# LinkedIn is ignoring user settings

Logged out users are prevented from reaching LinkedIn
profiles set to complete public visibility

A few days ago, on the #indieweb Freenode channel[^1] one of the users asked if we
knew an indieweb-friendly way of getting data out of LinkedIn. I wasn't paying
attention to any recent news related to LinkedIn, though I've heard a few things, such
as they are struggling to prevent data scraping: the note mentioned that they believe
it's a problem that employers keep an eye on changes in LinkedIn profiles via 3rd
party. This, indeed, can be an issue, but there are ways to manage this within
LinkedIn: your public profile settings[^2].

In my case, this was set to visible to everyone for years, and by the time I had to set it
up (again: years), it was working as intended. But a few days ago, for my surprise,
visiting my profile while logged out resulted in this:
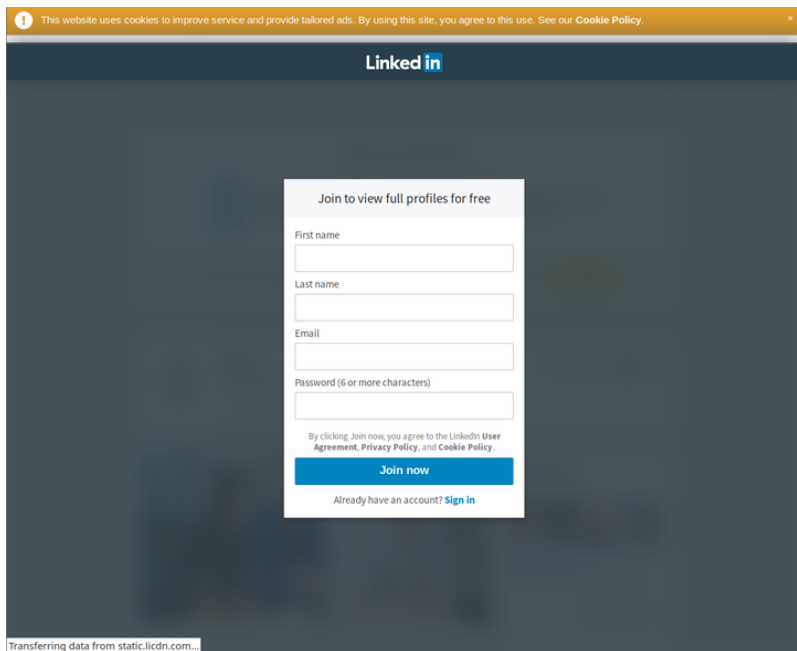
LinkedIn showing a paywall-like 'authwall' for profiles set explicitly to public for everyone

and this:

```bash
$ wget -O- https://www.linkedin.com/in/petermolnareu
--2018-01-14 10:26:12--  https://www.linkedin.com/in/
petermolnareu
Resolving www.linkedin.com (www.linkedin.com)...
91.225.248.129, 2620:109:c00c:104::b93f:9001
Connecting to www.linkedin.com (www.linkedin.com)|
91.225.248.129|:443... connected.
HTTP request sent, awaiting response... 999 Request denied
2018-01-14 10:26:12 ERROR 999: Request denied.
```

or this:

```bash
$ curl https://www.linkedin.com/in/petermolnareu
<html><head>
<script type="text/javascript">
window.onload = function() {
  // Parse the tracking code from cookies.
```

```
  var trk = "bf";
  var trkInfo = "bf";
  var cookies = document.cookie.split("; ");
  for (var i = 0; i < cookies.length; ++i) {
    if ((cookies[i].indexOf("trkCode=") == 0) &&
(cookies[i].length > 8)) {
      trk = cookies[i].substring(8);
    }
    else if ((cookies[i].indexOf("trkInfo=") == 0) &&
(cookies[i].length > 8)) {
      trkInfo = cookies[i].substring(8);
    }
  }

  if (window.location.protocol == "http:") {
    // If "sl" cookie is set, redirect to https.
    for (var i = 0; i < cookies.length; ++i) {
      if ((cookies[i].indexOf("sl=") == 0) &&
(cookies[i].length > 3)) {
        window.location.href = "https:" +
window.location.href.substring(window.location.protocol.lengt
h);
        return;
      }
    }
  }

  // Get the new domain. For international domains such as
  // fr.linkedin.com, we convert it to www.linkedin.com
  var domain = "www.linkedin.com";
  if (domain != location.host) {
    var subdomainIndex = location.host.indexOf(".linkedin");
    if (subdomainIndex != -1) {
      domain = "www" +
location.host.substring(subdomainIndex);
    }
  }

  window.location.href = "https://" + domain + "/authwall?
trk=" + trk + "&trkInfo=" + trkInfo +
      "&originalReferer=" + document.referrer.substr(0, 200) +
```

```
      "&sessionRedirect=" +
encodeURIComponent(window.location.href);
}
</script>
</head></html>
```

So I started digging. According to the LinkedIn FAQ[^3] there is a page where you can set your profile's public visibility. Those settings, for me, were still set to:

Edit public profile URL

Enhance your personal brand by creating a custom URL for your LinkedIn public profile.

www.linkedin.com/in/petermolnareu ✏

Customize Your Public Profile

Select what shows via searches on Bing, Google, etc. as well as on public profile badges and permitted services like Outlook, when the viewers are not logged-in members or did not bind their LinkedIn account to their account on such services.
Learn more ▸

Profile edits affect this public profile's contents.
Edit your Profile ▸

○ Make my public profile visible to no one

◉ Make my public profile visible to everyone

☑ Basics (required) ⓘ

☑ Picture

   ○ Your connections ⓘ

   ○ Your network ⓘ

   ○ All LinkedIn Members

   ◉ Public ⓘ

☐ Headline

LinkedIn public profile settings

Despite the settings, there is no public profile for logged out users.

I'd like to understand what it going on, because so far, this looks like a fat lie from LinkedIn. Hopefully just a bug.

UPDATE

~~I tried setting referrers and user agents, used different IP addresses, still nothing.~~ I can't type today and managed to mistype `https://google.com` - the referrer ended up as `https:/google.com`. So, following the notes on HN, setting a referrer to Google sometimes works. After a few failures it will lock you out again, referrer or not. This is even uglier if it was a proper authwall for everyone.

```bash
curl 'https://www.linkedin.com/in/petermolnareu' \
-e 'https://google.com/' \
-H 'accept-encoding: text' -H \
'accept-language: en-US,en;q=0.9,' \
-H 'user-agent: Mozilla/5.0 (X11; Linux x86_64) AppleWebKit/
537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/63.0.3239.132 Safari/
537.36'
```

```html
<!DOCTYPE html>...
```

Links

1. https://chat.indieweb.org
2. https://www.linkedin.com/public-profile/settings
3. https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/83?query=public

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