📈 *SEO Checker cheat-sheet*

A quick & dirty guide to using the SEO Checker to:

- Create "Friendly URLs"
- Redirect old iCM links
- Fix issues
    - Validation issues
    - Inbound link errors

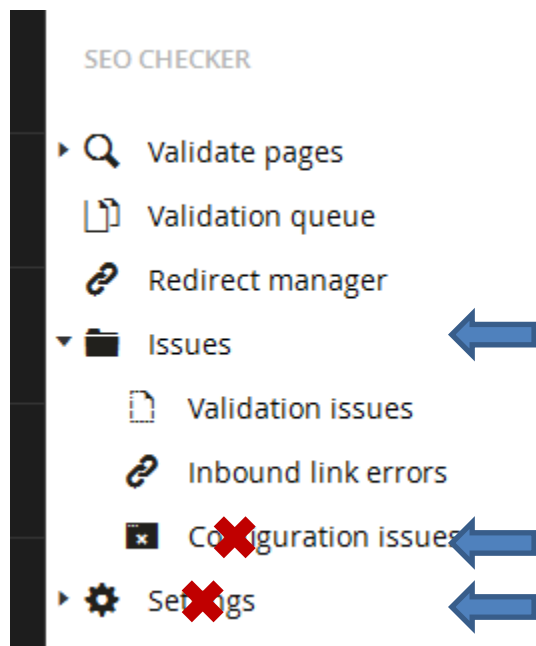Link: http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/umbraco/#/seochecker[1]

Left menu icon: 📈

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[1] If you don't have access to the link or can't see the icon contact digital@gloucestershire.gov.uk

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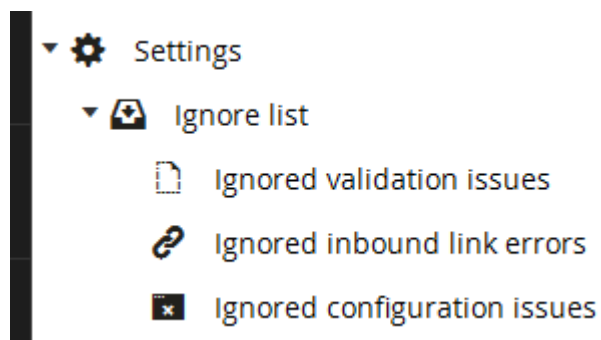   ▣ Co❌figuration issues ⬅

▸ ⚙ Se❌gs ⬅

This document only covers the three options indicated:

1. Redirect manager
2. Validation issues
3. Inbound link errors

It is possible that you will need to tweak the "ignored" items in "Settings" but do not make any changes anywhere else. SEO Checker offers some very powerful but very dangerous options.

It is possible to break the entire site if you change something you shouldn't.

▾ ⚙ Settings

   ▾ 📥 Ignore list

      ⃞ Ignored validation issues

      🔗 Ignored inbound link errors

      ▣ Ignored configuration issues

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Redirect manager

Note: this can only be used to set up Friendly URLs for pages on the Umbraco sites. External Friendly URLs are set up using a JavaScript work around described in "Appendix 1: Off site Friendly URLs".

Friendly URLs are actively managed and created in the **Redirect manager** but note that they can also be created when fixing errors in the Inbound link errors section (See Check "Inbound link errors" in Appendix 2: Morning tasks on SEO Checker).

Click the Redirect manager item to see a list of redirects. Use "Search URLs" above this table to check whether a friendly URL you want to create is already in use; although you don't have to do this as Umbraco will refuse to create duplicates.

You will notice two kinds of redirect:
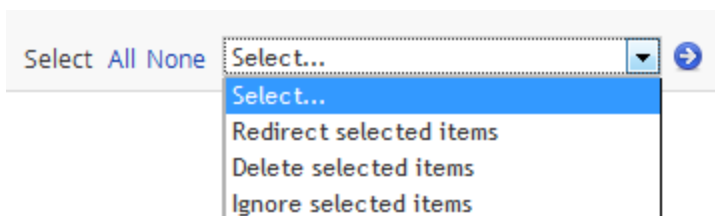1. Friendly URLs of the form "/facilitiesmanagement"
2. Old URL redirects of the form "/article/19597/windows-7-and-office-2010-guides" or "/media/word/8/t/phonics_five_key_areas_rec_y1.doc"

The table shows where these will redirect to and has buttons to:

 Edit the link

 Delete the link

You can also perform some mass edits using "Select All" or the check boxes and the drop down.

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Creating a Friendly URL in Redirect manager

1. Use [Redirect manager **…**] and [+ Create] to open a field to specify the URL you are redirecting – i.e. the friendly URL – you can include the preceding slash [/] but Umbraco doesn't need it.
2. Enter your "Old url" and hit [Create]

> **Notes:**
> Google recommends that you separate words with dashes [-]
> Avoid underscores [_] as these can be difficult to see in <u>an_underlined_url</u>[2]
> Avoid spaces which will appear as [%20] in the URL, making it less readable and may cause confusion.

3. Wherever possible use the "Redirect to node - Choose…" link to pick your page to redirect to. This ensures that the link is valid.

> The only exception to this rule is when you are creating a friendly URL to a media item when you would paste the link into the "Or redirect to url" field.
> However, we strongly recommend you **do not link to documents** – link to the page containing the document instead.

4. Hit Save 💾 at the top right
5. Test the URL

Test the URL

It's **important that you test the URL**. Unfortunately, there seems to be an issue in Umbraco which can lead to a "not found" result if you test a Friendly URL while logged in.

To avoid logging out you can test in a new window

- Chrome incognito: [Ctrl]+[⇧]+[N]
- Firefox private: [Ctrl]+[⇧]+[P] or
- Internet Explorer InPrivate: [Ctrl]+[⇧]+[P]

Or just open a browser other than the one you logged in from.

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[2] If you absolutely have to have them, most search engines recognise them as word separators so they are "safe".

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Redirect old iCM links

Although the preferred option is for incoming links to be reviewed and corrected on the web page or in the document by the originator, this may not always be possible and a redirect will be required.

iCM had two types of URL: with and without a query string (the ? part) and in the case of URLs without query strings, three forms of URL[3]. The query string type is slightly more involved to set up and the four forms that a URL without a query string can take also makes handling them a bit more involved than it should be.

Article with query string

These will be of the form:

/index.cfm?articleid=nnnn (where 'nnnn' is a number)

Scenario:

/extra/index.cfm?articleid=12345

…should go to…

/roads-parking-and-rights-of-way/major-projects/berkeley-bridge-improvements/

To set this up:

1. Use [Redirect manager **…**] and [+ Create] to open the "Old url" field.
2. Enter **only** "/extra/index.cfm" in this field – ignore the "?articleid=12345" part for now.
3. Hit [Create]
4. Scroll down to the "Advanced" section and enter "articleid=12345" in the "Querystring" field
5. Use the "Redirect to node - Choose…" link to pick your page to redirect to
6. Hit Save 💾 in the top right
7. Test URL in a private/incognito window or logged out browser

In our scenario above:

- http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/extra/index.cfm?articleid=12345
will now redirect to (tested & working)
- http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/roads-parking-and-rights-of-way/major-projects/berkeley-bridge-improvements/

Document with query string

These will be of the form:

/CHTTPHandler.aspx?media=nnnn (where 'nnnn' is a number)

The same principle applies as the article – spilt the URL at the "?" with the part left going into the "Old url" field and the part after into the "Advanced" - "Querystring" field.

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[3] Unfortunately we never implemented "canonical URLs" in iCM and as a result redirecting old links cab be a challenge.

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Article with no query string

These will be of various forms:

1. /nnnn
2. /article/nnnn
3. /article/nnnn/some-text

These may be prefixed by the subsite such as /archives/article/nnnn or /extra/articl/nnnn.

Hopefully you know where you want to redirect the URL. If you don't, forms 1 and 2 are almost impossible to trace. Form 3 offers "some-text" which iCM generated from the page title giving you some chance.

The Wayback Machine can help here. Go to https://archive.org/web/ and try the form of URL you have, eg: http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/article/nnnn - you may get lucky.

Process (handles all URL variants)

1. Use [Redirect manager …] and [+ Create] to open the "Old url" field.
2. Enter "/nnnn" into this field
3. Hit [Create]
4. Use the "Redirect to node - Choose…" link to pick your page to redirect to
5. Hit Save 💾 in the top right
6. Test URL in a private/incognito window or logged out browser
7. Repeat 1 – 6 for "/article/nnnn"
8. Repeat 1-6 entering "/article/nnnn/" (note trailing slash) in the "Old url" field and
   Tick the "Advanced" – "Wildcard url" option which means Umbraco effectively redirects the URL whatever the text after the slash

> Note: In some circumstances (i.e. if the article ID is six digits or media ID is five digits) you can use the wildcard option to avoid step 7 as there is no possibility of redirecting the wrong link; just perform step 8[4].

Document with no query string

These will be of the form

> /media/nnnn/title-of-media

This is a fixed format so will never be missing the "/media/" or "title-of-media" parts.

Process using "Wildcard url" to handle all variants

1. Use [Redirect manager …] and [+ Create] to open the "Old url" field.
2. Enter "/media/nnnn/" (note trailing slash) in the "Old url" field
3. Hit [Create]
4. Use the "Redirect to node - Choose…" link to pick your page to redirect to
5. Tick the "Advanced" – "Wildcard url" option which means Umbraco effectively redirects the URL whatever the text after the slash
6. Hit Save 💾 in the top right
7. Test URL in a private/incognito window or logged out browser

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[4] If the number is 1234 and you use wildcards you will redirect 12341, 12342, 12343, etc. which you don't want. As we reached 200000 plus on the system but not 1000000 plus it is safe to use six digits with a wildcard.
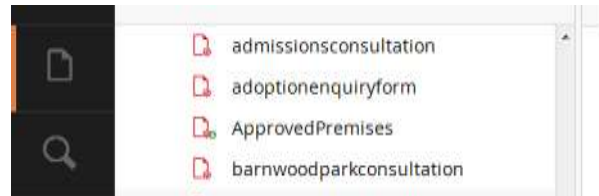
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Issues

See "Appendix 2: Morning tasks on SEO Checker" for processes for dealing with issues

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Appendix 1: Off site Friendly URLs

These cannot be created with the SEO checker – we currently use a work-around with JavaScript to redirect.
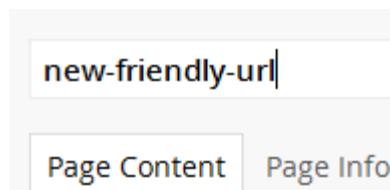
Method

The simplest method is to copy one of the existing redirect pages seen in the root of the main site. You then need to change the title and replace the existing link with the desired new redirect.

In this example I've copied the ApprovedPremises page into the root of the main site. If you want your external Friendly URL to work on another sub-site just choose to copy it there.

1. Copy your article
   Your new article will appear at the bottom of the article tree with " (1)" after the old title.
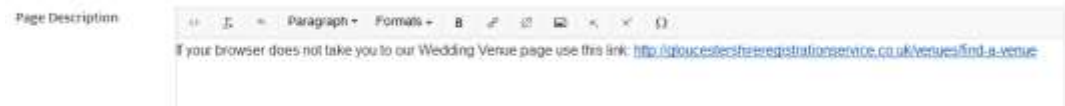2. Change the title to your new Friendly URL name

3. Find the Embed code at the bottom of the "Page content" tab

Change the URL in the quotes to the new URL
(http://gloucestershireregistrationservice.co.uk/venues/find-a-venue in the above example)

4. Switch to the "Page info" tab and make the same change to the wording here.
   This is important to give visitors the option to physically click through to the new link in case their browser does not execute JavaScript.
   Make sure your link here is active
   (i.e. select it and create a link with the "chain" button)

5. Save and Publish
6. Switch to the properties tab and click the "Link to document at the bottom of this panel – this opens a live version of you article in a new tab
7. Make sure the live version redirects properly
8. For tidiness you should use the sort option on the sub-site home page to place your new Friendly URL in its correct place (making it easier to find)

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Appendix 2: Morning tasks on SEO Checker

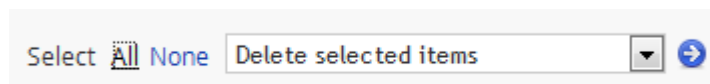### Check "Validation issues"

This will show:

- **Broken links**

  Currently we have issues with the internal links timing out.[5]

  The links are fine but SEO Checker flags them so unless processed they will build up in the logs masking the real issues.

  Until PCG fix the issue you need to:
  - Scan each page for true broken links to external sites
  - Edit the page containing the link using the 📝 (Edit document) button
  - Find the link & fix it
  - Save & publish the page with the fixed link
  - Delete the link from the list with the ❌ (Delete) button
  - Repeat these steps until there are no more broken links on page 1
  - Clear the page using the "Select All" and "Delete selected items" option

    Then hit 🔵 and confirm [Delete }

  - Refresh the screen and repeat until everything is fixed.
- **Metadata issues**

  Flags missing "SEO description" and "SEO titles" which are too long

  Ideally articles should have these and we should fix them all.

  PCG have been asked to look into automating this content: so the title is picked up from the page title if missing and the description is the first paragraph.
- **Content issues**

  Mostly missing "alt" text on images.

  Ideally we would check all these and fix those where the image is not just decorative.
- **General issues**

  Usually some issue with the validation process so not something you can fix
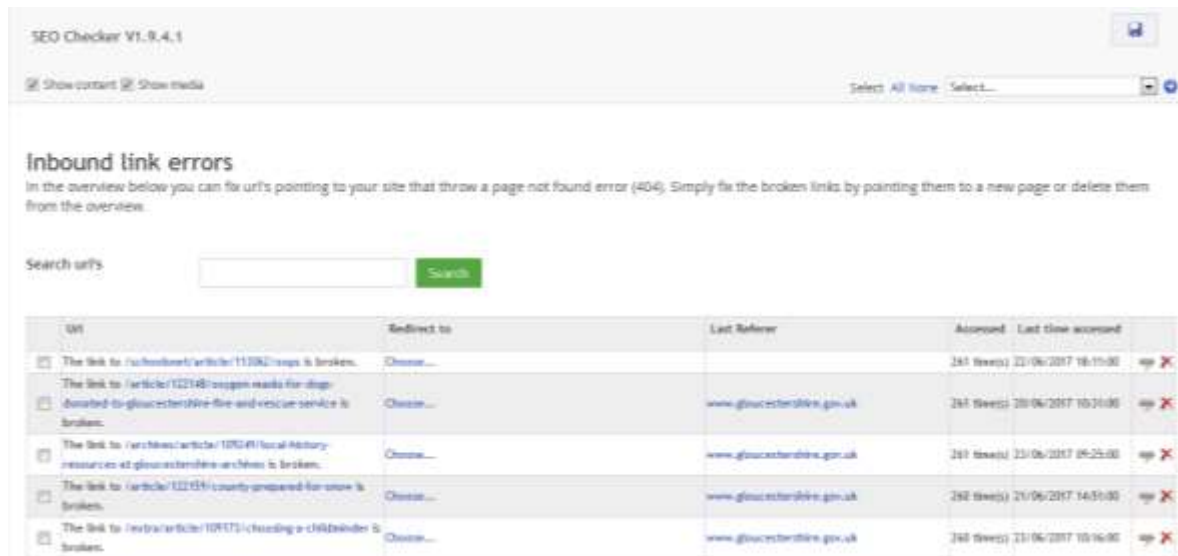
  Select all these and delete them – if they keep coming back, report them to PCG

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[5] This affects:
- On Staffnet, links from the home page navigation tab to the gloucestershire.gov.uk domain
- On the main site, links to pages with "Culture and hostnames" set and their children and all media

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Check "Inbound link errors"

This is a very useful tool for fixing links the other people are trying to open. Essentially it's a log of "404 not found" errors received by visitors to the site. They fall into several categories including:

- Links to old iCM system images – often included in copy & paste content
  eg the Word and Acrobat icons iCM used to shoe next to document downloads
- Links to images on old pages where the content was copied & pasted. While pasting content onto the staging version of the new site these images would have been visible because the iCM site was still live; they broke when the iCM site was decommissioned but editors have not checked all their pages and therefore not noticed the missing images.
- Links to old documents and articles
- Old Friendly URLs

Process for dealing with "Inbound link errors":
1. Try re-linking articles & media you think should work using the "Choose…" link in the "Redirect to column.
2. Redirect links to news old articles to the appropriate news index
   (On Staffnet redirect all /media/nnnn links to the "Document no longer exists" page.)

3. Select all useless links[6] and select "Ignore selected items" in the top right drop down and action with the 🔁

> Note: On Staffnet you can clear the inbound links list if you keep on top of it.
> On the main site, the list has grown beyond that point (approaching 2000 pages) so you just need to monitor it and process the top few that bubble up.

Configuration issues

We can do nothing about configuration issue so ignore this section.

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[6] This is an art rather than a science – there is no definitive list of what should be ignored but examples are:
- *.cfm links – these are old iCM scripts
- *.asp[x], .php, .py links
- /vti-bin/ and /cgi-bin/ links