory/nCoVMemory

Peter Foytik CS895F20 Chinese Citizens Circumvent Censorship


12/3/2020

Example of content in nCovMemory repo from Wayback Machine

Global Times

date	title	Original link	Screenshot	Archive	translation
03-16	During the epidemic, the central government sent a total of four investigation teams, and three investigation teams have concluded	 <i>Reprint</i>	link	link	/
03-16	Medical staff of Wuhan Central Hospital confessed their true feelings: the epidemic is a demon mirror	 <i>Reprint</i>	link	link	/


Wuhan Science and Technology News

date	title	Original link	Screenshot	Archive	translation
02-20	Who is lying? Conversation with a Wuhan Medical Care Patient	 <i>Reprint</i>	link	link	/

http://web.archive.org/web/20200425044035if_/https://github.com/2019ncovmemory/nCoVMemory#%E7%A1%95%E4%BF%8A%E5%AE%B6%E4%B9%A6

URI-R and URI-M for the links in the Wayback Machine archive

Wuhan Science and Technology News

date	title	Original link	Screenshot	Archive	translation
02-20	Who is lying? Conversation with a Wuhan Medical Care Patient	 Reprint	link	link	/

Original link

URI-R: <http://bbs1.people.com.cn/post/2/0/0/174922266.html>

URI-M: <http://web.archive.org/web/20200425044035/http://bbs1.people.com.cn/post/2/0/0/174922266.html>

Screenshot

URI-R: <https://github.com/2019ncovmemory/nCovMemory/blob/master/archive/jpg/3615.jpg>

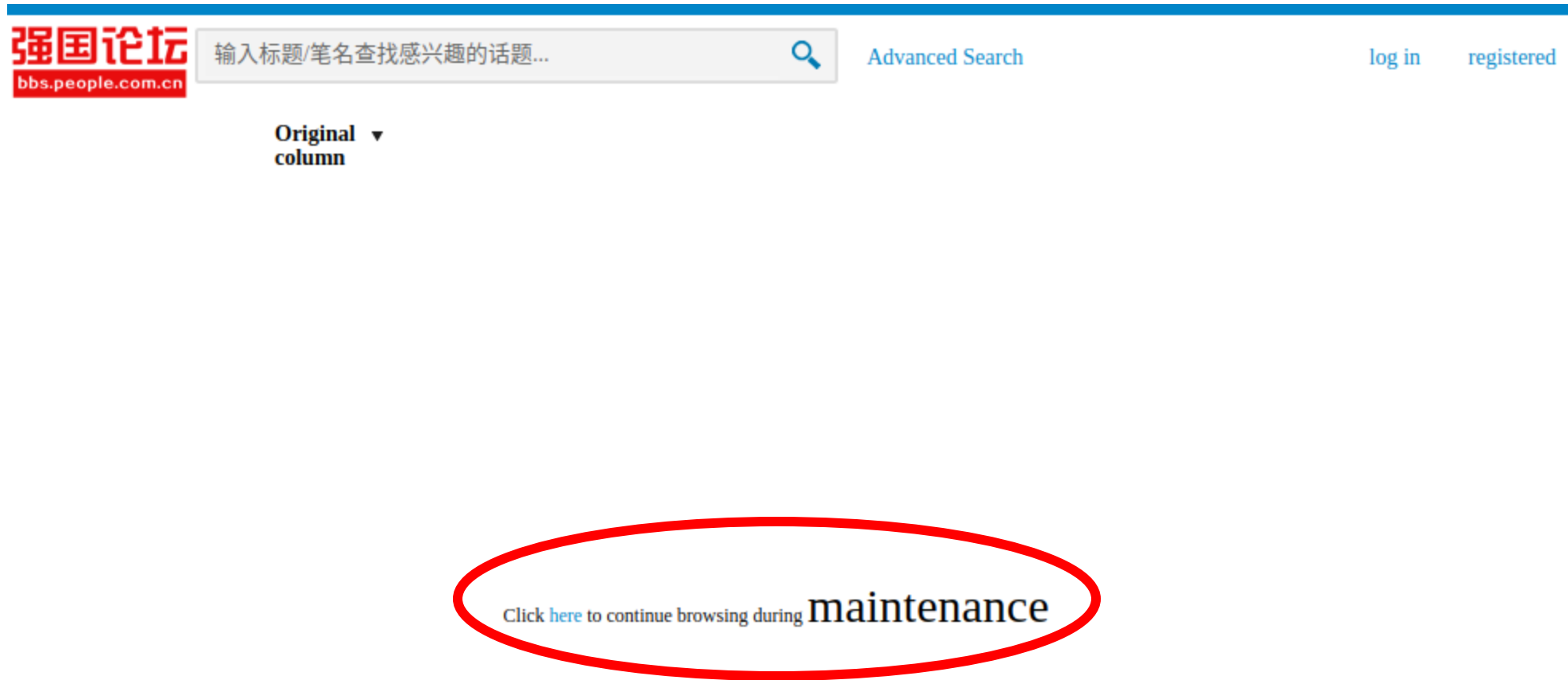
URI-M: <http://web.archive.org/web/20200425044035/https://github.com/2019ncovmemory/nCovMemory/blob/master/archive/jpg/3615.jpg>

Archive

URI-R: <http://archive.vn/cjNVI>

URI-M: <http://web.archive.org/web/20200425044035/http://archive.vn/cjNVI>

URI-R from Wuhan Science and Technology News (Live) currently shows the article has been removed



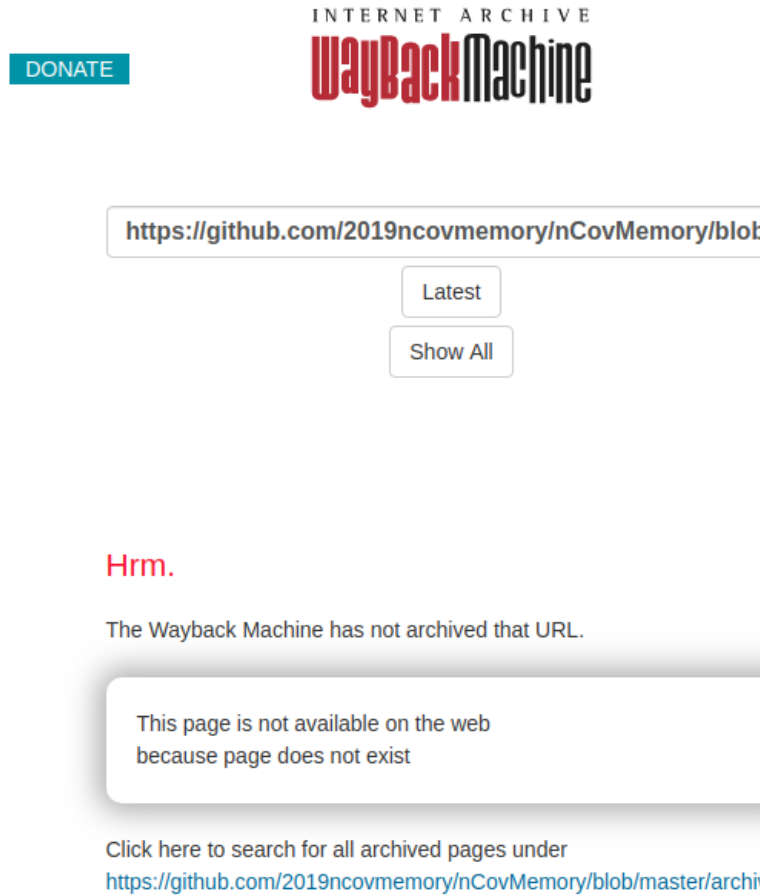
URI-R: <http://bbs1.people.com.cn/post/2/0/0/174922266.html>

URI-M link from Wuhan Science and Technology News provides the archived version of the article



URI-M: <http://web.archive.org/web/20200405194928/http://bbs1.people.com.cn/post/2/0/0/174922266.html>

URI-M Screenshot link from Wuhan Science and Technology News (Archive) is linked but not archived



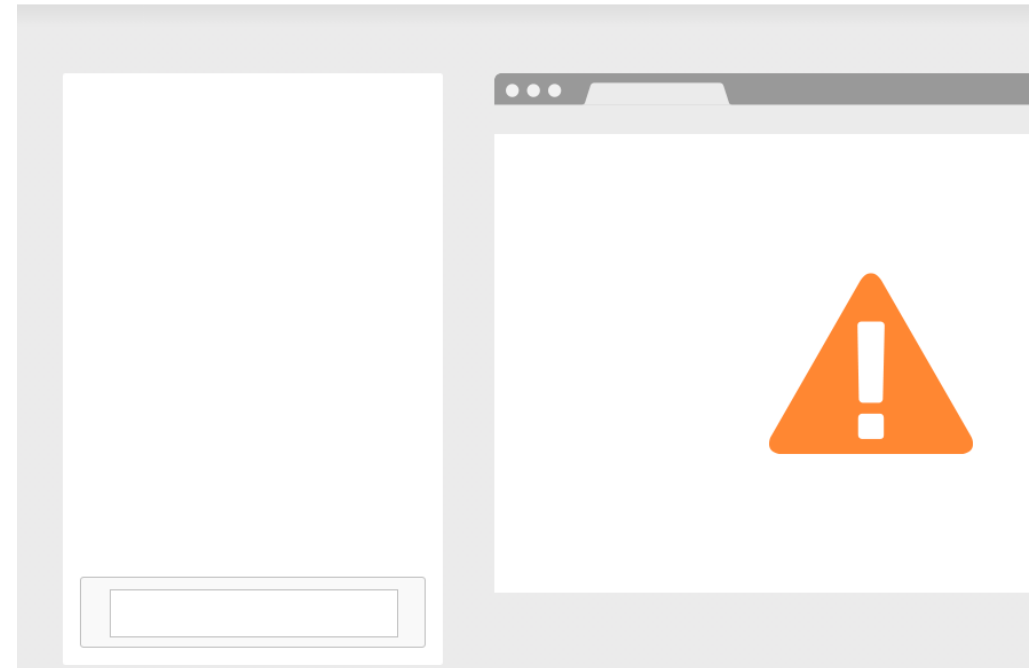
URI-M:

<http://web.archive.org/web/20200425044035/https://github.com/2019ncovmemory/nCovMemory/blob/master/archive/jpg/3615.jpg>

URI-M Archive link from Wuhan Science and Technology News points to archive.today but shows archive of CAPTCHA request

One more step

Please complete the security check to access
web.archive.org



URI-M:
<http://web.archive.org/web/20200405200819/http://archive.vn/cjNVI>

The archive.today shortened link works it just needs to be extracted from the URI-M of the Wayback Machine



URI-M Short:
<http://archive.vn/cjNVI>

URI-M Long:
<http://archive.today/2020.03.17-155850/http://bbs1.people.com.cn/post/2/0/0/174922266.html>

The archive on Wayback Machine is more complete comparing the media and personal narrative sources

Counts	Wayback Machine	archive.today
Media Sources	91	44
Personal Narrative	115	19

archive.today
webpage capture

search examples:

- 2019ncovmemory.github.io for all snapshots from the host
- *.github.io for list of subdomains
- <https://2019ncovmemory.github.io/nCovMemory/> for exact url
- https://2019ncovmemory.github.io/nCovMemory/* for url prefix

Oldest Newest List of URLs, ordered from newer to older

[2020新冠肺炎记忆](https://2019ncovmemory.github.io/nCovMemory/)
<https://2019ncovmemory.github.io/nCovMemory/>

archived via

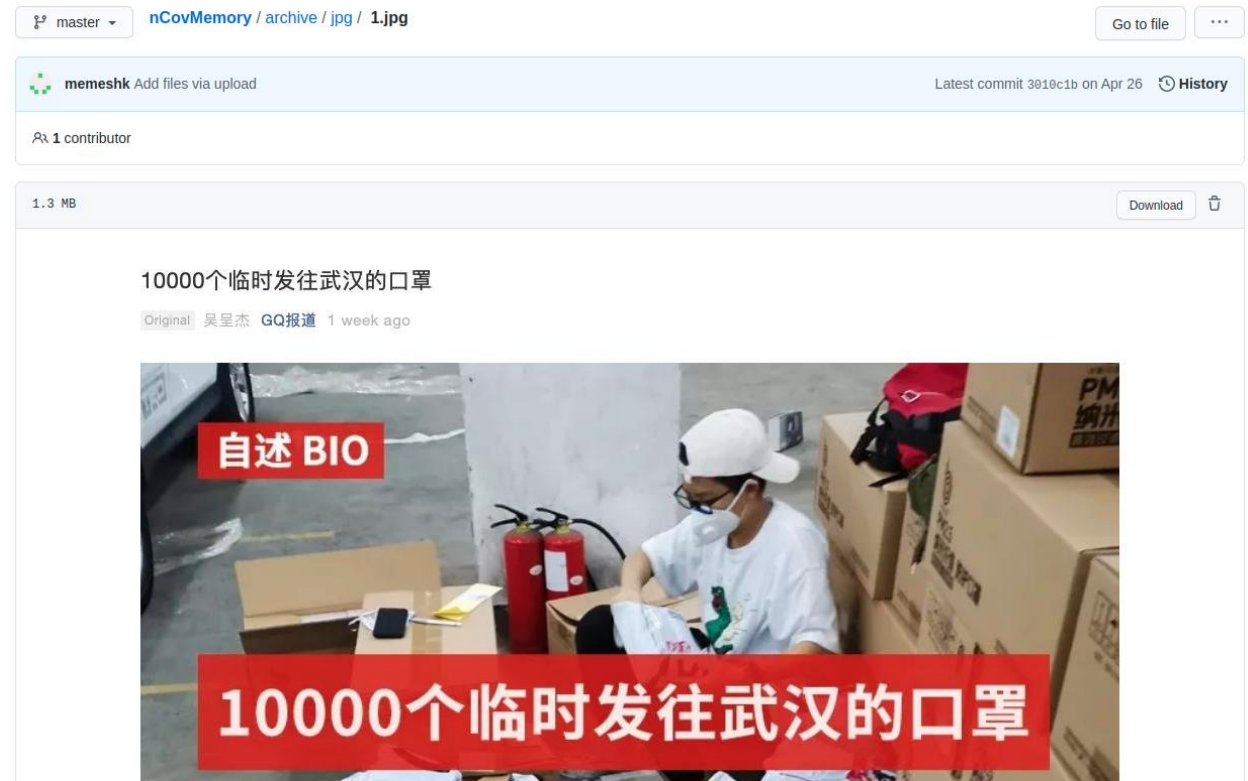
- <http://web.archive.org/web/20200223220429/https://2019ncovmemory.github.io/nCovMemory/>
- <https://web.archive.org/web/20200425145421/https://2019ncovmemory.github.io/nCovMemory/>

<http://archive.is/https://2019ncovmemory.github.io/nCovMemory/>

To avoid keyword search much of the archived material is images or PDF to avoid text searchable content referred to as "screensampling"

Screensampling creates a memetic abstraction from the original source by converting a web resource into an image, resulting in a transmedia transformation of the existing content.
- Amelia Acker

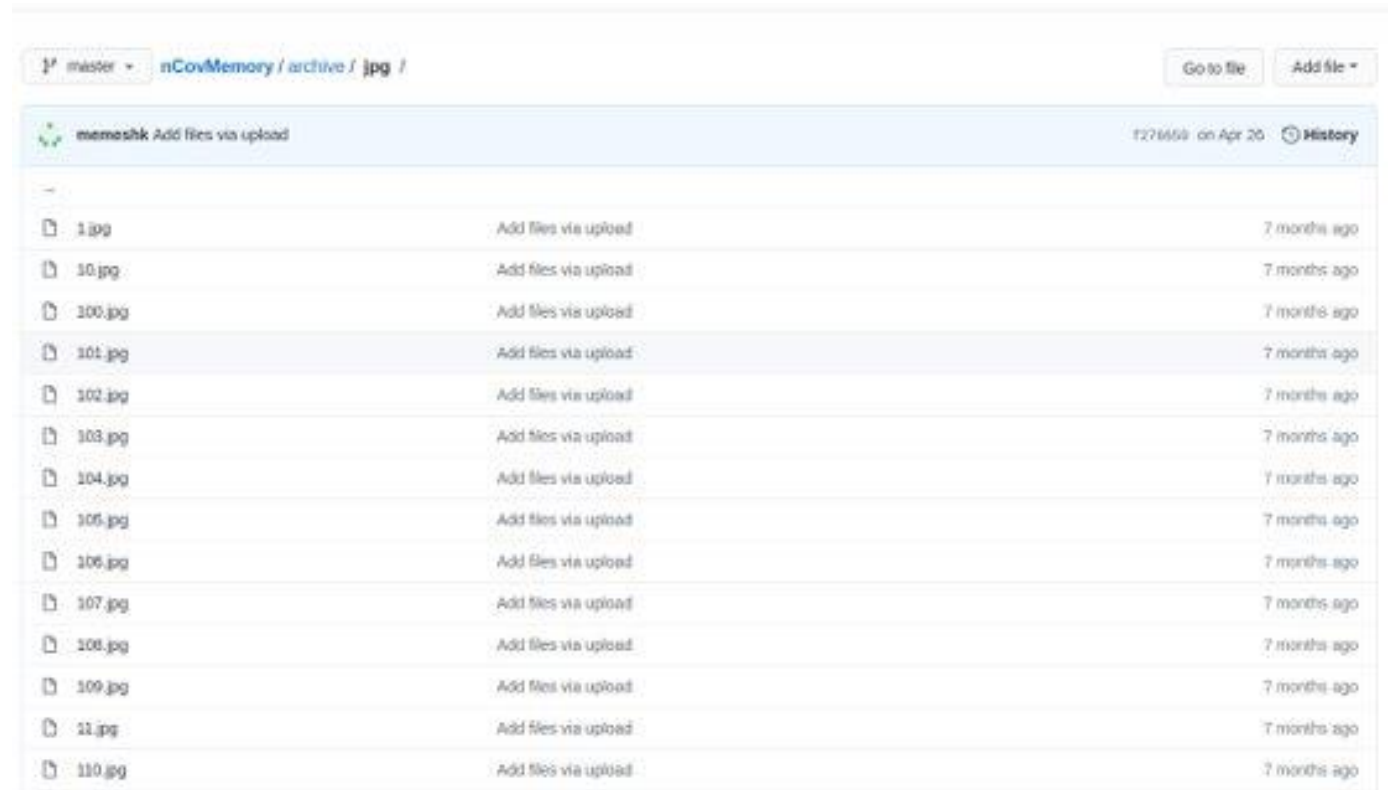
<https://misinforeview.hks.harvard.edu/article/the-weaponization-of-web-archives-data-craft-and-covid-19-publics>



URI-R:

<https://github.com/memeshk/nCovMemory/blob/master/archive/jpg/1.jpg>

Cloned github repo of nCovMemory's archive/jpg folder has 700 images of articles



URI-R:

<https://github.com/memeshk/nCovMemory/tree/master/archive/jpg>

Wuhan2019 Github from lestweforget states (with Google Translate):

- Around April 17, the epidemic situation and public opinion: The Wuhan pneumonia timeline TIMELINE project was suspended and disappeared afterwards.
- During the same period, [2019ncovmemory](#) stopped updating, after which the entire project disappeared
- Around April 23, volunteers Chen Mei, Cai Wei, and their girlfriends from [Endpoint Star](#) (a website backing up articles that were deleted by the authorities) were reported to be under “residential surveillance in designated residences,” which is house arrest in a secular sense.
- The above three people have not been free yet.

<https://github.com/lestweforget/wuhan2019>

Wuhan2019 focuses on pdf copies of all media associated with Covid-19 in China

- 42 directories each associated with a news outlet or journalism organization
- Each directory containing dated PDFs of news related to Covid from each organization

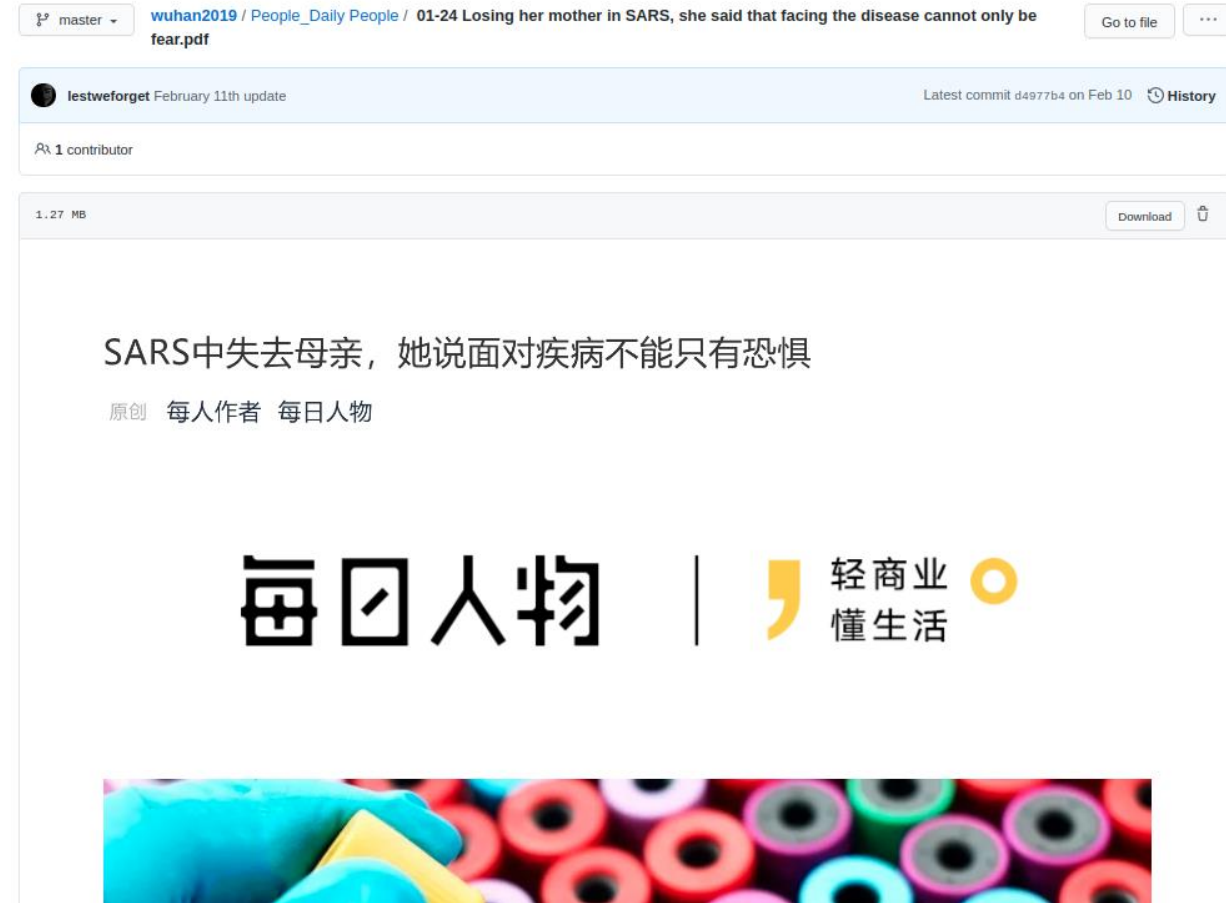
master wuhan2019 / GQ report /		Go to file	Add file
lestweforget April 10th update		2b585c0	on Apr 10 History
..			
01-27	10,000 masks temporarily sent to Wuhan.pdf	change directory	10 months ago
01-28	My home is very close to the South China Seafoo...	change directory	10 months ago
01-29	Xiaogan Frontline Doctor: Wuhan is more difficult...	Trap	10 months ago
01-29	People not seen during the epidemic crisis: Self-r...	change directory	10 months ago
01-30	Panic is normal. When the epidemic is over, it will...	change directory	10 months ago
01-31	Takeaway riders, taxi drivers, couriers, volunteers...	change directory	10 months ago
01-31	Psychological assistance in the epidemic: looking...	change directory	10 months ago
02-01	The pet rescue plan after the lockdown of Wuhan...	change directory	10 months ago
02-01	Chickens when the plague spread.pdf	change directory	10 months ago
02-02	The donation action of a group of international st...	Update on February 5	10 months ago
02-03	Pregnant women in Wuhan during the epidemic: I...	change directory	10 months ago
02-05	Rice Circle Rescue 2020.pdf	Added: New Weekly, Yi Cai, Interface, etc.	10 months ago
02-06	The infected nurse re-employed after healed: If I ...	Update on February 7	10 months ago
02-12	I saw the most authentic Wuhan while delivering f...	Update February 13	10 months ago
02-14	Wuhan taken by a couple: the Yangtze River, cat...	Update on February 15	10 months ago
02-17	Wuhan Community Hospital under the lens: the fr...	Update on February 18	10 months ago
02-19	Barbers in Wuhan Hospital: We want every medi...	Update on February 20	9 months ago
02-25	Huanggang Closure of the City: In the epidemic a...	Update on February 27	9 months ago
02-26	How do ordinary people in the epidemic area live ...	Update on February 27	9 months ago

PDF representation is like the JPEG

- Both prevent keyword searches
- Both also make it difficult to auto-translate with Google
- Resolution looks similar in both cases

URI-M

https://github.com/lestweforget/wuhan2019/blob/master/%E4%BA%BA%E7%89%A9_%E6%AF%8F%E6%97%A5%E4%BA%BA%E7%89%A9/01-24%20SARS%E4%B8%AD%E5%A4%B1%E5%8E%BB%E6%AF%8D%E4%BA%B2%E5%AF%B9%E8%AF%B4%E9%9D%A2%E5%AF%B9%E7%96%BE%E7%97%85%E4%B8%8D%E8%83%BD%E5%8F%AA%E6%9C%89%E6%81%90%E6%83%A7.pdf



State of repos today

- /Wuhan2019, is still accessible online but released a statement at the end of April that it would no longer accept new articles because of personal threats and the fears associated with long-term preservation.
- /2019nCovMemory is taken down with only archives of it partially preserved at web.archive.org and archive.today
 - Many clones of the repo exist on Github providing collectively a more complete archive
 - The most complete clone was not archived on Wayback Machine (archived it just in case)

Future and challenges of alternative platform archives

- Github was not designed for archiving, it was designed for source version control in community-based environment
- Users determined this was a great alternative to support the dissimination of censored content as images or PDFs
- The use of social media to archive community content is appealing because of its simplicity, market adoption, and production quality
- Because of social media platforms popularity and profit driven enterprises
 - Users should be careful of political control over the companies that hold the archives
 - The centralized nature of the social media platforms and increasing legislative regulation indicate more government control over the content of these sites
- Historically it seems the best means of archive is to spread the information everywhere
 - Github was built for this and allows this action within its platform
 - Forking and cloning