URL checker overview

Last modified on 07/22/2026 1:48 pm EDT

Are you worried that your knowledge base contains bad links that might lead to 404 pages and a bad reader experience? Do you need to audit all the external links in your knowledge base?

Use the **URL checker** to create a report that includes either a) broken and ambiguous links so you can fix them, or b) all the links in your knowledge base. Then rerun the checker periodically to be sure those broken links stay fixed. Choose whether to include all links or just broken links, depending on how you want to use the report. Refer to Report options for more information on these settings.

> Our default Editor and Writer roles have permission to use the URL checker. If you're using a custom author role, that role must have the **Tools** custom author role permission to **Run URL checker reports**.

The URL checker scans all your articles with Published or Needs Review publishing statuses to check for hyperlinks. It then generates a links report CSV file containing all the detected links, whether they're a "pass" (they load a page successfully) or a "fail" (they generate an HTTP status code that indicates the page doesn't load). It includes most hyperlinks across your knowledge base, though there are are some limitations.

Use controls in the checker to include draft articles, archived articles, or article versions. Refer to Additional content options for more information on those settings.

Once the report has been generated, it remains available in **Tools > URL checker** until you generate a new one, so you can start this report, go do other things, and then download it later.

Get started with the URL checker

To begin using the URL checker:

1. Review the information below on Which content is checked and Which content isn't checked so you can have clear expectations.
2. Follow the instructions to Generate a links report.
3. Refer to the guidance in Use the URL checker links report to review your report and fix links with failing HTTP status codes.

Which content is checked

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Here are all the objects and fields the URL checker reviews as it creates the links report:

- **Article**
  - **Article Content:** It always checks all text entered in the editor of the article, including src links for images, videos, and iframes.
  - **Redirect URL:** If an article has the URL Redirect box checked, it checks the redirect URL.
  - **Thumbnail URL** and **Banner URL:** If an article has a designated thumbnail and banner, it checks those URLs.
- **Category**
  - **Category description:** It always checks the category description text.
  - **Redirect URL:** If a category is set up as a URL Redirect category type, it checks the redirect URL.
  - **Icon URL:** If a category has a designated icon, it checks that URL.
  - **Thumbnail URL** and **Banner URL:** Topic display categories and Custom content categories can also have thumbnails and banners. If these categories have thumbnails or banners added, it checks those URLs.
  - **Category Content:** If it's a Custom content category, it checks all text entered in the editor, just like an article.
- **Snippet**
  - **Snippet Content:** It always checks all text entered in the editor of the snippet.
- **Homepage**
  - **Homepage Content:** It always checks all text entered in the **Customize > Homepage > Custom content** editor.
- **Theme**
  - **Custom HTML:** It always checks all HTML entered into any of the Custom HTML templates in **Customize > Style (HTML & CSS)**.
  - The report identifies which Custom HTML template is the issue in the Object Field column (404 Error, Article, Body, Homepage, Login, Manage Reader Subscriptions, Restricted Access Page, Right Column, or Top Navigation).
- **Article Versions:**
  - **Version Content:** If you opt to **Scan article versions**, it checks all text entered in the editor of all article versions. Refer to Additional content options for more information on including version content checks in your URL checker report.

Which content isn't checked

The URL checker has five known limitations:

1. **Anchors:** The URL checker won't check the validity of anchor or other hash portions of a hyperlink. Issues with anchors don't surface as independent HTTP status codes, so we have no automated way to check these.
   - The checker completely ignores same-page anchors (hyperlinks beginning with #).
   - For external page URLs that include an anchor, the checker strips off the anchor and checks the base URL of the page only.
2. **Private content:** While we can validate resources that are stored within KnowledgeOwl, we have no way to pass authorization to check private resources stored elsewhere. If you link to resources that require a login of some kind to view, such as within your company intranet, behind a VPN, on a shared network drive, or on

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another service, those links will generally show up in the report with some 400-level status code.

3. **mailto: links**: Since these links aren't a true URL, they can't be verified through the automated process we use. The report ignores these links.
4. **javascript links**: Since these links usually perform an action rather than hitting a URL, they can't be verified through the automated process we use. The report ignores these links.
5. **tel: links**: As with the mailto links, these links can't be verified through the automated process we use. The report ignores these links.

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