



Tips & tricks for broken links

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The Broken link checker can generate a lot of links in the report the first time you run it. Some links won't seem broken. Here are some tips and tricks we've learned while working with these reports.

Use the Link Text

The Broken links report includes a column for the **Link Text** for all hyperlinks. If you're looking at a broken link that has **Article Content** in the **Object Field**, the **Link Text** is your best way to find that link in your article.

We usually use either the **Editor Link** or **Live Link** and then use browser search to find the text.

Article Content link has no Link Text

Some broken links have **Article Content** in the **Object Field**, but a blank entry for **Link Text**, like this:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Object ID	Object Type	Editor Link	Live Link	Object Field	Link URL	Link Text	Status Code	
2	6050ec93f	Article	https://ap	https://wc	Article Content	[[hg-id:5dbb55e4ed121c8d5c70eb09]]	Administrat	404	
3	6050ec93f	Article	https://ap	https://wc	Article Content	[[hg-id:5dbb55d1ed121c8d5c70eaf1]]	Administrat	404	
4	633cb086f	Article	https://ap	https://wc	Article Content	http://www.playhouse-preschool.com/index.html	http://ww	403	
5	633cb086f	Article	https://ap	https://wc	Article Content	https://www.knowledgeowl.com/fake-page		404	
6	633cb086f	Article	https://ap	https://wc	Article Content	https://www.knowledgeowl.com/fake-page	 	404	
7	633cb086f	Article	https://ap	https://wc	Article Content	[[hg-id:633486118e80fe1f39134723]]	Apple	404	
8	633cb086f	Article	https://ap	https://wc	Article Content	[[hg-id:633cb188e6ed19188f0ad35f]]	I am delet	404	
9	62bb344b	Article	https://ap	https://wc	Article Content	https://dyzz9obi78pm5.cloudfront.net/app/image,2l		400	
10	62bb344b	Article	https://ap	https://wc	Article Content	https://dyzz9obi78pm5.cloudfront.net/app/image,2l		400	

Row 5 has no Link Text

The problem with these links is that you have nothing to search for. In fact, since these links have no text, they're not displayed in the live article or in the article WYSIWYG editor.

This situation is usually caused by a specific workflow:

- At some point, the link was inserted.
- When someone went to remove it, they didn't use the **Unlink** option; they just deleted the text itself.

Sometimes with this set of steps, the WYSIWYG editor keeps the hyperlink in the code, but just deletes the text from it.

To find these hyperlinks:

1. Open the article in the editor using the **Editor Link** provided in the report.

2. In the upper left of the editor, select the `</>` **Code View** editor control:

□

3. Use a browser search for the hyperlink. For really long articles, you can also copy that code view into a text editor and use that editor's search functionality.

4. Generally, these hyperlinks should be deleted (they haven't been visible/used since that text was deleted), though this might also prompt you to revisit if there should be a link here and where it should point.

5. Be sure to **Save** your changes.

To avoid having these types of links show up in your report in the future, we recommend this workflow whenever you remove a hyperlink:

1. Find the text for the link and click on it to open the Hyperlink menu.

2. Select the **Unlink** option:

□

3. Once the hyperlink has been unlinked, delete the text as usual.

Article Content link has ` `; Link Text

` ` is the HTML encoded version of a space, so this is another situation where the hyperlink won't display in the WYSIWYG editor or the live article. Follow the [Article Content link has no Link Text](#) instructions.

LinkedIn link has 999 code

999 is not part of the HTTP status code spec definition, so it's not a "real" error code. You most likely won't see these error codes for pages outside of LinkedIn.

LinkedIn does not like automated URL checks and has [set up their pages to return a 999 code](#) when these kinds of link checks are made, regardless of whether the URL is valid or invalid.

For these links, it's probably good to review them the first time you run the report to be sure they seem to work, but we generally filter them out after that since they're not informative at all.

If you're seeing these a lot and would like us to add a checkbox so you can ignore 999 codes, [contact us](#) and let us know.

Demio link has 502 code

Links to Demio resources will generally show up with a 502 error in the reports.

We contacted Demio and discovered that they don't support the automated checks our broken link checker runs, so these links will always generate a 502. ☒

You can skip these in the report or manually check them.

Codes you can probably ignore

In working with our own reports, we have found most pages with these status codes to load fine:

- 307: A type of redirect, similar to the 301 code we ignore by default
- 308: A type of redirect, similar to the 302 code we ignore by default
- 405

For now, we include these codes in all reports. If you find that these—or any other error codes—consistently are things you want to ignore, [contact us](#) and let us know. We'd be happy to add some more ignore options!

External link has 404 code but loads fine for me

Most of us are trained that a 404 page is an error, so these are often the status codes we prioritize first when reviewing a report.

But there are cases where some external links throw a 404 code in the report but seem to load fine for you when you check them. What's going on?

This can happen for a few different reasons.

Page takes too long to load

Broken link checker waits five seconds when it checks a URL. If it doesn't get a response within those five seconds, it logs the URL as a 404 and moves on. We do this to try to keep the reports from taking a long time to generate.

So if the page loads for you, but it loads slowly, this may be why it's showing up in the report. There's no good way to fix this and get the page to stop showing up in your reports, but if it's a link to a page you have control over, see if you can speed up the page load times.

Accepted security risk

Sometimes these pages load for you because you've accepted a security risk such as an expired SSL certificate or otherwise saved a cookie that makes a resource available to you. Since Broken link checker can't accept a security risk or store a cookie, it throws a 404 error.

Try testing the URL in an Incognito or Private window. These browser windows don't allow cookies, so they should give you the cleanest slate to test with to reproduce the error.

Intermittent server availability

External links are very much at the mercy of availability at the exact time the report was run. If the server the page or resource is hosted on had a small blip while Broken link checker was running, it might trigger a 404 in our report but open just fine.

We try to take note of links like this and check them again in future reports.

Automated link checking blocked

Like LinkedIn, the provider who hosts that site might not like automated link checkers and may throw 404s on perfectly valid resources just because they can.

We've noticed this with Google's documentation, all of which loads perfectly fine during regular browsing. There's no way to resolve these errors or remove them from your report.
