Canvas Course Link Validator Tool

It is a best practice to verify all external links throughout your course to ensure they are valid. Check these links using the course link validator, which searches through course content and returns invalid or unresponsive external links in both published and unpublished content. However, please note that some links flagged as unresponsive are inaccessible by Canvas servers and will still work for students. Examples of this type of link include Kanopy, OneDrive, and other links where students have to authenticate to access the content.

The course link validator also includes deleted links. Deleted links are links that are still in the course, but their linked content has been deleted (such as a course file or page).

For those users who have used this tool in the past, an update was made recently to make the tool more user friendly. (See the notes below.)

When Should I Use the Tool?
Many instructors copy content from one semester to the next. Sometimes content is lost or links to external URLs change. After copying content into a new course shell, it is a best practice to run the Link Validator to identify any issues.

Access and Run the Link Validator
To run the link validator, follow these steps:

1. In the Canvas course, click on Settings
2. On the Course Details page click the Validate Links in Content button, which is on the right sidebar
3. Click the blue Start Link Validation button

Report Link Types
When the report is complete the user is provided with invalid or unreachable links and images. Invalid means the link/image is no longer valid and the content should be removed or replaced. If the link is unreachable, this is most likely due to a server not responding due to the need for the user to authenticate, like Kanopy. (Mentioned above) Any content in the course that is unpublished will also be shown if the Show Links to Unpublished Content checkbox is selected.

Report Icons and Groupings
The new report provides:

- Icons indicating the object type where the problematic links are located. Examples are: Discussion, Page, Module, and Assignment icons
- Content is grouped by object type
- URL items in Modules that are broken are grouped by module
- The broken link displays if the broken item is a link or an image with the appropriate icon displaying
Understanding the Report

With the recent update to Canvas, the Course Link Validator now provides information along with icons that help determine the type of link that is broken, and where it is located.

Here is an example of the old report (on left) and the new report (on right):

Notice the new report uses icons and color, as well as providing the type of object using the link. It also explains what kind of problem there is.

Best Practice: Run the Course Link Validator each time a course is copied into a new course shell.