Finding Broken Links

7/14/2018 email to social media group:

Online tools can help you find performance issues with your website. An ongoing maintenance issue that can negatively affect your customer experience, and your ranking for whether you are found when searched for, are broken hyperlinks.

Hyperlinks go bad over time even if they once worked. One way to find bad links and old documentation is to use an online broken link checker. I recently went through both the church and Presbytery pages I manage with http://www.brokenlinkcheck.com. A different view of the links as they are checked can be seen at: https://www.deadlinkchecker.com/.

If Google Analytics has been set up on your web page, broken links is one of many performance issues that can be checked.

These tools helped me quickly identify problems created by:

- PCUSA's web redesign (not everything - just certain pages)
- an online storage tools (Scribd.com) that expires after a specific period of years,
- partner sites upgrading to secure (https) from older http: sites
- redirected web pages. If I were to just click and watch for a bad page, I might miss that I'm actually not linked to the ultimate site.
- typos in links
- uploaded documents that perhaps were not actually tested on the public version of the site the first time.
- non-error but slow to load links that timeout in deadlinkchecker.
- other changes and errors.

Suggestion:

1. Put your organization's URL into each of these and see what you learn.

2. Calendar a block of time to rerun & follow-up on the list of problems you find.

3. Put another date on your calendar 30-60 days after you fix the problems to run the check again.

Note: This does not replace the need to go through pages to check whether technically functional links go to current documents. But link checkers will save a ton of time in identifying and fixing nonfunctional links.