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Joomla! 3

Second Edition

Build, develop, and manage a fully functioning, professional looking, and feature-rich website with the Joomla! CMS

Beginner's Guide

Eric Tiggeler

[PACKT] open source*
PUBLISHING community experience distilled

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BIRMINGHAM - MUMBAI

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Eric Tiggeler has authored several books on Joomla!, such as the highly successful *Joomla! 2.5 Beginner's Guide* and *Joomla! 3 Beginner's Guide*, both by Packt Publishing. He has also written several Joomla! guides in Dutch. His books have received excellent reader reviews. He also writes tutorials for several computer magazines and Joomla! community websites. Over the last ten years, he has developed numerous websites, big and small, using Joomla!.

He is fascinated by the Web as a powerful, creative, and ever-changing means of communication, as well as by the revolutionary software Joomla!, which enables anybody to create beautiful and user-friendly websites.

On a daily basis, he works as a consultant and copywriter at a communication consultancy company affiliated to the Free University of Amsterdam. Over the last few years, he has written more than 20 books in Dutch on writing and communication. His passion lies in making complex things easy to understand.

He is married, has two daughters, and lives and works in Hilversum, the Netherlands. On the Web, you'll find him at www.joomla.ericbyggeler.nl (in Dutch) and www.joomm.net (in English).

Any book is a team effort, so I would like to thank everyone at Packt Publishing for their encouraging commitment to this project. I also wish to thank the reviewers for testing the alpha version of this book and helping me create a thoroughly reliable final release!

About the Reviewers

Mohamed Abdelaziz is a 37-year-old freelance Joomla! developer with extensive experience in developing and customizing Joomla! extensions. He has created six extensions that are listed on JED, for example, Multiple Extra Fields Groups for K2 and others. These extensions are published at www.joomreem.com.

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He graduated from Alexandria University with a BSc degree in Computer Science and Automatic Control (2000), and became a Sun Certified Programmer for the Java 2 Platform 1.4 in October 2005.

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I would like to thank my entire family, my father, mother, wife, and my kids, Reem and Omar, who have constantly motivated me, and which helped me review this book.

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He dropped out of his undergraduate course and got involved in web development in 2006. After working on several hundred websites for clients, he bootstrapped his own start-up called ThemeXpert. ThemeXpert has more than 55,000 clients all over the world and is a renowned Template Studio for Joomla!. It also has 50 plus premium and free Joomla! templates and more than 15 extensions at the time of writing this book. Some of these Joomla! extensions are very popular in Joomla! Extension Directory (JED) and have been downloaded over 200,000 times.

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He created SiegeEngine, the Foundation-based template framework for Joomla!, as a starting point for projects, which has since become a popular open source project in itself. While he specializes in CSS, HTML, and JavaScript, he's known to turn his hand to PHP, MySQL, .NET, and C#. Since building SiegeEngine, he's also pretty handy with the Foundation CSS framework.

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He is actively involved in the Joomla! community, where he is a member of the Community Leadership Team and Global Moderator at the Joomla! forum. In his hometown, Nijmegen (the Netherlands), he organizes Open Coffee Nijmegen (a monthly networking event for small businesses and self-employed people) and Linux User Group Nijmegen.

For Packt Publishing, Peter has reviewed various books such as *Joomla! 3 Beginner's Guide*, *Joomla! 2.5 Beginner's Guide*, and *Joomla! 1.6 First Look*, all by Eric Tiggeler; *Joomla! Search Engine Optimization*, Ric Shreves; and *Joomla! 1.5 Templates Cookbook*, Richard Carter.

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Preface

Joomla! is one of the most popular open source content management systems, and it is actively developed and supported by a worldwide user community. It's a free, fun, and feature-rich tool for anyone who wants to create dynamic, interactive websites. Even beginners can deploy Joomla! to build professional websites, although it can be challenging to get beyond the basics and build a site that completely meets your needs. This book will help you to start building websites with Joomla! quickly, and also help you learn step-by-step to get the most out of its advanced features.

What this book covers

Chapter 1, A New and Easy Way to Build Websites, will help you learn why you want to use Joomla! to create an advanced, cool-looking site that's easy to expand, customize, and maintain.

Chapter 2, Getting Joomla! Up and Running, will show you how to install Joomla! on your own computer or on a web server and how to create a sample site.

Chapter 3, First Steps – Getting to Know Joomla!, will familiarize you with the basic concepts of Joomla!, the administrative interface, and the principles of a website constructed out of building blocks.

Chapter 4, Web Building Basics – Creating a Site in an Hour, will make you face a real-life challenge of using Joomla! to build a basic but expandable website in less time. You'll customize a default sample site of Joomla! to fit your needs, adding content and menu links and changing the site's look and feel.

Chapter 5, Small Sites, Big Sites – Organizing Your Content Effectively, will help you design a clear, expandable, and manageable framework for your content. Using a structure of categories and tags, you will make it easy for the users to add and find information on your site.

Chapter 6, Creating Killer Content – Adding and Editing Articles, will help you to create attractive content pages, and you'll learn about different ways to add images and tweak the page layout.

Chapter 7, Welcoming Your Visitors – Creating Attractive Home Pages and Overview Pages, shows you how to create a home page and overview pages to entice visitors to actually read all your valuable content.

Chapter 8, Helping Your Visitors Find What They Want – Managing Menus, will discuss how you can help visitors to find what they want by designing clear and straightforward navigation through menus.

Chapter 9, Opening Up the Site – Enabling Users to Log in and Contribute, will show you how to enable users to log in and allow them to create content and manage a website.

Chapter 10, Getting the Most out of Your Site – Extending Joomla!, will explain how to extend the capabilities of Joomla! using all sorts of extensions, such as using an image gallery to display pictures attractively, automatically showing article teasers on the home page, or enhancing your workspace by installing a more powerful content editor.

Chapter 11, Creating an Attractive Design – Working with Templates, will show you how templates can give your site a fresh look and feel and how you can customize templates to create an individual look, different from a typical Joomla! site.

Chapter 12, Attracting Search Engine Traffic – SEO Tips and Techniques, will show you how to increase your site's visibility for search engines by applying Search Engine Optimization (SEO) techniques, such as creating friendly URLs.

Appendix A, Keeping the Site Secure, will explore some simple, logical steps you can take to safeguard your site from hackers or data loss.

Appendix B, Creating a Multilingual Site, will walk you through the series of steps involved in creating a bilingual website using the multilingual capabilities built in Joomla!.

Appendix C, Pop Quiz Answers, contains answers to the multiple choice pop quizzes you will find throughout the book.

What you need for this book

To follow the tutorials and exercises in this book, you'll need a computer with an Internet connection. It's recommended to have a web hosting account so that you can install Joomla! online.

Who this book is for

Joomla! 3 Beginner's Guide Second Edition is aimed at anyone who wants to build and maintain a great website and get the most out of Joomla!. It helps you build on the skills and knowledge you may already have of creating websites, but if you're new to this subject, you won't have any difficulty understanding the instructions. Of course, we'll touch upon basic terms and concepts (such as HTML and CSS), but if you're not familiar with these, you'll also find references to some web resources.

Conventions

In this book, you will find several headings appearing frequently.

To give clear instructions of how to complete a procedure or task, we use:

Time for action – heading

1. Action 1
2. Action 2
3. Action 3

Instructions often need some extra explanation so that they make sense, so they are followed with:

What just happened?

This heading explains the working of tasks or instructions that you have just completed.

You will also find some other learning aids in the book, including:

Pop quiz – heading

These are short multiple-choice questions intended to help you test your own understanding.

Have a go hero – heading

These practical challenges give you ideas for experimenting with what you have learned.

You will also find a number of styles of text that distinguish between different kinds of information. Here are some examples of these styles, and an explanation of their meaning.

Code words in text, database table names, folder names, filenames, file extensions, pathnames, dummy URLs, user input, and Twitter handles are shown as follows: "Click on the icon of the `sampledata` folder."

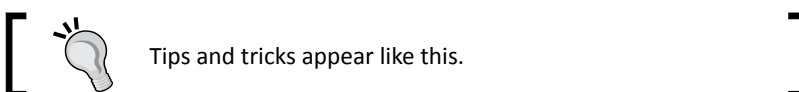
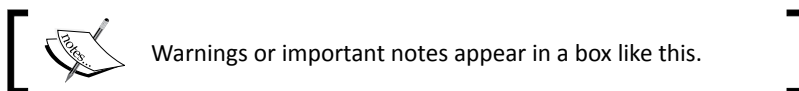
A block of code is set as follows:

```
.site-description {  
    color: silver;  
    font-size: 14px;  
    font-weight: bold;  
    padding-left: 104px;  
}
```

When we wish to draw your attention to a particular part of a code block, the relevant lines or items are set in bold:

```
#logo {  
    float:left;  
    background:#e5e5e5;  
    display:inline-block;  
    padding:0 20px;  
    font-size:18px;}
```

New terms and **important words** are shown in bold. Words that you see on the screen, in menus or dialog boxes for example, appear in the text like this: "Once the **Database Configuration** screen is complete, click on **Next**."



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1

A New and Easy Way to Build Websites

You want to build a website. It should look great, it should be easy to use and maintain, and keeping it up-to-date should be effortless. Changing the appearance of your site should take minutes, not hours. You don't want to manage it all by yourself, but you want to enable other people to log in and write new content without having to understand HTML or other coding languages. Also, when your site grows, it should be easy to extend it with new functionality—maybe adding a forum, or a newsletter. If that's what you're looking for, welcome to Joomla!.

When it comes to creating a great, professional-looking website that's straightforward to use, you really can't beat the power of a **content management system (CMS)** such as Joomla. Without writing a single line of code, you can create any kind of site that boasts a variety of cool and advanced features.

Join the CMS revolution

Maybe you have already built websites the traditional way. That basically meant creating HTML documents—web pages—one by one. As the site grew, you'd end up with a bunch of HTML documents, trying to keep all of them organized and making sure all menu links stayed up-to-date. You'd probably maintain the site by yourself, because it was hard for other people to learn their way around the structure of your particular site, or be proficient in the web editing software you use.

Let's learn about the Holy Grail of web building: CMS! CMS is an application that runs on a web server. It allows you to develop and maintain a website online using a web browser. It comes packed with features, ranging from basic features to add and modify content to advanced functionality such as user registration or site search capability. In short, CMS makes it possible to build sites that would normally involve a full team of web professionals with a massive amount of time, money, and expertise at their disposal.

All that magic is made possible because CMS is really an advanced set of scripts (written in a scripting language such as PHP) that uses a database to store the content of your website. From that database, it retrieves bits and pieces of content and presents them as web pages.

This dynamic way of storing and presenting content makes CMS very flexible. Do you want to show only a selection of articles from a specific category on a page? Do you want to display only the intro texts of the most recent articles on the home page? Do you want to add a list of links to the most popular contents? Do you want to limit access to registered users? It's all possible—just pick the right settings. Additionally, CMS allows you to integrate all sorts of extra features, such as contact forms, picture galleries, and much more.

The best part is that such CMSes are yours to download and deploy today. You can pick your CMS of choice from a range of freely available open source products. Your new CMS-powered site can be online tomorrow. Now how's that for a great deal?



What's open source software? The source code of this type of software is unlocked, unlike most software developed commercially. Everyone has access to the Joomla source code and software developers are encouraged to modify and help improve the software. The name *Joomla* stands for all together. It's as much a software product as it is an international community of people working together voluntarily to expand and improve that product. Most of the open source software is distributed free of charge, as is the case with Joomla and many of the extensions that have been developed for it. Some Joomla extensions are commercial—you have to pay for them. However, it's still open source (that is, you get access to the source code).

Why would you choose Joomla!?

There are many open source CMSes around. They're all great tools, each with its own typical uses and benefits. Why would you want to choose Joomla? Here's why:

- ◆ People tend to choose Joomla because they find it easy to use. It has a clear and friendly user interface that keeps getting better every year. Using the redesigned interface, it's even simpler to create and publish articles to keep your site updated. You can manage content anytime and anywhere, whether you're using a web browser on a PC, tablet computer, or smart phone.

- ◆ Adding new features to your site takes just a few clicks. There are thousands of extensions available for Joomla, ranging from menu systems to commenting systems and forums.
- ◆ It doesn't take much effort to change the site's appearance. There are abundant templates for Joomla and they can be installed within minutes, giving your site a fresh look and feel.
- ◆ The current Joomla release adds many improvements and new features, making CMS both easier to work with and more powerful. It takes less steps to install the software, it's mobile ready (that is, it has an improved text editor screen for creating content such as the screen layout that automatically adapts itself for the device being used, whether it's a laptop, computer, tablet, or a smart phone), and it has tons of other new and improved features. One example is that it offers great support for multilingual sites.

Apart from these typical Joomla benefits, it comes with all of the advantages of a state-of-the-art CMS. Some of them are as follows:

- ◆ Adding content and keeping it organized is a breeze (even if there's lots of it). Joomla allows you to categorize content using an unlimited number of multi-level categories, but you can also choose to use a really flexible new system of assigning tags to organize content.
- ◆ Keeping hyperlinks to other content on the same site up-to-date is greatly automated. For example, you can add category overview pages without ever having to manually update them—on a category overview page, Joomla will automatically add links to all new pages you'll put in that category.
- ◆ You don't have to maintain the website all by yourself. Other users can add content, add new menu items, and do much more.

The numbers seem to indicate that Joomla is the open source CMS of choice for web builders worldwide. It's been downloaded 35 million times since its start in 2006 and the number of sites powered by Joomla is still growing rapidly everyday. It's one of the biggest open source software projects around, it is supported by a large user community, and it is constantly being developed further by an international team of volunteers.

For an overview of Joomla, its capabilities, and examples of real-world sites using CMS, you should browse the Joomla site at <http://www.joomla.org>.



What kind of sites can you build with Joomla!?

Let's have a look at some great real-world examples of sites built using Joomla. If you're anything like me, seeing inspirational examples is what makes you want to get started right away creating something equally cool (or preferably something even better). In this section, you'll see a few examples from the Web and from the Joomla site showcase (<http://community.joomla.org/showcase>). They are very diverse sites from very different organizations, each with their own goals and target groups. What they have in common is that they deploy Joomla in a way that you could too. They adapt CMS to their specific needs, making it perfectly suited for the content they present and the impression they want to make.

Here's an example from the **World Health Organization (WHO)** Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, (<http://www.emro.who.int>). The home page uses various ways to present highlights from the site's impressive amount of content.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the WHO logo and the text "World Health Organization Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean". To the right, there are language options for "عربي" (Arabic) and "Français" (French), along with social media icons for RSS, Twitter, and Facebook. Below the navigation bar is a search bar with a "Go" button.

The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Top story:** A featured article titled "Measles/polio vaccination campaign planned for Kurdistan region". It includes a photograph of a healthcare worker administering a vaccine to a child. The text states: "Erbil, 21 June, 2014 – A measles/polio vaccination campaign will be launched on 29 June across the Kurdistan region of Iraq. The campaign aims to immunize 800 000 Syrian and Iraqi children aged 0–5 and has been planned in response to the arrival of more than 300 000 internally-displaced persons to the region following fighting in the Nineva governorate in northern Iraq." A link to "Read more about the vaccination campaign" is provided.
- Media centre and news:** A link to "Media centre and news" is located below the top story.
- News:** A list of news items:
 - WHO condemns attacks on health facilities in Iraq (21 June 2014)
 - WHO and Kurdistan regional government launch measles/polio vaccination campaign (21 June 2014)
- Events:** A list of events:
 - World Hepatitis Day: Think again (28 July 2014)
 - WHO Global Conference on Climate Change and Health (27–29 August 2014)
- Outbreaks:** A section titled "Outbreaks" featuring a small image of a person wearing a face mask and the text: "Dengue fever outbreak in Red Sea State, Sudan (18 June 2014)".
- Emergencies:** A section titled "Emergencies" with a small image of a person.

On the right side of the page, there are two promotional banners:

- A banner for "VIRAL HEPATITIS CAN BE BEATEN. PLAY YOUR PART. HEPATITIS: THINK AGAIN #thinkhepatitis" with the text "World Hepatitis Day 2014: Think again".
- A banner for "Chikungunya: the virus that 'bends up'" with a video player showing a person in pain.

The following example is the the Working Wonders website, a charity foundation (www.workingwonders.com.au):



Joomla can handle complex sites with thousands of pages. Here's an illustration of a content-rich site with a made-to-measure design: the Guggenheim Museum website (www.guggenheim.org).

NEW YORK
VENICE
BILBAO
BERLIN
ABU DHABI
INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS
GUGGENHEIM FOUNDATION

GUGGENHEIM

visit
support
calendar & events
about
exhibitions
collections
education
interact
press room
shop

NEW YORK



ON VIEW NOW

[Picasso Black and White](#)

[Gabriel Orozco: Asterisms](#)

[Now's the Time: Recent Acquisitions](#)

[Kandinsky 1911-1913](#)

GO



PLAN YOUR VISIT

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
1071 Fifth Avenue
(at 89th Street)
New York, NY 10128-0173

[Purchase tickets](#)

Hours & Ticketing

ON VIEW NOW

Special Exhibitions

[Picasso Black and White](#)
October 5, 2012–January 23, 2013

[Gabriel Orozco: Asterisms](#)
November 9, 2012–January 13, 2013

[Now's the Time: Recent Acquisitions](#)
November 4, 2012–January 2, 2013

[Kandinsky 1911–1913](#)
June 25–April 25, 2013

[A Long-Awaited Tribute: Frank](#)

NEWS



Guggenheim Acquires Mark Grotjahn Sculpture

The Guggenheim's recent acquisition of Mark Grotjahn's *Untitled (Ten Dollar Foxes, White on Red Mask M14.d)* expands its holdings of this important

EVENTS



Tallest Tree in the Forest

Sunday, January 13, 7:30 pm;
Monday, January 14, 3 and 7:30 pm

Advance tickets are available for the Works & Process presentation of *The Tallest Tree*

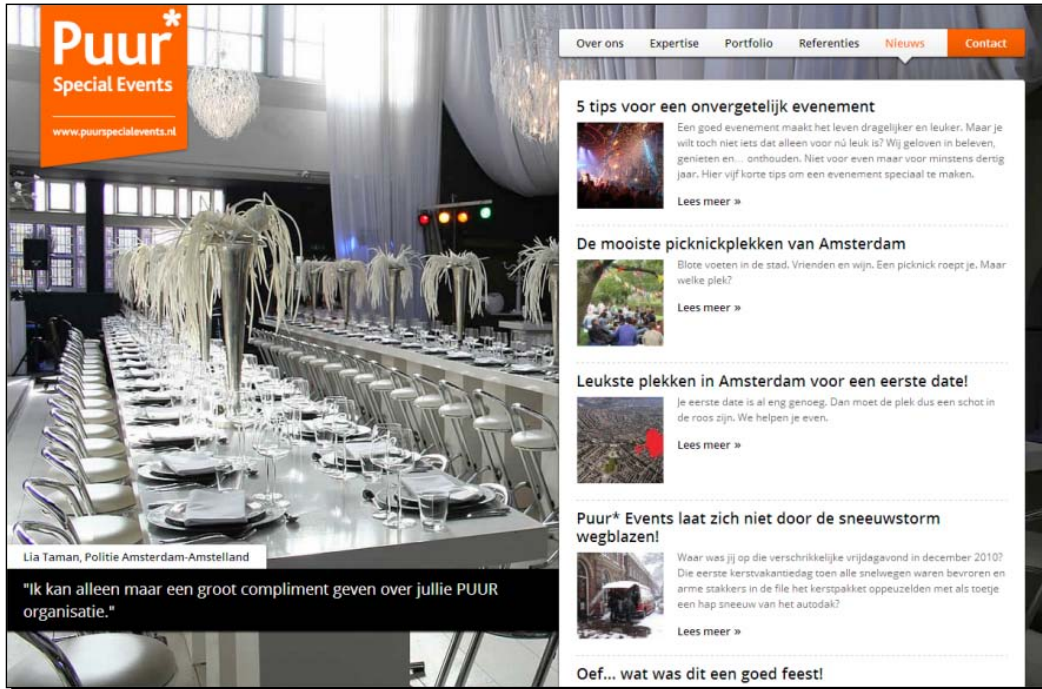
MEMBERSHIP

JOIN

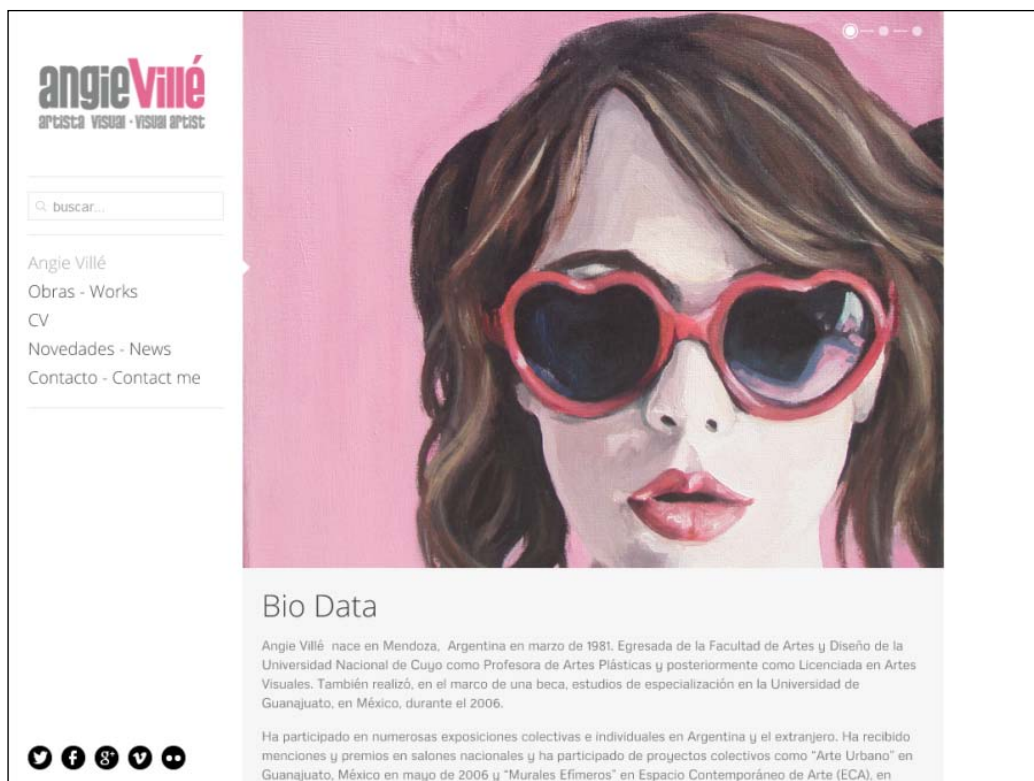
Skip the admissions line and enjoy savings and party invitations.

[Become a member.](#)

This example demonstrates that Joomla sites don't have to look anything like a typical CMS-powered site. You can use quite a different design and still take advantage of the default functionality of Joomla to power the site. This site presents a Dutch events company (www.puurspecialevents.nl).



One final example: the personal portfolio site of an Argentinian artist Angie Villé (www.angieville.com.ar).



If you're looking for some more inspiration, browse the official Joomla showcase at <http://community.joomla.org/showcase> or go to www.bestofjoomla.com and have a look around in the **Best of Sites** section.

Learning to use Joomla!

It may sound too good to be true. Does Joomla really make creating state-of-the-art websites easy as learning ABC? Let's be honest—of course, learning to work with CMS does require you to invest some time and effort. After all, working with Joomla (or any CMS) is very different from building websites the traditional way. You'll notice this as soon as you start installing the system. Compared to setting up a simple static website that consists of a few HTML pages, building a site powered by Joomla takes a bit more preparation. You'll need hosting space that meets specific requirements and you'll need to set up a database. It's very doable, and this book will run you through the process step by step.

Once you've got Joomla set up, you'll soon get the hang of creating a basic site. The next challenge is to get things just right for your particular goals. After all, you don't want just any Joomla site—you want to build a specific site, aimed at your specific target audience. This book will help you to go beyond a basic site and make the choices that fit your goals.

Even if you are using CMS, it will take time and effort to create and maintain great websites. However, Joomla will make it both easier and much more fun for you (and your web team members) to get your site started and keep it evolving.

The approach of this book

The *Joomla! 3 Beginner's Guide Second Edition* isn't just about Joomla—it's about making websites, and it shows you how to use Joomla to make the best website you can. After all, you can get a reasonable impression of the capabilities of Joomla by exploring the interface and trying out the menus and options. However, even a user-friendly interface doesn't tell you how to deploy it in the best way in real-life circumstances. What's the best and fastest way to get started, what features and options are particularly useful, and what are the ones you probably don't have to bother using at all? I want to help you tame the beast that's called Joomla to find your own way around it and get things done—creating a great looking, user-friendly website as the result.

That's what this book is about. It is focused on learning by doing—the structure of the book reflects the process of building a website.



Feel free to skip chapters!

Don't worry, to learn using Joomla you don't have to follow all the chapters of this book and the exercises in them step by step. After you've gone through the introductory chapters, maybe you feel comfortable to skip to changing the design of your site or adding extensions. That's okay—you can jump straight into most of the further chapters and follow the exercises there, as long as you have a working version of Joomla and a some dummy content available.

What's the current version of Joomla!?

On the Joomla website, two versions are available for download: 2.5 and 3 (3.3 or a higher version). Joomla 2.5 is supported until the end of 2014. It's still used, especially by experienced web developers who need a mature CMS and want to be able to use extensions, developed specifically for 2.5. Joomla 3.x, however, is the next generation and it's definitely the way to go when you start using the software.

In the past, Joomla used fixed version numbers—Joomla 1.5 and 2.5 were the long term releases of the 1 and 2 series. However, in 2014, the creators of Joomla chose a new release strategy. There won't be a final Joomla 3.x version—after Joomla 3.3 and Joomla 3.4, updates will be released if required. These minor releases (3.5, 3.6 and so on) may introduce new features, but they will always be backwards compatible with previous 3.x versions. Only major new releases (Joomla 4.x) can introduce new features that may break backwards-compatibility.

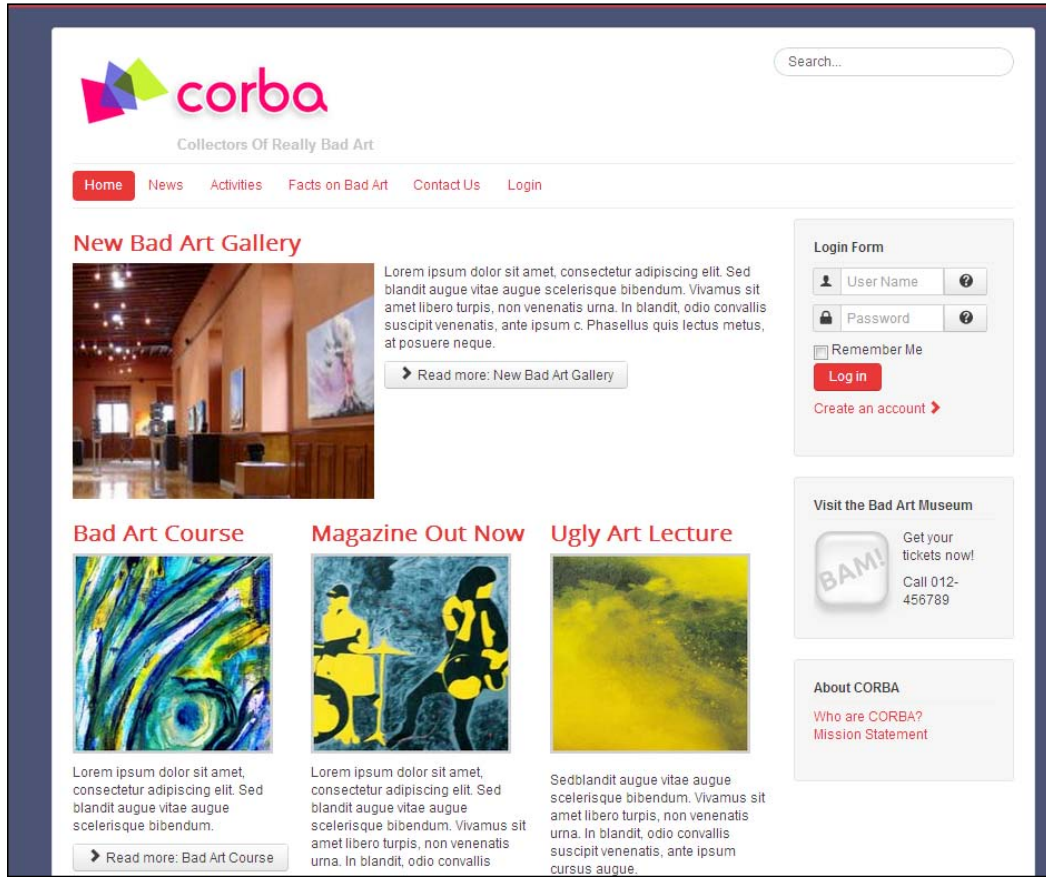
It may seem confusing that there's no fixed long term release, but the advantage is that Joomla development isn't frozen at any particular point. This way, Joomla 3.x users can use the built-in automatic update function and continually benefit from minor new features and improvements.

About the example site

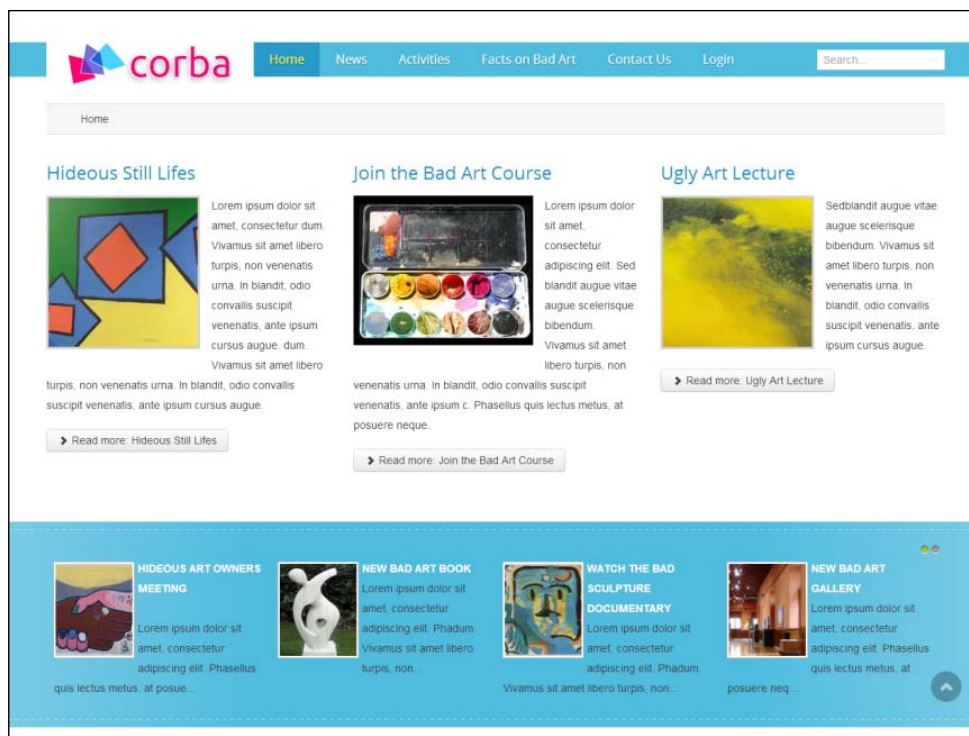
In the course of this book, you'll learn how to build a realistic example site step-by-step. Instead of just learning about the capabilities of Joomla in general terms, you'll meet real-world web building challenges. Throughout the book, you'll achieve all the goals of your fictitious client (such as "I want a website that my web team members can update themselves" or "I want a website that makes it easy to navigate through a large amount of content").

Now, who's that client of yours? It's CORBA, a club of Collectors Of Really Bad Art. They just love bad paintings and ugly sculpture. They argue it can be valuable art—in its own, ugly way. The CORBA people need a website to inform the public about their goals, informing the public about all sorts of bad art, showcasing fine examples of ugly art, and encouraging people to join and participate.

You'll take the CORBA site through different stages of development. First, you'll base the site on the default design and layout of Joomla.



Then, you'll add advanced features and shape the site's contents and design to meet the changing needs of your client.



The CORBA site is a good example of what you can accomplish with Joomla. You start out with a basic website and add sophisticated features as you go. Of course, you can follow along in this book without having to actually perform all of the actions described. However, you'll find that it's a good and fun way to learn building a site and honing your skills step-by-step.

Summary

In this chapter, you've been introduced to the wonderful world of the Joomla CMS. You've learned about the difference between building a website the traditional way and using CMS. You don't have to create HTML documents (web pages) one by one. Instead, you can use a web application to develop and maintain your site. Using CMS such as Joomla, you can create more powerful sites that are easier to maintain. You've also been introduced to the benefits of using Joomla, such as its user friendly interface, the ability to add extra features, and the ability to change the look and feel of the site fast. In the rest of this book, you'll learn how to build a realistic example site with Joomla step-by-step.

However, that's enough background information for now—let's get started! In the next chapter, you'll get the Joomla software up and running. After that, you'll get familiar with the way Joomla works and start building.

2

Getting Joomla! Up and Running

Joomla isn't just an ordinary software package that you can install on your own computer: it needs a web server to run. If you're new to Joomla, installing a web application may seem daunting. Also, let's be honest, running the installation procedure is probably the least exciting part of working with Joomla. However, if you just follow the required steps, it's pretty straightforward. It does take some preparation, but if you've got everything ready, you can walk through the setup wizard in minutes.

In this chapter, you'll install Joomla on a web server, allowing you or anyone else with Internet access to immediately see and visit your Joomla-powered site. Your site will be accessible via your own web address (URL), such as `http://www.example.com`. When you build and customize the site, you'll access the site through your browser.

Don't fear the technical mumbo jumbo



Joomla will make it really easy for you to build a state-of-the-art website, but installing the program will inevitably introduce you to some technical names and acronyms. Don't let this intimidate you. If you've never heard of PHP, MySQL, and the likes, you may be tempted to call in your computer geek nephew to carry out the installation for you. This will allow you to jump ahead to the fun and creative part—creating a beautiful site. However, rest assured, you can pull this off yourself. It's like following directions to a destination in a city you're new to. If you keep to the directions, you're certain to get there. Moreover, as you'll do this more often, you'll get to know the city map better and better. It will take you less and less time to get a new Joomla site up and running.

In this chapter, you'll learn about:

- ◆ What you need to install Joomla
- ◆ How to get Joomla up and running
- ◆ What's in the box: what do you get when you install Joomla?
- ◆ Where to find further help if you get stuck

So let's get started!

What do you need to start?

To be able to install and run Joomla, you'll need hosting space and a few tools. Here's a full shopping list.

Hosting space

First of all, you'll need hosting space—a place on a web server where you can set up your site, making it accessible for anyone with Internet access. Your hosting account should support the PHP scripting language (as Joomla is written in PHP), it should support the type of database that Joomla uses, called MySQL, and it has to run the Apache server software. Specifically, the following are the system requirements for Joomla 3.x:

- ◆ **PHP 5.3.10 or higher:** PHP is the scripting language that Joomla is written in. PHP 5.4 is recommended.
- ◆ **MySQL 5.1 or higher:** The MySQL database is where Joomla stores its data (the contents of your site). The MySQL database should support the InnoDB storage engine (which is a technique to store and manage information in a database).
- ◆ **Apache 2.x or higher:** Apache is the web server software that processes the PHP instructions on pulling in contents from the database and display a web page.
- ◆ **XML and Zlib support:** Your host's PHP installation should support XML and Zlib functionality. Moreover, the PHP Magic Quotes GPC setting should be off. If this setting currently isn't right, your webhost should be able to correct this.

You shouldn't have any difficulty in finding hosting accounts that meet these system requirements. If you're not sure, any hosting provider should be able to tell you if they support the current version of Joomla.

The technical setup described here (using MySQL as the database type and Apache as the web server type) is very common. However, Joomla also supports other database types: MSSQL and PostgreSQL. It also supports different web server types: Nginx and Microsoft IIS. You can find detailed information about the various system requirements at the Joomla official help site: <http://www.joomla.org/technical-requirements.html>.

What if you don't have hosting space?



If you don't have a hosting account yet, you can install Joomla on your computer. This does require you to install a web server software first. In this setup, you'll make Joomla run on your computer as if it were a real, live web server. This approach is OK for testing purposes and it makes it easy to develop a site without having access to a web server. However, there are also a couple of drawbacks. You'll have access to your Joomla site from just one computer, and when your site is ready for the world, you'll have to install it on a real web server anyway. In this book, we'll focus on installing and running Joomla on a web server. However, if you choose to install Joomla on your own computer first, you'll find instructions later in this chapter; please refer to the *Installing Joomla! on your own computer* section.

FTP software

To transfer files from your computer to a web server, you need special **File Transfer Protocol (FTP)** software. An FTP program is comparable to Windows File Explorer or Mac Finder. You can use it to manage files and move them from one place to another—the only difference being that the FTP program allows you to move files from your computer to your hosting space on a web server (and vice versa).

If you are new to FTP, do a web search for an FTP tutorial to get familiar with the basic procedures. For example, check <http://www.freewebmasterhelp.com/tutorials/ftp>.



Looking for FTP software? Check out the free (open source) FileZilla software, available for computers running Windows, Apple, and Linux. You can download it from <http://filezilla-project.org>. Also, if you're using the Firefox browser, you may be interested in FireFTP, an FTP plugin for your browser.

More than one browser

If you're perfectly happy with whatever your current browser may be, you won't have any trouble managing your Joomla site with it. However, people creating websites often install more than one browser on their computer. Apart from the ever-popular Microsoft Internet Explorer (<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/internet-explorer/download-ie>), you might want to install Google Chrome (www.google.com/chrome) and Mozilla Firefox (www.mozilla.org). Having more than one browser allows you to see whether your site looks okay in all of the major browsers. Make sure that you have the current version of these browsers. Older browsers may not render current websites as they should (older versions of Microsoft Internet Explorer are especially notorious in this respect).

Chrome, Firefox, and the recent versions of Internet Explorer offer features that will make your web developing life much easier. All come with built-in developer tools. Right-click on a web page and select the **Inspect Element** functionality to get a look under the hood and analyze the HTML and CSS source code of a page. This can be of great help to you when you want to customize the style and layout of your website. You can read more about web development tools in *Chapter 11, Creating an Attractive Design – Working with Templates*.

Installing Joomla! on a web server

If you have set up a web hosting account and got the tools you need, you're set to go. Install Joomla using the following steps:

1. Download the Joomla files from www.joomla.org.
2. Place the files on the web server.
3. Create a database.
4. Install Joomla itself using an installation wizard.

The rest of this section will give you a detailed walk-through of this procedure.

Time for action – downloading the Joomla! files

Let's begin by downloading the current version of Joomla.

- 1.** Point your browser to www.joomla.org. On the home page, click on the **Download** button.



2. You'll be taken to the download page. Select the latest release. Make sure that you download the full package (the other versions are upgrades for existing Joomla installations).



3. The default download file is a ZIP file. Download this file to your hard drive.
4. Unpack the compressed file to a folder on your hard drive. If you don't have a software program to unpack files, check out <http://www.7-zip.org> for an open source file extraction program.

What just happened?

You've downloaded and extracted the Joomla software files. All files required to install Joomla are now stored in a folder on your computer.

Time for action – placing the files on the web server

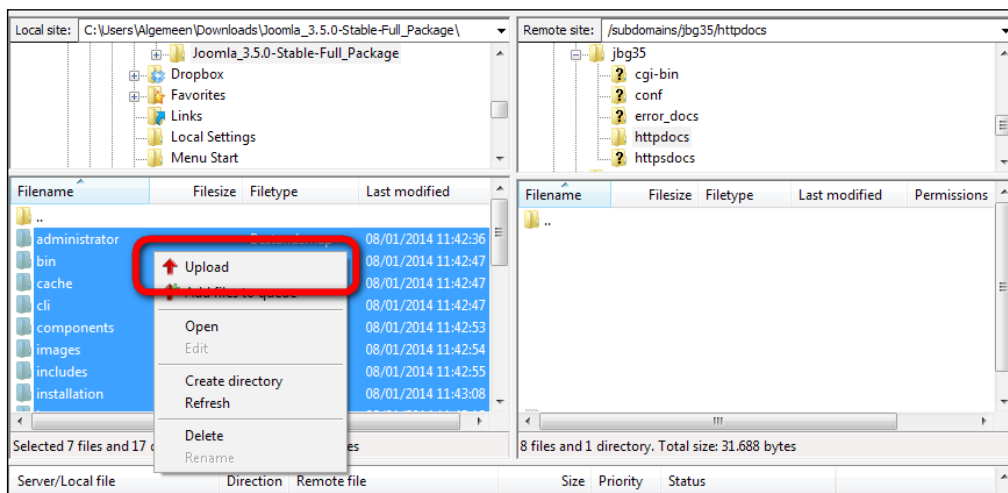
Next, start up your FTP program (see *What do you need to start?* earlier in this chapter) and upload all the unzipped files in the folder to the web server. This is how you do it:

1. In your FTP program, browse to the folder that contains the unzipped Joomla files. Select all files (do not select the folder, only its contents).
2. Select the target directory, that is, the root directory of the web server. The root directory is often called `httpdocs`, `htdocs`, `httpd`, `public_html`, or `www`. If you can't find the folder, your web hosting company should be able to help you out.



Don't worry about the name of the root folder (`httpdocs` or any of the other names listed before). This name won't show up in the web address of your site. Visitors don't have to type `www.example.com/httpdocs`, just `www.example.com` will take them to your site. However, if you create a folder within `httpdocs`, this folder name will show up in your web address. If you create a `joomla` folder under `httpdocs/` and install Joomla there, your site will be accessible only through `www.example.com/joomla`. This means you should only create such a subfolder if this is what you want (for example, when you're just testing Joomla and you want to keep using the root directory for your existing site).

3. In your FTP program, select all files in the Joomla folder. The list of files should resemble the one in the left half of the screen shown in the following screenshot. The following illustration shows the FileZilla screen, but if you're using another FTP program, this shouldn't look much different:



4. On the web server (the right-hand side of the FTP program screen), select the destination folder (`httpdocs`).
5. On your computer (the left-hand side of the FTP program screen), select all files in the folder that contains the Joomla files you unzipped previously. Right-click in the list with selected files and choose **Upload** to copy the Joomla files to the web server root directory.

What just happened?

You've just got your FTP program to copy all Joomla files from your computer to the web server. Don't worry if this takes some time as uploading thousands of Joomla files can take 10 minutes or more depending on the speed of your Internet connection.



Some web hosting companies support a feature that allows for faster uploading. They allow you to upload the zipped Joomla file and extract it on the web server, using the file manager tool of the web server control panel. If your hosting provider supports this feature, it's much faster than extracting the ZIP file on your computer and uploading thousands of separate files.

Time for action – creating a database

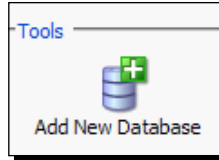
The next step is creating an empty database for Joomla. If you're new to Joomla, the concept of a web application using a database may take some getting used to. The database isn't a regular file that you can create (or copy, move, or delete) on the web server. To create and manage a database, you use special software (such as phpMyAdmin, a popular tool to manage MySQL databases). Most web hosting companies offer you database access through a web interface (usually called a *control panel*). Popular control panels are Plesk, DirectAdmin, and CPanel. You'll find details on the control panel that's available to you in your hosting account's information.

In the following example, we'll use Plesk 8 to create a new database. If your hosting company provides another control panel, the basic procedure won't be very different. However, if you're not sure how to access your web server control panel, your web hosting provider should be able to provide you with the details. You'll also find online documentation for common web hosting control panels; for CPanel, search for MySQL Database Wizard on <http://docs.cpanel.net> to find information on this subject.

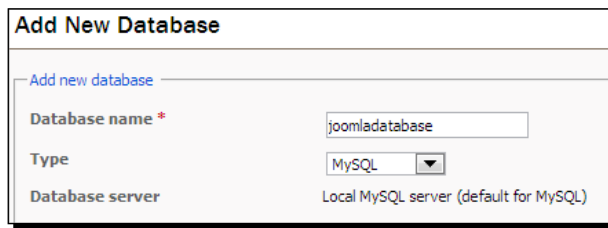


Sometimes, web hosting providers don't allow their users to create their own database. Instead, they provide a preinstalled database. If this is the case, you can go on to step 4, running the Joomla installation wizard. You will need some database details for this: the database name, the database username, and a password for this user. Check the account information you received from your host.

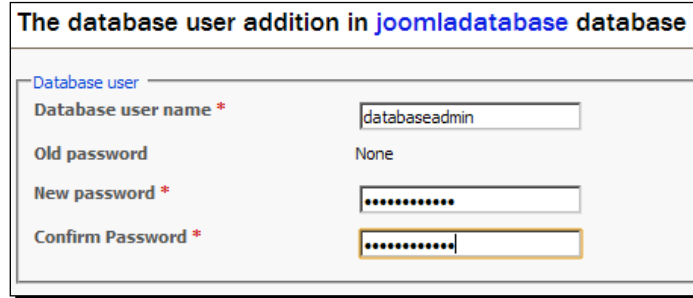
1. Log in to the Plesk control panel with the account information you have received from your hosting provider. To add a new database, click on **Databases** and click on **Add New Database**.



2. Enter a name for the new database, for example, JoomlaDatabase. Click on **OK**.

A screenshot of a web form titled 'Add New Database'. The form has a header 'Add new database' and a sub-header 'Add new database'. It contains three input fields: 'Database name *' with the value 'joomladatabase', 'Type' with a dropdown menu set to 'MySQL', and 'Database server' with the value 'Local MySQL server (default for MySQL)'. There are also some blue links and a minus sign icon at the top left of the form area.

3. Create a new user for the database. Click on **Add New Database User** and enter a database username and database password for the new database user as follows:

A screenshot of a web form titled 'The database user addition in joomladatabase database'. The form has a header 'Database user' and a sub-header 'Database user'. It contains four input fields: 'Database user name *' with the value 'databaseadmin', 'Old password' with the value 'None', 'New password *' with a masked password field, and 'Confirm Password *' with a masked password field. There are also some blue links and a minus sign icon at the top left of the form area.

4. Write down the details you need to install Joomla later on: the database name, the database username and database password. If you copy these details to a text file, you can easily copy and paste them later during the installation.

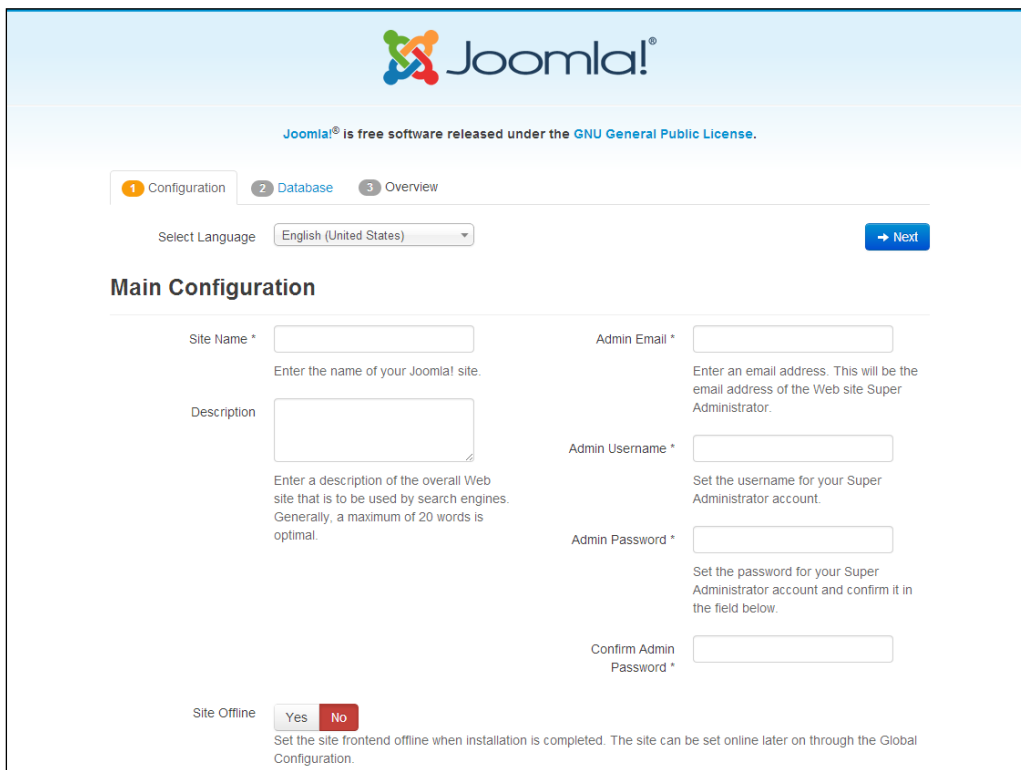
What just happened?

Using a web control panel, you've set up an empty database and created a database user. You're now ready to run the Joomla installation wizard.

Time for action – running the Joomla! installation wizard

You've got all the Joomla files copied to the web server and you've got a database ready to be filled. Let's finally install Joomla!

1. Enter the URL for your site (such as `http://www.example.com`) in your browser. The installation screen shown in the following screenshot will come up:



The screenshot shows the Joomla! installation wizard's 'Main Configuration' screen. At the top, the Joomla! logo is displayed, followed by the text 'Joomla! is free software released under the GNU General Public License.' Below this, there are three tabs: '1 Configuration', '2 Database', and '3 Overview'. The 'Configuration' tab is active. A 'Select Language' dropdown menu is set to 'English (United States)', and a blue 'Next' button is visible. The 'Main Configuration' section contains several input fields and checkboxes:

- Site Name ***: A text input field with the instruction 'Enter the name of your Joomla! site.'
- Description**: A text area with the instruction 'Enter a description of the overall Web site that is to be used by search engines. Generally, a maximum of 20 words is optimal.'
- Admin Email ***: A text input field with the instruction 'Enter an email address. This will be the email address of the Web site Super Administrator.'
- Admin Username ***: A text input field with the instruction 'Set the username for your Super Administrator account.'
- Admin Password ***: A text input field with the instruction 'Set the password for your Super Administrator account and confirm it in the field below.'
- Confirm Admin Password ***: A text input field for confirming the admin password.
- Site Offline**: A checkbox with 'Yes' and 'No' options. The instruction reads: 'Set the site frontend offline when installation is completed. The site can be set online later on through the Global Configuration.'



The Joomla installer will check whether your web server setup meets the installation requirements. If it does, you'll be taken to the **Main Configuration** screen. However, if any of the required web server settings isn't met, you won't be able to install Joomla. In that case, Joomla will display a screen of required settings and mark the ones that require attention. If there are any problems, get in touch with your web hosting company to have them correct the web server settings for you.

2. In the **Main Configuration** screen, change the settings and enter the following information:
 - ❑ **Select Language:** Using this option, you can select the language you want to use during the installation (if you need to change the default setting).
 - ❑ **Site Name:** In this field, enter the name for the website. This will be displayed in the browser's title bar (and in some cases, in the site header). In this example, we've entered **Corba**—you'll learn more about this esteemed client for your example site in later chapters.
 - ❑ **Description:** It's okay to leave this field blank for now. Here, you can enter one or two sentences explaining what your site has to offer. The information is important for search engines, but you can add this at a later stage through Joomla's configuration settings.
 - ❑ **Admin Email:** Enter a valid e-mail address in this field. Joomla will use this to send system messages and it will be used as the e-mail address for the default administrator user account.
 - ❑ **Admin Username:** In this field, enter the username you'll be using when you administrate the site. For security reasons, you'll want to choose a username that's not too easy to guess (preferably something more original and safer than *admin*, which was the default administrator username in previous Joomla versions).
 - ❑ **Admin Password:** Enter the site's administrator password in this field. This is a different password from the one you've entered previously for the database user. This new password is created here. Now, you'll use this to log in to Joomla after the installation. Choose a strong password, not something that hackers can easily guess. Make a note of administrator username and administrator password!
 - ❑ **Site Offline:** This is set to **No** by default. After installation, the (empty) site will be immediately online. Don't change this setting now. If you were to select **Yes** here, after installation of Joomla, visitors will see a message that the site is temporarily offline (and a login form for site administrators). This way, you can make the site you're developing accessible only for yourself after logging in.
3. Click on the **Next** button and you'll be taken to the **Database Configuration** screen that is shown in the following screenshot:

Joomla!
Joomla!® is free software released under the GNU General Public License.

1 Configuration 2 Database 3 Overview

← Previous Next →

Database Configuration

Database Type *
This is probably "MySQLi"

Host Name *
This is usually "localhost"

Username *
Either something as "root" or a username given by the host

Password
For site security using a password for the database account is mandatory

Database Name *
Some hosts allow only a certain DB name per site. Use table prefix in this case for distinct Joomla! sites.


Table Prefix *
Choose a table prefix or use the **randomly generated**. Ideally, three or four characters long, contain only alphanumeric characters, and **MUST** end in an underscore. **Make sure that the prefix chosen is not used by other tables.**

Old Database Process *
Any existing backup tables from former Joomla! installations will be replaced

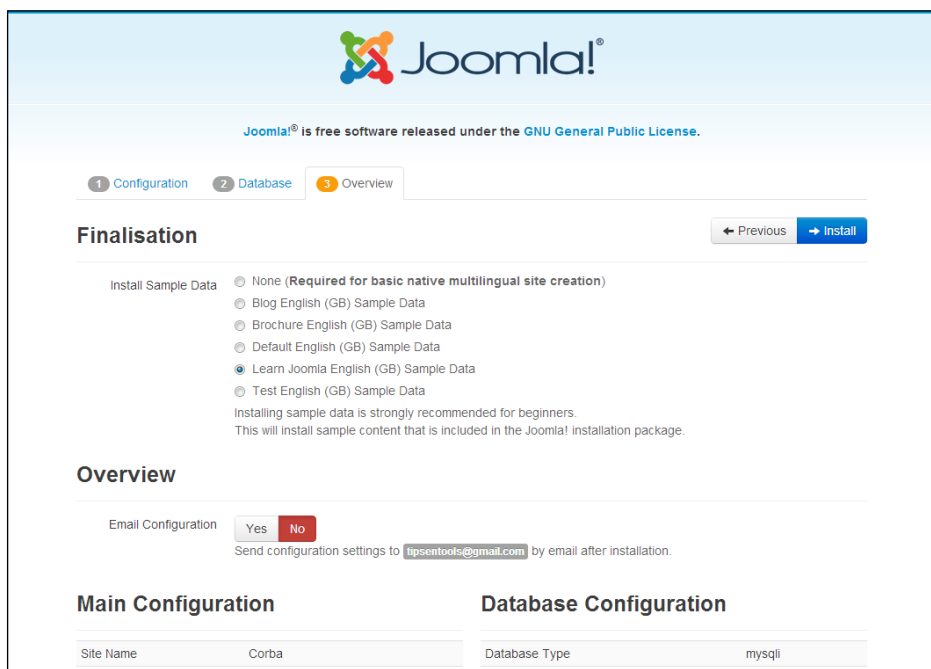
- 4.** In this screen, enter the following details:
- **Database Type:** You can probably leave this set to **MySQLi**. Currently, most web hosts support **MySQL Improved (MySQLi)**, which allows faster and more secure communication with the database than the traditional MySQL database type.
 - **Host Name:** This is usually **localhost** (unless your web hosting company has provided you with another name).
 - **Username:** Enter the username for the database you created earlier in the *Time for action – creating a database* section. If you haven't created the database yourself, your hosting provider should be able to provide you with the database and user details. In our example, the username is **databaseadmin**.
 - **Password:** Enter the database user password you'd created when setting up the database. Again, if the hosting provider has created the database, they should be able to provide you with the user password for the database.


- ❑ **Database Name:** Enter the database name you chose when you created the database. If you haven't created the database yourself, you can enter the name you have received from your webhost.
- ❑ **Table Prefix:** You can leave this unchanged. A table prefix is relevant only when one database is shared by several Joomla installations. This way, each of them can look up the appropriate data in the database by checking for the correct prefix.
- ❑ **Old Database Process:** This option is only relevant when you've installed Joomla before and need to empty the tables (the contents) of a previous database. Select **Backup** to backup existing database contents from a previous Joomla installation, or select **Remove** to remove them.

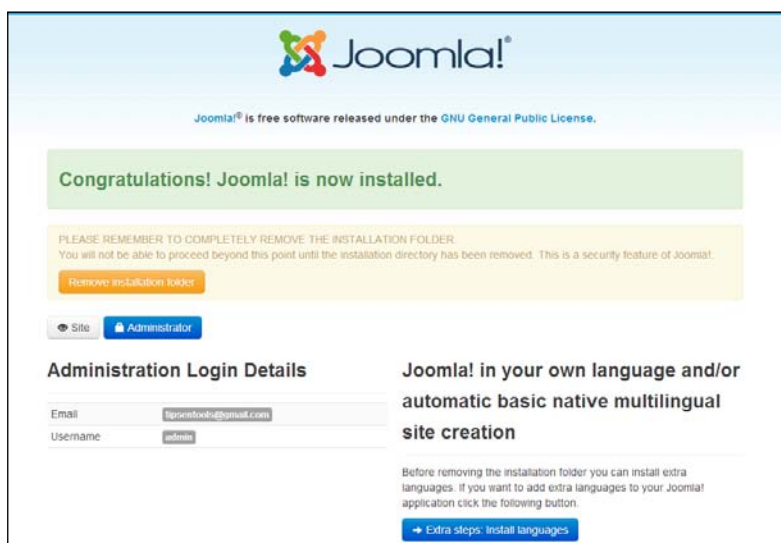
5. Once the **Database Configuration** screen is complete, click on **Next**. Joomla will now check whether it can connect to the database.

 If you see an error message, you probably made a typo when entering the database details. Make sure you have typed the password correctly. You can go back to the database details screen, enter the correct data, and click on **Next** again.

6. If all goes well, you are taken to the **Finalisation** screen, which is shown in the following screenshot:



7. Although this is an impressively long screen (you'll have to scroll to see it in full), its main purpose is to give you an overview of all current settings. You'll only have to make one or two choices here:
- **Install Sample Data:** When you create a Joomla site for the very first time, it's a good idea to install sample data. You can choose from several sets of sample data; for example, you can select Blog Sample Data to install Joomla with some example blog articles, menus, and modules. In this case, select **Learn Joomla English (GB) Sample Data**. Using this sample data option, you get a ready-made sample site to build upon that is already filled with example pages, menus, and extras. If you want to follow the exercises in this book, you'll need to install **Learn Joomla English (GB) Sample Data**.
- 
 If you don't install sample data, you have to create all content from scratch. You'll prefer this option when you're Joomla-savvy and know where to start, how to add content, and how to customize things. Installing Joomla without sample data is also required when you want to install a basic multilingual site—although you can just as well enable Joomla's multilingual capabilities later on. (See *Appendix B, Creating a Multilingual Site* for more information on creating multilingual sites.)
- **Email configuration:** Select **Yes** if you want Joomla to send you an e-mail with an overview of all site settings. When you select **Yes**, you'll be presented with an extra option: whether you want to send passwords via e-mail too. For security reasons, it's recommended not to send passwords via e-mail.
8. Click on the **Next** button to start the Joomla installation and it will display the progress. In a few seconds, you'll be presented with the following final screen:



9. Just one thing left to do and you're good to go. Before you can use Joomla, you must delete the folder named `installation`. This folder contains information that's needed for the installation, but is now no longer required (and you do not want to reveal its contents to hackers). Click on the **Remove installation folder** button to do this; the button text will change to **Installation folder successfully removed**.

Installing extra languages

You may have noticed that we haven't used the **Extra steps: install languages** button that's displayed in the final installation screen. There is a large number of translations available for both the administrative interface of Joomla and the frontend (where fixed texts such as **Read more** are translated). It's possible to add extra languages immediately after installation. This can be useful if you've installed, for example, the English Joomla version and you want to continue using your own preferred language.

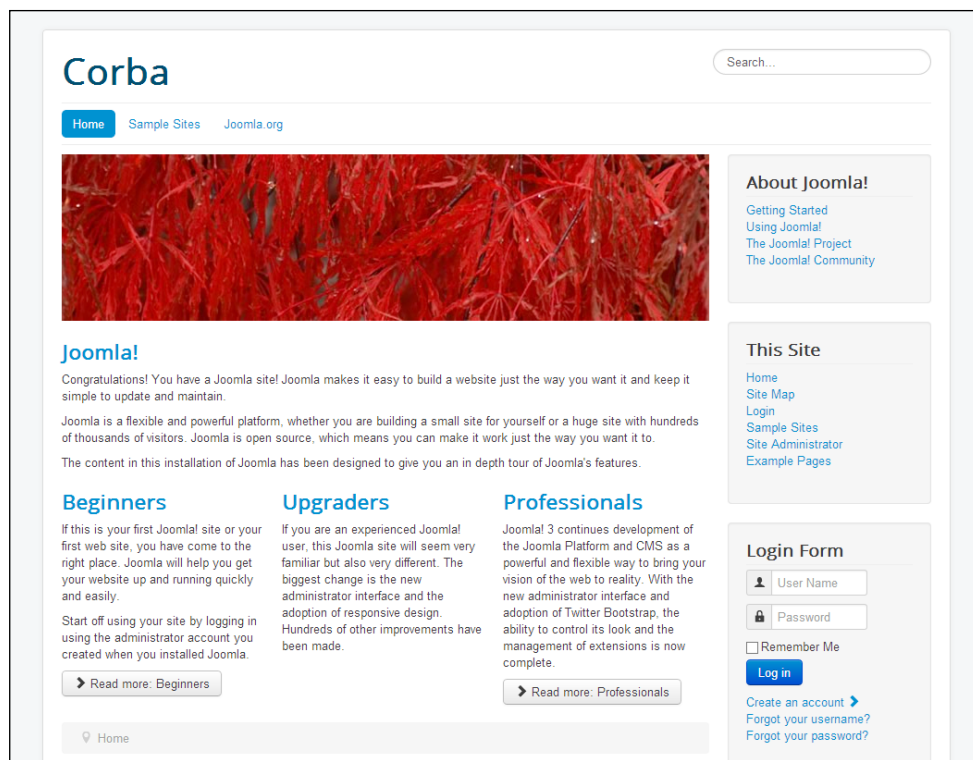


If you install Joomla and click on the **Extra steps: install languages** button, you'll be taken to the **Install Language packages** page. There you can select additional languages, install them, and choose the desired default language for the administrative interface and for the Joomla frontend. You've also got the option to activate Joomla's multilingual features, allowing visitors to switch between languages in the frontend of the site.

However, you can also easily add extra languages (and enable the multilingual features) after you've installed Joomla. You'll learn more about adding languages to Joomla in *Appendix B, Creating a Multilingual Site*.

What just happened?

Congratulations! You've installed Joomla. In the screen that appears after performing the steps from the previous section, click on the **Site** button to see what your Joomla site looks like.

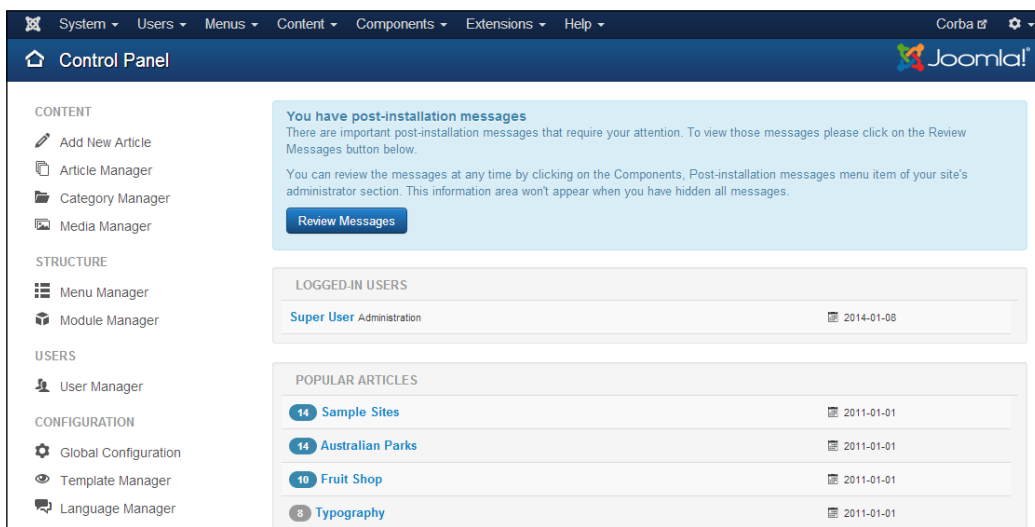


However, there's more to Joomla than meets the eye of a web visitor. To go to the "secret" login page of your site, enter your site URL in your browser address bar, adding the word `administrator`, for example, `www.example.com/administrator`.

You'll see the page as displayed in the following screenshot:



Here, you can log in to the administrative interface or backend of the site using the username (which you've chosen on the **Main Configuration** page of the installation routine) and password that you've created during installation (make sure you enter the *site administrator* password, not the *database user* password). Click on **Log in** to reveal the Joomla web interface. It is shown in the following screenshot:



This is your command center. Here, you'll add new content, manage articles, create content categories, add menu items, and do much more. In the next chapter, you'll learn more about working in the Joomla backend.

What are post-installation messages?

After installing Joomla, you'll probably see a notice on the backend of the site: **You have post-installation messages**. To view those messages, click on the **Review Messages** button. This will take you to a screen that should look like the following screenshot:

Post-installation Messages for Joomla!

Post-installation and upgrade messages

Two Factor Authentication is available

Since version 3.2.0

Joomla! comes with a built-in two factor authentication system. It secures your site login with a secondary secret code that's changing every 30 seconds. You can use your mobile device and the Google Authenticator app to produce that code. More Info http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google_Authenticator

By clicking the button below:

- Joomla! will enable the two factor authentication plugins
- Two Factor Authentication is going to be available for all users.
- Each user can configure Two Factor Authentication in User Details.
- You can always disable Two Factor Authentication plugin, or configure it for Backend usage only.
- You will be taken to your user profile page where you can find more information on two factor authentication and enable it for your user account.

[Enable two factor authentication](#) [Hide this message](#)

Here, you'll see messages about installation or configuration issues that require your attention. For example, you may want to activate or configure specific features that haven't been enabled by default. An example is **Two-factor authentication**, a two-step verification system that makes it harder for unauthorized people to gain access to the Joomla backend. (You'll find out more about **Two-factor authentication** in *Appendix A, Keeping the Site Secure*.) Just for now, you can ignore the notification system. Click on **Hide this message** for each of the messages displayed.



Protecting your site

You've just installed Joomla, so you probably want to get to the fun stuff right away and start creating cool sites. You're right of course, but still it's a good idea to keep an eye on security issues from the very start. As soon as you've got your site set up, it's really important to make sure you don't leave any doors open to people who like to break into other people's websites. Check *Appendix A, Keeping the Site Secure* to learn how you can keep your site secure.

Installing Joomla! on your own computer

In the previous section, you saw how to install Joomla on a web server. Another option is to install the web server software on your computer and run Joomla on this local web server. This is also called a *local installation*. In this setup, your computer will act as if it were a live web server—but your Joomla site will only be accessible on your computer. If you've followed along in the previous section and you have already installed Joomla on the Web, you can skip this section and head for the next chapter.

Installing Joomla on your own computer does have a couple of drawbacks. You'll have access to your Joomla site from just one computer, and when your site is ready for the world, you'll still have to move it to a real web server. However, installing Joomla locally is a good solution when you want to install CMS for testing purposes. It makes it easy to develop sites without having access to a web server.

In this section, you'll learn more about what it takes to install Joomla on your own computer. The following are the steps involved:

1. Download a web server software (in our example, XAMPP).
2. Install the web server software on your computer.
3. Create a database on your computer.
4. Download the Joomla files from www.joomla.org.
5. Place the files in a folder on your computer.
6. Install Joomla using an installation wizard.

You'll find a quick overview of these steps in the following section. We'll focus on the differences from the procedure described in the previous section, *Installing Joomla on a web server*.

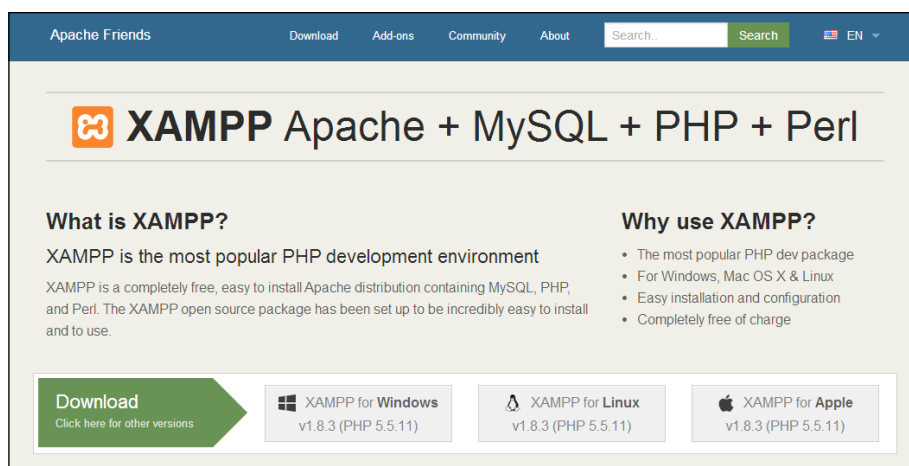
Downloading and installing a web server software

There are several free web server software packages available, such as XAMPP for Windows, Linux, and Apple computers (www.apachefriends.org/en/xampp.html); WampServer for Windows (www.wampserver.com); and MAMP for Apple (www.mamp.info). These packages bundle all that's needed to make your computer act as a web server and enable it to run software such as Joomla. Most importantly, they'll install the Apache web server software and MySQL database. All current versions of these software packages meet the system requirements of Joomla 3.x, as described in the *What do you need to start?* section earlier in this chapter.

Time for action – installing XAMPP

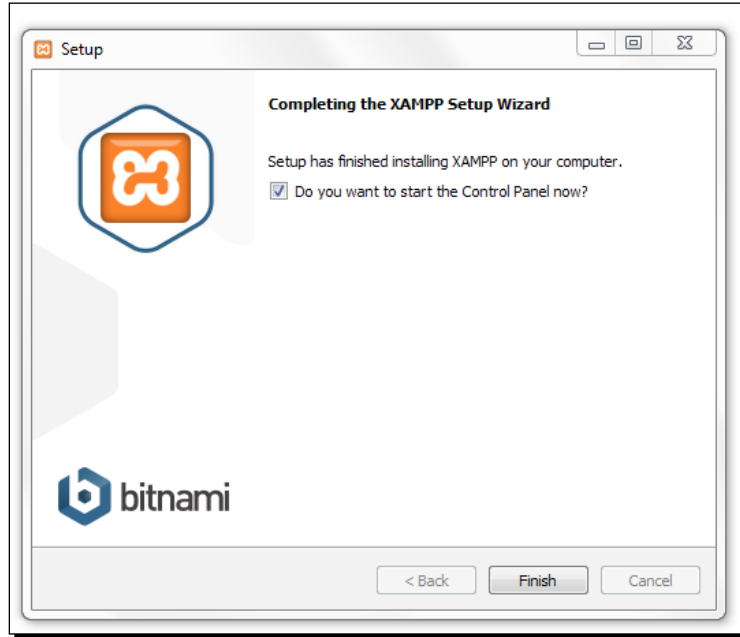
In this example, we'll install the XAMPP software package, as it's available for all major operating systems.

1. Go to www.apachefriends.org/en/xampp.html and download the latest release for your operating system. In this example, we'll download XAMPP for Windows. Select the installer version of the current release.

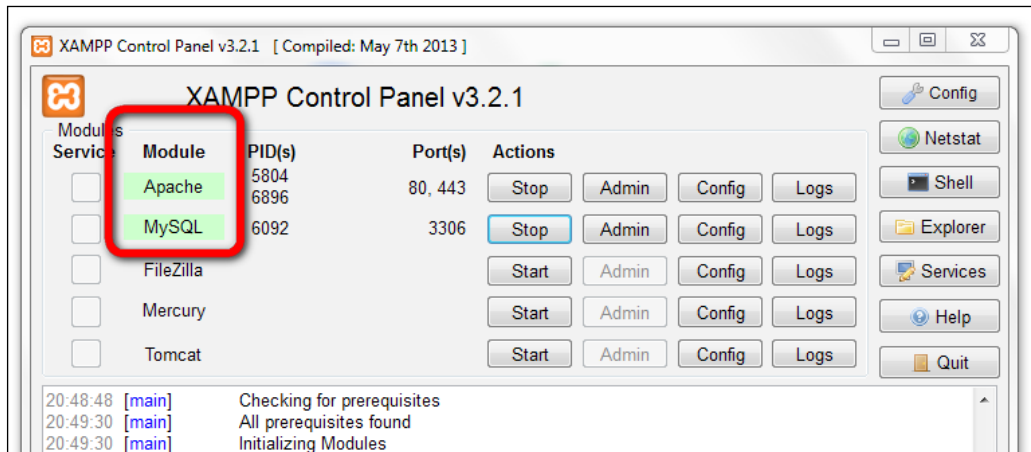


2. Open the downloaded software and give Windows permission to install it on your computer. The XAMPP Setup Wizard will start. In the next few screens, you can agree to all the default options. When you're prompted to select components to install, the default selection (all components) is fine. You'll probably also want to install XAMPP in its default location, `c:\xampp`.
3. Make sure to deselect the option **Learn more about BitNami for XAMPP**. It's best to choose a straightforward XAMPP installation.

4. XAMPP will start installing; this can take several minutes. When you see the completion notice, make sure that the **Do you want to start the Control Panel now?** option is selected as shown in the following screenshot and click on **Finish**:



5. The XAMPP control panel is displayed. Click on the **Start** buttons to start **Apache** and **MySQL**. In the **Module** column, the words **Apache** and **MySQL** will be displayed on a green background, as shown in the following screenshot:



6. Close the XAMPP control panel window. Do not use the **Quit** button (this will stop XAMPP), but click on **X** in the top-right corner.

What just happened?

You've installed the XAMPP web server software package on your computer. You can see that XAMPP is running—in the system tray, an orange icon with a white **X** in it is displayed. To check whether the web server works, type `http://localhost` in your web browser's address bar. You should see a screen similar to the one shown in the following screenshot:



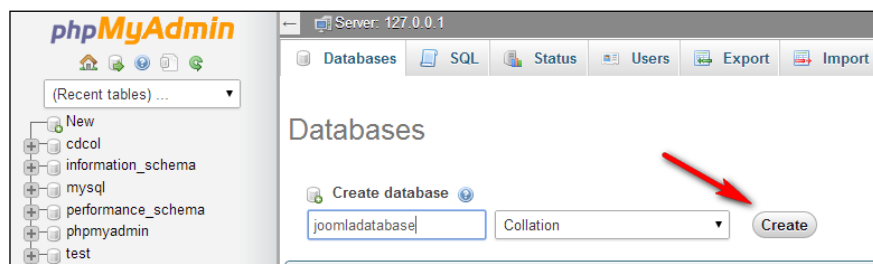
The XAMPP Control Panel prompts you to install Joomla on top of XAMPP using *BitNami*. This is a all-in-one installation package that creates a database and installs Joomla in one go. It's an easy solution, but it has a few drawbacks. As the installation procedure is automated, you don't have much control over the options chosen during installation. Therefore, I advise you to install Joomla the hard way—as explained in the following section.

Creating a database

The next step is to create a MySQL database on your computer. For this, you'll use the phpMyAdmin software, which was installed as part of the XAMPP package.

Time for action – creating a MySQL database

1. In your web browser, go to `http://localhost`. The XAMPP welcome screen appears.
2. In the menu on the left-hand side, under **Tools**, click on **phpMyAdmin**.
3. In the **phpMyAdmin** screen, click on the **Databases** tab. Enter a name for the new database (in this example, `joomladatabase`) and click on the **Create** button as seen in the following screenshot:



You'll see a confirmation notice that a new database has been created. A default database user (called root) will automatically be added by phpMyAdmin, which is alright for our purposes.

What just happened?

You've now finished preparing your computer to enable it to run the Joomla software. You've added the empty database Joomla needs to store its content in, so you're ready to install CMS.

Downloading and installing Joomla!

Now that you've got your computer set up as a web server, the procedure to install Joomla itself is not much different from the steps to install Joomla on a real web server, described earlier in this chapter. I'll run you through the main steps of the procedure, where referring to the steps described in the *Installing Joomla on a web server* section is needed. We'll focus on what's different in a local installation.

Time for action – downloading Joomla! and running the installation wizard

To install CMS, download Joomla, place the files on your computer, and start the step-by-step installation as follows:

1. First, download and unzip the Joomla files. Please refer to the *Time for action – downloading the Joomla! files* earlier in this chapter for specifics.
2. On your computer, use the file browser (in Windows this will be Windows File Explorer) to navigate to `C:\xampp\htdocs`. Create a new folder named `joomla3` in the `htdocs` folder.
3. Move the files you unpacked in the step 1 to the `joomla3` folder.
4. In your web browser, go to `http://localhost/joomla3`.
5. The Joomla installation wizard starts. You'll follow the same steps as described earlier in this chapter in *Time for action – running the Joomla installation wizard*. Please refer to that section for detailed information. The only differences when performing a local installation involve the database details (the second step in the following steps). Here's an overview of the steps involved:
 - In the **Main Configuration** screen, enter the site name and administrator details.
 - In the **Database Configuration** screen, enter the database details. For a local installation, the default database **Username** will be `root`, with no password (leave it blank). Enter the **Database Name** you've chosen when you'd created the database with phpMyAdmin.
 - In the **Finalisation** screen, you'll select the sample dataset you want to install. After that, click on **Install** to finish the installation procedure.
 - After installation, you'll be prompted to remove the installation folder and you can choose to visit either the site or the administrator backend.

What just happened?

You've installed Joomla on your own computer. To visit your site, point your web browser to `http://localhost/Joomla3`. To access the administrative area of your site, navigate to `http://localhost/joomla3/administrator`.



If you've installed Joomla on your own computer, you'll eventually want to move the completed site to a web server that's accessible through the Internet—in other words, move it to a web host. This can be done quite easily using an extension for Joomla, Akeeba Backup. You'll create a backup of the entire site, and restore this backup on the live web server. To find out more about Akeeba, see *Appendix A, Keeping the Site Secure*.

What if the installation doesn't work?

If you carefully follow the required steps for installing Joomla 3 on your own computer, it should work fine. However, in some cases, (depending on the particular computer configuration) users have reported an issue where the installation screen "freezes" when Joomla tries to create database files. If you experience this issue, changing a PHP setting should fix it. Open the `php.ini` file under `c:\xampp\php\` in a text editor (such as Notepad) and find the line, `max_execution_time = 30`. Change this to `max_execution_time = 300`. Save your changes and restart XAMPP, that is, click on the XAMPP system tray icon and select Quit, then start the program again. Now start the Joomla installation wizard again. Creating the database will still take some time, but the installer will continue.

Upgrading from previous versions of Joomla!

If you've already built websites with Joomla 1.5 or Joomla 2.5, you can upgrade your existing site to the current version of Joomla 3.x. However, this isn't an automated process. How much effort this takes depends on what Joomla version your current site is running on and what extensions and templates you're using. So what can you do if you want to keep your existing content and the existing structure of your website when upgrading to Joomla 3.x? Here's an overview of the possibilities.



When you decide to upgrade your site, make sure you create a backup of your current site. This way, if anything goes wrong, you can always revert to the old situation. Akeeba Backup is a great (and free) tool to backup Joomla sites. It allows you to create a backup and also to reinstall that version of the site on a *different* location. This means you can copy the current site to a temporary location, perform the upgrade, and put the upgraded site back to the original location after you've tested it. Visit www.akeebabackup.com for more details. To get an impression of the way Akeeba works, see the *Creating a Backup with Akeeba Backup* section in *Appendix A, Keeping the Site Secure*.

Updating Joomla! 1.5 to 3.x

If your old site is still running on Joomla 1.5, the switch to Joomla 3.x will involve a serious migration process. There's no built-in functionality that takes care of the upgrading. The main reason is that the structure of the content database has changed substantially since Joomla 2.5. However, there are a few tools available to help you migrate your site to the most recent version.

You may want to try out a free extension for Joomla, a component called jUpgrade. This will move your entire site, including its database, from 1.5 to 2.5. At the time of writing, jUpgrade doesn't support migrating to Joomla 3.x. After migrating to Joomla 2.5, you'll have to update Joomla 2.5 following the procedure described later in this chapter (see the *Updating Joomla! 2.5 to 3.x* section).

Even with jUpgrade, you will have to update a number of things yourself. For example, a template used in Joomla 1.5 won't work in higher versions, so you'll have to use a new template or update the old one. The same holds for extensions used in your old site.

All in all, this means that jUpgrade will be very useful if you want to migrate the CMS itself and its main content (articles and default Joomla extensions). You can find a detailed tutorial on upgrading Joomla 1.5 using jUpgrade at <http://www.joomm.net/index.php/joomla-tips-and-tutorials/upgrading-joomla-1-5-to-2-5>.

You can read more about upgrading on the Joomla documentation pages at http://docs.joomla.org/Migrating_from_joomla_1.5_to_joomla_2.5.



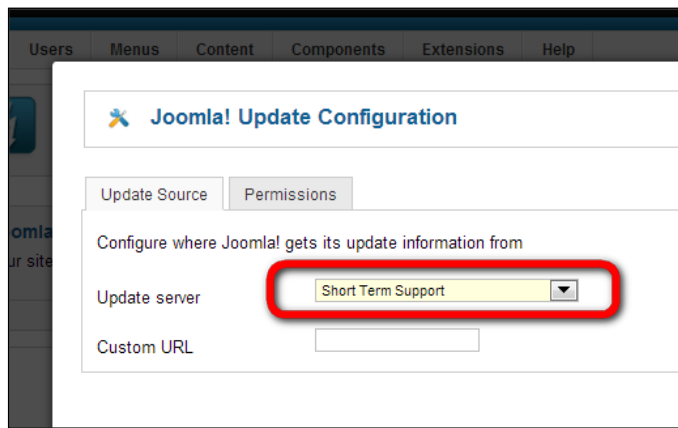
At the time of writing this, there's one commercial extension available that takes care of migrating Joomla 1.5 sites to 2.5 in one step: SP Upgrade. It also updates a number of popular extensions. However, keep in mind that templates and most extensions will still have to be upgraded manually. Visit <http://extensions.joomla.org/extensions/migration-a-conversion/joomla-migration/15609> for more information.

Updating Joomla! 2.5 to 3.x

Since Joomla 2.5, the CMS supports one click updates. You can use the built-in **Update** component of Joomla 2.5 to upgrade to version 3.0 or higher. However, there are a few things that you have to keep in mind:

- ◆ The template system of Joomla 3.x has changed, which means you can't just use your old Joomla 2.5 template in Joomla 3.x. You'll have to find out whether the template developer has created a new version that's compatible with Joomla 3.x, or you'll have to convert the old template manually. Another option is to use the switch to Joomla 3.x as an occasion to change the looks of your website and use a new 3.x-ready template.
- ◆ Most third-party extensions developed for Joomla 2.5 will have to be converted by their developers to make them Joomla 3.x compatible. If you need to use an extension that's not yet ready for Joomla 3.x, you may need to look for an up-to-date extension that offers similar functionality.

By default, in Joomla 2.5 you'll only receive updates for Joomla 2.5 (Version 2.5.1 and so on). To enable automatic updating from Joomla 2.5 to Joomla 3.x, go to **Components | Joomla! Update**. Click on **Options** and select as **Short Term Support** under **Update server** as seen in the following screenshot:



After you've saved this setting, Joomla will notify you as soon as updates are available and it will let you update Joomla 2.5 to 3.x and higher. You'll find a detailed tutorial on upgrading Joomla 2.5 at <http://www.ostraining.com/blog/joomla/how-to-upgrade-from-joomla-2-5-to-joomla-3/>.

Got stuck? Get help!

Looking for more help and tips on installing Joomla?

- ◆ Visit the Joomla documentation site at <http://docs.joomla.org> and check the **Getting Started with Joomla!** page at <http://www.joomla.org/about-joomla/getting-started.html>.
- ◆ Don't forget there are many free video tutorials on YouTube. Search for `install Joomla 3` and you'll be presented with a truckload of installation guides.
- ◆ If you're having trouble installing Joomla, chances are your problem has already been solved on the official Joomla forum dedicated to installation issues. On <http://forum.joomla.org>, look for the **Installation** section or use the forum's search functionality.



In your browser, go to www.joomm.net, the website that accompanies this book, to find answers to frequently asked Joomla questions.

Pop quiz – test your knowledge of installing Joomla

Q1. Why do you need FTP software before you can install Joomla?

1. To unzip the installation package.
2. To upload files from your computer to the web server.
3. To back up your site.

Q2. What are the main steps involved in installing Joomla?

1. First, upload the Joomla files and then run the web installer.
2. Download Joomla, unpack and upload the files, create a database, and run the web installer.
3. Download Joomla, unpack and upload the files, run the web installer, and create a database.

Q3. What username and passwords do you have to enter in the Joomla web installation wizard?

1. The username and password needed to log in to the Joomla backend.
2. The username and password needed to access the MySQL database.
3. The username and password needed to access the MySQL database and the username and password needed to log in to the Joomla backend.

Q4. Why would you want to install Joomla on your own computer instead of installing it on a web server?

1. You can install web server software on your computer.
2. It makes it easy to develop sites without having access to a web server.
3. When your site is ready, you can easily move it to a live web server.

Summary

In this chapter, you learned how to install Joomla. You learned that to be able to install and run Joomla, you'll need hosting space that meets Joomla's specific server requirements. You also need FTP software to put the required files on a web server. You might want to install a few different browsers.

You also learned that there are two ways to install Joomla—either on the hosting space on a live web server, or on your own computer. Installing Joomla on a web server means the new site is directly accessible through the Internet. Installing Joomla on your own computer is a good solution if you don't have a web hosting account or want to install Joomla for testing purposes.

Finally, you learned that the output of the Joomla installation has two faces. The Joomla frontend displays an example website that is publicly accessible and the backend is Joomla's web management interface where for now just one VIP is allowed to log in: you!

Now that you've got Joomla up and running, it's about time to find out what this great new web development tool can do.

In the next chapter, you'll explore the Joomla frontend and backend, and you'll get a first taste of building websites the Joomla way.

3

First Steps – Getting to Know Joomla!

Congratulations! You have just installed Joomla. This means you can now step into Joomla and start using one of the most exciting and powerful web building tools available today. Before you begin building your own site in the next chapter, let's take some time to get acquainted with the way Joomla works. The system has a clean, user-friendly interface that's easy to learn and fun to work with. You'll be amazed at how fast you can perform content management magic with just a few clicks. This chapter introduces you to Joomla's basic functions.

In this chapter, you will cover the following topics:

- ◆ Getting acquainted with the Joomla way of building and maintaining websites
- ◆ Exploring the user interface and trying out the main screens and toolbars
- ◆ Examining the example Joomla website that you've installed and understanding the main features and special functions that Joomla offers out of the box
- ◆ Getting your feet wet and trying out some of the most common administration tasks such as publishing your first content, adding an extension, and tweaking a few settings

This way, you'll get a taste of what it's like to use Joomla as your web toolbox and get ready to build your own site in the next chapter. So, let's get started!

Building websites the Joomla! way

If you're new to Joomla and **Content Management Systems (CMS)**, you'll find creating sites using a CMS takes a bit of getting used to. Even if you have some experience building websites, you'll have to adapt to a different way of working. However, it's certainly worth the effort, and Joomla will make it easy on you—really! Before we explore the example site you installed in the previous chapter, we'll have a brief look at just what's so different about building websites with Joomla.

As you may know, ages ago—at least before 2005, when Joomla came to be—most websites were handcrafted. Creating a website meant creating pages. For every new web page, you had to create a separate HTML document. You would design a basic page layout and reuse that over and over again, adding new pages and adapting the layout to fit the type of content. Whatever tool you used—Adobe (then Macromedia) Dreamweaver, Microsoft FrontPage, or maybe a plain text editor—you would be designing, coding, editing, or building the same web page your visitors would see on your website.

Earlier, getting anything published on the Web meant uploading pages (HTML documents) from your computer to a web server. Adding and updating content or managing hyperlinks was basically done by hand. You'd open a page in an editor, make changes, and upload it to the web server again. Those were the bad old days of static websites.

Those days are long gone. Today, most websites are dynamic. They use a CMS to make it easier to create and manage content. These CMS-based sites are either built from scratch (by web programmers creating a custom CMS to meet specific client requirements) or based upon a generic CMS, such as Joomla, that can be customized and expanded. It's that dynamic bit that makes working with a CMS so all-new and different.

Sorry, web pages have ceased to exist

Okay, now brace yourself for the main difference between the static, old school approach and building websites using a CMS such as Joomla—there are no web pages.

Of course, a visitor browsing your site still experiences that website as—basically—a collection of pages. In Joomla, however, the page your visitor sees is a collection of little blocks of interactive data that the CMS pulls from a database. These blocks can be arranged and combined into web pages in many different ways.

As soon as your visitor clicks on a link, he or she actually sends a request to Joomla to assemble bits and pieces of data to present a full web page. If your site visitor clicks on **Home**, they'll see a page consisting of headings, images, and teaser texts. If they click on a **Read more** link, a new mix of data is displayed. This can consist of the same article heading from the home page, possibly the same teaser text and image (now combined with the full body text), links to related articles, banners, and different menu options.

When creating static websites, the HTML page you designed would be the exact same HTML page that the site visitor would see. This one-to-one relationship has gone out of the window. Of course, to a visitor, a Joomla-powered site still consists of the web pages they see in their browser. However, behind the scenes, in Joomla, you won't be editing pages—after all, there are no pages in Joomla. To change the output (the web page), you will edit the different building blocks. These blocks can be any part of the final page—the main article, a menu entry, a banner, or a list of hyperlinks to related items.



A CMS is like a coffee machine system

In a way, a CMS functions just like those big, multi-option coffee machines used in office environments—although the quality of the output of a CMS is incomparably better! However, the same principles apply—the user presses a button to select any of the available options; the machine invisibly fetches all of the required ingredients and mixes these to serve a cup of fresh coffee, latte, Frappuccino, or decaf.

This is similar to the way a CMS serves content. As the site visitor clicks on a link, the mighty machine gathers whatever combination of content parts is needed from the database to complete this particular order and it pours the output into a coffee cup—sorry, a web page.



The benefits of the CMS approach to websites

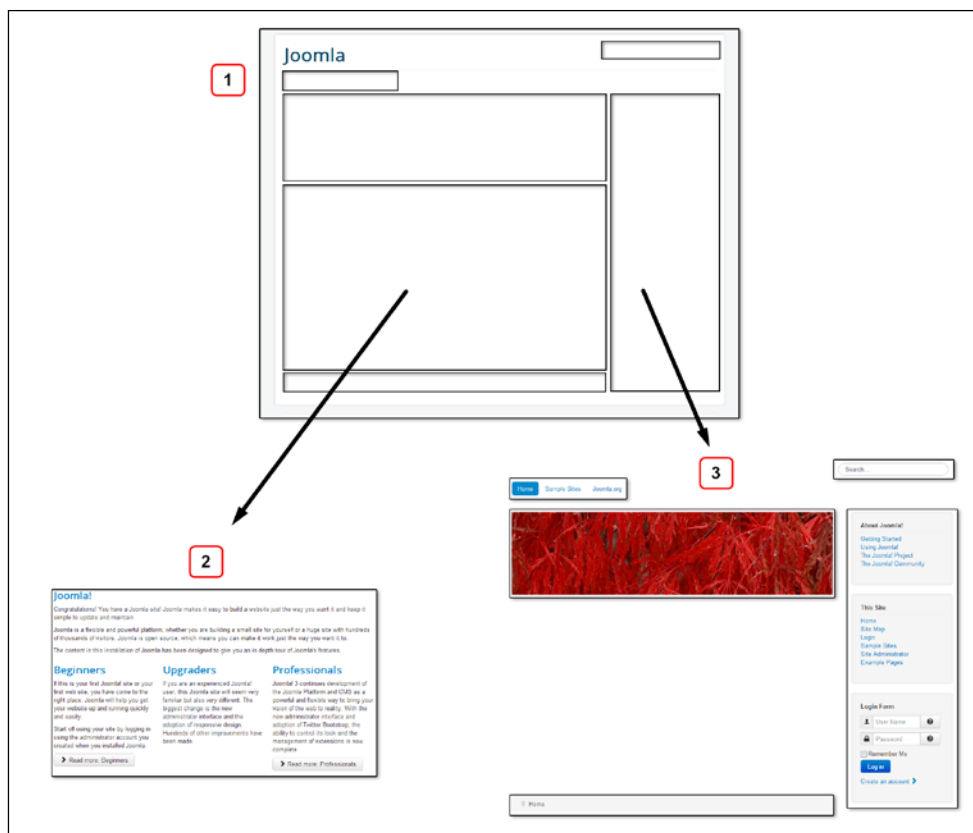
The dynamic approach of a CMS such as Joomla makes creating websites flexible. You don't have to manually create dozens of rigid content pages, copying menus and other common elements from page to page as you extend your site. Here are a few examples of the benefits of using a CMS to create any combination of building blocks to construct web pages:

- ◆ Joomla allows you to combine different blocks of content into your home page—maybe just one main article and a menu, or maybe a more elaborate combination of teaser texts, menus, and hyperlinks to popular articles.
- ◆ It's possible to display specific content blocks in specific sections of the site. As an example, think of a banner advertisement drawing attention to your special newsletter on a particular subject that will appear only on the pages about that specific topic.
- ◆ You can set a starting date and an ending date for the publishing of your articles. While you're on holiday, you automatically update the site with the articles you prepared beforehand.

To summarize, as the site administrator, you will have to determine what content blocks Joomla packs together on any specific page, and you will also set the order and the layout of these blocks on the browser screen. Joomla uses the powerful PHP scripting language to communicate with a database, gathering just the blocks of data you need and presenting them the way you want.

A website built of blocks

Now, what do these building blocks look like in real life? Here is a dissected illustration of Joomla's page building system. A web page in Joomla basically consists of the three parts displayed in the following screenshot: a base layout (**1**), the main content block (**2**), and as many function blocks (or *modules*, as Joomla calls them) as you like (**3**).



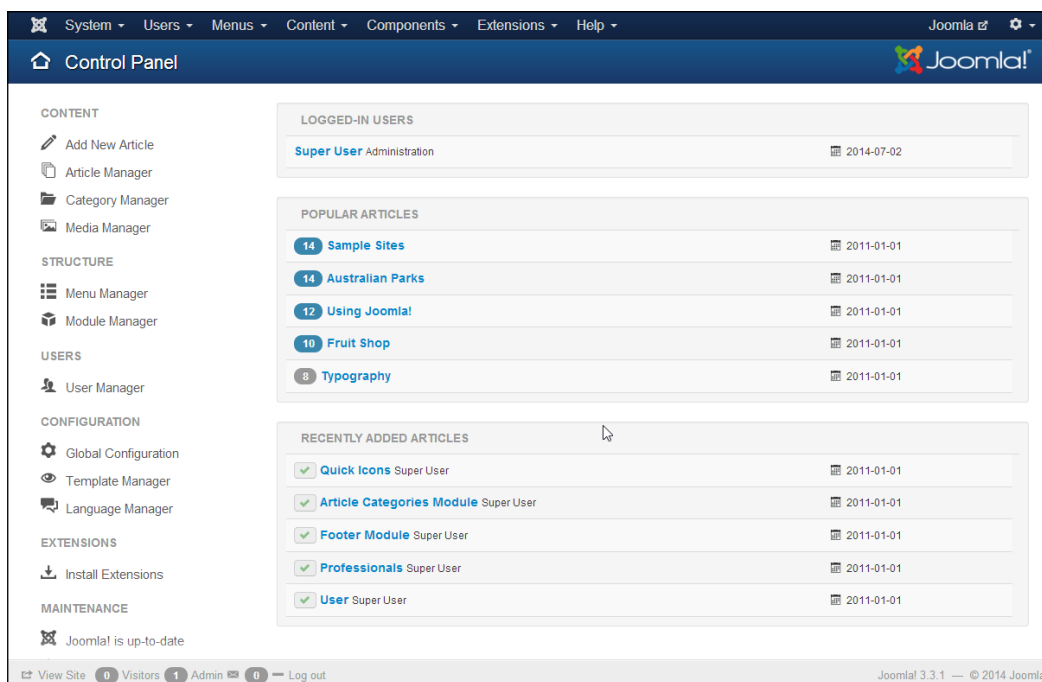
- ◆ **The base layout (1):** This defines the presentation of all content (the amount of columns, background colors, header graphics, and so on). This base layout also contains *positions* (spaces Joomla can fill with its content blocks). In Joomla, this base layout is defined in a template. Generally, you can set the template once and forget about it. It controls the graphic design; it's not part of your daily routine of content management. You'll learn more about using templates in *Chapter 11, Creating an Attractive Design – Working with Templates*.
- ◆ **The main content area (2):** This is the essential part; it contains the cold hard content. Whether you publish an article or show a contact form or a photo gallery, it will appear here. In Joomla, this area is called the *main body*. In most cases, the main body appears in the middle of the page.
- ◆ **The blocks around the main content area (3):** These blocks are called *modules*, for example, the search box, the main menu in the right-hand sidebar, and the login form. Modules can contain advanced functionality: menus, dynamic lists with hyperlinks to popular content, random images, slideshows, and so on. Anything in the top, left, right, or bottom of a Joomla page is displayed using modules. The default Joomla installation comes with dozens of modules; the system is very extensible.

To summarize, the template functions as a frame. The main content area, or *main body*, is the central and essential building block that fits right in the middle. Modules are blocks that you can add and arrange around the main body, just the way you like, to add essential functions (or just fun and pizzazz) to your site.

Introducing the frontend and backend – the Joomla! interface

Okay, so how do you get to build the website you want using Joomla's set of building blocks? How do you get the main content area to show content the way you want to? How do you work with modules? To answer these questions, we'll first have a look at the Joomla interface, which is the workspace that contains all the tools and controls you'll need for any web building magic.

The following screenshot shows the two faces of the example Joomla site you installed in the previous chapter—the frontend and the backend:



Your workspace – the backend

Joomla is a web application. It's a software tool that's installed on a web server and is accessed through a browser. Creating and managing a site with Joomla is an online activity. Wherever you are, if you have Internet access, you can log in to the Joomla administration interface to manage your site.

This means every Joomla site has a staff entrance that your site visitors will never get to see. It's the administration interface or backend of your site, which is accessed through a login page that's displayed when you add `/administrator` to the URL of the site. By default, only the site administrator has permission to log in to the backend; later on, the administrator can give access to other contributors. Although there's such a thing as frontend editing, generally you will administer your site using the backend. The backend is the interface for all site management tasks, such as adding content, changing menus, or customizing the layout.

What's the frontend?

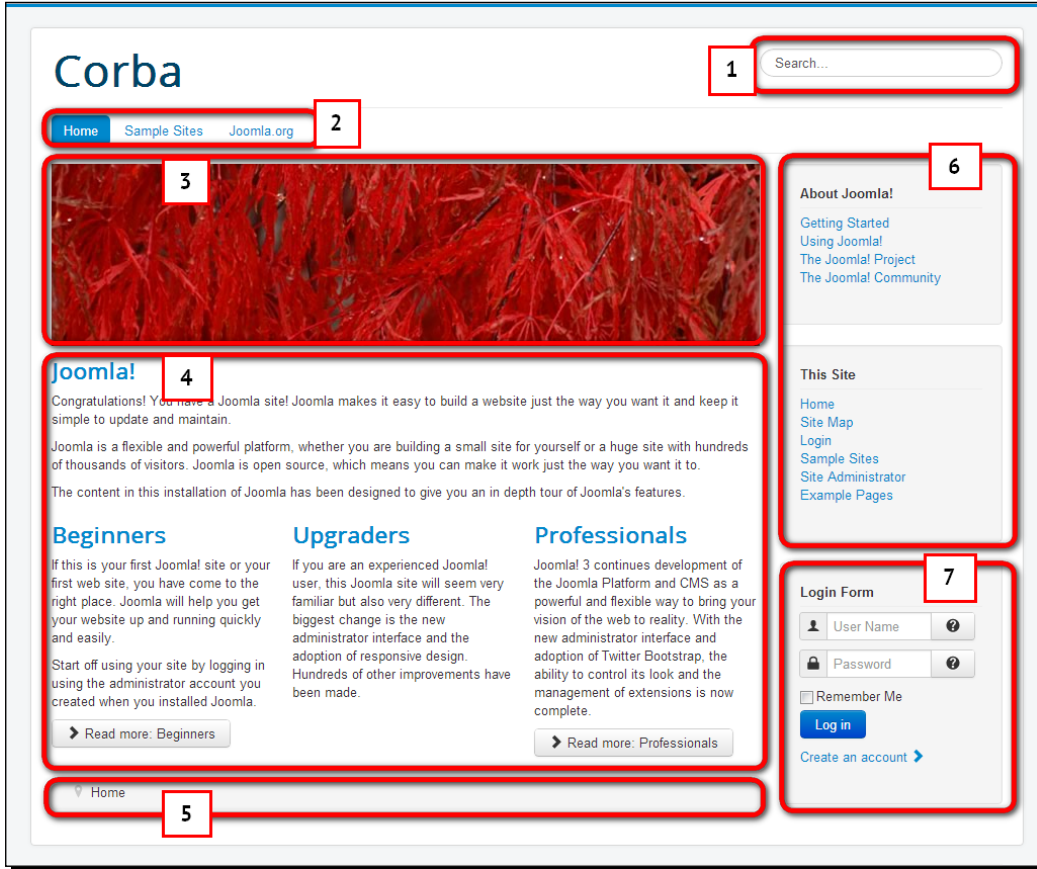
The public face of your Joomla site is called—you might have guessed it—the *frontend*. That's just another word for your website as the visitor sees it.

In the rest of this chapter, you'll learn more about these two basic notions in Joomla. First, we'll take a closer look at the frontend (the final output of whatever you do in Joomla) by exploring the contents of the example Joomla website. After that, we'll examine how the backend works and get our hands dirty with some real-life content management activities.

Exploring the frontend – the website as the user sees it

Let's first take a closer look at the elements of the default home page of the example Joomla site. This will give you a good overview of the different modules that Joomla features out of the box.

The home page is shown in the following screenshot:



In the preceding screenshot, you can see what the home page looks like after you've installed Joomla with the Learn Joomla sample data. As you can see, the example is focused on presenting quite a lot of information, and the home page is pulling the reader towards the content through introductory text and different menus. There's one main image—the header image that stays unchanged on all pages.

The preceding screenshot of the home page shows the following elements:

- ◆ **Search box (1):** The search results are shown in the main content area
- ◆ **Top Menu (2):** This is a menu at the top of the page
- ◆ **Header image (3):** This area displays a selected image on one or more pages
- ◆ **Main body of the home page (4):** This area contains introductory text of selected articles
- ◆ **Breadcrumbs (5):** This area shows the pathway to the current page
- ◆ **Two different menus (6):** This contains the **About Joomla!** and **This Site** menu items
- ◆ **Login Form (7):** This is for registered users

This site with example content perfectly demonstrates what Joomla is capable of. The fact that it's already packed with articles, menus, and extras gives you a great opportunity to try out Joomla's capabilities and decide for yourself which features fit your site's requirements.

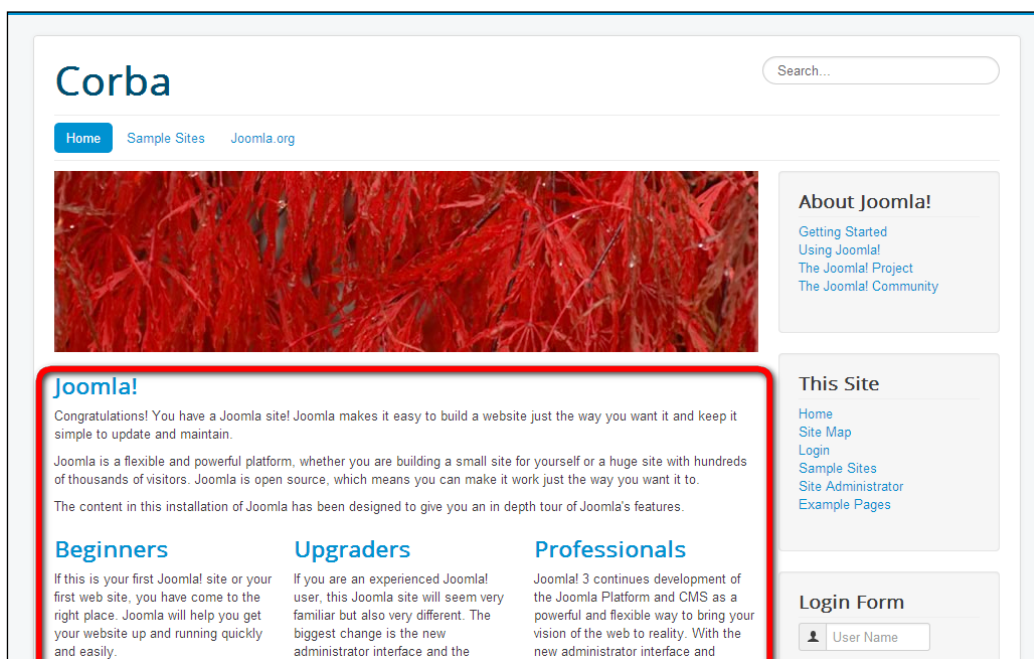


You're certainly not limited to building the kind of information-rich sites the example site demonstrates. In *Chapter 1, A New and Easy Way to Build Websites*, you saw a few other examples of Joomla sites, ranging from small personal blogs to huge corporate and e-commerce sites. Joomla 3.5 even comes with sample data showcasing other types of sites, such as blogs. However, you can only select the sample data type when installing Joomla. Unfortunately, it isn't possible to see the effects of other sample data unless you reinstall the CMS. However, don't worry, the Learn Joomla sample data we're using in this book is the most comprehensive set of sample data. So, it's your best choice if you want to get a good grasp of all that Joomla has to offer. Later on, you'll learn how to customize the Learn Joomla sample site to create a look that may fit your needs better.

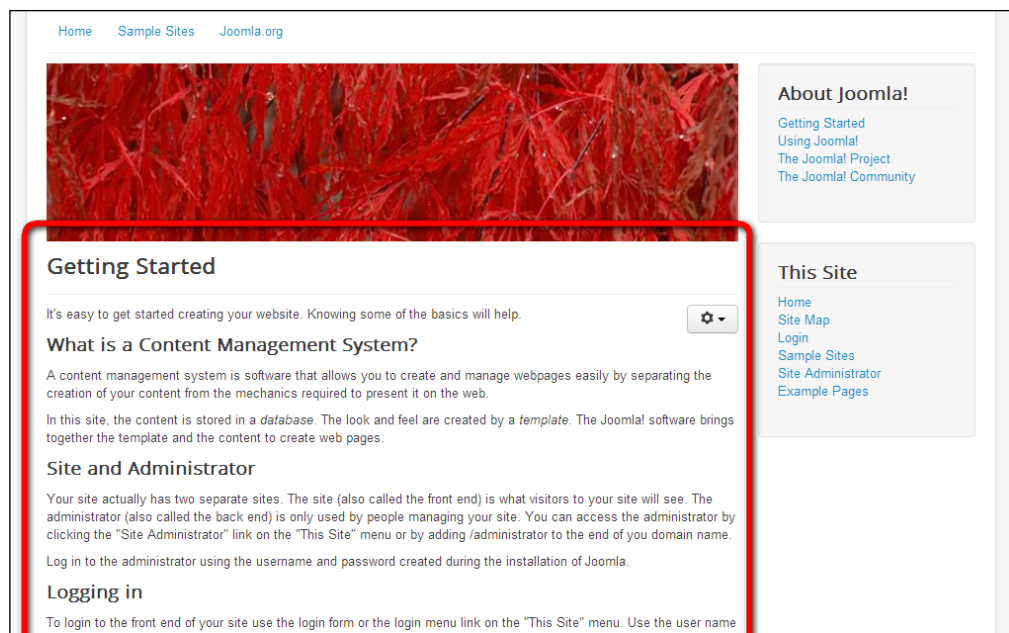
Time for action – touring the example site

Let's take a closer look at the demo site and see some real-life examples of page layouts. You'll see how the content in the main body and the modules in the surrounding content area change depending on the menu hyperlink that you select:

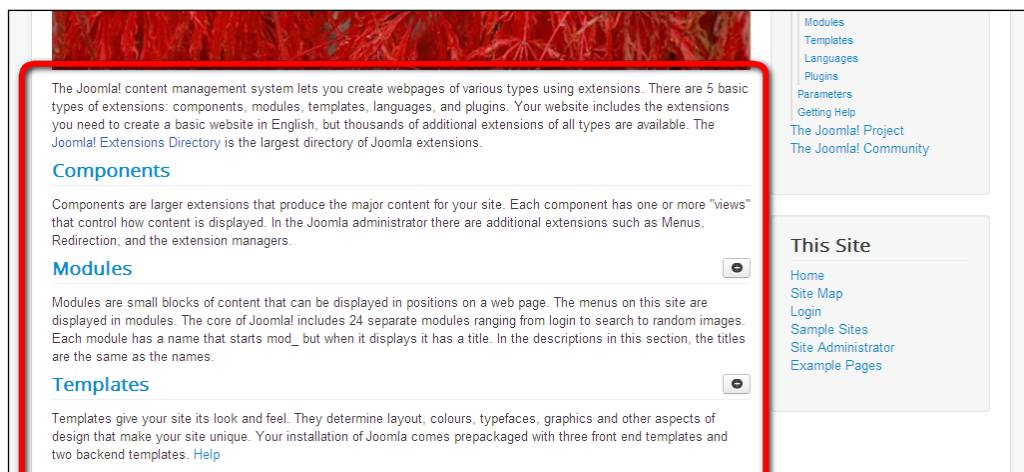
1. Enter the URL of your site (for example, `http://www.mysite.com`) in your web browser. If in *Chapter 2, Getting Joomla! Up and Running*, you installed Joomla into another folder, the URL will be `http://www.mysite.com/otherfoldername`. You'll recognize the home page, as displayed in the following screenshot. The main body (outlined in the following screenshot) consists of introductory text for four articles.



2. Let's explore how the layout changes on a different page. In the **About Joomla!** menu, click on **Getting Started**. You'll notice that the main body displays just one article, which is the most common type of page content. **Login Form** isn't displayed on this page. Again, the main body is outlined in the following screenshot:



3. Let's have a look at another type of page layout. In the **About Joomla!** menu, click on **Using Joomla!** and then click on **Using Extensions**. This link takes you to a page in which the main body starts with a short introductory text describing the main category, **Extensions**. Below **Extensions** is a list of links to (and descriptions of) subcategories of the **Extensions** category, such as **Components**, **Modules**, and **Templates**. This is illustrated in the following screenshot:



What just happened?

At first sight, the example Joomla site may seem overwhelming. There are many bits of content, many menus, and different types of web page layouts. But in fact, many pages on Joomla sites are built around the three page layouts you've just discovered: the home page (showing featured articles), content pages (with one main article in the main body), and the pages in between. These pages in between function as overview pages linking to one or more content categories. Overview pages can contain either short descriptions of content categories or introductory text to the articles themselves (just like the ones you've seen on the home page). These overview pages help users discover the site contents by offering them an overview of articles on related topics.

You've also discovered how the main body can be combined with different modules. In the example site, the home page contains a login form in the left-hand column. On other pages, this block isn't displayed.

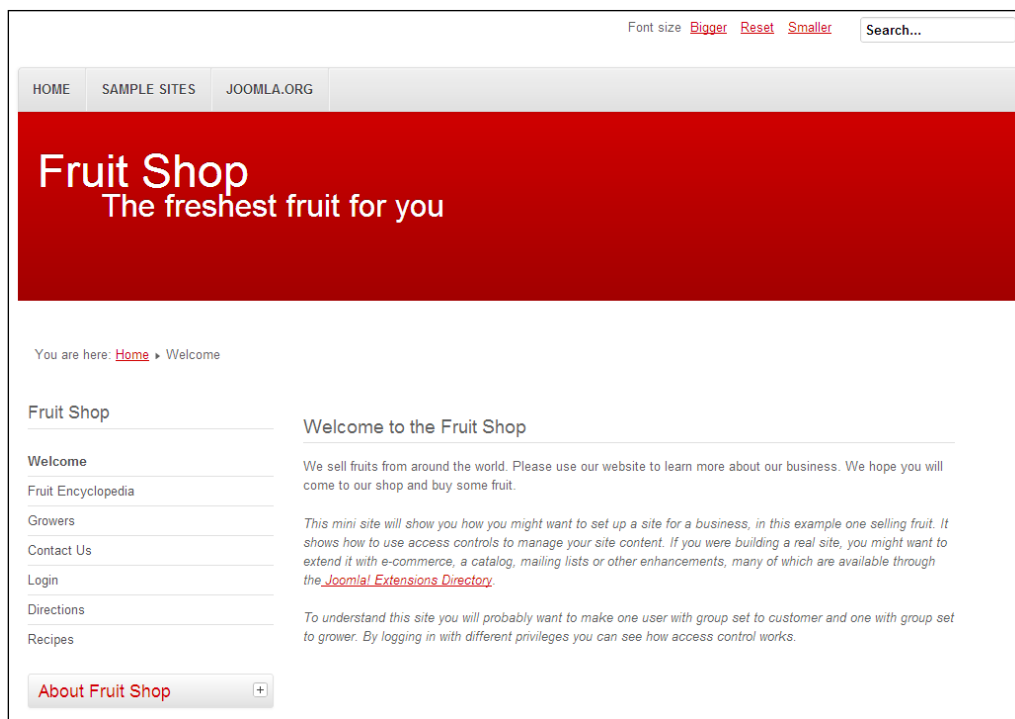
Exploring the example content

Take some time to browse the rest of the example Joomla site. You'll notice that there is more to explore than just pages with *classic content* (articles, text, and images) that we've seen so far. Although classic content pages may be at the core of many websites, in a dynamic site, all kinds of dynamic content can be displayed in the main body. Try out the **Login** link in the **This Site** menu on the home page, or try out the **Search** box. You'll see that the main body will show a login form page and search results.

For now, we won't go any deeper into these different types of dynamic content—though it's important to realize that they exist and that they take Joomla's capabilities much further than just plain old presentation of text and images. We'll cover this topic in more detail in the next few chapters.

Have go hero – get familiar with the other example sites

Are you ready to explore a link to quite a different site layout? In the horizontal menu at the top, click on the **Sample Sites** link. You'll see a new menu appearing in the right-hand side column, which features links to **Australian Parks** and **Fruit Shop**. In the **Fruit Shop** menu, click on the **Welcome** link. You're in for a bit of a shock—you're taken to a totally different website! This is illustrated in the following screenshot:



The **Fruit Shop** sample site appears to be a separate website—not only the content, but also the site design is quite different. Don't let this confuse you—it's all part of one big Joomla example site, the one you installed with the Learn Joomla sample data. The trick is that the menu links pointing to the **Fruit Shop** site have a specific template assigned to them. As a template in Joomla controls the overall look and feel of the site, the **Fruit Shop** menu links appear to open a totally different site. However, when you click on the **Home** link, you'll notice that you'll be taken to the default home page of the sample site again.

Applying templates to specific menu links within the site can give visitors the impression of exploring a separate set of websites. Usually, you'll probably use just one template in your website. However, you can use different templates to give different parts of the site—for example, site sections focused on particular product groups or services—a distinct look and feel. You'll learn more about assigning templates to specific site parts in *Chapter 11, Creating an Attractive Design – Working with Templates*.

Administering your site in the backend

The backend is the cockpit of your website. It's the administration interface that allows you to manage your site. It's organized neatly, so you should learn to find your way around it pretty fast. We'll have a closer look at the backend interface right now.

Time for action – logging in to the backend

To enable you to get a closer look at the administrative interface of Joomla, let's see how you can access the backend of the site and enter Joomla's **Control Panel**:

1. In the address bar of the browser, enter the address of your website and add / administrator to it. If your site is `http://www.mysite.com`, type `http://www.mysite.com/administrator` in the address bar.
2. You've already had a short look at this page after you installed Joomla in the previous chapter—it is the secret entrance to your site. You'll see a login prompt as shown in the following screenshot:



3. Enter your username and the password you entered when installing Joomla (see also *Chapter 2, Getting Joomla! Up and Running*). Click on the **Log in** button.
4. After you've successfully entered your credentials, you'll enter the actual administration interface: the backend home page, **Control Panel**. This interface provides access to all of the functions that you need as a site administrator, such as adding content, changing menus, customizing the layout, and so on. It is shown in the following screenshot:

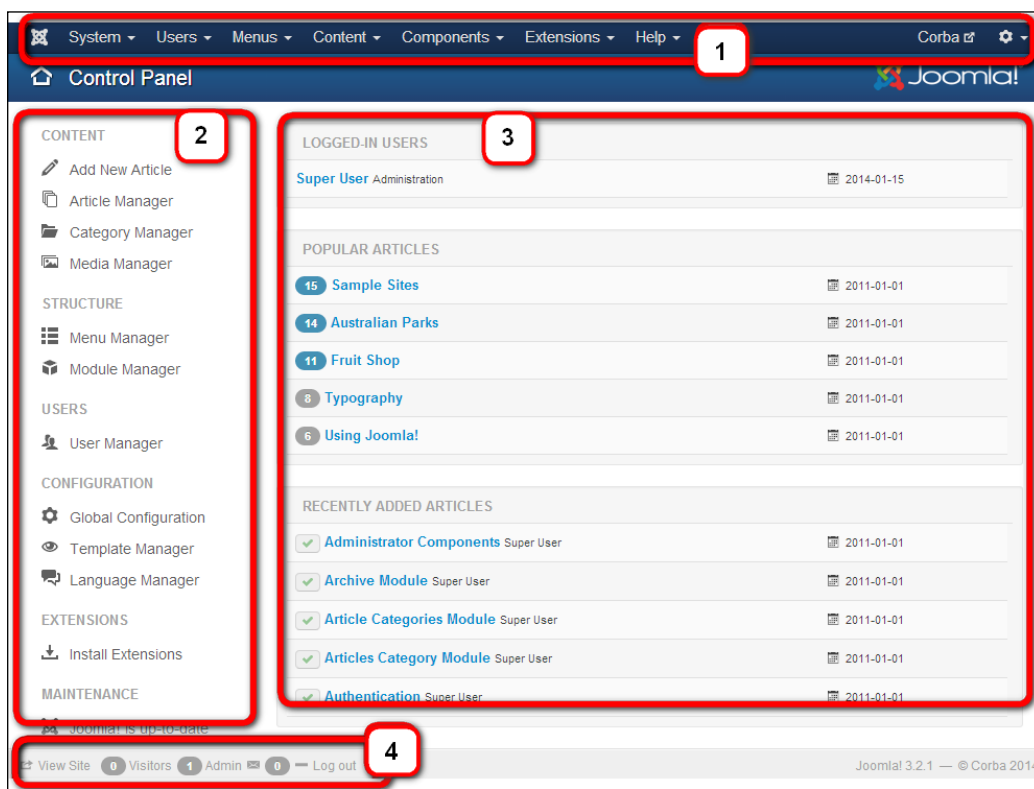


What just happened?

You've logged in to the backend of your site. Lo and behold! You've entered **Control Panel**, which is accessible only to users with special access rights. You'll be coming back here for every site management activity. As the site administrator, you'll probably want to add a bookmark in your browser of the `/administrator` URL.

Taking a closer look at Control Panel

Let's look at **Control Panel** in more detail. In the following screenshot, the four main screen areas of **Control Panel** are outlined:



In the preceding screenshot, I've added numbers to clarify the four different sections of **Control Panel**. Let's have a closer look at each of them.

The top menu

The horizontal top menu is an essential feature of **Control Panel**. This is really where all of the action is. Each main menu item gives access to a drop-down list that features all of Joomla's content management tools and functions. On the top left-hand side, you'll notice a small version of the Joomla logo. Wherever you are in the Joomla backend, clicking on this logo will always take you back to **Control Panel**.

The main menu items are as follows:

- ◆ **System:** This option is used to set global configuration options and perform system maintenance
- ◆ **Users:** This option is used to manage users and users' access rights and send e-mail to users
- ◆ **Menus:** This option is used to add, delete, and manage menus and menu links
- ◆ **Content:** This option is used to add, delete, or change articles; change site structure; and manage media (images)
- ◆ **Components:** This option is used to manage special features, such as banners and contacts
- ◆ **Extensions:** This option is used to manage extensions, templates, and languages to extend the functionality and capabilities of your website
- ◆ **Help:** This option is used to access Joomla's online help function and support pages

This menu is the one you'll use over and over again when working on your site. For now, we'll first have a look at the other panels and controls. After this, we will start exploring the wide range of capabilities hidden behind all of the top menu items.

The shortcut list (quick icons)

The shortcut list is a series of hyperlinks that provide quick access to frequently used functions such as adding a new article, changing site settings, or adding an extension. You can also access all these functions through the top menu. However, this cleverly selected set of hyperlinks can save you quite a few menu clicks in your day-to-day site management routine. Moreover, under the **Maintenance** heading, you'll be informed as soon as there are updates available for either Joomla or for the installed extensions. Clicking on any of the notices that appear there will take you to Joomla's automated update functionality.

The information panels

These three panels display information about the current **Logged-in Users**, **Popular Articles**, and **Recently Added Articles**. The purpose of these panels is to give you a quick overview of the up-to-date information on your site's users and content. Click on any of the items in the list to edit them. For example, clicking on the title of a popular article will take you to the page where you can edit the article.

The preview and info bar

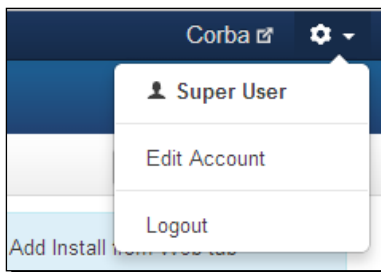
At the bottom of the administrator screen, there's a horizontal bar that always remains visible. In this part of **Control Panel**, you'll find the following functions:

- ◆ **View Site:** This opens the website's home page in a new browser tab or window.
- ◆ **Visitors:** This gives information on the number of visitors who are currently logged in on the frontend of the site.
- ◆ **Admin:** This is the number of users that have logged in on the backend of the site. Currently, that's just one person: you.
- ◆ **Messages:** This indicates the number of unread private messages. These are messages sent to you by other site users.
- ◆ **Log out:** This option is used to log out from the backend.

In the far left, at the top of the menu bar, you'll notice that your site name is displayed. This is the site name you entered previously while installing Joomla. If you followed along in *Chapter 2, Getting Joomla! Up and Running*, you'll see the name of the example we'll be building in this book, **Corba**. The text of the site's name is a hyperlink that will open the frontend of the site in a new browser tab. You'll probably often use this shortcut to quickly see the effects that changes you've made in the backend have on the the front of the website.

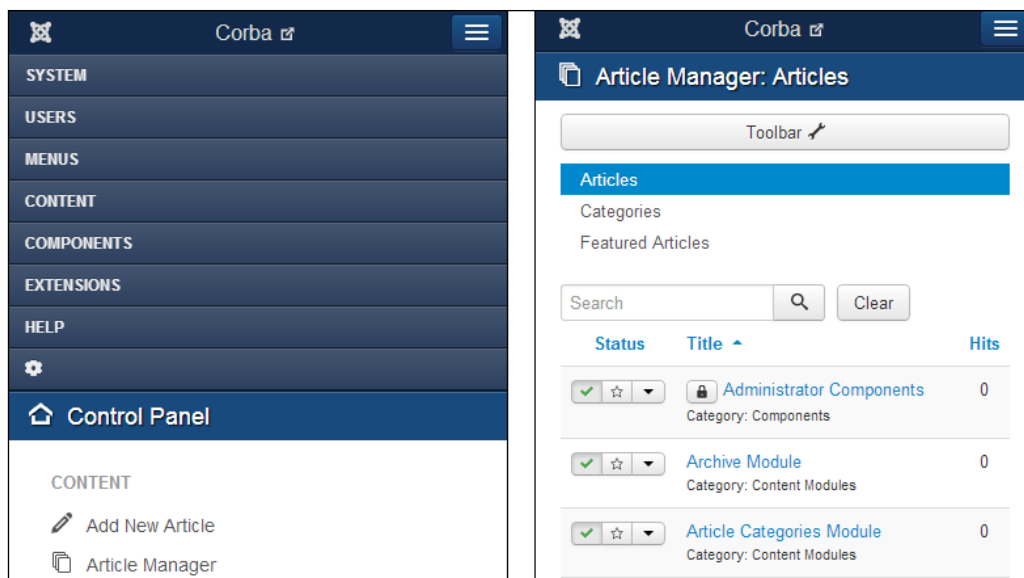


Next to the site name, you'll notice a little gear icon in the top-left corner. Click on this gear icon to open a little drop-down menu that will allow you to edit your user account's information or log out of the backend. This is shown in the following screenshot:



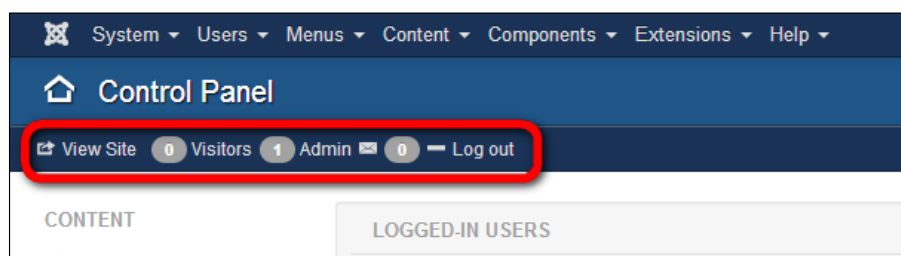
Adjusting Control Panel to your needs

You may have noticed that the backend interface adapts to the size of the screen you're using. If you resize your browser window (and make it really small), you'll see that the screen layout, the top menu bar, and other screen elements change to make the best possible use of the limited amount of screen space. This is shown in the following screenshot:



This adaptive (or *responsive*) screen layout is especially useful if you want to manage your site using a tablet or smart phone. This is one of the benefits of the latest Joomla backend template, which is called Isis.

There are also a couple of settings available in the Isis template to further adjust the backend interface to your preferences. Navigate to **Extensions | Template Manager** and click on the name of the **Isis - Default** template. Click on **Advanced** to see the available options. The **Status Module Position** option is a useful feature. Select **Top** and then **Save** to save your changes, and then look at the effects on the **Control Panel** interface as seen in the following screenshot:



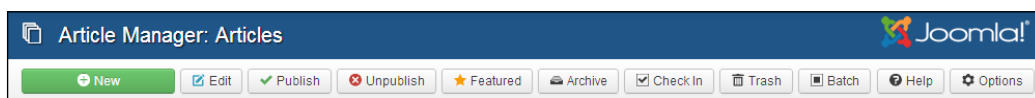
You'll notice that the **Status Module** setting affects the position of the preview and info bar. This is now displayed at the top of the screen—you may find it convenient to have all controls clustered in that area. To reverse this change, set the **Status Module Position** setting to **Fixed Bottom** again.

Feel free to try out the other settings of the backend template. You can't break the template, and it's always possible to revert to the default settings.

Understanding the backend tools and controls

Control Panel is the home page of the backend. Whatever action you want to perform, the dozens of links on the **Control Panel** page lead you to the appropriate tools (or *managers*, as Joomla calls them). Examples are **Article Manager**, **Menu Manager**, and **User Manager**. That's where the real action takes place.

Although there are many different managers and other types of administration tools, it's quite easy to grasp the way they work. All of the interface pages share the same base layout and show a toolbar in the top right position of the screen. In the following screenshot, you can see the control buttons of Joomla's **Article Manager** toolbar:

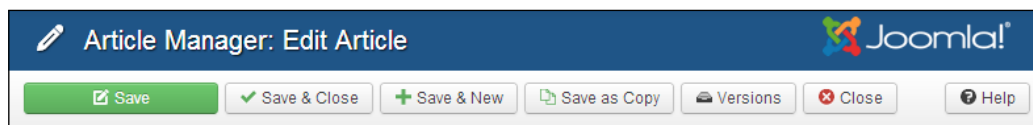


Many manager pages share commonly used features, such as **New**, **Edit**, **Publish**, and **Trash**. Let's take the **Article Manager** as an example and look at the functions of the toolbar buttons in more detail:

- ◆ **New**: This is used to create a new article.
- ◆ **Edit**: This is used to edit an article.
- ◆ **Publish**: This is used to make an article visible to your visitors.
- ◆ **Unpublish**: This is used to make an article invisible to your visitors (without throwing it away).
- ◆ **Featured**: This is used to assign a special status to the article and to display it in an overview of selected (featured) articles on the front page or on another page showcasing featured articles.
- ◆ **Archive**: This is used to archive articles and make these accessible only through a special menu link to archived content.
- ◆ **Check In**: This is used to unlock articles that are currently marked as checked out. (This option can be useful if articles are locked because another content editor didn't properly save the article and finish the editing session. Using the **Check In** option, the article is unlocked and users will be able to edit it again.)
- ◆ **Trash**: This is used to send an article to the trash (to delete it).
- ◆ **Batch**: Select any number of articles and click on **Batch** to move or copy all selected articles at once or change article access levels.

- ◆ **Help:** This is used to browse to Joomla's online help.
- ◆ **Options:** This is used to change general article settings.

The toolbar is context sensitive. It will display the buttons relevant to the current activity. When you select an article and click on the **Edit** button in **Article Manager**, you'll be taken to the article editor screen:



In this screen, you'll see the following set of toolbar buttons:

- ◆ **Save:** This saves changes without closing the current window.
- ◆ **Save & Close:** This saves changes and closes the current window (and returns to **Article Manager**).
- ◆ **Save & New:** This saves changes and opens a new empty article editing screen. This allows you to quickly create a series of articles without having to close the **New Article** screen.
- ◆ **Save as Copy:** This saves the current article and leaves the current screen and its contents open for you to edit a copy of the article you have just saved.
- ◆ **Versions:** This will take you to the **Item Version History** screen. Joomla's new **Item Version History** feature automatically stores a version of an article every time you save it. This way, you're able to track (and possibly undo) changes you or other content contributors have made to this article. You'll learn more about this feature in *Chapter 6, Creating Killer Content – Adding and Editing Articles*.
- ◆ **Close:** This closes the window without saving any changes.
- ◆ **Help:** This is used to access Joomla's online help.

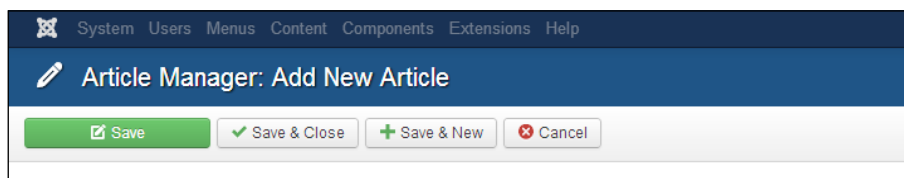
As you can see, most toolbar buttons are self-explanatory. Note, however, the difference between the **Save** and **Save & Close** buttons. Click on **Save** to save changes without leaving the current page. You'll find that when editing the text of an article, it's easiest to click on **Save** and then store changes without leaving the current screen. When you're satisfied with the results, click on **Save & Close** to close the editing screen. The same applies to any occurrence of **Save** and **Save & Close** on other Joomla interface screens.



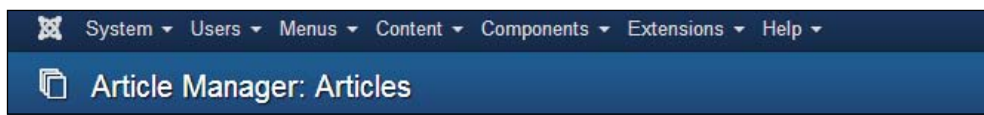
Clicking on the **Save** button every now and then when writing a long article will ensure that your article contents are saved. You can lose all of the unsaved changes when you leave the article editor open (without action) for more than 15 minutes. Later in this chapter (see *Time for action – setting Joomla! preferences*), you'll learn how to change this 15 minutes setting to allow you to take some more time for your well-deserved coffee breaks.

What if you can't click on the top menu items?

People new to Joomla sometimes experience a little difficulty in using the top menu—in certain situations, it's not clickable. If you look closely, you'll notice that in those situations, the top menu items are displayed in a muted color as shown in the following screenshot:



This can happen, for example, when you're editing an article. Even if you've already saved it, you still have to first close the article editor to be able to perform any other administrative actions. First click on **Save & Close** (or **Close** or **Cancel**). You're taken to the **Article Manager** screen and all top menu options are available again. This is shown in the following screenshot:



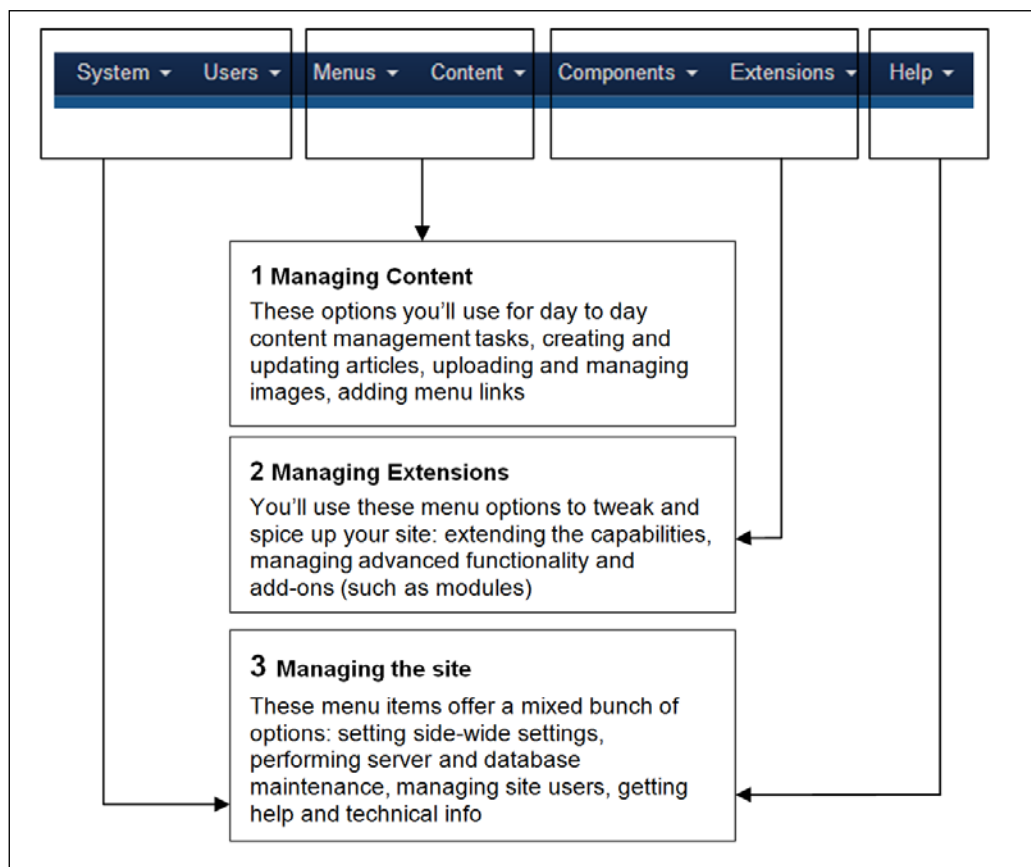
Getting your feet wet – start administering your site

We have had a first look at the **Control Panel** screen layout and the main backend toolbars. You're probably curious to try out how the thing actually works! I'll test your patience just a little more. First, we'll make some more sense of **Control Panel** and find out what you really need to know to get started on this impressive toolbox. After all, its main menu bar consists of seven menu options with more than 40 submenu items. That's a wealth of CMS power—but it's also quite daunting.

We won't go into all of the menu items and their capabilities here; rather, you'll learn how to use the important menu options as you go along building your site in the next chapters. For now, let's go ahead and see what the primary functions are.

The three types of backend tasks

Roughly, the seven options in the **Control Panel** menu bar consist of three clusters. Some you'll use on a daily basis, while some you'll only have to deploy every now and then. In the following diagram, you can see what these three groups are. In the rest of this chapter, we'll take a closer look at them not in the order they appear on the menu bar, but in order of their relevance in your day-to-day content management activities.



Let's try out an example of each of the following three types of content and site management actions:

- ◆ **Content management example:** This creates and publishes content
- ◆ **Extension management example:** This adds a module
- ◆ **Site management example:** This changes site settings

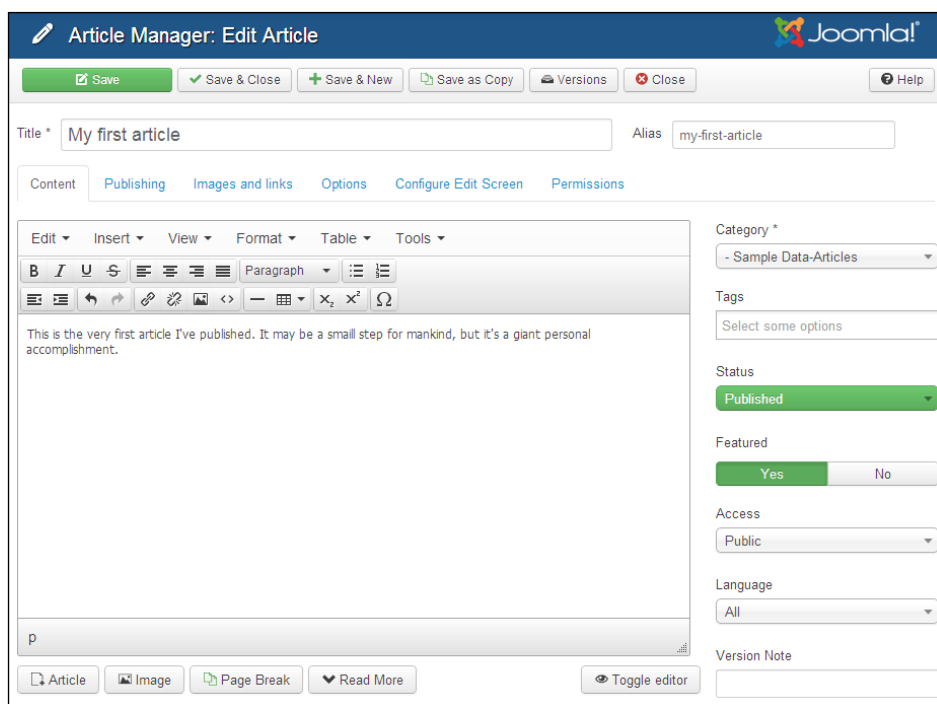
A content management example – let's create some content!

It's fine to have an example site filled with some dummy content about Joomla, but you probably want to make your mark by adding your own content; you want to publish something, anything, to your own Joomla website.

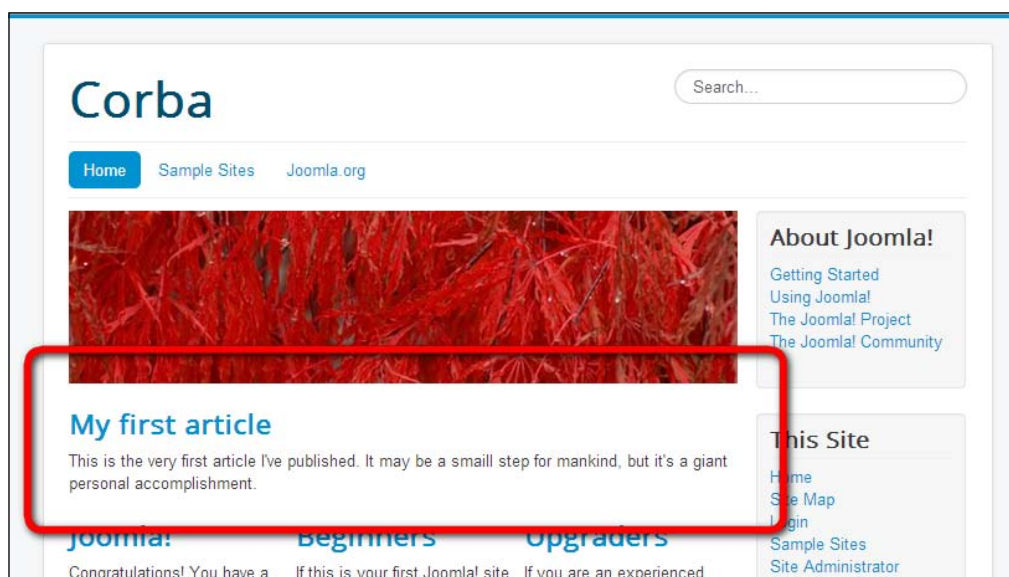
Time for action – publishing your first article

To begin with the publishing of an article, let's perform the following steps:

1. Navigate to **Content | Article Manager**.
2. In the toolbar, click on the **New** button (the green one with the plus sign).
3. Alternatively, you can use the fly-out menu **Content | Article Manager | Add New article**. This will take you to the **Article Manager: Add New Article** screen even faster. Otherwise, you can skip steps 1 and 2 by just clicking on the **Add New Article quick** icon in **Control Panel**. You'll notice that in Joomla, there are often several ways available to navigate to the desired option.
4. In the **Article Manager: Add New Article** screen, fill out the **Title** field as shown in the following screenshot. Enter a title (for example, `My first article`) and type some article text in the text editor box. Any text will do; for now, we're just playing around in the example site.



5. Leave the **Category** drop-down box as it is; it's okay to have this article assigned to the **Sample Data-Articles** category. You'll learn how to create categories and organize content in the next two chapters. Also, we won't add any **Tags** just now.
6. Make sure **Status** is set to **Published**. This is the default option.
7. Click on **Yes** under **Featured** to make sure your article will be shown on the home page.
8. Click on the **Save** button in the toolbar in the top left-hand side of the page. Joomla will inform you that it has successfully saved the changes to your article.
9. Click on **View Site** in the preview and info bar section of the screen. This will take you to the home page of your site. This is shown in the following screenshot:



You're done! As you can see, your first article is now published on the front page.

What just happened?

In a few steps, you have created and published brand new content. By choosing the **Featured** option, you've made sure that the article text is shown on the home page. Later, you'll learn how to create articles on other content pages and make them accessible through menu links in the next chapter.

An extension management example – adding a module

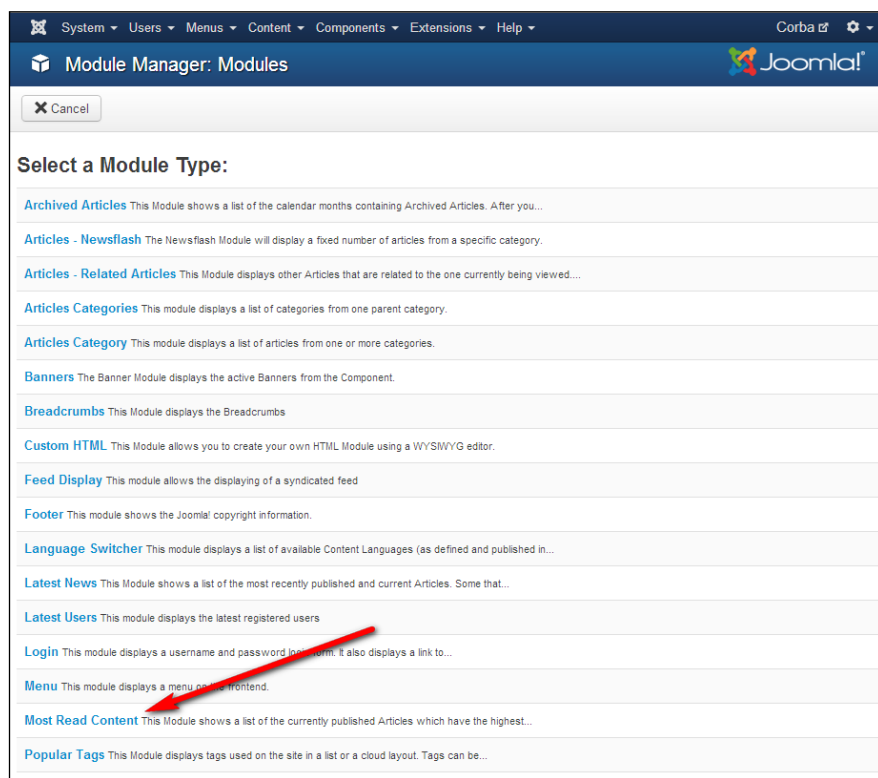
You've just added an article to your site. However, in Joomla, you can also easily add other types of content. By using extensions, you can add new functionality to the site. One example of an extension at work is the **Login Form** block on the home page.

Extensions are separate additions to Joomla. You can download them from the Web and add them to your Joomla installation in a few clicks. Because there are many extensions available, Joomla is nearly limitlessly extendable. By default, some (mostly quite simple) extensions are included in the default installation. In the next example, you'll activate one of these included extensions: the most read articles module. This adds a little block (module) to the site that automatically lists the most popular items.

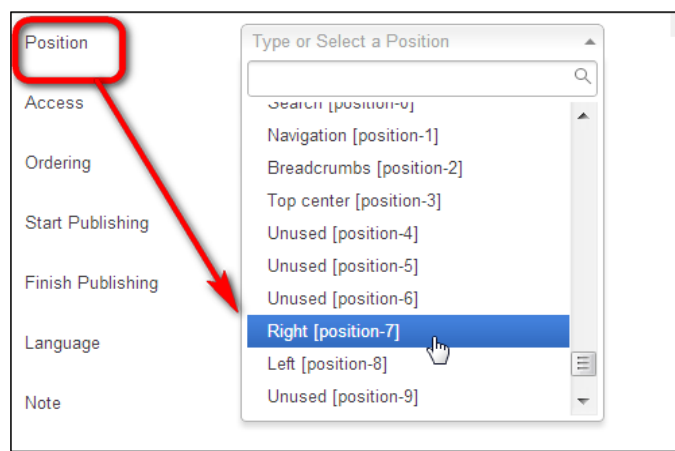
Time for action – adding a module to the site

You are logged in to the backend of the site and want to add a block with links to the most read articles on the site. Let's add this block (or as Joomla calls it, a module):

1. Navigate to **Extensions | Module Manager** and click on **New**. A list of available module types will be displayed, as shown in the following screenshot:

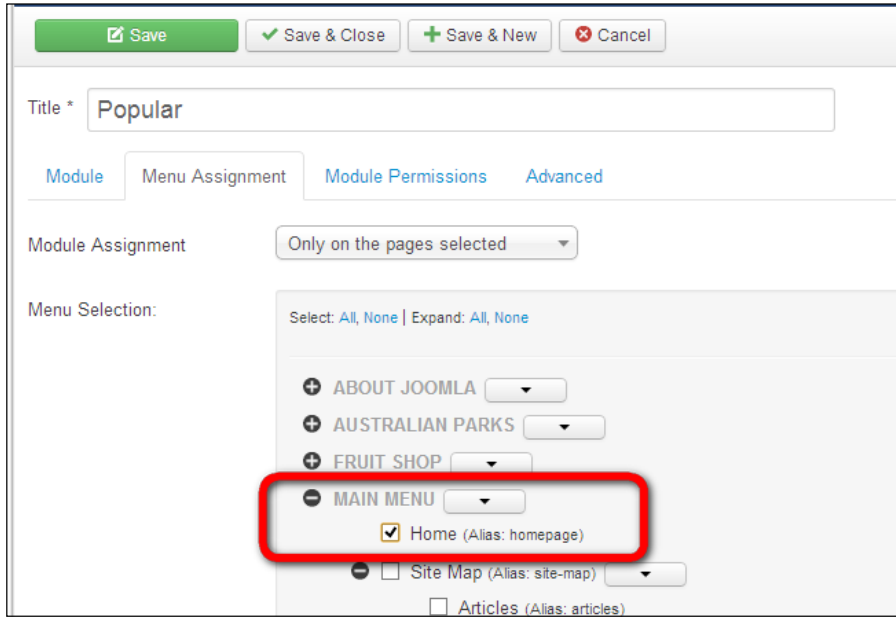


2. Click on the name of the module type you want to add, **Most Read Content**.
3. The **Module Manager: Module Most Read Content** screen opens. This is where you manage the settings of this module. Change the details as follows:
 - **Title:** In this field, enter the title that will appear above the list of hyperlinks, for example, *Popular*.
 - **Position:** In this option, select the location on the page where the module is displayed. Click on **Type or Select a Position** to display a drop-down list containing all available positions. Scroll down until you see the positions for **Protostar**, which is the current site template. Now select **Right [position-7]**, which means that the module will appear in the right column, as shown in the following screenshot:



4. Click on the **Menu Assignment** tab to select the pages where you want the module to appear. Select **Module Assignment: Only on the pages selected**.
5. By default, all pages are selected. So, to make your selection, first click on **Select: None** to deselect all pages.
6. To find the **Main Menu** items we're looking for, click on the minus sign to the left-hand side of the **About Joomla** menu name. This will collapse this menu (hide all menu items). Also, click on the minus sign to the left of **Australian Parks** and **Fruit Shop**. Now, the **Main Menu** items are easily visible.

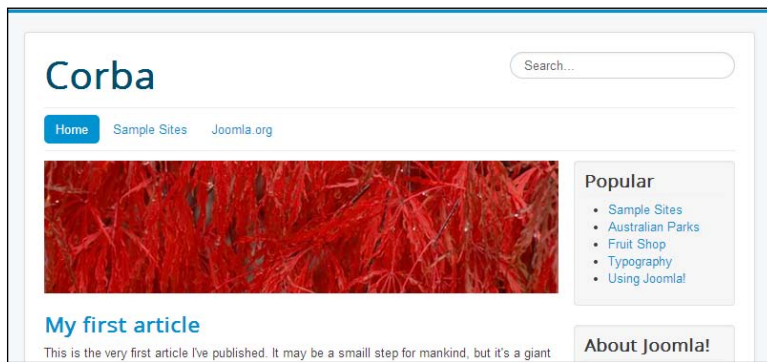
7. Just below the **MAIN MENU** heading, select the **Home** link. This way, the module will appear on the home page only:



8. You can leave all other settings unchanged. Click on **Save** and click on **View Site** to see the results.

What just happened?

A new block is displayed on the home page. It's dynamically populated with hyperlinks pointing to the five most read articles. The beauty of a module like this one is that you can set it once and then forget about it. There's no need for manual maintenance—when other articles become more popular, Joomla will automatically update the list.



Extensions can be easily switched on and off. By switching an extension off, you don't delete anything—the extension and all of the settings you've chosen for it remain available in the backend, but they're not visible to a site visitor anymore. This way, you can still decide to use it again later. To make the module block containing the most read articles invisible, go back to **Extensions | Module Manager**, click on the name of the newly created module (**Popular**), and change the **Published** setting back to **Unpublished**.

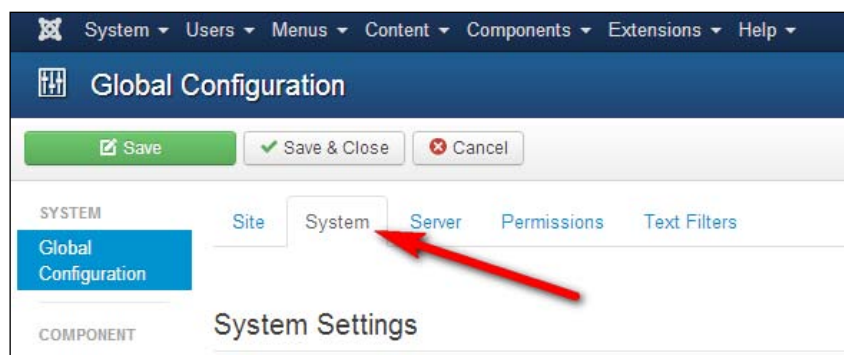
A site management example – configuring basic site settings

The **Site** menu and the **Users** menu in the **Control Panel** menu bar offer you some more advanced functions, ranging from database maintenance to user management. Over the course of this book, you'll learn which functions are important for day-to-day site management. For now, we'll take a look at the **Basic Configuration** settings of **Site**, where you can set Joomla preferences.

Time for action – setting Joomla! preferences

When browsing the Joomla backend, you may have noticed that after a certain amount of idle time, Joomla will ask you to log in again. By default, Joomla kicks you out when you've been logged in for 15 minutes without any activity. When developing a site, it can be quite annoying to have to log in every time you return to your desk with a fresh cup of coffee. Let's change this with the **Session Lifetime** setting in the Joomla preferences:

1. From **Control Panel**, navigate to **System | Global Configuration**. You can also click on the **Global Configuration** shortcut in the **Configuration** menu on the left-hand side of **Control Panel**. (Remember, you can always jump to **Control Panel** by clicking on the little Joomla logo in the top left-hand corner of any backend screen.)
2. **Global Configuration** is divided into **Site** settings, **System** settings, **Server** settings, **Permissions**, and **Text Filters**. Click on the **System** tab to show the appropriate settings panel, as shown in the following screenshot:



3. On the **System** page, scroll down until you see the **Session Settings** heading. Change **Session Lifetime** to **30** minutes.
4. Click on **Save** in the toolbar. From now on, you only have to log in again if you leave the Joomla backend untouched for more than 30 minutes.

What just happened?

You've just made your life as an administrator a little easier by changing one of the default system settings. You can now leave your computer idle—more specifically, you don't perform any actions in the Joomla backend—for 30 minutes before Joomla prompts you to log in again. Note that it's best not to set this value too high, as this poses a potential risk. When you leave your computer idle for a long time while still being logged in, others can gain access to the site. Moreover, this global setting applies to all user accounts. When you add other users, the prolonged session lifetime will also apply to their accounts.

Have a go hero – explore the configuration options

Check out the other **Global Configuration** options, but be careful. It's important to leave most of the settings unchanged. Don't touch **Server Settings** and **Database Settings** (on the **Server** page) unless you know what you're doing, as these contain critical data that Joomla needs to function properly. However, you can easily change some harmless **Site** settings. Maybe you would like to change **Site Name** (the name shown in the backend header bar) or add a few appropriate words in the **Metadata Description** field to let search engines know what your site's about. If you're not yet familiar with these concepts, however, that's fine. You'll learn more about the options you need later on in the book.



Looking for all the answers?

Over the course of this book, you'll learn much more about **Control Panel** and the sort of functionality it has to offer. However, we won't cover every small detail of the administration interface. Luckily, Joomla offers an exhaustive online reference to all backend menus, submenus, options, settings, and screens. In the backend, click on **Help** in the **Global Configuration** screen. There's a wealth of up-to-date information from the Joomla help site.

Pop quiz – test your knowledge of Joomla basics

Q1. What makes a CMS-based website different from a static website?

1. A CMS consists of an unlimited database of web pages
2. A CMS doesn't use traditional coding languages, such as HTML
3. A CMS dynamically builds web pages by gathering content blocks from a database

Q2. What's the backend of a Joomla-powered website?

1. It's the interface where administrators log in to change site configuration settings
2. It's the interface where administrators log in to build and maintain the site
3. It's the part of the site that's only accessible for registered users

Q3. How do you add module blocks to your site?

1. By creating a new module and entering the desired settings in **Module Manager**
2. By creating a new article and entering the desired settings in **Article Manager**
3. By adding the appropriate HTML code

Summary

In this chapter, you learned what's special about building websites with Joomla, what the frontend of your site can look like, and how to use the backend control panel.

You've seen what the differences are between static websites and websites built the Joomla way. A Joomla-powered website is a collection of building blocks that are dynamically constructed from the database.

The frontend of the website—the site as your visitor experiences it—is constructed out of different building blocks. The central part of the page is called the main body; the surrounding blocks are called modules.

Joomla offers a great number of options to present information in the central content area, the main body. Moreover, you can combine the main body with almost any combination and number of modules in the header, in the footer, in the left-hand side column, and the right-hand side column.

Every Joomla site has a backend, **Control Panel**, to administer your site. When you log into the backend, you can manage content, add new features, change settings, and so on. You add an article using **Article Manager**, rearrange elements on the page using **Module Manager**, and change site settings in the **Global Configuration** panel.

In the next chapter, we'll get up to speed and take things much further. Now that you've experimented with Joomla a bit, you'll create a fully functional website that perfectly meets your first client's demands—and it will be finished in an hour!

4

Web Building Basics – Creating a Site in an Hour

In the previous chapter, you acquainted yourself with the Joomla interface, explored the example site, and tried out Joomla's administration interface.

You know your way around, you've got a good grasp of how things work, so now it's high time you start building a website! In this chapter, you'll build a complete site in just one hour. Imagine you've just got a call from your first client. They have founded a club that is about to get some media attention, but they still don't have a website they can refer to. They need a website and they need it fast. Can you help them out?

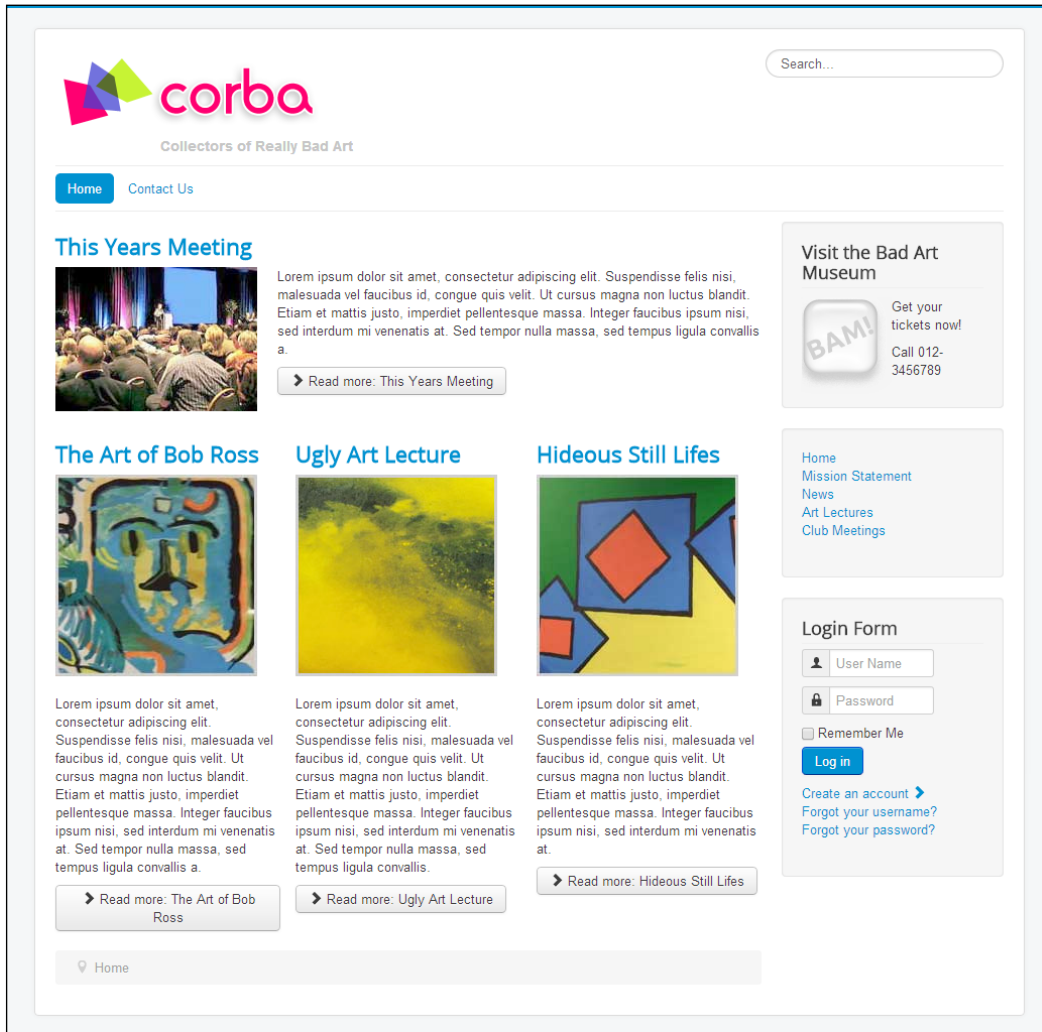
That's a perfect opportunity to put your new web building toolkit to the test. And, well, being new to Joomla, maybe you'll need a little bit more than just one hour. However, if you start now, you're certain to meet tomorrow's deadline, and you will also have time left to have dinner, take a hot bath, and grab a movie too.

In this chapter, you'll learn how to:

- ◆ Remove Joomla's sample data to create a blank canvas for your site
- ◆ Customize the site's template
- ◆ Add content: create a framework, add articles, and add menu items
- ◆ Add new features: create a contact form and a special message block
- ◆ Finish your very first fully functional Joomla-powered website

What you will be making

In the following screenshot, you see what you will be building throughout this chapter. Although it still uses the basic layout of Joomla's sample site, it's perfectly tailored to meet the client's specifications.



Meet your client

Allow me to introduce you to your first client! It's a club that's proudly calls itself **Collectors Of Really Bad Art (CORBA)**. They just love horrible amateur paintings and other forms of ugly art that mostly end up in the trash heap or turn up in charity shops. According to the CORBA philosophy, ugly art is worth collecting for its own ugly sake. Now that a big newspaper is about to write an article about CORBA, the collectors' club needs a website to broadcast its message and tell the public what the club is all about. You may not be into art, but you are into the art of building websites, so you're just the one the CORBA people need.

CORBA's wish list is as follows:

- ◆ The look and feel of the site should fit with the logo and colors found on the club's stationery
- ◆ The site should present several pages of content in a well-organized way, providing a solid basis for further expansion
- ◆ The home page should show a selection of news items on bad art collecting
- ◆ Visitors should be invited to get in touch; there has to be a contact form



Logging in again

If you want to follow along with the exercises in this chapter, I'll assume you're logged in to the backend of your site. Remember, it takes just two steps:

- 1) In your browser, log in to the backend by adding the word **administrator** to the URL of your website, for example, `www.mysite.com/administrator`.
- 2) At the login prompt, enter your username and password and click on the **Login** button. Once you are logged in, you'll see the **Control Panel**. The **Control Panel** is the home page of the backend.

Removing the sample data

In *Chapter 2, Getting Joomla! Up and Running*, you installed Joomla with the example site data. You'll only do this once—when you're new to Joomla and want to explore the kind of pages, menus, module blocks, and other features Joomla has to offer. In the previous chapters, you worked with the sample content. Now that you will start building your own site, you don't need all that content. Unfortunately, there is no **Uninstall Sample Data** button. You can install Joomla again without sample data; in fact, this is what you will probably do once you're an experienced Joomla user. However, in this case, we'll just clean up the sample site.

Admittedly, cleaning up Joomla may seem about as exciting as wiping clean a wall-to-wall classroom blackboard before the lesson starts. However, it's a good way of preparing yourself for your very first Joomla site. You'll find that stripping Joomla's example site will give you some useful insight in the way it's constructed. Bit by bit, it will reveal the different types of content that have been used to fill the empty CMS framework.

If you have installed Joomla with no sample data, you can skip the next two steps.

Step one – removing the sample content

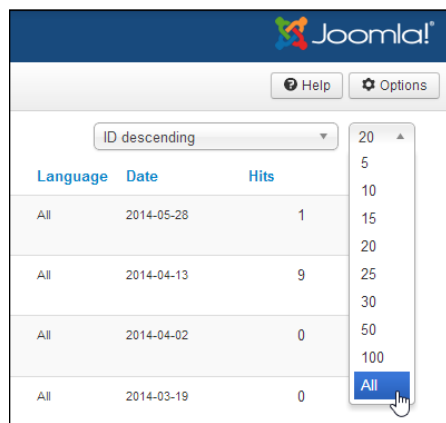
Let's first remove the sample content. It consists of three groups:

- ◆ **Actual content:** This contains articles and the containers Joomla uses to organize articles; they are called categories. We'll learn more about them in the rest of this chapter.
- ◆ **Menu:** This links to the articles or to categories.
- ◆ **Modules:** These are small prefab function blocks, such as the login form.

Time for action – deleting articles and categories

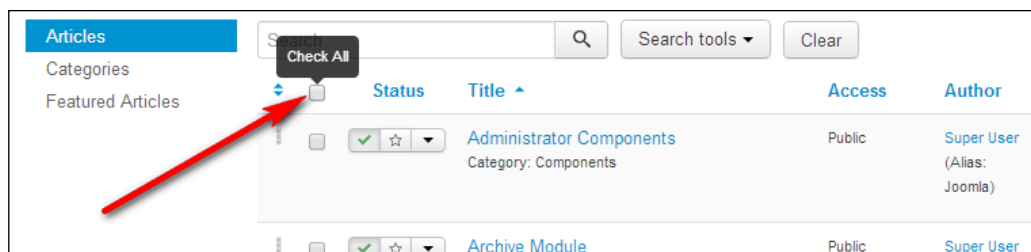
To remove content, you always start with the actual articles. This is because you cannot remove containers (categories) as long as they're not empty.

1. Navigate to **Content | Article Manager**.
2. Above the article listing, on the right-hand side, you'll notice two drop-down boxes: **Title ascending** and **20**. The number **20** indicates the number of articles listed on this page. Click on the **20** button and change the value to **All**, as shown in the following screenshot:

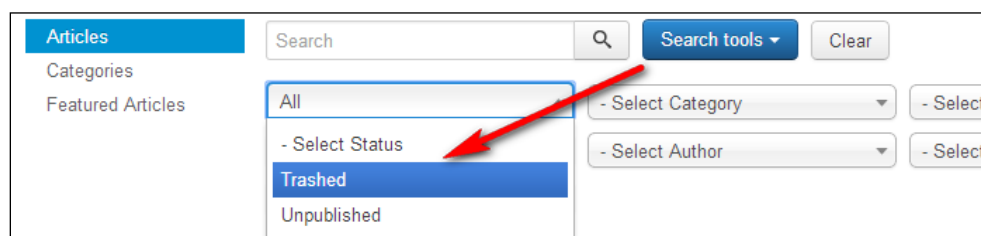


Now, the full list of example articles is displayed on the page.

3. Select the checkbox at the top of the list (just to the left-hand side of the **Status** heading). This way all of the items in the column are selected, as shown in the following screenshot:



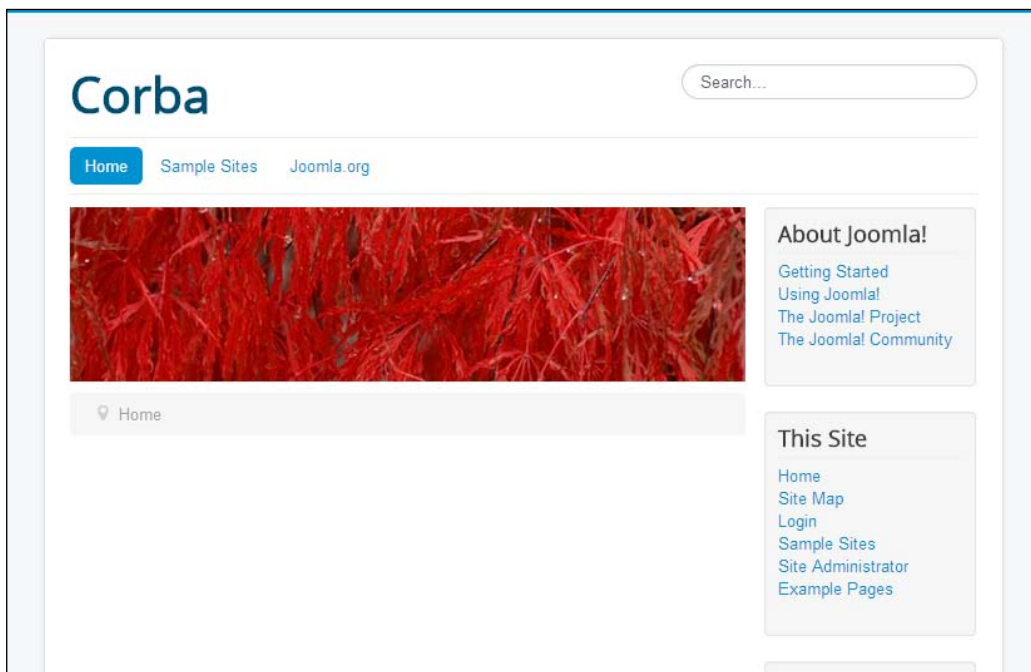
4. Click on the **Trash** button in the toolbar. Joomla shows a message that confirms that the articles have been trashed.
5. When articles are in **Trash**, they're still in Joomla's database should you wish to restore them. If this were your own articles, you'd probably want to keep them in **Trash**, as this option allows you to reuse old content. As this is just sample content, you won't need these articles again. To permanently delete them, click on the **Search tools** button to reveal a few extra search options. Click on the **Select Status** dropdown and select **Trashed** as shown in the following screenshot:



6. All trashed articles are displayed on the page. Again, select all articles and now click on **Empty Trash**. All the articles are deleted.
Now remove the sample categories. These are containers for articles that no longer exist.
7. Navigate to **Content | Category Manager**. Make sure all categories are displayed. In the drop-down list that indicates the number of displayed articles, select **All**.
8. Select the top row checkbox to select all of the categories. Deselect just one category: **Uncategorised**. We want to keep this one, as it is used for articles that do not fit a specific category.
9. Click on **Trash**. You'll see a confirmation message that states the categories have been successfully trashed.

- 10.** To permanently delete the categories, click on **Search Tools**, and in the **Select Status** dropdown, select **Trashed**. Select all categories and click on **Empty trash**. All categories are permanently deleted.

Have a look at the frontend of the site. You'll see that all of the content has been removed from the example site, except for the menus, the login and search module, as shown in the following screenshot:



In this example, the site header shows the current site's name. If you've followed along in *Chapter 2, Getting Joomla! Up and Running*, this will be CORBA, the name of the example client we'll use in the rest of this book. If you want to change the site name displayed in the header, you can do this by navigating to **System | Global Configuration | Site Settings | Site Name** and changing the current value.

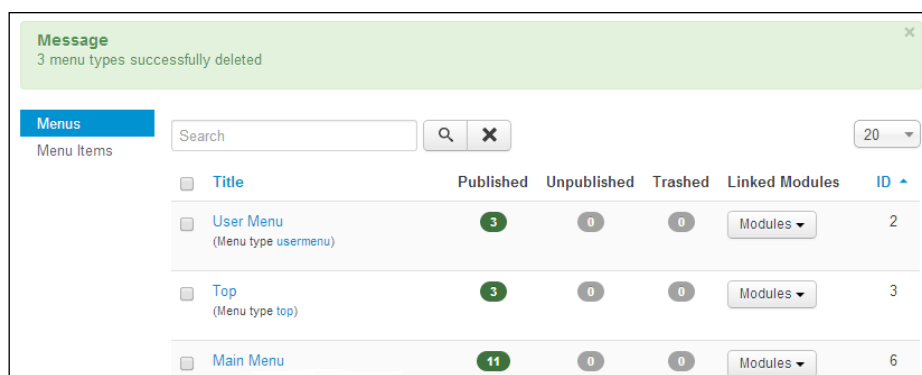
Step two – deleting menus and other modules

Apart from articles and categories, the example site contains menus and modules. Actually, menus themselves are modules too—you'll learn more about this in *Chapter 8, Helping Your Visitors Find What They Want – Managing Menus*.

Time for action – deleting menus

As many of the example menus are not needed for our goal, we'll delete them. Don't worry, you can always create new menus! We'll just delete the specific instances of the menus that were used in the example site.

1. Go to **Menus | Menu Manager**. Select three example menus you won't need any more: **About Joomla**, **Australian Parks**, and **Fruit Shop**. Do not select **Main Menu**, **Top**, or **User Menu**. We'll keep these three generic menus because we can reuse them in our new site.
2. Click on the **Delete** button. A warning message appears; click on **OK** to confirm you want to delete the menus and their content and the associated menu modules. You'll see a confirmation message and you will be left with just three menus in the **Menu Manager** screen, as shown in the following screenshot:



Although we'll keep **Main Menu**, we don't need the links it contains (links to the content that has just been deleted). The only link we need to keep is the **Home** link, as it's necessary for any Joomla site to function properly. You'll know the drill of deleting items by now, as the steps involved are similar to those needed to remove articles or categories.

3. Navigate to **Menus | Main Menu**. Alternatively, you can just click on the **Main Menu** title if you've still got the **Menu Manager: Menus** screen open. Select all menu items, except **Home**. Click on **Trash** to delete the selected menu items.
4. As you won't need these menu links any more, you might as well permanently remove them from **Trash**. Click on **Search tools**, and in the **Select Status** drop-down list, select **Trashed**. Select all of the items and click on **Empty Trash**. The **Main Menu** is empty now, except for one link.

5. While you're at it, you may as well delete a couple of redundant links in the **Top** menu. Navigate to **Menus | Top** and select the two menu links **Sample Sites** and **Joomla.org**. Again, transfer these links to **Trash**, and then permanently delete them.

What just happened?

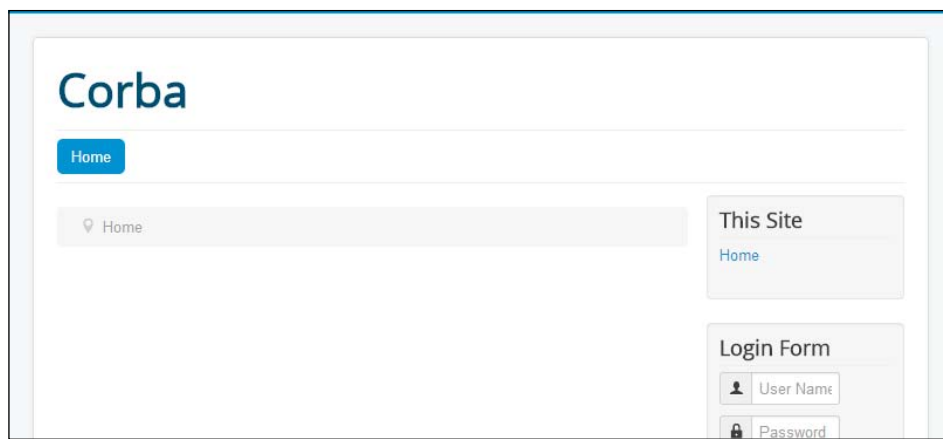
To put together your first Joomla site, you deleted a lot of sample content including articles, categories, and menus. The site is almost empty now.

Have a go hero – clean out the list of modules

The example site contains many examples of modules that are redundant for our site. You probably haven't even seen them all in action, as most of them are only shown on their specific demonstration page in the example site. However, you can safely delete these module examples. Don't worry—you can always recreate any of these modules again. As an example, we'll create a new module in the course of this chapter, and we'll find out more about modules in the upcoming chapters; see *Chapter 8, Helping Your Visitors Find What They Want – Managing Menus*, for information on creating menus and *Chapter 10, Getting the Most out of Your Site – Extending Joomla!*, for information on extending Joomla. By deleting modules, you just throw away the specific instances of these modules that were used in the example site, not the module functionality.

The module deletion drill will seem familiar by now. In short, in the **Extensions** drop-down menu, click on **Module Manager**. The **Module Manager** displays a list of modules that are in use; make sure all of these are displayed. In the select box that indicates the number of displayed items, select **All**. Click on the select box (**Check All**) to the left of the **Status** heading. Now, deselect generic modules that you will be using in your own site; make sure to keep **This Site**, **Top**, **User Menu**, **Search**, **Breadcrumbs** in **position-2**, and **Login Form**. Be careful as there are similarly named modules that you can delete, such as **Breadcrumbs** in **position None** and the module named **Login**.

After you've deleted all the modules you don't need (using the **Trash** button), have a look at the site. The results are impressive—articles, categories, menus, and redundant modules have disappeared. We're left with a blank canvas perfectly suitable for the new site, as shown in the following screenshot:



Remember, installing Joomla with sample data is only recommended when you're new to Joomla and want to get familiar with the system by exploring its page layouts, menus, modules, and so on. When you already know Joomla, it's both easier and faster to start building your site without first installing sample data.

Building your new site in three steps

You've now got a blank canvas. The site is empty, there's no content, and there are just a few basic layout elements. It's time to start building something new, cool, and attractive! In the rest of this chapter, you'll add new content to replace the content that you've just deleted while deconstructing the example site.

We'll do this in three steps:

1. **Customize the basic layout:** Tweak the layout to fit your needs.
2. **Add content:** Design a structure for your content (using categories) and add articles that fit the content framework.
3. **Add extras:** Add further functionalities to your site, such as a contact form or a little content block, drawing attention to a specific topic.

Step one – customizing the layout

In the previous chapter, you saw that the overall site layout (columns, colors, typography, and so on) is set in the site's template files. Joomla allows you to edit the current template using **Template Manager**. In this case, we'll replace the Joomla logo with your client's logo image and tweak the header text a little.

Time for action – creating a copy of the current template

First, let's make a copy of the current template. This is the best approach to take if you want to modify the current template—you avoid the risk that any changes to the code will be overwritten if the original template should ever be updated. Joomla allows you to easily create a copy of all of the template's files in a new folder.

- 1.** To create a template copy, go to **Extensions | Template Manager**. Click on **Templates** in the menu on the left-hand side.
- 2.** In the **Template Manager: Templates** screen, click on the **Protostar Details and Files** link. You will be taken to the **Template Manager: Customize Template** screen. Click on the **Copy template** button. Enter a name for the template copy, for example, `Protostar_copy`. You can use only letters, numbers, dashes, and the underscore sign. Click on **Copy template** in the pop-up screen. The pop up closes. Now, click on **Close** to return to the **Templates** screen.
- 3.** Finally, switch to the **Template Manager: Styles** screen by clicking on the **Styles** link in the menu on the left-hand side. Here, you can set the new template to be the default one. Click on the white star next to **protostar_copy - Default** to make this your new default template. The star turns orange.

What just happened?

You've used Joomla's built-in template copying machine to create an exact copy of the template you want to use and change. You now can leave the original template untouched, which can come in handy should you wish to return to its default settings. Moreover, you can now safely change the settings and code of the copied template without worrying that your changes will be overwritten by an update of the original template files.

Now that you've created a copy of the Protostar template, it's time to customize this copy a little. After all, we don't want our design to look like any default Joomla site. We'll make our mark by creating a new logo image and adding it to the template.

Time for action – preparing a new logo image

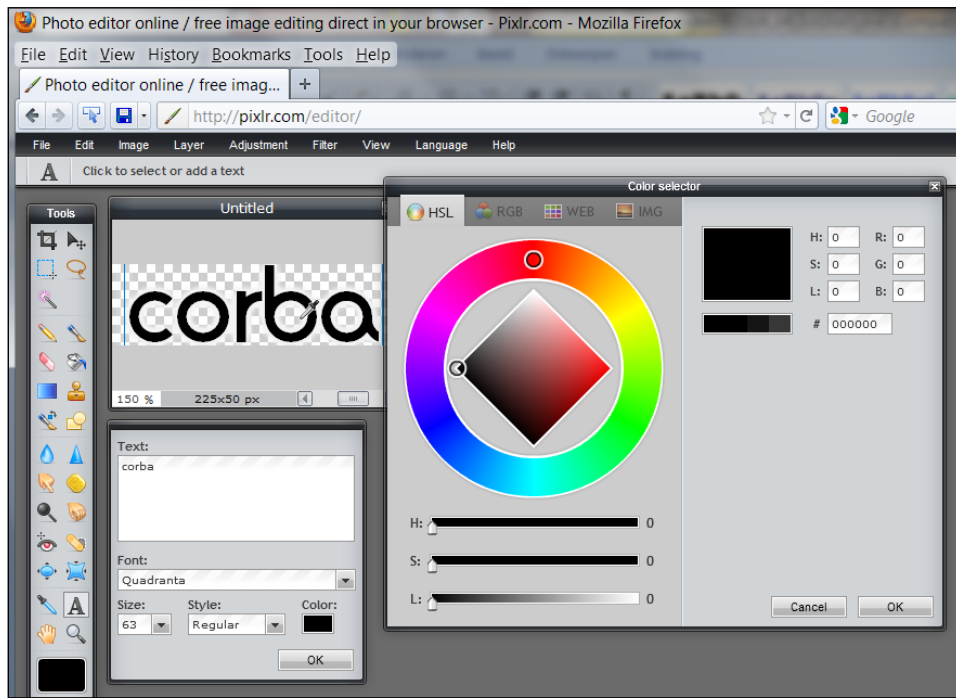
Let's first create a new logo image.

- 1.** Open up your image editing tool. In this example, we'll use Adobe Photoshop, but you can use any image editor.

Living without Photoshop—free alternatives

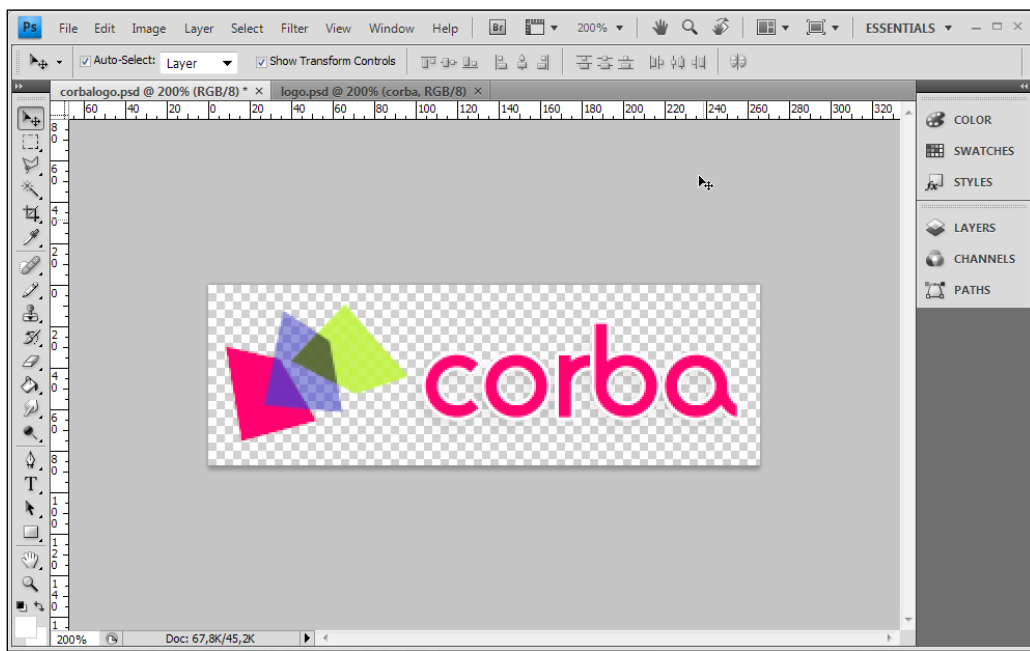


Photoshop may be a fine graphic editing tool, but it's not exactly cheap. The standard Windows graphics editor Paint can do the job, but its capabilities are very, very basic. Fortunately, there are many excellent and free Photoshop alternatives. You can even have essential Photoshopping capabilities on your computer without installing a thing. Just go to www.pixlr.com, click on Open Photo editor, and start creating and editing!



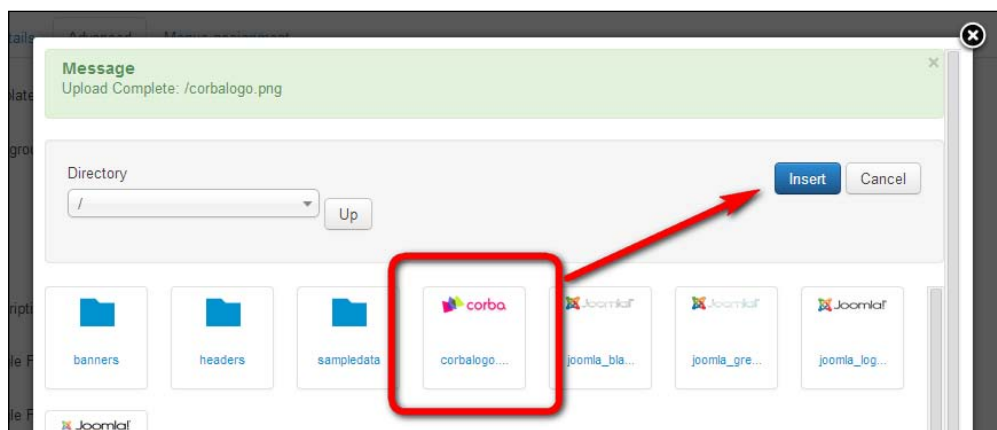
If you're looking for free graphic editing software programs, perform a web search for Paint.NET or **GNU Image Manipulation Program (GIMP)**. Both are very capable programs; Paint.NET is beginner friendly and at the same time quite powerful. **GIMP** is arguably the most popular free Photoshop contender. It's an open source program that's available for all platforms (Windows, Apple OS, and Linux) and features a truckload of photo retouching and image editing tools.

2. A logo image of about 270 pixels in width and 90 pixels in height will fit nicely in the existing template header space (in *Chapter 11, Creating an Attractive Design – Working with Templates*, you'll learn how to take a look at the HTML and CSS to find out the dimensions used in different parts of the page design). Click on **New**. In the **Width** and **Height** boxes, type in 270 and 90 pixels. Choose **Background Contents: Transparent**.
3. In Photoshop, the PNG file shows a grey and white checkerboard background. This indicates the background is transparent, which means the colors of the header background will shine through. This way, the logo image you create blends in nicely with the overall design.
4. Now, you can create any logo you like. Let's skip the details, as these depend on the specific needs of your site and the tool you are using. For this example, I've created a contemporary logo using a free font **Quadranta**, from www.dafont.com (refer to www.dafont.com/faq.php for installation instructions). Apart from this, I have applied an outline, a drop shadow effect, and I've added a few shapes (colored, distorted rectangles) to make my design look like a contemporary logo, as shown in the following screenshot:



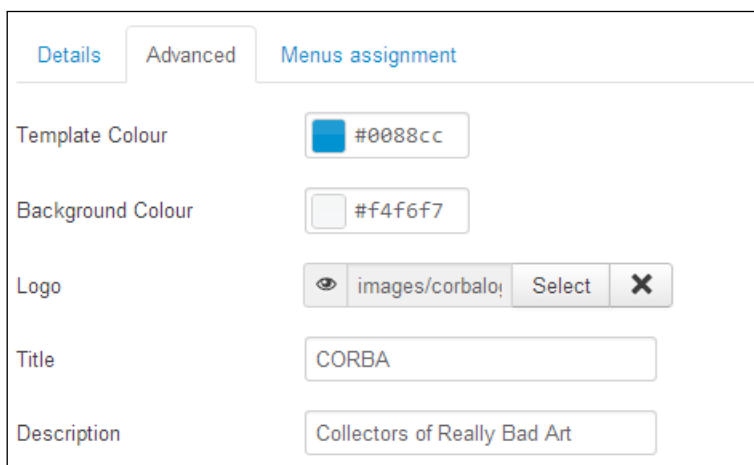
5. Save the image as a PNG file. In Photoshop, click on **Save for Web and Devices**, choose the **PNG-24** file format, and save the image with the name `corbalogo.png`. Make sure to select the **Transparency** checkbox to preserve the transparent background. Click on **Save**.
6. On the next screen, choose a location on your computer and click on **Save** again. Your logo image is ready!

At the backend of the Joomla site, you can now upload and activate the logo image file. The current template, Protostar, contains a **Logo** option specifically for this purpose.
7. Go to **Extensions | Template Manager**. The current (default) template is called **Protostar_copy**. Click on the **protostar_copy – Default** link. Click on the **Advanced** tab. You'll see a **Logo** option that allows you to select a logo image file. Click on **Select**. A pop-up window opens.
8. In the pop-up window, click on **Browse ...** (you may have to scroll within the pop up to see it) and browse to the `corba_logo.png` file on your computer. Select it and click on **Start upload**.
9. The **Upload Complete** message is displayed. Now, click on the thumbnail of the new logo image (the filename will automatically appear in the **Image URL** field) and then click on **Insert**, as shown in the following screenshot:



10. The pop-up window closes and you return to the **Template Manager: Edit Style** screen. The new logo image has been set. However, we'll also change a few other settings to customize the template. In the **Advanced** section, change the following values:

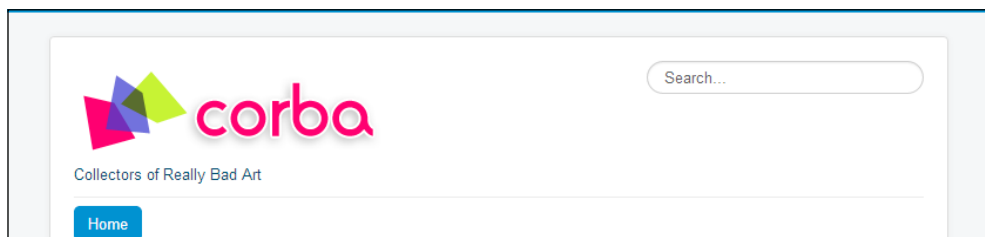
1. In **Title**, enter CORBA.
2. In **Description**, enter Collectors Of Really Bad Art.



The screenshot shows the 'Advanced' tab of the 'Template Manager: Edit Style' interface. It features three tabs: 'Details', 'Advanced', and 'Menus assignment'. The 'Advanced' tab is active. The settings are as follows:

- Template Colour:** A blue color swatch with the hex code #0088cc.
- Background Colour:** A light blue color swatch with the hex code #f4f6f7.
- Logo:** A field containing the path 'images/corbaloi', a 'Select' button, and a close 'X' button.
- Title:** A text input field containing 'CORBA'.
- Description:** A text input field containing 'Collectors of Really Bad Art'.

11. Click on **Save & Close** and click on **View site** to see the output.



As you can see, the new logo and the new tagline now both appear just as we had expected. You can also see why we created a copy of the Protostar template earlier in this chapter— all your preferences and tweaks are safely stored in the template copy, not in the original template. If, at this moment, you set the original Protostar template as the default site template again, the site would be displayed using all the default Protostar settings, without the new logo. If the original Protostar template is overwritten or updated, this won't affect your template copy.

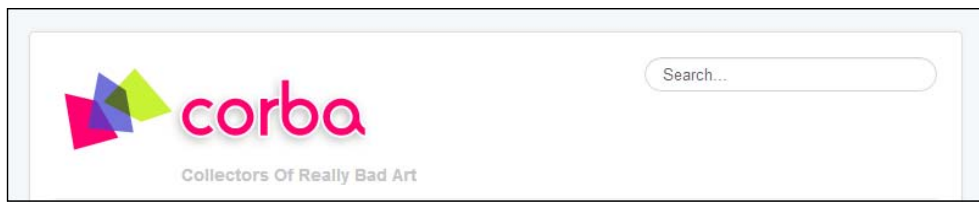
Time for action – tweaking the design details

Maybe you're happy with the template as it is now that you've personalized the logo and tagline text. However, in many cases, you may want to customize the design even more. To do this, you have to edit the CSS files of the template. **Cascading Style Sheets (CSS)** define the design of the site—the HTML code provides the basic structure of the page. It is used to customize the layout, color, and typography. We'll come back to the principles of CSS soon, but the best way to find out how it works is to play around with it a little. As an example, we'll change the style of the tagline text. Right now, it's pretty small and inconspicuous, so let's make it bigger and bolder.

1. Go to **Extensions | Template Manager** and click on the **Templates** menu link on the left-hand side. Click on **Protostar_copy Details and Files** to edit the copied template. This will take you to the screen that shows the (editable) files of the current template. In the file tree on the left-hand side, click on **css** and then on `template.css`. This is the CSS file that the **Protostar_copy** template currently uses.
2. The **Template Manager** editor screen opens. Here, you can edit or add the CSS code to the `template.css` code file. The file doesn't contain any particular style for the site description at this moment; the looks of the tagline are determined by the general CSS markup for all paragraph text. Luckily, Joomla developers have already assigned a specific CSS name (or a class, in CSS terms) to it. If you were to look in the page's HTML code, you'd see this line of text has the `.site-description` class applied to it. All you have to do to change the styling of the tagline text is to add the CSS code that adds some meaning to the currently empty `.site-description` class. This will give browser-specific instructions on how to render the tagline text. To do this, enter the following code at the beginning of the code screen:

```
.site-description {  
    color: silver;  
    font-size: 14px;  
    font-weight: bold;  
    padding-left: 104px;  
}
```
3. To clarify, the `color: silver` code indicates the text should have a gray color, `font-size: 14px` indicates the font should be a bit bigger than the original value, `font-weight: bold` indicates the tagline should be rendered as bold text, and `padding-left: 104px` indicates the tagline should be placed 104 pixels to the right from its current position, which aligns it with the logo text.
4. Click on the **Save & Close** button.

5. Click on **View Site** to see the results on the frontend. If you still see the old design, refresh your browser (reload the page) by pressing *F5* (you can also use *R, Ctrl + R*, or *cmd + R*) to see the page, as shown in the following screenshot:



You'll see that the tagline looks much better and stands out a little more.

What just happened?

The new look for your site is beginning to take shape. You've replaced the original logo image, but you've also added a few lines in the CSS of the current Joomla template.

CSS style sheets? Come again?

You've just changed the code in one of the Joomla template files. Specifically, you've edited a CSS file. Now wait a minute—isn't Joomla supposed to take the code editing effort out of managing websites? It certainly is—and it does—but if you want to really customize the appearance of your site, editing the CSS files is the way to go. Don't worry, you don't have to be a code wizard to be able to change the template's CSS to suit your needs.

Now what exactly is CSS? We'll get into this subject in more detail in *Chapter 11, Creating an Attractive Design – Working with Templates*, but here's a short introduction to what style sheets are and what they do:

- ◆ You probably know web pages are documents that contain the HTML code. HTML tells the web browser what content it should display and roughly where this content is placed on the web page.
- ◆ These HTML documents can be linked to CSS files. These CSS files tell the web browser how the data in the HTML file should be displayed. CSS is a relatively simple set of rules that define the web pages' colors, fonts, page layout, and more.

As CSS instructions are stored in a separate file, these layout instructions can be linked to (and used by) any number of HTML documents. In other words, changing one line in a CSS file can change the appearance of a number of web pages that are using that CSS file. You saw an example of this when you made all pages on the site display a bigger tagline by editing the `template.css` file.

Joomla's built-in CSS editor screen makes it easy to quickly tweak the current template's layout details; however, you do need to have some knowledge of CSS for this. If you're new to CSS, you can find a wealth of information on the Web. Just google the phrases "introduction to CSS" or "CSS tutorial" and you'll be presented with some great resources. To get a quick introduction, have a look at www.yourhtmlsource.com/stylesheets/introduction.html.

Have a go hero – exploring layout settings

As you've seen, there are different ways to influence the look and feel of your current template. The first way is by using the options that are built into the template that allow you to select different settings and values (go to **Template Manager | Styles**), and the second way is editing the template style sheet (the actual template code; to do this, go to **Template Manager | Templates**).

Have a go and experiment a little with the built-in template options. Get a feel for the effects that the different options have by trying out some width settings and color combinations. Pick your flavor, click on **Save**, and click on **View site** to see the output on the frontend.

You'll see that the template options only allow you to change a limited set of options. It's far more powerful to take a look under the hood and edit the template CSS file or files in the Joomla editor. That way, your layout options are only limited by your CSS skills. It's a good idea to take another look at the `template.css` file in the template editor CSS files to get a feel of what coding in CSS is like—you'll see that CSS rules are, for the most part, written in plain English and don't look difficult at all to understand.

Step two – adding content

The customized template looks good, but the site's still empty. It's time to actually populate it with some articles. In the previous chapter, you created one simple article in the Joomla example site. However, when you create your own site, you'll want to choose a more structured approach.

Creating a foundation first – creating categories

If you have experience in designing static websites, you've probably added new pages to the site in two steps. You started making a new HTML document—the page—and then added a link to that page, making sure your new content can be found.

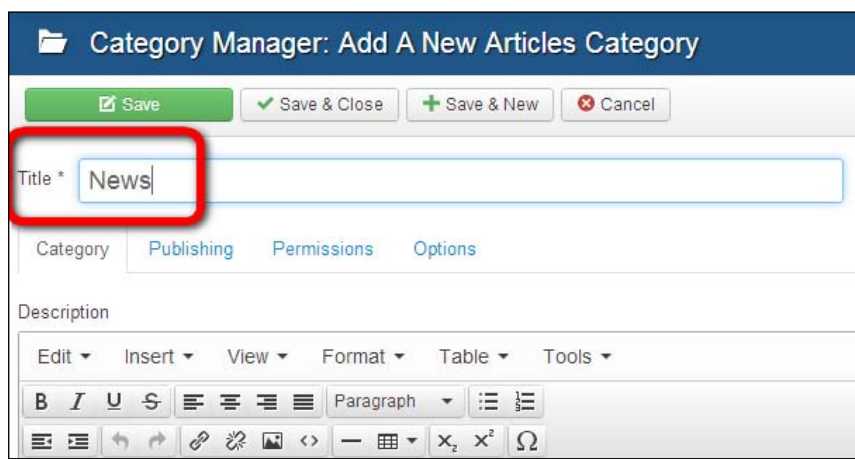
In Joomla, you have to take a little preparatory action. Before you make new pages, it's common practice to first create containers for your content. These containers are called categories. You can create as many categories as you want. Categories hold articles. We won't go into the specifics just now, as we'll be exploring the ins and outs of organizing content in the next chapter. For now, let's experiment a little and see how using categories in Joomla works.

As you've got a tight deadline to meet, we'll follow the three steps of content creation the quick and dirty way. For this basic site, we will split up one category into two subcategories to classify all content, and this will work just fine.

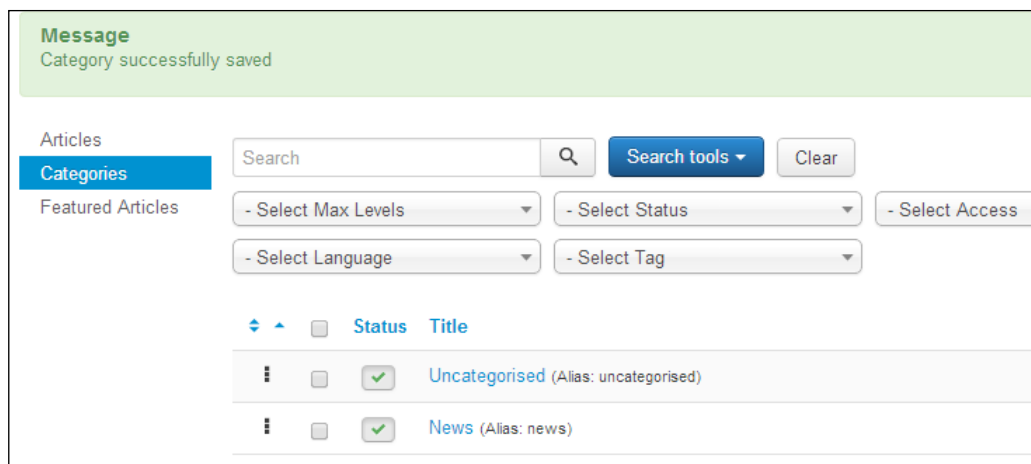
Time for action – creating a news category

Your client, CORBA, wants to publish a range of articles on the current club activities on their site; that's what they're all about. How can we categorize these articles the Joomla way? Let's first add a category as a container for these news articles.

1. Navigate to **Content | Category Manager**. Click on the **New** button. (Alternatively, you can click on the **Add New Category** fly-out menu item under **Content | Category Manager**.)
2. The **Category Manager: Add A New Articles Category** screen opens. In the **Title** field, type in *News*, as shown in the following screenshot. Don't worry about the other fields; you can leave them empty for now.

The screenshot shows the Joomla Category Manager interface for adding a new category. The title field is highlighted with a red box and contains the text "News". The interface includes a top bar with "Save", "Save & Close", "Save & New", and "Cancel" buttons. Below the title field are tabs for "Category", "Publishing", "Permissions", and "Options". A rich text editor is visible at the bottom.

3. Click on **Save & Close**. A message is displayed (**Category successfully saved**) and you're taken to the **Category Manager** screen. You'll see the results; apart from **Uncategorised**, there's one other category now, **News**, as shown in the following screenshot:



What just happened?

In Joomla, you create content groups (categories) before you can actually start adding articles and menu links. However, when you add categories at the backend, you'll see nothing changes on the frontend. To get them to display, we'll add content to the categories and create a menu link that points to category content later.

Creating articles and using the images and links fields

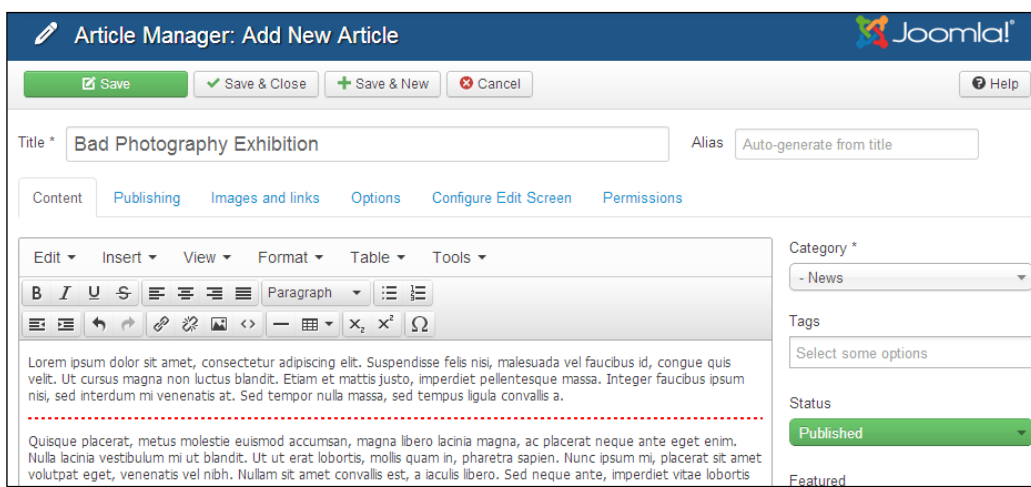
Now we come to the core of content management. Let's actually start creating content! You'll write some articles, apply the appropriate formatting, and add images.

Time for action – creating an article

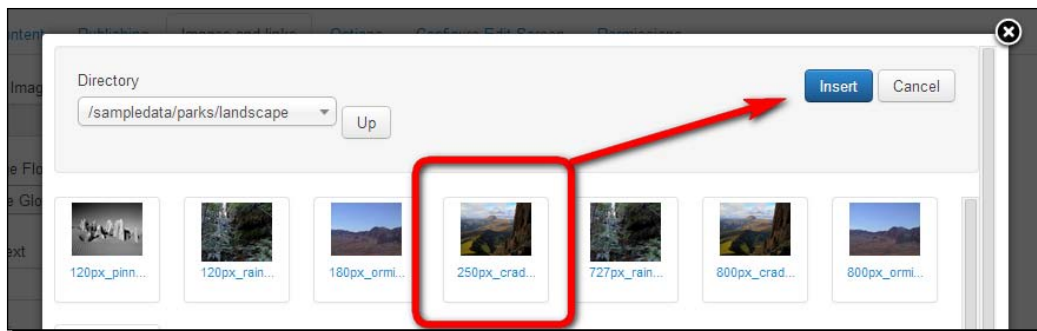
First, let's create an article in the **News** category:

1. Navigate to **Content | Article Manager | Add New Article**. The **Article Manager: Add New Article** screen opens.
2. In the **Title** box, type in the title of the article (in this example, *Bad Photography Exhibition*).
3. In the **Category** drop-down box, select **News**. Now you see why you needed to create a category before adding articles. Without categories, you cannot assign any new article to the appropriate containers within your overall site structure.

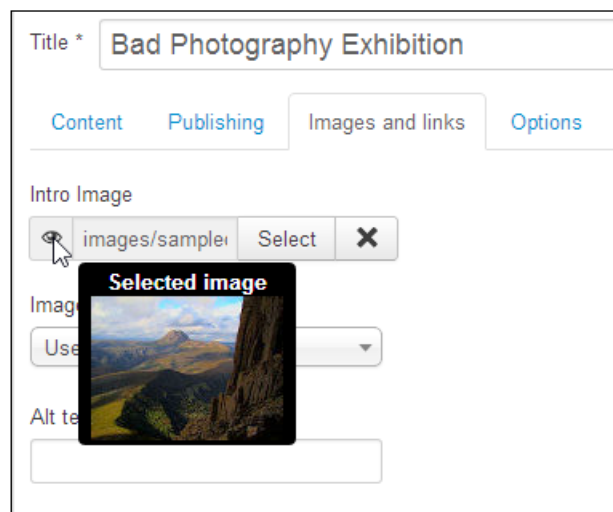
4. On the editor screen, write the article. In this example, we'll just use dummy text. It's easy to copy and paste any amount of fake text from www.lipsum.com.
5. To divide the article text into an introduction text and the main article text, position the cursor at the beginning of the first line of the second paragraph. Click on the **Read more** button at the bottom of the editor screen. A red dotted line appears, which indicates the separation between the introduction text and main article text, as shown in the following screenshot:



6. Finally, we'll add an image to the article. Above the article editor screen, there's a row of tabs. Click on the **Images and links** tab. The **Images and links** feature allows you to add an image that Joomla will show at the beginning of the article introduction text and/or the main article text. In this case, we'll add images to the introduction of the article. To do this, click on **Select** in the **Intro Image** field. A pop-up screen with thumbnails of the available images in Joomla's default image folder appears. Click on the icon of the `sampledata` folder. Navigate to `landscape` under `sampledata/parks` and select one of the available images by clicking on its thumbnail.
7. In the **Image float** drop-down box, click on **Left**. This will make the image appear at the left-hand side of the text. Click on **Insert**, as shown in the following screenshot. The pop-up window closes.

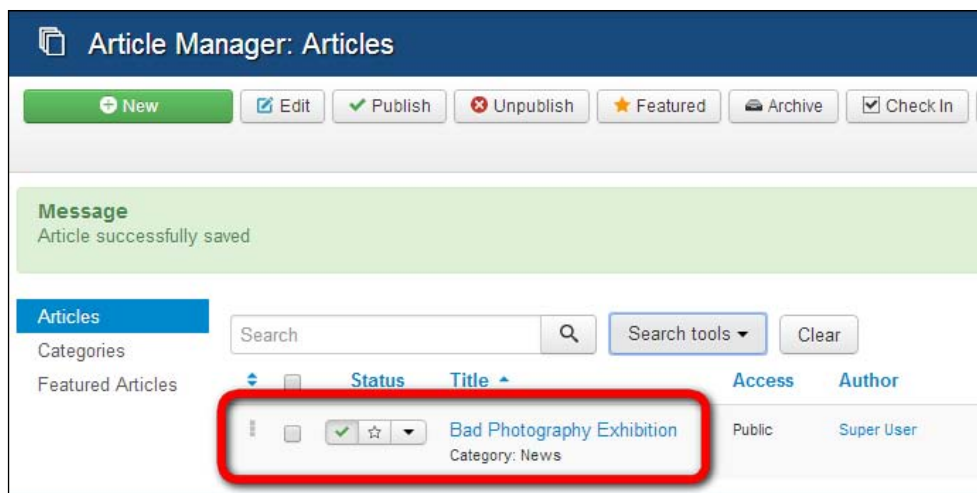


Although the image will be shown on the frontend, it isn't visible at the backend article text. To check whether you've chosen the desired image, point your cursor to the eye icon in the **Intro Image** field. This will display a small thumbnail of the selected image:



8. Repeat the previous two steps to add **Full article image**. Again, select an image (in this case, preferably an image of a bigger size) and set **Image float** to **Left**.

9. Click on **Save & Close** to save the changes you've made. You're taken to the **Article Manager: Articles** screen. The details of the article are displayed in the articles list, as shown in the following screenshot:



10. The new article is ready, but if you now click on the **View site** link, you might be disappointed. There is no sign of your new article on the website! That's because you have to take one last step and add a menu link.

What just happened?

You've created a full-blown article that consists of text and images. To add images, you used Joomla's **Images and links**, a nifty new feature. After all, it's a common scenario with web content that images are placed at the very beginning of an article. Joomla's **Images and links** fields make it more convenient to create a set of articles using fixed layouts. They offer a foolproof way of inserting different images placed exactly at the beginning of the article introduction and of the full text of article.

To enable Joomla to display the introduction text separately (with a **Read more** link to the full article), you used the **Read more** button in the article editor. This divides the article text into introduction text and the main article text. In the editor, the separation is indicated by a red dotted line.

You'll probably remember seeing this division on the sample site home page that contains several short intro texts. Only when visitors click on the accompanying **Read more** link, they are taken to a page with the full article text.

Have a go hero – add more images to articles

When you want to add images to articles, you're certainly not limited to the **Images and links** feature you used in the previous examples. It's possible to place images anywhere in an article—just position the cursor at the beginning of any paragraph and click on the **Image** button at the bottom of the editor screen. We'll use this way of adding images later in this book, in *Chapter 6, Creating Killer Content – Adding and Editing Articles*. Here's a quick walkthrough of the steps involved.

To the article you just created, you added an image from Joomla's default image set. This is okay for testing purposes, but in real life, you'll want to add your own images. To do this, place the cursor at the beginning of any article paragraph and click on the **Image** button at the bottom of the article editor screen. In the pop-up screen, you'll see an **Upload files** box. Click on **Browse files** to find an image file on your computer. Select the image file and click on **Start Upload**. A thumbnail of the uploaded image will appear among the other thumbnails (you may have to scroll down if there are a lot of images). Click on the desired thumbnail. Choose the appropriate **Align** settings and click on **Insert**. The pop-up window closes, and your picture is inserted in the article text.

Making content visible on the site – creating a menu link

The article you've just created is ready and stored in Joomla's database, but it's still invisible on the frontend of the site. That's because there's no link that points to it. The **Main Menu** (titled **This Site**) is empty, except for the **Home** link.

Time for action – adding a menu link

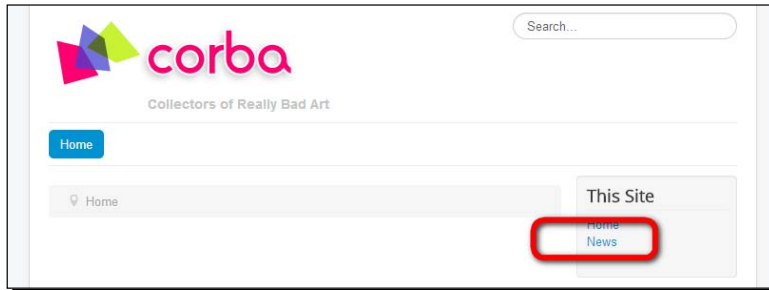
Let's finish the three steps of content creation and add a link to your article.

1. Navigate to **Menus | Main Menu | Add New Menu Item**. The **Menu Manager: New Menu Item** screen opens.
2. Next to the **Menu Item Type** box, click on the **Select** button and go to **Articles | Category Blog**. This menu link type tells Joomla to display a page that contains introduction text and **Read more** hyperlinks to all the content from a specific category. You'll see what this looks like in a minute.
3. In the **Choose a category** drop-down box, select **News**.
4. In the **Menu Title** field, type in **News**. Click on **Save**.

What just happened?

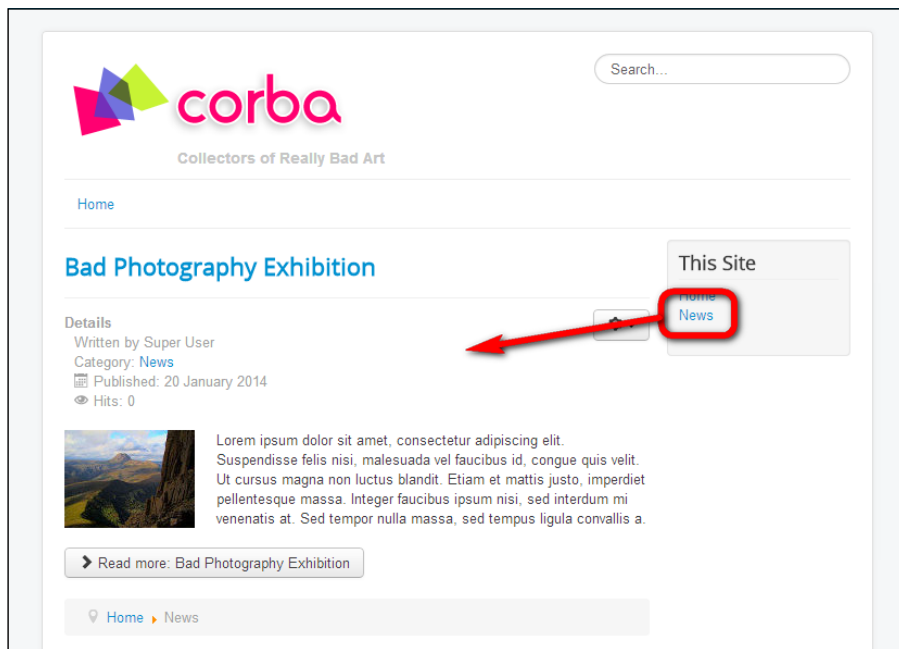
Creating just one link to the **News** category changes a lot on the frontend. The site now looks as follows:

The home page is still empty, but the menu does contain the new link, **News**, as shown in the following screenshot:



When visitors click on the **News** link, they are shown a category blog page. This is an overview page of all contents of the **News** category. The overview consists of introduction texts and **Read more** links to the full articles.

For now, there's just one article's introduction text. When you add new articles to the category, they will automatically be added to this overview page.



When the visitor clicks on the **Read more** link, he or she is taken to the full article. The breadcrumb trail just below the article (not visible in the following screenshot) reflects the category structure **Home | News | Bad Photography Exhibition**.

The screenshot shows a Joomla! article page. At the top left, the article title "Bad Photography Exhibition" is displayed in blue. Below the title, the "Details" section shows: "Written by Super User", "Category: News", "Published: 20 January 2014", and "Hits: 0". To the right of the details is a settings icon. In the top right corner, a "This Site" menu is visible with links for "Home" and "News". The main content area features a large landscape photograph of a mountain range under a cloudy sky. Below the image is a block of placeholder text: "Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Suspendisse felis nisi, malesuada vel faucibus id, congue quis velit. Ut cursus magna non luctus blandit. Etiam et mattis justo, imperdiet pellentesque massa. Integer faucibus ipsum nisi, sed interdum mi venenatis at."

That's the all-important power of menus

The previous example illustrates the power of Joomla menu links. Just by adding a menu link, you make content accessible in several ways. Whatever you add to the category you've set up, no new menu links are needed. Any new content will show up through the **News** category link that you have already created.

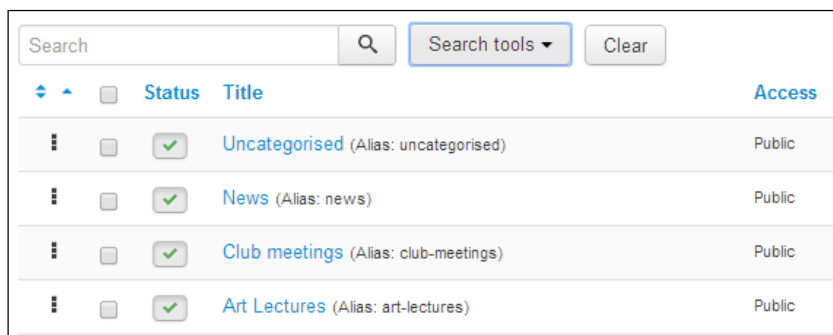
It's important to note that Joomla menu links are very special. They don't just point to existing pages; rather, they determine what page will be displayed. The **Category Blog** menu item type you just deployed contains dozens of options and settings (which we will try out later). Choosing a particular menu item type and tweaking its settings tells Joomla exactly what to fetch from the database and how to display it. That's why you see such an impressive list of menu item types when you add a new link to a menu. In fact, these menu item types represent different preset ways to display all kinds of content.

The **Category Blog** layout makes Joomla display bits of articles in a blog style; that is, as a series of short introduction texts on one page. If you had created a direct menu link to the new article using **Article Layout**, the menu link would have pointed to the same content, but presented differently: the full article page.

In *Chapter 8, Helping Your Visitors Find What They Want – Managing Menus*, we'll dive deeper into the art of creating menu items and the effects that different menu item types and their settings have on the final results.

Have a go hero – create more categories and articles

For the example site, you'll need a few more categories and articles. Your client wants to publish content on two specific subjects: club meetings and art lectures. This calls for two new categories. You can add these using the same steps you took to create the **News** category. First, add one more category called **Club meetings** and click on **Save & New**—this will save the first category and open a blank new screen to immediately create a second one. Create a second category called **Art Lectures** and click on **Save & Close**. The **Category Manager** should show the results with the two new categories you added:



	Status	Title	Access
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Uncategorised (Alias: uncategorised)	Public
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	News (Alias: news)	Public
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Club meetings (Alias: club-meetings)	Public
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Art Lectures (Alias: art-lectures)	Public

Add a few dummy articles to the categories. To do this, repeat the steps you just took in the *Time for action - creating an article* section.



A quick way to add new (dummy) articles is using the **Save as Copy** button in the **Article Manager: Edit Article** screen. Open any article you want to use as a base for a new article and change the **Title** article. Empty the **Alias** field and click on **Save as Copy**. You've now created a new article. To create more articles, repeat these steps: change the title, clear the alias, and click on **Save as Copy**. Of course, you can change more details of the article if you like, such as changing some article text, adding another image, or assigning the article to a different category. Make sure the **Status** of the article is set to **Published**. In any case, saving the article as a copy is a lot quicker than just creating a series of separate new articles and filling out all the details.

To follow along with the examples used in this book, create articles using the titles displayed in the following screenshot. In this example, three articles have been added to each of the two new categories:

	Status	Title	Access	Author	Language
☰	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="star"/> <input type="dropdown"/>	Hideous Still Lifes Category: Art Lectures	Public	Super User	All
☰	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="star"/> <input type="dropdown"/>	Bad Abstract Paintings Art Lecture Category: Art Lectures	Public	Super User	All
☰	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="star"/> <input type="dropdown"/>	Ugly Art Lecture Category: Art Lectures	Public	Super User	All
☰	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="star"/> <input type="dropdown"/>	The Art of Bob Ross Category: Club meetings	Public	Super User	All
☰	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="star"/> <input type="dropdown"/>	This Years Meeting Category: Club meetings	Public	Super User	All
☰	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="star"/> <input type="dropdown"/>	Hideous Art Owners Meeting Category: Club meetings	Public	Super User	All
☰	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="star"/> <input type="dropdown"/>	Bad Photography Exhibition Category: News	Public	Super User	All

As you can see, **Article Manager** displays an overview of the entire site content. In the **Title** column, all of the articles are shown; below each title, you can see the **Category** to which the article is assigned.

In your case, the order of the articles in the listing may be different from the order shown in the previous screenshot. By default, the articles are ordered by **Title**, but in the previous screenshot, you've seen them ordered by **Category**. To change the way the articles are sorted, click on the drop-down box above the article listing (on the right-hand side) and select the desired option.

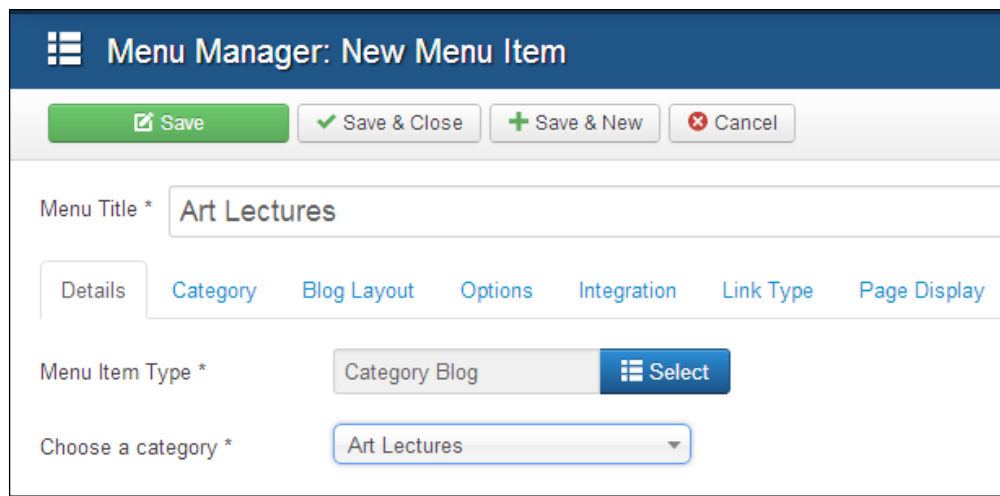
By defining a couple of categories, you've now got a foundation to add any amount of content on the main subjects. In later chapters, we'll expand this structure.

Creating menu links to the new content

Now that you've added some more categories and articles, the next step is to make that content accessible through the menu. You've already seen how this works. Go to **Menus | Main Menu | Add New Menu Item**.



First, add a new menu item of the **Category Blog** type found under **Articles**. Name this menu link **Art Lectures** and point it to the **Art Lectures** category.



After you've saved this menu link, create the same type of menu link for the **Club Meetings** category. Remember, in cases like these, the **Save & New** button is your best friend!

The **Main Menu** should now contain a total of four menu items: **Home**, **News**, **Art Lectures** and **Club Meetings**. Click on **View Site** to have a look at the frontend. You'll see the site is beginning to take shape. If you click on a link that is pointing to any of the categories, Joomla displays the intro texts of the articles in that particular category. If you've added a picture to the intro texts, the result should look something like what's shown in the following screenshot: an overview page that contains the intros of all category content. Don't worry if the actual order of articles is different in your setup; by default, articles are arranged with the newest ones on top. You'll learn how to change this in *Chapter 7, Welcoming Your Visitors – Creating Attractive Home Pages and Overview Pages*.


Search...

corba
Collectors of Really Bad Art

Home

Ugly Art Lecture


Details ⚙
 Written by Super User
 Category: [Art Lectures](#)
 Published: 20 January 2014
 Hits: 0

 Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Suspendisse felis nisi, malesuada vel faucibus id, congue quis velit. Ut cursus magna non luctus blandit. Etiam et mattis justo, imperdiet pellentesque massa. Integer faucibus ipsum nisi, sed interdum mi venenatis at. Sed tempor nulla massa, sed tempus ligula convallis.

[Read more: Ugly Art Lecture](#)

Bad Abstract Paintings Lecture


Details ⚙
 Written by Super User
 Category: [Art Lectures](#)
 Published: 20 January 2014
 Hits: 0

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[Read more: Bad Abstract Paintings Lecture](#)

Hideous Still Lives

Details ⚙
 Written by Super User
 Category: [Art Lectures](#)
 Published: 20 January 2014
 Hits: 1

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[Read more: Hideous Still Lives](#)

Home > Art Lectures

In this example, all articles contain a left-aligned image in the intro text. You'll agree that this makes the category blog overview page look quite attractive, even if we haven't changed any of the default settings.

Adding individual content pages – uncategorized articles

For now, your client would like to have just a one different type of content page on their first website. Let's say they'd like a page on their mission statement. As there's no need for more content like this, it would be overkill to create a category to accommodate for this article. Luckily, Joomla! allows you to add uncategorized articles. You've probably noticed there's a default category just for this purpose called **Uncategorised** (which is, admittedly, a peculiar name for a category). Uncategorized articles are ordinary articles, except for one thing—while adding them, you assign them to the **Uncategorised** category.

Time for action – adding uncategorized articles

Let's create a **Mission Statement** page by adding an uncategorized article.

1. Navigate to **Content | Article Manager**. Click on **New**.
2. In the **Title** box, enter `Mission Statement`. In the **Category** drop-down box, make sure **Uncategorised** is selected.
3. In the text editor area, add the **Mission Statement** text and add an image, if you like. For this example, we've entered the following text:

We all know the works of great art throughout the centuries. But what about bad art? Much of the creative output of really lousy artists has been discarded, thrown away because of its lack of artistic value. Let's not let that happen anymore!

The beauty in ugliness

Collectors Of Really Bad Art is a club for bad art lovers. We seek to find and promote the beauty that's hidden behind superficial ugliness. Tour our website to discover that beauty too!

Title Alias

Content [Publishing](#) [Images and links](#) [Options](#) [Configure Edit Screen](#) [Permissions](#)

Edit ▾ Insert ▾ View ▾ Format ▾ Table ▾ Tools ▾

B *I* U ~~S~~ Paragraph ▾

We all know the works of great art throughout the centuries. But what about bad art? Much of the creative output of really lousy artists has been discarded, thrown away because of its lack of artistic value. Let's not let that happen any more!

The beauty in ugliness

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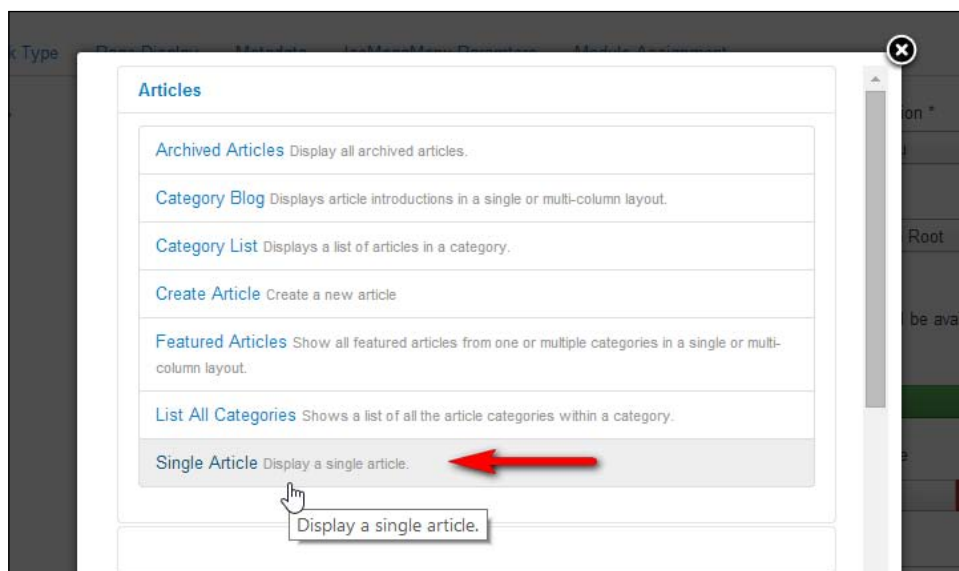
Category *
- Uncategorised ▾

Tags
Select some options

Status
Published ▾

Featured

4. Click on **Save & Close**. The uncategorized article is finished—we just need a menu link to make it visible.
5. Navigate to **Menus | Main Menu | Add New Menu Item**.
6. In the **Menu Manager: New Menu Item** screen, we'll create a link to a single article. Select the appropriate **Menu Item Type**; to do this, click on **Articles | Single Article**. The pop-up screen closes.

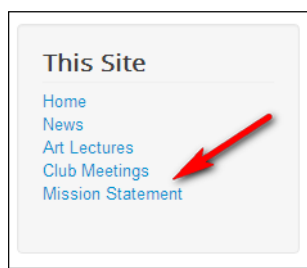


7. Click on the **Select** button next to the **Select an Article** box to choose the article this menu link will link to. In the pop-up box, select the **Mission Statement** article. The pop-up window closes.
8. In the **Menu Title** box, enter `Mission Statement`.
9. Click on **Save & Close**. Click on **View Site** to admire the results. The menu now displays a new link to the **Mission Statement** article.

Your first uncategorized article is ready.

What just happened?

Uncategorized articles are a perfect solution to place content on your site that doesn't fit the categories structure. For now, you've added one uncategorized article and a menu link that points to that specific article. On the frontend of your website, the output is shown as follows:



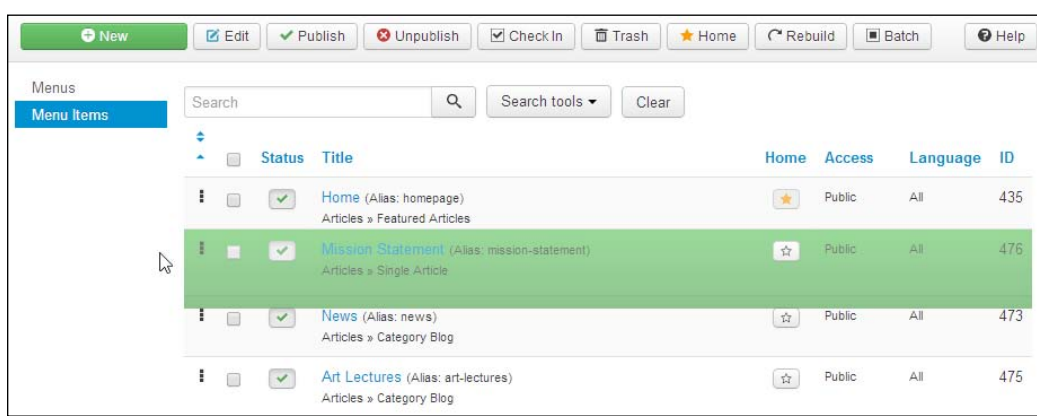
A new menu link is displayed as the last item in the main menu.

Clicking on the **Mission Statement** link reveals a single article page.



Have a go hero – rearrange the main menu using drag-and-drop

You'll notice that **Main Menu** items are shown in the order that you've created them. The last two menu items you've just added are displayed at the bottom of the menu. You can change the order of items in the main menu by navigating to **Menus | Main Menu** and clicking on the three vertical dots to the left-hand side of any of the article titles. You can now drag-and-drop the article to the desired position. Try this out now. If you can't move the menu items, first click on the two little triangles on the top of the **Ordering** column. Now you should be able to, for example, move the **Mission Statement** article link to the second position, as shown in the following screenshot:



No need to save this new setting; when you have a look at the frontend of the site, you'll immediately see the effects.



Hiding the menu title

The main menu, as it's displayed on the frontend, has a title: **This Site**. You may want to edit or delete that title; generic web site menus don't need a title. To change the title of the menu, you'll need to edit the menu module properties. To do this, go to **Extensions | Module Manager**. Click on the **This Site** title. The **Module Manager: Module Menu** screen menu opens. Select **Show Title** as **Hide** and save changes. From now on, the menu title is hidden.

Putting content on the home page – at last!

Now that you've stuffed your site with content, there's one essential page to take care of. As we haven't added anything to the home page yet, its main content area is still empty.

It may seem strange that you do not *start* with the home page while adding content; after all, it's the official entrance to the site. However, you do need to have the actual content—articles—before you can start publishing anything on your home page. After all, the home page usually is a selection of content items—teasers, images, or hyperlinks—drawn from the rest of the site.

Adding items to the home page

How do you control which articles are shown on the home page? When you write a new article (by navigating to **Content | Article Manager | New**), or edit an existing article in **Article Manager**, you can choose whether you want the article to be displayed on the home page or not. To do this, in the **Article Manager: Edit Article** screen, select **Featured** as **Yes**:



Another way to quickly add items to the home page (or remove them) is to use the **Article Manager** overview screen (you can also navigate to **Content | Article Manager**). A white star in the **Status** column indicates the article is not displayed on the home page. Clicking on the star changes its color to orange. This indicates the article will be displayed on the home page, as this page is by default set up to show all featured articles. We'll try this out right now.

Time for action – assigning articles to the home page

Let's add a couple of articles to the home page through **Article Manager**:

1. Navigate to **Content | Article Manager**.
2. In the **Status** column, click on the white star next to four articles: **Hideous Still Lives**, **Ugly Art Lecture**, **The Art of Bob Ross**, and **This Year's Meeting**. The white star turns orange. The results are shown in the following screenshot and the four articles are set to show on the home page:

	Status	Title
☰	<input type="checkbox"/> ✓ ★	Hideous Still Lifes Category: Art Lectures
☰	<input type="checkbox"/> ✓ ☆	Bad Abstract Paintings Lecture Category: Art Lectures
☰	<input type="checkbox"/> ✓ ★	Ugly Art Lecture Category: Art Lectures
☰	<input type="checkbox"/> ✓ ★	The Art of Bob Ross Category: Club meetings
☰	<input type="checkbox"/> ✓ ★	This Years Meeting Category: Club meetings

3. Click on **View Site**. You've got a home page filled with content! Four articles are displayed on the home page as intro texts with **Read more** links:



Search...

Collectors of Really Bad Art

Home

[Home](#)
[Mission Statement](#)
[News](#)
[Art Lectures](#)
[Club Meetings](#)

This Years Meeting



Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Suspendisse felis nisi, malesuada vel faucibus id, congue quis velit. Ut cursus magna non luctus blandit. Etiam et mattis justo, imperdiet pellentesque massa. Integer faucibus ipsum nisi, sed interdum mi venenatis at. Sed tempor nulla massa, sed tempus ligula convallis a.

[Read more: This Years Meeting](#)

The Art of Bob Ross



Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Suspendisse felis nisi, malesuada vel faucibus id, congue quis velit. Ut cursus magna non luctus blandit. Etiam et mattis justo, imperdiet pellentesque massa. Integer faucibus ipsum nisi, sed interdum mi venenatis at. Sed tempor nulla massa, sed tempus ligula convallis a.

[Read more: The Art of Bob Ross](#)

Ugly Art Lecture



Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Suspendisse felis nisi, malesuada vel faucibus id, congue quis velit. Ut cursus magna non luctus blandit. Etiam et mattis justo, imperdiet pellentesque massa. Integer faucibus ipsum nisi, sed interdum mi venenatis at. Sed tempor nulla massa, sed tempus ligula convallis.

[Read more: Ugly Art Lecture](#)

Hideous Still Lifes



Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Suspendisse felis nisi, malesuada vel faucibus id, congue quis velit. Ut cursus magna non luctus blandit. Etiam et mattis justo, imperdiet pellentesque massa. Integer faucibus ipsum nisi, sed interdum mi venenatis at.

[Read more: Hideous Still Lifes](#)

Login Form

Remember Me

[Create an account](#)

[Forgot your username?](#)

[Forgot your password?](#)

[115]

What just happened?

By clicking on the icon in the **Featured** column in **Article Manager**, you have added four articles to the home page. On the frontend, these four articles are now shown in the default Joomla home page layout; the first intro text is displayed in the full main body width, and the other intro texts below that are presented in three columns. We'll leave this for now, but rest assured, you'll learn how to tweak these display options to your heart's content in later chapters.



There's more to the home page than just featured articles

How do you determine what's shown on the home page? You do so partly by indicating which articles should be **Featured**. By default, featured articles appear on the home page. They are shown in the main content area or main body. That is the part of the page where the four intro texts are displayed in the preceding screenshot. However, there's more to the home page—the entire page the user sees when they click on **Home**. This page also contains modules, such as menus and the search function. Using the module settings, you control whether a module is displayed on the home page or any other page. We'll see an example of adding and placing a module later on in this chapter.

Step three – adding extras through extensions

You've just taken a few giant leaps! You have customized the layout of your new site, framed a structure, and have created and published the content to match. If this were a static HTML site, this would be about it. This would be all there was to the website. In Joomla, however, the fun has just begun. You can now add functional or even just plain cool extras. For this, you'll use Joomla's components and other extensions—that's where Joomla's real magic power lies.

Components and extensions – what's the difference?

To manage Joomla's extended functionalities, you'll find yourself working with both the **Components** and **Extensions** menus at the backend. In fact, components are extensions too—they also extend Joomla functionalities. Components are found under the separate **Components** menu in the Joomla backend, as they are more powerful and more complex; they're applications within the Joomla application. Through the **Extensions** menu, you can find modules and plugins. These are smaller add-ons that can contain all sorts of dynamic information. Sometimes, components and modules are designed to work together.

In spite of the differences between the different types of extensions, behind the scenes they generally serve the same purpose. They all enhance your site's functioning.



For now, we'll be using components and other extensions that are included in the default Joomla setup. Later, you'll probably want to add other extensions. There are thousands of these available on the Web, providing all functionalities you might want to add to your site. You'll learn more about adding extensions in *Chapter 10, Getting the Most out of Your Site – Extending Joomla!*.

Adding a contact form

Let's take care of one of the last items on your client's wish list and enable site visitors to get in touch through a contact form. Adding this form will take two steps. First, we'll create a contact, and after that, we'll create a menu link that displays a contact form.

Time for action – creating a contact

Let's add a contact, that is, someone whose (mail) address and other contact details can be displayed on the form page and someone who will receive the form data in their mailbox.

1. Navigate to **Components | Contacts. Contact Manager** opens. Click on **New**.
2. In the **Contact Manager: Contact** screen, enter the details for the contact. In the **Name** box, enter **CORBA Staff**.

3. In the **Category** drop-down list, select **Uncategorised**. There's no need for different types of contact categories on our site.
4. In the **New Contact** screen, enter the contact information details you want to display. In this case, it's okay to just fill out the **Email** text field and the **Telephone** field. It is important to specify a valid e-mail address because this is where the form data will be sent. In the **Position** field, enter something such as **Staff Bureau** or **General Enquiries**—this is the text that will be displayed above the telephone number.

5. Click on the **Display** tab to specify whether you want to show or hide specific contact details on the contact form page. In this case, the default options are okay. You could, of course, display more contact details to offer visitors various ways to respond.
6. Click on **Save & Close**.

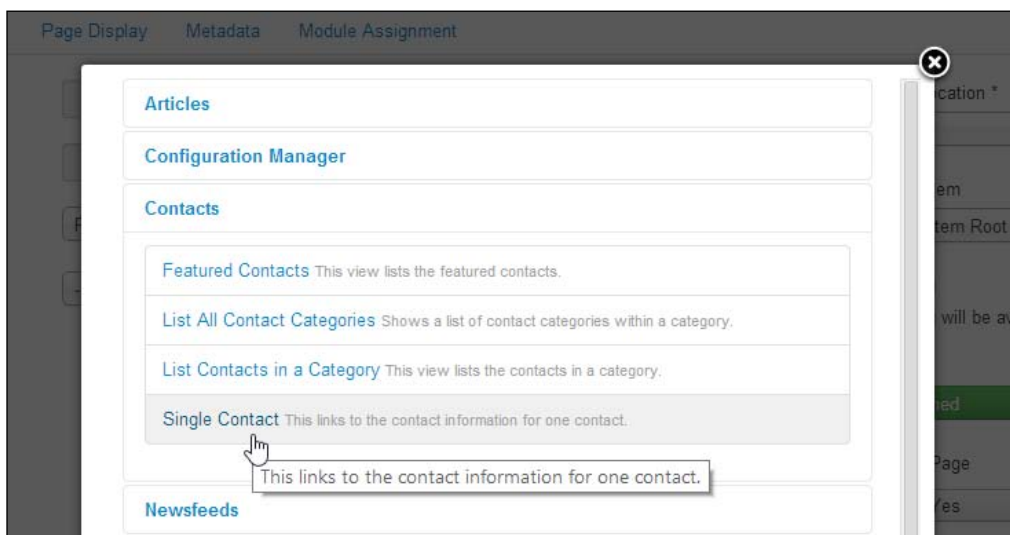
What just happened?

To be able to create a contact form, you first created a contact. Using the Joomla **Contacts** component, you can build a comprehensive system of contacts organized by contact categories. For our goal, just one contact name and e-mail address will suffice.

Time for action – creating a Contact Form menu link

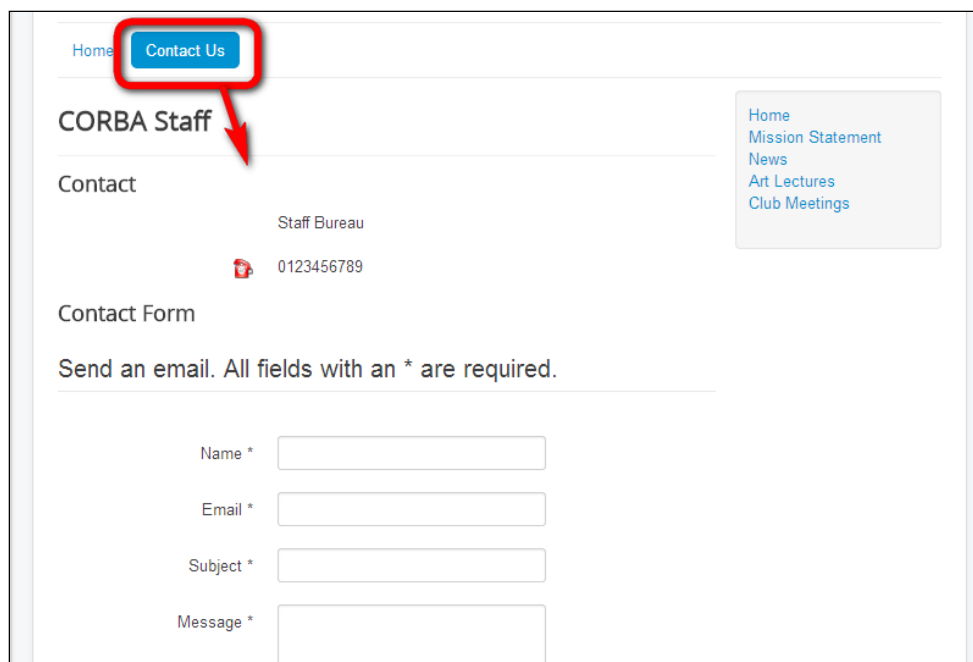
Now that a contact exists, you can add a link to a contact form to the main menu:

1. Navigate to **Menus | Top**. We'll add the new link to the horizontal top menu.
2. Click on **New**.
3. In the **Menu Item Type** list, go to **Contacts | Single Contact**.



4. Click on the **Select** button next to the **Select a Contact** textbox to select the appropriate contact, **CORBA Staff**.
5. Enter **Menu Title** for the menu item (for example, **Contact Us**). Make sure **Menu Location** is set to the **Top** menu.

6. Click on the **Contact Display Options** tab, choose **Display format: Plain**. Otherwise, the contact form will be displayed in separate (sliding or tabbed) panels—which is not what we want.
7. Click on **Save & Close**. The site now has a **Contact Us** menu link that displays a contact form:



What just happened?

You used the **Contacts** component to create a contact and added a menu link to a contact form. Again, you have experienced how powerful menu links are in Joomla. Just by selecting **Menu Item Type: Single Contact**, you created a menu link that takes the visitor to a contact form page.

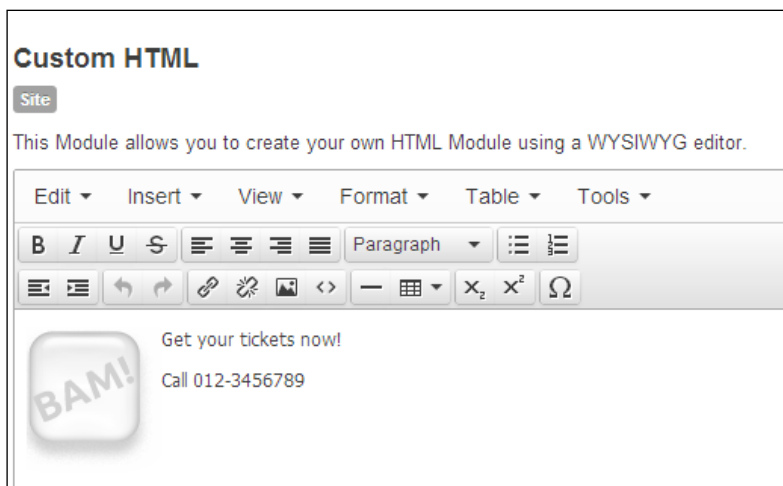
Adding a special message block

The CORBA people are pleased with the current site, but they would like you to draw a little extra attention to their upcoming Ugly Art Exhibition in the Bad Art Museum. Could you maybe place some sort of message block on the home page, instead of just adding another article? In Joomla, you can. For this purpose, you can use one of the module types that are available, called Custom HTML. In this module block, you can add all the desired content (text, images, hyperlinks, and more), and you can place the block in a specific position on specific pages.

Time for action – creating a message block

To add a message block about the Ugly Art Exhibition on the home page, we'll add a new module of the Custom HTML type:

1. Go to **Extensions | Module Manager** and click on **New** to create a new module.
2. In the **Select a Module Type** screen, select **Custom HTML**.
3. Enter `Visit the Bad Art Museum` for the **Title**.
4. In the **Position** drop-down list, scroll to find a list of available positions for the current template, **Protostar_copy**. Select **Right [position-7]**. This will add the block to the right column of the current template. You'll learn more about finding out what positions are available in *Chapter 11, Creating an Attractive Design – Working with Templates*.
5. Click on the **Custom Output** tab to enter any content the module block should contain. To insert an image, click on the **Image** button at the bottom of the editor. If you use the example files for this book, upload and insert the `bam_logo.png` image file. Make sure it's aligned to the left.
6. Add some text. In this example, we will enter some short text: `Get your tickets now!` and a phone number. The editor screen now looks like what is shown in the following screenshot:



7. Finally, let's determine the pages where the module will appear. Click on the **Menu Assignment** tab to select **Module Assignment as Only on the selected pages**. Click on **Select** and then **None** to deselect all pages. Now, select only the **Home** page.

- Click on **Save & Close** and then click on **View site**:



What just happened?

You used a simple but very flexible small module in Joomla called Custom HTML. Your site now shows a special info block in the left column of the home page.

Wrapping up – changing site settings

The one-hour website is finished. However, there are a few adjustments to be made in the backend.

Time for action – changing the site configuration

The site configuration still shows some default values that don't match the new site content. Let's enter the appropriate site name and add site metadata:

- Navigate to **System | Global Configuration**.
- In the **Site Settings** section, enter `CORBA - Collectors Of Really Bad Art` for **Site Name**. In the **SEO Settings** section (you may have to scroll down to find it), select **Include Site Name in Page Titles** as **After**. This way, the site information will be shown on in the title bar or the current tab of the visitors' web browser:



3. In the **Metadata Settings** section, add some text. **Site Meta Description** is used in result pages of search engines. In the **Site Meta Description** box, enter CORBA is an international club of Collectors Of Really Bad Art.
4. Joomla also offers you the possibility to add **Site Meta Keywords**. Most search engines ignore meta keywords these days, but it won't hurt to enter a few keywords that characterize the site's content: bad art, ugly paintings, bad painting, CORBA. Save your changes by clicking on **Save & Close**.

What just happened?

By entering a few lines in the **Global Configuration** screen, we've made sure the right site name shows up in the visitors' web browser, and search engines pick up the right information about the site's contents.

Pop quiz – test your basic Joomla knowledge

Q1. What can you use the built-in Joomla CSS editor for?

1. To add some content containers.
2. To change the appearance of your site.
3. To change menu settings.

Q2. In what order do you add articles and menu links?

1. Create menu links first, then add articles.
2. Add articles first, then create menu links.
3. You can choose the order you like.

Q3. What methods does Joomla provide you with to insert images in articles?

1. You can add images in fixed positions through the **Images and links** fields found in the article editor screen.
2. You can insert images anywhere you like in the article text by using the **Image** button below the article editor text field.
3. You can use methods of the both previously mentioned steps, whichever is more appropriate for your goals.

Q4. What do you use components and extensions for?

1. Extending Joomla's functionality.
2. Adding content that only registered users can see.
3. To quickly add new content.

Summary

You may not be aware of it, but you did actually do an incredible job. Your first Joomla website is up and running! You've built your site in three steps. First, you customized the layout, then you added a framework for content, and then you added further functionality to your site with modules.

You have personalized the look of the site by editing the template files. You can edit the template CSS files directly in the **Template Manager** editor screen.

Before you created content pages, you created the containers they belong in. These containers are called categories. You also added uncategorized articles—content pages that don't fit any category. You've seen that to make content visible on your site, there has to be a menu link that points to it. You've added items to the home page by changing their **Featured** settings. You've added an extra functionality to the site by using components and extensions. Using the **Contacts** component, you added contact details and a contact form.

In this chapter, we followed the fast and simple approach and used only the basic capabilities of the system, leaving most settings at their default values. Building on this, it is possible to create much bigger, complex, sophisticated, and cool sites. The next chapters will cover the subjects we've touched upon in more detail.

In the next chapter, we'll look specifically at the site's structure; how can you organize the content of your site, whether it's a personal website with 10 pages or a big corporate site? You'll find out that Joomla's system of categorizing content makes it easy to create a site that's user friendly, expandable, and easily manageable.

5

Small Sites, Big Sites – Organizing Your Content Effectively

In the previous chapter, you learned that creating a website in Joomla revolves around three major tasks: designing a layout, creating content, and adding extras. The central part is, of course, creating content. You can have a Joomla site using a simple default template and you can have a site without adding extra functionality, but you can't have a site without content. That's why, in the following chapters, we will concentrate more on managing and creating content. Then, we will work on the layout and add extras.

In this chapter, you will learn the following topics:

- ◆ Building on the example site
- ◆ Grouping content – a crash course on site organization
- ◆ Creating categories and subcategories
- ◆ Displaying main categories and subcategories on your site
- ◆ Refining your site's structure
- ◆ Using tags to label and organize content

Building on the example site

The CORBA site that you developed in the previous chapter is a great little site, and it is perfectly suited for your client's initial purpose as their first web presence. Now, it's time to make room for growth. Your client has a big pile of information on bad art that they want to present to the public. You are asked to design a site framework that makes it easy to add more content, while at the same time keeps it easy for visitors to quickly find their way through the site.

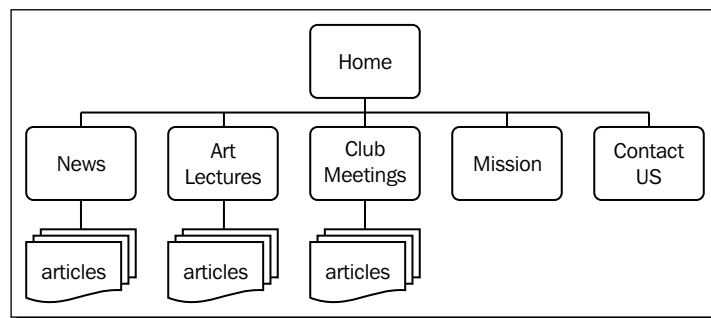
Can you do that? You most certainly can! Joomla allows you to build sites of all sorts and sizes, whether they consist of just a few pages or thousands of pages. If you plan ahead and start with a sound basic structure, you will be rewarded with a site that is easy to maintain and extend. In this chapter, we will review the site you have just built and look at the different ways in which the content can be structured and rearranged, if required.

Grouping content – a crash course on site organization

To lay the groundwork for your site, you won't use Joomla. The back of a napkin will do fine. Draw up a plan: a site map showing the primary content chunks and their relationships. View your site from a user's perspective. What do you think your visitors will primarily look for, and how can you help them find things quickly and easily?

Designing a site map

To create a site map, first collect all the information that you plan on having on your website and organize it into a simple and logical format. Let's take another look at the CORBA website you built in the previous chapter. The following diagram shows a basic outline of the site you have created so far:



As far as site maps go, this is a very basic one. **News**, **Art Lectures**, and **Club Meetings** are categories that hold several articles on these three topics. **Mission** is a basic web page (an article). **Contact Us** is a contact form page. This structure was good enough to start with, but it won't work if CORBA wants to expand their site.

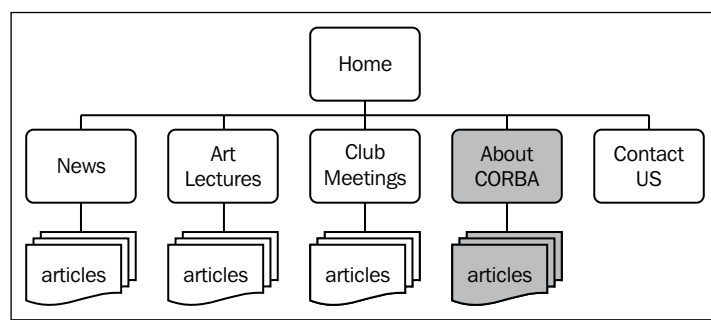
Time for action – creating a future-proof site map

Let's make some room for growth. Imagine your client is planning to expand the site and add new content. They have come up with the following list of subjects they want to add to their site:

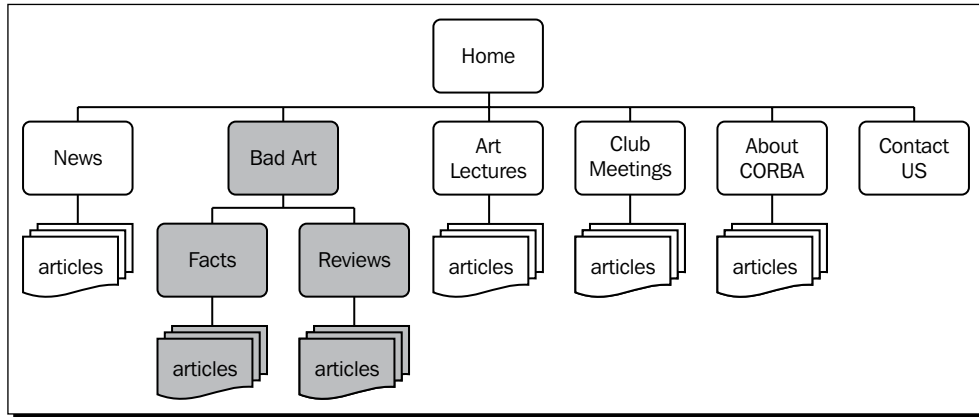
- ◆ A few pages to introduce the founding members of CORBA
- ◆ Facts on bad art, such as history, techniques, and so on
- ◆ Reviews of bad art, bad art galleries, and so on
- ◆ General information on club activities other than lectures and meetings

What's the best way to organize things? Let's figure out which content fits which type of container:

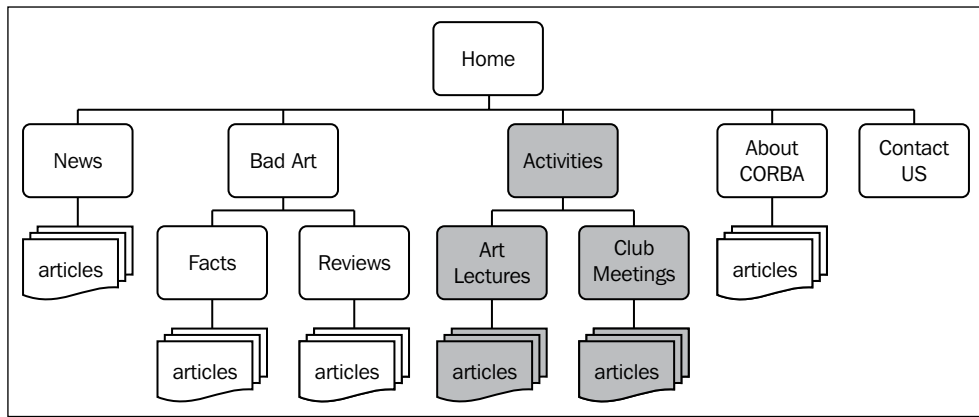
- 1.** The information on CORBA founders fits in a new category, **About CORBA**. This will be a category containing just a few articles. Apart from an article on CORBA founders, the existing uncategorized **Mission Statement** article can be moved in this category too. The new outline of the site is shown in the following diagram:



- Up to now, we created content groups that are just one-level deep—categories that hold articles. However, Joomla categories can hold as many other categories as you like. To organize all content on bad art, it will be good to have an extra level. There will be a main category on **Bad Art** containing two subcategories: articles with **Reviews** and articles containing **Facts**. This is shown in the following diagram:



- Now, how do we accommodate for the general content on **activities** that the client wants to add? We've already got two categories that both contain information on things CORBA organizes: lectures and meetings. It makes sense to add a new top-level category **Activities**, as this is really the common denominator for both the **Art Lectures** and **Club Meetings** article groups. General information on activities can be placed in the **Activities** container, and specific articles can be placed in **Art Lectures** and **Club Meetings**. This is shown in the following diagram:





Of course, it's up to you to decide whether you want to create subcategories within a main category (in this case, **Activities**). You could also have three top-level categories for different types of activities. However, grouping content as outlined in the previous step does have advantages when managing and presenting content. By putting all content in one main container, you can, for example, choose to create one menu link to display all the content of the **Activities** category in one overview page, regardless of the category of activity they belong to. We will see an example of this later in this chapter.

What just happened?

You have laid a foundation for your site—on paper! You have created a set of content groups (categories, in Joomla terms). Some of these categories contain subcategories.

Before you actually start using Joomla to create categories, it is a good idea to sketch a structure for the content that you have in mind. Basically, no matter how big or small your website is, you will organize it just like the example you have just seen. You will work from top to bottom, from the primary level to the lower levels, defining content groups and their relations. In Joomla, you can have as many subcategory levels as you like. However, try to keep your site map lean and clean. Choose an organization that makes sense to you and your visitors. A complex structure will make it harder to maintain the content, and eventually—when building menus—it will make it harder to design clear and simple navigation paths for your visitors.



Tips on choosing main categories

It can be useful to choose categories based on the main intentions people have when they come to the site. What are they here for? Is it to browse products or to join a workshop?

Common choices for main categories are: **Products, Catalogue, Company, Portfolio, About Us, Jobs, News, and Downloads.**

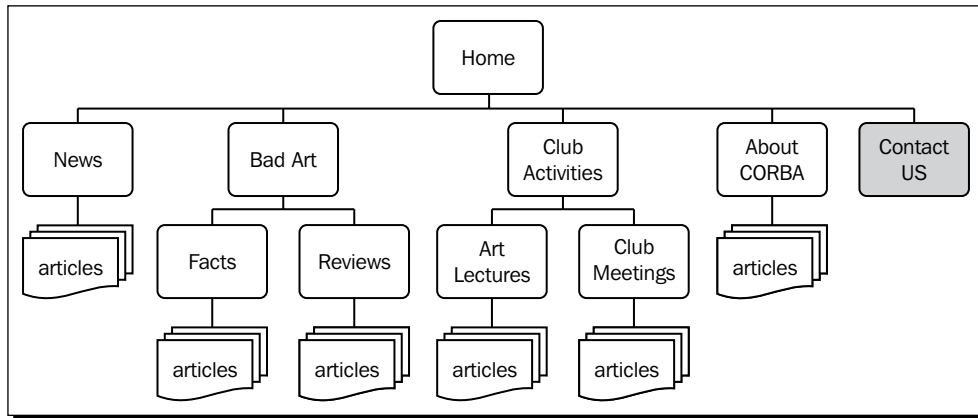
Try not to have more than five to seven main categories. Once you have more than that, readers won't be able to hold them all in their heads at once when they have to choose which one to browse.

Using tags as an additional means of organizing content





Since version 3.1, Joomla features a additional powerful system to organize content. You now have the option to label articles (and other content) by using content tags. You may be familiar with tags, as they are widely used on blogs and other websites. Assigning tags allows related articles to be grouped and makes it easier for visitors to find specific content. Clicking on an article's tag will take the visitor to a page that displays all content labeled with that particular tag. For now, you will first lay the foundation for the site content by using a set of categories. You will see an example of adding content tags in the *Using tags to organize content* section later in this chapter.

Transferring your site map to Joomla!

Let's have a closer look at our new site map and identify the Joomla elements. This site consists of four types of content, just like many other Joomla sites. The outline of the site is shown in the following diagram:



The content types in our CORBA site map are discussed in the following table:

Description	Diagram
Obviously, the top-level item will be the Home page.	
The main content groups we can identify are called categories . This small site has four main categories, two of which contain two subcategories. In Joomla, you can present articles in a given category in the category overview pages.	
Each of the categories hold actual content. This is what will end up in Joomla as articles .	
The home page, categories, and articles are all about article content, that is, they're all <i>text and images</i> . However, most sites are likely to also contain a different type of content: items containing special functionality. An example is the contact form in the site map shown in the previous figure. Other examples are guest books, order forms, photo galleries, and so on.	

What's the purpose of uncategorized articles?

In this site map, we have placed all article content in categories. However, more often than not, you will find there are one or two articles that don't really belong in any category: a **Disclaimer** page or a simple **About Us** page. In Joomla, you can add these as uncategorized articles. When you install Joomla, it will always contain at least one default category, **Uncategorised**. You have seen an example of using this category when building your first site in the previous chapter.



Usually, uncategorized articles contain static content, such as an **About Us** page or some legal information.

Moreover, uncategorized articles come in handy when building a very small site of just a few pages. Instead of creating categories that each hold just one article, you can leave all content uncategorized. You will see some examples of this at the end of this chapter.

Another way to make use of uncategorized articles is as a placeholder for articles that have not yet been assigned to a category. You can always place uncategorized articles in a (new) category later on.

Basically, the four groups outlined in the previous table are all there is to a Joomla site. When you have got your site blueprint laid out, you won't meet any surprises when building. You can transform any amount of content and functionality into a website.

How do you turn a site map into a website?

What's the best way to get from the site map on the back of your napkin to a real-life Joomla site? In this book, we will work in the following order:

1. Organize by creating content containers:

You have seen that much of the site map we just created consists of content containers, that is, categories. In this chapter, we will create all containers necessary for our example site.

2. Add content by filling the containers with articles:

Next, we will add articles to categories. Articles are the *classic content* that most web pages are made of. We will work on article content for our example site in the next chapter.

3. Put your contents on display by creating the home page and content overview pages:

Now, you want to guide and invite visitors. You can achieve this using two special types of pages in the site map: the home page and Joomla's category overview pages (secondary home pages). You will focus on deploying these page types in *Chapter 7, Welcoming Your Visitor – Creating Attractive Home Pages and Overview Pages*.

4. Make everything findable by creating menus:

The top-level items in your site map will probably end up as menu items on the site. Opening up your site to the world will create and customize menus, helping visitors to easily navigate your content. This is the subject of *Chapter 8, Helping Your Visitors Find What They Want – Managing Menus*.

What about the special content?

In the preceding list, we have only accounted for classic content, such as articles, home pages, overview pages, and menus linking them all. We haven't mentioned one essential part of the site map yet: the special goodies. On a dynamic website, you are likely to have much more than just plain old articles. You can add picture galleries, forms, product catalogs, site maps, and much, much more. It is important to identify these special pages from the beginning, but you will add them later using Joomla's components and extensions. That is why we will first concentrate on building a rock-solid foundation; later we will add all of the desired extras.



Let's start with step one now and get our site organized!

Creating categories and subcategories

Let's log in to Joomla again and turn to the first step in the task list outlined in the previous steps about creating content containers. In the previous chapter, you had a taste of how you create categories in Joomla. It's pretty straightforward and the same goes for creating categories within categories (called subcategories or nested categories). Let's find out how this works for our example site.

Time for action – creating a category and subcategories

We've seen that the CORBA site could do with some extra content containers. We've already outlined what categories are needed on paper, so, let's add the first new category, **About CORBA**:

1. Navigate to **Content | Category Manager | Add New Category**.
2. In the **Category Manager: Add A New Articles Category** screen, fill out the **Title** field. In this example, type `About CORBA`:

3. Leave the other values unchanged and click on **Save & Close**. You're taken to the **Category Manager** screen. The **About CORBA** category is now shown in the **Category Manager** list.

According to our site map, the next few categories we need are nested: one main category (**Bad Art**) containing two subcategories (**Facts** and **Reviews**). We will add them as follows:

1. In the **Category Manager** screen, click on **New**.
2. In the **Category Manager: Add A New Articles Category** screen, fill out the **Title** field with the name `Bad Art`.
3. Click on **Save & New**. This button makes it easier to create a series of categories; in one go, the current category is saved and the **Add A New Articles Category** screen opens.

4. Enter the details for the next category you want to create. In the **Title** field, add **Facts**. In the **Details** section on the right-hand side of the screen, locate the **Parent** drop-down box and select **Bad Art**, as shown in the following screenshot:



The screenshot shows a form for creating a new category. The 'Title' field is filled with 'Facts'. To the right, there is an 'Alias' field with the text 'Auto-generate from title'. Below the title field, there are tabs for 'Publishing', 'Permissions', and 'Options'. A red arrow points to a 'Parent' dropdown menu, which is highlighted with a red box. The dropdown menu shows '- Bad Art' as the selected option. At the bottom of the form, there are several menu items: 'Edit', 'Insert', 'View', 'Format', 'Table', and 'Tools'.

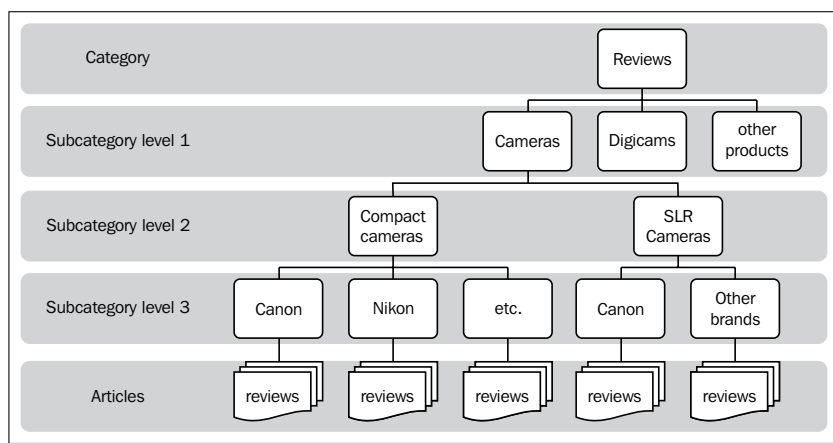
5. Click on **Save & New** again. In the next screen, enter the title of the next new category: **Reviews**. Make sure this category is also a subcategory of the **Bad Art** parent category. Click on **Save & Close**. You're done!

What just happened?

You added an **About CORBA** category and a category on **Bad Art** with two subcategories. **About CORBA** will contain just a few articles (such as the **Mission Statement**). As bad art is a much more important subject on our site, it contains a couple of subcategories that will allow you to classify lots of bad art content in a logical way.

In what case do you need more subcategory levels?

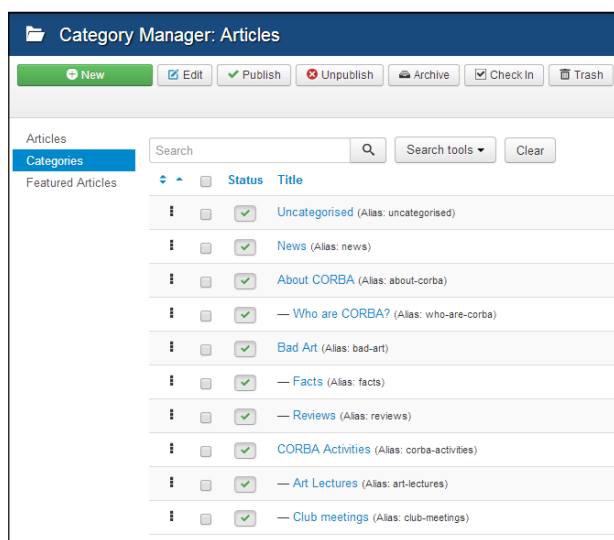
Technically, there are no limits to the number of subcategories any category can hold. However, it is best to keep the number of category levels limited, as every new layer of content adds complexity to your site. In our example site, one level of subcategories is all we need. On large sites, it can certainly make sense to use more levels of content organization. Imagine a site featuring product reviews. Let's have a look at an example of an altogether different site: a website featuring digital camera reviews. In such a site, a more elaborate system is needed to organize lots of information on brands, camera types, and product features. The following outline illustrates how such a site could use four levels of categories to organize a main category of **Reviews** in subcategories of product types, brands, and models:



Have a go hero – rearrange existing categories

Let's return to the CORBA site map—the category tree of the example site is nearly finished. One thing left to do is to group the two separate categories we created in the previous chapter, **Art Lectures** and **Meetings**. You need to change these into subcategories of a new main category: **Activities**. Luckily, in Joomla it's easy to rearrange categories and move them up or down in the category tree.

To do this, first create a new category called **Activities** and click on **Save & Close**. Now, open the existing **Art Lectures** category (go to **Category Manager** and click on its title) and change **Parent** to **Activities**. Repeat the same steps for the **Club Meetings** category. In **Category Manager**, the results are displayed as follows:





You can easily recognize subcategories in **Category Manager**, as they are always displayed indented. A first-level subcategory is indented one position, a second level will be indented two positions, and so on.

You're done! The site map that we outlined on paper before has now turned into a Joomla category tree. It consists of four main categories, two of which contain subcategories. It is a clear and logical structure.



If you need to copy or move a lot of categories (or articles), Joomla's **Batch** function can speed up this process. It allows you to copy or move multiple items in one go. See the *Refining your site's structure* section later in this chapter for an example.

Adding content to new categories

By adding new categories, you have made room for growth. We will leave these containers empty for now; in the next chapters, we will add articles to them. However, if you do want to add some (dummy) content to any of the new categories, you can do this by repeating the steps you took in the previous chapter (see the *Step two – adding content* section in *Chapter 4, Web Building Basics – Creating a Site in an Hour*). In short, navigate to **Content | Article Manager** and click on **New**. Add a title and in the **Category** drop-down box, select any of the new categories. Add some article text and add a **Read More** link after the first paragraph to enable Joomla to separately show the introductory text and the body text. Click on **Save & New** to quickly open a new, empty article editor screen, or click on **Save as Copy** to save the current article and leave the article editor and its content open for you to create a copy, changing any details as needed.

Displaying main categories and subcategories on your site

Categories are content containers; they tell Joomla how to group things in the backend. Now, how do you get the content in these containers to show up on your website? You have already seen in *Chapter 4, Web Building Basics – Creating a Site in an Hour*, that one way to do this is by adding a menu link of the **Category Blog** type. In the previous chapter, you have already added menu links to the **Lectures** and **Meetings** categories in the same manner.

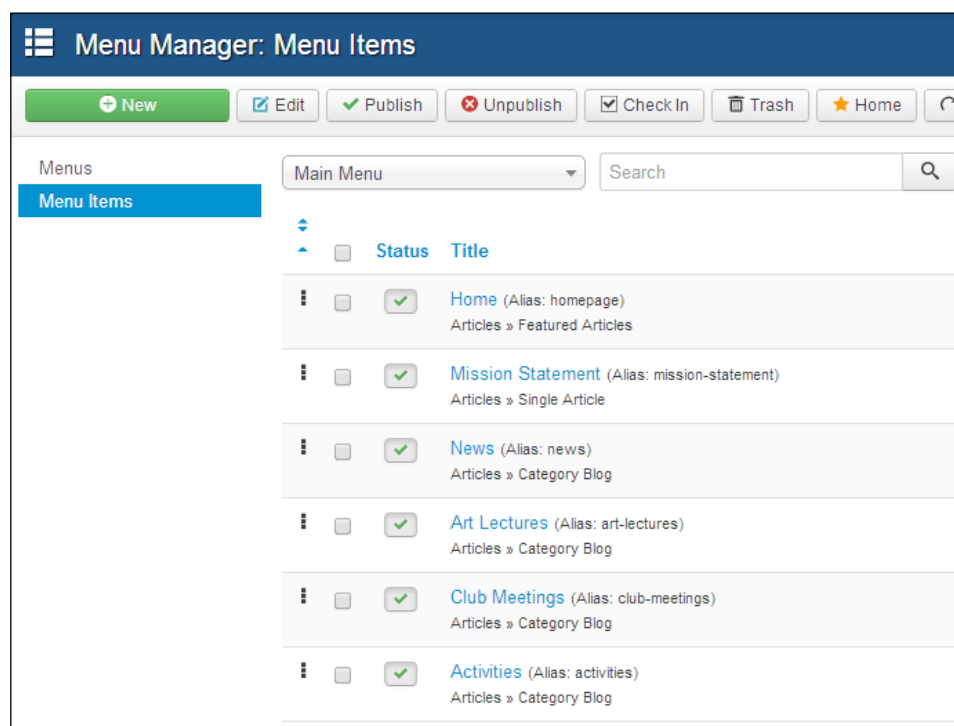
Let's start creating menu links that points to categories in some more detail. How do you go about creating a menu link to display the content of the new **Activities** main category (top-level category) and its subcategories?

Time for action – creating a link to point to a main category

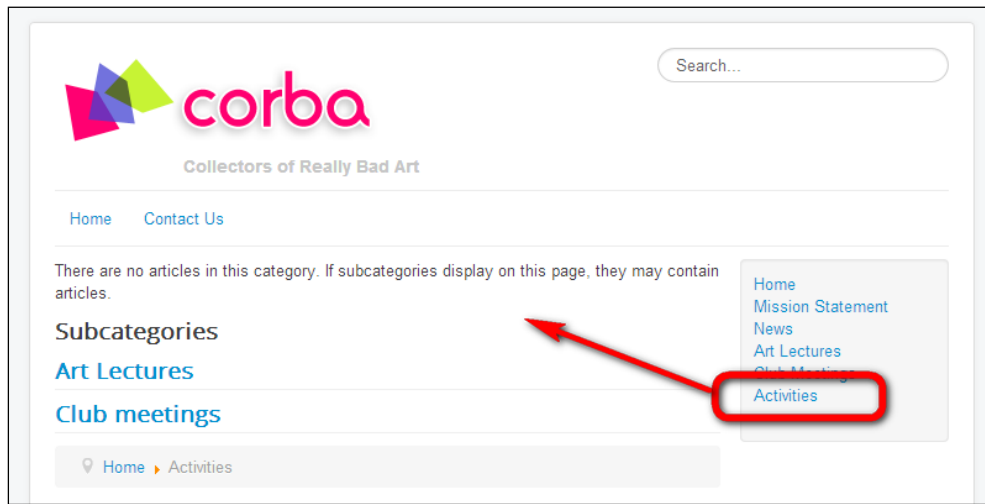
Follow the ensuing steps to create a menu link that points to a category:

1. Navigate to **Menus | Main Menu** and click on **New**.
2. The **Menu Manager: New Menu Item** screen opens. In the **Menu Item Type** section, navigate to **Articles | Category Blog**.
3. In the **Choose a category** drop-down list, select **Activities**.
4. Enter a **Menu Title** (that is, *Activities*).
5. Click on **Save & Close**.

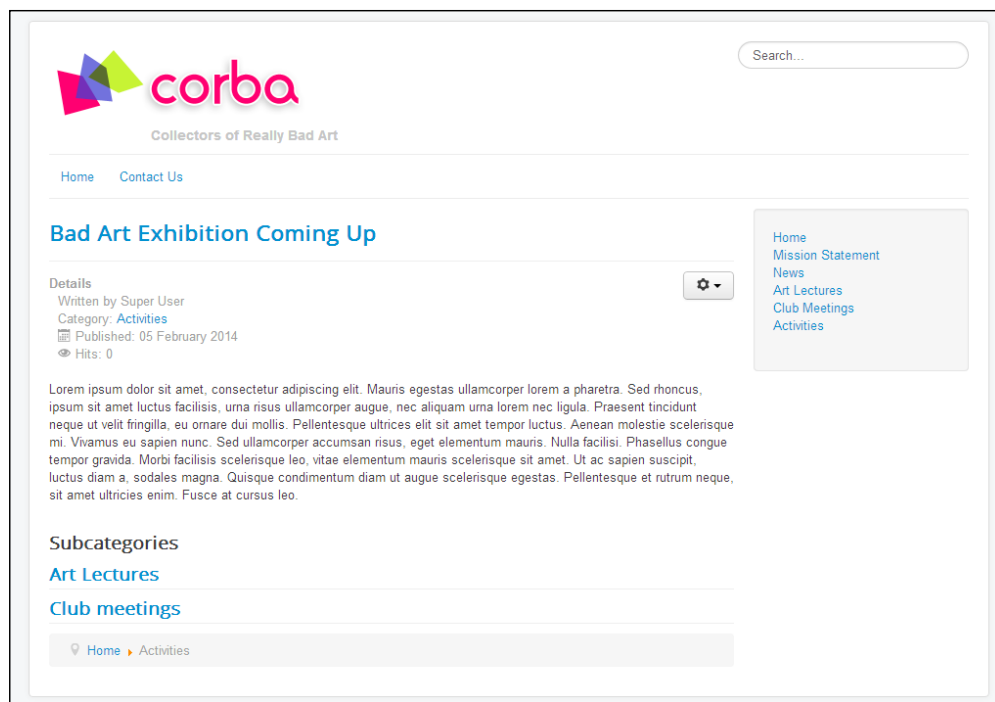
As you can see in the following screenshot, **Activities** now shows up as the last menu item in the **Menu Items** manager. The order in which menu items are presented here is the same order they will have in the **Main Menu** list on your website. If you would like to move the **Activities** link up in the **Main Menu** list, just click on the three little blocks in the ordering column to drag-and-drop any menu item to the desired position. (The ordering column is the one on the left-hand side with two little blue triangles pointing up and down in the top row.) In this example, we will leave the order unchanged.



Click on **View Site** and click on the new **Activities** link in the main menu to check out what's changed on the frontend, as shown in the following screenshot:



Rather uninviting, isn't it? As you can see, a menu link to a top-level category (that holds other categories) displays differently from a direct link to a category, such as the direct menu links to the **Art Lectures** and **Club Meetings** categories you created earlier. Because the top-level **Activities** category is empty, the **Activities** menu link points to a page that contains no more than just two links to the subcategories. However, if you were to add an article to the **Activities** category, the display would change, shown as follows:



As you can see, the **Activities** link now points to a page containing introduction text from the main category (in this case, there is just one article in it) and there are two links to the subcategories at the bottom of the page. When the visitor clicks the **Art Lectures** or **Club Meetings** link, they will be taken to a page showing the content of that specific subcategory.

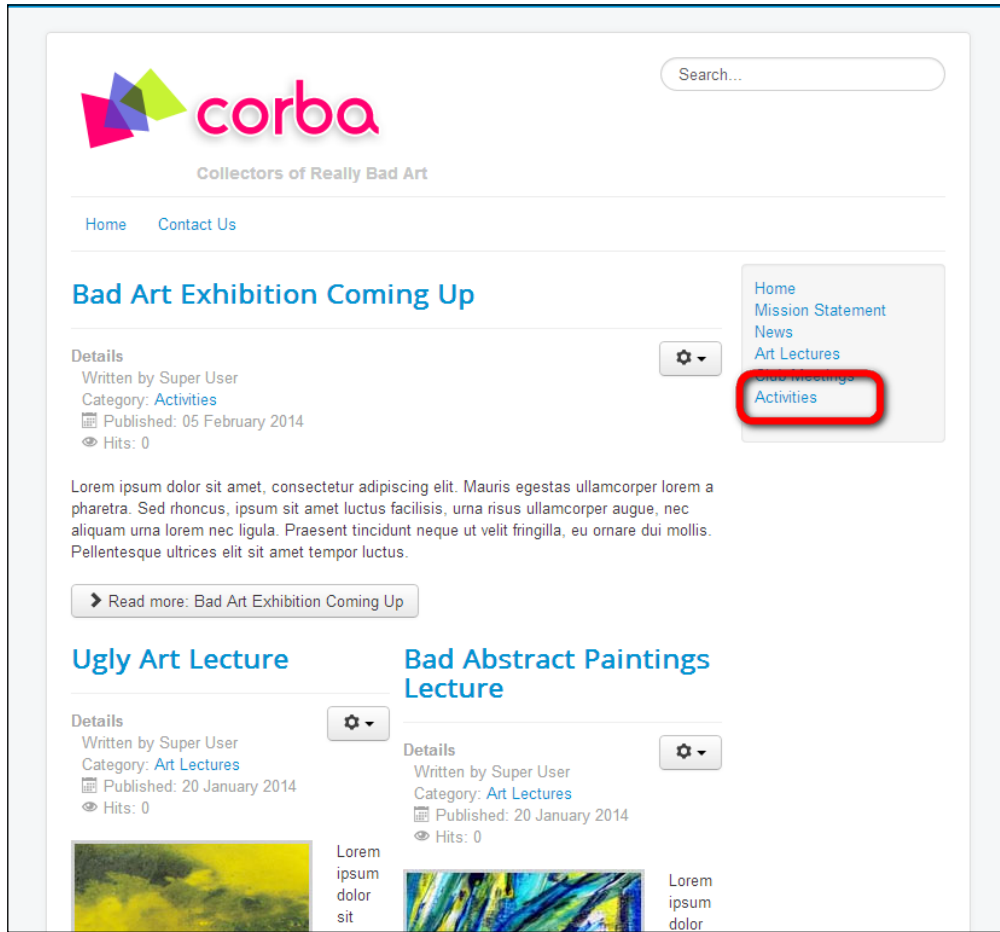
Have a go hero – exploring the possibilities of category pages

When categories contain subcategories, the default setup of category blog pages requires visitors to click on the links to subcategories at the bottom of the page to see what articles they contain. However, it's also possible to make the articles from all subcategories visible on the **Activities** page. Let's have a peek at the possibilities right now; in the later chapters, we will explore overview pages like these more thoroughly.

To change the layout of the **Category Blog** page, go to **Menu Manager** again and edit the **Activities** menu item by clicking on the menu item **Title**. Click on the **Blog Layout** tab and set the **Include Subcategories** option to **All** and then save the changes, as shown in the following screenshot:



When the visitor clicks on the **Activities** link on the frontend, a page containing article introduction texts from the main category **Activities** and both subcategories, **Art Lectures** and **Club Meetings**, will be displayed. This is shown in the following screenshot:



You will notice changing one small setting makes quite a difference. Feel free to explore the other options of the **Category Blog** menu item type and get a taste for their effects on the page display. This is just the beginning: there's much more to categories' content presentation than just the blog layout. You can choose to display category content in many other formats. For now, using the **Category Blog** format will do just fine; you will learn about the other ways of displaying category contents in *Chapter 7, Welcoming Your Visitor – Creating Attractive Home Pages and Overview Pages*.



If you have followed along with all the previous *Time for action* sections, you have now got a rather messy menu containing separate links to both **Activities** and to its subcategories, **Club Meetings** and **Art Lectures**. That's okay for now; we will clean up and rearrange our site menus in *Chapter 8, Helping Your Visitors Find What They Want – Managing Menus*.

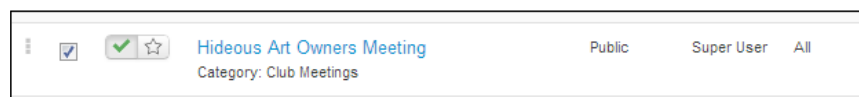
Refining your site structure

You probably won't get your site structure right in one go unless you have got a really simple, really static site. Is that a bad thing? No, it isn't—because websites evolve and Joomla makes it easy to start with a provisional structure and change things when needed. Maybe there is new content available that has to go into a new category; or maybe because when you are actually adding content, you learn that your well-organized site isn't altogether logical after all. That's fine; keeping a close eye on the structure of your website is a continuous process. Luckily, categories, once defined, can be changed easily without any consequences for the articles they may contain. You've seen how easy it is to add new ones, and it's equally simple to move content from one category to another.

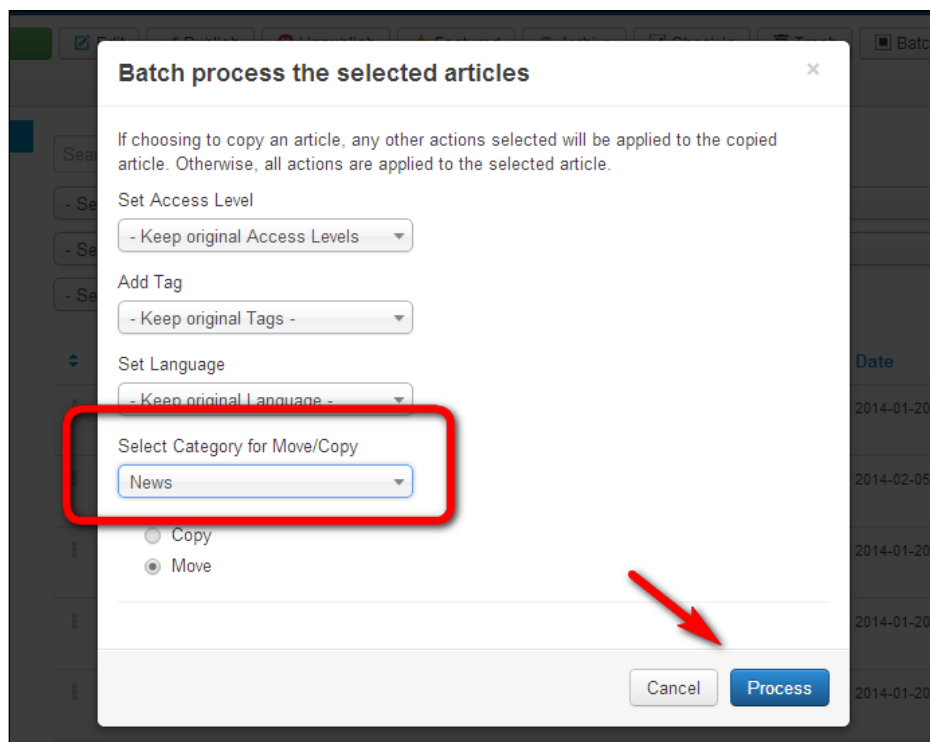
Time for action – moving content from one category to another

The main **Activities** category contains a couple of articles that you may want to move to the **News** category. Let's clean up the **Activities - Meetings** category and move anything topical into the **News** category:

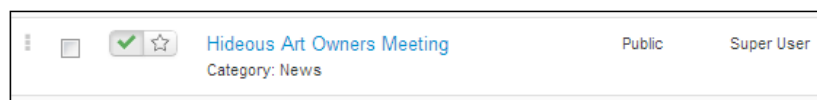
1. Navigate to **Content | Article Manager**. From the list, select the items you want to move from the **Meetings** category to the **News** category. In this example, we've selected one article:



2. Click on the **Batch** button. A pop-up box called **Batch process the selected articles** appears. In the **Select Category for Move/Copy** drop-down box, select the target category: **News**. Once you are done, click on **Process**:



3. The following message is displayed: **Batch process completed successfully**. In the **Article Manager** screen, the selected article is now part of the **News** category:



What just happened?

You've faced the real life challenge of content management! Now, you're not only able to create a sound content structure for your website, but you also know how to improve on it. You can move any amount of existing content to another category.

Have a go hero – moving entire categories

Sometimes, you might want to move an entire (sub) category and all its contents to another main category. Try this out for yourself—it's not much different from moving articles, as you've done just before. Imagine you'd like to move the **Reviews** subcategory from the **Bad Art** main category to another main category. In **Category Manager**, select the category you want to move. Click on the **Batch** button and in the **Batch process the selected categories** screen, use the **Select category for Move/Copy** drop-down box to select the target category. Click on **Process** to move the category to its new main category. It's just as straightforward to move the entire category—including all of its article content—back again. This flexibility is great when you're setting up or restructuring your site.

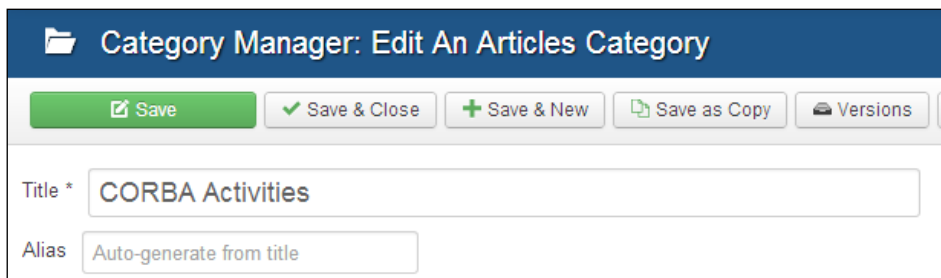
Renaming categories

As we've just seen, Joomla allows you to easily rearrange your site structure and its content. You can also rename categories that already contain articles. No content will be lost; the existing category content will just be assigned to the renamed category.

Time for action – renaming a category

On your client's website, there's an **Activities** category. Your client wants to make it clear that this site section is not about activities organized by other art societies—it's only about CORBA. So, you could change the name of the section to **CORBA Activities**, as explained in the following steps:

1. Navigate to **Content | Category Manager** and click on the title of the **Activities** section to open it for editing.
2. In the edit screen, change the **Title** to **CORBA Activities**, as shown in the screenshot:



The screenshot shows the Joomla Category Manager interface for editing a category. The title bar reads "Category Manager: Edit An Articles Category". Below the title bar are several buttons: "Save" (green), "Save & Close", "Save & New", "Save as Copy", and "Versions". The main form has two input fields: "Title *" with the value "CORBA Activities" and "Alias" with the value "Auto-generate from title".

3. In the **Alias** field, remove the existing alias (remember, the **Alias** is Joomla's internal name for the article used to create user-friendly URLs). Leave this box blank; Joomla will fill it with CORBA activities when you apply or save your changes. You can check that now by clicking on **Save**. You will notice the **Alias** box is filled out automatically.
4. Click on **Close**. In **Category Manager**, the new title and alias are displayed.

What just happened?

By changing a category name, all of Joomla's internal references to the name are updated automatically. All articles in the renamed category will reflect the changes you made. In **Article Manager**, for example, all items that belonged to the **Activities** category are now updated to show they are in the **CORBA Activities** category. No manual labor here—and more importantly, nothing is lost!

Have a go hero – name and rename

Using appropriate, short, and descriptive labels for categories (and for the menu links pointing to them) is essential. After all, these are the words that guide your visitors to the content you want them to discover. It's a good idea to tweak these labels until you're perfectly happy with them. When you change the names of categories, you might want to change menu link labels too, as these don't automatically change with the category name. Try to find short and appropriate menu link labels. To change menu link labels, navigate to the main menu, select any of the menu items, and change the data in the **Title** field (such as **Activities**).



When changing titles (of categories or menu link items), make sure to clear the content of the **Alias** box. Joomla will automatically create an Alias for the new title.

Changing the category settings

You've already created a lot of categories without altering any of the default settings. In some cases, however, you may want to have some more control over the category details. In the next screenshot, you can see the options that are available when you edit or create a category in the **Category Manager: Edit An Articles Category** or **Add A New Articles Category** screen.

The screen is organized in four main sections that are accessible through tabs: **Category**, **Publishing**, **Permissions**, and **Options**. These screens allow you to enter more details on the content of a category (by adding a description), determine whether a category is visible or not for specific user groups, and so on. The **Category Manager: Edit An Articles Category** screen is shown in the following screenshot:

The screenshot displays the Joomla! Category Manager interface for editing an article category. The title bar reads "Category Manager: Edit An Articles Category" and the Joomla! logo is in the top right. Below the title bar is a toolbar with buttons for "Save", "Save & Close", "Save & New", "Save as Copy", "Versions", "Close", and "Help".

The main content area is divided into two sections. On the left, the "Description" section features a rich text editor with a menu (Edit, Insert, View, Format, Table, Tools) and a toolbar with various formatting options. The "Title" field contains the text "News" and the "Alias" field contains "news".

On the right, the "Options" section contains several dropdown menus and text input fields:

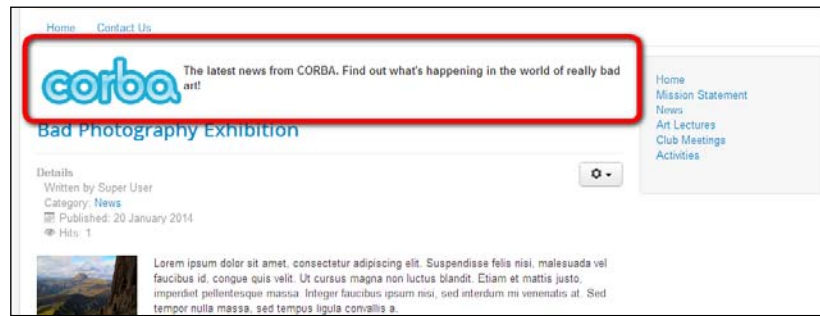
- Parent:** A dropdown menu set to "-- No parent".
- Tags:** A text input field with the placeholder "Select some options".
- Status:** A dropdown menu set to "Published".
- Access:** A dropdown menu set to "Public".
- Language:** A dropdown menu set to "All".
- Note:** A text input field.
- Version Note:** A text input field.

Let's have a look at the options that are available when creating or editing a category.

Setting	Description
Title	This is the category title as it will be displayed. You can use lowercase, uppercase, and spaces.
Alias	Leave the Alias box blank. The alias is the internal name of the item. When you save the category, Joomla will automatically fill in the category name in lowercase letters without spaces or special characters. If Title is About CORBA , the alias will be about-corba . Joomla can use the alias to create the page URL (<code>www.example.com/about-corba.html</code>) when using Joomla's search engine friendly URLs (see <i>Chapter 12, Attracting Search Engine Traffic – SEO Tips and Techniques</i>).
Description	In the this area, you can enter and format some descriptive text that introduces the subject of the category that is shown as follows:



Category descriptions can be displayed at the top of pages displaying category content (provided the category description is set to show in the **Category** options of the menu link pointing to that category overview page).



For more on category descriptions, refer to *Chapter 7, Welcoming Your Visitors – Creating Attractive Home Pages and Overview Pages*.

Parent	Select No parent to create a top-level category or select any of the existing categories to add a subcategory.
Tags	Here, you can enter content tags to classify categories. You will learn more about tagging content later in this chapter; refer to the <i>Using tags to organize content</i> section.

Setting	Description
Status	The category status can be Published (visible on the frontend of the site), Unpublished (not visible on the site, but still visible in the backend), Archived (moved to the archive; you can make archived articles / categories visible with a special menu link), or Trashed (moved to the trash). Unpublished categories can be useful when your site is live and you're preparing a new category. When you use this option, your site visitors won't know the category is there until you publish it.
Access	By choosing the appropriate Access setting, you control who have access to this category: Public (all visitors), Registered (registered users), or Special (users with special rights). The default value, Public , should be okay. When you start working with different user types on your site, you can change settings (see <i>Chapter 9, Opening Up the Site – Enabling Users to Log In and Contribute</i> on user access levels). You can also create special access levels.
Language	If you have a multilingual site, this drop-down list box allows you to select the language for this category.
Note and Version Note	Notes allow you to enter short text that will only be visible in the administrative interface. You can add a note for yourself or for others who have access to the backend. For example, you can describe the purpose of the category (a new generic category on club activities). A version note can be particularly useful if you change a category and want to explain your choices (for example, a changed description by request of John). This way, you can easily track why you changed things or what you changed later on. Joomla automatically stores previous versions of the category after alterations; you can access these through the Versions button in the administration toolbar. For more information on the version history feature, see <i>Chapter 6, Creating Killer Content – Adding and Editing Articles</i> .

The Publishing tab

Created by	This is used to select the user who will be displayed as the author of this category.
Meta Description, Meta Keywords	Metadata is added to the HTML document source code. It's information that's not displayed on the web page, but search engine spiders do process it. Metadata for a category override global metadata or menu item metadata. You can add a short meta description and meta keywords for categories. Not all search engines use Meta Keywords to index content, but Meta Description is certainly important. For example, Google uses it in search results pages to describe the page content.
Author	Using this option, add an author to make it possible for search engines to display the author of the document.
Robots	The Robots meta tag is used to indicate whether search engine spiders should index the contents of this category or not.

The Permissions tab

Public, Guest, and so on Category permissions allow you to determine what different user groups are allowed to do with this category. For example, you can determine which user groups can edit or create content in this category. You can read more about permissions in *Chapter 9, Opening Up the Site – Enabling Users to Log in and Contribute*.

The Options tab

Alternative Layout This is a powerful feature that lets you select a custom layout for the current category, provided the selected template (or component) allows for these additional layout options. A template may contain so-called template overrides, which are custom layouts that overrule Joomla's default layouts of categories. More information can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/jlayouts> (a shortcut URL pointing to <http://downloads.joomla.org/trackeritem/5/8/6/58619/introtoaltlayouts inversion1-6v2.pdf>).

Image This option affects how overview pages of the category content are displayed. At the top of these pages, an image and a short description can be shown. Here, you can select the image that will be displayed with that description. However, you can also choose to insert an image into the description itself, as shown on the previous page in the example given under **Description**.

Using tags to label and organize content

Since Joomla 3.1, there's an additional way to organize articles. Apart from using categories, you can now use content tags to classify articles (and other content, even categories themselves). This way, you provide the visitor with alternative means to find groups of content—not just by browsing content categories, but also exploring tagged content. Tags are displayed with every tagged content item; each tag will automatically link to a list of all content labeled with the same tag. Moreover, it's possible to assign as many tags as you like to any article—whereas, you can assign articles to just one category.

Both categories and tags are ways to group content. Moreover, both can be used as links to those groups of content; the visitor can browse content by category or tag. So what's the difference between categories and tags? Categories divide your site content in broad sections, whereas tags offer more precision in classifying content. A helpful analogy is treating categories as the table of contents of your site and tags as terms from the index. Categories help your user when browsing the main topics, whereas tags help them find more details about the topics regardless of the category they're in.

Adding tags to the example site

Tags allow you to add all kinds of new relationships between content items. To explore the possibilities, let's see how we could deploy the tags system in our art website. For example, we could add tags grouping content as follows:

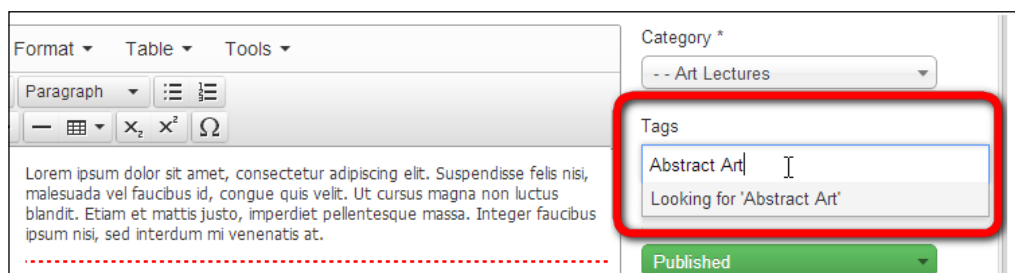
- ◆ By art genre, such as abstract art, landscapes, and portraits
- ◆ By technique, such as oil painting, drawing, and photography
- ◆ By period, such as 19th century, 20th century, and 21st century
- ◆ by country of origin, such as American art and European art

We will keep it simple and add just a few content tags labeling content by art genre. This will be a good way to allow site visitors who are interested in specific genres to find all the content, whatever category that content is in. After all, content about abstract art could be present in different categories, such as **Art Reviews** or **Facts**.

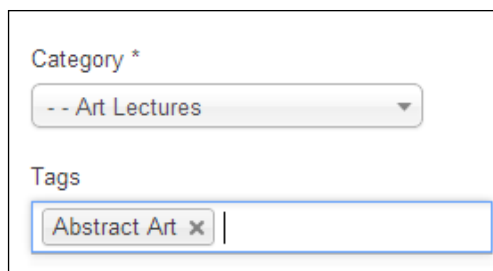
Time for action – creating a tag

Let's create a tag called *Abstract Art* and add it to several articles that are about this type of art (regardless of the category they're in) by performing the following steps. This way, visitors can see all related abstract art content just by clicking on that tag.

1. Go to **Content | Article Manager** and click on an existing article to open it. In this example, I've opened the **Bad Abstract Paintings Lecture** article.
2. To the right of the editor text area, there's a **Tags** text field. Here, you can enter and create a new tag. Start typing the words *Abstract Art*, as shown in the following screenshot:



3. Make sure to end the tag text by hitting the *Enter* key. Congratulations, you've created your first tag! The tag is now displayed as shown in the following screenshot:



4. Click on **Save & Close** to return to **Article Manager**.
5. We will also assign the **Abstract Art** tag to an article in another category: **Reviews**. If you don't yet have any articles in the **Reviews** category, create one now. In this example, I've created a dummy article and named it *Visual Atrocities*. Save the article.
6. Now let's add the **Abstract Art** tag. As this tag already exists, you don't have to type it again. Place the mouse cursor in the **Tags** text field. Joomla will automatically display the available tags, which is just this one. Click on it to assign it to an article, as shown in the following screenshot:



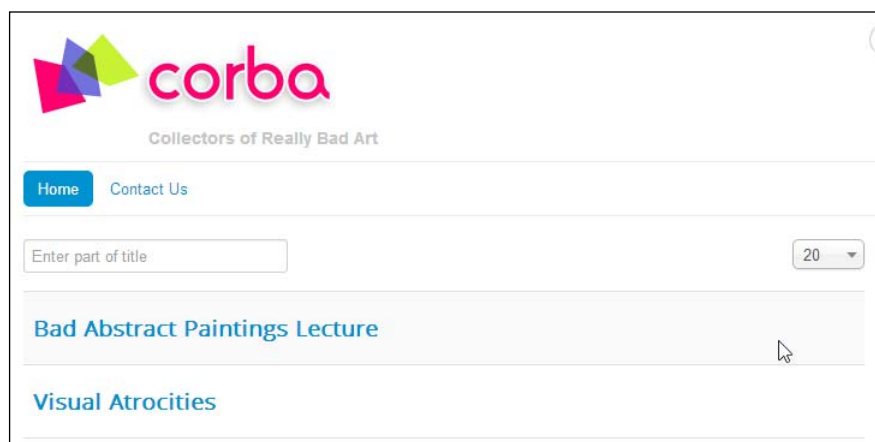
7. Click on **Save & Close**.

What just happened?

You have just created a tag just by typing a new tag in the **Tags** field and you've assigned it to a couple of articles in different categories. Let's have a look at the frontend of the site. Navigate to the **Bad Abstract Paintings Lecture** article. Our brand new tag is shown under the article details as follows:



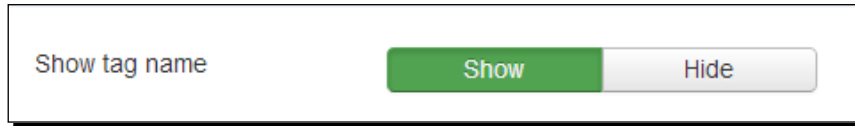
Click on the tag to see a list of all articles featuring the **Abstract Art** tag, as shown in the following screenshot:



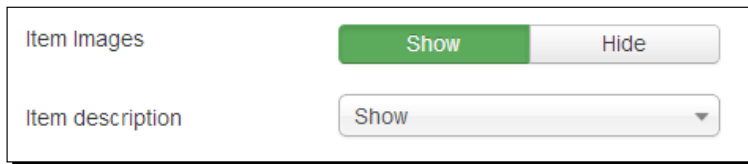
That's it! Just by adding a simple tag to an article, you've allowed the visitor to see to all content sharing that same tag.

Have a go hero – improve the tagged items page

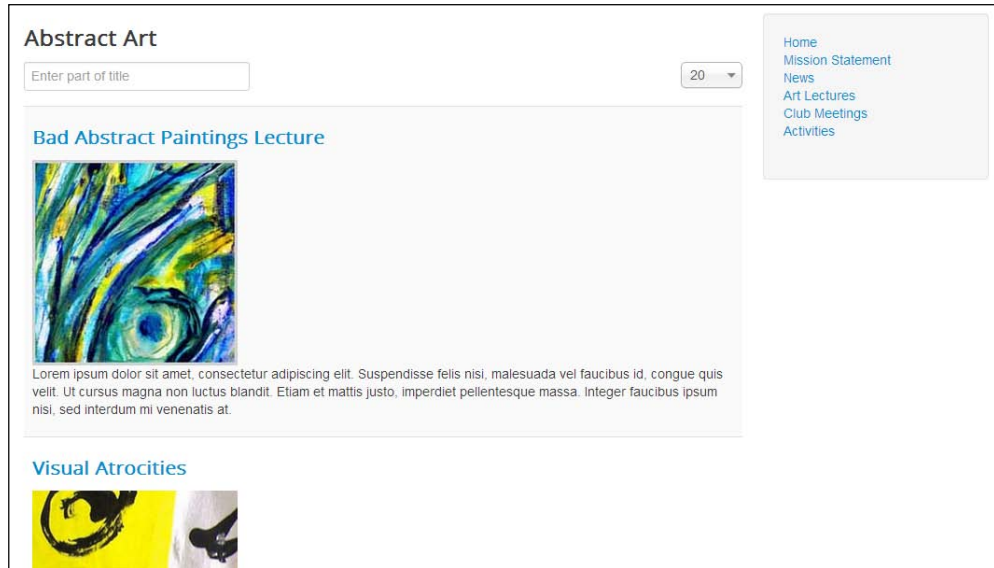
You will notice that by default the page displaying tagged items is a little bland. It just shows a list of article titles, without a page heading or any information on the article content. Luckily, Joomla allows you to present more article details to the **Tags** page. To see how this works, navigate to **Components | Tags** and click on the **Options** button. Under **Tagged Items Options**, there's a huge list of settings that will allow you to tweak the page display. To try out the possibilities, it's a good idea to set **Show tag name** to **Show**, as shown in the following screenshot:



Also, set **Item Images** and **Item Description** to **Show**, as shown in the following screenshot:



Now, have a look at the frontend of the site again to see what the tags listing page looks like, which will be similar to the one shown as follows:

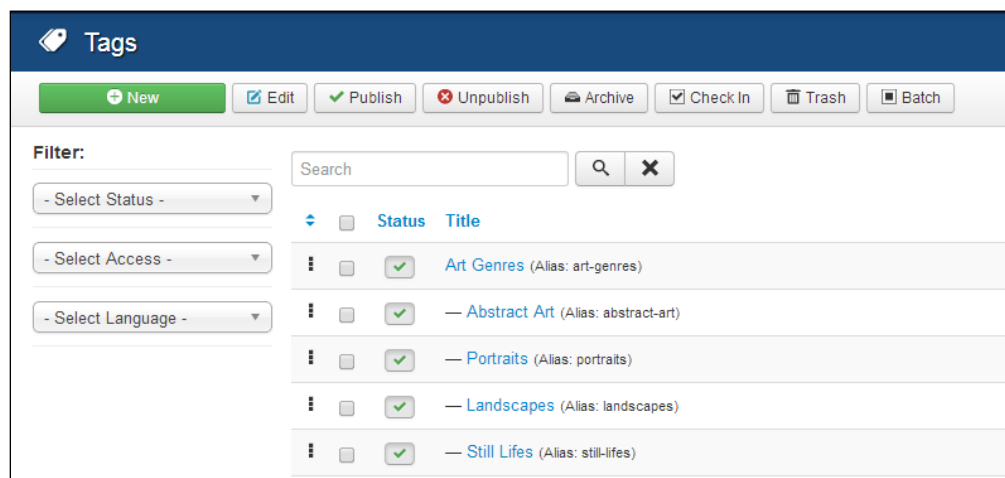


You will notice the differences are striking: after clicking on a tag, the visitor now sees a clear and attractive page. The content tag now serves as the page heading; all tagged articles feature article images and short teaser texts. Feel free to explore the many available settings of the **Tags** component and their effects on the presentation of tagged content.

Creating and managing tags using the Tags component

In the previous section, you learned how easy it is to add tags to articles. They can be added by just entering or selecting a tag in the **Tags** field of the article editor. Using this simple technique, you can create any amount of tags and make the list of tags on your site as elaborate as you need it to be. However, you can further organize tags using some special features that you can only access through **Components | Tags**.

Managing tags in the **Tags** component is very similar to managing categories. Here, you can create tags, edit existing tags (for example, to add tag descriptions), and even group tags by assigning parent tags. This latter feature can be quite useful: it's possible to create a hierarchy of main tags (such as **Art Genre**) and subtags (such as **Abstract Art**, **Portraits**, and so on). The following screenshot shows what such a list of tags would look like in the **Tags** component:



When you have a site with many tags, creating a tag hierarchy is a great way to keep them organized. It helps you easily manage and assign tags and makes sure that you don't end up with an endless unordered list of tags. We won't need all these features for our example site; however, it's a good idea to explore the possibilities of the **Tags** component, add a few tags, and try out the different options.

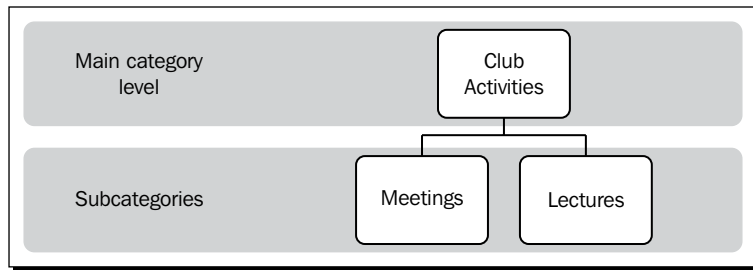


Displaying tagged items through menu links

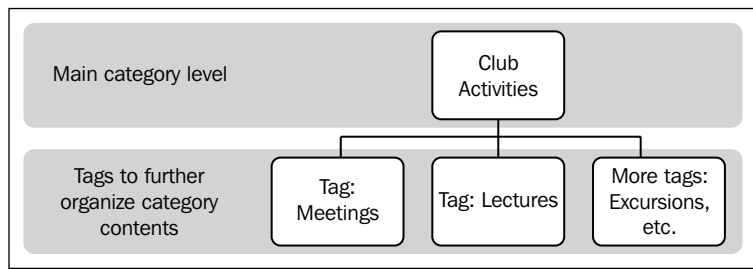
Up to now, you've seen how the visitor can browse through articles sharing the same tag by clicking on the tag itself. However, it's also possible to add menu links pointing to tag pages. By adding a menu link of **Menu Item Type** called **Tagged Items**, you can create a list of articles that share one or more specific tags. This is similar to the **Category Blog** overview pages you have already used. We will see some examples of this in *Chapter 7, Welcoming Your Visitor – Creating Attractive Home Pages and Overview Pages*, where we will explore in more detail how to create overview pages. Overview pages are pages that list the content assigned to specific categories or specific tags.

Using tags as an alternative to categories

Sometimes, using tags may offer advantages over using just categories. In our example site, we've split our main category **Club Activities** in two subcategories (**Lectures** and **Meetings**), as shown in the following diagram:



Instead of these subcategories, we could add the tags **Lectures** and **Meetings**, along with as many other tags as we need to further organize this category content. The following diagram shows how that would look:



An advantage of using tags over subcategories is that you and other content contributors can flexibly create new tags when adding a new article. So, there's no need to first make new, empty categories.

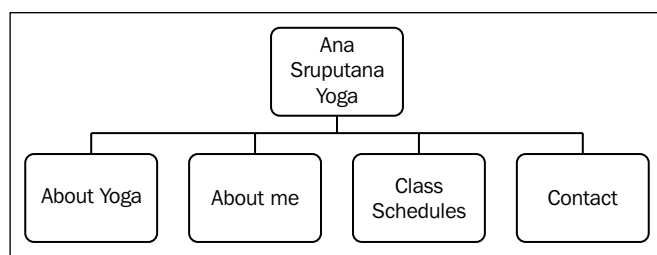
Moreover, using a number of tags within just one main **Club Activities** category allows the visitor to easily browse all activities. If they want to further narrow down their search, they can easily filter on just the articles about **Meetings**, **Lectures**, **Excursions** and so on.

In other words, tags can help you to keep the site's organization scheme as simple as possible. You can use a limited set of main categories and add tags as a flexible way to further organize the category content on a more detailed level as the need arises.

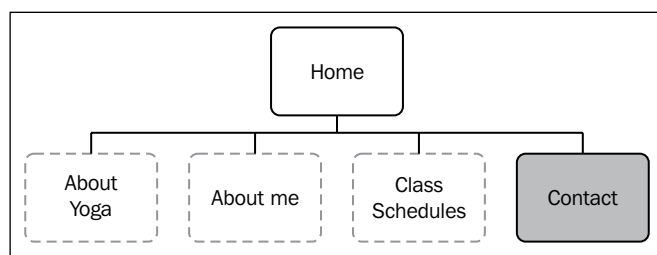
Building a site without using categories or tags

You've seen how powerful Joomla's categories and tags systems are. However, in some cases, you can just as well do without them. Very small sites, such as brochure sites with five to ten pages that do not have secondary page levels, can consist of uncategorized articles only.

Let's say your local yoga teacher asks you to develop a website. She probably wouldn't need much more content than what is shown in the following diagram:

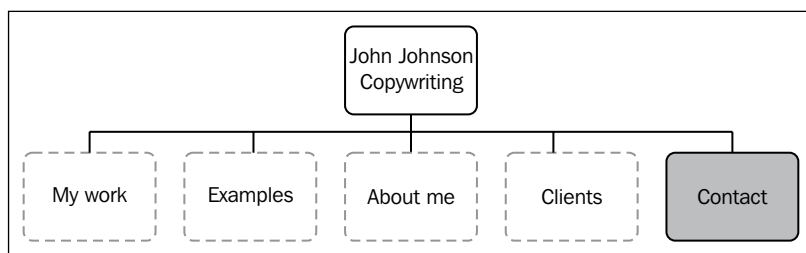


In this case, there are no layers of content below the menu link level. There will probably be five menu links: **Home**, **About Yoga**, **About Me**, **Class Schedules**, and **Contact**. Three of these will each point to an article (**About Yoga**, **About Me**, and **Class Schedules**). The **Contact** page could also be a plain article, but let's assume this is—just like we've seen before—a contact form generated by Joomla's **Contacts** component. We could translate the previous site map in Joomla terms as follows:

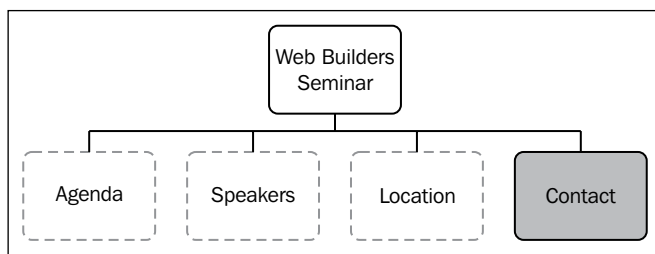


The boxes with grey dotted outlines represent uncategorized articles; the box with a gray background represents a special functionality page (in this case a contact form).

This same, simple one-level structure will be appropriate for all kinds of small sites with a dedicated subject matter, that is, a portfolio site for a one-man company or an event site. A copywriting company will have a Joomla site structure similar to the following diagram:



For an event site, such as a site for a congress or seminar, a structure like the one shown in the following diagram will be fine:



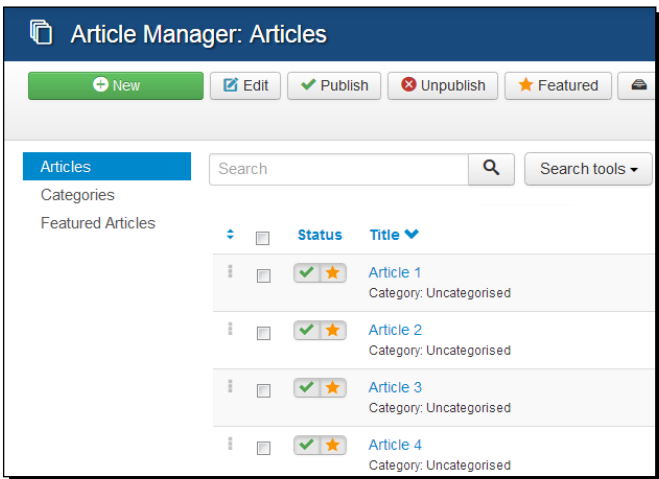
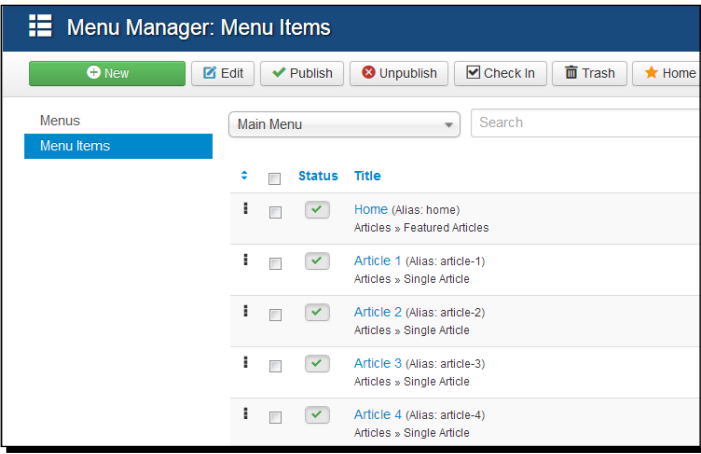
Although you will leave much of the built-in functionality to manage big, content-rich sites untouched, it's still worthwhile to use Joomla for sites like these. All the other advantages of Joomla still hold, such as the ability to add any extra functionality you like. If your client wants a registration form for his or her seminar site, or a photo gallery for his or her portfolio site, you can add these using Joomla extensions. Of course, your client will be able to manage and update content easily.

How do you go about building a small site?

Creating a small site like the examples previously shown simply means you will skip a few steps, as there's no need to create any categories. Following are the actions it takes:

1. Create the uncategorized content pages (articles) you need.
2. Add menu links to **Main Menu**. In this case, you will link directly to articles instead of categories.

An example is as follows; a three-page site based on a clean Joomla installation (without sample data). Creating the basic setup of a tiny site like this takes just a few minutes.

Description	Screenshot
<p>In this example, in our new and empty Joomla site we've created four uncategorized articles. We've set them all to display on the homepage (as Featured Articles).</p>	
<p>For each of the articles, we've added a menu link in Main Menu (via Menus Main Menu Add New Menu Item).</p>	

Description

Screenshot

This is what the visitor sees. The **Main Menu** contains four links to articles; **Front Page** shows introduction texts of the articles with the **Read more** links.



When the visitor clicks on a link, the full article is shown.



That's all there is to setting up a tiny one-level website in Joomla. Write a few articles and create links pointing to them. After that, you can focus on the extras you might want to add (refer to *Chapter 10, Getting the Most out of Your Site – Extending Joomla*) and the design (refer to *Chapter 11, Creating an Attractive Design – Working with Templates*).



Downsize the home page too

For a very small site, you can still build the home page using Joomla's default **Featured** articles system. Select a few articles to display (fully, or only as introduction texts) on the home page. However, you may want something simpler for this type of site. It's possible to show just one particular article as your own, customized home page content. You will read more about this approach in *Chapter 6, Creating Killer Content – Adding and Editing Articles*.

Have a go hero – organize a site!

Imagine you've been asked to build an informative website for a small company. How will you go about this? Think of what you want to achieve, create an outline of the main and secondary categories, and translate this outline to Joomla. What would be your main categories and subcategories, and where will you put uncategorized articles?

How about creating a small website about you? Using the site structuring skills you've acquired in this chapter, go ahead and create a great structure that will be both realizable in Joomla and appeal to your visitors.

Pop quiz – test your site organization knowledge

Q1. What's the best order in which to build Joomla-based sites?

1. Start with extensions, add content, add menu links, add content containers.
2. Start with menu links, add content containers, add content, add extensions.
3. Start with content containers, add content, add menu links, add extensions.

Q2. What can you use uncategorized articles for?

1. To display articles that have not yet been authorized.
2. To display articles that do not belong to categories.
3. To display articles that are displayed on the homepage.

Q3. How can you get categories to display in the frontend?

1. Categories are backend stuff; they're only displayed in **Category Manager**.
2. A category can be displayed by adding a specific menu link that points to a category overview page.
3. Categories are automatically displayed on overview pages when added to **Category Manager**.

Q4. How many categories can be assigned an article, and how many tags can you add to an article?

1. You can assign an article to as many categories as you want and add as many tags to the article as you want.
2. You can assign an article to one specific category, but you can add as many tags to the article as you want.
3. You can assign an article to either one category or one tag.

Summary

In *Chapter 3, First Steps – Getting to Know Joomla!*, you learned that Joomla retrieves content from a database, block by block. Together, these blocks form a web page. That's why you begin building a site by creating categories; you start with the core of the site—a well-organized content database. In this chapter, we've learned what it takes to create content categories and build a future-proof framework for site content.

Specifically, you learned that every website, big or small, requires planning. It all starts with creating a logical site map reflecting the structure of the content you have in mind. Keep it lean and clean. Bear in mind that visitors will want to get to the content they're looking for as fast as possible. To transfer your hand-drawn site map to a working Joomla site, first identify the different Joomla content elements in it. This will help you build the site step by step.

The main content containers are categories and subcategories. You will create these first, before adding content. To show category content on the site, you will add menu links pointing to categories. At any time, you can rearrange and rename categories or move their content.

Another way to organize content is by using tags. In Joomla, any article can have as many tags as you like. Generally, you will use categories for the main site structure. Tags are often used to enable visitors to find content using more specific terms.

Small sites, with just a few content pages, can do without categories or tags. They can consist of uncategorized articles only. In the next chapter, we will jump from organization to creating content. We will fill the containers we've made with different types of articles.

6

Creating Killer Content – Adding and Editing Articles

Once you have created a framework of categories and subcategories, things can move pretty fast. There's nothing to stop you from creating a content-rich site—whether you want to add a dozen, hundreds, or even thousands of pages. In this chapter, we'll focus on adding and editing articles, the type of content that's essential to most sites. Later, you might want to add other types of content (such as image galleries or forums); we'll deal with those in Chapter 10, Getting the Most Out of Your Site – Extending Joomla!.

When creating the example site in Chapter 4, Web Building Basics – Creating a Site in an Hour, you've seen how to create a new article using the default settings. You left all of the extra function buttons and parameters alone. However, in real life, you'll probably want more control. You probably want to make your content look great, add pictures, and specify exactly how to display things and what details to display. Joomla allows you to edit articles and tweak the article settings to fit your needs exactly.

In this chapter, you'll learn the following:

- ◆ Creating, editing, and formatting articles
- ◆ Splitting an article into intro text and body text
- ◆ Dealing with long articles by splitting them into a series of pages
- ◆ Tracking changes and restoring previous versions of articles
- ◆ Adjusting general article settings
- ◆ Archiving articles

So let's get started!

Articles and content pages – what's the difference?

You might be tempted to think an *article* is the same as a *page*. Strictly speaking, they aren't same. You read at the beginning of this chapter that Joomla doesn't think in terms of pages. Joomla figures any web page is constructed of a whole lot of database-driven bits and pieces, and almost any combination of those bits and pieces can turn up on the visitor's browser as a web page.

Although in Joomla an article will certainly be at the center of a content page, there's bound to be much more to that page. Around the article, there will be all kinds of other dynamic content—yes, those bits and pieces again. Be that as it may, for the sake of simplicity we'll just use the word *page* (or content page) for articles now and then. As long as we're aware that content pages may contain more than articles, that's OK, isn't it?

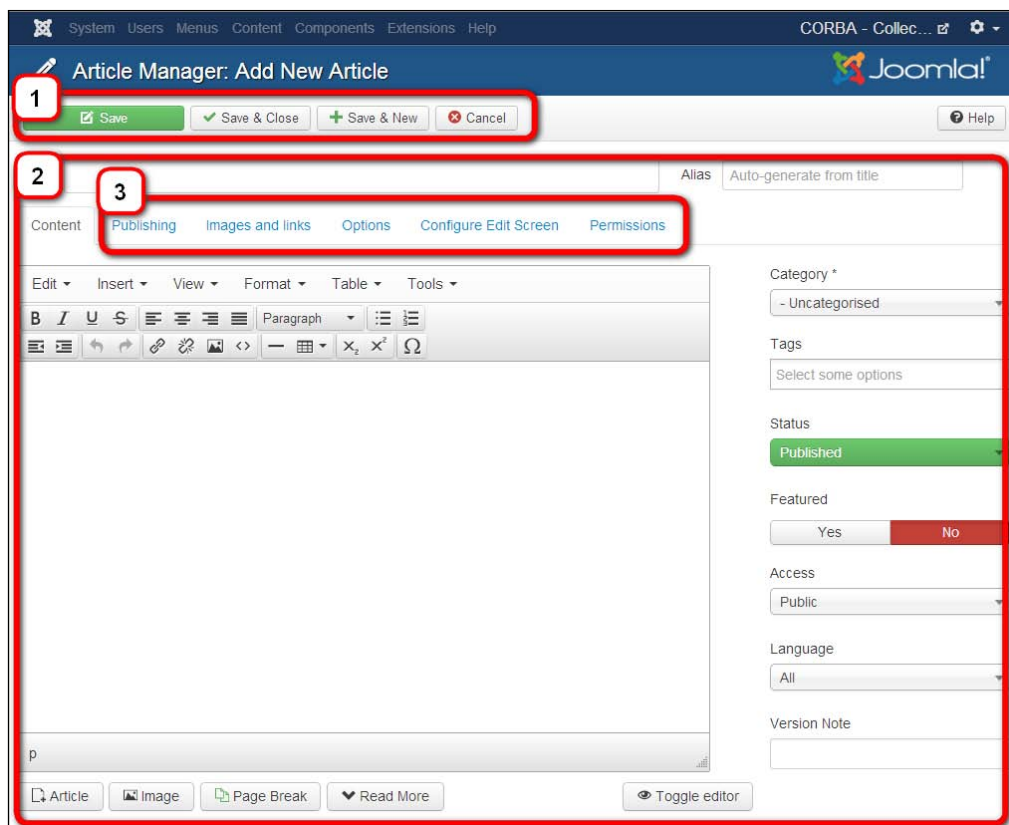
Creating and editing articles – beyond the basics

Over the last few chapters, you practiced adding and editing articles. Let's recap the steps involved:

1. To create a new article, navigate to **Content | Article Manager** and click on **New**. Alternatively, use the shortcut menu option by navigating to **Content | Article Manager | Add New Article**. Either of these two methods will open the **Add New Article** screen under **Article Manager**.
2. To edit an existing article, navigate to **Content | Article Manager**. Select the article (select the checkbox on the left-hand side of the article's title) and click on the **Edit** button in the toolbar. There's also a shortcut available—just click on the title of the article to open it in **Article Manager: Edit Article** screen.

Apart from the screen titles, the **Add New Article** and **Edit Article** screens are identical. You're already familiar with some of the most important functions; in this chapter, we'll go to the sections we haven't explored yet.

The article editor is shown in the following screenshot:



The article editing screen consists of three sections:

- ◆ The toolbar buttons (1) allow you to save the article (or cancel changes).
- ◆ The actual text editing area (2) offers you a simple interface to enter and format text, which is similar to that of a word processor. Above the article text, you can add **Title**. In the right-hand side of the editor, you can select the appropriate **Category**, add some **Tags**, set whether the article should be **Published**, or whether it should be a **Featured** article.

- ◆ The article text (3) is shown when the **Content** tab is active (this is the default state). Apart from **Content**, there are five other tabs. Clicking any of these tabs reveals a screen where you can set specific options. These tabs are discussed as follows:
 - The **Publishing** and **Options** tabs contain options to set up the article to display and behave just as you need it to. You'll learn more about them in the *Tweaking the details – changing article settings* section later in this chapter.
 - On clicking on the **Images and links** tab, you'll find options to add images that will be displayed at the start of the article and a set of links (URLs) that can be displayed above or below the article.
 - With the **Configure Edit Screen** tab, you can access a couple of advanced options that will allow you to customize the appearance of the article edit screen for users who have permissions to edit this article. You can specify which article options should be available for them in the edit screen.
 - With the **Permissions** tab, you can set permissions for user groups for the level of this specific article. Using the permission settings, you can control whether specific user groups can see this article or whether they are allowed to edit it. You'll learn more about permissions in *Chapter 9, Opening Up the Site – Enabling Users to Log In and Contribute*.

Now let's explore the power of the Joomla article editor. We'll find out how we can tweak articles to get them to be displayed as we want them to.



In the **Add New Article** screen, you'll usually have to select **Category** the article belongs to. Before adding a number of articles to the same category, you can set one specific category to be already selected when you open the **Add New Article** screen. To do this, in the **Article Manager: Articles** screen, select the desired **Category** in the **Filter** list. Now, this category will be the default one when you click on **New** to create a new article.

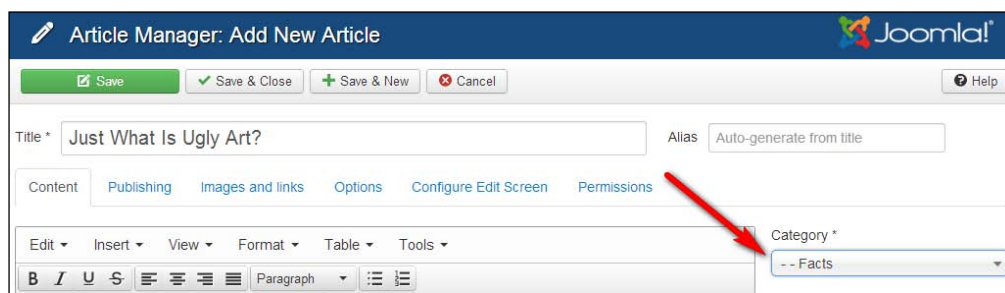
Making your words look good – formatting article text

Your client, CORBA, wants to add some new content to their site that explains the characteristic qualities of bad art. You've been given a text file and have been asked to turn the contents into a new page. Can you create a new article and make it look good?

Time for action – adding styles to the article text

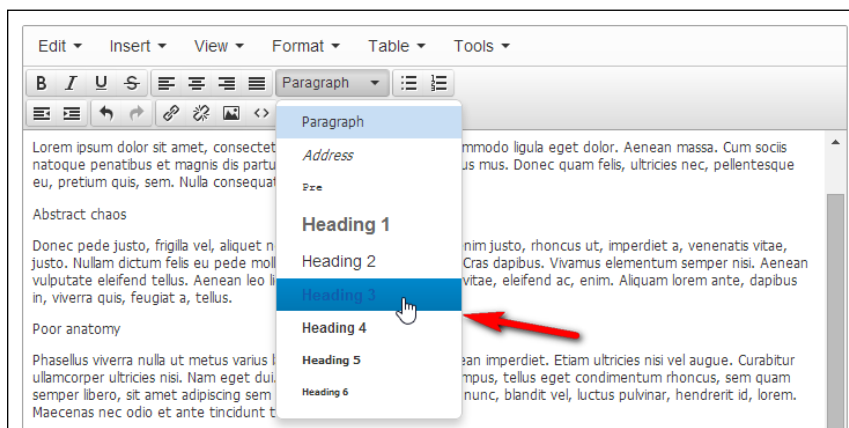
Let's create a new article and see how we can format it adequately.

1. Navigate to **Content | Article Manager** and click on **New**.
2. In the **Title** box, enter **Just What is Ugly Art?** This is the type of factual content that fits the **Facts** category, so let's select the **Facts** category (a subcategory of the **Bad Art** category). This is shown in the following screenshot:



3. By default, **Status** (found under **Details**) is set to **Published**. Let's set it to **Unpublished**. This way, the article will remain invisible to your site's visitors until you're finished with it.
4. We don't want this article to show up on our home page, so leave **Featured** set to **No**.
5. In the text editor screen, add some article text. If you want to copy text from a word processor document, it's really important to first strip out all of the formatting. This way, you can avoid invisible word processor tags messing up your article text. To do this, open the Notepad application on your PC (or TextEdit on a Mac) and paste the text from the word processor into the Notepad or TextEdit document (in the case of TextEdit, you have to set its preferences for new documents to the plain text format). This will give you a clean text-only file that you can copy and paste into the Joomla editor window. Right-click and select **Paste** from the pop-up menu.
6. In this example, we added five paragraphs: a short introductory text and four separate paragraphs. Type a subheading above each of the four paragraphs. In the example, we've used the subheadings **Abstract Chaos**, **Poor Anatomy**, **Too much detail**, and **Hideous Colors**.

- Let's use the text editor tools to change the basic formatting of the text. Put the cursor anywhere in the line that contains the subheading **Abstract Chaos**. Click on the **Format** drop-down box (it shows the **Paragraph** format by default) and select the predefined **Heading 3** format, as shown in the following screenshot:



In the preceding screenshot, the **Header 3** format is being applied to an article subheading. As the main article titles in Joomla usually have a **Header 2** format, the **Header 3** format is suited for the next level (the subheadings within an article).

Want more formatting control?



The font style of the heading is now set to the **Heading 3** format. What this actually looks like depends on the CSS style sheet of the template you're using. In the default Joomla template we're using, the **Heading 3** style is preformatted as a blue **Open Sans** font. When you install a different template, your headings and all other CSS-defined layout will probably look completely different. If you really want to get creative and produce an attractive article layout, you'll want to change the template CSS styles yourself and adapt them to your needs. Don't worry, we'll get to the ins and outs of templates and styling in *Chapter 11, Creating an Attractive Design – Working with Templates*.

- Select the other three subheadings and apply the **Header 3** style to these too. When you're done formatting the text, click on **Save & Close**.

This article editor screen gives you a rough impression of what the article will look like, but it isn't a reliable preview of the article; on the frontend, the fonts used and the overall layout can be quite different due to specific template CSS styles. This means you'll probably always want to check what the article looks like by navigating the frontend of the site as soon as the article has been published. To have this preview available while editing an article, it's a good idea to open the frontend article in a new browser tab and switch between the two tabbed browser windows using the *Ctrl + Tab* key combination. You can see how it works later in this chapter after we've added a menu link for the current article and set the article status to **Published**.

What just happened?

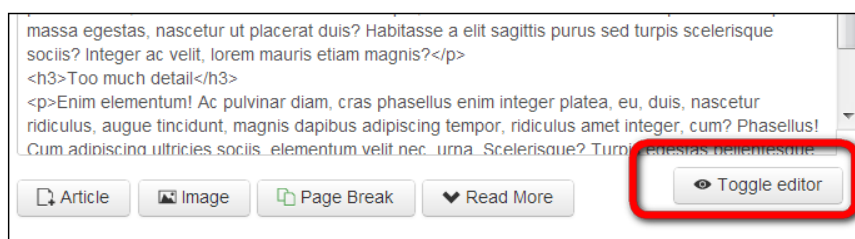
You created a new article in the **Facts** category and formatted some text using the word processor-like interface of the text editor. The text editor makes it easy to enter text and modify the underlying HTML code without you having to type one line of HTML.

While preparing your text, you can set it to be invisible (**Unpublished**); later on, you'll publish the finished text in one click.

Have a go hero – change the formatting

Feel free to open the article you've just created and play around to explore the different text formatting options. Check out how to apply indenting, bulleted lists, and so on. You may want to select the first paragraph and make it bold to really make it stand out as the leading paragraph. Applying styles to the selected text works just like you'd expect it from word processing software. Use the *Enter* button to start a new paragraph and use *Shift + Enter* to start a new line (but not a new paragraph).

Make sure you check out the **Toggle editor** button at the bottom of the editor screen as shown in the following screenshot. By clicking on **Toggle editor**, you can see the HTML code—a mixture of the article text with the HTML tags needed to render it in your browser.



This can be particularly useful if you know your way around HTML; sometimes you may want to directly edit the HTML code or check it for unwanted tags. You can go back to the **What You See Is What You Get (WYSIWYG)** view by clicking on the **Toggle editor** button again.

Don't overuse text editor formatting



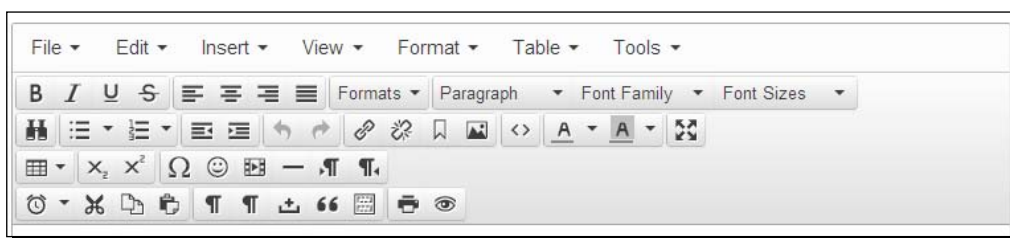
You may be tempted to use the abundance of text formatting options in the editor to modify the appearance of text—change the font, its size and color, make text bold or italic, and so on. However, it's best to only use these formatting options to style individual words and phrases—not to format repeated items, such as headings or whole paragraphs. When you change the text appearance this way, you'll have to apply the same formatting edits to every single instance of the heading or paragraph. In this case, it's much better to apply global text styles, created through CSS. These styles (such as **Header 1** or **Paragraph**) combine a particular set of formatting options. In Joomla, these CSS (text) styles are stored in the site template. In *Chapter 11, Creating an Attractive Design – Working with Templates*, you'll learn more about templates and customizing CSS.

Extending the text editor

Joomla ships with the text editor you used just now. It's actually an extension called Tiny MCE that comes with Joomla. This is a good tool for basic text editing, but you may run into limitations when you need just a little bit more, for example, when want to have some more control over the way images are displayed in the article text (their position, alignment, and so on).

If you would like to add some more advanced text editing controls, you can set Tiny MCE to its **Extended** view. Just navigate to **Extensions | Plug-in Manager** and click on **Editor - TinyMCE** to edit the settings.

In the **Basic Options** section, set **Functionality** as **Extended**. This will add some useful buttons to the editor screen. The extended text editor toolbar looks similar to the following screenshot:



In the rest of this book, I'll assume you have selected the **Extended** functionality of **TinyMCE**. You'll need some of the extra buttons and features to be able to follow along with the exercises and examples in the following chapters.



If you still find Tiny MCE's capabilities too limited, you can easily replace it with another (free) text editor. A very popular one is **Joomla Content Editor (JCE)**. You'll read more about replacing the default text editor in *Chapter 10, Getting the Most out of Your Site – Extending Joomla!*.

Adding images to articles

You've just created an all-text page on art. That's not really what makes your visually oriented visitors tick. Let's show them what it's all about and add some images! Imagine you've been sent some image files by mail and you've copied them to your hard drive.



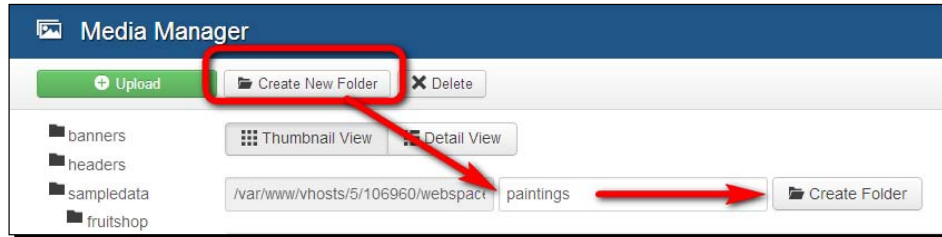
Before uploading images, make sure they are resized to the proper dimensions for use on your web page. It's not a good idea to upload a big image and resize it in the editor screen, as loading the image file will considerably slow down the web page display in the browser. Moreover, Joomla doesn't contain image editing capabilities, so you cannot change image dimensions or crop images once they're uploaded. To resize images, use either an image editing software (such as Photoshop or GIMP) or pick a simple online resizing tool such as PicResize (<http://www.picresize.com>). Search for web image formats to find more information and tutorials on the best image formats and image sizes for use on the Web. In *Chapter 10, Getting the Most Out of Your Site – Extending Joomla*, you'll read more about some great extensions that extend Joomla's limited image management capabilities.

Time for action – uploading images

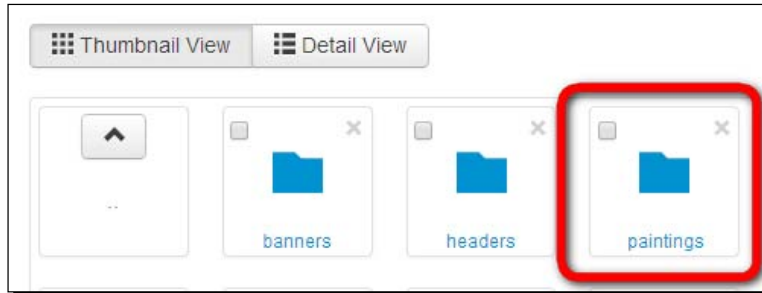
To add images to an article, you'll first use Joomla's **Media Manager** to upload the image files to the web server.

1. Navigate to **Content | Media Manager**. The **Media Manager** window displays the files available in the default image folder.

2. We'll create a specific folder for the files we want to add. Click on the **Create New Folder** button. A text field appears where you can type the name of the new subfolder. In this example, we've entered `paintings`. Now, click on the **Create Folder** button.

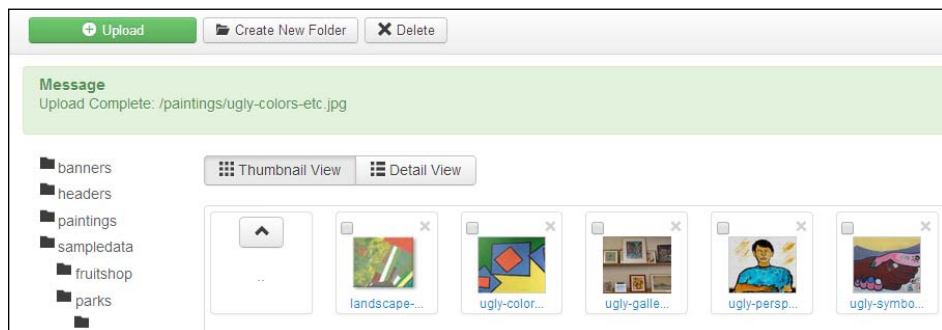


3. Click on the icon of the new **paintings** folder.



4. You'll be shown an empty folder. Add a new image by clicking on the **Upload** button in the toolbar.
5. Click on the **Browse** button, select about five images from your computer's hard drive, click on **Open**, and then click on **Start Upload**.

A message appears to indicate that the upload is complete. The **Files** section of **Media Manager** shows the thumbnails of the uploaded pictures, as shown in the following screenshot:



What just happened?

You've uploaded a set of pictures ready to be inserted into any article. By default, Joomla's **Media Manager** will look for images that are present in the `images` folder of the web server folder in which Joomla has been installed. Joomla doesn't, however, display the name `images` when you browse **Media Manager**; it just shows the `images` folder content and a list of subfolders. When you create new subfolders in **Media Manager**, you actually add subfolders to the `images` root folder.

It's a good idea to create subfolders if you want to keep different groups of images organized (for example, paintings, sculpture, staff, and meetings). This way, you won't end up with all image files piled up in one big default image folder.



If you'd like to use another folder as the default base directory, navigate to **Content | Media Manager** and click on **Options**. In the **Component** section, change the path to the `images` folder. For example, entering `/images/paintings` as the default path would make Joomla look in this folder when you insert article images.

Time for action – inserting and aligning images

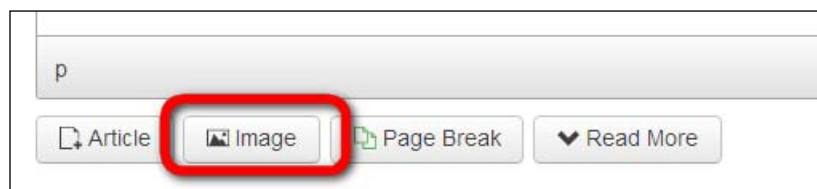
Now, let's insert the images you've just uploaded into the article text as follows:

1. Navigate to **Content | Article Manager** and open the article **Just What is Ugly Art?** to edit it (by clicking on the article title).
2. Let's place an image in each of the article paragraphs. Place the cursor at the beginning of the first paragraph below the introduction text, just after the first subheading, as shown in the following screenshot:

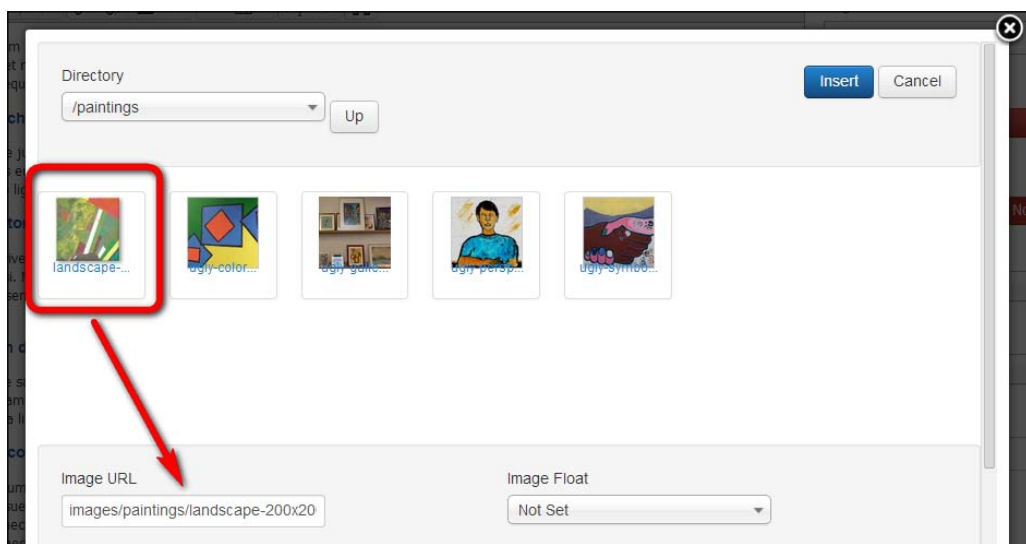
Abstract chaos

Donec pede justo, frigilla vel, aliquet nec, vulputate eget, arcu. In enim justo, rhoncus ut, imperdiet a, venenatis vitae, justo. Nullam dictum felis eu pede mollis pretium. Integer tincidunt. Cras dapibus. Vivamus elementum semper nisi. Aenean vulputate eleifend tellus. Aenean leo ligula, porttitor eu, consequat vitae, eleifend ac, enim. Aliquam lorem ante, dapibus in, viverra quis, feugiat a, tellus.

3. Click on the **Image** button at the bottom of the text editor screen as shown in the following screenshot:

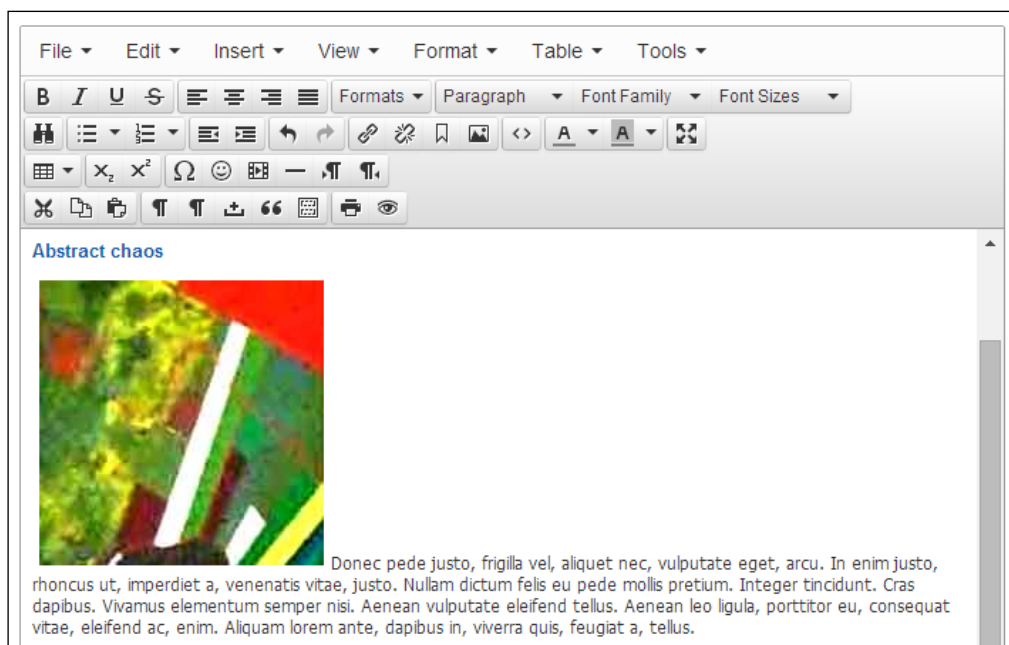


4. A pop-up screen displaying the contents of the images root directory opens. Select the appropriate subfolder by clicking on the `paintings` folder icon.
5. Select the image you want to insert. Joomla automatically adds the path of the image in the **Image URL** field.

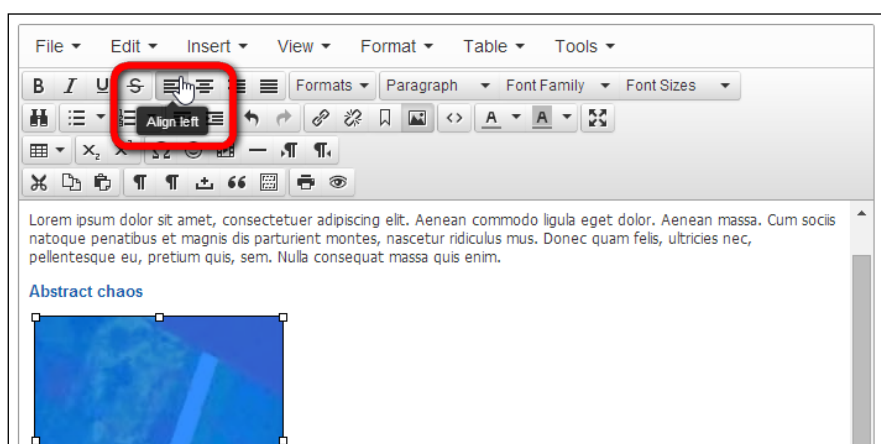


6. Scroll down in the pop-up window to add the other relevant details as follows:
 1. In the **Image Description** box, type a description. This text isn't displayed, but it informs search engines what the picture is about. It will also show up when the visitor uses a nonvisual web browser.
 2. In the **Image Title** box, enter a title. This is shown only when the web visitor moves the mouse pointer on the image. Enter a caption the **Caption** box if you want to display a small amount of text as a caption just below the image.

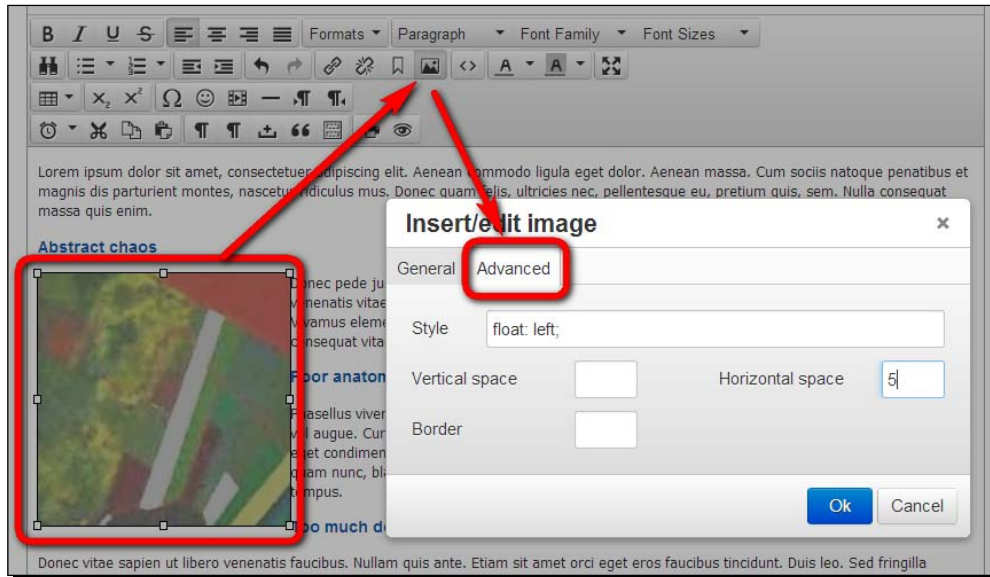
3. Let **Image Float** be set to **Not Set**; we'll adjust the alignment after we've inserted the image. In the current version of Joomla, this works more reliably.
4. When you're done, click on **Insert** in the top right corner of the pop-up screen to close it and add the image to the article.



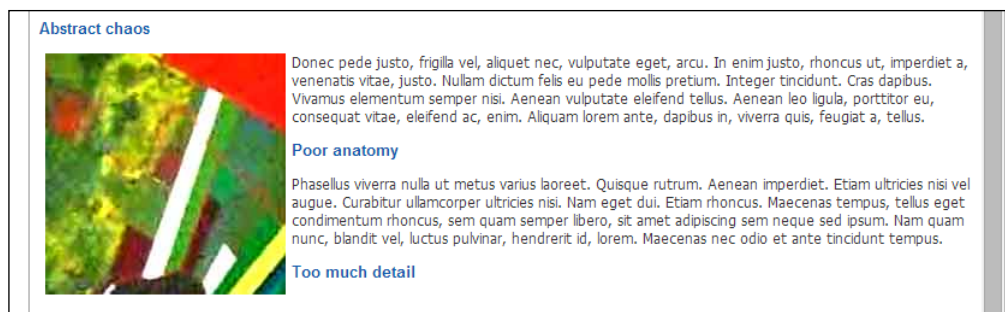
7. Now let's change the position of the image in the paragraph. Select the image and click on the **Align left** button in the editor, as shown in the following screenshot:



- You'll notice the text now flows to the right of the image, just as we expected. We just need to add a little *gutter* between the image and the paragraph text. To do this, select the image again and click on the **Insert/edit image** button in the editor. Now, click on the **Advanced** tab. This is shown in the following screenshot. (If you don't see the **Advanced** tab, you'll have to set the text editor to its **Extended** functionality first. Refer to the *Extending the text editor* section earlier in this chapter.)

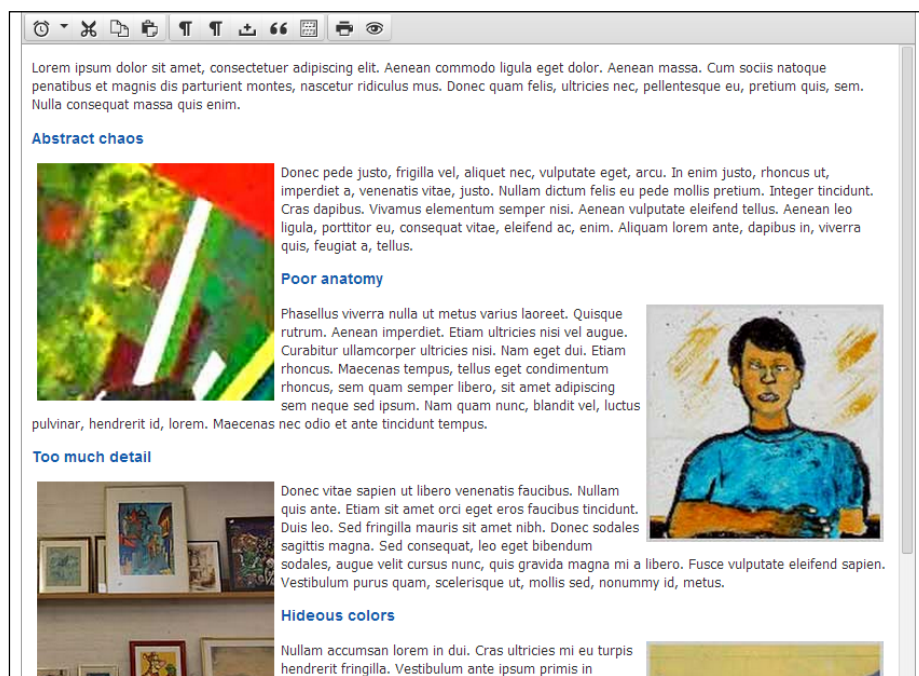


- To add a little space to the left and right of the image, in the **Horizontal space** field, enter 5 and click on **Ok**. We're done; the image is now nicely aligned to the left of the text, as shown in the following screenshot:

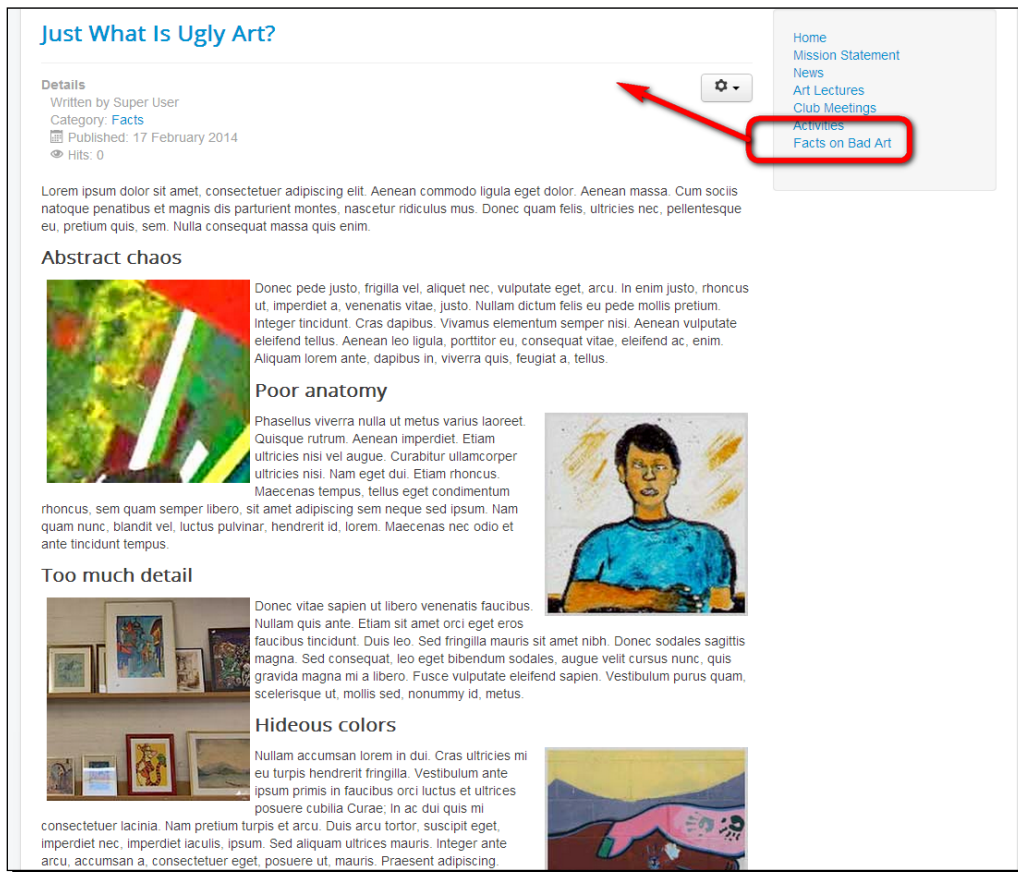


- 10.** Place the cursor in the next paragraph and repeat steps 3 to 9. Repeat this until every paragraph of the article body text contains a picture.

The **Article Text** editor screen roughly shows what the article text will look like; this is okay to get a first impression of the output. In the following example, some images are aligned to the right with respect to the text, while some are aligned to the left. This is shown in the following screenshot:



As the article is ready for display, let's get it to show on the frontend of the site. First, make sure **Status** of the article is set to **Published**. Click on **Save** to save the article. Now, add a menu link to the **Facts** category to make its contents (even if that's just this one article) visible. You'll know the drill from previous chapters: go to **Menus | Main Menu | Add New Menu Item**, select **Category Blog** as the **Menu Item Type**, select the **Facts** category, add **Menu Title** (that is, **Facts on Bad Art**), and save the menu link. That's it—you can now see the article output on the frontend by clicking on the **Facts on Bad Art** menu link.



What just happened?

Adding pictures to articles is a pretty straightforward process. You upload the desired image files and use the **Image** button to insert them. Next, use the **Insert/edit image** button to adjust the image placement in the text.



The **Insert/edit image** button in the default editor (Tiny MCE) isn't really suited to inserting images. After clicking on this button, you can't browse to the image file, but you have to know its exact location (URL). That's why there's a separate **Image** button below the text editor screen that's better equipped to insert images.

When you want to upload images and create new folders, **Media Manager** does the job. However, it does have a few limitations. Although you can add and delete files, you can't move them from one folder to another. However, there are extensions available that enhance Joomla's image management capabilities. The Joomla content editor (see *Chapter 10, Getting the Most Out of Your Site – Extending Joomla*) is a powerful replacement for the default text editor, which also makes uploading and inserting images much easier.

Changing the way the article is displayed

The article editor screen gives you much more power than just formatting text and adding pictures. You can also control how the article should be displayed: as one individual article, split into two parts, or even split in as many parts (subpages), as you like. Let's find out how we can enhance articles with these options.

Splitting the article into intro text and main text

So far, we haven't added any instructions in our article to change the way it displays. Let's have a look at the frontend to see how it's displayed by default. To see again how our new article looks at the frontend, click on the **Facts on Bad Art** link on the frontend **Main Menu**.

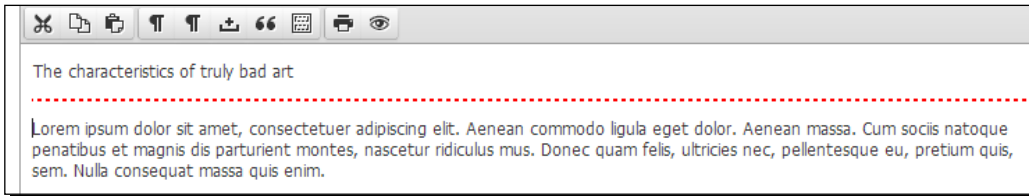
Earlier in this chapter, you created a link to the **Facts** category. As you might have noticed (click on the **Facts on Bad Art** link to check this again if you want), the full five paragraph article shows up on the **Facts** category overview page. This is not how we want our article to display. If we were to add more articles to this same category, they would all be fully displayed on a possibly huge **Category Blog** overview page. To get Joomla to show just a short teaser text here, we'll now split the article, separating the intro text and the full article body text.

Time for action – creating intro text

In the articles you created in earlier chapters, you saw it's good to add separate intro text to an article. Now you know why—if you don't, the article can only be displayed fully on overview pages such as the category overview you just saw. Let's fix things by adding some intro text to our new article.

1. Navigate to **Content | Article Manager** and open the article that you just created (**Just What are Ugly Paintings?**) to edit it.

2. In the text editor screen, add a new first line. In this example, we entered The characteristics of truly bad art.
3. Place the cursor just after this first line to indicate that you want Joomla to split the article here. To create a **Read more** link to point to the full article, click on the **Read more** button at the bottom of the editor screen. A red dotted line appears:



4. Click on the **Options** tab and set **Show Intro Text** to **Hide**. This means the intro text (the short teaser text we just created) will be hidden when the full article is shown. It will only be displayed on overview pages.
5. Click on **Save** and then click on **View site** to see the output on the frontend. You'll be taken to the home page. In **Main Menu**, click on the **Facts on Bad Art** link.

Mission accomplished! Now, only the intro text and **Read more** link of the new article appear on the category overview page:



More teaser text will be added to the overview when you add more articles to the category.

The full five paragraph article is shown (without the teaser text) when the visitor clicks on the **Read more** link.

What just happened?

In principle, any article in Joomla can consist of one continuous piece of text. Especially when writing short articles (think of blog posts), it's okay to create that kind of text. However, in many cases, you'll want to split articles into an introductory text (a teaser text, in newspaper terms) and the actual body text. This allows Joomla to publish the two parts on separate pages. By setting the intro text to hide, you can create a teaser text that's different from the intro text that's displayed as a part of the full article page.

Creating multipage articles

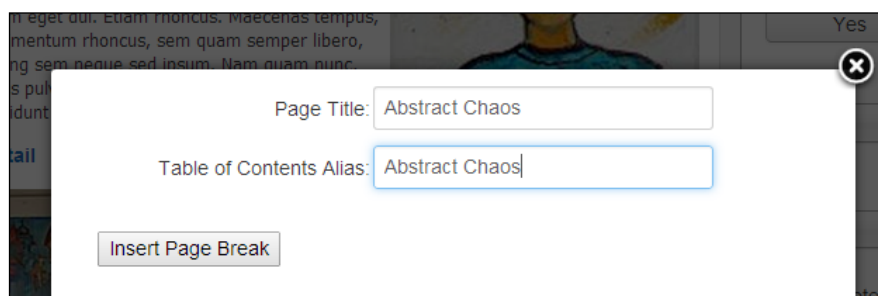
Suppose you have a long article with several sections, each covering a subtopic. Sometimes, you may find such an article is too long to be displayed fully on one page. It doesn't fit the content screen, but you don't want the visitor to have to scroll all that much.

There's a tedious solution to this. It involves manually splitting the article by creating several individual short articles. But luckily, there's also a quick way out. By adding page breaks in a single article, Joomla will display this single article in the frontend as a series of separate pages, automatically adding navigation links and a table of contents.

Time for action – using page breaks to split up an article

Let's assume your client doesn't like the one page article on ugly paintings. Instead of having one article with several subheadings, they'd rather see a couple of short pages that explain things step-by-step. To do this, we'll edit the existing article:

1. Navigate to **Content | Article Manager** and open the **Just What is Ugly Art?** article to edit it.
2. Add page break locations. This is where Joomla will split the article into separate pages. In this example, we'll replace every subheading with a page break. Select the first subheading (**Abstract Chaos**) and delete it. Now click on the **Page Break** button at the bottom of the editor screen. A pop-up screen is displayed, where you can enter **Page Title** and **Table of Contents Alias**. In this case, enter `Abstract Chaos` in both fields as shown in the following screenshot:



Page Title is for the new subpage. It will be displayed next to the article title, separated by a dash: **Just What are Ugly Paintings? – Abstract Chaos**. **Table of Contents Alias** is the link text that will appear in a little **Table of Contents** menu on the multipage article. It's best to keep the Alias text as short as possible.

3. Click on **Insert Page Break**. The pop-up screen closes and a gray dotted line is inserted to indicate the location of the page break.
4. Repeat steps 2 to 4 for each page break required and save the article. Click on **View site** to have a look at the frontend results. In the frontend **Main Menu**, click on **Facts on Bad Art** and locate the intro text of the **Just what is Ugly Art?** article. Click on the **Read more** link.

Now, instead of one article, Joomla has created a series of interlinked article pages. The first page the visitor sees is the first subpage. Pages include the << **Prev** and **Next** >> links to the previous and next page respectively; **Table of Contents Aliases** you've entered when creating page breaks now show up as hyperlinks in a table of contents featured on the right-hand side of every subpage. This is shown in the following screenshot:

The screenshot shows a Joomla article page titled "Just What Is Ugly Art? - Abstract Chaos". The page is on "Page 2 of 5". The article content includes a colorful abstract painting and a block of placeholder text. On the right side, there is a table of contents with the following links: "Just What Is Ugly Art?", "Abstract Chaos", "Poor anatomy", "Too much detail", "Hideous colors", and "All Pages". At the bottom of the page, there are navigation buttons for "<< Prev" and "Next >>".

What just happened?

Joomla lets you add page breaks to spread the content of a single article over multiple pages. To allow the visitor to move back and forth, a table of contents and **Previous** and **Next** navigation is automatically added to multipage articles.

Working with page breaks gives you an extra level of content below the article level. However, in general, it's safe to assume that visitors don't like clicking multiple links to read one article. It's best to reserve multipage navigation for articles that easily break into logical chunks, such as step-by-step tutorials or portfolio pages that show different clients and projects.

Have a go hero – use sliders and tabs


The current release of Joomla offers some new and creative ways to put a lot of content on a single page, without displaying it all simultaneously. You don't have to use the default technique (as discussed in the previous section), where a long page is divided into several separate pages using a table of contents for navigation. Instead, you can now choose to divide the page's contents using either sliders or tabs.

In the following screenshot, you can see an example—the page we've created before is now divided into four panels. Panels slide out and slide in on a mouse click. When the visitor clicks on the title of any of the sections, the content of only that section is displayed. This is shown in the following screenshot:

Just What Is Ugly Art?

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean commodo ligula eget dolor. Aenean massa. Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus. Donec quam felis, ultricies nec, pellentesque eu, pretium quis, sem. Nulla consequat massa quis enim.

Abstract Chaos



Donec pede justo, fringilla vel, aliquet nec, vulputate eget, arcu. In enim justo, rhoncus ut, imperdiet a, venenatis vitae, justo. Nullam dictum felis eu pede mollis pretium. Integer tincidunt. Cras dapibus. Vivamus elementum semper nisi. Aenean vulputate eleifend tellus. Aenean leo ligula, porttitor eu, consequat vitae, eleifend ac, enim. Aliquam lorem ante, dapibus in, viverra quis, feugiat a, tellus.

[Poor anatomy](#)

[Too much detail](#)

[Hideous colors](#)

This technique is sometimes also called an **accordion**. To change the display of articles using page breaks, go to **Extensions | Plugin Manager** and click on the title of **Content-Pagebreak** plugin. Under **Basic Options**, select **Sliders** under **Presentation Style**. This is shown in the following screenshot:



Save your changes and check the output of the article with page breaks that you created before.



You can only choose one presentation style for all page breaks on the site. This means you can't have tabs on one article and sliders on another one. If you want to use more advanced tabbed pages and sliders (accordions), however, there are many Joomla extensions available. In *Chapter 10, Getting the Most Out of Your Site – Extending Joomla*, you'll learn how to install and apply them.

Displaying images and links with articles

You've just seen how you can insert images anywhere you want in the article text. In the article editor screen, there's also an **Images and links** tab. Joomla offers these fields for images and links to make it easier to create a series of articles that share the same standardized layout: displaying an image at the top of the article and/or displaying a series of hyperlinks above (or below) the article. Although you're free to add images and hyperlinks to the article text itself, the **Images** and **Links** fields allow a fool-proof way of inserting images and links that are displayed in a fixed position.

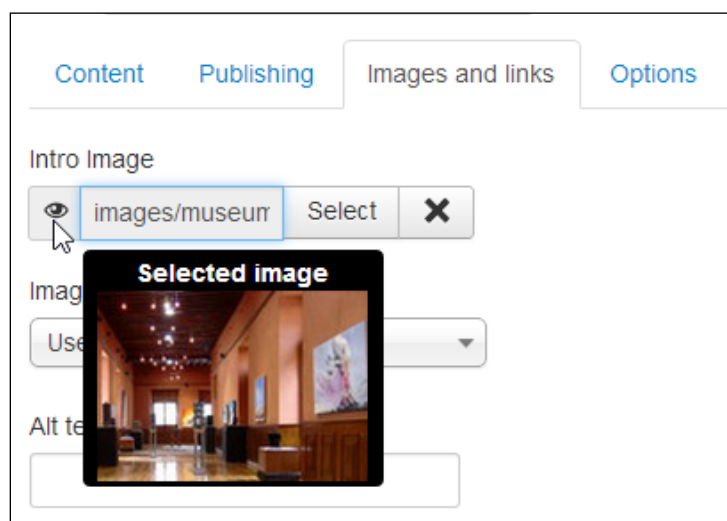
The advantage is that you (or other content contributors) don't have to repeatedly make sure that they insert images in the appropriate article location, which can easily lead to mistakes. By adding an intro image and setting its alignment, all article intro texts will share the same layout. The same holds for the three hyperlinks you can add through **Images** and **Links**; if you want articles to start with one or more hyperlinks, you can enter these here. They will appear as a list of hyperlinks at the top or bottom of the article.

You saw an example of using the **Images** fields in *Chapter 4, Web Building Basics – Creating a Site in an Hour*. Now, let's take a closer look at how this feature works.

Time for action – adding images and links to an article

Let's create a new article in the **Facts** category to try out the possibilities of the **Images and links** feature.

1. In the backend, go to **Content | Article Manager | Add New Article**.
2. In the **Title** field, enter *An Overview of Bad Art Museums*. From the **Category** drop-down list, select **Facts**.
3. Enter a few paragraphs of dummy text. Insert a *Read more* section after the first paragraph by placing the cursor at the start of the second paragraph and clicking the **Read more** button.
4. The basic article is ready. Now let's use the **Images and links** feature. First, we'll add **Intro Image**. Click on the **Images and links** tab and click on the **Select** button for **Intro Image**. A pop-up screen that allows you to select (or in our case, upload and select) images appears.
5. As we haven't uploaded the appropriate images yet, let's do that now. In the **Upload file** section of the pop-up window, click on **Browse**. Select two images from your computer. If you use the example images for this book, upload `museum_small.jpg` and `museum_large.jpg`. Click on **Open** and then click on **Start Upload**. Both images are now uploaded and their thumbnails appear.
6. Click on the `museum_small.jpg` thumbnail to select it and click on **Insert**. You can click the little eye icon to check a preview of the selected image, as shown in the following screenshot:

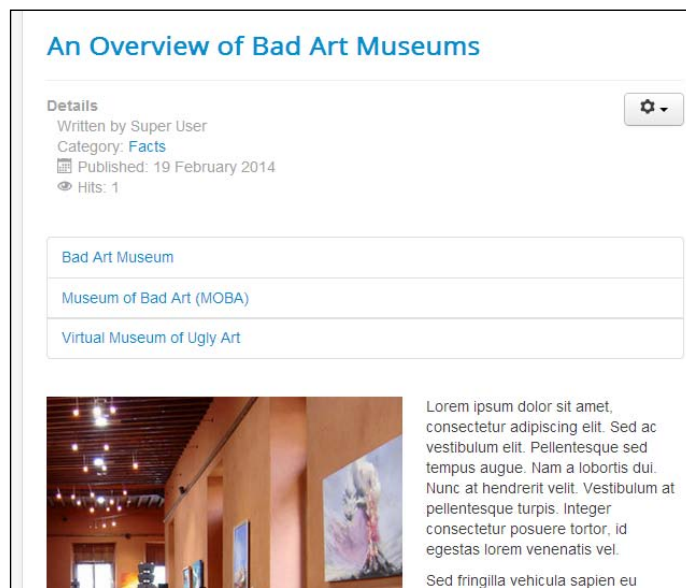


7. It's okay to leave the **Image Float** setting unchanged (**Use Global**). This way, the global setting (set through global article options) will be used. The image will be aligned to the left of the paragraph text.
8. Next, add **Full article image**. Click on **Select** to open a pop-up window. Click on `museum_large.jpg` to select it and click on **Insert**.
9. The **Link** fields allow you to add a maximum of three hyperlinks that will be placed above or below the article text. In the textboxes for **Link A**, **Link B**, and **Link C**, enter the URLs that these hyperlinks should point to. For testing purposes, you can enter any URL here (for example, `www.google.com`).
10. Finally, add the link texts that will be displayed on the web page: **Link A Text**, **Link B Text**, and **Link C Text**. In this example, I entered `Bad Art Museum Ohio`, `Museum of Bad Art (MOBA)`, and `Virtual Museum of Ugly Art`. Save the article.

You're done! Time to find out what the output looks like. In the frontend, click on the **Facts on Bad Art** link in **Main Menu**. This will take you to the overview page of the **Facts** category, proudly displaying your brand new article.

What just happened?

You've just created an article using the standardized layout that Joomla offers through the **Images** and **Links** fields. You'll notice that the **Facts** overview page displays the intro text and the small intro image you've added to the article. Clicking on the **Read more** button reveals the full story, including the full size image and a set of links that are displayed above the article text. This is shown in the following screenshot:



Have a go hero – tweak the article layout

Although the new article looks okay, the default settings may not be appropriate for your purposes. For example, it may seem strange to start an article with a row of hyperlinks that only make sense *after* the visitor has read the accompanying article text. Don't worry, it's easy to change the layout of the article through the article options. To find out how this works, open the article to edit it and click on the **Options** tab. To change the position of the three hyperlinks, select **Below** under **Positioning of the Links**. You may also want to hide a few article details that are displayed by default—set **Show Category**, **Show Author**, **Show Publish Date**, **Show Hits**, **Show Print Icon**, and **Show E-mail Icon** to **Hide**. As a result, the article output is clear and uncluttered: the focus is now on the main article text, and the set of hyperlinks is shown after the main text. I'm sure you'll agree the article options are a powerful way to customize the default display of articles and the article details. We'll find out more about the options available in the next section.

An Overview of Bad Art Museums



>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Sed ac vestibulum elit. Pellentesque sed tempus augue. Nam a lobortis dui. Nunc at hendrerit velit. Vestibulum at pellentesque turpis. Integer consectetur posuere tortor, id egestas lorem venenatis vel.

Sed fringilla vehicula sapien eu sagittis. Aenean molestie metus suscipit, posuere magna ac, ornare diam. Maecenas sed gravida metus. Maecenas malesuada molestie metus, ut ultricies mauris accumsan quis. Proin interdum odio eget nibh scelerisque, non congue justo blandit. Nam leo neque, vestibulum nec ipsum eu, viverra feugiat est.

Nam volutpat urna lacus, eu interdum odio ornare id. Mauris augue massa, posuere ut elementum ac, accumsan egestas risus. Morbi consequat eros vitae ornare scelerisque. Proin placerat bibendum pretium. Sed bibendum dui sit amet tempus viverra. Sed gravida odio id velit pretium tristique. Vivamus et justo gravida, bibendum nunc vitae, bibendum purus. Nulla tempor sem nec nibh varius hendrerit. Nulla a est non augue pharetra ornare vel nec urna.

Ut eu gravida turpis. Donec placerat viverra sem, a tempus ligula consequat tempus. Sed sollicitudin libero et urna ornare laoreet. Proin pretium turpis urna, nec condimentum tellus scelerisque ut. Nulla in nunc eget magna mattis vulputate molestie sed eros. Nunc porta at libero in molestie. Pellentesque porttitor felis tellus, id gravida leo blandit eu. Cras malesuada felis vitae mi dapibus semper. Cras tincidunt sodales m

[Bad Art Museum](#)

[Museum of Bad Art \(MOBA\)](#)

[Virtual Museum of Ugly Art](#)

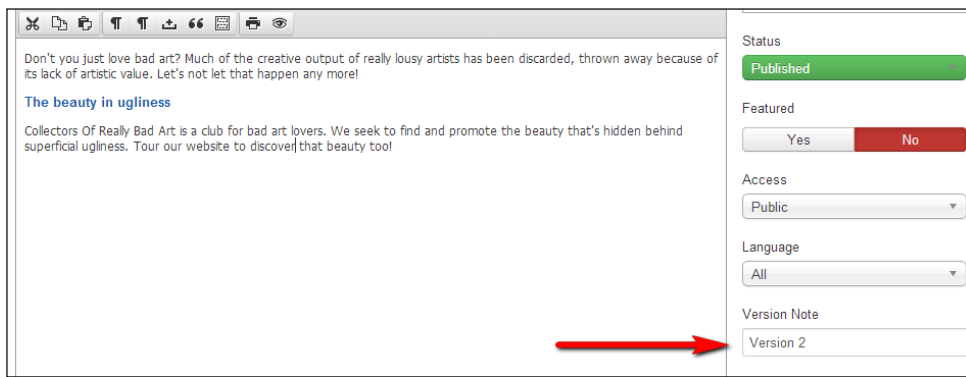
In this example, we set these preferences for one particular article. It's also possible to change settings like these for all articles; see the *Setting general preferences for all articles* section later in this chapter.

Restoring a previous version of an article

When adding or revising content in an article, you might want to reverse your changes and return to a previous version of an article; maybe because you've deleted some of the article text and accidentally saved the new version, thus throwing away all content the article previously contained, or maybe because you decide you want to go back to the brilliant phrasing you used in an earlier version of the same article.

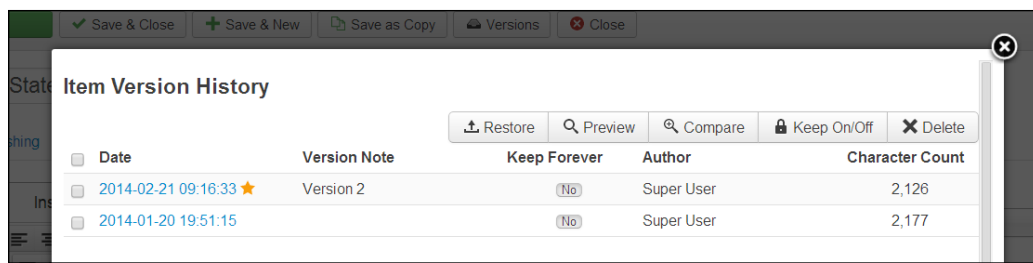
From Joomla 3.2 onwards, a powerful new feature was added: content version history. You can track older versions of articles, compare changes, and restore articles as required. Let's find out what this feature has to offer you.

1. Go to **Content | Article Manager**. Open the **Mission Statement** article. Up to now, there's just one version of this article, as you've saved it once after writing it.
2. We'll make a second, revised version of the article. In the editor screen, delete the first two sentences and replace them. In this example, I've replaced them with the sentence: `Don't you just love bad art?. To make it clear that this is a revised version, I've also added Version Note as Version 2, as shown in the following screenshot:`



In real life, you'd probably want to add a more meaningful version note, describing what's changed (reworded first line) or special (shortened to fit page) about this version.

3. Click on **Save & Close**. On second thoughts, you don't like the **Version 2** changes. You decide the previous version of **Mission Statement** was much better. That's the moment when version history is your best friend; you can revert to the old version.
4. Open the article again to edit it. In the article button bar, click on **Versions**. The **Item Version History** pop-up screen now displays the two available article versions. The current version (that you were currently editing) is marked with an orange star, as shown in the following screenshot:

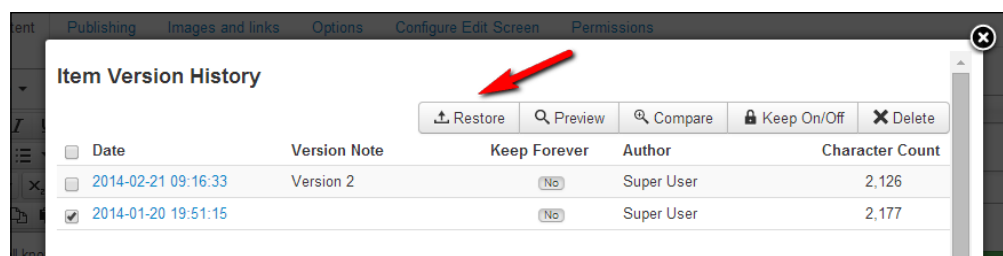


- Select both versions and click on the **Compare** button to see the changes in a new browser window, as shown in the following screenshot:

Field	Saved on 2014-01-20 19:51:15	Saved on 2014-02-21 09:16:33 Version 2	Changes
ID	80	80	80
Title	Mission Statement	Mission Statement	Mission Statement
Alias	mission-statement	mission-statement	mission-statement
Intro text	We all know the works of great art throughout the centuries. But what about bad art? Much of the creative output of really lousy artists has been discarded, thrown	Don't you just love bad art? Much of the creative output of really lousy artists has been discarded, thrown away	We all know the works of great art throughout the centuries. But what about Don't you just love bad art? Much of the creative output of really lousy artists has been discarded,

The contents of the older and newer version are shown; the final column displays what's been changed. This way, you can decide which version you want to keep or restore.

- In this example, we decide that we want to have the original article version back. Close the browser window that displays the comparison to return to **Item Version History** screen. Select the previous version and click on **Restore** as shown in the following screenshot:



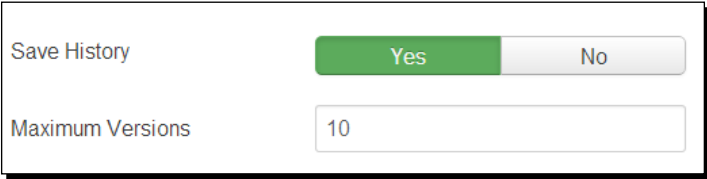
You're taken back to the editor screen. There you go; the previous version has been restored. Save the article to keep this version.

What just happened?

You've restored a previous version of an article. The versions feature allows you to view previously saved versions of the article, compare them, and replace the current version with an older one.

Have a go hero – explore version control options

Have a look at the settings that are available in the **Version Control** feature. Go to **Content | Article Manager** and click on **Options**. Under the **Editing Layout** tab, you can switch the version history feature on or off (set **Save History** as **Yes** or **No**, as shown in the following screenshot). You can also set the maximum number of saved versions that Joomla keeps in its database. By default, this is set to 10 versions. Don't make this number much higher, as this will take up more database space on your web server.



The screenshot shows a form with two settings. The first is 'Save History', which has a toggle switch set to 'Yes' (the 'Yes' button is highlighted in green). The second is 'Maximum Versions', which is a text input field containing the number '10'.

After 10 saved versions, older article versions are automatically deleted. If for some reason you want to keep a specific version forever, you can set this via the article options. When editing the article, click on the **Versions** button, select the version you want to keep, and click on the **No** button in the **Keep forever** column. The setting will toggle to **Yes**. This way, you'll always be able to restore this particular version.

Tweaking the details – changing article settings

When editing an article, you can set a wide array of options. These allow you to control exactly which article details are shown, when the article will be published, and so on. It's a good idea to explore the options to make sure what combination of settings fits your needs best.

The following is an overview of the settings you can choose for each article.



At the top of the editor screen, there's the **Alias** field. **Alias** is an internal reference that Joomla uses for the article URL. You don't have to enter anything here; Joomla will automatically fill out the **Alias** field based upon the article title. However, when you change the article title, it's best to make the **Alias** field empty. This way, Joomla will update its contents to reflect the new article title.

The Publishing tab

The following is a list of options of the **Publishing** tab with a description of each:

Options	Description
Start Publishing, Finish Publishing	Sometimes, you'll have prepared content that should only be published for a given period of time. For example, a temporary promotion or a special new year's message. Use Start Publishing to enter the date when the new page should appear on the site; set a date in the Finish Publishing box to automatically remove the content after a certain period.
Created Date	Change this value to manipulate the Created Date that Joomla can display with any article. By changing the date, you can bring an existing article to the attention of the visitor, because it will reappear in lists or pages with new items.
Created by, Created by alias	By default, Joomla will display the name of the article author. You can overrule this setting under Article Options Show Author (as shown in the following screenshot). The author name is the name of the logged in user who created the article. As long as you haven't created other user accounts, the author name displayed will be Super User . If you want another name to appear with the article, you can enter an author alias here. When you have created accounts for other users, you can also select another user here by clicking the Select User button after the author name textbox. You can read more on creating user accounts in <i>Chapter 9, Opening Up the Site – Enabling Users to Log In and Contribute</i> .
Meta Description, Meta Keywords, Robots, Author, Content Rights, External Reference	Metadata information is used by search engines. You can add an article description and meta keywords and enter instructions for robots (web search engine spiders). You'll read more on this in <i>Chapter 12, Attracting Search</i> .

The Images and links tab

Under the **Images and links** tab, you'll find options to add images that will be displayed at the start of the article and a set of three hyperlinks (URLs) that can be displayed above or below the article. You saw an example of this earlier in this chapter in the *Displaying images and links with articles* section.

The Options tab


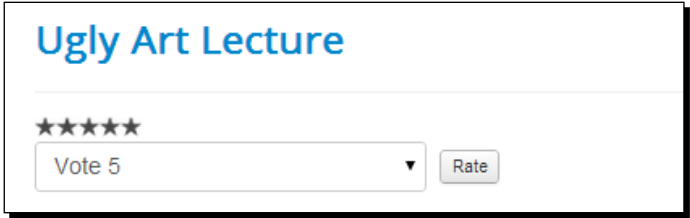
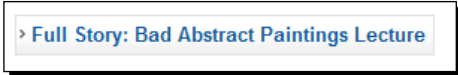
The following is a list of options of the **Options** tab with description:

Options	Description
Show Title, Show Tags, Show Intro Text, Position of Article Info, Show Category, Show Parent, Show Author, Show Create Date, Show Modify Date, Show Publish Date, Show Navigation, Show Icons, Show Print Icon, Show Email Icon, Show Voting, Show Hits, Show Unauthorised Links	<p>These options control which details should be displayed with the article (in full article view). By default, these details are displayed at the top of the article.</p> <p>In the following example, many of the article details are set to show. This is the default setup and it may result in a lot of "article clutter." It can be hard to find the actual article content in this detail overkill.</p>



By using the **Position of Article Info** option, you can also set this information to display in a humbler position at the bottom of the article, as shown in the following screenshot:



Options	Description
	<p>However, whatever position you choose for the article details, it's best to only display useful information. Often, you can even leave out all extras to save valuable screen real estate for the article text itself, as shown in the following screenshot:</p> 
	<p>Selecting Show Voting will display a five point scale below the article title when the full article is shown; visitors can rate the article. This is shown in the following screenshot:</p> 
<p>Linked Titles, Link Category, Link Parent, Link Author</p>	<p>When set to Show, an article Title, Category, parent Category, or Author name are hyperlinks. This can be a very useful option, as it gives the visitor an alternative way to find content, apart from the menu system. By clicking on the hyperlink shown above or below the article, visitors navigate directly to the article/category/parent category or all articles by the same author.</p>
<p>Positioning of the Links</p>	<p>If you use the Images and links feature (covered later in this chapter), you can decide to display a set of hyperlinks in a fixed position—either above or below the article.</p>
<p>Read more text</p>	<p>Entering a Read more text will replace the default Read more link text. If you were to enter the text Full Story here, this would be displayed on the frontend as follows:</p>  <p>Adding specific text here can be better for usability, as it allows you to better guide your visitors towards the article content.</p>

Options	Description
Alternative Layout	You can select a custom layout for the current article, provided the selected template (or component) allows for these additional layout options. A template may contain so-called template overrides, which are custom layouts that overrule Joomla's default layouts of categories. More information can be found at http://docs.joomla.org/Layout_Overrides_in_Joomla . The information here also applies to Joomla 3.x.

The Configure Edit Screen tab

The following table describes options of the **Configure Edit Screen** tab:

Options	Description
Show Publishing Options, Show Article Options, Administrator Images and links, Frontend Images and links	Here you can set whether you as an administrator want to hide the two previous options panels (publishing options and article options) for other users on this article edit screen. You can also set whether you want to hide the next panel (Images and links , as shown in the following screenshot) for users who have an Administrator account and/or for users that have frontend editing permissions. You'll read more on restricting access and permissions for user groups in <i>Chapter 9, Opening Up the Site – Enabling Users to Log In and Contribute</i> .

The Permissions tab

In the **Article Permissions** section, you can set permissions for user groups at the level of this specific article. These permission settings allow specific user groups to see the article (or not see it), or allow them to edit it. You'll learn more about permissions in *Chapter 9, Opening Up the Site – Enabling Users to Log In and Contribute*.

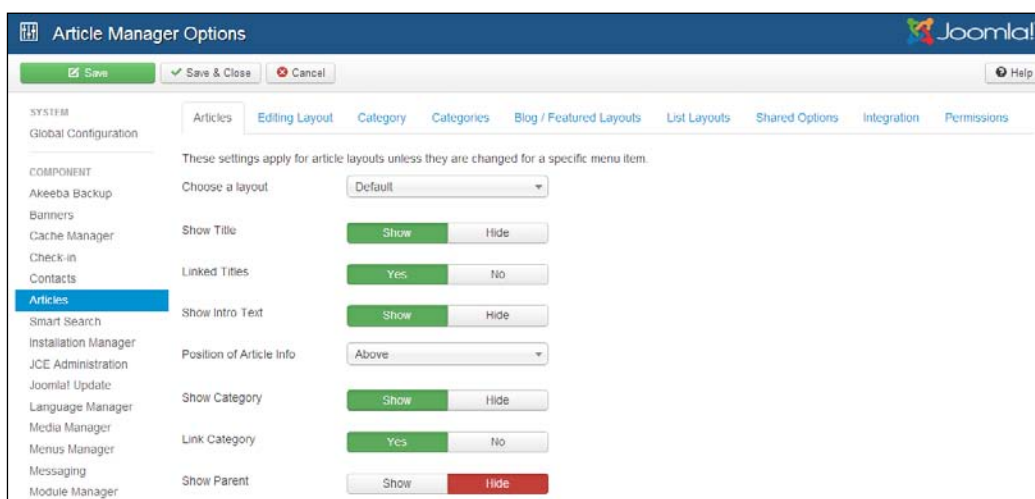
Setting general preferences for all articles

The tabbed options panels in the article editor screen allow you to set preferences for specific articles. However, you'll probably want to select default preferences for all your articles—whether you want the author's name displayed, whether the title should be a hyperlink, and so on. To enter these site-wide article preferences, navigate to **Content | Article Manager** and click on the **Options** button in the toolbar. These settings will apply to all articles.



Through **Options of Article Manager**, you select settings for all articles. If you want to override these global settings, you can do this through the settings of a particular **Menu Item**. These will overrule the general settings for all articles that are displayed through this menu item. Finally, if you want to override the global settings or **Menu Item** settings for a specific article, you do this through the options of that particular article.

Let's have a look at the available general settings now. Go to **Content | Article Manager** and click on the **Options** button. You'll see a screen featuring nine tabs (**Articles**, **Editing Layout**, **Category**, and so on), as shown in the following screenshot:



The Articles tab

The options under the **Articles** tab define the article properties (you saw most of these settings in the options panels of individual articles). The choices you make here apply to all articles. However, you can also set article options through menu items—when you create a link to an article or category, you'll also find the same set of **Article** options. The settings you choose for a specific menu item overrule the general settings.

An option that you'll only find in the **Article Manager Options** screen is **Read More Limit**. The number you enter here determines the maximum number of characters for the article title in a **Read more** button. This way, you can avoid the **Read more** button getting too big because of the length of the article title.

The Editing Layout tab

The options in the **Editing Layout** tab control what options are available on the article edit screen for the other users (the almighty super user). You can set whether you want to hide specific options panels (**Publishing Options** and **Article Options**) for users who have access to article edit screens. You can also hide the **Images and links** panel (allowing users to specify an image for the intro text and for the full article) for users who have an administrator account and/or for users that have frontend editing permissions. You'll read more on restricting access and permissions for user groups in *Chapter 9, Opening Up the Site – Enabling Users to Log In and Contribute*.

The Category tab

Although the **Category** tab is displayed among the **Article Manager** options, the **Category** options don't apply to articles; they determine the way categories are displayed on category pages. The same set of options is available when you create a menu link to display categories (such as the **Category Blog** menu item type you've already used). Again, the general settings chosen here apply only when you don't make other choices for specific menu items.

One option that you will only find on the **Category** tab is **Choose a layout**. Here, you can determine how category overviews are displayed by default—either in a blog view or a list view. You'll learn more on the available category views in *Chapter 7, Welcoming Your Visitor – Creating Attractive Home Pages and Overview Pages*.

The Categories, Blog/Featured Layouts, List Layouts, and Shared Options tabs

Again, these options don't relate to individual articles. Rather, they affect the way overview pages displaying articles or article teasers are displayed. You'll learn more about these types of overview pages in *Chapter 7, Welcoming Your Visitor – Creating Attractive Home Pages and Overview Pages*. Here's a short introduction:

- ◆ The **Category** options affect pages that display multiple categories. You'll also find these options when you create a menu item type of a specific type, called **List of All Categories**.
- ◆ The **Blog/Featured Layouts** options affect article overview pages that use Joomla's **Blog** layout or **Featured** layout. This layout is used when you create pages through the **Category Blog** menu item type or the **Featured Articles** menu item type.
- ◆ The **List Layouts** options apply to overview pages that use a list view of items. You can create list views (and find the same set of display options) by adding a menu item type of the **Category** list or a list of all categories type.
- ◆ The **Shared Options** apply to **List**, **Blog**, and **Featured** layouts.

The Integration tab

The **Integration** options are only relevant when you use news feeds (RSS feeds) on your website. The **Show Feed Link** option allows you to show or hide an RSS feed link. This will display a feed icon in the address bar of the web browser. The **For each feed item show** option allows you to control what to show in the news feed—the intro text of each article or the full article. The choices made here can be overruled by the **Integration Options** settings of specific menu item types (such as a link of the **Category Blog** type).

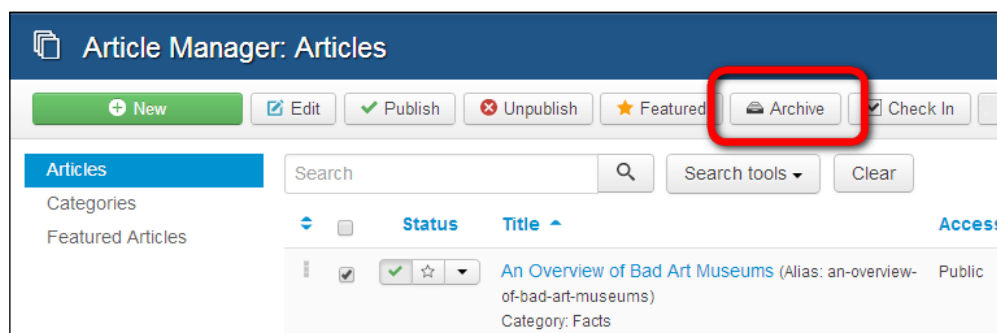
The Permissions tab

Here you can set the default permissions for all article content. You can, for example, allow specific groups of users to edit or delete articles. You can read more about user permissions in *Chapter 9, Opening Up the Site – Enabling Users to Log In and Contribute*.

Archiving articles

As your site grows, you might want to clean up the site contents. You probably don't want to display outdated articles, such as last year's news, among your current content. In Joomla, there are different ways to achieve this. One option is to remove old articles. Then, the articles are still available in the backend, but the site visitor cannot see them anymore. Another option is to create an archive. Archived articles are still available, but they're no longer part of the ordinary site contents. You can make them visible through a menu link of the **Archived Articles** menu item type.

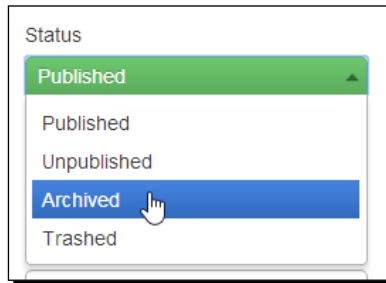
Archiving is something you do by hand. To archive an article (or multiple articles at once), select the desired article(s) in **Article Manager** and hit the **Archive** button on the toolbar. It is shown in the following screenshot:



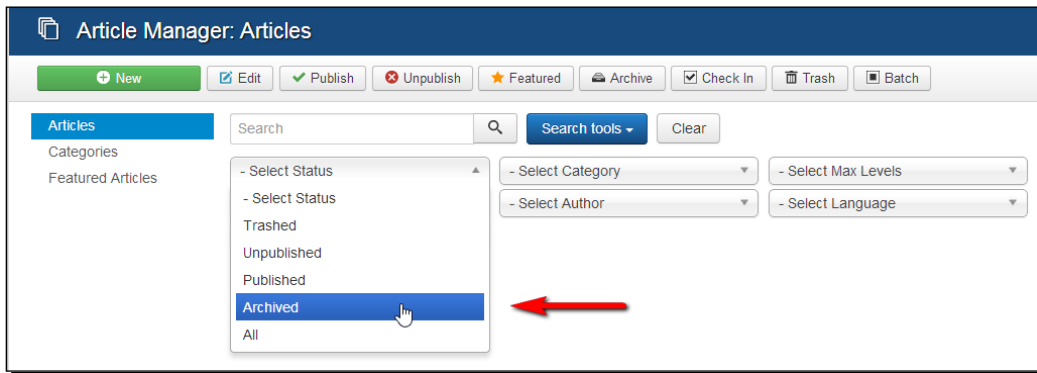


If you want to automatically archive articles that are older than a given period of time, consider using Joomla extensions such as **AutoArchive**. You can find it on the Joomla extension site (<http://extensions.joomla.org/extensions/authoring-a-content/archive>). Find more information on installing and using extensions in *Chapter 11, Creating an Attractive Design – Working with Templates*.

You can also change the article **State** to **Archived** when you've opened it in the article editor screen, as shown in the following screenshot:



To see which articles have been archived, go to the **Article Manager** and select **Archived** in the **Select Status** drop-down list, as shown in the following screenshot:



If the **Select Status** option isn't displayed, click on the **Search tools** button to display all search options.

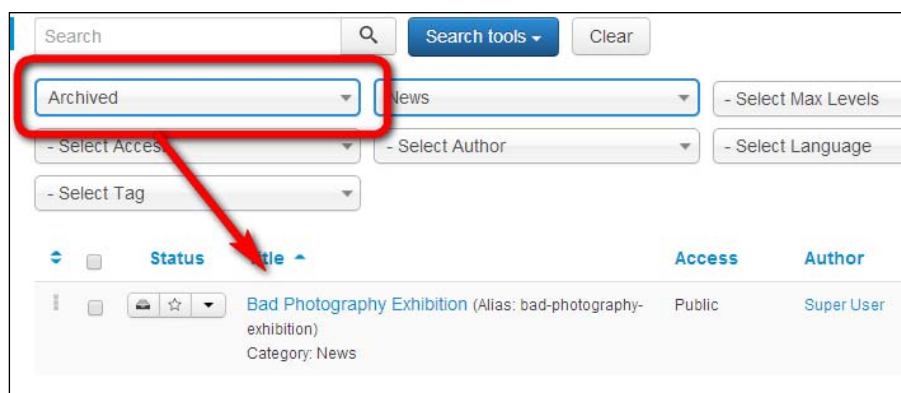
You can still edit an archived article, which is quite useful. After all, although articles are archived, you might still want to correct a typo or delete some outdated information. To edit an archived article, just click on the article **Title** in **Article Manager** to open the **Article Manager: Edit Article** screen.

To remove an article from the archives, select the article and change **State** from **Archived** to **Published** (or **Unpublished**, if you don't want to display the article). Click on **Save** to commit the status change.

Time for action – creating a News archive

Let's create an archive for some old news pages on the CORBA site. This can be done by performing the following steps:

1. Navigate to **Content | Article Manager**. In the **Select Category** filter box, select **News** to see only the articles in that category.
2. Select the articles to be archived. In the following example, we've selected **Bad Photography Exhibition**.
3. Click on the **Archive** button in the toolbar.
4. A message appears to confirm that the article has been archived. The article disappears from the article list. To see archived contents, select **Archived** in the **Select Status** drop-down list, as shown in the following screenshot:



You've created a (tiny) news archive now, but there's no way for the visitor to see its contents. Let's create a link now.

5. Navigate to **Menus | Main Menu | Add New Menu Item**. As the **Menu Item Type** for this link, select **Articles | Archived Articles**.
6. Enter **Title** for the hyperlink as `News Archive`. Adjust any other settings you want and click on **Save**.

On the frontend, a link to the **News Archive** is shown (as shown in the following screenshot). Right now, there's just one article; however, if the site contains a substantial archive, the visitor can filter (search) archived articles by keyword or publication date.



What just happened?

You've created an archive for outdated articles. Visitors can view an overview of the archive contents by clicking on the **News Archive** link in **Main Menu**.

Pop quiz – test your article expertise

Q1. The article editor screen in Joomla allows you to do which of these three things?

1. Formatting article text.
2. Inserting images.
3. Controlling the start and end date of publishing.

Q2. What is Joomla Media Manager used for?

1. It allows you to manage all sorts of media (images, movie files, and MP3 files).
2. It allows you to upload images and insert them into an article.
3. It allows you to insert images that come with the default Joomla installation.

Q3. You open an existing article in the Joomla article editor and see a dotted red line. What does that mean?

1. Text below the line will not be displayed.
2. The article text has exceeded the maximum number of characters allowed.
3. If necessary, Joomla can separately display the intro text and the full article text.

Q4. How can you break a long article into a series of short ones?

1. By manually creating several individual articles.
2. By entering page breaks in an article.
3. By entering **Read more** links in an article.

Q5. Why would you want to use version control?

1. It allows you to compare versions of articles.
2. It allows you to revert to an older version of the current article.
3. Both of the above answers are correct.

Q6. What's the function of archiving articles?

1. Archived articles cannot be edited any more.
2. Archived articles aren't displayed in the frontend.
3. Archived articles are displayed in a special **Archive** part of the frontend.

Summary

In this chapter, you mastered creating article content.

To create new articles and edit existing ones, **Article Manager** is your starting point; just click on **New** to create a new article or select an article and click on **Edit** to edit it.

The article editing screen allows you to style your contents and add images. If you want more text editing control, you can set the text editor to show an extra (extended) set of buttons.

Media Manager allows you to create new image folders. This way, you can keep the image files on the web server organized.

There are several ways to display article content. It can be one continuous text page, but you can also split the article into an introductory text and the actual body text.

To break a long article into several interlinked subpages, you add page breaks to the article text. In the backend you've still got one article, in the frontend it will display as a series of pages.

Using Version Control, you can recover previous versions of articles. Every time you save an article, this version is stored in the database. By default, up to 10 article versions are kept.

You can set outdated articles to the **Archived** status. This way, they won't be displayed among the other articles in the same category any more. To make the archive contents visible, you create a menu link that points to archived articles.

You've now mastered the recipe that enables you to create as much killer content as you like. But all that beautiful content is useless if your site's visitors fail to notice it's there. So, it's time to focus on your site's shop windows—the home page and other pages that draw your visitors' attention to the content.

In the next chapter, you'll learn how to create an inviting home page and alluring overview pages, giving visitors an irresistible preview of what your site has to offer.

7

Welcoming Your Visitors – Creating Attractive Home Pages and Overview Pages

In the previous chapters, you laid the groundwork for your site. You created content containers (categories and subcategories), and then you created the actual content (articles). You've now got a bunch of neatly organized, attractive articles ready to be explored by the web surfing audience. However, how can you entice those casual web surfers to actually read all that valuable content? Why would they bother to drill down into the content of your site?

That's where the home page and overview pages come in. The home page lures your visitors in. Joomla's overview pages, which are second level home pages that provide a quick overview of category contents, direct people to the articles they could be interested in.

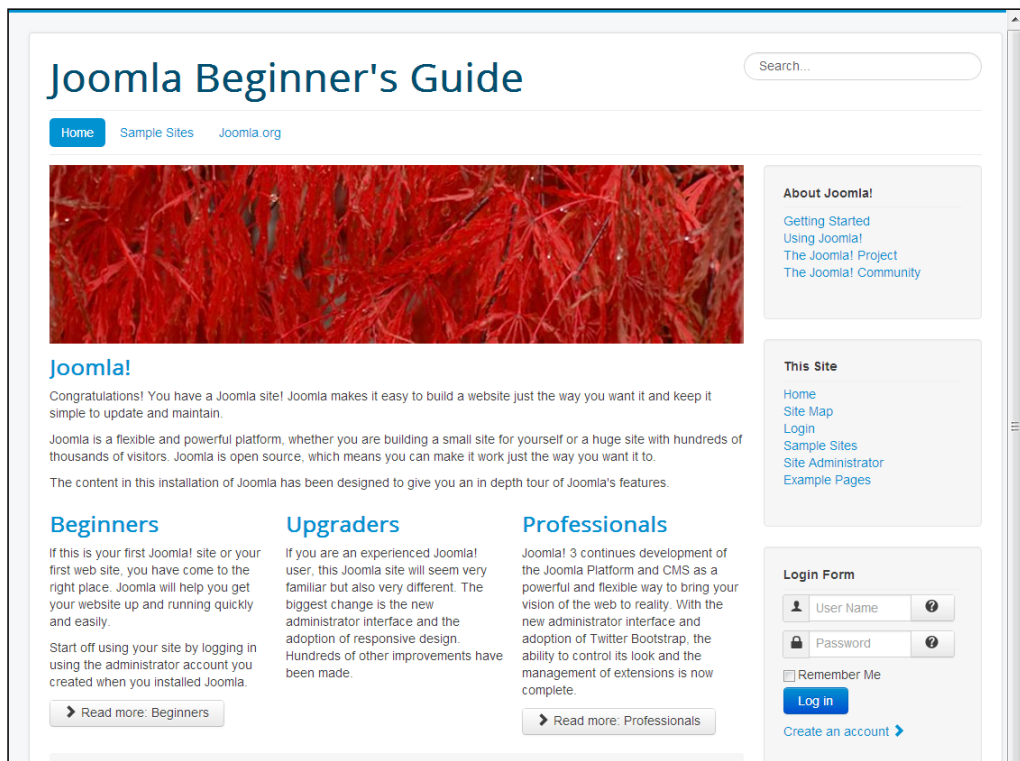
In this chapter, we will learn the following topics:

- ◆ Customizing the home page settings
- ◆ Creating a different kind of home page
- ◆ Creating and tweaking the overview pages that show category contents
- ◆ Creating different layouts for different types of overview pages
- ◆ Creating overview pages for tagged articles

So, let's start tweaking the CORBA home page!

Up to now, you've set up the home page and category's overview pages by using the default options. However, you may have noticed that Joomla offers dozens of options for these page types. Changing these options can completely alter the way content is presented. In fact, different settings can create pages that look very different.


To effectively welcome your visitors and entice them to read your valuable content, we'll create a better home page and effective category pages. In the following screenshots, you'll see the page types we're talking about. The basic layout of both home pages and overview pages is similar. The first screenshot shows the example home page in the default Joomla installation with the Learn Joomla! sample data, and the second one depicts an example category overview page. In the default setup, you can find the second page in the **About Joomla!** menu by navigating to **Using Joomla! | Using Extensions | Components | Content Component | Article Category Blog**.



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First Blog Post ⚙

Written by Joomla

Details

Category: [Park Blog](#)

Published: 01 January 2011

Hits: 1

Lorem Ipsum is filler text that is commonly used by designers before the content for a new site is ready.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Sed faucibus purus vitae diam posuere nec eleifend elit dictum. Aenean sit amet erat purus, id fermentum lorem. Integer elementum tristique lectus, non posuere quam pretium sed. Quisque scelerisque erat at urna condimentum euismod. Fusce vestibulum facilisis est, a accumsan massa aliquam in. In auctor interdum mauris a luctus, Morbi euismod tempor dapibus. Duis dapibus posuere quam. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas. In eu est nec erat sollicitudin hendrerit. Pellentesque sed turpis nunc, sit amet laoreet velit. Praesent vulputate semper nulla nec varius. Aenean aliquam, justo at blandit sodales, mauris leo viverra orci, sed sodales mauris orci vitae magna.

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Second Blog Post ⚙

Written by Joomla

Details

Category: [Park Blog](#)

Published: 01 January 2011

Hits: 2

Lorem Ipsum is text that is traditionally used by designers when working on a site before the content is ready.

Pellentesque bibendum metus ut dolor fermentum ut pulvinar tortor hendrerit. Nam vel odio vel diam tempus iaculis in non urna. Curabitur scelerisque, nunc id interdum vestibulum, felis elit luctus dui, ac dapibus tellus mauris tempus augue. Duis congue facilisis lobortis. Phasellus neque erat, tincidunt non lacinia sit amet, rutrum vitae nunc. Sed placerat lacinia fermentum. Integer justo sem, cursus id tristique eget, accumsan vel sapien. Curabitur ipsum neque, elementum vel vestibulum ut, lobortis a nisl. Fusce malesuada mollis purus consectetur auctor. Morbi tellus nunc, dapibus sit amet rutrum vel, laoreet quis mauris. Aenean nec sem nec purus bibendum venenatis. Mauris auctor commodo libero, in adipiscing dui adipiscing eu. Praesent eget orci ac nunc sodales varius.

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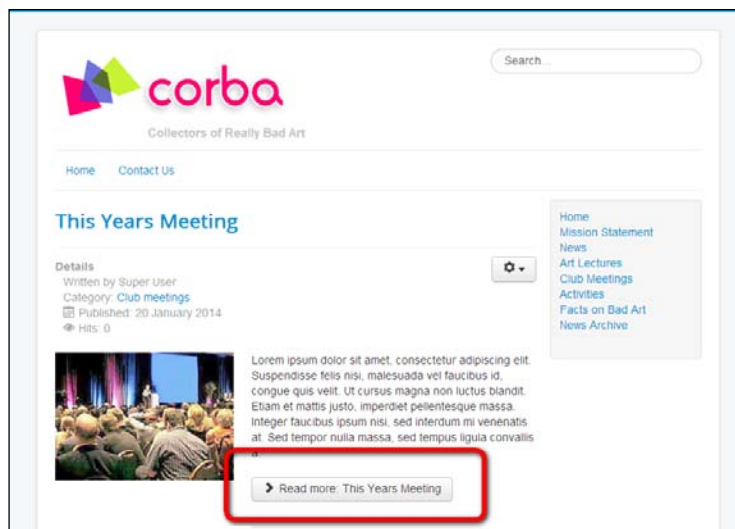
Why do you need overview pages anyway?

Typically, Joomla will lead your site visitor to a category's content in three steps. Between **Main Menu** and the actual content, there's a secondary page to show category contents. You can see how this works in the screenshots in the following sequence:

1. The following screenshot displays the screen that appears when a visitor clicks on a menu link:



2. Then, visitors are taken to an overview page with article previews inviting them to click on the **Read more** link, as shown in the following screenshot:



3. Visitors can click on **Read more** to read the full article, as shown in the following screenshot:



As you can see, what's on the home page and the overview pages (and how it's presented) is vitally important to your site. It's the teaser texts, images, and hyperlinks on these pages that offer your visitors a first glimpse of the actual content. Of course, people don't always arrive at your site through the home page. Search engine results might take them directly to any page, including overview pages. This is one more reason to make those pages as enticing as you can!

Overview page, landing page, or secondary home page?



Joomla doesn't have a name for overview pages. Among web builders, these pages are also known as *start pages*, *category pages*, *department pages*, or *landing pages*. Whatever you prefer to call it, it's the same thing—a navigational page that provides an overview of site categories. In this book, we'll call them overview pages.

Mastering the home page layout

By default, the home page of any Joomla! site is set up to display the following items:

- ◆ One introductory article text over the full width of the main content area (main body)
- ◆ Three intro texts in three columns

As we haven't changed any of the home page layout settings up to now, the example site home page has the same layout.

This default setup is suited for many types of content-rich sites. However, you're certainly not limited to displaying this one particular combination of intro texts and links in the central part of the home page (the main body, as it is called in Joomla). There are a large number of choices on how to display content on the home page and what to display.

Changing the way the home page is arranged

It's your client on the phone, telling you that—happy as they are with their new site—some CORBA staff members find the home page layout too distracting. They don't like the newspaper look that displays the content columns in different widths. Would you be so kind as to tone things down a little? If you could quickly show them an alternative layout, that would be fine. You hang up and dive into the home page settings.

Time for action – rearranging the layout of articles on the home page

You decide to rearrange the items on the home page. Let's say you want a maximum of two intro texts, both in just one column. Apart from this, you would like to show a few hyperlinks to other articles that could be of interest to visitors browsing the home page. You may wonder where Joomla stores the home page settings. As we've seen in the previous chapters, the menu link settings often determine Joomla's page output; this also holds for the **Home** link in the main menu. This menu link is for a specific menu item type: **Featured Articles**. To change the appearance of the home page, we'll customize the **Home** menu link settings as follows:

1. Navigate to **Menus | Main Menu**. In **Menu Manager**, click on **Home** to enter the screen where you can edit the menu link settings.
2. Click on the **Layout** tab. The current settings are shown in the following screenshot:

The screenshot shows the Joomla! Menu Manager interface for editing the 'Home' menu link. The 'Layout' tab is selected, and the following settings are visible:

Setting	Value
# Leading Articles	1
# Intro Articles	3
# Columns	3
# Links	0

A red box highlights the input fields for # Leading Articles, # Intro Articles, # Columns, and # Links.

These are the magic numbers that determine the home page's layout. As shown in the highlighted part of the preceding screenshot, there's one leading article (which means it's displayed full width in the content area), three intro articles that are shown in three columns, and there are zero links to articles.

3. Change the values as follows: set **# Leading Articles** to 0, **# Intro Articles** to 2, **# Columns** to 1, and **# Links** to 4. This way, just two articles will be shown in a single column and the rest of the featured articles will be displayed as a set of hyperlinks. Our aim is to get a simple and clean one-column layout.
4. Save your changes and click on **View site** to see the changes on the frontend. There are now two full-width intro texts, as shown in the following screenshot. Although you have set **# Links** to 4, beneath the intro texts only two article links are displayed. This is because up to now only four articles have been assigned to the home page. If you assign more articles to the home page, this list will grow to a maximum of four hyperlinks.

The screenshot displays a website home page with a clean, one-column layout. At the top, there are navigation links for "Home" and "Contact Us". The main content area features two full-width intro articles:

- Ugly Art Lecture**: Accompanied by a yellow and green abstract image. The text is a placeholder: "Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Suspendisse felis nisi, malesuada vel faucibus id, congue quis velit. Ut cursus magna non luctus blandit. Etiam et mattis justo, imperdiet pellentesque massa. Integer faucibus ipsum nisi, sed interdum mi venenatis at. Sed tempor nulla massa, sed tempus ligula convallis." Below the text is a "Read more: Ugly Art Lecture" button.
- Hideous Still Lifes**: Accompanied by a colorful abstract image with geometric shapes. The text is a placeholder: "Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Suspendisse felis nisi, malesuada vel faucibus id, congue quis velit. Ut cursus magna non luctus blandit. Etiam et mattis justo, imperdiet pellentesque massa. Integer faucibus ipsum nisi, sed interdum mi venenatis at." Below the text is a "Read more: Hideous Still Lifes" button.

On the right side, there is a sidebar with two sections:

- Visit the Bad Art Museum**: Includes a "BAMI" logo, the text "Get your tickets now!", and the phone number "Call 012-3456789".
- Navigation Links**: A list of links including "Home", "Mission Statement", "News", "Art Lectures", "Club Meetings", "Activities", "Facts on Bad Art", and "News Archive".

At the bottom of the page, there is a pagination control showing "Page 1 of 2" and a list of two article links: "This Years Meeting" and "The Art of Bob Ross".

What just happened?

This is a really important concept in Joomla: the settings of any menu item allow you to influence what the hyperlink's destination page looks like. By default, the Joomla **Home** link in **Main Menu** is of the **Featured Articles** menu item type. In this case, you've tweaked the layout options of the **Featured Articles** menu link to change the home page's main body layout. The magic numbers on the **Layout** tab are really powerful, as different values can completely change the way the page content is displayed.

Have a go hero – tweak the home page layout options

Up to now, we've only changed a few home page settings. However, Joomla offers you dozens of settings to customize the home page's layout. Navigate to **Menus | Main Menu | Home** and click on the **Layout** tab to see the available options. For example, you may want to set **Pagination** to **Hide**. This way, you'll hide the pagination links (< **Start**, **Prev**, **Next**, and **Last** >) that Joomla displays when there are more articles available than can be shown on the home page as intro texts. In our example, the pagination links allow the visitor to navigate to a second home page, displaying the intro texts of the two hyperlinks in the **More articles** list. Showing pagination links on a home page is suitable for web log home pages, where visitors expect to be able to browse through possibly long lists of blog entries. On most other types of sites, web users aren't likely to expect multipage home pages.

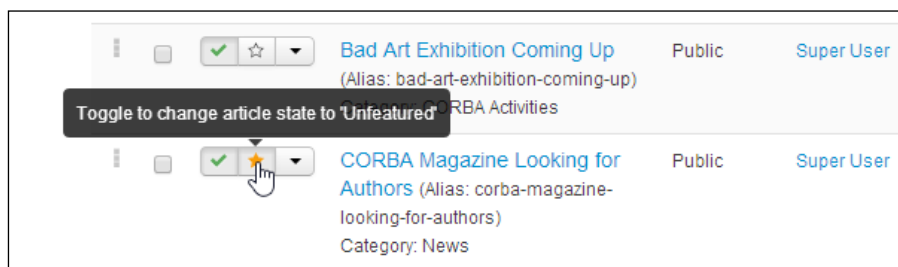


The **Options** tab for the **Home** link (or any other menu link of the **Featured Articles** type) allows you to control exactly what details are shown for every article on the home page. Through **Options**, you can determine whether or not you want to show the author name, publication date, the category name, and much more. These article display settings in the menu link overrule the general settings found by navigating to **Content | Article Manager | Options** (in the same way as these menu link settings can be overruled through the settings in the **Options** tab of any individual article). For a full overview of all the options available for the **Featured Articles** menu item type, see the section *Have a go hero – try out the home page settings* section later in this chapter.

Adding items to the home page

In the **More Articles** hyperlink list at the bottom of your home page, two hyperlinks are shown. That's because only four articles are set to display on the home page. To add a couple of articles, navigate to **Content | Article Manager**. Add any article by clicking on the white star in the **Status** column to the left-hand side of the article title. The gray star changes to an orange star.

In the following example, we've selected a **News** item **CORBA Magazine Looking for Authors** to be featured on the home page:



Want to see what this looks like up front? Just click on **View Site**. The new home page item is shown at the top. All other featured items are now positioned one position lower than before. You'll notice the **Hideous Still Lifes** intro text has disappeared as this featured item has now slid down one position to the list with articles hyperlinks. This list now contains three articles instead of two. All this is shown in the following screenshot:





Another way to add articles to the home page

Adding an item to the home page takes just one click in the **Status** column of **Article Manager**. You can also add an individual article to the home page when writing or editing an article; in the **Edit Article** screen, set **Featured** to **Yes**.

Controlling the order of the home page items manually

Now that you've reorganized your home page layout, you'll probably want some control over the order of the home page items. To manually set the order, first edit the **Home** menu link. Under the **Layout** tab, make sure **Category Order** is set to **No Order**, as shown in the following screenshot:

Category Order: No Order
Article Order: Featured Articles Order

Click on **Save & Close**, go to **Content | Featured Articles**, and set the order as per your choice. First, set the sort order (by default, it shows **Title ascending**) to **Ordering ascending**, as shown in the following screenshot:

Ordering ascending

Alternatively, you can just click on the **Ordering** column heading; this will also set the order to **Ordering ascending**.

Now, the **Ordering** column shows little up and down arrows. Click these to change the featured articles order manually. The intro texts and links on the home page will now be displayed in the order they are arranged in the **Featured Articles** screen, as shown in the following screenshot:

The screenshot displays the 'Article Manager: Featured Articles' interface. On the left, there is a table with columns for 'Status', 'Title', and 'Ordering'. The 'Ordering' column contains values 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Red arrows point from the 'Ordering' column to the corresponding article titles in the preview pane on the right: 'This Years Meeting', 'CORBA Magazine Looking for Authors', and 'The Art of Bob Ross'.

What's the use of the Featured Articles screen?



In the **Featured Articles** screen, you can't—as you may have expected—assign items to the **Featured** status. As you've seen, you can assign articles to the **Featured** status in **Article Manager** (or in the article editing screen). You'll probably use the **Featured Articles** screen if you want to manually control the order of home page items, or if you want a quick overview of all featured articles. Apart from this, the **Featured Articles** screen allows you to publish, delete, or archive featured articles—but you can just as easily use **Article Manager** for that too.

Creating a sticky article

How do you go about creating a "sticky" article that will always be displayed as the first featured article on the home page? An example of this is an article welcoming visitors or explaining what the site is about. To make any featured article sticky, enter a negative value in the **Ordering** column: -1 . Now click on **Save Ordering** (two arrow icons pointing up and down). As other featured articles will have a positive value (1 or higher), the article with the negative value article will remain at the top.

Setting criteria to automatically order the home page items

Having full manual control over the order of the home page items can be convenient when you have a fixed set of content items that you want to show up on the home page. For example, if you have a corporate site and want to always show your company profile, an introduction on your products, and a link to a page with your address and contact details.

However, when your site is updated frequently with new content, you'll probably want Joomla to automatically arrange the home page items in a certain ordering criteria. Again, you can customize this behavior by editing the **Home** link of **Main Menu**. Its **Layout** options allow you to choose from a wide range of ordering methods.

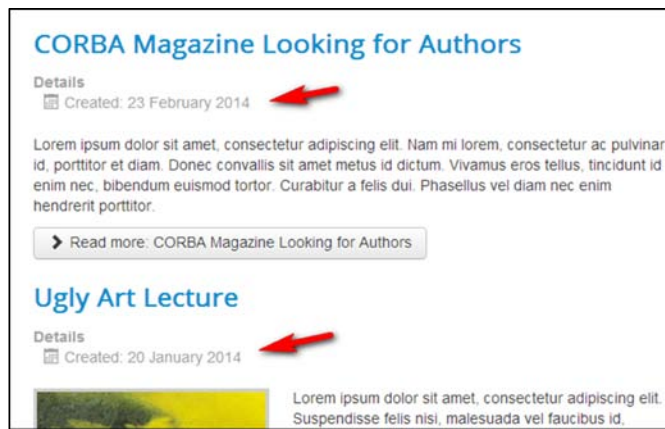
Time for action – showing the most recent items first

The visitors of the CORBA site will probably expect to see the most recently added items on the top of the page. Let's set the **Layout** options to organize things accordingly.

1. Navigate to **Menus | Main Menu** and click on the **Home** link to edit the settings.
2. Under the **Layout** tab, you'll find several ordering options for featured articles. Make sure **Category Order** is set to **No Order** in order to avoid specific category order settings overruling the article settings you choose. In the **Article Order** drop-down list, choose **Most recent first** as shown in the following screenshot:



3. In **Date for ordering**, select **Created**. When ordering your articles by date, you'll probably want to display the creation date for every article. Navigate to the **Options** panel of the menu link and make sure **Show Create Date** is set to **Show**.
4. Click on **Save** and click on **View Site**. Now, the most recent items are shown first on the home page, as shown in the following screenshot:



What just happened?

You've told Joomla to put the most recently added items first on the home page. If you want, you can check this by opening a featured article, changing its created date to **Today**, and saving your changes. This article will immediately be displayed at the top in the home page layout. If you prefer to order home page items in another way (for example, alphabetically by title), you can do this by selecting the appropriate **Article Order** settings of the home page menu item (the **Home** link in **Main Menu**).

The Featured Articles menu item type – an overview of all options

You've seen the **Home** menu is a link of the **Featured Articles** menu item type. When adding or editing a **Featured Articles** menu link, you'll see there are six expandable option panels available under the **Advanced Options** tab, and these options offer a large number of customization settings. Now, we'll see the all the available options in detail.



Dozens of dazzling options— isn't that a bit too much?

You saw these options before (when setting article preferences in *Chapter 6, Creating Killer Content – Adding and Editing Articles*), and now they turn up again, this seemingly endless lists of options. Maybe you find this abundance discouraging. Is it really necessary to check thirty or forty options to create just one menu link? Luckily, that's not how it works. You get fine results when you stick to the default settings. However, if you want to tweak the way pages are displayed, it is worthwhile to experiment with the different options. See which settings fit your site best, and in your day to day web building routine, you'll probably stick to those.

The Layout tab

Under the **Layout** tab of the **Featured Articles** menu item type, you will find the main settings that relate to the layout and arrangement of home page items.

Setting	Description
Select Categories	By default, the home page displays Featured Articles from all article categories. You can, however, control exactly which categories featured articles should be shown from. For example, you might want to display only featured articles from the News category on the home page and featured articles from another category on another Featured Articles page, introducing another category. This can be done using the Select Categories option. You'll see an example of this in the <i>Creating more than one page containing featured articles</i> section later in this chapter.
# Leading Articles	In this field, enter the number of leading articles you want to display, that is, intro texts displayed across the entire width of the main body.

Setting	Description
# Intro Articles	In this field, specify the number of article intro texts that you want to show in two or more columns.
# Columns	In this field, specify the number of columns that the intro texts be distributed over.
# Links	In this field, specify the number of hyperlinks to other articles (which are shown below the leading or intro texts).
Multi Column Order	This option can be used to specify whether intro texts in multiple columns will be sorted from left to right (Across) or from top to bottom (Down).
Category Order	<p>Do you want to organize the items on the page by category title? You might want to do this when you have many items on your home page and you want your visitor to understand the category structure behind this. If you want to order by category, set Show Category (see Article Options explained in the next table) to show the category. This way, the visitor can see that the articles are grouped by category.</p> <p>The following Category order options are available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ No Order: If you select this option, the items are displayed in the order you set in the Article Order field (the next option under Layout Options).◆ Title Alphabetical: This organizes categories alphabetically by title.◆ Title Reverse Alphabetical: This organizes categories in the reverse alphabetical order by title.◆ Category Manager Order: This organizes categories according to the order in Category Manager and orders the category contents according to Article Order (which you can specify in the Category Manager).
Article Order	You can order the items within the featured articles page by date, alphabetically by the Author name or Title , most hits, and so on. If you choose Featured Articles Order , then the items appear in the order they have on the Featured Articles screen under Content . This last option gives you full manual control over the order of items on the page. Note that Article Order is applied only after Category Order . The Article Order only has effect if you choose No Order in the Category Order box.
Date for Ordering	If you've set Article Order to Most Recent First or Oldest First , select the date for ordering: Created , Modified , or Published .



Setting	Description
Pagination	This is set to Auto . When there are more items available than that fit the first page, Joomla automatically adds pagination links (<< Start < Previous 1 2 3 Next > End >>). On the home page in many cases, you'll probably want to set Pagination to Hide .
Pagination Results	If pagination links are shown, Joomla can also display Pagination Results , which is the total number of pages (for example, Page 1 of 3).

The Options tab

The **Options** tab influences how article details are displayed on the **Featured Articles** page. For all these article details, you can choose between **Show**, **Hide**, **Use Global** (which means, use the settings chosen under **Article Manager | Options**) or **Use Article Settings** (use the settings chosen in the option panels of the individual articles).

The article options are similar to the options you can set in the general preferences for articles by navigating to **Article Manager | Options** (see *Tweaking the changing article settings* in *Chapter 6, Creating Killer Content – Adding and Editing Articles*). Here, you can depart from the general settings for articles and make different choices for this particular menu item.

Option	Description
Show Title	Should we display article titles or not? Usually, you'll want to show these. However, for some individual articles you may want to hide the title to display just the article text. For example, you may want to show a short introductory text on a Category Blog page and prefer not to use the Category Blog description for this purpose (because articles are easier to find and edit in the backend). In this case, you can place an article at the top of the Category Blog page with an introductory text and hide its title (as the category overview page already has Page Title).
Linked Titles	Should the title of the article be a hyperlink to the full article? By default, this option is set to Yes . This is better for usability reasons, because your visitor can just click on the article title to read a full article (instead of just on a Read more link). It is also better because search engines love links that clearly define the destination (which article titles should do).
Show Intro Text	After the visitor has clicked on a Read more link, see a page with just the rest of the article text (by selecting No) or the full article including the intro text (by selecting Yes).

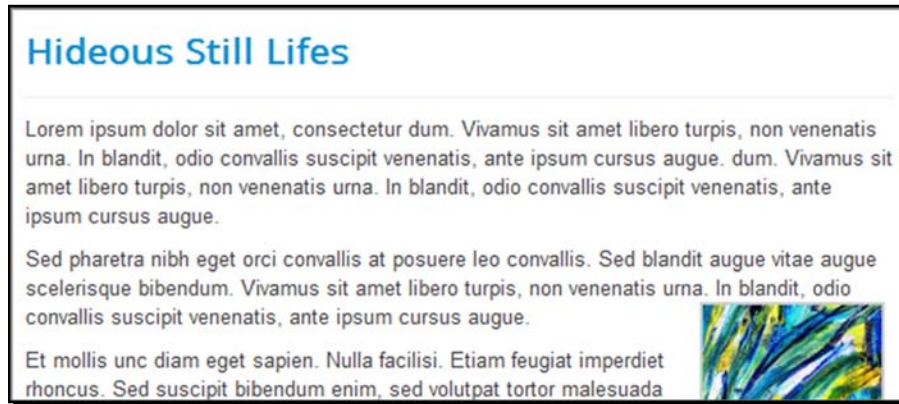
Option	Description
Position of Article Info	This option consists of the article details, such as the publication date, author name, and so on. If these details are set to be displayed, do you want to display them above the article, below the article, or split (partly above the article and partly below it)? All these can be specified using this particular option.
Show Category	For this option, select Show if you want to show the category name below the article title. Joomla will display the category (as shown in the following screenshot, Category: Club Meetings).
	
Link Category	If Category Title is shown, should it be a hyperlink to the category? In most cases, it's a good idea to select Yes here. This provides visitors with a link to category contents with every article.
Show Parent	For this option, select Show if you want to show the name of the main category (Parent Category of the current article category) below the article title. This will look like the following:
	
Link Parent	Just like the Category title, the title of Parent Category can be made a link to an overview page of the main category contents.
Show Author, Link Author, Show Create Date, Show Modify Date, Show Publish Date	Do you want to show the author name (and make it a link to a page with other articles by the same author), the creation date, the date the article was last updated, and/or the date on which the article was first published? By default, many of these options are set to Show . You may want to choose Hide if you've got a small site or a site that isn't regularly updated. In that case, you probably don't want to broadcast when your articles were written or who wrote them.
Show Navigation	For this option, select Show if you want to display navigation links between articles.

Option	Description
Show Voting	This option gives readers ability to rate articles (assign one to five stars to an article).
Show "Read more"	Do you want a Read more link to appear below an article's intro text? You'll probably want to leave this set to Yes , but if the title of the article is a hyperlink, a Read more link can be omitted. Although Joomla displays Read more by default, many web builders just make the article title clickable and omit a separate Read more link.
Show Title with Read More	It's a good idea to display the article title as part of the Read more text, as this will make the link text more meaningful for both search engines and ordinary visitors.
Show Icons	Joomla can show a set of special function icons with any article. These allow the visitor to print the article or to e-mail it. Do you want to display these options as icons or text links?
Show Print Icon, Show Email Icon	Do you want to show or hide the special function icons? This can be set using the Show Print Icon and Show Email Icon options. It's often better to altogether hide these extras. Your visitors may want to use the print function, but any modern browser offers a print function with better page formatting options.
Show Hits	This option allows you to choose whether the number of hits per article (the number of times it's been displayed) should be shown.
Show Unauthorised Links	This option lets you decide whether to show hyperlinks to articles that are only accessible to registered users or hide these articles completely.

The **Options** listed in the preceding table allow you to show or hide all kinds of details, such as **Author**, **Create Date**, and **Modify Date**. In the following screenshot, you can see the result when most options are set to **Show**. Obviously, this results in a clutter of too much detail.



On a website that's maintained by just one or a few authors or a website that isn't updated regularly, you'll probably want to hide author and date details. On a home page, you'll probably also want to hide all of the special function icons (set **Icons**, **Print Icon**, and **Email Icon to Hide**). It's unlikely that visitors want to print or e-mail parts of your home page content. In the following image, all extras are hidden, which leaves much more room for actual content in the same space.



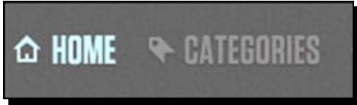
The Integration Options tab

The **Integration Options** are only relevant when you use news feeds (RSS feeds) on your website.

Options	Description
Show Feed Link	The Show Feed Link option allows you to show or hide an RSS Feed link. This will display a feed icon in the address bar of the web browser.
For each feed item show	This option allows you to control what to show in the news feed, the intro text of each article, or the full article.

The Link Type Options tab

Link Type Options allow you to set the display of the menu link to this page (in this case, the **Home** link).

Options	Description
Link Title Attribute	Here, you can add a description that is displayed when the mouse cursor hovers over the menu link to this page.
Link CSS Style	<p>This option is relevant only if you are familiar with CSS and want to apply a custom CSS style to this specific menu link. If you've added a specific style in the CSS, you should fill in the name of that special style in this box. Joomla will adjust the HTML and add the CSS style to the current menu Home link as follows:</p> <pre> Home </ a></pre> <p>To find out more on using CSS, see <i>Chapter 11, Creating an Attractive Design – Working with Templates</i>.</p>
Link Image	<p>Should an image be shown in the Main Menu link next to the Home link? Menu images (icons) can make a menu more attractive and easier to scan. The following screenshot is one of countless examples from the web:</p> 
Add Menu Title	When you use Link Image , should the menu link text be displayed next to it? Select No only if you want a completely graphical menu using just icons.

The Page Display Options tab

Under **Page Display Options**, you'll find some options to customize page headings and an option to control the general design of the page.

Options	Description
Browser Page Title	An HTML page contains a title tag. This doesn't appear on the page itself, but it is displayed in the title bar of the browser. By default, Joomla will use the menu item title as the title tag. In Browser Page Title option, you can overrule this default title. You can read more about this functionality in <i>Chapter 12, Attracting Search</i> .
Show Page Heading	Using this option, you can determine whether a page heading will appear at the top of the page (that is, in the main body). By default, this option is set to No . Select Yes to show Menu Item Title as Page Heading .
Page Heading	If you want to customize the Page Heading text (instead of using the default Menu Item Title as the heading text), enter text here.

Options	Description
Page Class	This is only relevant if you want to get more control over the page design: font size, colors, and so on. Using the Page Class field, you can add a suffix to the name of all CSS styles used on this page. To use this feature, you have to know your way around CSS. You can read more about CSS in <i>Chapter 11, Creating an Attractive Design – Working with Templates</i> .

The Metadata Options tab

Metadata Options allow you to add a description and keywords to describe the web page's content.

Option	Description
Meta Description, Meta Keywords, Robots, Secure	Metadata information is used by search engines. You can add an article description or meta keywords and enter instructions for Robots (web search engine spiders). You can also select whether this link should use a specified security protocol. You'll read more on metadata in <i>Chapter 12, Attracting Search</i> .

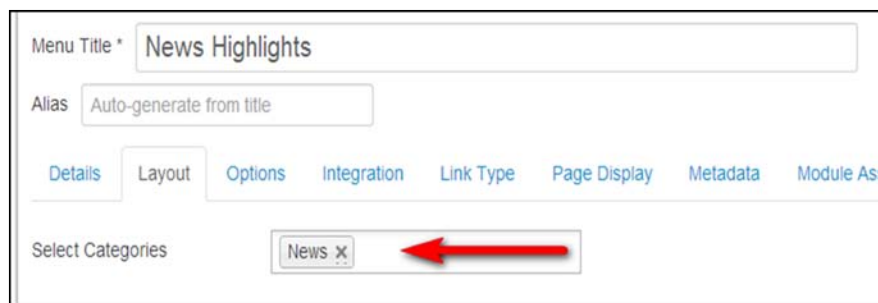
The Module Assignment tab

Click on the **Module Assignment** tab to see links to all modules that are assigned to the current menu item. Modules in Joomla are always assigned to one or more menu items. When the visitor clicks a menu link, a page that consists of (among other things) specific module blocks is displayed. This overview of (links to) assigned modules makes it easier for administrators to jump directly from the menu item to all related modules and change their settings. You'll find more on modules in *Chapter 10, Getting the Most out of Your Site – Extending Joomla!*.

Creating more than one page that contains featured articles

By default, the **Featured Articles** menu item type is used only once on your site. All articles that have the **Featured** status are shown on the home page. This is because the **Home** link in **Main Menu** is created using the **Featured Articles** menu item type.

However, you can create as many **Featured Articles** pages as you like, each showing featured articles from different categories. Let's say you want to create a page called **News Highlights** that contains featured articles only from the **News** category. To do this, create a new menu link of the **Featured Articles** menu item type and instead of **All Categories**, select only the **News** category. This is shown in the following screenshot:



The output will be a separate featured articles page that contains news highlights—articles in the **News** category that have the **Featured** status. To prevent the same featured news showing up on both the home page and the **News Highlights** page, you should change the home page settings (currently set to show all categories) and get it to display featured articles from all categories except the **News** category.

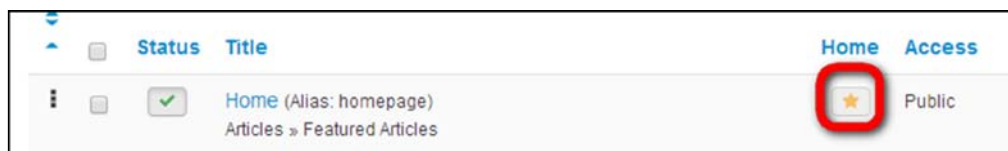
Another type of home page – using a single article

So far, you've used Joomla's **Featured Articles** layout for your site's home page. However, what if you want a completely different home page layout? This is easily achieved, since Joomla allows you to set any menu item as the default page.

Time for action – creating a different home page

Let's not use **Featured Articles** and create a simple home page that only shows one single, full article. This can be done by performing the following steps:

1. Navigate to **Menus | Main Menu**. As you can see in the following screenshot, there's a star in the **Home** column of the **Home** link. This indicates that this is the default page; the visitor will see this page in the main body when accessing your site.



- In this example, we'll select the **Mission Statement** menu item as the new home page. Locate this article in the list and click on the gray star in the **Home** column, as shown in the following screenshot:



- Clicking on the gray star will turn its color to orange, indicating that it is now the default page. Click on **View Site**. The results are shown in the following screenshot; an ordinary article is now the home page:



If you want to update **Main Menu** to reflect these changes, you can hide the existing **Home** link in **Article Manager**, which is still pointing to the old home page. To do this, in **Menu Manager** you have to click on the **Unpublish item** icon, which is next to the **Home** link, and rename the existing **Mission Statement** menu link to Home.

What just happened?

You've changed the default view of the home page to a fresh look that shows one article. Of course, you can dress up such a basic home page any way you like. For some sites (for example, a simple brochure site that presents a small company or a project), this may be a good solution.

The consequence of this approach is, of course, that the **Featured** status (that you can set in **Article Manager** and in the article edit screen) no longer determines what's published on the home page.

Have a go hero – undo!

For our example site, a single article home page doesn't fit the bill. You can easily revert to the home page you created earlier. In **Main Menu**, set the **Home** link to be the **Default** item again. In the **Status** column, you'll see that this setting will automatically change to **Published** again. Everything is back to normal now.

Creating category overview pages

In the previous chapter, you saw how you can organize content into categories and subcategories. By creating categories, you tell Joomla how to group things. However, you will also want to present category content on the website in one way or another. That's where Joomla's category overview pages come in. They provide an intermediate level between the home page and content pages, presenting hyperlinks to category contents. They're a bit like second level home pages. Joomla has no name for these pages; we'll call them overview pages or just category pages.



You saw some basic examples of Joomla's overview page when you created menu links for the **Category Blog** menu item type to display categories (see *Displaying main categories and subcategories on your site* in Chapter 5, *Small Sites, Big Sites – Organizing Your Content Effectively*). Now, we'll go beyond the basics and make category pages that exactly fit your (client's) needs.

Two main choices – Blog layout and List layout

Of course, being a somewhat advanced "Joomlaer", you already know that you can create category overview pages through specific menu link settings. Perform the following steps to create a link to a category:

1. Navigate to **Menus | Main Menu | Add New Menu Item**.

2. In the **Menu Item Type** section, click on **Select**. In the pop-up screen, click on **Articles**. To display categories, you have two main options:
 - **Category Blog**
 - **Category List**
3. Select the appropriate layout, select the category the menu link should point to, and add a link. That's all!

There's a small catch in step 3. How do you choose between a **Blog** layout and a **List** layout? How do you create the type of overview page that fits the content of a specific category? That's what we'll find out now. Let's first have a look at **Blog** layout; it's more common and more flexible than **List** layout.



Among the available **Menu Item Types**, you'll notice there's another one that has to do with categories: **List All Categories**. This has a specific use—as you may have guessed, it generates a page that lists hyperlinks to all article categories on the site. You can use this to generate a very simple site map. We'll see an example in *Chapter 12, Attracting Search*, which discusses search engine optimization.

The first type of overview page – creating Category Blog layouts

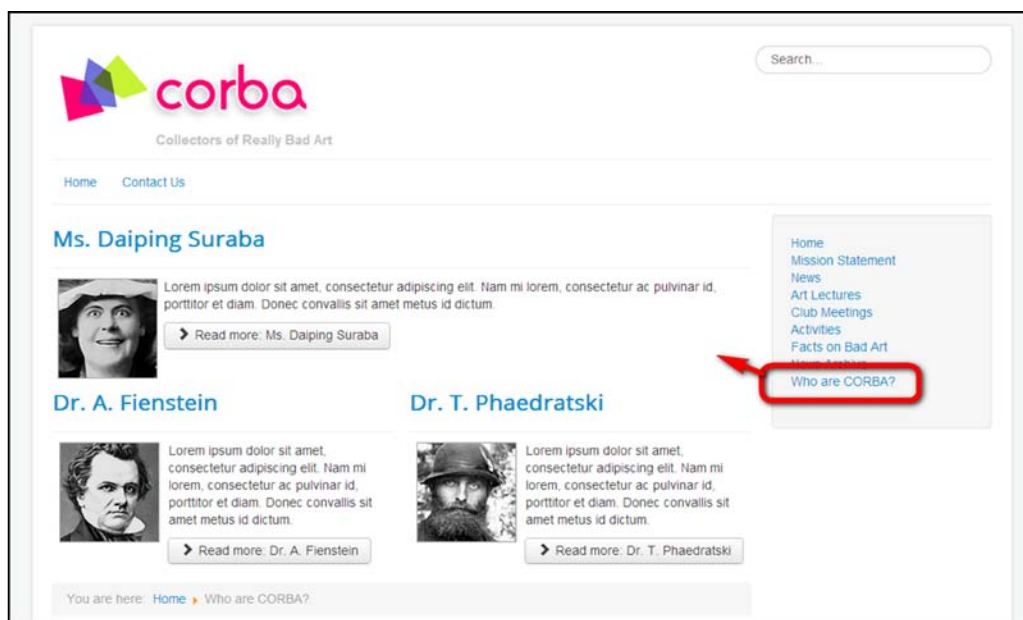
The **Category Blog** layout is quite flexible and offers you very different ways of presenting your content. Time to start experimenting!

Time for action – creating a face book using the Blog layout

Let's use the **Blog** layout to create a small face book, a collection of pages that present the CORBA team.

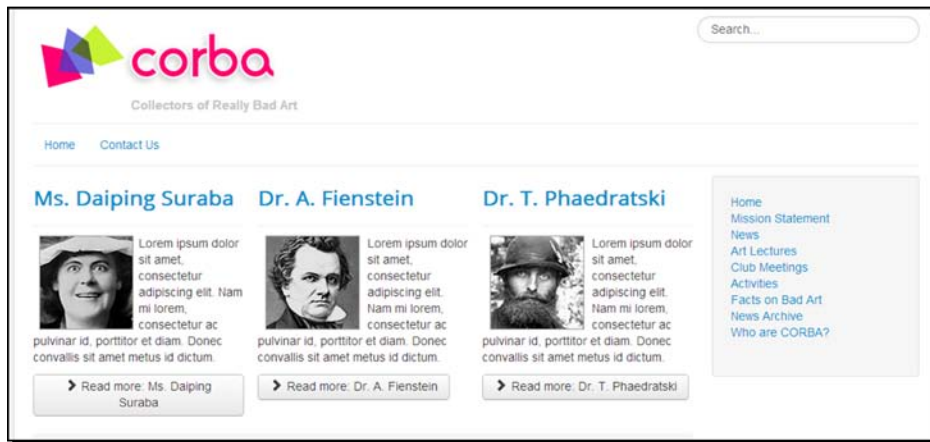
1. For this purpose, create a new category named **Who are CORBA?** by navigating to **Content | Category Manager | Add New Category**. Under **Details**, select **About Corba** as its **Parent Category** and click on **Save & close**.
2. Navigate to **Content | Article Manager** and create three new articles in the **Who are CORBA?** category in the **About CORBA** main category. In this example, we used the following titles: **Ms. Daiping Suraba**, **Dr. T. Phaedraski**, and **Dr. A. Fienstein**. Create articles with an intro text, a **Read more** link, and main article text (if you're unsure how this works, refer to *Chapter 4, Web Building Basics – Creating a Site in an Hour*).

3. Now, let's create a category page. Set up a new menu link by navigating to **Menus | Main Menu | Add New Menu Item**. In the **Menu Item Type** field, select **Category Blog** under **Articles**.
4. In the **Details** screen, select the appropriate category by navigating to **About CORBA | Who are CORBA?**. Enter a name (**Menu Title**) for the new link: Who are CORBA?.
5. Click on **Save** and then click on **View Site**. So far so good! There's a new link that shows a new category page:

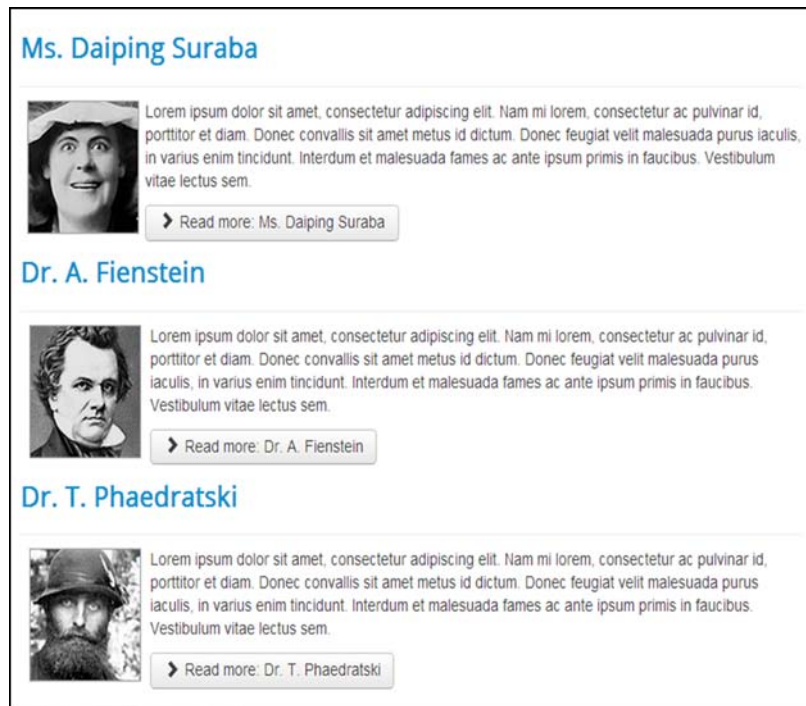


6. The page looks OK, but there's room for improvement. We don't want to display the first founding member in one wide column and the others in two narrow columns. Let's divide the article intros evenly over the page. Change the **Blog** Layout options of the **Who are CORBA?** menu link as follows:
 - ❑ **# Leading Articles:** 0
 - ❑ **# Intro Articles:** 3
 - ❑ **# Columns:** 3
 - ❑ **# Links:** 0

7. Click on **Save** and then click on **View Site**. The following screenshot shows the new outcome:



8. Looks alright, but the three column layout doesn't fit with the overall site design.
9. Let's try one final alternative. Set **# Leading Articles** to 3, **# Intro Articles** to 0, **# Columns** to 1, and **# Links** to 0. Click on **Save** and then click on **View Site**. Voila! A simple and clean one-column layout is created, as shown in the following screenshot:



The resulting page looks balanced, so let's keep it this way.

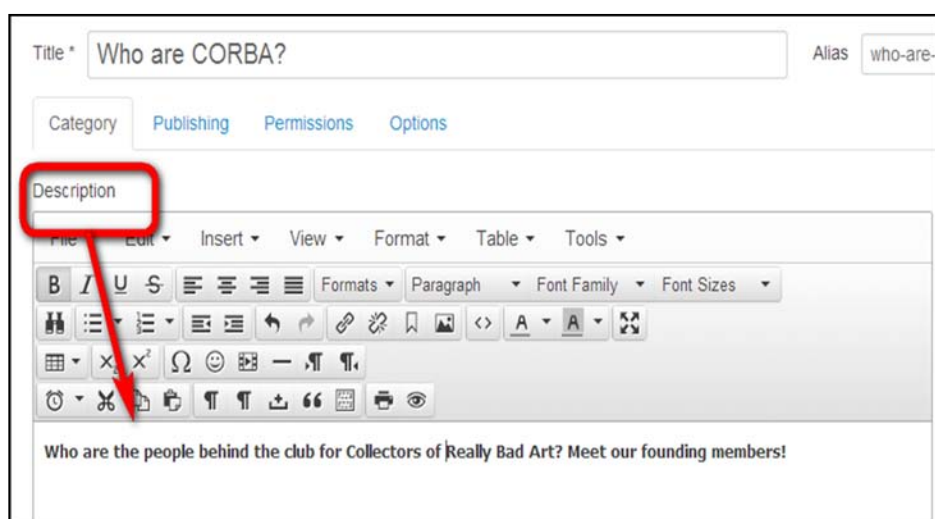
What just happened?

You've tried out different ways that category pages can show article content. You've added a face book to the **Who are CORBA?** category by displaying the intro texts of the articles in a category overview page, and you've seen how the magic **Blog** layout numbers determine what the page looks like.

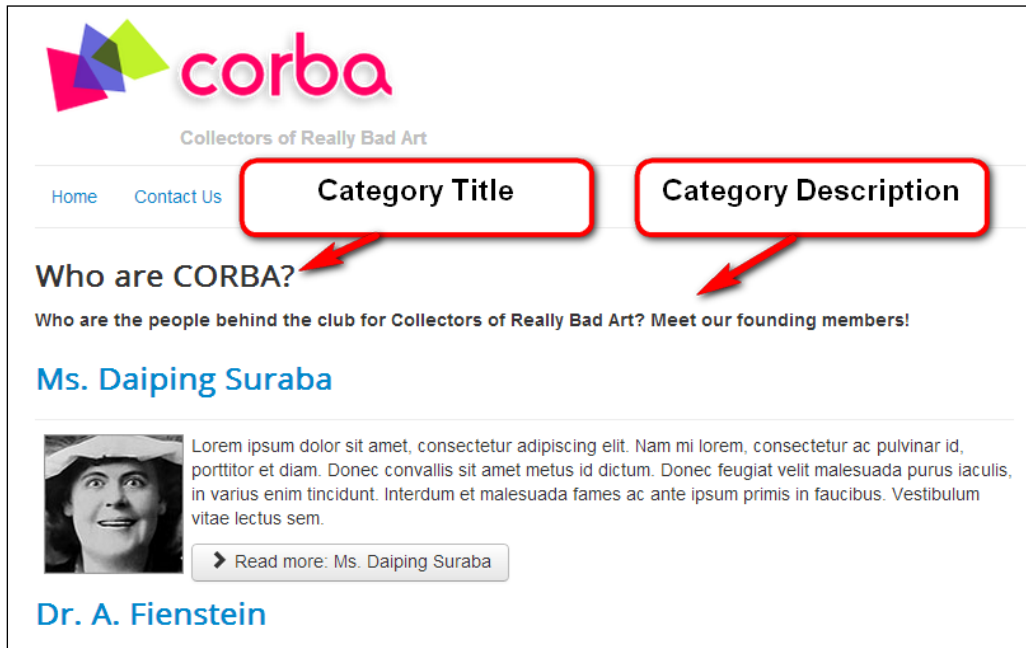
Have a go hero – add a category description

Category content doesn't always speak for itself, so you may want to give your visitors a short introduction to a category page. We already mentioned the possibility of entering category descriptions in *Chapter 5, Small Sites, Big Sites – Organizing Your Content Effectively*. They allow you to show a few descriptive lines at the top of any category page. Why not add one to the **Who are CORBA?** category page?

1. Navigate to **Menus | Main Menu** and open the **Who are CORBA?** menu link to edit it. In the **Edit Menu Item** screen, click on the **Category** tab. Make sure **Category Description** is set to **Show**. You may also want to set **Category Title** to **Show**; this way, the page will have a heading that reflects the menu link title. Save and close the menu link screen.
2. As there's no category description to display, let's add a few lines. Navigate to **Content | Category Manager** and click on the **Who are CORBA?** category title to edit the category properties. In the **Description** field, add a little intro text as shown in the following screenshot:



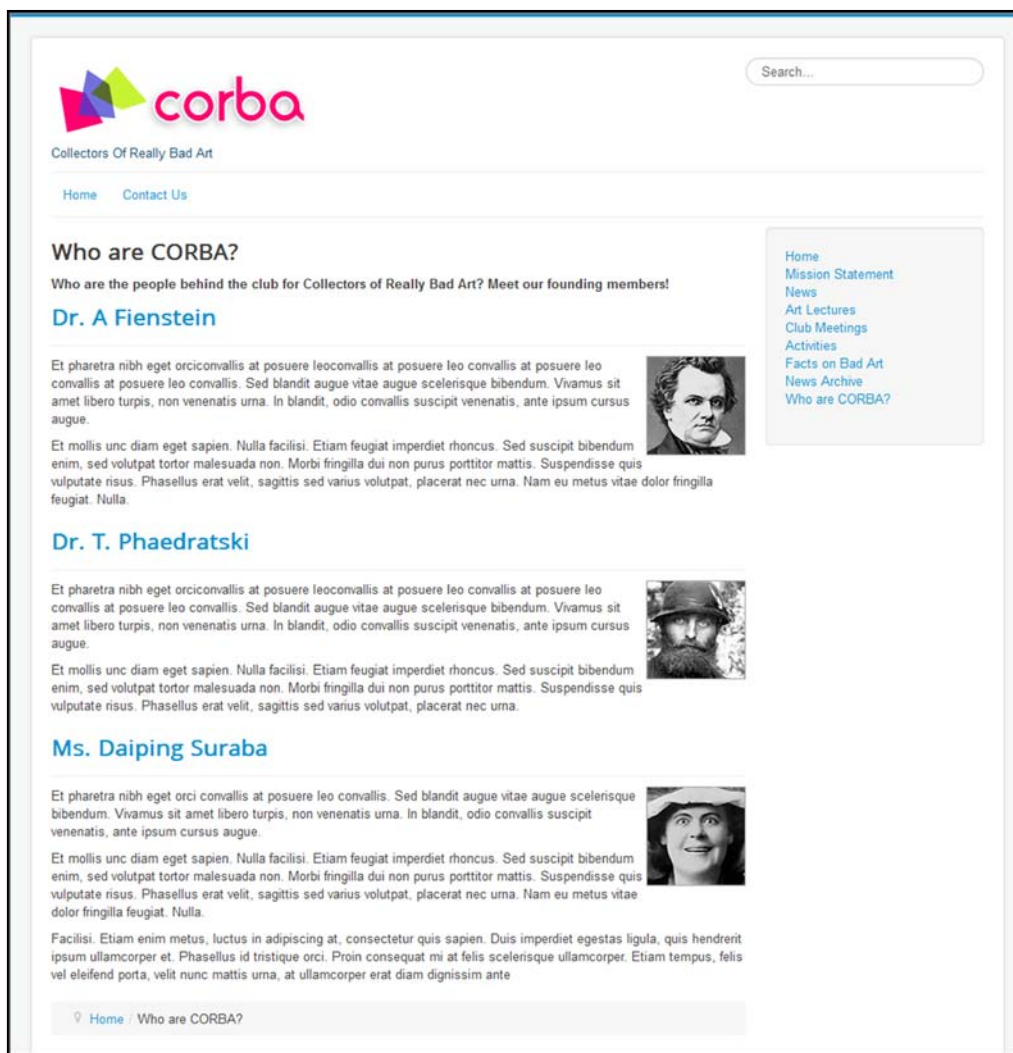
3. Click on **Save** and then click on **View Site**. On the **Who are CORBA?** page, the category title and category description are displayed as shown in the following screenshot:



The more menu items you create, the longer and messier the main menu will get. You'll probably want to change the order of menu links, or create submenus to better arrange the long list of menu links. Don't worry, we'll get to building and customizing menus in *Chapter 8, Helping your Visitors Find What They Want – Managing Menus*.

Showing full articles on a category overview page

So far, you've seen how you can show *intro texts* and *links* to articles on a category page. However, you can also use category pages to show a list of *full* articles. In fact, this is probably why this layout is called **Category Blog**. A typical page on a web log consists of a number of short articles ordered by subject or by date. The following screenshot shows an example of how you can get a category page to show three full article texts:



To achieve this in Joomla, you can use a **Category Blog** page similar to the one you created just before. To show full articles instead of intro texts, change the article texts themselves. Up to now, they contain a **Read more** division that tell Joomla to display no more than the intro text on overview pages. Navigate to **Content | Article Manager** and select the article you want to edit. In the editor screen, select the red dotted line that indicates the separation between intro text (with a **Read more** link) and the rest of the text. Now delete this red line. This will tell Joomla not to split the article. On any overview page, it will now show the full article instead of just its intro text.



When you create a page like this, you probably don't want to display **Category: Who are CORBA?** information that is, by default, shown with every article. There's no use for this, as there are no additional articles in this category; all articles are already displayed on this one page. Again, you can tweak these details using the settings of the menu link that points to the page. In this case, to hide the link to the category name, edit the menu link settings of the **Who are CORBA?** link; under **Article Options**, set **Show Category** to **Hide**.

Have a go hero – experiment with the Category Blog layout settings

Just like the **Featured Articles** layout, the **Category Blog** layout offers a huge array of settings that allow you to adjust the target page. You set them by navigating to **Menus | Main Menu** and then clicking on name of link to category blog page. You'll find a number of options panels that you'll be familiar with; after all, you already tried out the **Featured Articles** settings earlier in this chapter and the available options are very similar. The following section is a short overview of the options, particularly of those options that are specific for the **Category Blog** layout. See the *Have a go hero – try out the home page settings* section earlier in this chapter for a full listing.

Setting the options for the Category Blog menu item type

Most of the settings available for the **Category Blog** menu item type are identical to the options of the **Featured Articles** layout. For an overview of these options, please refer to the *The Featured Articles menu item type – an overview of all options* section earlier in this chapter. In the following sections, you can find the options that are specific for the **Category Blog** layout.

Category Options

The settings specific for **Category Blog** layout are found in the **Details** panel (where you select the category you want to display) and in the **Category Options** panel. In the following table, you'll find an explanation of **Category Options**.

Options	Description
Show Subcategories Text	If there are subcategories, set this option to Show to display the available subcategories on the blog layout page under a separate heading.
Category Title	This option lets you decide whether to show the category title as a heading on the category page.
Category Description	This option allows you to decide whether to show the category description as an introductory text on the category page or not.
Category Image	If the category has an image added to it (under Basic Options of the category edit screen), this option gives you the option to decide whether to display it on the page.

Options	Description
Subcategory Levels	If the selected category has subcategories, enter the maximum number of subcategory levels that should be displayed on the page.
Empty Categories	Should empty categories be hidden or not? It's best to hide these categories, as there's little need for visitors to explore categories that have no content.
No Articles Message	When Empty Categories is set to Show , a message can be displayed to tell the visitor there are no articles.
Subcategories Descriptions	This option allows you to choose whether the descriptions of subcategories should be displayed.
# Articles in Category	This option allows you to choose whether the number of articles in the category should be displayed.
Page Subheading	When you set Category Title to be hidden, you can enter another piece of text here that will be displayed as the page heading. If you were to enter the text Meet the CORBA team! here, this will result in the output shown in the following screenshot:



The second type of overview page – lists

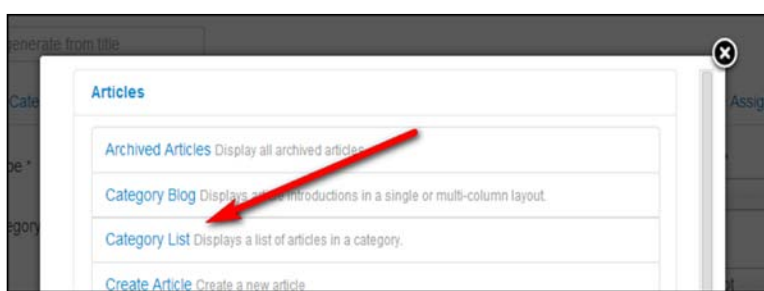
Compared to the **Category Blog** layout, the **Category List** layout provides a more basic view of category contents. Instead of a series of intros and links, the visitor is shown only a number of links to categories and/or articles.

How do you make such a list page? The steps are basically the same as the ones involved in creating the **Category Blog** menu links. Navigate to **Menus | Main Menu | Add New Menu Item** and select **Category List** as **Menu Item Type**. Provide the necessary details (select a target category and type a link title) and you're done. In this section, we'll find out in more detail how this works and how you can customize the default **List** layout.

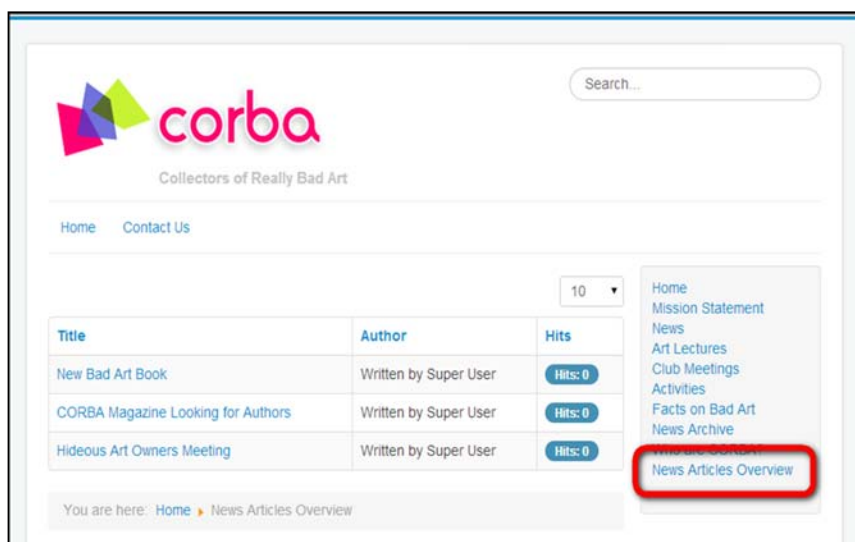
Time for action – adding a link to a Category List layout

Let's find out what the differences are between **Category Blog** and **Category List**. Earlier, you created a **Category Blog** link that points towards the **News** category. Now let's create a list overview of the same category.

1. Navigate to **Menus | Main Menu | Add New Menu Item**.
2. In the **Details** screen, click on the **Select** button next to the **Menu Item Type** option. In the **Select a Menu Item Type** pop-up screen, click on **Category List**, as shown in the following screenshot:



3. In the **Choose a category** drop-down box, select **News**. In the **Menu Title** field, add a descriptive menu link text: **News Articles Overview**.
4. Click on **Save**. Done! Click on **View Site** to see the home page of your site, and click on the **News Articles Overview** link to see the new list page. It should look similar to the following screenshot:



What just happened?

You have created a category page that displays a list of hyperlinks to articles instead of a series of teaser texts. Clicking on an article title takes the visitor to the actual article page.

The **Category List** layout can be useful for categories that are crammed with articles. If the **News** category contains hundreds of articles, this layout could provide a quick overview to all articles, allowing visitors to scan or search for article titles. You can also consider using **List Layouts** on a site with many articles on related subjects, such as elaborate FAQ sections or large numbers of articles in a site section that features product reviews. Lists enable visitors to quickly find information they are searching for. It's not really designed to attract casual surfers to explore the site's content. For that purpose, you'll probably want to use the **Category Blog** layout.

Customizing lists – exploring the Category List options

You can customize the look of **Category List** pages in the same way as you change **Category Blog** pages—by changing the settings available in the menu link screen. Navigate to **Menus | Main Menu** and click on name of menu link to the category list. In the **Details** tab, you'll select required settings, such as the category you want to display. Click on the other tabs to see the available options. Here's a short overview.

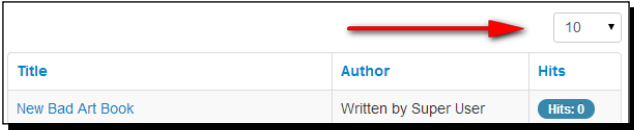
Category Options

These are identical to **Category Options** of the **Category Blog** layout. To find out what options are available, have a look at the previous section on **Category Blog** layouts (see the *Have a go hero – experiment with Category Blog layout settings* section).

List Layouts

The **List Layouts** panel contains the settings that are relevant to this specific menu item type. They allow you to customize the list display.

Setting	Description
Display Select	For this option, select Show to display a drop-down box that allows the visitor to choose how many items they want to see on the page. This option is turned off by default, because it's only useful if the list contains at least a few dozen hyperlinks.



Title	Author	Hits
New Bad Art Book	Written by Super User	Hits: 0

Setting

Description

Filter Field

Filter Field is a search box that appears at the top of an article list, and allows the visitor to quickly find content that matches the search criteria entered. The **Filter Field** setting allows you to specify that the search filter works by title, author name, or number of hits. You can also set **Filter Field** to **Hide**.



Table Headings

In this option, you can select whether you want to show or hide column headers (**Title**, **Author**, and so on) above the article listing. The output will look like the following:



An advantage of showing table headings is that the visitors can sort the table list (as this is done by clicking on the column heading).

Show Date

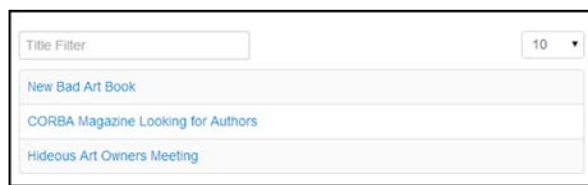
This option allows you to choose whether you want to show or hide the **Date** column (that shows publication dates). You can choose to show the **Created**, **Modified**, or **Published** date.

Date Format

By default, Joomla displays the date as in the following example: **Tuesday, 19 August 2014**. If you want to format the date differently, enter a date format code here. For example, entering the code **%Y-%m-%d** will change the article date format to **2014-09-19**. To find out which codes are allowed, check <http://php.net/manual/en/function.strftime.php>.

Show Hits in List, Show Author in List

These options allow you to hide the author name column and the column with the number of hits. By hiding both, you can display a basic hyperlink list that consist of only article titles. This is shown in the following screenshot:



Setting	Description
Category Order	If the menu link points to a category and its subcategories (as set in the Category options of this menu link), in what order should these multiple categories be displayed? Using this option, you can order them alphabetically by title, reversed alphabetically, or in the default order that the categories are in Category Manager .
Article Order	This is used to set the order of the list of articles. Article Order doesn't have an effect on the category list page itself (which contains no articles), but does on the next page.
Date for Ordering	If articles are ordered by date, this option is used to select the date you want to order them by. The options are: Create Date , Modify Date , or Publish Date .
Pagination	This is set to Auto . When there are more items available than fit the first page, Joomla automatically adds pagination links (<< Start < Previous 1 2 3 Next > End >>).
Pagination Results	If pagination links are shown, Joomla can also display Pagination Results , which is the total number of pages (for example, Page 1 of 3).

Options, Integration, Link Type, Page Display, and Metadata tabs

The settings found under these tabs are identical to the ones you saw in the overview of available options for the **Featured Articles** layout (see *The Featured Articles menu item type – an overview of all options* section earlier in this chapter).

How are multi-level categories displayed in Lists?

In the preceding example, we created a **Category List** link that points directly to a category that contains articles. Now, what if your site contains categories that hold no articles but holds subcategories? Let's take the **Bad Art** category as an example; it's empty but it does hold two subcategories (**Facts** and **Reviews**). If you were to create a **Category List** link to the **Bad Art** main category, it would be displayed as follows:

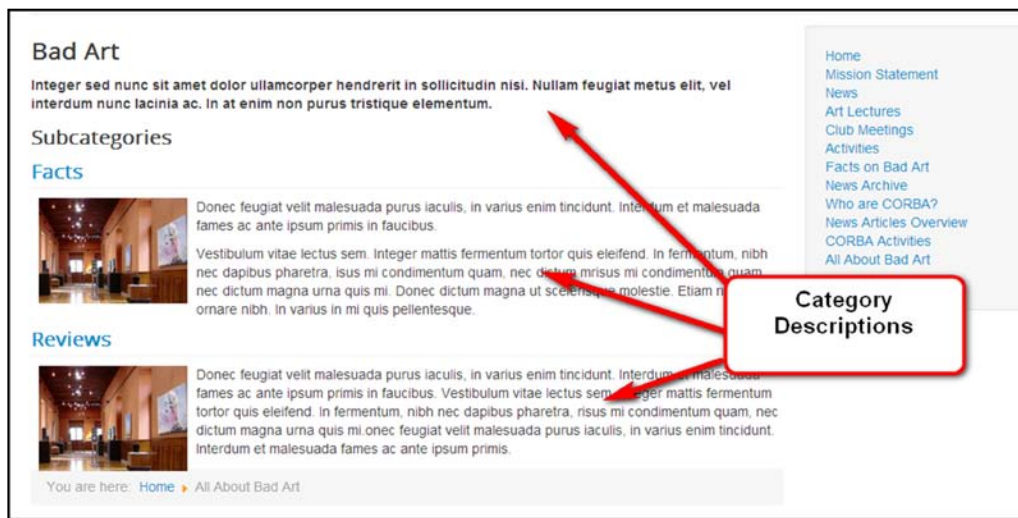


If the **Bad Art** top category contains articles, they will be listed here. Instead, now a no articles message is displayed. Subcategories are displayed as hyperlinks under the **Subcategories** heading. Clicking on the hyperlink takes the visitor to an overview of that particular category.

Empty top-level overview pages such as the one displayed in the preceding screenshot don't look inviting at all. You may want to skip this type of top-level page altogether and just point menu links directly to categories that hold actual content. However, if you do want to use top-level list layout pages, there are a few ways to make them more meaningful.

First of all, you'll probably want to hide the no articles message, as it discourages the visitor from exploring the subcategory contents. When they see there's nothing available on the current page, they'll probably just jump to another page on the site. You can hide the message via the **Category Options** of the menu link. Change **No Articles Message** to **Hide**.

To further enhance the overview page, set **Category Description** and **Subcategories Description** to show. Descriptions make the page a little more interesting and explain what the subcategories are all about. Add descriptions by editing the properties of the categories themselves by navigating to **Content | Category Manager** (see *Chapter 5, Small Sites, Big Sites – Organizing Your Content Effectively*). The following screenshot shows a **Category List** layout for the **Bad Art** page with a description of both the main category and of the two categories it holds. As you can see, a description can also contain images.



The subcategories links (**Facts** and **Reviews**) take the visitor to a list page that shows the actual category contents in a **Category Blog** overview.

Creating overview pages that show tagged articles

In *Chapter 5, Small Sites, Big Sites – Organizing Your Content Effectively*, you saw what content tags are and how they function in Joomla. You also saw how using tags allows the site's visitor to browse articles that share the same tag. When they click on the tag that's displayed with the individual article, they are automatically taken to a page that shows all items with that particular tag. Another way to display tagged items is by adding a menu link. By adding a menu link of **Menu Item Type** called **List of Tagged Items**, you can create a list of articles that share one or more specific tags—similar to the **Category Blog Overview** pages you saw earlier in this chapter.

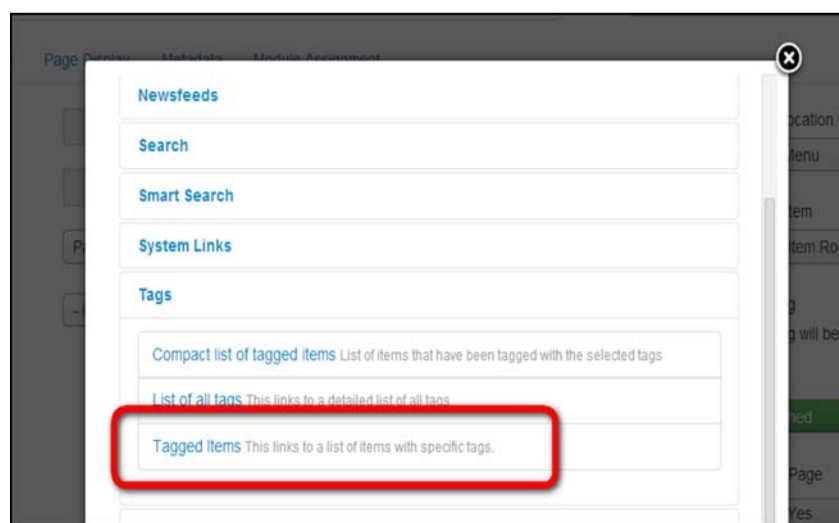
Creating lists of tagged items is a powerful way to create pages that list specific selections of articles. Imagine a recipe site where you could display all dishes tagged as **Vegetarian** in one go, regardless of the category they are in. You could even create more specific selections by using a menu link to display all recipes that are **Vegetarian, Italian, and Pasta**. You can imagine that this is a great solution to filter content for sites with lots of articles.

To find out how creating overview pages for tagged items works, let's add a tagged items page on our example site.

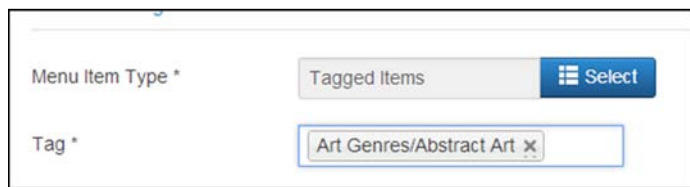
Time for action – creating a tagged items overview page

On the example site, we tagged some articles by art genre. Let's create a page that lists all content labeled with the tag *Abstract Art*.

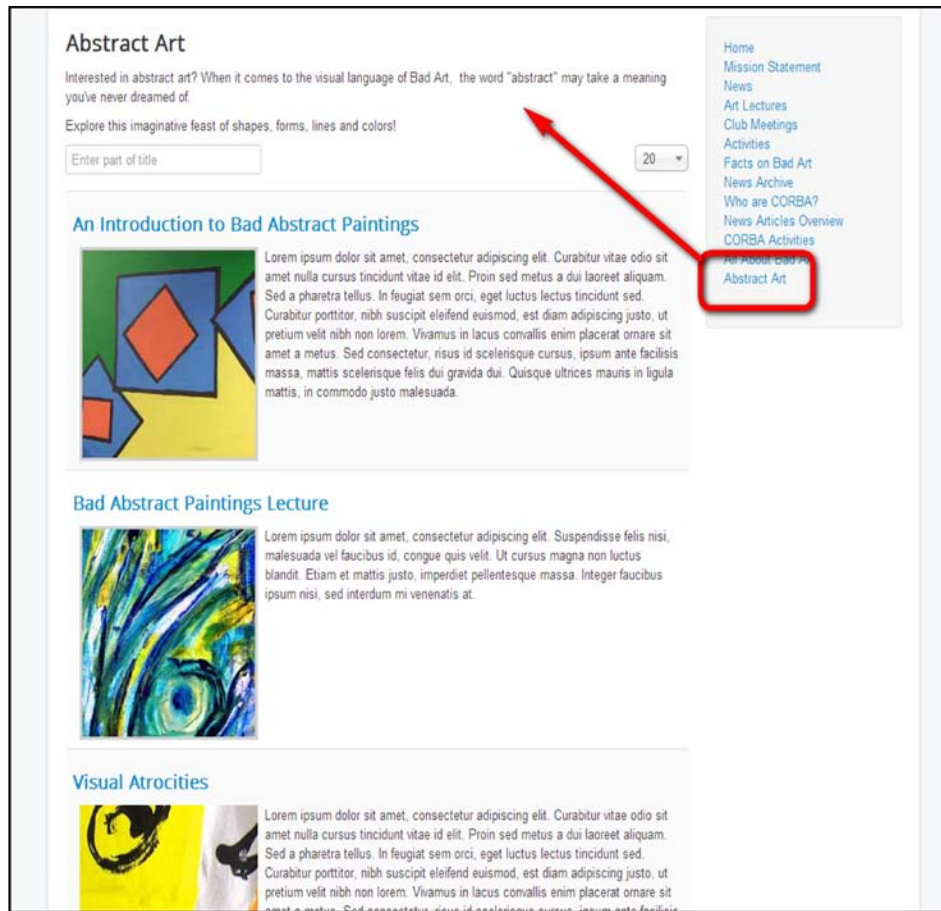
1. Navigate to **Menus | Main Menu** and create a new menu item. Select **Tagged Items** as the **Menu Item Type** as shown in the following screenshot:



2. In the **Menu Title** field, enter `Abstract Art`.
3. In the **Tag** field, select the **Abstract Art** tag as shown in the following screenshot:



4. Select **Article** as the **Content Item** type. It's also possible to tag other content items (such as categories); however, in this case we only want to tag and display articles.
5. Under the **Tag Options** tab, set **Tag Description** to **Show**. This way, the tag description (entered for the individual tag via the **Tags** component) will be shown at the top of the tagged items page.
6. To show more than just a list of titles of the tagged items, it's a good idea to also change a couple of options on the **Item Options** tab; set **Item Image** as **Show** and **Item Description** as **Show**. This way, the tagged item page will show the first article image and the first few lines of the article text.
7. Click on **Save & Close** and then click on **View Site** to see the outcome on the frontend. It is shown in the following screenshot:



What just happened?

You've created a menu link that enables the visitor to see all articles labeled with the **Abstract Art** tag. This means the visitor has two ways to get to articles with that particular tag: either by clicking the **Abstract Art** tag displayed with the tagged article or by clicking on the menu item you just created.

Have a go hero – experiment using tag pages

We've only scratched the surface of what's possible using menu links that point to tag overview pages. As mentioned before, you can also set up menu links that point to lists of articles that have a combination tags. If we had a more elaborate tag system on our site, we could direct visitors to all pages tagged with **Abstract Art** and **American Art** to show lists of all American abstract art. Otherwise, we could point them to articles with the tags **Landscapes** and **19th Century** to show them all landscape paintings from that particular period. You can also set this menu item type to display only content that meets one of the given tag criteria, that is, display items that are either tagged with **Landscapes** or with **Portraits** to show all articles that contain landscapes or portraits.

Don't hesitate to experiment a little with the **Tagged Items** menu item type. It's a good idea to have a closer look at **Tag Options**, **Item Options**, and **Item Selection Options** of this menu item type and try out the effects of the different settings. As this is quite a powerful way to filter articles, using this menu item can really help you out when you're trying to figure how to organize content and display content selections on your site.



Apart from the **List of Tagged Items** menu item type, you'll notice there are two other tags-related menu item types available: **Compact List of Tagged Items** and **List of All Tags**. The compact list output is similar to that of the **Category List** layout; it generates an overview page that lists linked titles of articles with a particular tag (or combination of tags). **List of All Tags** displays a page that lists only the tags used on the site, and not the tagged items themselves.

Pop Quiz – test your knowledge of home pages and overview pages

Q1. How can you change the arrangement of items on your home page?

1. By adding new content in the **Featured Articles** list.
2. By changing the main menu **Home** link settings.
3. By selecting **Status** as **Featured** in the article editor.

Q2. How do you create a category overview page?

1. By adding a new article in **Article Manager**.
2. By adding a new category.
3. By adding a new menu link to point to a category.

Q3. In what cases would you choose to present content in a **Category Blog** layout?

1. **Category Blog** layouts are used strictly for web logs.
2. **Category Blog** layouts are used to show a row of article titles.
3. You can use **Blog** layout to show teaser text or full articles.

Q4. How can you create pages that list articles that have been labeled with a particular content tag?

1. You can't, Joomla doesn't allow you to list tagged items.
2. Tagged items are listed automatically when the visitor clicks a tag.
3. You can create a menu link of the **Tagged Items** type that points to a page that lists items with a particular tag or combination of tags.
4. Both 2 and 3 are correct.

Summary

In this chapter, you learned all about two types of pages that Joomla uses to draw visitors towards the actual content of your site: home pages and overview pages.

When you want to set the layout and arrangement of the home page contents, you can change the settings of the **Main Menu Home** link. The **Home** link uses the **Featured Articles** layout by default. When you want a completely different home page, you can choose not to use the **Featured Articles** layout. You can set any **Main Menu** item to be the default home page content.

To show the contents of a category, you can create menu links to category overview pages. These provide an intermediate level between the home page and content pages; they're like "second level home pages."

There are two main formats for overview pages: **Category Blog** and **Category List**. The **Category Blog** layout is more versatile and provides a taste of the article's content. Its purpose is to lure casual surfers. The **Category List** layout helps visitors quickly scan or search for article titles in categories with long lists of content (such as an elaborate FAQ section).

Apart from creating links to articles in a given category, you can also display articles lists by creating a menu link that points to tagged items—pages showing all items that share one or more content tags.

In the previous chapter, you created content; in this chapter, you focused on presenting that content (through the home page and overview pages). In the next chapter, you'll master another critical aspect of web design: creating great navigation. You'll learn how to design menus that guide your visitors and help them to easily find what they're looking for.

8

Helping Your Visitors Find What They Want – Managing Menus

Menus and content in Joomla are closely intertwined. In the previous chapters, you saw that menu links don't just point to existing pages, as you might expect if you have experience building websites the old-fashioned way. When adding a menu link, you don't just tell Joomla what page the menu link should point to; rather, you instruct it to make that page. You saw how this works when you added content to your site. By adding menu links, you created category pages and other types of pages.

However, to your visitor, Joomla menus are no different from other website menus. To them, menus should provide an easy means of navigation. In this chapter, we'll concentrate on menus as a means to navigate. We'll focus on how you can make and tweak menus to design clear and intuitive navigation, and also on how you can help the visitors find what they want without difficulty.

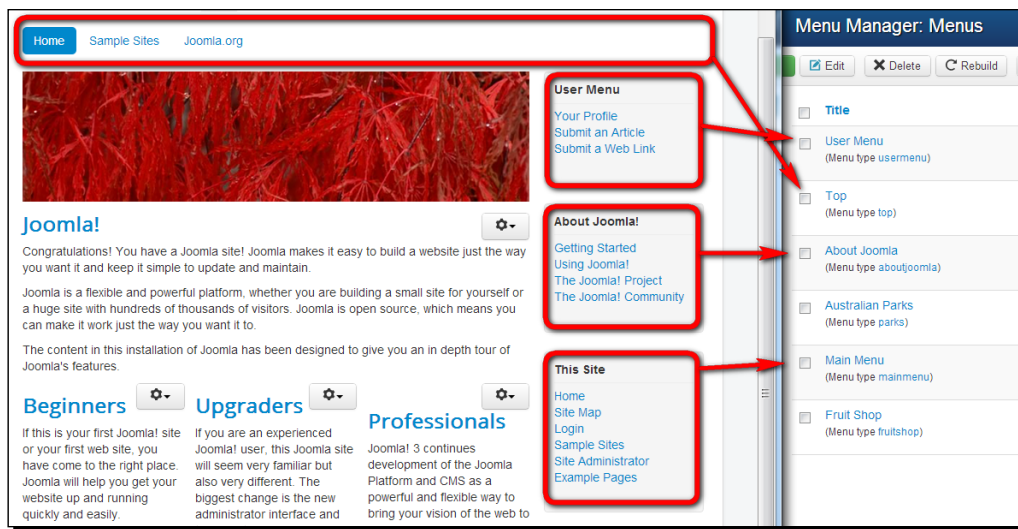
Up to now, you've added menu links using mainly the default settings. Let's find out how we can enhance menus and improve the navigability of the site.

In this chapter, you will learn how to:

- ◆ Add a new menu
- ◆ Create submenus
- ◆ Adjust menu module settings
- ◆ Create hyperlinks in article texts

How many menus can you have?

On any Joomla website, you can create as many menus as you want. Every menu can contain one or more menu items; each menu item points to a page on the site. The default sample site that you installed in *Chapter 2, Getting Joomla! Up and Running*, is an example, as it contains no fewer than six menus. On the home page, four of them are shown: **User Menu** (only displayed after a registered user has logged in to the site), the horizontal **Top** menu, the **About Joomla** menu, and **Main Menu** (titled **This Site**). In the following screenshot, you can see how the frontend menus are reflected in the administrative interface:



The **Australian Parks** menu and the **Fruit Shop** menu have been added to the sample data for demonstration purposes; they're only used on the **Parks** and **Fruit Shop** example site pages.

At least one menu is needed for Joomla to function properly—the menu containing the link to the home page. By default, that's the menu called **Main Menu**. The other ones are only there to showcase Joomla's menu possibilities. In real life, using these many menus would be confusing for both your site visitors and those who need to maintain the site.

However, it's great to be able to create as many menus as you like. This allows you to set up different menus for different functions and different users. You can, for example, have **Main Menu** (at the top of the page) containing primary links, and another menu (somewhere down the page) containing secondary links. You may also want to have a special menu with action links (such as **Login** and **Register**) and another menu that's only shown to visitors who have logged in.

Menus use modules (and why that's important)

You've already seen some examples of modules in action, such as the **Custom HTML** module. Remember, modules are Joomla's magic building blocks that can contain all kinds of functionality. Menus are displayed through modules too. In fact, every new menu you add uses a new instance of the **menu** module. This makes menus very flexible. Not only can you have as many menus (displayed through menu modules) on your site as you like, but you can also tell Joomla exactly where (on what part of the screen and in which module position) and when (on which specific pages and for which specific users) you want these menus to show up. You can even choose to create more than one module for a particular menu, to display the menu contents with different settings on different positions in different pages.

Sounds confusing? Don't worry, we'll practice adding and customizing menus in this chapter—and once you get the hang of it, you'll really appreciate Joomla's menu flexibility.

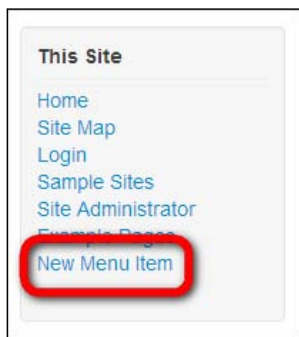
Creating user-friendly navigation – cleaning up Main Menu

When building a site, you'll start by adding links to **Main Menu**. This menu is always part of the Joomla installation, even if you don't install sample data. But as your site evolves, it can become a long and cluttered list of hyperlinks. Even the menu of our small CORBA example site already contains too many links. When you find **Main Menu** getting long and messy, what options do you have to improve site navigation?

Option one – changing the order of menu items

By default, a new menu item is added to the end of the existing menu. Have a look at the following screenshot:

If you add a new link to any menu, it will always show up as the last item, as shown in the following screenshot:



This is probably not what you want. The order in which you add items isn't necessarily the order in which you want them to be displayed to your visitor. It's a good idea to rearrange links as soon as you've filled the menu with hyperlinks.

Deleting or unpublishing unnecessary menu items

In the previous chapters, we added a few links for demonstration purposes or just to try things out. To get rid of redundant menu links, go to **Menus | Main Menu**, select the desired items, and click on the **Trash** button. In our example site, we can trash a few of the links that are no longer needed (as there are other links present to get to the same content): **Art Lectures** and **Club Meetings**, **News articles overview**, and **CORBA Activities**. Trashing a menu item can always be reverted by changing **Status** to **Published**. To permanently delete menu items, select all items with **Status** as **Trashed** and click on **Empty Trash**.

If you want to temporarily hide menu items, select them and click on **Unpublish**. You may want to choose this solution for the two menu items we created earlier, pointing to tag pages. Select **All About Bad Art** and **Abstract Art** and unpublish both. They won't be visible for the site visitor and they won't be in your way when you manage the site. However, you can easily publish them again if you decide you want to have a couple of tag-related menu items.

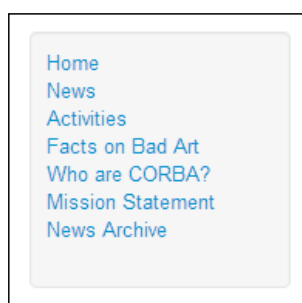


Time for action – changing the order of menu items

On the CORBA example site, let's move **Main Menu** items around to present them in a more logical order. The items that we want to get most attention should be in the top half of the menu; links to less important or static content should be placed down below. In the following screenshot, the original menu is shown:



A more logical order—from most important to less important—is shown in the following screenshot:



It takes just a few steps to adjust the order of menu items:

1. Navigate to **Menus | Main Menu**.
2. In the **Ordering** drop-down list above the menu items list, select **Ordering ascending**. Now click on the three vertical squares on the left-hand side of the menu item you want to move and drag-and-drop the menu item to its new position, as shown in the following screenshot:



Repeat the previous step until you're happy with the sequence of menu items.

What just happened?

The menu items now show up in the order that you've chosen. **News** and **Activities** have been moved up from their humble positions.

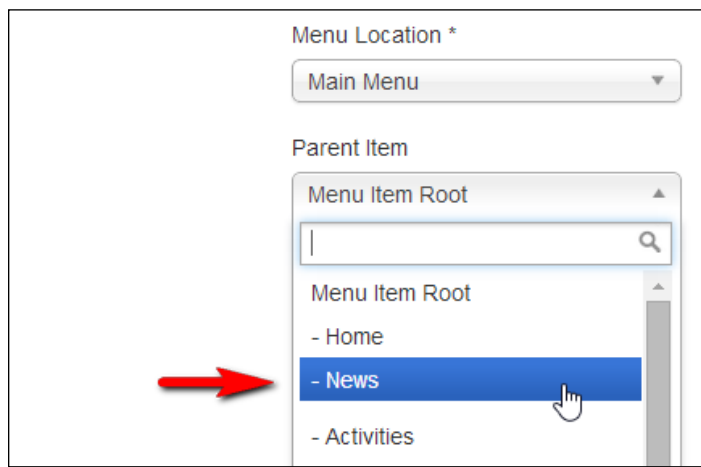
Option two – creating submenu items

There's still room for improvement in our **Main Menu**. Although there are now only five links left, the way they're organized may still confuse visitors. Having a **News** link and a separate **News Archive** link on the same menu level is odd. **News Archive** probably shouldn't be a top-level link, so let's change it into a secondary link that will only be displayed after the **News** link has been clicked.

Time for action – creating a secondary menu item

To remove the **News Archive** link from the primary level in **Main Menu** and show it as a sublevel link, use the following steps:

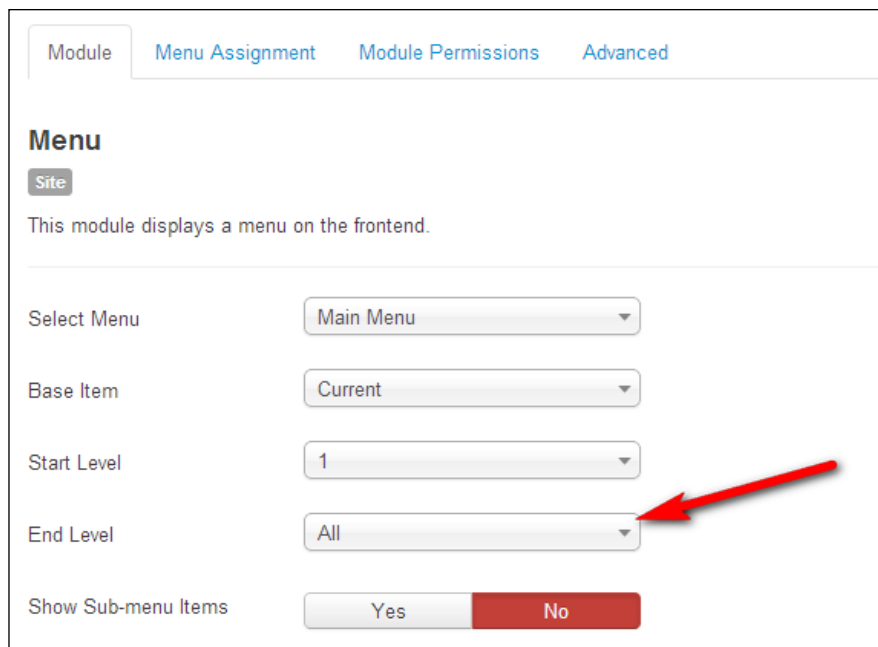
- 1.** To edit the **Main Menu** content, navigate to **Menus | Main Menu**.
- 2.** Click on the title of the item you want to edit, **News Archive**.
- 3.** In the **Details** section, **Parent Item** is set to **Menu Item Root**. This indicates it's a top level link. Change **Parent Item** to **News**:



4. Click on **Save & Close**. In the list of menu items in **Menu Manager**, the new sublevel menu item is shown indented, as shown in the following screenshot:



5. To make sure the menu will display the sublinks intended, let's check a setting of the current menu module. Go to **Extensions | Module Manager**.
6. In the **Select Type** drop-down list, select **Menu**. Click on the **This Site** menu module to edit it.
7. On the **Module** options screen, check if **End Level** is set to **All**. This indicates that all submenu levels will be displayed. Leave **Show Sub-menu Items** set to **No**, unless you want to always display the submenu items (even if the **Main Menu** link hasn't been clicked).

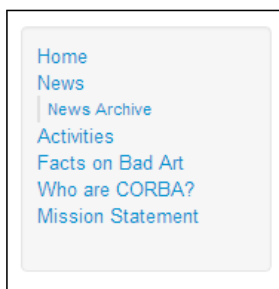


8. Save changes and click on **View site** to see the output on the frontend.

Main Menu now shows six primary links, as shown in the following screenshot:



When the visitor clicks on **News**, a secondary link **News Archive** is displayed, as shown in the following screenshot:



What just happened?

By assigning a parent item to it, you turn a menu link into a submenu link. Using main (parent) links and secondary (child) links can clarify the coherence of the site. Of course, submenus aren't the only way to make secondary content visible. In *Chapter 7, Welcoming Your Visitors – Creating Attractive Home Pages and Overview Pages*, you saw that main links can point to overview pages with links to category content. Both submenu links and secondary home pages can be used to help the visitor drill down the site content.

To change the contents of a menu, you use **Menu Manager**. To change the menu location and the menu behavior—such as the display of submenu links—you change the menu module settings. This combination of **Menu Manager** and menu module settings may seem confusing, but we'll practice using both sides of the Joomla backend in the next section, where we'll add a whole new menu.

Option three – adding a separate new menu

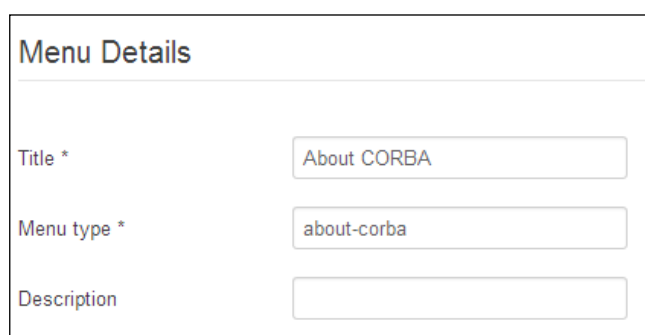
You've seen how you can rearrange menu items and add different levels within a menu. Another way to improve a menu is removing links that don't really fit in, and creating a separate menu for these links that you can show somewhere else on the page. This way, you can either emphasize those links in the visual hierarchy of the web page—or you can choose to make them less prominent.

Let's have a look at the CORBA **Main Menu** items. Imagine your client has asked you to reorganize the navigation to enable visitors to quickly find the information on ugly paintings that this site is about. It's difficult for the visitor to distinguish between links on actual bad art contents and links on the organization behind the site. A good solution would be to create a separate menu on CORBA-related contents.

Time for action – create a new, empty menu

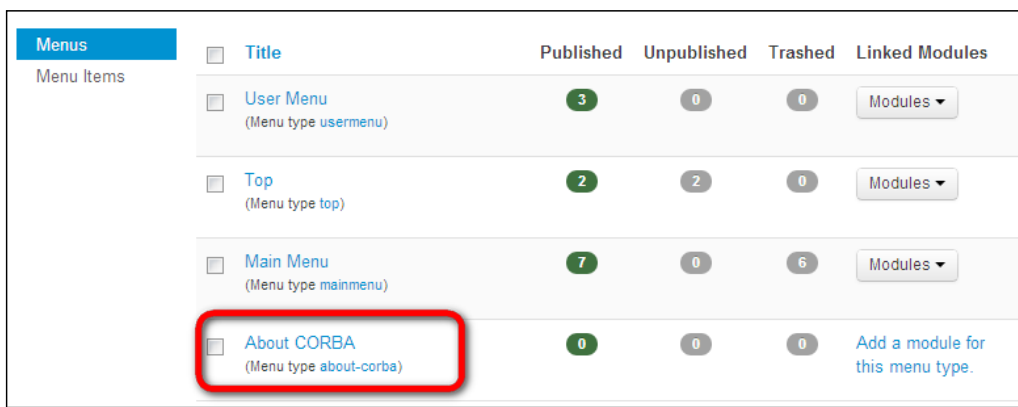
In **Main Menu** of the example site, three items are suitable to be shown in another menu. These links are of interest to visitors who want to know more about the CORBA organization. Let's create a new menu, **About CORBA**, so that we can move the menu links **Who are CORBA?**, **Mission Statement**, and **Contact** there.

1. Navigate to **Menus | Menu Manager**. Click on **New**.
2. In the **Menu Manager: Add Menu** screen, enter a title name in the **Title** field; this is the name that can be displayed with the menu. Fill the **Menu type** field too; this is the name that Joomla uses to identify the menu and it won't be visible on the frontend. When you enter a name, Joomla will save it without spaces or special characters. In the following example, we have entered `About CORBA` both as menu **Title** and **Menu type**. After clicking on **Save**, you'll notice the **Menu type** text has automatically changed to `about-corba`, as shown in the following screenshot:



Menu Details	
Title *	<input type="text" value="About CORBA"/>
Menu type *	<input type="text" value="about-corba"/>
Description	<input type="text"/>

- Description** is optional although it can be useful to help you distinguish between different menus in the backend. For now, let's enter Menu `about CORBA` and click on **Save & Close**. You'll be taken to **Menu Manager**. At the bottom of the list you can see a new entry. The menu **About CORBA** has been created, as shown in the following screenshot:



Menu	Title	Published	Unpublished	Trashed	Linked Modules
Menu Items					
<input type="checkbox"/>	User Menu (Menu type usermenu)	3	0	0	Modules ▾
<input type="checkbox"/>	Top (Menu type top)	2	2	0	Modules ▾
<input type="checkbox"/>	Main Menu (Menu type mainmenu)	7	0	6	Modules ▾
<input type="checkbox"/>	About CORBA (Menu type about-corba)	0	0	0	Add a module for this menu type.

If you were to click the `about-corba` link now, you would see all **Menu Details** again: **Title**, **Menu type**, and **Description**.

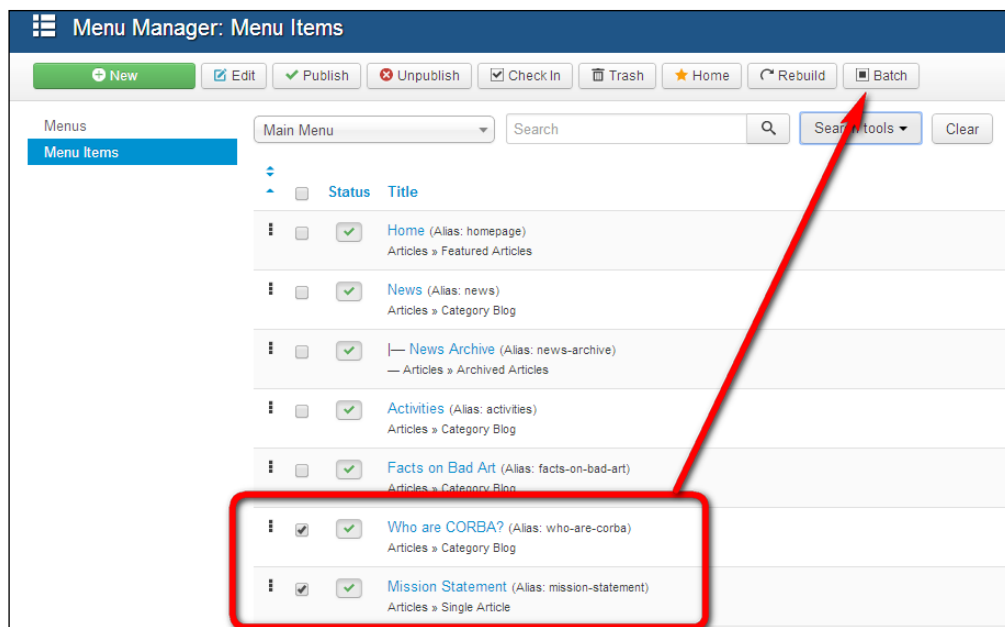
What just happened?

In **Menu Manager**, you created a new menu. It's visible in the Joomla backend—but of course, it's still empty.

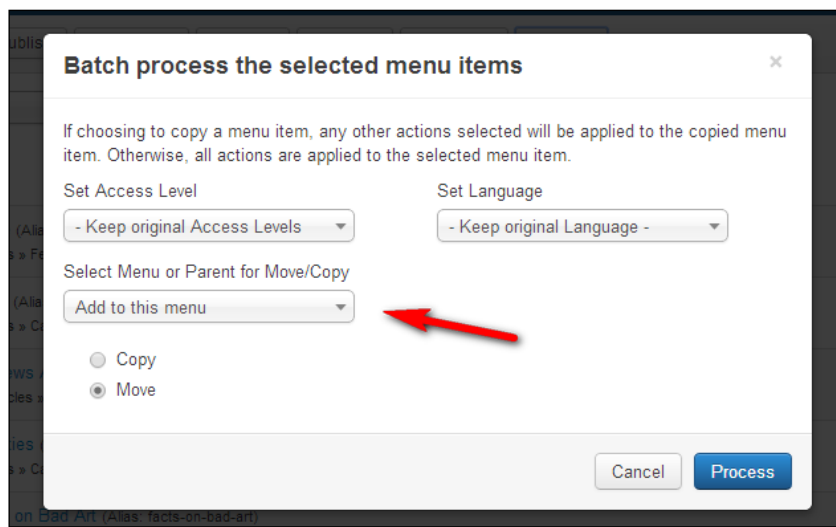
Time for action – moving hyperlinks to the new menu

One way to fill a new menu is by creating brand new links (**Menus | About CORBA | New**). In this case, however, we'll *move* three existing links from **Main Menu** to our new menu:

1. In **Menu Manager**, locate the **Main Menu**. Click on the name **Main Menu** to edit it.
2. Select the menu items you want to move to the new menu. In this example, we've selected **Who are CORBA?** and **Mission Statement**. At the top of the screen, click on the **Batch** button to move the menu items.



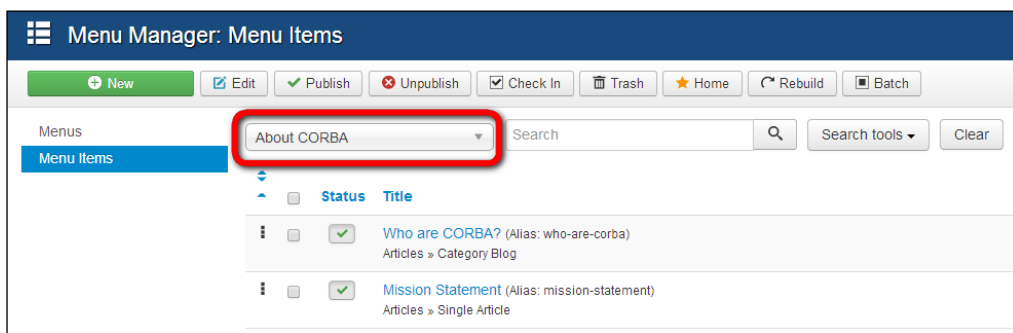
3. A pop-up screen called **Batch process the selected menu items** appears. In the **Select Menu or Parent for Move/Copy** drop-down list, go to **About CORBA | Add to this menu**. The text in the drop-down list changes to **Add to this menu**, as shown in the following screenshot:



4. Click on the **Process** button. A message is displayed: **Batch process completed successfully.**
5. Click on **Menus** in the menu on the left-hand side to switch to the **Menu Manager: Menus** screen. This now displays two items in the **Published** column of the **About CORBA** menu:



6. Click on the number **2** to see the actual menu items. The contents of the **About CORBA** menu are shown in the following screenshot:



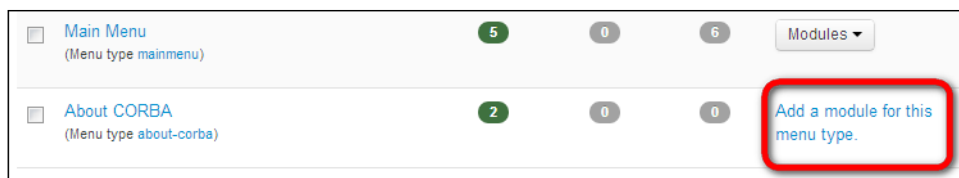
What just happened?

Everything is set up fine now; the new **About CORBA** menu contains the desired hyperlinks. There's just one thing left to do now—make it visible on your website.

Time for action – telling Joomla! where to display the menu

To actually get the new menu to show up on the site, you have to create a menu module. The module is the functionality block that contains your menu, and that's needed to be able to display menu contents. Let's tell Joomla! where you want it to show the menu:

1. Go to **Menus | Menu Manager** to see all menus. Locate the **About CORBA** menu. Click on the **Add a module for this menu type** link, found in **Modules** linked to the **Menu** column. (Actually this is a shortcut to **Module Manager**—it saves you a few clicks in navigating to **Extensions | Module Manager**, clicking on **New**, and then selecting **Menu**.)



2. In the **Module Manager: Module Menu** screen, enter **Title** for the menu: **About CORBA**. Select **Position: Right [position-7]**. This will make the new menu appear in the same column as **Main Menu**.
3. Click on **Save** and then on the **View site**. There you are! A separate menu appears. The new **About CORBA** menu is displayed in the right-hand side column:




4. You're almost there! We've got our new menu showing up in the right column, but we obviously want it to appear below **Main Menu** to establish a better visual hierarchy. This takes just one extra step. If you've clicked out of the module editing screen, navigate back to **Extensions | Module Manager**, and select the **About CORBA** module to edit the menu module again.
5. There are two settings that control where the menu will turn up on the frontend. We'll leave **Position** unchanged (to keep the menu in the right-hand side column). Click on the **Ordering** drop-down box. You'll notice that the **About CORBA** menu is now displayed as the second module in this position. To change this value, select a lower position (in this example, it's **5: This Site**). This will position the new menu below the current position of **Main Menu**.

6. Click on **Save & Close** and then on **View Site** to check that the secondary menu is now published in the proper position, as shown in the following screenshot:



What just happened?

In this example, we chose to take two links out of **Main Menu** and show them in a separate menu. We succeeded in cleaning up the previously overcrowded **Main Menu**; it now shows just six main links. All links that point to content about the CORBA organization have been moved to a separate menu.

 Don't worry if you don't like the default formatting of the Joomla **Main Menu** and submenu. Many templates allow attractively styled menus. If you have some CSS coding skills, you can edit the menu styles yourself. You'll see examples of styling with CSS in *Chapter 11, Creating an Attractive Design – Working with Templates*.

Have a go hero – changing menu settings

You may want to experiment with menu module settings (go to the **Module Manager: Module Menu** screen of the **About CORBA** menu) to adjust the position of the menu on the web page. Try out a few different menu module positions, for example, **Left (position-8)**. In *Chapter 10, Getting the Most out of Your Site – Extending Joomla!*, we'll explore the available module positions in greater detail.

Apart from the position setting, there are many other menu module settings that you can tweak to your liking. See the *Exploring menu module settings* section later in this chapter for a full overview.



Menu Manager or Module Manager?

To customize a menu, you'll sometimes use **Menu Manager** and sometimes use **Module Manager**. What's the difference? **Menu Manager** is used for everything that has to do with the contents of the menu. Anything to do with the display of the menu module can be controlled through the module settings.

Using the horizontal drop-down menu as the main menu

In Joomla 3.5, the horizontal top menu is in fact the most important site menu. Not only is it visually prominent, it's also the menu that will remain visible even if the website is shown on the small screen of a smartphone or tablet computer. Joomla's default template, Protostar, is set up to automatically adapt to such small screens. However, the content layout does change when the site is displayed on a smaller screen—you can try that out now by resizing the browser window:



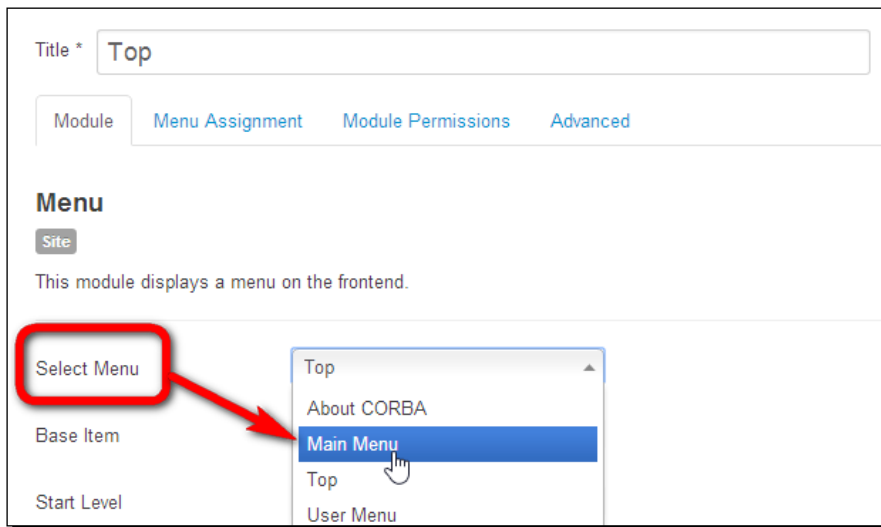
As you can see, the top menu remains visible, but the right-hand side column (containing the **This Site** menu) has disappeared. In fact, the right column content is still there, but you need to scroll down all the way to the bottom of the screen to see it.

This means that in our current site (using the default site template), it would be better if we were to use the top menu as our default site menu. Right now, that's not the case, but it's easy to assign the contents of **Main Menu** to **Top** menu (and vice versa).

Time for action – displaying Main Menu links in Top Menu

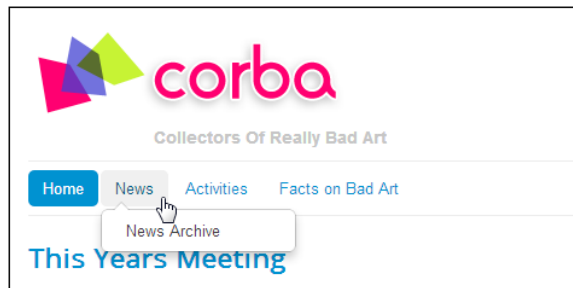
Let's set the Top menu module to show the **Main Menu** contents:

1. Go to **Extensions | Module Manager**. Locate the menu module named **Top** and click on its name to edit it.
2. Click on the **Select Menu** drop-down box to select **Main Menu** (instead of the current selection, **Top**):



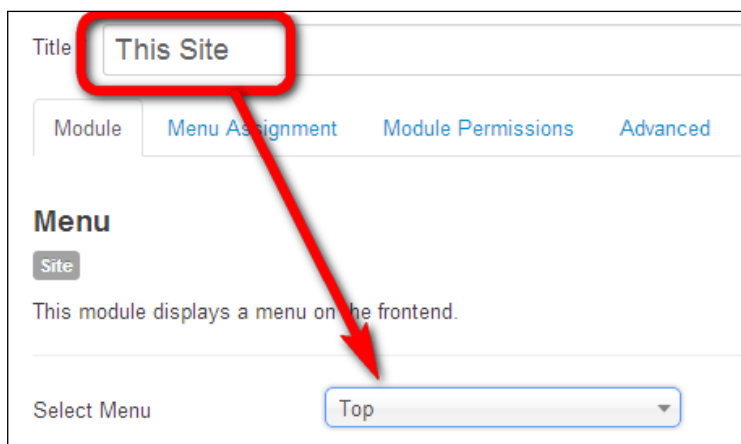
3. Make sure **End Level** is set to **All** and set **Show Sub-menu Items** to **Yes**. This way, the menu will display submenu links, not just the main level links. Save your changes.

Have a look at the frontend to see the output. As you can see, the **Top** menu now displays the contents of **Main Menu**. Hover your mouse over the **News** link to see whether the drop-down links are working—even if there's only one submenu link right now: the **News Archive** link.

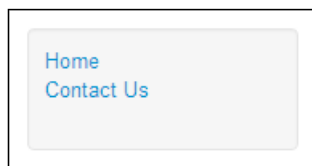


Have a go hero – cleaning up menus and menu links

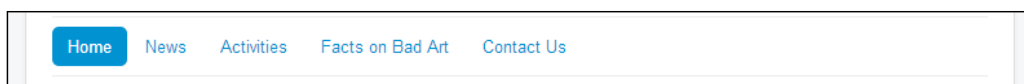
At this moment, the site contains two menu modules displaying the same menu contents. Both the **Top** menu module and the menu module called **This Site** display the contents of **Main Menu**. You can easily correct this by assigning the **Top** menu contents to the **This Site** menu module. To do this, navigate to **Module Manager**, open the menu module called **This Site**, and under **Select Menu** make sure the **Top** menu contents are selected:



Save changes and have a look at the frontend of the site. The contents previously assigned to the top menu—just two links—are now shown in the **This Site** menu:



We could leave this menu as it is, but it doesn't serve a purpose; the **Home** link is already present in the horizontal top menu, so why not move the **Contact Us** link to another menu and unpublish the superfluous menu altogether? To do this, navigate to **Menus | Top**, select the **Contact Us** link, and click on **Batch** to move it to **Main Menu**. Now the top menu displays all main links, including **Contact Us**:



Next, navigate to **Extensions | Module Manager**, locate the **This Site** module, and click on the green tick in the **Status** column to unpublish the redundant menu.

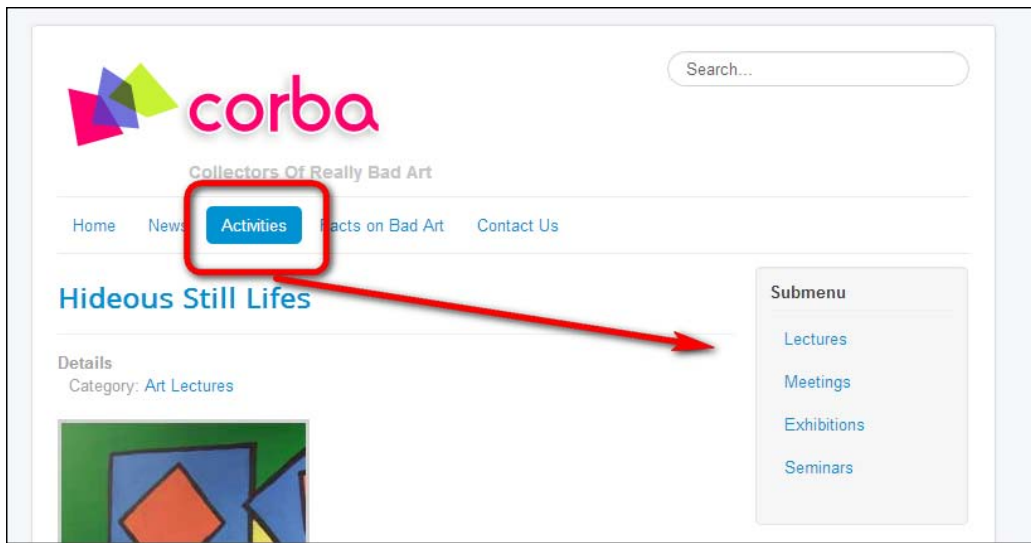
Creating split submenus

Earlier in this chapter, you've seen that you create submenu links by selecting an appropriate **Parent Item** for any menu link. By default, every new link is a top-level link—its **Parent Item** is set to **Menu Item Root**. Changing **Parent Item** to another menu link turns the current menu link into a submenu link.

Usually, submenu links will be displayed within the same menu as parent links. You've seen how this works in both the vertical **This Site** menu (where submenu items become visible after the visitor has clicked on a **Main Menu** item) and in the horizontal **Top** menu (where submenu items become visible as drop-down items when the mouse cursor hovers over a **Main Menu** item).

However, you can also choose a different presentation. A common practice is to put the main navigation links horizontally along the top of the page and display the second level links in a separate menu module (for example, in a vertical menu in the left-hand side column). This creates a clear visual distinction between the main menu items and their submenu items. At the same time, it's clear that the two menus share a relationship. The parent item can be marked as active (using a different style or color) when the related submenu is displayed.

An example is shown in the following screenshot. A primary link, **Activities**, is shown in a (horizontal) main menu bar. When this link is clicked on, a separate submenu shows secondary links (submenu links) to **Lectures**, **Meetings**, **Exhibitions**, and **Seminars**:

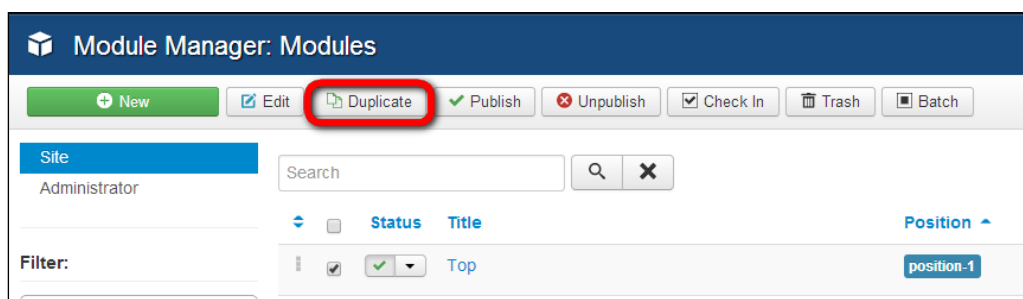


This menu setup can be useful if you've got a lot of submenu content. Instead of displaying all links within the same menu, you can use a column or any other part of the page to display a list of submenu links.

How do you build this kind of menu system in Joomla? In short, you create a copy of the main menu module, set the original main menu module to show only the top-level links, and set the copy to show only the second-level links. Joomla will automatically display the appropriate submenu when the parent item is chosen in the **Top** menu.

We won't add a split menu system to our example site, as it doesn't have the amount of content that would justify an elaborate multi-level navigation. However, feel free to experiment on your own website, as this is a very powerful technique. The following are the required steps:

1. Suppose you have created a **Top** menu with two or more submenu links. Navigate to **Extensions | Module Manager**. Select the **Top** menu module and click on **Duplicate**.



2. The same list now contains a copy, called **Top (2)**. Open the copy and enter a new title (for example, **Submenu**). Select a **Position** (for example, **position-7**).
3. Set **Status** of the module to **Published**.
4. Set **Start Level** to **2** and **End Level** to **2**. This will make the menu display only second-level menu items.

Start Level	2
End Level	2

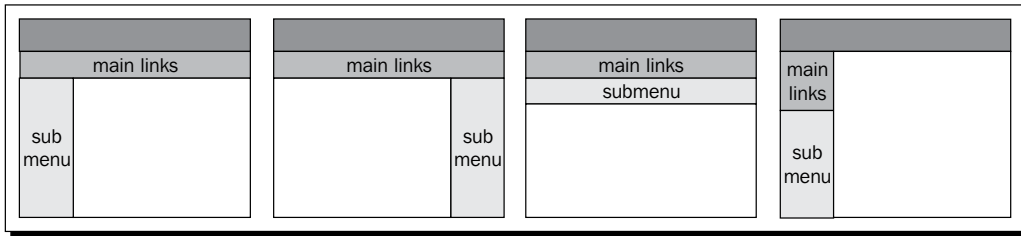
5. Click on the **Menu Assignment** tab, and assign the module to **On all pages**. Click on **Save & Close**. The menu copy is ready.

- Now, edit the original **Top** menu module to show only the top-level items. Set **Start Level** to **1** and **End Level** to **1**. This indicates the menu will only show primary links.

The submenu is done! By default, the submenu links are hidden. Only when the visitor clicks on the **Top** menu **Activities** link (which has submenu links), the submenu is displayed elsewhere on the page.

Have a go hero – arranging menus any way you like

Joomla's split menu capabilities allow you to design exactly the type of navigation that's appropriate for your site. You can place a row of main menu links at the top of the page and position secondary (submenu) links on the left-hand side or right-hand side column. Try to figure out what arrangement of main and secondary links fits your site best and how you can realize this in Joomla. Here are a few suggestions (some common arrangements of site navigation) to get you going:



Joomla's default template allows simple drop-down menus. However, there are many extensions available that are specifically designed to support more advanced horizontal drop-down menus. There are also many menu extensions available that support horizontal drop-down menus in any template. We'll see an example of this in *Chapter 11, Creating an Attractive Design – Working with Templates*.

Exploring menu module settings

While creating or editing a menu module, the module details and options allow you to control exactly where the menu is shown and how it displays. In many cases, the default settings will do—but if you really want control over your menus, it's a good idea to explore the wide range of additional possibilities. In the **Module Manager**, click on the menu name (such as **This Site** or **About CORBA**). The **Module Manager: Module Menu** screen appears as follows:

The screenshot shows the Joomla! Module Manager configuration for the 'About CORBA' module. The title is 'About CORBA'. The configuration is divided into two main sections: 'Menu' and 'Advanced'.

Menu Section:

- Title:** About CORBA
- Site:** This module displays a menu on the frontend.
- Select Menu:** About CORBA
- Base Item:** Current
- Start Level:** 1
- End Level:** All
- Show Sub-menu Items:** Yes

Advanced Section:

- Show Title:** Show
- Position:** position-7
- Status:** Published
- Start Publishing:** (empty)
- Finish Publishing:** (empty)
- Access:** Public
- Ordering:** 5 This Site

Switching to the menu module screen

You've just seen how you can edit menu properties by navigating to **Extensions | Module Manager** and finding the appropriate menu module. However, we've seen there's also a shortcut available that takes you straight from **Menu Manager** to the corresponding menu module settings:

The screenshot shows the Joomla! Menu Manager interface. A table lists menu items with columns for Title, Published, Unpublished, Trashed, Linked Modules, and ID. Two red arrows point to the 'User Menu' and 'Main Menu' rows. Below the arrows are two red-bordered boxes with text: 'Click to edit menu items' and 'Click to edit menu module'.

Title	Published	Unpublished	Trashed	Linked Modules	ID
User Menu (Menu type usermenu)	3	0	0	Modules	2
Top (Menu type top)	1	0	2	Modules	3
Main Menu (Menu type mainmenu)	6	3	0	Modules	6
About CORBA (Menu type about-corba)	2	0	0	Modules	8

Click to edit menu items

Click to edit menu module

In the **Linked Modules** column, click on the link to the menu module. Usually, there will be just one linked module available; however, if you use more instances of the same menu in different module positions, these will be listed here. The shortcut in the **Linked Modules** column will display a pop-up screen with (almost) all module options that you can also find through **Module Manager**.

Let's have a closer look at all the menu module options available in the **Module Manager: Module Menu** screen.

The Module tab

The settings in the **Module** tab control the basic properties, such as the menu title and the menu position.

Option	Description
Title	Enter the Title of the module that can be displayed on the frontend.
Select Menu	Select the menu (found by navigating to Menus Menu Manager) from which this menu should draw its content.
Base Item	Usually, Joomla will only display submenu items related to the current menu item. You probably don't want to change this, as this is the expected behavior. However, you can select a different Base Item here in order to display submenu items that are not related to the current active menu item. For example, you could show the News submenu-items on pages that are not related to the News menu link. To do this, select the desired Base Item and the corresponding Start Level and End Level to display the submenu items that would not normally show on the current page.
Start Level, End Level	Start Level and End Level allow you to split a menu showing primary links (level 1) at the top of the page and secondary links (level 2 and further) in a split menu in another position. See <i>Creating split submenus</i> earlier in this chapter for an example.
Show Sub-menu Items	Should submenu items be displayed even when the parent is not active (not selected)? Select No to have submenu items display only when the parent menu item is clicked. If the site template supports drop-down menus, select Yes here to get the menu to display drop-down submenus when the user hovers over the main menu items.
Show Title	In many cases, you can set Title to hide. After all, why should a main menu be called Main Menu or This Site ? Web visitors recognize a menu when they see one. Only special function menus (Login) may display a title.

Option	Description
Position	Select the predefined position where you want the module to be displayed. The options you have here depend on the template you're using. Template designers can add as many positions as they like, giving you maximum flexibility in assigning positions to menus and other modules.
Status	Select Published to show the menu module on the site, and select Unpublished to hide it or Trashed to send it to the trash can.
Start Publishing, Finish Publishing	If a (menu) module should be displayed for a limited period of time, enter the start and end date here. If you just want to postpone publishing, only enter a start date.
Access	When you apply different access levels to different parts of your site, here you can determine who has access to this menu. When set to Public , every visitor can see the menu. Choose Registered to only give registered users access and Special to only give access to users with an author status or higher.
Ordering	You can put more than one module within Position ; by changing the Ordering setting, you control the order of the modules in the Position selected. The drop-down box shows all modules in the current Position (for an example, see <i>Option one – changing the order of menu items</i> earlier in this chapter).
Language	If you have a multilingual site, assign the appropriate language to this module.
Note	This is room for a short note about this module for yourself or for others that have access to the administrative interface.

The Menu Assignment tab

The **Menu Assignment** section allows you to control on which pages (through which menu links) the menu module will be accessible.

Option	Description
Module Assignment	On what pages should the module be displayed? By default, a module will be shown on all pages. Choose between On all pages , On no pages , Only on the pages selected , or On all pages except those selected . The actual selection is made in the next step.
Menu Selection	When you select any Module Assignment other than On all pages or No pages , this option appears. Here you can select menus and the menu links they contain. This selection controls on which pages (that are linked to through listed Menu Items) the module is displayed.

The Module Permissions tab

In the **Module Permissions** tab, you can set permissions for user groups at the level of this specific module. Using permission settings, you can control whether specific user groups can or cannot see this module, or if they are allowed to edit it. You'll learn more about permissions in the next chapter.

The Advanced tab

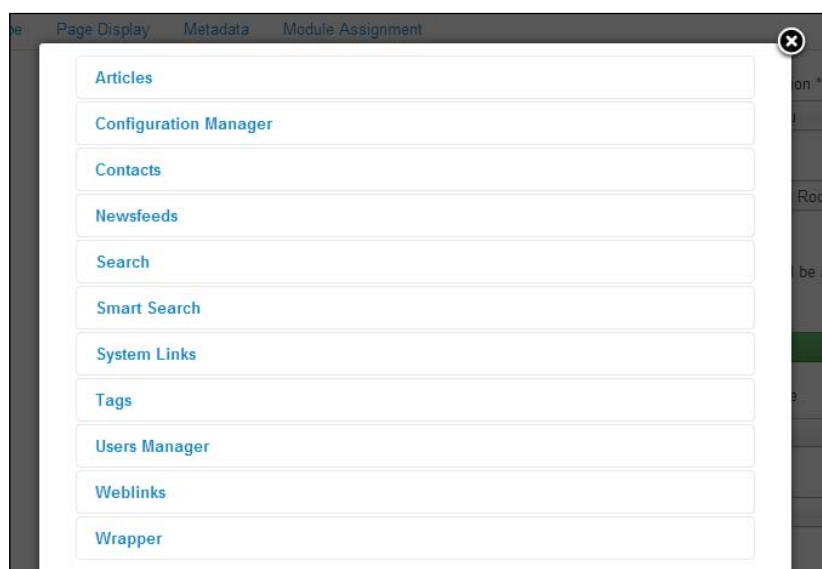
You'll probably only adjust the **Advanced** options in certain specific situations.

Option	Description
Menu Tag ID, Menu Class Suffix, Module Class Suffix	You can set the Menu Tag ID , Menu Class Suffix , and Module Class Suffix to tweak the layout of the menu. These options are only relevant if you want fine control over the layout of your menu through CSS. In the default Joomla 3 template (called Protostar), the horizontal menu uses " nav-pills" (without quotes, but with a starting space) as Menu Class Suffix . The vertical This Site menu in Joomla 3 uses Module Class Suffix : "_menu" (without quotes).
Target Position	This is only relevant in some templates to specify the location of drop-down or pop-up menus.
Alternative Layout	Here you can select a custom layout for the current module, provided the selected template (or module) allows these additional layout options.
Caching, Cache Time	If you have set a caching value in Global Configuration , you can override it here for this module.
Module Tag, Bootstrap Size, Header Tag, Header Class, Module Style	These options allow you to customize the module layout by specifying the HTML tag used for the module title and the module itself.

What types of menu links are available?

Until now in this chapter, we focused on creating menus and tweaking menu display and settings. Of course, menus are about the actual hyperlinks that they contain. Earlier in this book, you created several menu links, for example, to create category overview pages. However, when creating menu links, you saw that Joomla offers you an impressive list of other menu item types to choose from. Let's have a closer look at the available types.

You're already familiar with the basic steps taken to create a menu link: navigate to **Menus**, click on the name of the menu, and click on **New** (or on the **Add New Menu Item** fly-out menu). When selecting **Menu Item Type**, you'll see a list of headings, as displayed in the following screenshot. Click on any of these headings (such as **Articles**) to reveal the available menu item types.



The list of menu item types can be different in your particular Joomla installation. After you've installed a component that contains its own specific page types, these can show up in the **Menu Item Type** list too.

Remember, Joomla menu item types are not about different types of menu navigation; they are about creating different types of content. They represent different preset ways of displaying all kinds of content.

The following table provides a short overview of what the available menu item types mean and how you can deploy them. We won't go into the details here (as these menu item types are really not about navigation, but about creating content). However, it's a good idea to browse the menu options explored in the table to get an idea of what they have to offer. We'll cover relevant menu item types in more detail in other chapters about adding content (the references to these chapters are given in the following table):

Name	What menu links are available here?
Articles	These are the menu links you will probably use the most. These are links pointing to an article, or to overview pages (category pages), or to pages containing featured articles (see <i>Chapter 6, Creating Killer Content – Adding and Editing Articles</i> , and <i>Chapter 7, Welcoming Your Visitor – Creating Attractive Home Pages and Overview Pages</i>). The link Create Article is used for registered users who have permission to add articles. You'll learn more about this in the next chapter.
Configuration Manager	Usually, the site administrator will set the site configuration details in the backend of the site. However, it's also possible to allow users to log in to the frontend of the site and set certain configuration options there. That's what these two menu links are for. If a user with special permissions has logged in to the frontend, they can click on a Configuration Manager menu link to change a number of site settings. For example, they can set the site to Offline or change template settings.
Contacts	These menu links take the site visitors to a page with data on one or more contacts. They are part of the Joomla Contacts component (see <i>Chapter 4, Web Building Basics – Creating a Site in an Hour</i>).
Newsfeeds	These are links to a page with one or more RSS feeds and news from other sites.
Search	This is a link to a page displaying the search engine of the site and listing the search results. Search is the old Joomla search engine system. It's still available just in case the new Smart Search system (see the following option) doesn't function properly (which, for example, can happen on very large sites).
Smart Search	This is a link to a site search page replacing the standard Search system. Smart Search features auto-completion and suggests alternative search phrases. It works in conjunction with a plugin and component, both called Smart Search . To be able to use this system, first enable the Smart Search plugin and use the Smart Search component to index all content.

Name	What menu links are available here?
System links	The following are System links : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ External URL: This is a link to an external site ◆ Menu heading: This is a heading to separate, different parts of the menu (for example, you could use a Tags heading to introduce a number of links to tagged pages) ◆ Menu item alias: This is a copy of an existing menu link ◆ Text separator: This is not a link, but a line used to visually separate different parts of the menu
Tags	These are menu links that display overview pages showing tagged articles (or other tagged items). See <i>Chapter 7, Welcoming Your Visitor – Creating Attractive Home Pages and Overview Pages</i> (the <i>Creating overview pages showing tagged articles</i> section) for an example.
Users Manager	These are links to special pages for users with additional permissions, for example, a registration and login page.
Weblinks	These are links to pages with links to other sites. The web links you want to show must be first entered via the Weblinks component.
Wrapper	This is link to a page that shows an external web page within this site (in a frame).

Have a go hero – try out menu item types

The extensive list of menu item types looks inviting; why don't you have a go at the different types of menu items? Add a new **menu** link to **Main Menu**, and choose a menu item type you haven't used yet. Check out the **Search**, **External Link**, or **Separator** menu item types; they're pretty straightforward. Some others, such as the **User** link, are quite complex and won't make sense at first glance—but don't worry, they won't mess up your site permanently, and you can easily change or delete unwanted menu items again. In the course of this book, you'll learn to use many of these menu item types.



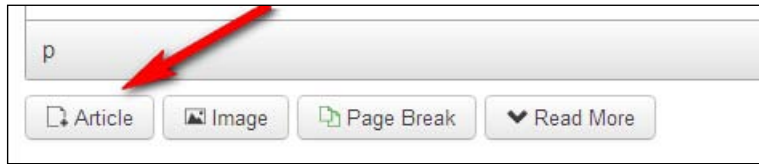
Why do you have to create menu links manually?

You may wonder why Joomla doesn't automate the process of adding menu links as soon as you create new content. Manually creating menu links may seem like a step you'd like to automate; however, it gives you much more control. You determine what type of page a menu link points to, in what order menu links appear, on what pages they show up, and so on.

And don't worry, you'll only make menu items pointing to the main pages and content groups—not to each and every page. Menus usually point to overview pages, a couple of selected articles, and special function pages (such as a search page). Joomla will automatically create links to any amount of articles below the main levels, using overview pages, as you learned in *Chapter 6, Creating Killer Content – Adding and Editing Articles*.

Creating plain text links

Sometimes, you'll want to show hyperlinks that are not part of a menu, but are embedded in an article text. To create these, use the **Article** button at the bottom of the article editor screen:

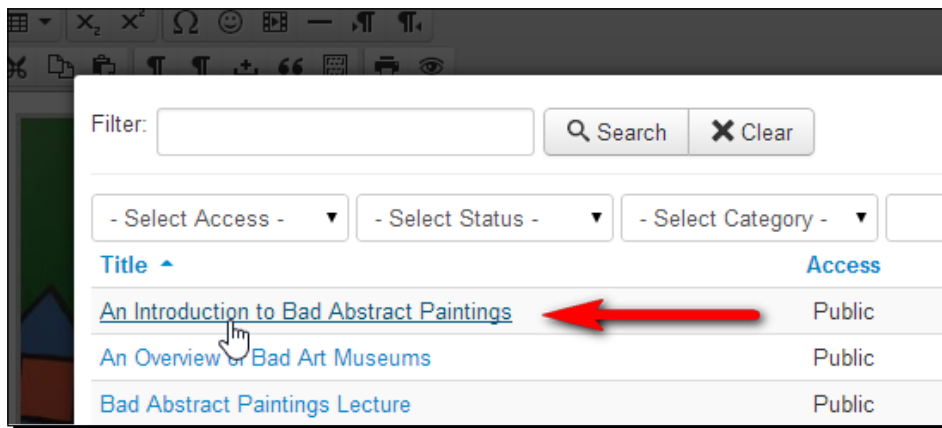


This makes adding links very straightforward. Let's find out how it works.

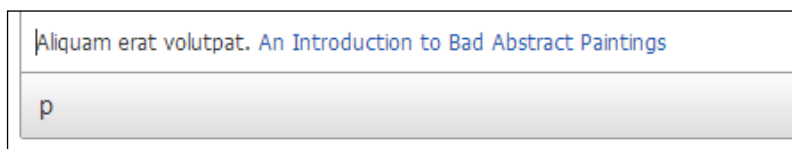
Time for action – creating text links

We'll create an internal hyperlink—a text link from one page to another page on the same site. Perform the following steps:

1. Go to **Content | Article Manager** and open the article that you want to add a link to.
2. Place the mouse cursor in the article text, on the position where you want to insert the hyperlink. Don't select any text, as this would be replaced by the link text you are about to insert.
3. Now click on the **Article** button at the bottom of the editor screen. A pop-up screen appears, listing all articles on the site. Click on the title of the article you want to link to (in this example, **An Introduction to Bad Abstract Paintings**):



4. The pop-up screen is closed. You're done! A link to the target article is inserted as follows:



5. Let's tweak the link text a little. By default, it consists of the target article title. To change this, you can edit the hyperlink text just as you would any other text in the article editor screen. However, if you want to replace the whole hyperlink text, it's easiest to switch to HTML code view. Otherwise, you could inadvertently remove the hyperlink by changing it to plain text. To edit the text, click on the **Toggle editor** button.
6. Now, the HTML code of the text is displayed. Locate the hyperlink code, the code starting with `<a href=`. It should be similar to the following:
- ```
An Introduction to Bad Abstract Paintings
```
7. To replace the link text to **Some examples of bad abstract paintings**, change this as follows:
- ```
<a href="index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=90&catid=85&Itemid=435">Some examples of abstract paintings</a>
```
8. Click on **Save & Close** and then on **View site**. Browse to the article you've edited; it now contains a text link.

What just happened?

You created a text hyperlink from an article to another article in the same site. Using the **Article** editor button, you can create a text hyperlink to any article on the site.



If you often need to add text links to articles, there's another editor available that gives you even more flexibility: **Joomla Content Editor (JCE)**. It allows you to just click on and select any item on the site, not just articles. To read more about the JCE editor, see *Chapter 10, Getting the Most out of Your Site – Extending Joomla*.

Pop quiz – test your menu knowledge

Q1. How many menus can you add to your website?

1. Six menus (**Main Menu** and five other menus).
2. As much as you want.
3. You can only have one **Main Menu**.

Q2. How can you add submenu items to a menu?

1. By creating "parent links" and "child links".
2. By assigning a different **Parent Item** to a menu link than the default (**Home**).
3. By creating a new menu.

Q3. When you create a new menu link, why does Joomla show such a big list of menu item types?

1. To enhance navigation.
2. To enable you to create new menus.
3. To enable you to create different types of target pages.

Summary

In this chapter, we learned a lot about creating user-friendly navigation through Joomla menus. We learned that:

New menu links are added at the bottom of the list. To change menu item order, you move links up or down in the menu item manager.

Menus can be more than one level deep. By assigning a parent item to a menu link, you create a submenu item.

You can move links that don't fit the main menu to a separate menu. You can also create interrelated menus, such as a main menu showing parent links and a secondary menu that automatically shows child links.

Submenus aren't the only way to make secondary content visible. Main links can point to overview pages with (automatically generated) links to category content.

To create hyperlinks in an article to another article, use the **Article** button in the editor screen.

You've now finished making a basic, functional, and easy-to-navigate website. In the following chapters, we'll take things further—after all, dynamic, database-driven CMS magic doesn't stop at creating *basic* sites.

In the next chapter, you'll learn how to add extra functionality, such as the ability for your visitors to contribute content or to register as site members.

9

Opening Up the Site – Enabling Users to Log in and Contribute

In the last few chapters, you have set up a great little site, but there's still something quite old fashioned about it. You're the only person who has access to it and who is allowed to add and manage content. This means you haven't yet benefited from Joomla's built-in tools to create a team of specially designated power users who can log in to the site to add or edit content. In Joomla, you're allowed to add as many content contributors as necessary, and you can give them permission to create or edit articles or to do even more.

However, opening up your site to the world doesn't end there—Joomla offers some powerful methods to engage your web visitors and turn them into active users. You can enable visitors to register and give them exclusive access to premium content. Also, you can allow them to rate articles, giving others a good indication of must-read content.

In this chapter, you'll learn about the following topics:

- ◆ Creating and managing user accounts—enabling web team members to log in and maintain the site contents
- ◆ Configuring self-registration for site visitors and creating content for registered users only
- ◆ Creating user groups and permissions—practical examples of how you can use Access Control List

Working with the default set of user groups

One of the biggest recent changes in Joomla is the introduction of a new system to manage user permissions, and it is usually referred to as **Access Control List (ACL)**. Currently, Joomla offers you almost infinite control of what users can see and do on the site. However, out of the box, the ACL system already comes with a set of basic user groups and default permissions—and in many cases, these may offer all the features you need. We'll first have a look at the basics; later in this chapter, we'll cover an example of more advanced ways to deploy the ACL system by crafting made-to-measure user groups and their distinctive permission settings.

An overview of the default user groups and their permissions

After you've installed Joomla, you'll notice a set of user groups is already present, each with their own specific permissions. Let's have a look at the default setup.

To view the default groups and their permissions, go to **System | Global Configuration** and click on the **Permissions** tab. The **Permissions Settings** screen is displayed as shown in the following screenshot:

Permissions of the 'Public' user group

Other user groups

Action	Select New Setting ¹
Site Login	Not Set
Admin Login	Not Set
Offline Access	Not Set
Super Admin	Not Set
Access Administration Interface	Not Set
Create	Not Set
Delete	Not Set
Edit	Not Set
Edit State	Not Set
Edit Own	Not Set

On this screen, all the currently available user groups are displayed in a set of tabbed panels. A user group is a collection of users sharing the same permissions, such as **Public**, **Manager**, or **Administrator**. By default, the panel showing the permissions of the **Public** group is displayed.

In the panel for the **Public** group, their generic (site-wide) permissions are shown; these are called **Site Login**, **Admin Login**, and so on. These permission settings control the actions users are allowed to do on the site. For the default user groups, these permissions have already been set.

When adding new user accounts to the site using Joomla's **User Manager**, you assign users to one of these **User Groups**, granting them various levels of access to the site. If you need tailor-made sets of permissions, you can create your own **User Groups** with specific sets of permissions. However, to get a grip on the ACL system, it's best to start using the default groups and their permissions. Here's an overview.

Public and Guest users – the site visitors

The Public level is the very basic level; anyone visiting your site is considered part of the Public group. Members of this group can view the frontend of the site, but they don't have any special permissions.

By default, the **Access** level of content in a Joomla site is set to **Public**. The site administrator can set the **Access** level for different types of content, ranging from modules and menu items to individual articles (as shown in the following screenshot of the **Article Manager: Edit article** screen):



The screenshot shows a form with several fields. The 'Status' field is a green button labeled 'Published'. The 'Featured' field is a toggle switch with 'Yes' on the left and 'No' on the right, currently set to 'No'. The 'Access' field is a dropdown menu with 'Public' selected, and a red arrow points to it from the right. The 'Language' field is a dropdown menu with 'All' selected.

When **Access** is set to **Public**, this indicates that anyone belonging to the **Public** group (your site visitors) will be able to see that content. When **Access** is set to any of the other available levels (covered later in this chapter), specific viewing rules apply for specific user groups.



At first glance, the **Guest** group seems similar to the **Public** user group—guests are users who have not logged in. However, the presence of the **Guest** group serves a specific purpose. Other than **Public** content, **Guest** content is hidden once users have logged in. In other words, assigning the **Guest** access level allows you to show content to users who are not logged in and to hide content from logged in users. For example, if you have a banner module on your site that says **Sign in now**, you can hide this module for people who have already logged in by setting its **Access** level to **Guest**.

Registered users – the user group that can log in

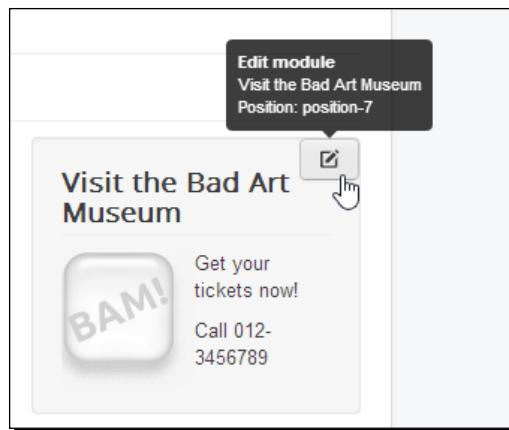
These are regular site visitors, except for the fact that they have registered and activated their account. After they have logged in with their account details, **Registered** users can view content that may be hidden from ordinary site visitors (**Public** users) because the **Access** level of that content has been set to **Registered**. Setting **Access** to **Registered** allows you to present logged-in users with all kinds of content that ordinary (**Public**) users can't see. Although **Registered** users have special access rights, they can't contribute content. They're a part of the user community, not the web team. We'll discuss user registration later in this chapter (see the *Allowing visitors to register* section).

Author, Editor, and Publisher – the frontend content contributors

Up to now, you've only experienced Joomla's backend editing capabilities. To change anything on the site, you've logged in to the backend to access the administrative interface. However, it is also possible to log in to the frontend (using a login form) and edit or add articles straight away through a frontend content editor screen. We'll see how that works in a moment.

The idea behind having frontend editing possibilities is to lower the threshold for nontechnical content contributors. They don't have to bother to learn all the intricacies of the backend interface and can edit and add content directly in an interface that they already know—the public frontend of the site.

In Joomla 3, frontend editing has become much more useful. After logging in on the frontend of the website, users can click on an **Edit** button displayed with any article, but also with modules or menus (if they have the appropriate permissions). This way, they can easily edit all the relevant content within the context of the website as the visitor sees it, which is obviously very convenient. For example, here's what the **Edit module** button looks like for logged-in users with frontend editing permissions:



If you consider adding users with frontend editing permissions, you can choose from three types of content contributors, each with their specific permission levels:

- ◆ **Author:** The members of this group can create new content for approval by a **Publisher** or someone higher in rank. They can edit their own articles, but can't edit existing articles created by others.
- ◆ **Editor:** The members of this group can create new articles and edit existing articles. **Publisher** or higher must approve their submissions.
- ◆ **Publisher:** The members of this group can create, edit, and publish, unpublish, or trash articles in the frontend. They cannot delete content.

Authors and editors can't publish content. Only after approval by a **Publisher** (or someone higher in rank) will the content they submit be visible on the site. Although this has its advantages—someone will be double-checking all content before it's published—having to review all of the new articles can create an extra workload for those with publishing permissions. Also, it could possibly turn into a bottleneck impeding a steady flow of new content. That might be a reason to instead assign **Publisher** (instead of **Author**) permissions to your web team members. Publishers have the same permissions as authors and editors, but they are the ones who can also actually publish content.



Generally, assigning a user to the **Publisher** group will be a good choice when you want the web team members to be able to individually add and publish content, without you having to grant them access to the (more complex) backend of the site. Publishers can easily create new content without having to learn their way around the backend—or being able to create havoc by changing things they shouldn't.

Manager, administrator, and super user – the backend content contributors and administrators

In all, there are three types of backend users. They have all the permissions of the frontend group, but they are also allowed to log in to the backend to add and manage content and to perform administrative tasks:

- ◆ **Manager:** The members of this group can do all that publishers can, but they are also allowed to log in to the backend of the site to create, edit, or delete articles. They can also create and manage categories. They have limited access to administration functions.
- ◆ **Administrator:** The members of this group can do all that managers can and have access to more administration functions. They can manage users, edit or configure extensions, and even change the site template. They can use manager screens (**User Manager, Article Manager**, and so on) and can create, delete, edit, and change the state of users, articles, and so on.
- ◆ **Super Users:** The members of this group can do everything possible in the backend. When Joomla is installed, there's always one **Super User** account created. That's usually the person who builds and customizes the website. In the current example website, you're the super user.

Shop Suppliers and Customers – two example user groups

If you've installed Joomla with sample content, you'll notice two groups in the **Permissions Settings** screen that we haven't covered yet: **Shop Suppliers (Example)** and **Customer Group (Example)**. These user groups have been added as part of the sample data to show how you can create customized groups.

Enabling users to log in and contribute content

Let's find out how you can use the default set of user groups to enable a couple of people to log in to your site and to contribute content. Currently, there's just one user present: the super user. This is the only user that's automatically created when you install Joomla. By navigating to **Users | User Manager**, you can check the account details of the super user: **Name** (by default, this is **Super User**), **User Name** (you've chosen this yourself when setting up your account), whether this user account is **Enabled**, the user's **Email** address, the user's **Last Visit Date** and **Registration Date**, and the user's **ID** (an identifying user number that's used by the system). This is shown in the following screenshot:

The screenshot shows the Joomla! User Manager interface for managing users. At the top, there's a toolbar with buttons for 'New', 'Edit', 'Activate', 'Block', 'Unblock', 'Delete', and 'Batch'. Below the toolbar is a search bar and a table of users. The table has columns for 'Name', 'User Name', 'Enabled', 'Activated', 'User Groups', 'Email', 'Last Visit Date', 'Registration Date', and 'ID'. The first user listed is 'Super User' with 'User Name' 'admin', 'Enabled' and 'Activated' status checked, and 'User Groups' 'Super Users'.

Click on the name of the user to edit their account details. For example, for security reasons, you'll probably want to change the default **User Name** (admin) to something that's harder to guess. Just enter a new name and save changes. The next time you log in, use your updated credentials.

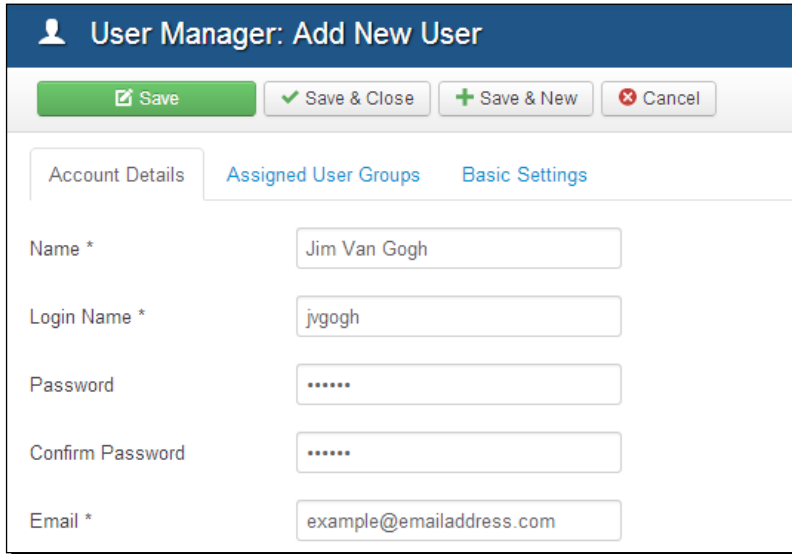
Let's find out how you can make use of **User Manager**, Joomla's backend manager where you can view, edit, and create site users. We'll add some other people to the site who, apart from **Super User**, are allowed to add content.

Time for action – adding a user with frontend authoring permissions

Let's create user accounts for a couple of club members who'll become content contributors. The steps are as follows:

1. Navigate to **Users | User Manager**.
2. There's just one user, you. By default, Joomla calls this first user **Super User** (and this user belongs to the **Super Users** group). To add another user, click on the **New** button in the toolbar.

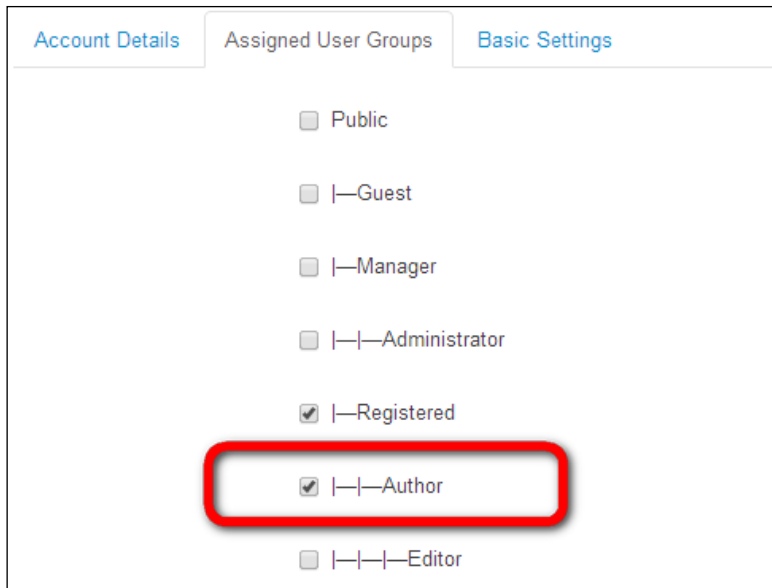
3. In the **Add New User** screen, add **Account Details** as desired. In this example, we've entered Jim Van Gogh in the **Name** field. In the **Login Name** field, we've entered jvgogh. Enter a password in the **Password** field and enter a valid e-mail address in the **Email** field for the new user.



The screenshot shows the 'User Manager: Add New User' interface. At the top, there are four buttons: 'Save' (green), 'Save & Close', 'Save & New', and 'Cancel'. Below the buttons are three tabs: 'Account Details' (selected), 'Assigned User Groups', and 'Basic Settings'. The 'Account Details' tab contains the following fields:

Name *	Jim Van Gogh
Login Name *	jvgogh
Password
Confirm Password
Email *	example@emailaddress.com

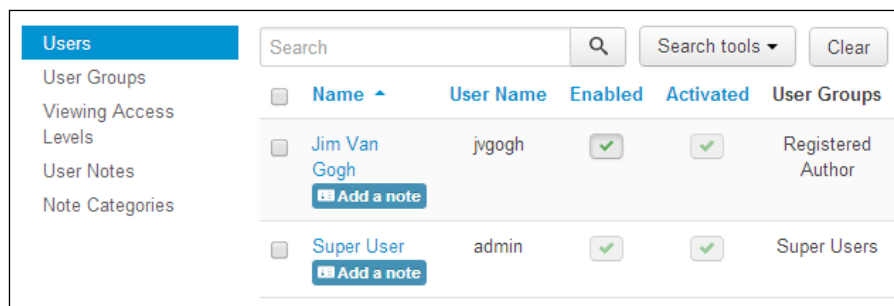
4. Click on the **Assigned User Groups** tab and select **Author**. This will allow the new user to submit and edit content (after logging in to the frontend of the site).



The screenshot shows the 'Assigned User Groups' tab. It contains a list of user groups with checkboxes:

- Public
- |—Guest
- |—Manager
- |—|—Administrator
- |—Registered
- |—|—Author (highlighted with a red box)
- |—|—|—Editor

5. Click on **Save & Close**. The **User Manager** screen now shows the new user:



What just happened?

In the site user list in **User Manager**, you're no longer on your own. As Mr. Van Gogh has been assigned to the **Author** user group, he is now permitted to log in to the frontend of the site and add content. However, to enable the new user to do anything, we'll have to create a way for him to log in to the frontend. After all, the method of logging in that you yourself have been using (through a separate backend URL such as `http://www.yoursite.com/administrator`) is only accessible to users with backend access—and Mr. Van Gogh doesn't have those permissions.

Enabling content contributors to log in to the frontend

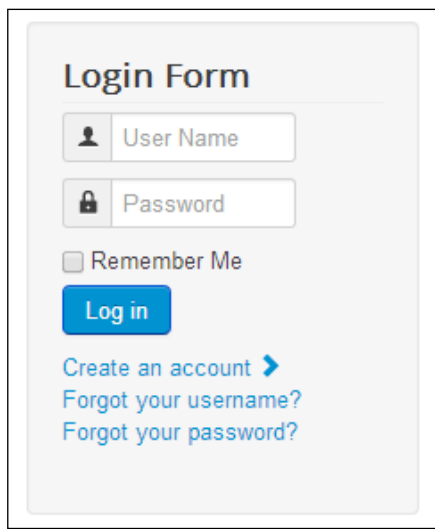
Once you've assigned users to the **Authors**, **Editors**, or **Publishers** group, there has to be an entrance to the site frontend. In Joomla, the frontend entrance is the login form. After you've installed Joomla, the **Login Form** module is already enabled and it's displayed on the home page. If you haven't changed this default setup, you can skip the next step. If you've disabled or removed the login form, enable the login form as described in the following section.

Time for action – putting Login Form on the home page

The login module is part of the Joomla default installation. Here's how you make it visible on the home page:

1. Navigate to **Extensions | Module Manager**. Locate the **Login Form** module and click on its name to edit the module settings. Select **Status: Published** to publish the module. **Position** should be set to **position-7** to display the login module in the right-hand side column in the current site template.
2. Make sure **Menu Assignment** is set to **Home**; this way, the login module will only show up on the home page. We can safely assume that users will probably want to log in to the site directly from the home page, so there's no need to clutter valuable screen real estate with a login form on other pages.

3. In this example, we'll leave the module options unchanged. You could enter some pre-text or post-text here: a text shown before or just below the login module.
4. Click on **Save** and then on **View Site** to check the output on the frontend. In the left-hand side column, **Login Form** is now shown below **Main Menu** as shown in the following screenshot:



What just happened?

You've now enabled users to access your site through **Login Form**. Maybe you've noticed that as soon as you add this form, it also displays a **Create an account** link. By default, Joomla is configured to allow user self-registration. You'll read more about user registration later in this chapter.



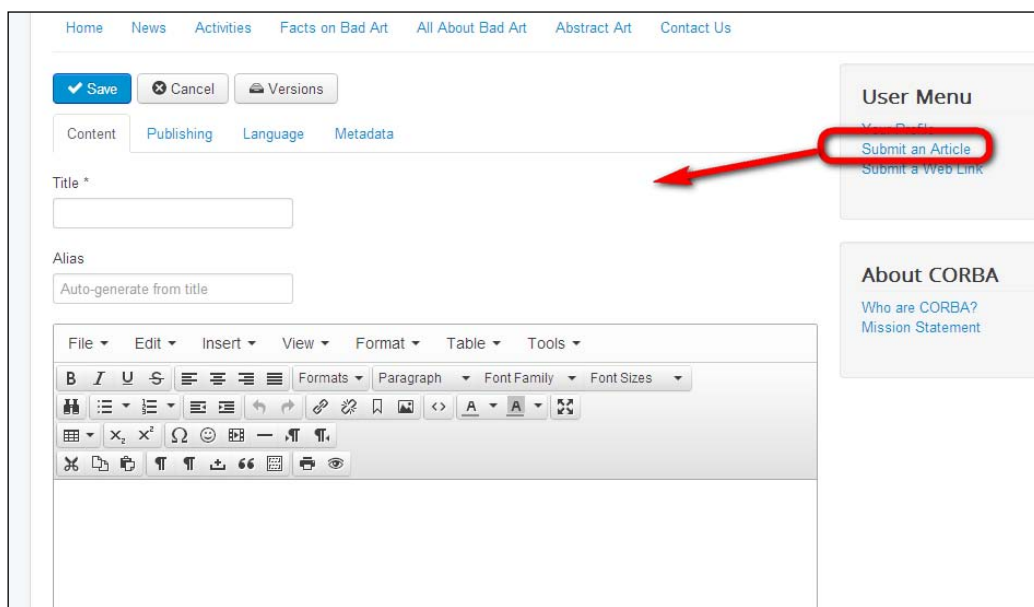
An alternative approach to displaying a login form is to add just a login link in an existing menu. See the **Displaying a Login menu link** section later in this chapter for more details.

Time for action – logging in as a frontend content contributor

There's a user assigned to the **Author** group, there's **Login Form** to enable this user to enter the site—so why don't we try out how our **Author** logs in and submits content? The steps are as follows:

1. Navigate to the frontend of the site and use **Login Form** to log in as the new user (in this example, **jvgoth**).

2. In the right-hand column, **User Menu** appears. This is part of the Joomla installation when you've chosen to install the Learn Joomla! sample data, and it's set to be only visible when a user has logged in—that's why it turns up all of a sudden. **User Menu** provides links to functionality only available to registered users. For example, it allows an author to view and edit his or her user details. However, we're primarily interested in the possibility of entering new content, so let's click on the **Submit an Article** link. Now here's a surprise: the Joomla frontend turns into a live web page editor!



3. For testing purposes, enter a title, some article text, and select the appropriate **Category** (click on the **Publishing** tab to find the **Category** drop-down box). In this example, we've created a dummy article called **CORBA welcomes new members** in the **News** category.
4. Click on **Save** to submit the article. You'll see an **Article successfully submitted** message.

What just happened?

You've just logged in to your own site as if you were part of the **Author** user group. As an author, you're able to submit content on the frontend of the site. The new article isn't published on the site yet—we'll get to that in a minute.

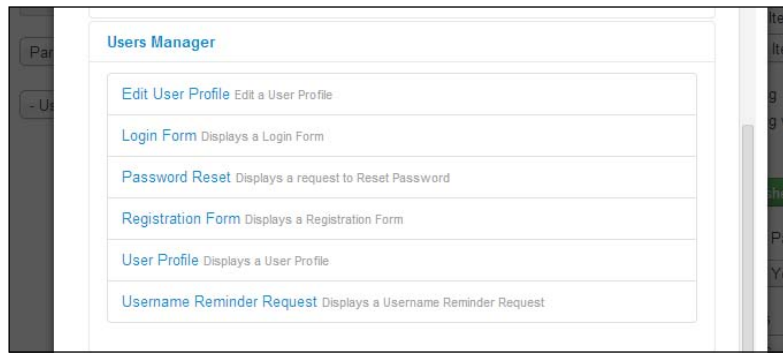
Have a go hero – creating a frontend User Menu

In the preceding example, you've seen **User Menu** suddenly appear when a registered user has logged in. **User Menu** is preinstalled when you choose to install Joomla with sample data. Now, what if you haven't installed sample data? You'll obviously want your logged in authors to be able to submit content. To do this, create your own dedicated menu for frontend users.

The procedure is pretty straightforward; these are roughly the steps involved. In the **Menu Manager**, create a new menu and call it, for example, **User Menu**. You now have an empty menu—click on the menu name and then click on the **New** button to add links. To enable authors (or higher) to submit an article, in the **Menu Item Type** list, add a link of the **Create Article** type from **Articles**. Set the **Access** level to **Special**; this ensures the menu link is only visible for users with **Author** permissions or higher. Save your changes and add a menu module aimed at displaying the menu. In the **Menu Manager: Menus** screen, click on **Add a module for this menu type**. Make sure to set your new menu module to be published and set the module **Access** level to **Special**. If you're a bit rusty on menu creating skills, please have a look again at the previous chapter.

Allowing users to manage their own accounts

The default login form already enables users to log in, create a new account, and retrieve their password or user name. However, instead of using the login form, you can also create separate menu links to a login page, a self-registration page, or to a page that enables users to manage their account details (for example, to change their password). You'll find these particular link types in the **Users Manager** section of the **Select a Menu Item Type** screen. We'll try a few of these **Users Manager** links out later in this chapter in the *Allowing visitors to register* section.



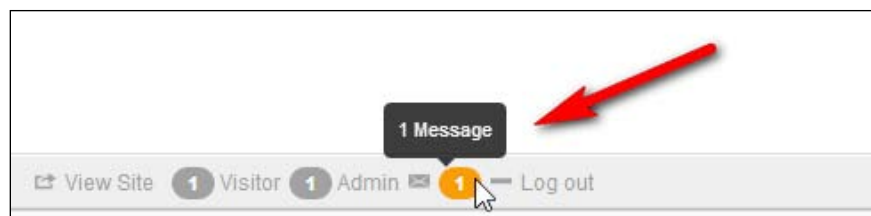
Reviewing and publishing team content submissions

Up to now, you've seen how you can create user accounts for team members on your site and how you can enable them to log in. You've also switched to another role to see your site through the eyes of a logged in team member— an author, someone who's able to submit (but not publish) content. Now, let's see how you can get submitted content to show on the site.

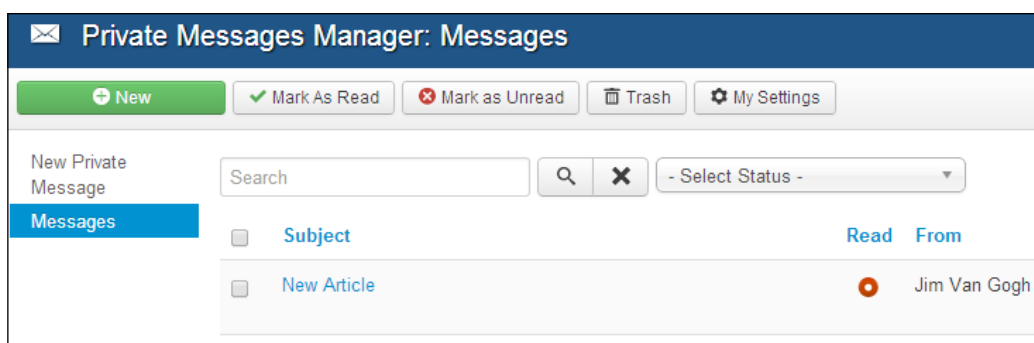
Time for action – reviewing and publishing submitted content

Once again, switch back to your original role, **Super User**. Now that an author has submitted an article, you should review and approve the new content to publish it. The steps are as follows:

1. Log in to the backend of your site in your default role, **Super User**. In the info bar (in the bottom-left area of the screen), Joomla notifies you that you've got exactly one message. This is shown in the following screenshot:



2. Click on the number **1**. Alternatively, you can view messages via **Components | Messaging | Read Private Messages**. You'll see the screen shown in the following screenshot:



3. Click on **New Article** to read the message contents: **A new Article has been submitted by 'Jim Van Gogh' entitled 'CORBA Welcomes New Members'**.



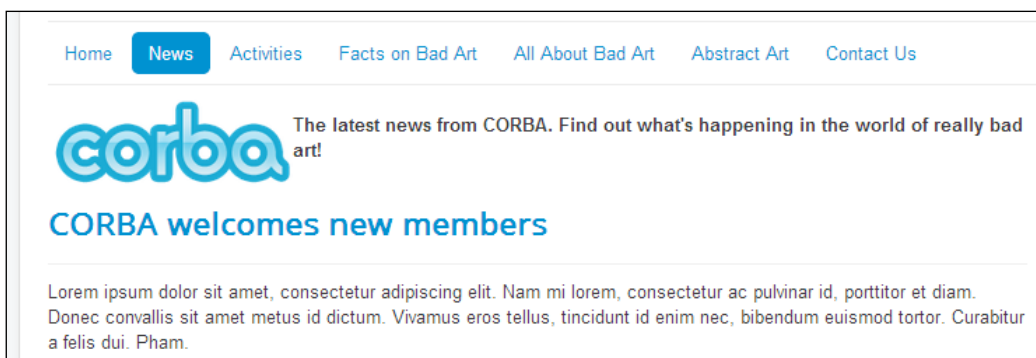
Receiving submission reminders

Do you want to get an e-mail notification every time new content is submitted? Navigate to **Components | Messages | Read Private Messages** and click on the **My Settings** button in the toolbar. Select **Email New Messages: Yes**.

- To review and publish the new article, navigate to **Content | Article Manager** and locate the new article. (Another way to find new articles is to navigate to **Site | Control Panel** and explore the **Recently Added Articles** panel.) You'll notice a red circle in the **Status** column indicating the article is still unpublished.



- Click on the title of the article to view and edit it as desired. When you're happy with the article, click on **Save**. In the **Status** column of **Article Manager**, click on the red circle with a little cross. It will turn into a green check mark.
- Click on **View site**. In the **News** section, the new article is shown. This is shown in the following screenshot:



What just happened?

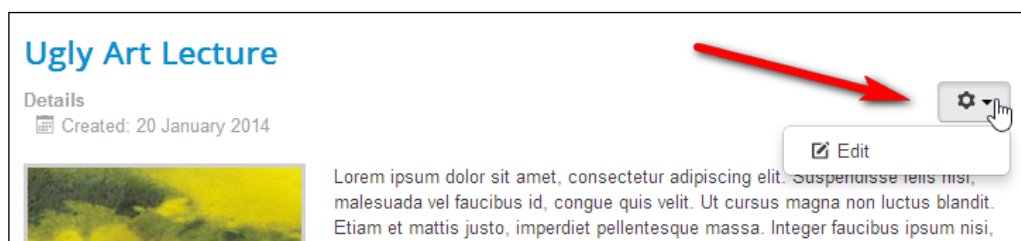
When logging in as the site administrator, you're able to check articles that have been submitted by authors. You can review an article, edit it, and publish it if you're happy with it.

Have a go hero – explore different User Group permissions

So far, you've seen what authors are allowed to do in Joomla. Why not explore other **User Groups** permissions? It's a good idea to change the new example user's permissions and log in as this user to get a grasp of the possibilities. Changing user permissions only takes a few clicks. The following are a few pointers to get you going.

Finding out what editors and publishers can do

Navigate to **Users | User Manager** and click on the name of the test user (in our example, **Jim Van Gogh**) that you've added earlier and who's assigned to the **Author** group. Now, in the **Assigned User Groups** section, select **Editor** to give the user new frontend editing permissions. Click on **Save** and log in to the frontend with the username and password of Mr. Van Gogh. You'll notice a small difference—if you click on the wheel icon displayed next to the article title, you get access to a special **Edit** link. This is shown in the following screenshot:



This opens up a range of new possibilities. When clicking on the **Edit** link, the web page turns into an editor screen just like the one you've seen before when submitting an article (see the *Time for action – logging in as a frontend content contributor* section earlier in this chapter). As you can see, editors can change the text of existing articles by editing them in the frontend of the site, and then immediately publish the edited article. Although they can't create and publish content on their own (without approval of a publisher or higher), they are allowed to make changes to existing content on their own.

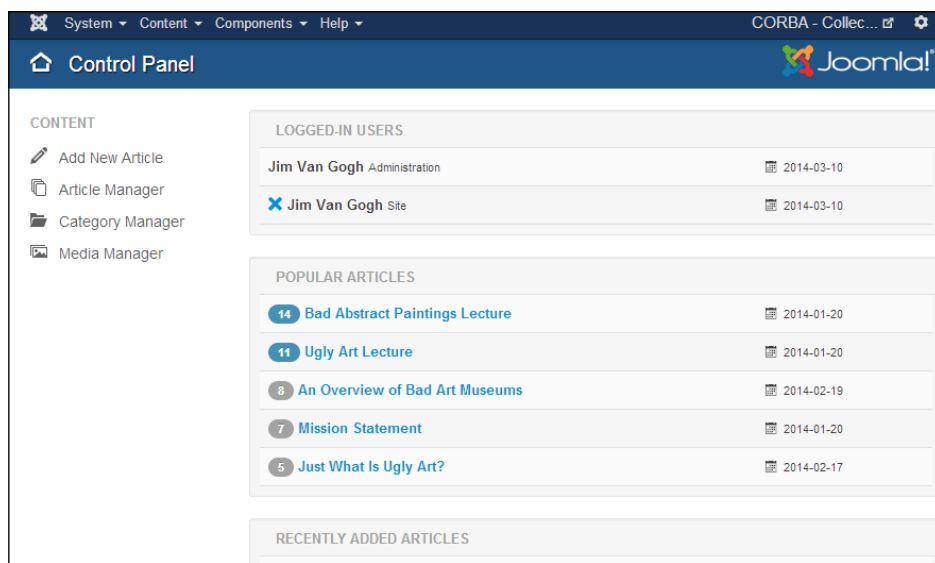
To find out what publishers can do, change the **User Group** that Mr. Van Gogh is a member of to **Publisher**. After logging in to the frontend, at first sight, there are no differences between this role and the **Editor** role. However, after you've edited or created an article, saving the article will immediately publish it. The article won't be submitted for review first.

Finding out what backend users can do

A final step in upgrading user accounts is assigning one of the three backend accounts: **Manager**, **Administrator**, or **Super User**. For example, change the existing **Publisher** user account and assign the user to the **Manager** group. You can now log in with this user's username and password to the backend of the site (via `http://www.yoursite.com/administrator`):



After logging in, you'll be taken to the backend **Control Panel** where you can add and edit content the same way you're used to in your role as site administrator. As the new user has been assigned the **Manager** role, he has permissions to do most things with content that site administrators can (creating new categories and articles, managing contacts, and so on). However, you'll notice a manager can't manage users, extensions, or templates. Compared to the backend options that you as **Super User** are used to, only a limited number of menus, menu items, and shortcuts are available, as seen in the following screenshot:



Enabling self-registration – allowing visitors to register

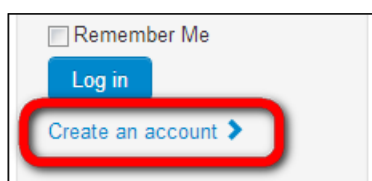
In the previous section, you've set up new user accounts manually in the backend using **User Manager**. Giving a team of content contributors access to the site is a great way to collaborate in maintaining the site and keeping its content up to date.

Another way to open up your site is to enable user self-registration. That way, a user community can develop and any amount of users can register themselves without the site administrator having to do or approve anything (of course, the administrator is still in charge and has the ability to block or remove users).

Registered users don't contribute content, but they do have exclusive access to parts of the site where the **Access** level is set to—you guessed it—**Registered**. Let's first find out how to create members-only content and enable visitors to join through self-registration.

How do you enable users to create their own account?

It may have skipped your attention, but when you set up **Login Form** (see the *Time for action – putting Login Form on the home page* section earlier in this chapter), you also enabled user self-registration. By default, the login module not only allows existing users to log in, it also contains a link inviting visitors to create a new account:

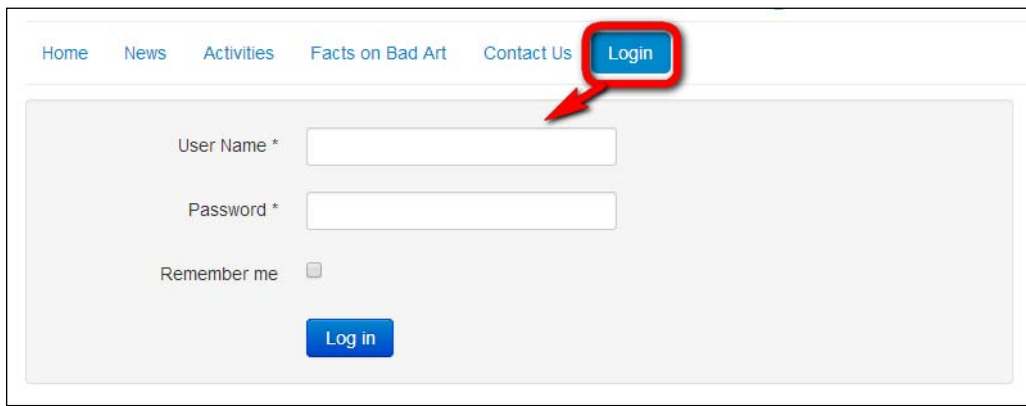


If you don't want users to be able to register, navigate to **Users | User Manager** and select the **Options** button. In the **Component** screen, make sure **Allow User Registration** is set to **No** (the default value is **Yes**). Now, the **Create an account** link will disappear.

Displaying a Login menu link

Although Joomla, by default, is set up to display a small login form on the home page, you may find this too big or too conspicuous. If you'd rather show just a small **Login** link pointing to a separate login page, that's possible too.

To add a **Login** link, navigate to **Menus | Main Menu** and click on **New**. Then, in the **Select a Menu Item Type** pop-up screen, select **Users Manager | Login Form**. Add a title for the link (for example, **Login**) and click on **Save & Close**. Now, a **Login Form** page will be displayed after the visitor has clicked on the **Login** link:



The screenshot shows a website's home page with a navigation menu at the top. The menu items are Home, News, Activities, Facts on Bad Art, Contact Us, and Login. The Login link is highlighted with a red circle and a red arrow. Below the menu, there is a login form with the following elements:

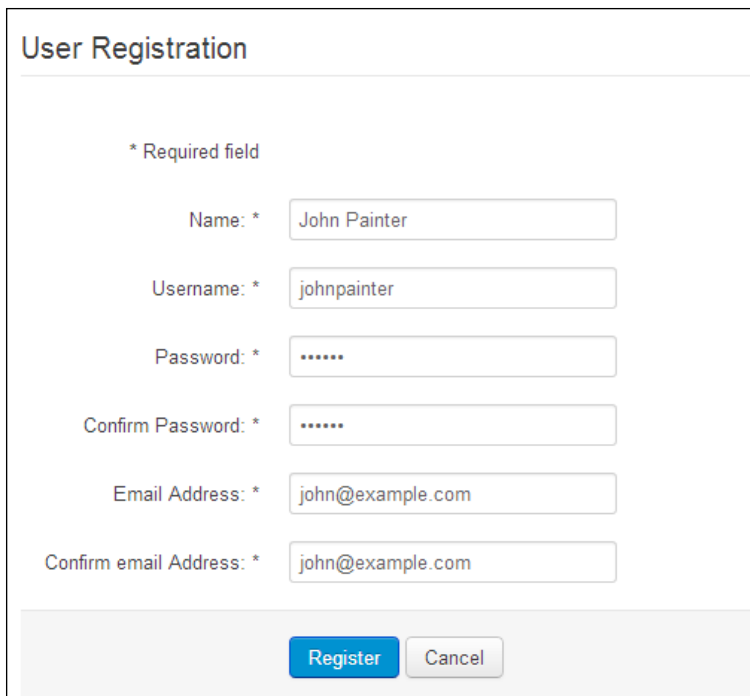
- User Name * [input field]
- Password * [input field]
- Remember me
- Log in [button]

As **Login Form** in the home page right-hand column is no longer necessary, you can unpublish the **Login Form** module via **Extensions | Module Manager**.

Time for action – registering yourself and logging in

Let's see what site visitors have to do to create an account. To test this, we'll create a dummy user account ourselves:

- 1.** Log out of the site and navigate to the frontend. On the frontend, click on the **Create an account** link below **Login Form** in the left-hand side column (if you've created a menu link to a separate **Login** page as described before, then click on this menu link and click on **Don't have an account?**). This will take you to the **User Registration** page. Enter your details and make sure to use a valid **E-mail** address.



The screenshot shows a 'User Registration' form with the following fields and values:

- Name:** * John Painter
- Username:** * johnpainter
- Password:** *
- Confirm Password:** *
- Email Address:** * john@example.com
- Confirm email Address:** * john@example.com

At the bottom of the form are two buttons: a blue 'Register' button and a grey 'Cancel' button.

2. After clicking on **Register**, you are taken to the home page. On the home page, Joomla displays a system message confirming your account has been created.
3. Joomla will now send you an automatically generated e-mail. It contains a link you must click on to activate your new user account. You'll be taken to the home page and a confirmation message will be displayed: **Your Account has been successfully activated. You can now login using the username and password you chose during the registration.**

What just happened?

You're now officially a member of your own site! Try this out by using **Login Form** on the home page. Enter your username and password in the **Username** and **Password** fields and click on the **Login** button. You're taken to your **Profile** page where you can edit your profile settings. However, logging in as a registered user doesn't make much sense yet, since apart from this profile page, there's no special content that only registered users can access. We'll take care of that in a minute.



You can also enable users to register without having to enter a valid e-mail address. To do this, navigate to **Users | User Manager** and click on the **Options** button. Set **New User Account Activation** to **None**. However, be aware that this can lower the threshold for spammers to create fake member accounts on your site. One step you can take to avoid automated spam robots registering on your site is to enable Recaptcha; visit http://docs.joomla.org/How_do_you_use_Recaptcha_in_Joomla%3F for more information.

Hiding content for nonregistered users

Creating members-only content doesn't take much more than setting the **Access** level of an item to **Registered**. This item will be hidden for regular users, but it will show up for those who have logged in. Most of Joomla's building blocks can be set to a specific **Access** level. Whether this block is just one specific page, a module, or all of the contents of a specific category, you can set it to be visible to registered users only. This basically means that you can make your site look very different to different types of users. **Public** users may only see a basic website; registered users have the same content plus a whole bunch of extra articles, menus, menu links, or modules.

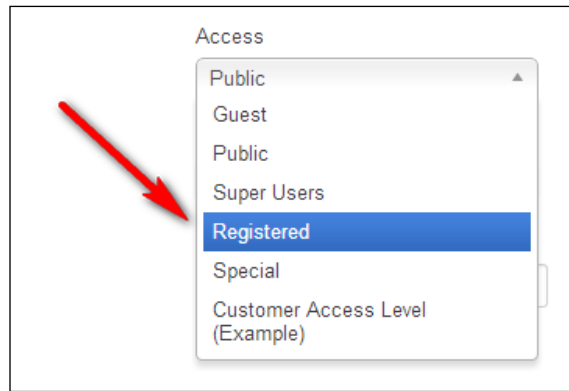
Time for action – hiding content for nonregistered users

Let's explore how hiding content works. By default, every menu item is visible: the **Access** level is set to **Public**. We'll change that setting for the **Activities** link that's currently shown in **Main Menu**, as shown in the following screenshot:



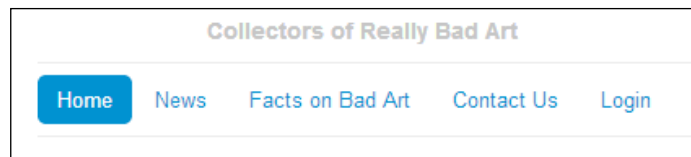
Let's make this **Activities** link visible only for registered users who have logged in. The steps are as follows:

1. Go to **Menus | Main Menu** and click on the **Activities** link to edit it.
2. In the menu links' **Details** screen, set the **Access** level to **Registered** and click on **Save & Close**.



What just happened?

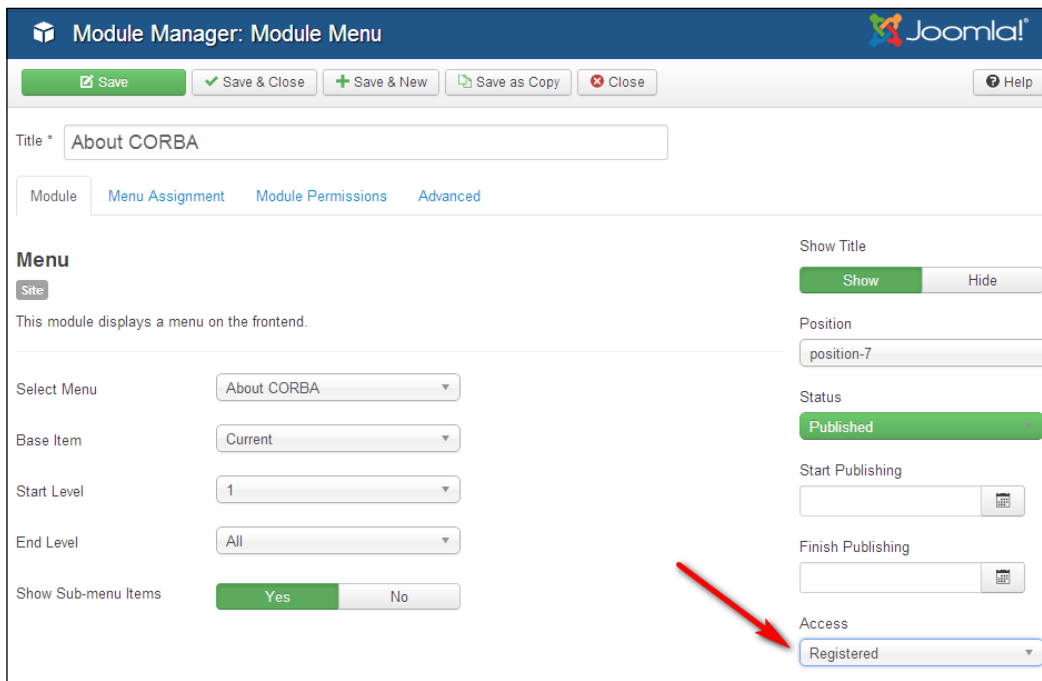
That's it! By changing a single menu item parameter, you've effectively hidden the menu item for nonregistered users. The output is shown in the following screenshot:



The **Activities** link will only be displayed after a registered user has logged in.

Have a go hero – changing access level settings

You may want to explore the way you can change access levels for different items on your site. Take a look at the details of any article, menu item, or module—you'll find that there's always the same set of **Access** level choices available. For example, if you would like to make a whole menu visible for registered users only, you'd set the **Access** level of that particular menu module to **Registered**:



The screenshot shows the Joomla! Module Manager interface for a module titled "About CORBA". The interface includes a top navigation bar with the Joomla! logo and a title bar "Module Manager: Module Menu". Below the title bar are several action buttons: "Save", "Save & Close", "Save & New", "Save as Copy", "Close", and "Help". The main content area has a "Title" field containing "About CORBA" and a tabbed interface with "Menu Assignment", "Module Permissions", and "Advanced" tabs. The "Menu" section is active, showing a description: "This module displays a menu on the frontend." There are several configuration fields: "Select Menu" (About CORBA), "Base Item" (Current), "Start Level" (1), "End Level" (All), and "Show Sub-menu Items" (Yes). On the right side, there are additional settings: "Show Title" (Show/Hide), "Position" (position-7), "Status" (Published), "Start Publishing" and "Finish Publishing" (calendar pickers), and "Access" (Registered). A red arrow points to the "Access" dropdown menu.

What's the Special access level about?



You'll have noticed that there are four default access levels—not just **Public**, **Guest**, and **Registered**, but also **Special**. Whatever is set to **Special** is only visible for authors and higher. You'll read more about **Access** levels later in this chapter, in the *An overview of all available Viewing Access Levels* section.

Getting your visitors to register to read more

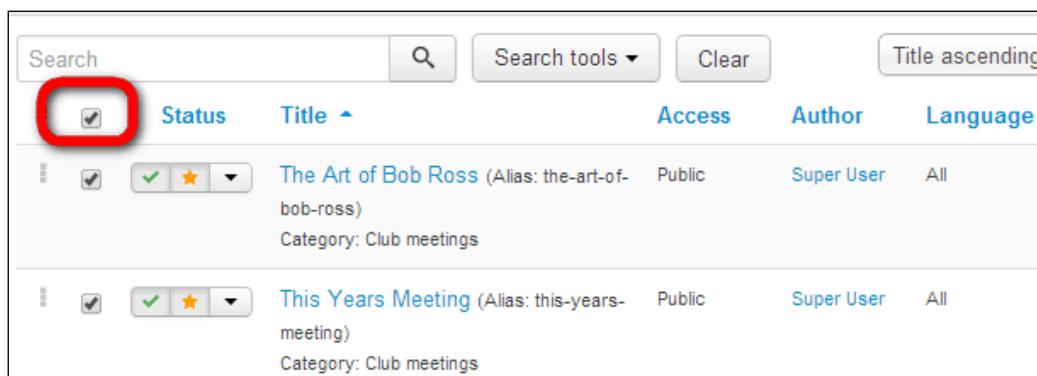
It's great to be able to completely hide contents for nonregistered users, but this approach does have one drawback. It doesn't encourage users to register as they simply can't see what they are missing out on. Sometimes, it's better to show nonregistered users only part of an article and invite them to join (register) to read more.

On the example site, we'll do just that. We won't completely hide content for nonregistered users, as this would leave a very sparse website for first time visitors and won't really persuade them to explore the hidden stuff.

Time for action – partially hiding content from nonregistered users

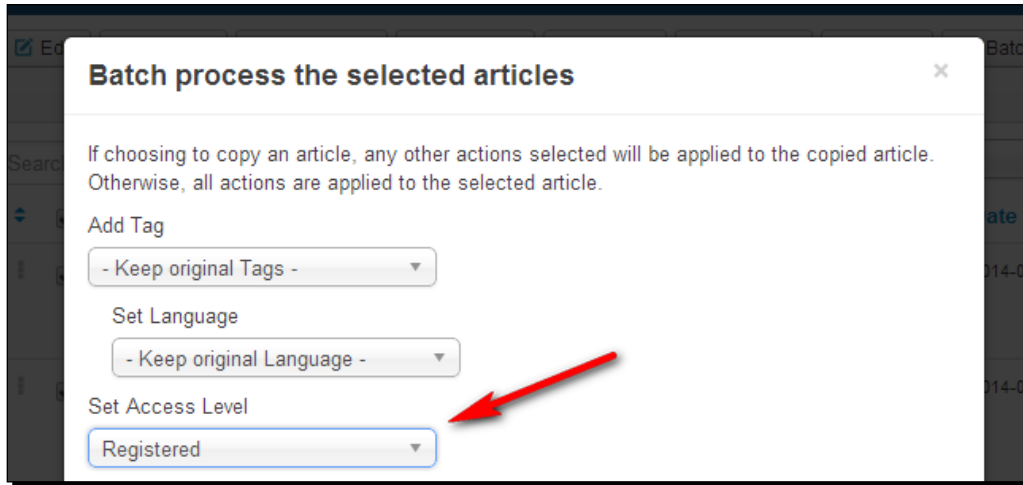
Suppose your client wants to offer their site members some exclusive content; anyone registered to the CORBA site can read all about exclusive club meetings. Let's change the settings so that all content shown through the **Activities | Club Meetings** menu link is displayed only partly—unless users register. The steps are as follows:

1. Make sure you're logged in to the backend of the site as **Super User**. Open the current **Activities** menu link (**Menus | Main Menu**) to edit it. The link itself should be visible for all; **Status** should be **Published**, and **Access** should be **Public**.
2. Under the **Options** tab, set **Show Unauthorised Links** to **Yes**. This is the step that takes care of the "register to read more" magic. Of all articles that have been assigned **Registered** status, only the intro text will be displayed. Click on **Save & Close** to save and close the menu link.
3. To set the **Access** level of the desired articles to **Registered**, navigate to **Content | Article Manager**. In the **Select Category** drop-down box (click on **Search tools** first if you don't see it), select **Club Meetings**.
4. Select all **Club Meetings** articles by clicking on the checkbox in the top-left row as shown in the following screenshot:



<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Status	Title	Access	Author	Language
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	✓ ★	The Art of Bob Ross (Alias: the-art-of-bob-ross) Category: Club meetings	Public	Super User	All
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	✓ ★	This Years Meeting (Alias: this-years-meeting) Category: Club meetings	Public	Super User	All

5. Click on the **Batch** button. In the **Batch process the selected articles** pop-up screen, there's a **Set Access Level** drop-down box. Select **Registered** as shown in the following screenshot:



6. Click on **Process**. In the **Access** column, you can see all articles are now **Registered**, as shown in the following screenshot:



	Status	Title	Access	Author
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	The Art of Bob Ross (Alias: the-art-of-bob-ross) Category: Club meetings	Registered	Super User
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	This Years Meeting (Alias: this-years-meeting)	Registered	Super User

7. In the frontend of the website, navigate via the **Activities** link to the overview page containing articles from the **Club Meetings** (and **Art Lectures**) categories. You'll notice all **Club Meetings** articles are now only partially shown with a **Register to read more** hyperlink:

This Years Meeting



Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Suspendisse felis nisi, malesuada vel faucibus id, congue quis velit. Ut cursus magna non luctus blandit. Etiam et mattis justo, imperdiet pellentesque massa. Integer faucibus ipsum nisi, sed interdum mi venenatis at. Sed tempor nulla massa, sed tempus ligula convallis a.

[➤ Register to read more...](#)

What just happened?

You've created web pages that can be fully viewed by registered users only. Articles for **Registered** users are partially displayed with a **Register to read more** link. This way, unregistered users get a taste of the registered content. When site visitors click on the **Register to read more** link, they are automatically taken to a separate login page.

Visitors who haven't yet created an account can click on **Don't have an account?** to do so now. If the visitors already have an account, they can log in here. You can check this out yourself by logging in now with the dummy user account you created earlier.

Creating custom-made user groups

Up to now, we've used **User Groups** and their sets of permissions that are available in Joomla out of the box. However, you can also create custom-made user groups and assign them permissions to do and see just what you allow them. Instead of using the existing user groups and their predefined sets of permissions, you can create as many groups as you want and grant the people in those groups any combination of permissions. If you want, you can set permissions for specific parts of the site; permissions apply to either the whole site or specific components, categories, or items (such as a single article). For example, you can allow only members of the HR department to change content on all pages in the **Job Opportunities** category without allowing them to edit other content. Or you can give specific users permission to access the backend of the site just to keep the **Contacts** pages up-to-date; we'll see how that works in a minute.

Let's first have a look at the four steps involved in creating a custom user group and assigning permissions:

1. Create a user group (a group of people sharing the same permissions).
2. Tell Joomla what the group can see. What's visible on the site, and what's hidden for them? In Joomla terms, this means you assign a viewing access level to the group.
3. Tell Joomla what the group can do. What actions can they perform on the site? In Joomla terms, this means you set **Permissions** for this user group.
4. Add users to the group.

To get a better understanding of this process, we'll have a look at the types of **Permissions** you can assign and **Viewing Access Levels** that are available. After that, we'll try out setting up a new custom user group with specific permissions using this four-step approach.

An overview of the permissions you can assign to user groups

When assigning permissions (such as site-wide permissions that can be found by navigating to **System | Global Configuration | Permissions**), nine types of permissions are available, such as **Site Login**, **Admin Login**, and so on. The following table outlines what the permission names mean:

Permission name	Description
Site Login	This allows the user to log in to the front of the website.
Admin Login	This allows the user to log in to the backend administration interface.
Offline Access	This allows the user to log in to the frontend of the website when the site is offline (when the site is under construction).
Super User	This allows the user to do anything on the site; these users have all Super User permissions.
Access Administration Interface	This allows the user to have administrative access to the Joomla backend.
Create	This allows the user to create new content.
Delete	This allows the user to delete content.
Edit	This allows the user to edit all content.
Edit State	This allows the user to publish, unpublish, trash, and archive content.
Edit Own	This allows the user to edit content that they've created themselves.

To allow or deny users to do things, each of the available permissions can be set to **Allowed** or **Denied** for a user group. If the permission isn't explicitly allowed or denied, it is **Not Set**.



Parent and child user groups

When creating a new set of permissions for a new group, you don't have to set each and every permission manually—permissions are inherited between groups. That is, a child user group automatically gets the permissions set for its parent. **Public** is the parent group, **Manager** is a child of **Public**, and **Administrator** is a child of **Manager**. Permissions are inherited by all child groups (unless these permissions are explicitly set to **Allowed** or **Denied** to break the inheritance relationship). In other words, a child group can do anything a parent group can do—and more, as it is a child and therefore has its own specific permissions set. If you add a new group as a child of the **Registered** group, this means your new group inherits the right to log in to the site. In the **Permissions Settings** screen, the indentation of user group names indicates the permissions hierarchy.

An overview of all available Viewing Access Levels

We've just seen the things that users can be allowed to do through the **Permissions** settings. However, determining what users can do is not all there is to setting up permissions. You'll also want to control what users can see on the site. This is where **Viewing Access Levels** come in. By assigning an **Access** level, you can control whether users can only see the public site, whether they have access to special sections of the frontend, or whether they can access the backend. You can also control which articles, menus, modules, or components the user group can actually view.

Go to **Users | Viewing Access Levels** to see the default set of levels: **Public**, **Guest**, **Registered**, **Special**, and **Super Users**. The **Customer Access Level** is just an example used in the sample data. The following are the default **Viewing Access Levels**:

- ◆ **Public**: This means that there are no special viewing permissions involved. It's the set of permissions for the **Public** user group, whose members are only allowed access to the public site.
- ◆ **Guest**: This is the set of permissions for **Guest** users. These are users who have not logged in. The purpose of this access level is being able to give only non-logged in users access to certain content—in other words, to hide things for users once they have logged in. Content that has been assigned the **Guest** access level will be visible for **Guest** users, but not for logged-in users—**Registered** or **Special** users.
- ◆ **Registered**: This is the set of permissions for **Registered** users. These are allowed to log in to the site to view the site parts that are set to the **Registered** access level. **Registered** content is hidden for **Public** and **Guest** users.

- ◆ **Special:** This is the set of viewing permissions for all users involved in maintaining the site. In the default setup, this means **Special** content is accessible for **Authors, Editors, Publishers, Managers, Administrators, and Super Users**.
- ◆ **Super Users:** This is the set of viewing permissions for **Super Users** only. It gives only this group the right to view (access) certain parts of the site.

Viewing Access Levels can be set for all kinds of content on the site, from modules and menu items to individual articles, by changing the value of the **Access** drop-down list.

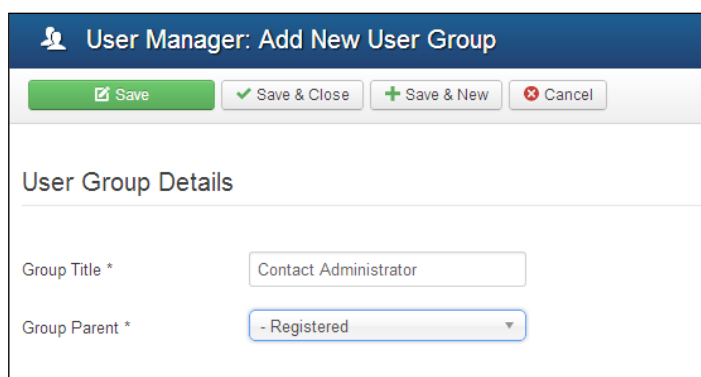
Creating a custom user group to manage contacts

Let's find out how we can create a custom user group on our site. Our client wants to set up a contacts database on the site by using the **Joomla Contacts** component. This allows visitors to find specific contacts in the organization and view their contact details. To create this database, we would like to have a new type of user—someone who's able to administer the contacts database of your site, which can be accessed by navigating to **Components | Contacts**.

Time for action – creating a user group

Let's assume we want to allow just one person, the club secretary, to manage and update contact details. This means we need to create a specific group of users who can access the backend, but who aren't able to view or change anything other than the **Contacts** menu and functionality. The steps are as follows:

1. Go to **Users | Groups** and click on **New** to create a new group called **Contact Administrator**.
2. Set the **Group Parent** to **Registered**. This way, the new group gets the login permission from the **Registered** group, but no other permissions.



The screenshot shows the Joomla! User Manager interface for adding a new user group. The title bar reads "User Manager: Add New User Group". Below the title bar are four buttons: "Save", "Save & Close", "Save & New", and "Cancel". The main content area is titled "User Group Details" and contains two form fields. The first field is "Group Title *" with the text "Contact Administrator" entered. The second field is "Group Parent *" with a dropdown menu showing "- Registered".

3. Click on **Save & Close** to apply changes.

What just happened?

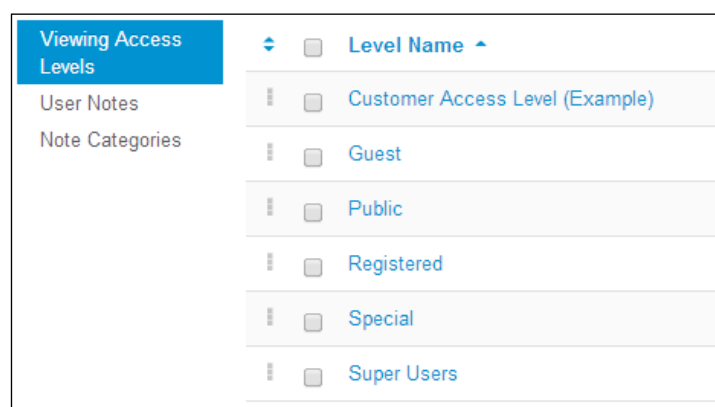
You've created a new user group. As they inherit **Registered** permissions, they can log in to the site, but as of yet no specific permissions have been assigned to this group.

Time for action – telling Joomla! what the group can see

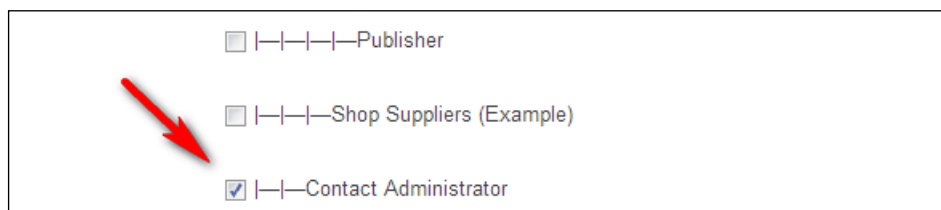
To specify what the members of the new user group can see and do, we'll first specify which viewing access level this user group has. As stated before, this level defines what users can access and see on the site, but it doesn't give them the rights to do anything.

In this case, we want the new user group to be able to access the backend. For this, we can use an existing viewing access level: the **Special** level. In the default Joomla setup, anyone with the **Special** level can access the backend controls:

1. Go to **Users | Access Levels**. The existing **Viewing Access Levels** are visible, as shown in the following screenshot:



2. To add the new user group to the **Special** access level, click on **Special**. Add the new **Contact Administrator** user group to this level by clicking on the select box to the left of the name **Contact Administrator**, as shown in the following screenshot:



3. Make sure that your changes are saved.

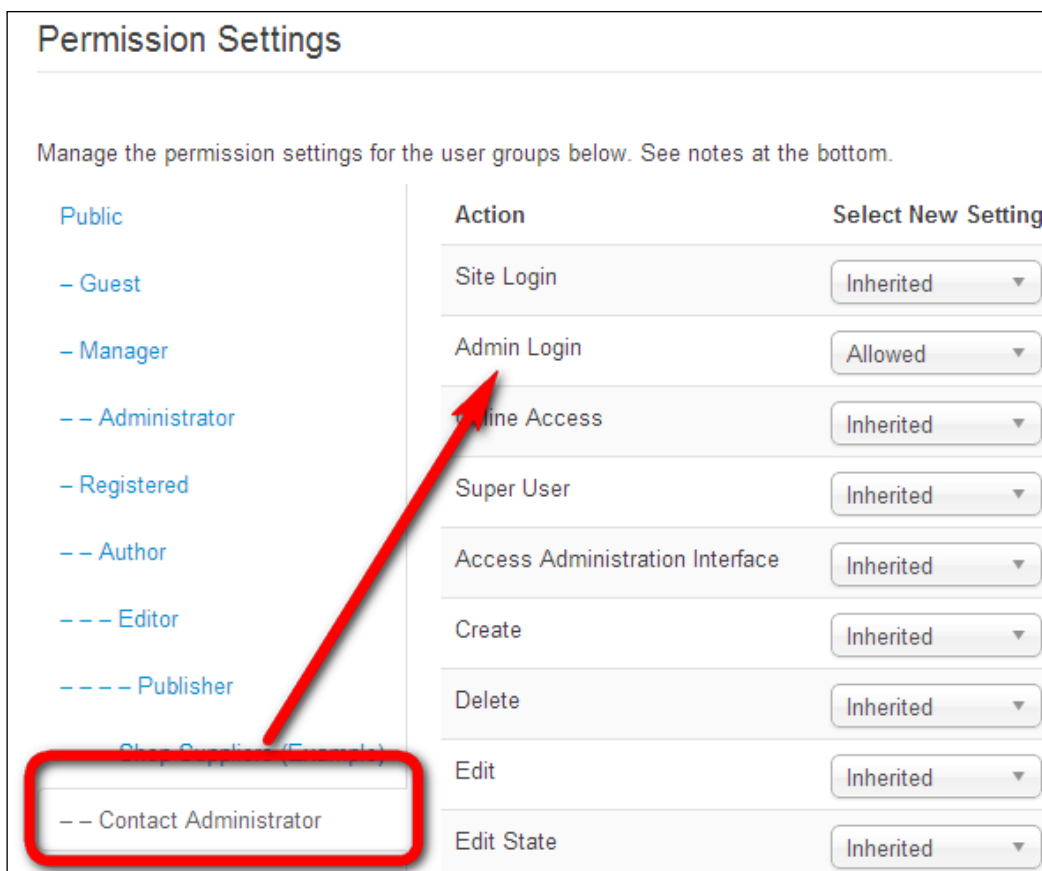
What just happened?

So far, you've created a user group and made it possible for them to view the backend once they've logged in by assigning them to the **Special** level. However, they still can't actually log in to the backend. Logging in to the backend is an action—and this specific action's permission is set through the **Admin Login** permission in **Global Configuration**.

Time for action – telling Joomla! what the group can do

Let's give the **Contacts Administrator** permission to log in to the backend. The steps are as follows:

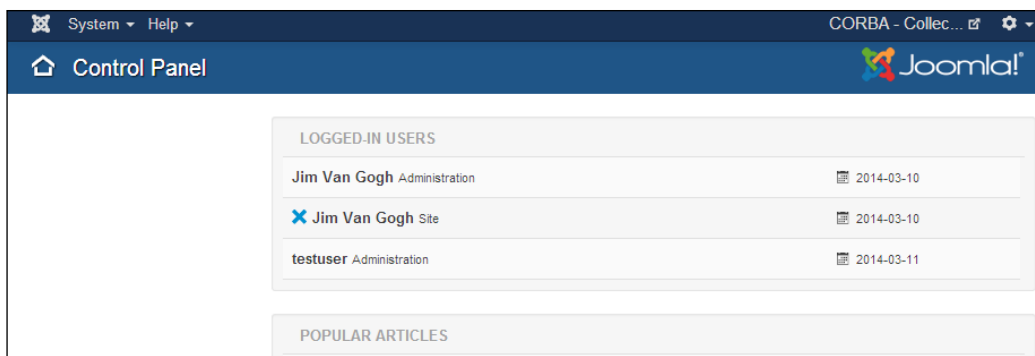
1. Go to **System | Global Configuration** and click on the **Permissions** tab. Select the **Contact Administrator** user group. The permissions for the group are shown.
2. For this group, change the **Admin Login** permission to **Allowed**, as shown in the following screenshot:



The screenshot shows the Joomla! Permission Settings interface. On the left, a list of user groups is shown under the 'Public' section, with 'Contact Administrator' highlighted in a red box. On the right, a table lists various actions and their corresponding permissions for the selected user group. A red arrow points to the 'Admin Login' row, where the permission is set to 'Allowed'.

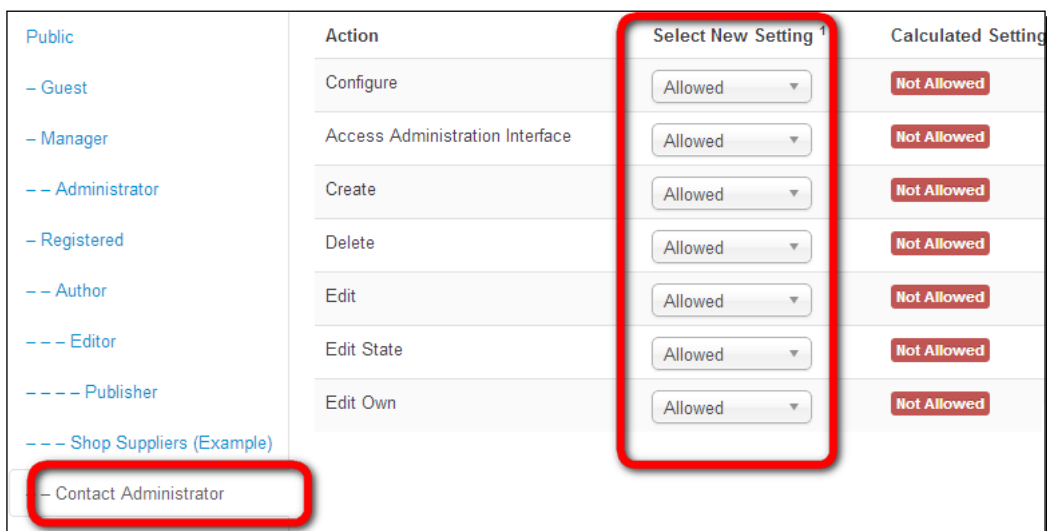
Action	Select New Setting
Site Login	Inherited
Admin Login	Allowed
Offline Access	Inherited
Super User	Inherited
Access Administration Interface	Inherited
Create	Inherited
Delete	Inherited
Edit	Inherited
Edit State	Inherited

Save this setting. If you were to log in to the site as **Contact Administrator** now, you'd be able to access the backend, but there will hardly be any functionality available at all. You'd just see the backend interface with just a few menu options (allowing you to edit your account profile).



So, now that we've set the proper permissions on a site-wide level, it's time to set more specific permissions. We have to allow our new group to actually manage contacts in the backend. To do this, we customize the permissions of the **Contacts** component:

1. Go to **Components | Contacts** and click on the **Options** button.
2. Click on the **Permissions** tab and click on **Contact Administrator** to change permissions to **Allowed** for this group for any action, as shown in the following screenshot:



3. Click **Save & Close** to commit changes.

What just happened?

Setting permissions is done. Users in this group can now access the backend and manage contacts, just as we expected. They won't, however, be able to do anything else.

For what parts of the site can you set permissions?

You can set permissions at up to four levels on the website, ranging from site-wide permissions to permissions on the level of individual items, such as articles:

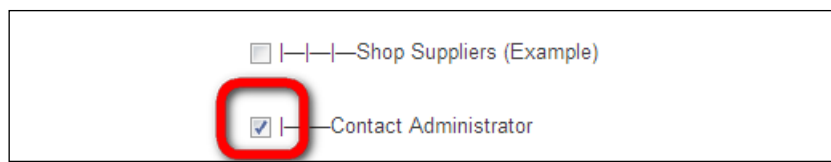
- ◆ **Site-wide permissions:** This can be set by navigating to **System | Global Configuration | Permissions**. You've seen these default site-wide permissions for each group earlier in this chapter.
- ◆ **Permissions for components:** Joomla components are **Articles, Menus, Users, Banners**, and so on. There's a **Permissions** screen in each of the Joomla components. For example, go to **Article Manager | Options | Permissions** to access the **Permissions** screen of **Article Manager**.
- ◆ **Permissions for categories:** In the screen where you create or edit a category (**Edit** or **New** under **Category Manager**), there's a **Category Permissions** section. Here you set permissions for all items (that is, articles) within a category.
- ◆ **Permissions for articles:** Go to **Content | Article Manager | Options | Permissions** to set permissions for all articles or open any article to set specific permissions in the **Article Permissions** section.
- ◆ **Permissions for modules:** Go to **Content | Module Manager | Options | Permissions** to set permissions for all modules or open any module to set specific permissions in the **Module Permissions** section.



Time for action – adding users to the new group

As of now, there are no members assigned to the new group. One last thing to take care of is to create a new user. The steps are as follows:

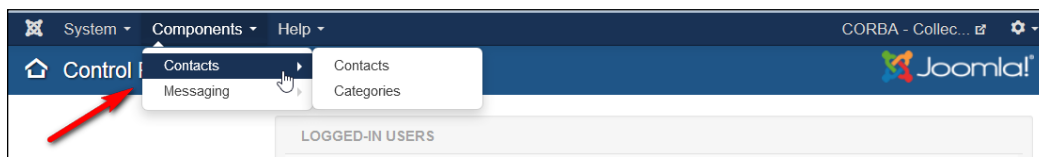
1. Go to **Users | User Manager** and click on **Add a new user**. Enter the required details in the **Name, Login Name, Password, and Email** fields. Of course, instead of creating a new user, you can also edit the permissions of the user you added earlier, Jim Van Gogh.
2. In the **Assigned User Groups** section, assign the new user to the appropriate group by ticking the box to the left of the **Contact Administrator** group name as shown in the following screenshot:



3. Save your changes. You're done!

What just happened?

You've set up a user group and assigned the appropriate access levels and permissions. You'll probably want to find out if everything is set up correctly. Log out and log in to the backend as the new user. You'll notice the backend interface is almost empty. Most of the usual menus and shortcuts have disappeared or are dysfunctional. Only the functions relevant to the new user group are available; the only component the user can see and access is **Contacts**. Check this by clicking on the **Contacts** submenu link by navigating to **Components | Contacts**. This is shown in the following screenshot. You'll notice all the functionality related to managing contacts is available for the new user. Apart from that, the user has access to his own profile details and can use the **Messaging** component, as this is meant for all users that have access to the Joomla backend.



Pop quiz – test your knowledge of Joomla user management

Q1. What's the difference between registered users and ordinary site visitors?

1. Registered users can add content to the site.
2. Registered users are able to view "registered" content.
3. Registered users are team members.

Q2. What's the use of displaying a login form on your website?

1. To allow users to log in or to register.
2. To allow anyone to log in to the backend.
3. To allow users to activate their account.

Q3. What's the advantage of using **Register to read more** links?

1. Site visitors will feel encouraged to add content.
2. Site visitors will feel encouraged to register to read partly hidden content.
3. Site visitors won't be able to know what content is hidden.

Q4. On which levels of the site can you set permissions for user groups?

1. Only for the whole site, through **Global Configuration**.
2. For components, for categories, or for individual articles.
3. Site-wide, for components, for categories, or for individual modules or articles.

Summary

In this chapter, we explored the exciting possibilities of the Joomla ACL system. You saw how you can create new users and assign them to a specific group, granting them various levels of access. Some users only have access to registered areas of the frontend; others can also log in to the backend of the site.

The default **User Groups** consist of seven levels, from guests (**Public**) to the most powerful (**Super Users**). However, you can also add custom user groups. By controlling user permissions, you tell Joomla what parts of the site specific users can view and what they can do there.

You've steadily built a fine website. It looks good, it's organized clearly, it's easy to expand, and it's easy to navigate. Moreover, you added some advanced features to the site using Joomla's user management capabilities. What more can you want? Much more! Now it's time to look further and explore the vast range of powerful extras by extending Joomla.

In the next chapter, you'll enhance your site and make it even better and much more fun to use.

10

Getting the Most out of Your Site – Extending Joomla!

When you've got your basic Joomla-powered site up and running, and you've got all of your content and functionality covered, chances are you'll want more. Maybe your client has specific requirements, or maybe you just want to increase the wow factor of your site and add some eye candy or cool effects. Doing more things with Joomla and making your site stand out from the rest of them—that's where extensions come in. The real power of Joomla lies in its extensibility. If you need any functionality that's not built into the basic Joomla installation (or core), you'll very likely find it in the huge treasure house that's called the Joomla extension directory. Extensions are little pieces of software that you can download and install to extend Joomla's capabilities.

In this chapter, you'll be doing the following tasks:

- ◆ Trying out Joomla's core extensions
- ◆ Downloading and installing third-party extensions
- ◆ Putting extensions to work to add new features to the frontend and backend of your site

Don't let the term **extension** confuse you; some extensions are part of the Joomla core. They are integrated into the basic Joomla package. Many of these extensions provide essential functionality, so you can't even uninstall them. Joomla's search function, its menu system, or its tags functionality are examples of these preinstalled extensions. This means you already have some experience of extensions. As soon as you start using Joomla, you deploy extensions.

In this chapter, we'll focus on the possibilities of some core extensions that we haven't covered yet and also on using third-party extensions. We'll install some must-have extensions and find out how they work.

Extensions in all shapes and sizes

Before digging into the wonderful world of extensions, it's good to know they come in different shapes and sizes. Basically, there are three types of extensions.

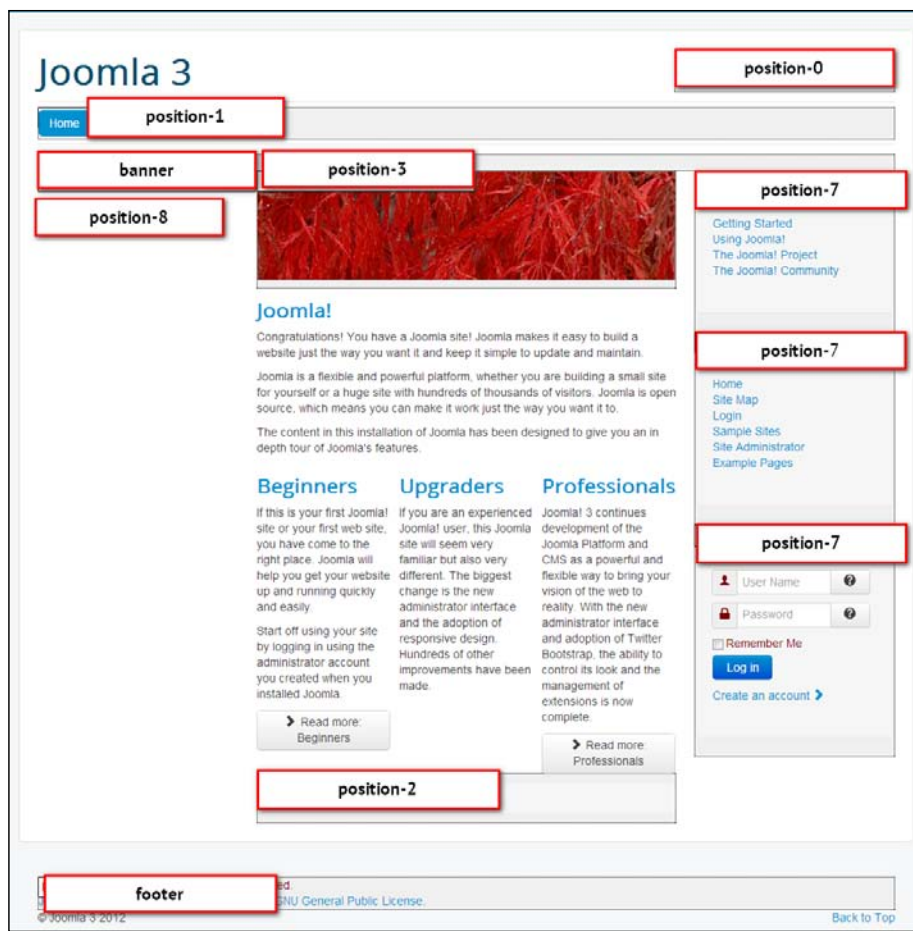
The big ones – components

You can manage components through a special **Components** menu in the backend. They are the most comprehensive extensions, often providing lots of administration options and settings. Component output is usually displayed in the main content area. An example is the Contacts component (to manage a system of contacts, contact details, and contact forms). We'll have a more detailed look at this component later in this chapter.

The medium ones – modules

Modules are blocks that contain special functionality. You've already seen examples at work, such as the menu module. You can manage modules by navigating to **Extensions | Module Manager**.

Modules usually turn up around the main content area, in the left-hand side and right-hand side column, or in the header and footer. These module positions are predefined by the template designer. In the default template, positions have names such as **position-1**; in other templates, descriptive names such as **left**, **right**, and so on are used. In the following screenshot, you can see the main module positions in the default template:



What module positions are available?



When adding modules, you place them in a specific module position. To find out which module positions are available in the current template, go to **Extensions | Template Manager**. Click on the **Options** button and make sure the **Preview Module Positions** setting is set to **Enabled**. From now on, every template found through the **Template Manager | Templates** tab will contain a **Preview** link. Click on this link to see the template, including an overlay that displays all available positions and their position names (such as **position-7**). Another way to quickly see this overview of all available positions for the current template is adding `/index.php?tp=1` to the URL of the site (for example, `http://www.example.com/index.php?tp=1`). This second method only works if the **Preview Module Positions** setting is enabled.

The tiny ones – plugins

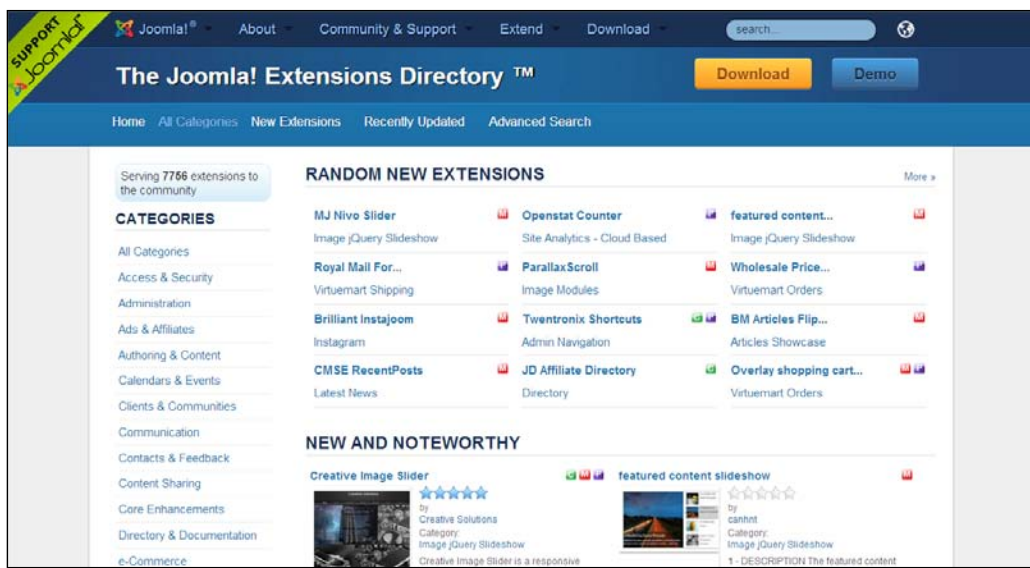
The third type of extension is plugins. These are usually minor enhancements, such as an extra button in the text editor that makes it easy to insert hyperlinks. Don't worry, you don't have to memorize this extensions typology. Although technically and practically there are differences between components, modules, and plugins, the bottom line is that they all extend Joomla's capabilities by adding extra functionality. You just choose the tool that does the job. This means you'll sometimes use a component, sometimes a module, and sometimes a plugin (or a combination).



In the **Extensions** menu, you'll also find **Template Manager**. We'll cover these specific extensions that determine the site's layout, colors, and typography in *Chapter 11, Creating an Attractive Design – Working with Templates*.

Where do you get extensions from?

You can find thousands of extensions developed by third parties on the Web. Most of these are listed on <http://extensions.joomla.org>, which contains the **Joomla Extensions Directory (JED)**. The JED is comparable to an app store, and it allows you to browse and install all kinds of extra functionality for your site, as shown in the following screenshot:



Browsing JED, you'll see that extensions offer a wealth of new possibilities—better content presentation (through alternative menus, link lists, and galleries), user interaction (using forums and comments), or backend tools (interface enhancements).



You can also access the contents of the JED right from within the Joomla backend. The current version of Joomla allows you to browse and even install extensions right from the administrative interface. To use this feature, you have to enable the **Install from web** functionality in the **Extensions** menu. You'll read more on how to install extensions later in this chapter in the *Enhancing your site using third-party extensions* section.

JED lists many extensions, but there are many more extension portal sites and developer sites. Just Google search for `Joomla extensions` or `Joomla extensions must-haves` and make sure you've got enough coffee prepared to embark on a long and adventurous online treasure hunt. However, do make sure you only download extensions from reliable sources. The JED is the safest place to find extensions, as it unlists any extension as soon as security vulnerabilities are discovered.

For more tips on finding and selecting the best extensions for your needs, please have a look at the section *Finding the right extensions for your site* later in this chapter.



What do extensions cost?

Many Joomla extensions are free or available for a reasonable fee. Sometimes, developers require registration before you can download the extension. Both free and commercial extensions are usually distributed under an open source license, the **General Public License (GPL)**. A major benefit of using GPL software and extensions is that basically anyone is allowed to use and modify the source code. This implies you're not dependent on the original software developer for updates or customizations. You can also have a look at <http://www.gnu.org/licenses/quick-guide-gplv3.html>.

Enhancing your site using core extensions

Let's first explore some extensions that are part of the Joomla core package. We'll put the Newsflash module to work and after that, we'll have a closer look at the use of a more complex extension, the Contacts component.

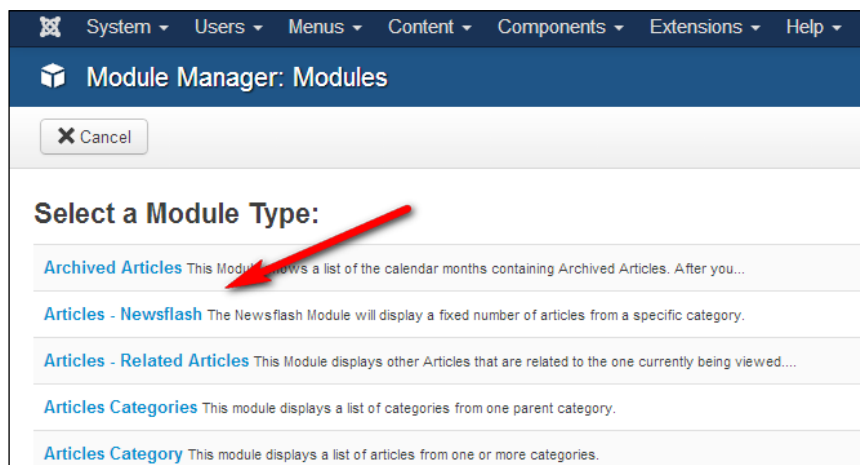
Highlighting articles using the Newsflash module

When your site grows, it's important to make sure that the home page properly reflects all of the content categories to prevent your valuable new content from staying unnoticed. By selecting the **Featured Articles** option (check the *Adding items to the home page* section in *Chapter 4, Web Building Basics – Creating a Site in an Hour*), you control what articles show up in the central area of the home page. However, there are more ways to attract attention to specific articles.

Time for action – adding the Newsflash module to the home page

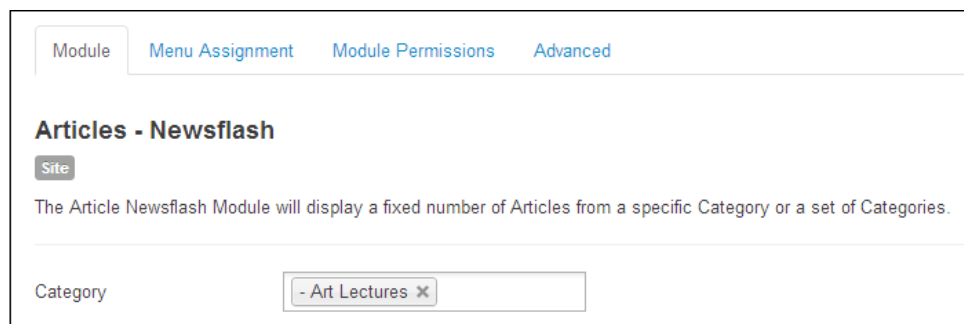
Let's use the Newsflash module to show a random article's introduction text from a selected category each time the page is loaded. Every time the visitor returns, another item will be displayed in the Newsflash module position. The steps are as follows:

1. Navigate to **Extensions | Module Manager**. Click on **New** and select **Articles - Newsflash**. This is shown in the following screenshot:



2. In the next screen, make sure the **Status** setting is set to **Published** so that the module displays the articles. This is the default setting.
3. In the **Title** box, enter an appropriate title. In this example, we'll enter *Recent Lectures* as the module title. Make sure the **Show Title** option is set to **Show**.
4. Set the **Position** setting as **position-7** to display the module in the right-hand side column in the current template (called Protostar).
5. Click on the **Menu Assignment** tab and select **Only on the pages selected**. Set the module to show on the home page only.

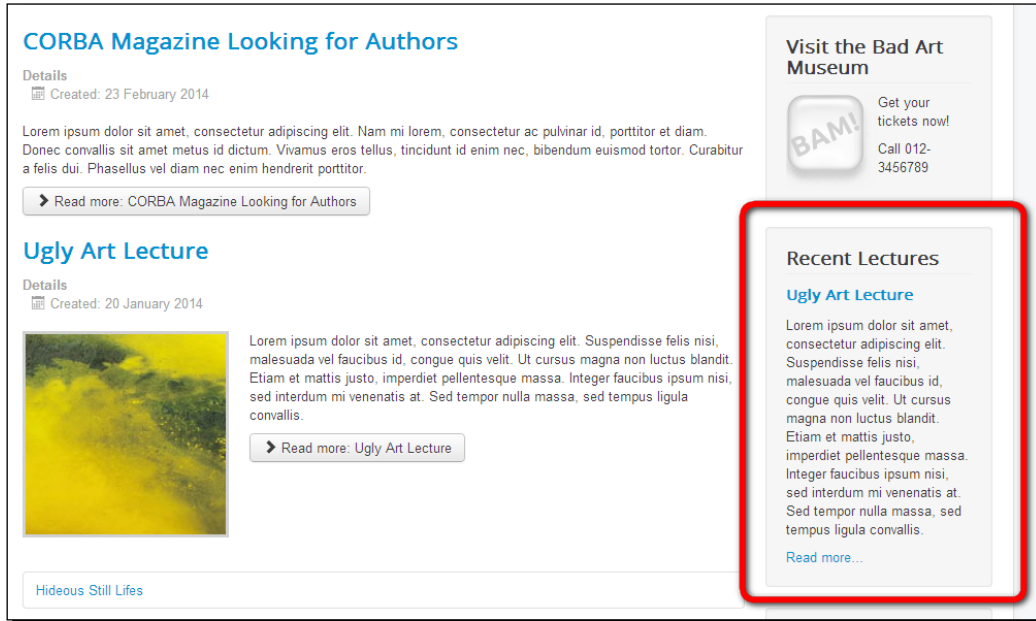
- Click on the **Module** tab. In the **Category** field, remove the default selection (**All Categories**). In this case, we want Joomla to show article introduction texts from the **Art Lectures** category. This is shown in the following screenshot:



- Set the **Show Images** option to **Yes**; this way, the images in the article's introduction text will be displayed. Images will only fit if they aren't wider than the available module position, as bigger images aren't resized automatically.
- Set the **Show Article Title** option to **Yes** to display the article title (and not just the introduction text).
- Set the **Linked Titles** option to **Yes** to turn the title of the newsflash articles into a hyperlink.
- Set the **'Read more...'** Link option to **Show** to display a **Read more** link after the introduction text.
- In the **Number of articles** box, enter 1. This will make the module display one article from the selected category.
- In the **Order Results** drop-down box, select **Random**. This will make the module display random articles from the selected category each time the visitor revisits this page. (You can also choose **Created Date** or **Modified Date** to order by date, or choose **Ordering** to leave the order as it is in the Article Manager). This is shown in the following screenshot:



- 13.** Click on **Save** and then click on **View Site**. The Newsflash module is shown to the right of the main content column, as shown in the following screenshot:



What just happened?

The Newsflash module can help you attract attention to a specific set of articles; every time the page is revisited (reloaded in the visitor's browser), a new random article introduction text from the selected category is shown. Don't let the name Newsflash fool you, as the module is obviously not just for news items. You can use it to show one or more items from any category. The fun part of using a random selection is that you can surprise the visitor with different content at every revisit, without having to actually refresh the content of your site.

Have a go hero – change the Newsflash module settings

As with almost any module, the settings and parameters greatly determine the output of the Newsflash module. In the following screenshot, you can see what the output could look like if you change the position and layout settings. Here, we've added another Newsflash module in the column on the left-hand side.

The screenshot shows the CORBA website interface. At the top left is the CORBA logo (Collectors of Really Bad Art) with a search bar on the right. Below the logo is a navigation menu with links for Home, News, Activities, Facts on Bad Art, Contact Us, and Login. The main content area is divided into three columns. The left column contains a section titled 'What's Bad Art? Ugly Sculptures' with a sub-section 'Famous Bad Artists' and an image of a lion sculpture. The middle column features 'CORBA Magazine Looking for Authors' and 'Ugly Art Lecture'. The right column includes 'Visit the Bad Art Museum' with a 'BAM!' button and 'Recent Lectures' with an 'Ugly Art Lecture' section. At the bottom right, there is an 'About CORBA' section.

In this case, the **Position** setting is set to **position-8**, which is the left-hand side column of the Protostar template (set to be displayed only if any content is assigned to it). We've chosen to display two random article introduction texts from the Bad Art Facts category in one column. This way, we use the main content area to show featured articles and use module columns to highlight the contents of a couple of specific categories.

Using the same module twice (or more)

It's possible to use multiple instances of any module on a page. You've already seen an example if you have installed Joomla with sample data, as the sample site shows various menus on one page (such as **Main Menu**, **Top Menu**, and **User Menu**). These are all copies of a single module type, Menu.

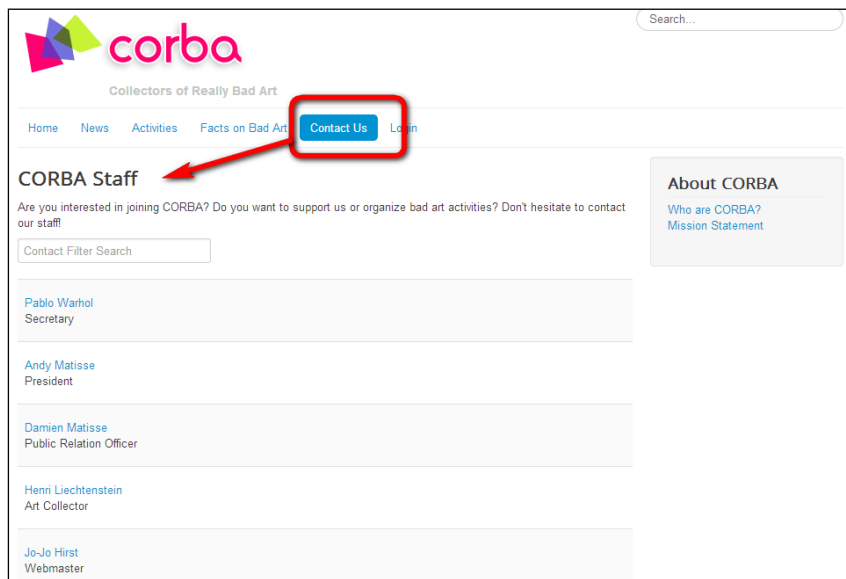


In the previous screenshot, I've used two instances of the Newsflash module to display content from different categories on different module positions.

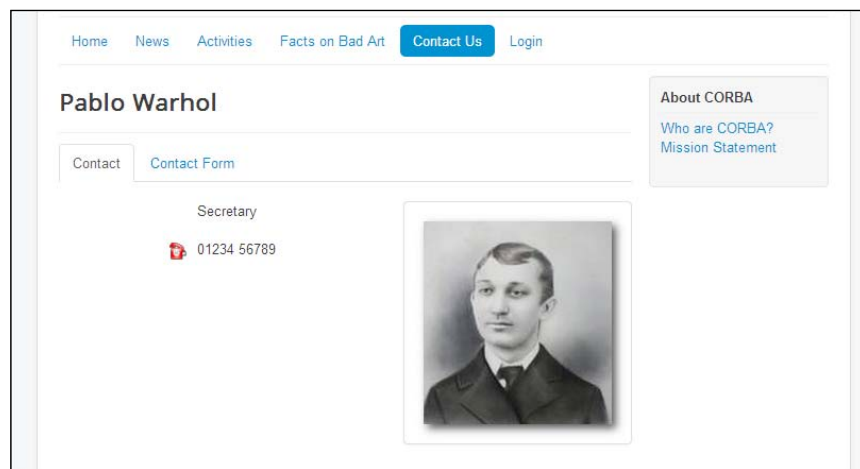
Often, it's easiest to create a copy of the first module so that you don't have to create the second instance from the ground up. Navigate to **Extensions | Module Manager**, select the module to copy, and click on **Duplicate** in the toolbar. In the **Module Manager** screen, a copy will show up (for example, **Menu (2)**). You'll probably want to give the copy a different title, select another position, and set the source to another category. Also, set the **Status** setting of the duplicated module to **Published**, as the default status of a duplicate is **Unpublished**.

Creating a list of contacts using the Contacts component

In *Chapter 4, Web Building Basics – Creating a Site in an Hour*, you've already deployed Joomla's built-in Contacts component to create a generic contact form. However, the Contacts component has much more functionality than what's needed to create a simple form. Instead, you can set up a system of contacts, displaying as many contacts in as many categories as you need. Imagine you want to display a list of contacts to allow the visitor to select the specific department or staff member they want to get in touch with. The result would look as displayed in the following screenshot:



When the user clicks on any of the staff names, the appropriate contact details are shown:



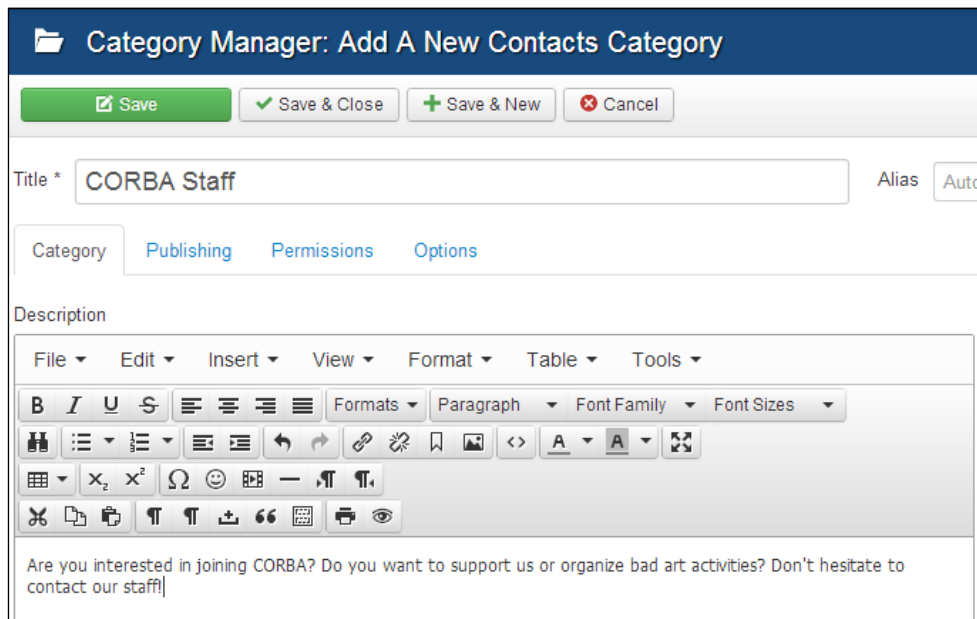
This system allows the visitor to find the appropriate contact, browse the contact details, and get in touch through a contact form for each contact. Let's find out how we can create a couple of contacts and create a list using the Contacts component.

Time for action – adding a series of contacts

We'll create a contacts category, add contact details, and finally make a menu link to point to the new set of contacts.

1. Navigate to **Components | Contacts | Categories**. If you installed Joomla using sample data, there may still be sample categories present. It's easy to remove them; select them all (make sure **All** is selected in the select box at the right-hand side above the contact listing) and click on the **Trash** button.

2. Click on **New** to create a new contacts category. In the **Title** field, enter CORBA Staff. In the **Description** box, enter a short description that will be displayed above the contacts list. In this example, we've entered Are you interested in joining CORBA? Do you want to support us or organize bad art activities? Don't hesitate to contact our staff! Click on **Save & Close**. This is shown in the following screenshot:



3. Click on the **Contacts** link in the menu on the left-hand side and then click on **New**. Make sure the **CORBA Staff** category is selected. Enter the details for a new contact. In this example, we've entered Pablo Warhol in the **Name** field. Under **New Contact**, enter information as necessary. Select an image to display a portrait with the contact information, enter a position (such as *secretary*), and enter a telephone number and an e-mail address for the contact; even if we won't display the e-mail address, it will be used when the visitor uses the e-mail form for this contact. Finally, click on **Save & New**.
4. Repeat the previous step to enter information for a couple of other contacts. When you're done, click on **Save & Close**. We now have a new contacts category holding a set of contacts.

5. Now, let's add a new menu link to display the list of contacts. Navigate to **Menus | Main Menu**. Edit the existing **Contact Us** link (alternatively, if you haven't yet created a **Contact Us** link, just click on **New** to create a new menu item). In the **Menu Item Type** section, select **List Contacts in a Category** under **Contacts**. Under **Select a Category**, make sure the **CORBA Staff** category is selected.
6. Click on the **List Layouts** tab and set which details you want to display in the contacts list. Set the **Phone**, **City or Suburb**, **State or County**, and **Country** settings to **Hide**. We don't want to show too many details in the overview list of contacts. Also, set the **Display Select** option to **Hide**; we have just a short list of contacts, so we don't want to bother the visitors with a drop-down list that enables them to select the number of contacts displayed on the page.
7. Under **Contact Display Options**, select the details that will be displayed on the details page of each contact. Set the **Display format** option to **Sliders**. Set the **Name**, **Contact's Position**, and **Telephone** settings to **Show**. Under the **Mail Options** tab, set the **Show Contact Form** option to **Show** to make sure that every contact can be reached through their own contact form.
8. Click on **Save & Close** and then click on **View Site**. In the frontend top menu, click on the **Contact Us** link to see the results. The site should now display a menu link to a list of contacts, as shown in the previous two screenshots.

What just happened?

Using the Contacts component, we've created a little database of people and their details. When the visitor clicks on the menu link pointing to the Contacts category, a list is shown. Clicking on any of the names on the list reveals the contact details and a tabbed link to a contact form, enabling the visitor to e-mail the selected person.

Have a go hero – try out the Contact component settings

You'll have noticed that you can enter a huge number of details per contact and also select the details that you want to show or hide in the contacts list and the contact details page. The options found by navigating to **Components | Contacts** are general settings for all contacts and contact pages; you can overrule these by more specific settings through the menu link pointing to a specific contact. Go ahead and experiment with the settings and options. You may also want to enter some more contact details to see how these are displayed on the frontend. For example, you can also add tags for every contact; these will be displayed above the contact information and function as hyperlinks to a group of related contacts.

What extensions are parts of the Joomla! core?

We've tried out how you can put a module or a component to use. However, the Joomla core package contains many more extensions. Let's have a look at the modules and components that are part of the default installation. Navigate to **Extensions | Module Manager** and click on **New** to see a list of available modules.

Module Name	Description
Archived Articles	When you archive items in Joomla, you can use this module to display a list of links to archived articles (sorted by date). We've explored archiving articles in <i>Chapter 6, Creating Killer Content – Adding and Editing Articles</i> .
Articles - Newsflash	You've read about this module earlier in this chapter. It's not just for news, but it allows you to display the introduction texts of a set of articles in any category.
Articles - Related Articles	This shows a list of hyperlinks to pages with a subject matter related to that of the current page. The relationship is based on the meta tag keywords of the articles. If the current page and two other articles contain the keyword tutorial, then the two items will appear in the link list.
Articles Categories	This module shows a list of links to the subcategories in a category. You can use it to allow people to draw attention to subcategories and allow visitors to navigate more easily to content one level lower in the site structure.
Articles Category	This module shows a list of titles and article texts (or introduction texts) of articles in one or more categories. In fact, this is quite a powerful module that can be used to display selected articles that meet specific criteria in a module position.
Banners	This module displays banner ads created using the Banners component.
Breadcrumbs	This displays a set of hyperlinks that helps visitors understand where they are (that is, Home Category Article).
Custom HTML	This is a simple but very flexible module to display content anywhere on the page. See <i>Chapter 4, Web Building Basics – Creating a Site in an Hour</i> , for an example of its usage.
Feed Display	This displays a list of hyperlinks to news updates (newsfeeds) from another website.
Footer	This module you probably won't use. It displays a Joomla copyright notice on the site.
Language Switcher	Use this module if you are working with content in multiple languages on your site. Users can choose their preferred site language using this switch.

Module Name	Description
Latest News	This shows a list of hyperlinks to show the most recently added articles in specific categories. The name can be a little confusing, because it is really about the latest content, not just news.
Latest Users	This is useful if users are allowed to register and log in to the site. This module shows a short list of users that have logged in recently.
Login	This module shows a form that users can use to log in or create a new account. You've seen this in action in <i>Chapter 9, Opening Up the Site – Enabling Users to Log in and Contribute</i> .
Menu	This is Joomla's default menu module. All menus in Joomla are instances of this generic menu module.
Most Read Content	This displays a list of hyperlinks to the articles that have been accessed most often.
Popular Tags	This displays popular tags in one of the following two layouts: as a list of tags or as a tags cloud. The layout can be set through the Alternative Layout option.
Random Image	This shows a random image from an image folder any time the page is reloaded. This is a simple way to surprise the visitor with a page that looks different on every visit, even when there's no new content added.
Search	This shows the Site Search field.
Similar Tags	This doesn't display similar tags, but it does display links to articles that have one or more tags in common with the current article. This module can be useful to direct visitors to related content (for example, from Pasta Recipes to Vegetarian Pasta Recipes).
Smart Search Module	Use this module instead of the regular Search module together with the Smart Search component and the Smart Search content plugin. Smart Search is an enhanced search system for your site. See also the list of components in the next table.
Statistics	This shows a set of website statistics, such as the number of articles and visitor hits.
Syndication Feeds	This shows an RSS Feed link; users can click on this to subscribe to updates for the current page and read them in a special application (a news reader).
Weblinks	If you use Joomla's Weblinks component, you can show web links from a specific category through this module.
Who's Online	This shows how many users are logged in.
Wrapper	This allows you to show an external page (a page from another site) within your site.



You'll notice that every module listed in the **Module Manager** has a title and a type specified. The title is the (customizable) name of the module that you can show on the frontend of the site. The module type is the (fixed) name that Joomla uses internally. As you saw in the previous table, you can repeatedly use the same module type (for example, Menu), but you need to distinguish module copies with their title (for example, Top Menu, or User Menu).

Navigate to the **Components** menu to see which components are parts of the Joomla core. The following table gives a short overview:

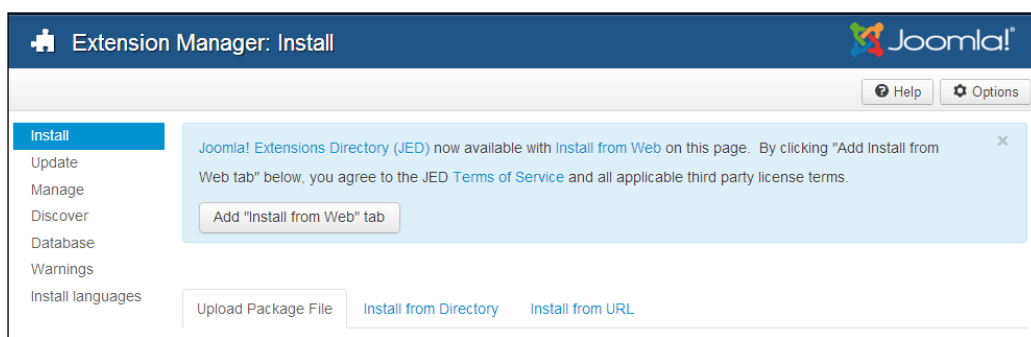
Component Name	Description
Banners	This is used to manage banner ads on your website. You can create new banners and manage banner clients.
Contacts	This is used to add and manage contact information and link contacts to registered users. You saw an example of its use earlier in this chapter.
Joomla Update	Using the Joomla Update component, you can check whether there are updates available for the Joomla core software. If there are, updating is just a matter of clicking on the Update button. You don't have to remember to check the Update component; there's a quick icon in the Control Panel that takes care of checking for updates and it will take you straight to this component if updates are available.
Messaging	This is used to send and receive private messages (to and from other administrators who have access to the site backend).
Newsfeeds	This is used to add newsfeeds from other sites to your Joomla site.
Post-installation messages	This displays messages in the administration area after Joomla has been installed or updated. The component allows you to review messages to see if they require action.
Redirect	When URLs in your website change, you can redirect users who still use the outdated URL to the new page by entering old and new URLs here using this component.
Search	This is used to access search statistics to see how many searches were done for certain keywords or keyword combinations.
Smart Search	The enhanced search functionality of Joomla is a combination of the Smart Search component, the Smart Search module, and the Smart Search plugin. You can use Smart Search instead of the default search by enabling the plugin, creating a search index using the component, and using the Smart Search module (or menu link). Smart Search is usually faster and it is more user friendly, as it gives users search suggestions and autocompletes search phrases. However, it also has some drawbacks; on very large sites, it can slow down the server and take up a lot of database space. For more information, see http://docs.joomla.org/Smart_Search_quickstart_guide .

Component Name	Description
Tags	You can create tags from any article or other content item, such as a contact or category. Using the Tags component, you can view a list of existing tags, edit their properties, and create new ones.
Weblinks	This is used to add and categorize links to other websites (to display on your site through the Web Link menu link type).

Enhancing your site using third-party extensions

When you run into the limitations of the Joomla core extensions, it's time to check out some more sophisticated and dedicated extensions. Any functionality you can think of is likely to exist in the form of a component, module, or plugin (or a combination). It takes just a few steps to add a new extension to your website. Basically, there are two methods:

- ◆ In many cases, the fastest method is using the Install from Web functionality that has recently been added to Joomla. For extensions that support this functionality, Install from Web simplifies the process of downloading and installing extensions. To use it, you first have to enable it. Navigate to **Extensions | Extension Manager** and click on the **Add "Install from Web" tab** button, as shown in the following screenshot:



This adds a tab that gives you access to extensions that you'd normally have to browse the Joomla extension website for. In many cases, the Install from Web functionality allows you to install extensions directly from their provider's website. If that's not the case, it will still save you some time by allowing you to jump straight to the developer's website in order to download the extension files.

- ◆ The second method for adding extensions takes just a few extra steps. First, you select the desired extension from JED at <http://extensions.joomla.org> and download this extension (as a ZIP file). After this, you install the extension by uploading the ZIP file through the Upload Package File functionality in the **Extension Manager**.

In both cases, after installing the extension, you adjust its settings to get it to work the way you want it to by navigating to the newly installed plugin, module, or component in the Joomla backend.



Although the Install from Web functionality offers you a fast way to install extensions, you'll probably also want to explore JED when you want to add new functionalities to your site. You can point your browser directly to <http://extensions.joomla.org>, but there's also a link available when you browse extensions through the **Install from Web** tab. Clicking on the **Directory Listing** button will also take you to the JED. Here, you have additional ways to assess extensions; you can read more detailed information, read reviews by other users, and search for related extensions.

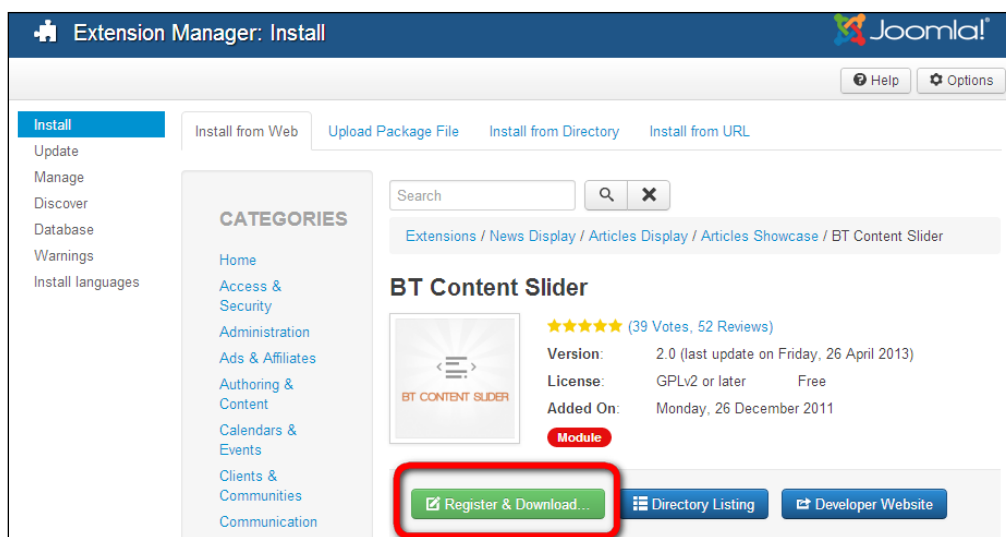
Trying out a more powerful Newsflash module

Earlier in this chapter, you explored a module that comes with Joomla: Newsflash. This is a great little tool to draw attention to a couple of selected articles. However, it's quite basic. There are many article teaser modules available that offer added functionality and are much more versatile. Let's try out an example to find out what the differences are between the built-in extensions and third-party alternatives.

Time for action – downloading and installing an extension

We'll install an alternative module to show teasers on the home page: the BT Content Slider module. This new module can only be downloaded after you create an account on the developer's site; however, the power and advanced features of this extension certainly make up for this extra effort. Let's find out how to get it.

1. Navigate to **Extensions | Extension Manager**. In the search field in the **Install from Web** tab, enter `BT Content Slider` and hit the search button. Click on the **BT Content Slider** search result to see the extension details, and then click on the button that says **Register & Download**. This is shown in the following screenshot:



2. You're taken to the developer's site. After clicking on the **Download** button there, click on **Register** to register for a free account and follow the required steps. After registering, log in to the site with your username and password. On the download page, download the ZIP file of the BT Content Slider module. Make sure that you select the most recent version for Joomla 3.x.
3. In the backend of your site, click on **Upload Package File**. You'll be taken to the **Install** screen of the **Extension Manager**.
4. Now, install the extension by clicking on **Browse** to select the extension's ZIP file on your computer. Click on **Upload & Install**. Once the installation is complete, you'll see the message **Installing module was successful**.

What just happened?

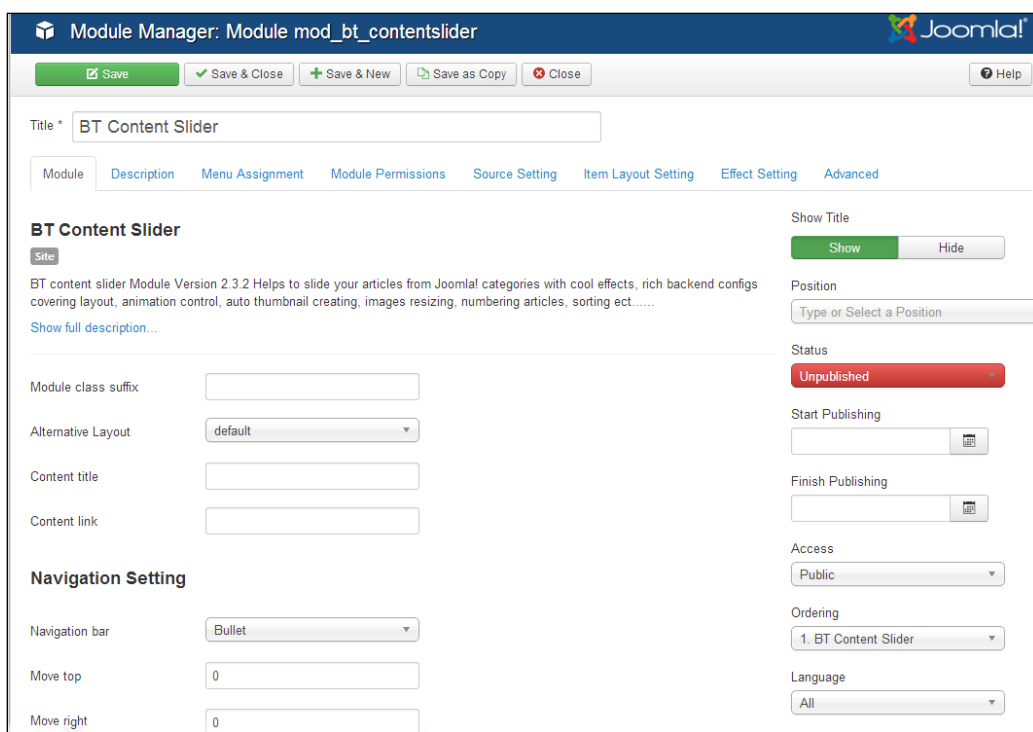
Congratulations, you have successfully installed your first extension! The new module can now be found by navigating to **Extensions | Module Manager** and you can add one or more instances of the module to your site. We'll see how that works in a minute.

Time for action – putting the extension to work

Let's get the BT Content Slider module to display article teaser texts on the home page. The steps are as follows:

1. If you've followed along and installed the Newsflash module earlier, you may want to hide that module now. To do so, navigate to **Extensions | Module Manager**. Locate the Newsflash module that is titled **Recent Lectures**.

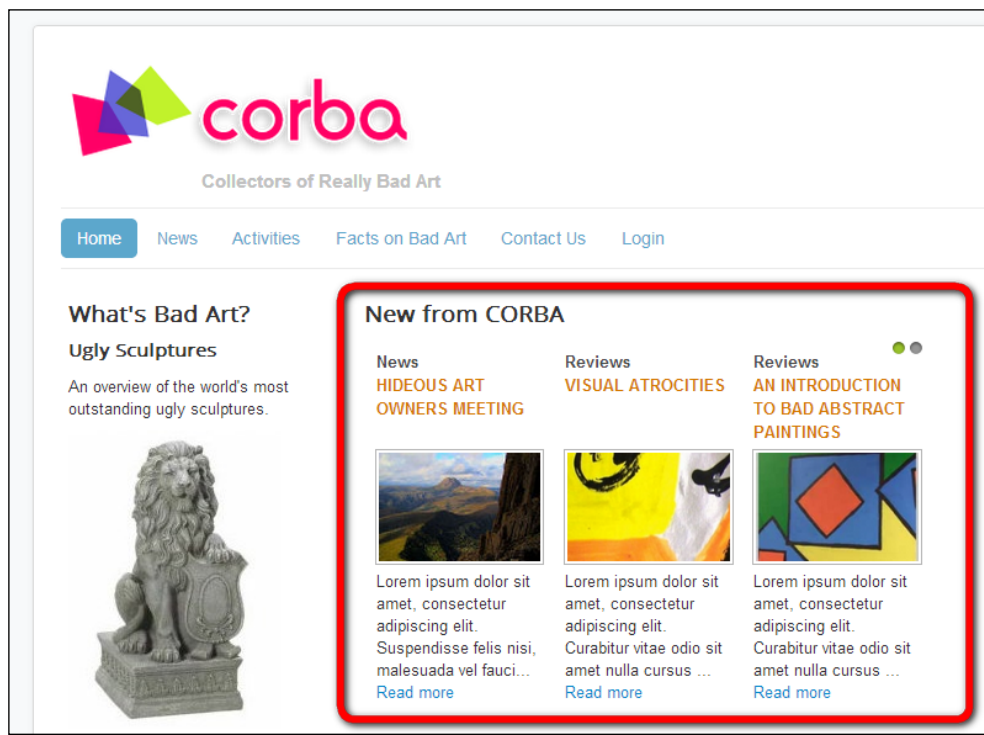
2. Click on the green check mark in the **Status** column to unpublish this Newsflash module, that is, hide it on the frontend.
3. In the **Module Manager** screen, locate the BT Content Slider module (**mod_bt_contentslider**) and click on its title to set the available options. These options are shown in the following screenshot:



This looks quite different compared to the default Newsflash module. The Content Slider settings are divided into eight tabbed panels! Here, dozens of settings are available to customize the extension. But don't despair, you'll only have to tweak a few settings to get this module to work.

4. Let's start with the **Module** tab. In the **Title** field, enter `New from CORBA`. We want to display this title in the frontend, so check that the **Show Title** option is set to **Show**.
5. Set the **Position** option to **position-3**. This will display the module's contents between the header and the main content. A quick way to enter the desired position is to just type it in the **Position** field; Joomla will automatically suggest available positions. Set the **Status** option to **Published**.

6. Click on the **Menu Assignment** tab and set the module to display on the home page only.
7. In the **Source Setting** panel, select the categories that should be the source of the module output. In this example, we've chosen to show content from the **News** and **Reviews** category. Of course, if you haven't added any dummy content to these categories, any other category containing articles will do just fine. It's best to use articles that have images in either the introduction text or in the **Images and Links** fields; the Content Slider module will display thumbnails of these images.
8. Click on **Save** and then click on **View Site** to see the output on the home page. It should look like the following screenshot:



This is what the module output looks like using the default settings. Three article introduction texts are displayed and they include a thumbnail of the article image. You'll notice that the contents of the module changes automatically; every few seconds, a new set of introduction texts slides into place. Try the navigation bullets at the top right-hand corner of the module block; these controls allow the visitor to manually browse the available article teasers.

9. Let's change this basic presentation. Navigate to the module settings again and in the **Item Layout Setting** section, set the **Show Intro Text**, the **Show Category Name**, and the **Show Read More** options to **No**. Set the **Thumbnail Width** and **Thumbnail Height** options to 100 pixels to make the thumbnails a little smaller. The results on the frontend are as shown in the following screenshot:



Instead of introduction texts, now only article images and titles are shown. The visitor can click on the image to read the article or navigate through the scrolling images by clicking on the little dots in the upper right corner.

What just happened?

We deployed the Content Slider module to show teaser texts from a selected category on the home page. The module allows you to create all sorts of eye-catching displays of articles. The module navigation includes a sliding effect inviting visitors to explore different articles, which is much more than a static Newsflash presentation does.

Have a go hero – explore module options

We've only scratched the surface of all the possibilities this module has to offer, so why don't you try out a few other options? You can switch off the automatic sliding display or change the **Navigation Effect** option; set this option to **Fade** to make the next set of available introduction texts fade in (instead of sliding into view). Changing the number of items, columns, and rows displayed will also greatly change the output. It's a good idea to set the **Featured Articles** option to **Hide**. After all this, featured articles are already set to show in the home page's main body. If you set the **Featured Articles** option to **Only Show Featured Articles**, the module will display only featured articles. This is useful if you want to show featured articles from particular categories through this module; you can then set the **Home** link to display featured articles from other categories.

The Content Slider is a good example of the difference between Joomla's built-in extensions and the extensions that are available through third-party developers. Generally, the core extensions are lightweight, simple, and do their job just fine. However, dedicated third-party extensions are bound to have more options and features. Moreover, you can usually choose between several excellent extensions to perform the same kind of functionality. Other great extensions to display article teasers, for example, are News Show Pro GK4 and Mini Frontpage.

Showing images in a lightbox gallery

On our website, we'd like to display art pictures, allowing the visitor to enjoy as much of the ugly art details as possible. This means that we definitely need an image gallery that uses a lightbox effect. This is a common approach on many sites; images are displayed as thumbnails, to be maximized only after the visitor has clicked on them. The full-size image opens in a lightbox. This technique allows you to display photos as little thumbnails, leaving it to the visitor to pick which pictures they want to have a closer look at. Here's how to achieve this effect in Joomla.

Time for action – creating an image gallery

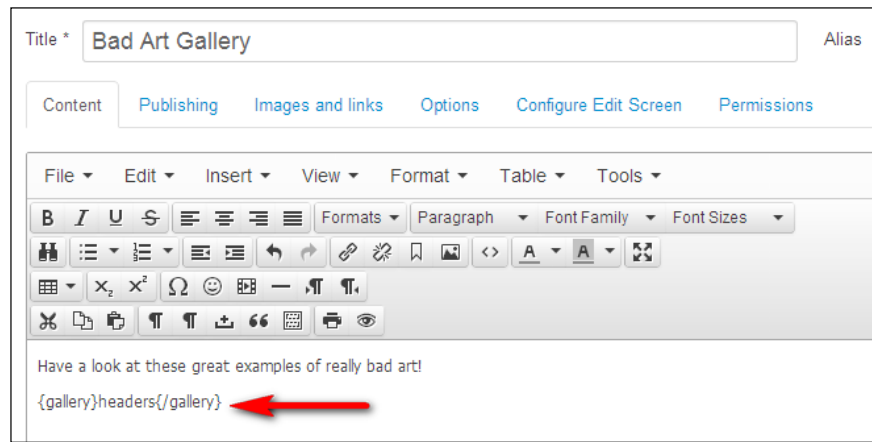
1. To show all images as a gallery, we'll use a plugin called Simple Image Gallery Extended. Navigate to **Extensions | Extension Manager** and click on the **Install from Web** tab. In the search box, enter `image gallery extended`. The Simple Image Gallery Extended plugin will turn up in the search results. Click on it and then click on the **Download** button.
2. You're taken to `http://joomla-extensions.kubik-rubik.de/sige-simple-image-gallery-extended`. Download the latest version; at the time of writing, this file is called `plg_sige_v3-2.zip`.
3. Navigate to **Extensions | Extension Manager** and click on **Upload Package File**. Select the plugin's ZIP file that you downloaded and click on **Upload & Install**. You'll see a message when the installation is finished: **Installing plugin was successful**.
4. As this is a plugin, we'll use the **Plugin Manager** to enable the extension. Navigate to **Extensions | Plugin Manager** and locate the **Content - Simple Image Gallery Extended** plugin. Click on the red and white cross in the **Status** column. It turns into a check mark, indicating the plugin is now active. This is shown in the following screenshot:



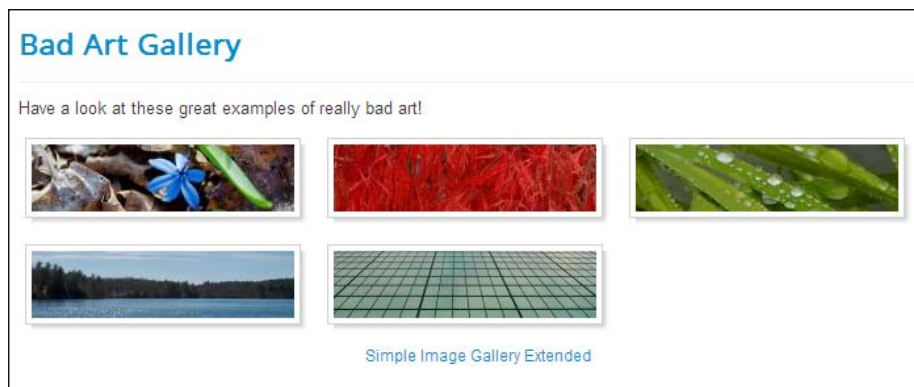
Status	Plugin Name	Type	Element	Access	ID
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Content - Simple Image Gallery Extended	content	sige	Public	10008

The plugin has no additional settings, so you're all set.

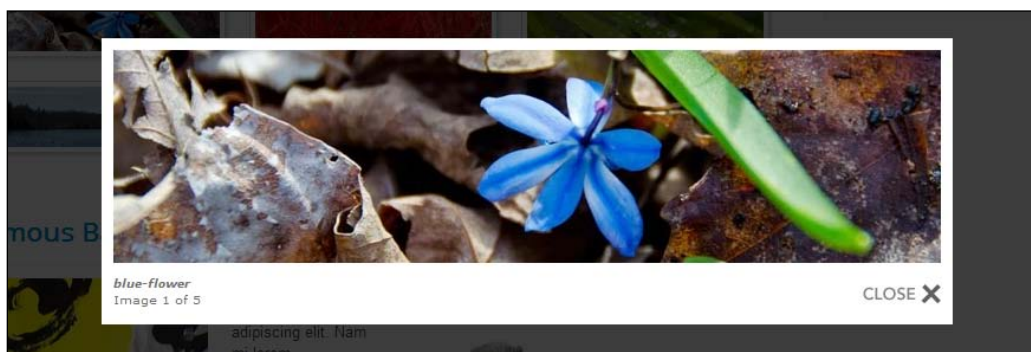
5. Now, you just have to create a new article (or edit an existing one) that will contain the gallery pictures. Navigate to **Content | Article Manager** and click on **New**. In this example, I've created an article titled **Bad Art Gallery** and assigned it to the **Facts** subcategory of the **Bad Arts** category.
6. In the article editor, enter the article text and add this code where you want the images to appear: `{gallery}headers{/gallery}`, as shown in the following screenshot. This will instruct the plugin to display all image files in the `images/headers` folder in the article. For testing purposes, this is okay. This is the folder that contains the header images that are installed with the Joomla sample data. Of course, you can also point the module to any other subfolder of the images folder if you like.



7. Click on **Save** and you're done. On the frontend, click on the link in the **Main Menu** to navigate to the new article. It will be displayed as shown in the following screenshot:



8. Click on any of the thumbnails to display it as a full-size image in a lightbox, as shown in the following screenshot:



You can remove the link to the website of the Simple Image Gallery Extended plugin's developer that's displayed below the gallery. In the plugin options, set the **Show Link to Author** option to **No**.

What just happened?

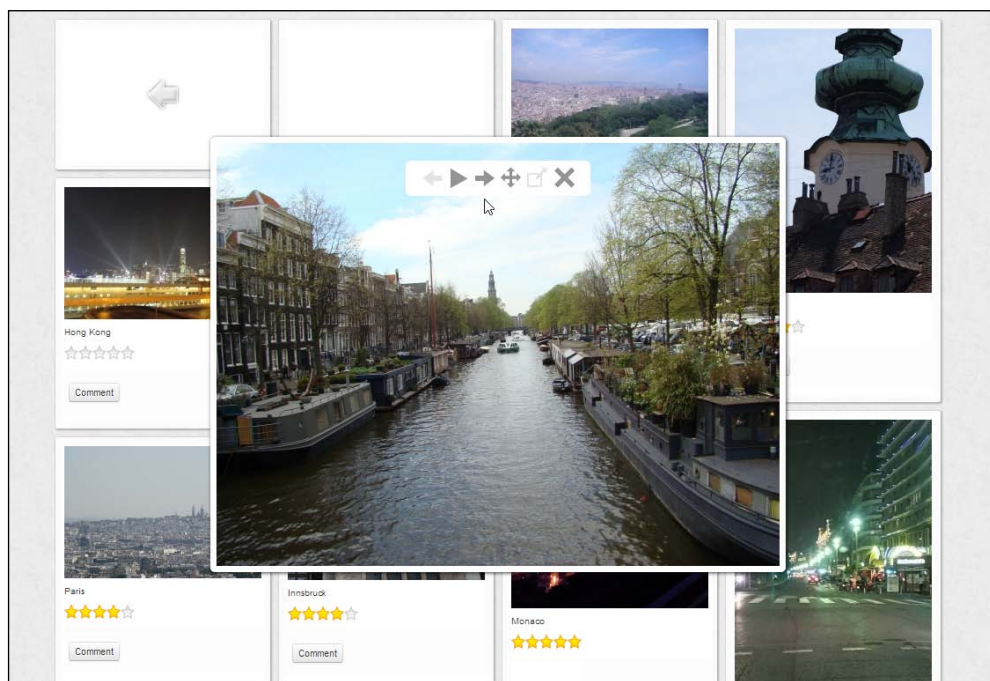
You've set up a small gallery that will impress your visitors. To do this, you only have to enter the name of the image folder in between the `{gallery}` and `{/gallery}` code in the article text. The base for this folder is the default Joomla image folder, called `images`. The code `{gallery}headers{/gallery}` indicates that the image files in the `images/headers` folder will be displayed as thumbnails in the article. Clicking on any of the thumbnails opens a lightbox with the full-size image, allowing the user to browse through the available set of images.

Have a go hero – add your own images

In this case, we've used the sample photos that are already present in the sample data of the default Joomla installation. To show your own photos, upload your photos to a new folder, for example `images/myimages`. In this case, the code needed in your article will be `{gallery}myimages{/gallery}`. If your image uploading skills are a bit rusty, please refer to *Chapter 6, Creating Killer Content – Adding and Editing Articles*, again (see the *Time for action – uploading images* section).

Do you need a more powerful photo gallery?

The image gallery plugin is great if you've only got one or two pages where you want to display pop-up images. If you're looking for a more sophisticated gallery tool that allows you to manage a large number of images and show them to your visitors in a structured way, you may consider using a gallery component. A popular example is Phoca (www.phoca.cz/phocagallery). Phoca can present large image collections using categories and subcategories. Visitors can browse the photos using lightbox pop-up screens, as shown in the following screenshot:



Using extensions to enhance your work space

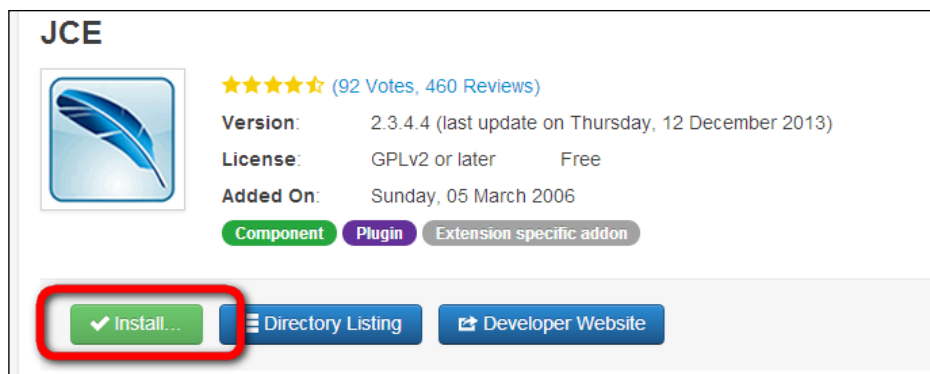
Extensions don't just extend the functionality of the frontend of your site. There are also extensions that enhance and extend the backend. In the next two examples, we'll replace the backend article editor with a more powerful one and add a plugin to easily create hyperlinks straight from an article.

Joomla's default text editor is alright for entering text, but some of the advanced capabilities (such as adding images or inserting hyperlinks) aren't really easy and intuitive. Let's install the **Joomla Content Editor (JCE)**, a very popular and freely available replacement for Joomla's default editor (which is called TinyMCE). For many Joomla users, JCE is the first thing that needs to be added after installing Joomla.

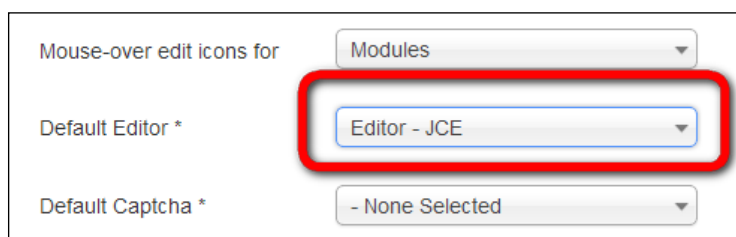
Time for action – replacing the default text editor of Joomla!

Let's install JCE and set it to be the default text editor.

1. Navigate to **Extensions | Extension Manager**. In the search field in the **Install from Web** page, enter `jce`. The JCE will be shown as the first search result. Click on the JCE details and then click on the **Install** button, as shown in the following screenshot:

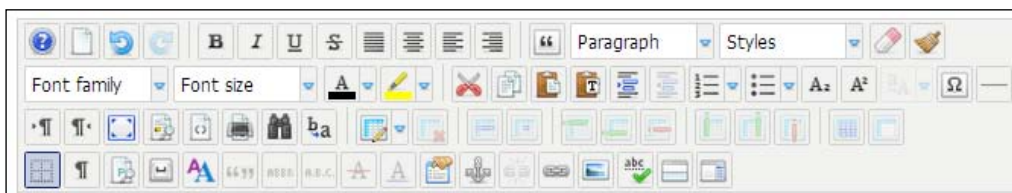


2. A great thing about JCE is that it fully automates the installation. Just hit the **Install** button in the next screen and you're good to go. The installation should take about half a minute. You'll see a message: **Installing component was successful**.
3. There is just one thing to take care of now. Tell Joomla that you want JCE to be the default editor. Navigate to **System | Global Configuration**. In the **Site Settings** panel, set the **Default Editor** option to **Editor - JCE** and save your changes. This is shown in the following screenshot:



What just happened?

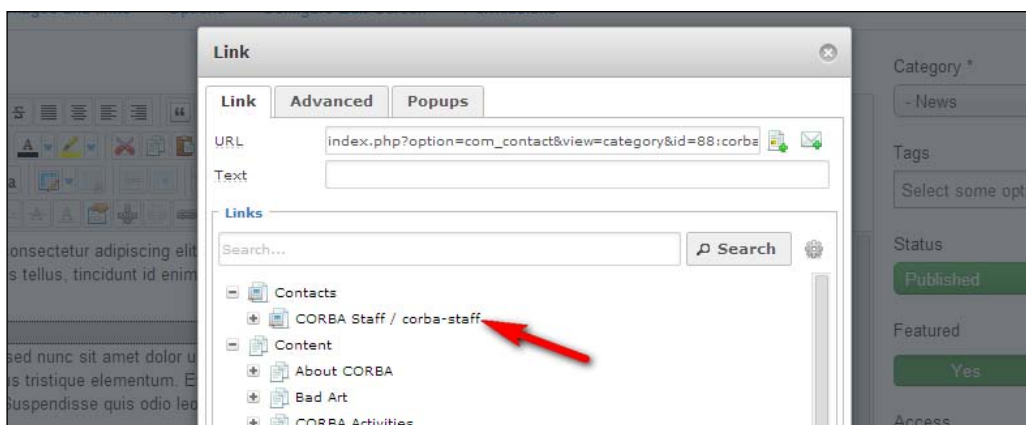
You've just installed JCE. From now on, whenever you create or edit an article, you'll see the JCE buttons. They are shown in the following screenshot:



At first glance, it may not be obvious what's improved here—but you can be sure using JCE will make a big difference in day-to-day article editing! Here are a couple of examples of the advantages of using JCE.

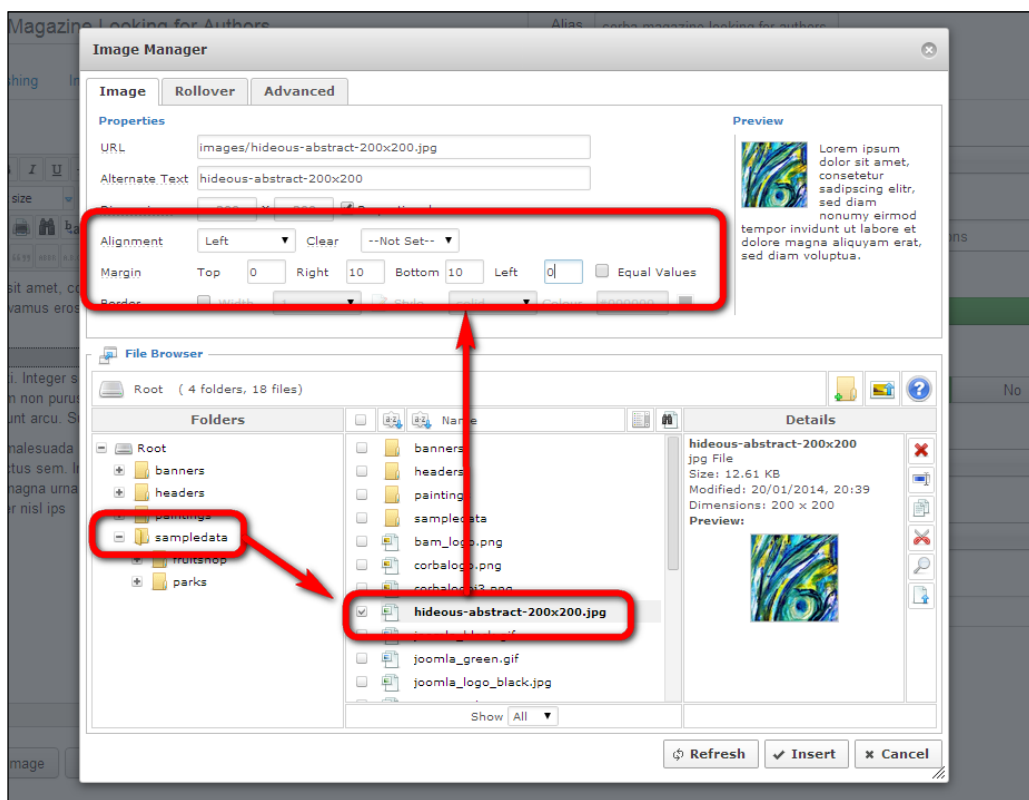
Creating text links using JCE

Using JCE, you can quickly create text links to other menu items. In *Chapter 8, Helping Your Visitors Find What They Want – Managing Menus* (the *Creating plain text links* section), you've seen that you can create links to articles using the **Article** button; but what if you want to link to another type of page, such as a contact form? In JCE, select one or more words in the article and click on the hyperlink icon in the bottom row to open the **Insert/Edit Link** window. JCE now lets you select any target page in a list, as shown in the following screenshot:



Inserting images with JCE

Another improvement you and your colleague content editors will appreciate is the easy way JCE handles inserting images. To add an image to an article, you no longer use the **Image** button below the **Editor** screen. Instead, click on the **Insert/Edit Image** button to open JCE's own **Image Manager** window, which is shown in the following screenshot:



To add an image, click on the desired folder, select the image file, check the preview, and adjust the image settings (such as alignment and margins) as required. For example, set the image **Alignment** setting to **Left** and set the **Right** and **Bottom** options of the **Margin** setting to **10** pixels to have the text flow nicely around the image. The small **Preview** window in the top-right corner displays the desired effect. When you're happy with the results, click on **Insert**.

You can also set image alignment and margin preferences with the JCE component configuration options (by navigating to **Plugin Parameters | Image Manager | Default Values**).

Using JCE to create a link to a PDF or Word file

JCE makes it easy to create a link to a PDF file or a Word file that site visitors can download. In any article, select the text that should become a hyperlink, click on the **Insert/Edit Link** button and click on the **Browse** button (next to the **URL** field). Now, you can browse to any PDF or Word file in the file browser. If the document is on your computer, click on the **Upload** button. Next, select the file, click on **Insert**, and your file download link is ready.

Customizing JCE

One final example of the power of JCE is if you want to, you can adjust JCE to your needs via **Components | JCE Editor | Control Panel**. If you're not happy with the default editor layout and the default order of icons and buttons, try the settings under **Editor Profiles | Default | Features & Layout**. To enhance the usability of JCE for other users, visit www.scribd.com/doc/82770047/Optimizing-JCE-editor-from-usability-point-of-view.

JCE's comprehensive system of editor profiles allow you to determine what different users (for example, editors or webmasters) may see and do in JCE. This will come in handy if you want to limit what different types of users can do, for example, if you don't want to allow editors to add images to an article.

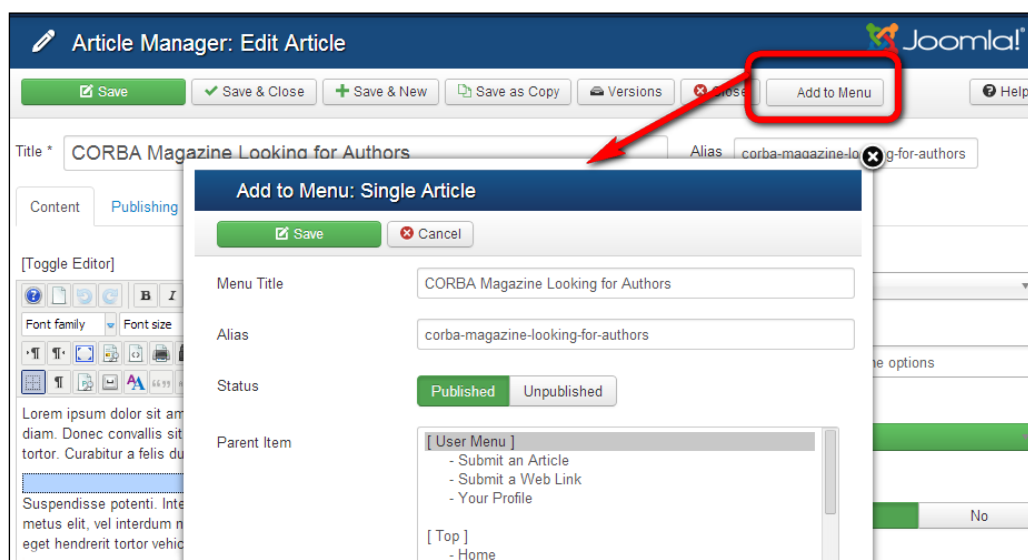
The developer also offers a set of great add-ons for JCE, which can be obtained for a reasonable fee.

A selection of must-have extensions

At the end of this section, you'll find some pointers on how to search for extensions effectively. To whet your appetite, I'll show you three great, freely available extensions that make your work as a site builder easier, enhance your workflow, and improve the capabilities of the site for the end user. You can find all extensions mentioned in the following sections by searching for the extension name in the search box in the **Install from Web** tab (or in JED).

Add to Menu – adding links directly from articles

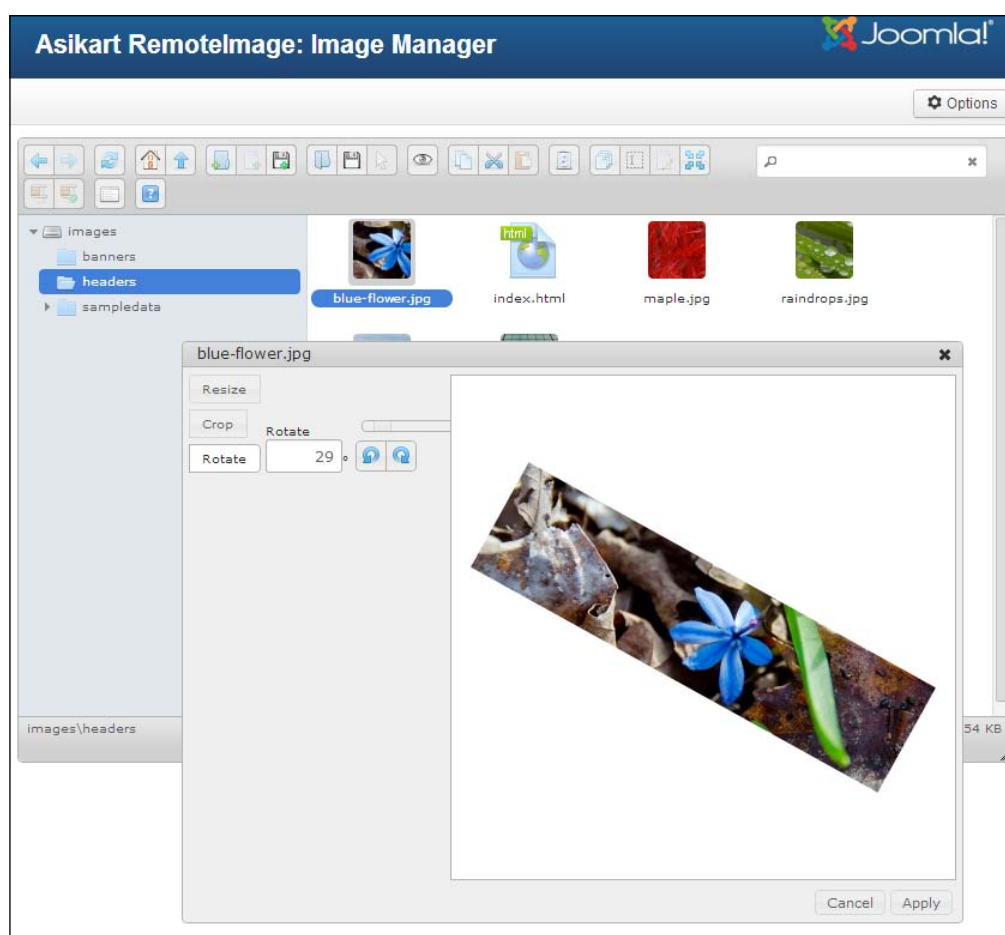
When creating or editing an article or category, you might find yourself searching for an easy way to create a menu link pointing to that article or category. Unfortunately, in Joomla!, you'll always have to create the article or category first and then add a link through the **Menu Manager** screen. This is where the Add to Menu extension comes in; it provides an extra button in the article editor, allowing you to add a menu item link to the page you are viewing. This is shown in the following screenshot:



For more details and a user guide, visit <http://www.nonumber.nl/extensions/addtomenu>.

Asikart RemoteImage – a much-enhanced image editor

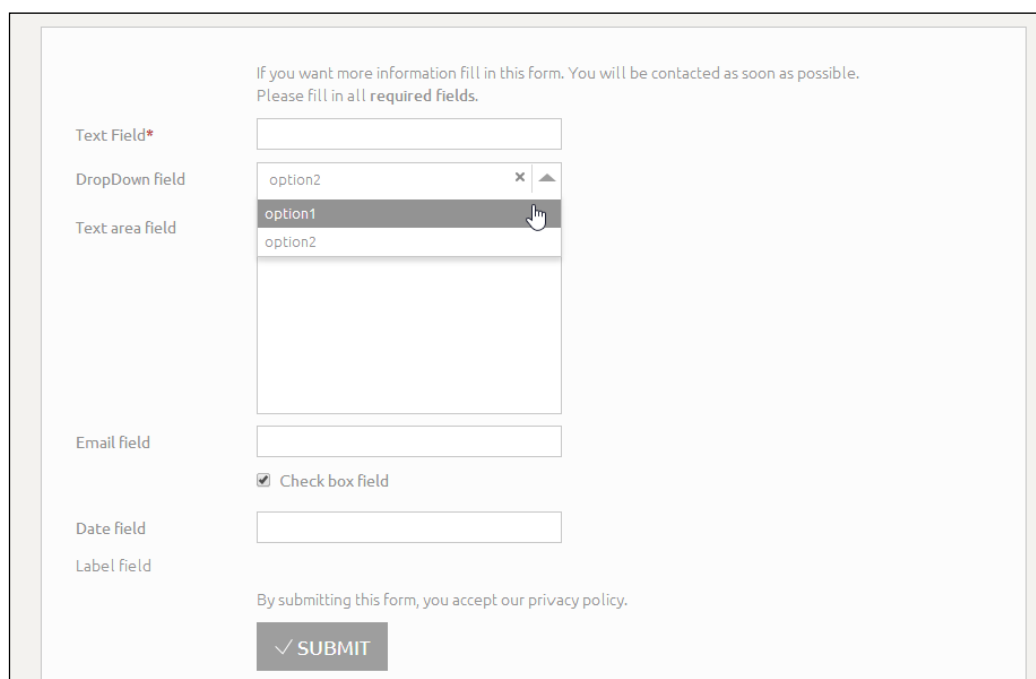
Adding images to articles is probably one of the most common tasks in day-to-day content management. However, Joomla's **Image Manager** capabilities are limited. Before you can upload an image, you have to make sure its dimensions fit the web page layout. The free Asikart RemoteImage extension fully replaces Joomla's Image Manager and allows you to easily upload, resize, crop, rotate, and even edit images—all directly from the Joomla backend. You can easily change image dimensions and even enhance or customize images. Here's what this image editor looks like:



Search for Asikart in the **Install from Web** tab's search box. For a full tutorial, visit <http://joomm.net/index.php/Joomla-tips-and-tutorials/managing-article-images-in-Joomla-3>.

B2J Contact – a feature-rich contact form

Joomla comes with a simple contact form that works in combination with the built-in Contacts component. However, often you'll need a more powerful form creation tool. B2J Contact by Bang2Joom is a free component that you can use to add all kinds of forms: contact forms, booking form, surveys, or reservations. What's great is that you can add different type of fields: text fields, drop-down lists, check boxes, dates, and more. This is shown in the following screenshot:



The screenshot displays a contact form with the following elements:

- Introductory text: "If you want more information fill in this form. You will be contacted as soon as possible. Please fill in all required fields."
- Text Field*: A single-line text input field.
- DropDown field: A dropdown menu with "option2" selected and "option1" highlighted by a mouse cursor.
- Text area field: A multi-line text input area.
- Email field: A single-line text input field.
- Check box field: A checked checkbox labeled "Check box field".
- Date field: A single-line text input field.
- Label field: A single-line text input field.
- Footer text: "By submitting this form, you accept our privacy policy."
- Submit button: A button labeled "SUBMIT" with a checkmark icon.

For more information, see the documentation at <http://www.bang2joom.com/documentations/b2j-contact>.

Finding the right extensions for your site

The examples in this chapter give you an impression of the power that comes to your site with the right selection of extensions. However, there are countless other extensions available—from plugins to adding YouTube videos, adding articles, adding components, and creating a full-blown e-commerce site.

A good way to find must-have extensions is to do a web search for the best Joomla extensions or must-have Joomla extensions. Every Joomla user probably has their own particular favorite extension, but there sure are some great ones around that almost everybody seems to deploy.

Furthermore, it's a good idea to browse the JED now and then to explore new or recently updated extensions. Keep an eye on the **New and Noteworthy** section, and make sure to check out the **Editor's Picks** and the **Most Popular** extensions to find some true gems. It's also a good idea to read the comments of other users. They will often give you a good indication of whether an extension is mature enough and whether the support by the developer is up to standards.

If you're looking for specific extensions, use the **ADVANCED SEARCH** feature on <http://extensions.joomla.org/extensions/advanced-search>. Here, you can search according to specific criteria: the type of extension you're looking for, whether it is a free or a commercial extension, and the Joomla version it is compatible with.



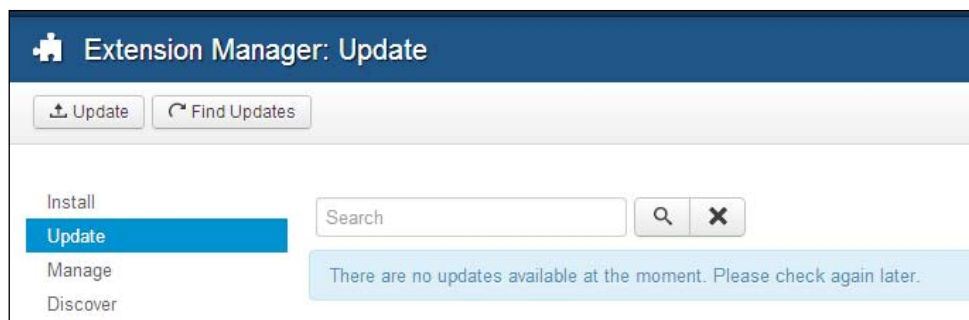
Although theoretically you can add dozens of extensions to your website, it's best to only use the ones you really need. After all, every extension adds a bit of complexity to the system. Users maintaining the site will have to learn to use them, and the site administrator will have to check regularly if the installed extensions are up to date. Moreover, adding too many extensions can slow down the website and there's a risk that a specific combination of extensions could break the site. If you want to try out new extensions, a good approach is to use a test site for this. Install Joomla on your own computer on a web server for testing purposes. Use this site to test whether the extensions you've selected offer the functionality you need and whether they work well. When you're content with the extensions installed, you can also use them on your live site.

Updating extensions

Extension developers regularly release updates to solve bugs or security problems. If you have a large number of extensions, it is difficult to monitor for all those extensions when updates become available. Fortunately, Joomla features automatic update functionality. If extensions support this feature, you can update them very easily. In the **Control Panel**, there's a **Maintenance** section where notifications are displayed when updates for either Joomla or installed extensions are available. Another way to find an update is by navigating to the **Extension Manager** window and clicking on the **Update** link in the menu on the left-hand side, as shown in the following screenshot. In the **Update** screen, click on **Find Updates**. If updates are available, select them and install them using the **Update** button.



Checking for updates is essential from a security point of view. Hackers often utilize security holes in extensions to get access to sites. As not all extensions can be updated through the Joomla backend, it's also important to regularly check the websites of the extensions you're using.



For security reasons, it's best to completely remove extensions that you don't use any more. This way, you don't risk the code of outdated and possibly insecure extensions being exploited by hackers. To delete an extension, click on the **Manage** tab in the **Extension Manager** screen. Select the extension you want to remove and click on the **Trash** button.

Managing the site language

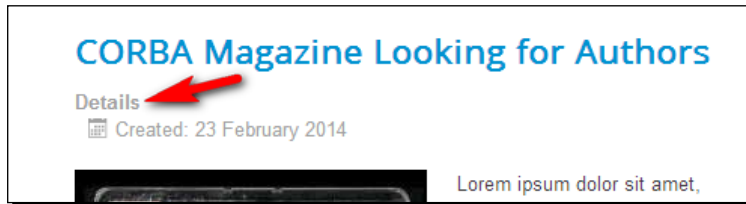
In the **Extensions** menu, you'll also find the **Language Manager**. This allows you to extend the language capabilities of your Joomla-powered site; you can add new languages for both the administrative interface and the frontend of the site. To install a new language pack, click on **Install Languages** to see an overview of all available languages. Adding a language pack is just a matter of selecting it and clicking on the **Install** button. Once it's installed, it's available in the **Language Manager** screen and you can set the default language for both the frontend and the backend of your website.

Changing default text strings

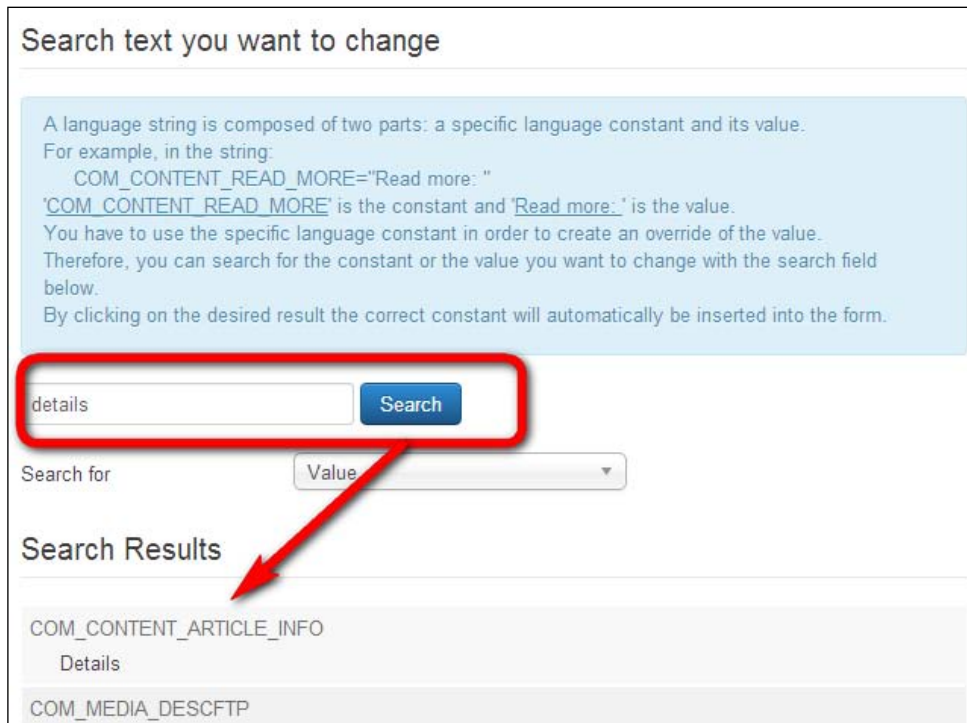
Another great feature of the **Language Manager** is that it enables you to change the default texts that a Joomla site contains—just think of words and sentences such as **Read more**, **More articles**, and **Details**. In most cases, you won't have to bother changing them. However, sometimes the default texts don't fit your website. It's simple to remove these texts or replace them with your own words. This is done through language overrides.

Time for action – removing or replacing default texts

Let's say we want to remove the word **Details** that's displayed with every article. After all, it takes up valuable space on the screen and doesn't really convey useful information.



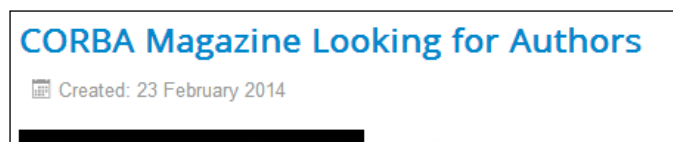
1. In the Joomla backend, navigate to **Extensions | Language Manager** and in the menu, click on **Overrides**. Then, click on **New**. In the **Search text you want to change** section, enter the word or words you're looking for (in this case, `details`) and click on **Search**. Joomla will display all matches. In this case, the first hit is the one we're looking for as shown in the following screenshot:

A screenshot of the Joomla Language Manager search interface. The title is "Search text you want to change". Below the title is a light blue informational box with text explaining how to use language strings. Below the box is a search form with a text input field containing "details" and a blue "Search" button. Below the search form is a "Search for" label and a dropdown menu with "Value" selected. Below the dropdown is the "Search Results" section, which contains a table with two rows. The first row has the constant "COM_CONTENT_ARTICLE_INFO" and the value "Details". The second row has the constant "COM_MEDIA_DESCFTP" and an empty value field. A red arrow points from the "Search" button to the "Details" value in the search results table.

- Click on the search result (in this case, **COM_CONTENT_ARTICLE_INFO Details**). It's automatically displayed in the **Create a New Override** section on the left-hand side of the screen. In the **Text** box, enter the text you want to replace the current text with. In this case, we want to display no text at all, so keep the text box empty.

The screenshot shows the Joomla! administration interface for creating a new override. The title is "Create a New Override". Below the title, there are two input fields. The first is labeled "Language Constant *" and contains the text "COM_CONTENT_ARTICLE_INFO". The second is labeled "Text" and is currently empty, with a vertical cursor at the beginning.

- Click on **Save & Close**. You're done! Check the frontend to see that the **Details** text doesn't show up any more:



What just happened?

By creating a language override, you can easily delete or change the default screen text in Joomla!. In this case, you've deleted the **Details** heading that Joomla! displays above the article details by emptying the text field.

Have a go hero – add default pieces of text that suit your needs

In the preceding example, you've in fact deleted some text; it's equally easy to replace that text by another one. As an example, change the **Category** heading that's displayed if you choose to display the category with the article details. Create a new override just like you did in this section, enter the search string `Category`, and hit **Search**. Click on the first search result in the list. Now, change the text `Category: %S to In: %s`. Save your override and you're done. In the frontend, you can see the effect of the `%S` code you left unchanged; this is a variable that Joomla! replaces with the category name.

Keep in mind that language overrides affect the whole site; if you change a generic word such as `Article`, this will be replaced on all pages. If you're not satisfied with the results of a language override, you can always delete it to revert to the default setup.



It's really neat that language overrides can also be used to change the texts that are used in many extensions. This way, when an extension hasn't been translated (completely), you can easily replace the text in the original language.

Using the Language Manager to create multilingual sites

Using the **Language Manager** and a set of built-in extensions, Joomla makes it relatively easy to create a multilingual website. To find out more, please refer to *Appendix B, Creating a Multilingual Site*.

Pop quiz – test your knowledge of Joomla! extensions

Q1. What's the difference between components and other extensions?

1. Components are more powerful and more complex.
2. Components are only available in the Joomla backend.
3. Components are shown in different module positions.

Q2. What's the use of the Newsflash module?

1. It allows visitors to subscribe to newsfeeds.
2. It displays only articles from the News category.
3. It shows one or more article introduction texts in a module position.

Q3. What's the use of installing modules?

1. Modules can make it easier to enter new content.
2. Modules can contain any kind of advanced functionality.
3. Modules can contain lists of hyperlinks.

Summary

In this chapter, we've covered the magic of Joomla extensions. You've learned that there are three types of extensions: components (the big ones), modules (the medium ones), and plugins (the small ones). The Joomla core already contains several components, modules, and plugins.

If you need any functionality that's not built into the basic Joomla core, you'll very likely find it in the JED. To add a third-party extension to your website, you download it from the Web and install it. Some extensions can even be installed directly from the Joomla administrative interface. After the installation, you can adjust it in the backend and activate it (enable it, in Joomla terms).

Language files allow you to set the default language for the frontend and the backend of the site. In the frontend, this will translate all preset texts (such as **Read more** and **Written by**) to a language of your choice. Using language overrides, you can replace default pieces of text with your own texts.

Now that you've explored how extensions work and added a few to your site, it's time to focus on one special extension type: templates! In earlier chapters, you've already made some changes to the default template. However, Joomla's template capabilities are much more powerful. In the next chapter, you'll learn how to find and install templates and apply a brand new design to your site.

11

Creating an Attractive Design – Working with Templates

You probably don't want to make websites that all look like typical Joomla sites. That's where templates come to the rescue, because Joomla allows you to install a different template in a few minutes, giving your site a fresh look and feel is really a breeze. There are hundreds of templates available on the Web, making it possible to apply any style imaginable to your site. Moreover, you can easily customize templates to meet your needs. If you're a Web building wizard yourself, you can create your own template from scratch.

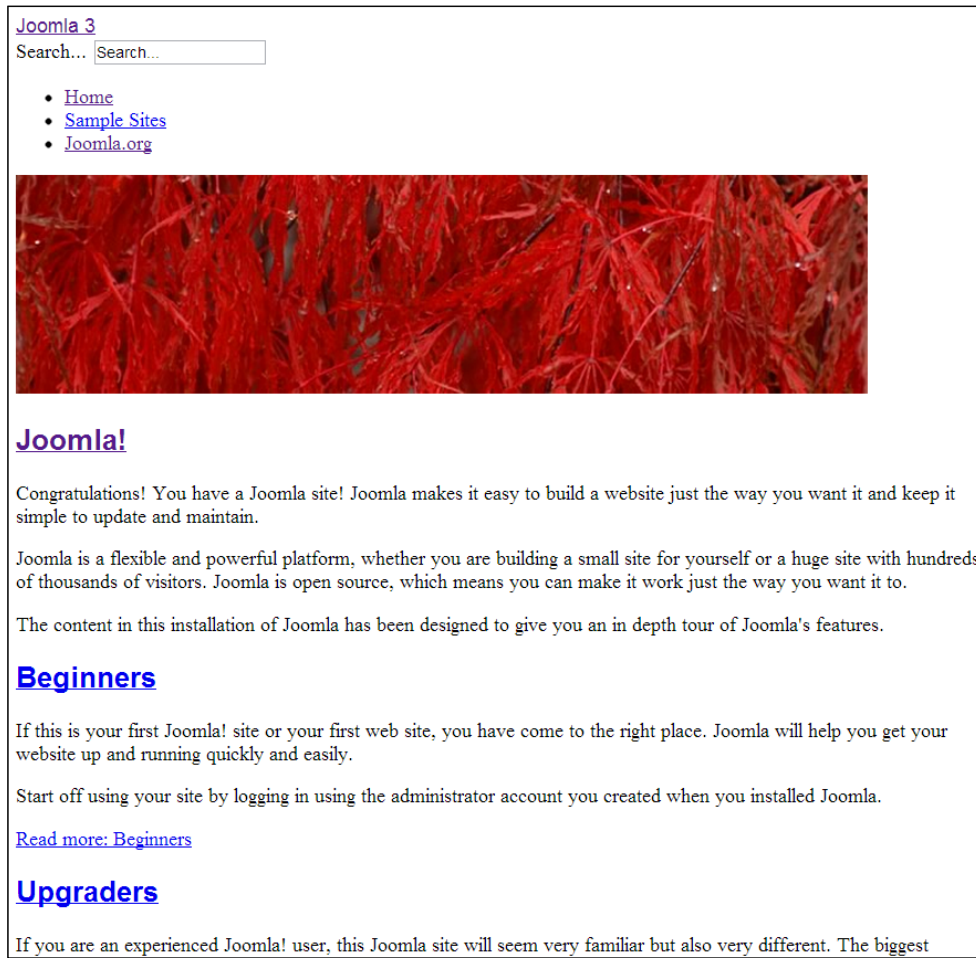
In this chapter, we'll explore the power of templates further. You'll learn about the following topics:

- ◆ Changing the settings of the default template
- ◆ Applying different templates to different pages
- ◆ Downloading and installing third-party templates
- ◆ Customizing templates—tweaking CSS and HTML

What do templates do?

A Joomla template is a set of files that contain the HTML and **Cascading Style Sheets (CSS)** code that defines what your website will look like. HTML is the code used to build web pages and CSS is the code used to style them. You could say that HTML is the bricks and mortar of your site, whereas CSS provides the wallpaper and paint. Let's see how this works.

Without any CSS styles applied, your web browser would display a typical Joomla site as shown in the following screenshot. Although the screenshot is too small for you to be able to discern the screen text, you'll notice that just plain text and images are shown here with minimal styling.



The same content is shown with CSS styles applied in the following screenshot. Through CSS codes, the overall page layout and design is added.

Joomla 3

Search...

Home

Sample Sites

Joomla.org



Joomla!

Congratulations! You have a Joomla site! Joomla makes it easy to build a website just the way you want it and keep it simple to update and maintain.

Joomla is a flexible and powerful platform, whether you are building a small site for yourself or a huge site with hundreds of thousands of visitors. Joomla is open source, which means you can make it work just the way you want it to.

The content in this installation of Joomla has been designed to give you an in depth tour of Joomla's features.

Beginners

If this is your first Joomla! site or your first web site, you have come to the right place. Joomla will help you get your website up and running quickly and easily.

Start off using your site by logging in using the administrator account you created when you installed Joomla.

➤ Read more:
Beginners

Upgraders

If you are an experienced Joomla! user, this Joomla site will seem very familiar but also very different. The biggest change is the new administrator interface and the adoption of responsive design. Hundreds of other improvements have been made.

Professionals

Joomla! 3 continues development of the Joomla Platform and CMS as a powerful and flexible way to bring your vision of the web to reality. With the new administrator interface and adoption of Twitter Bootstrap, the ability to control its look and the management of extensions is now complete.

➤ Read more:
Professionals

About Joomla!

- Getting Started Using Joomla!
- The Joomla! Project
- The Joomla! Community

This Site

- Home
- Site Map
- Login
- Sample Sites
- Site Administrator
- Example Pages

Login Form

?

?

Remember Me

[Create an account >](#)

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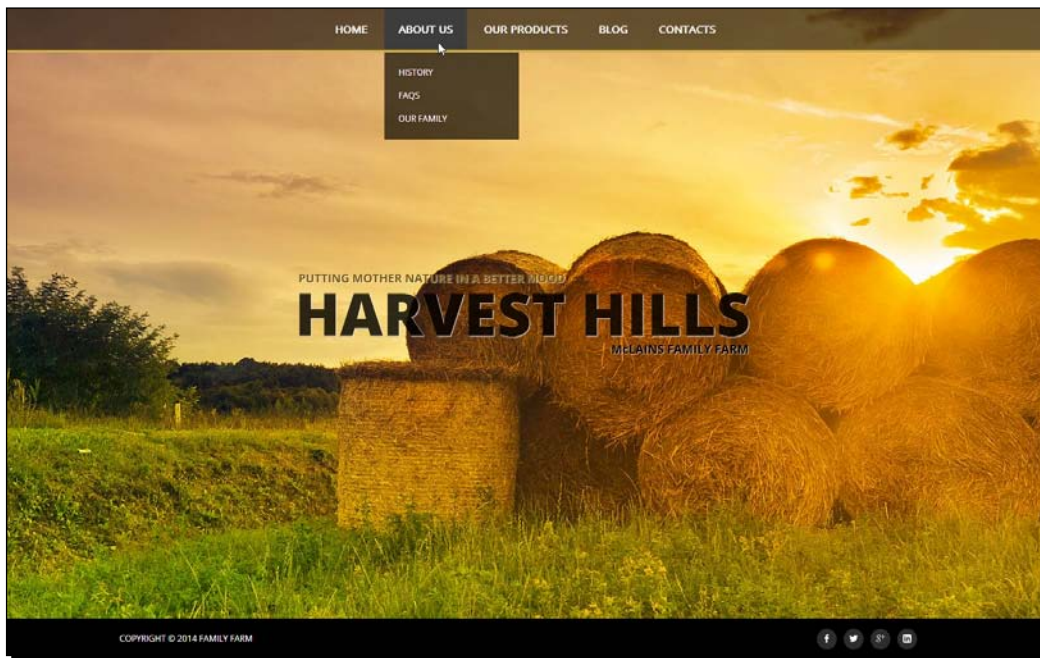
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Actually, a template contains more than pure HTML and CSS codes. After all, Joomla has to know where the dynamic content should be placed within the HTML page structure. That's why a template also contains some instructions written in the PHP language that instruct Joomla where to put the main content, menus, and other modules.

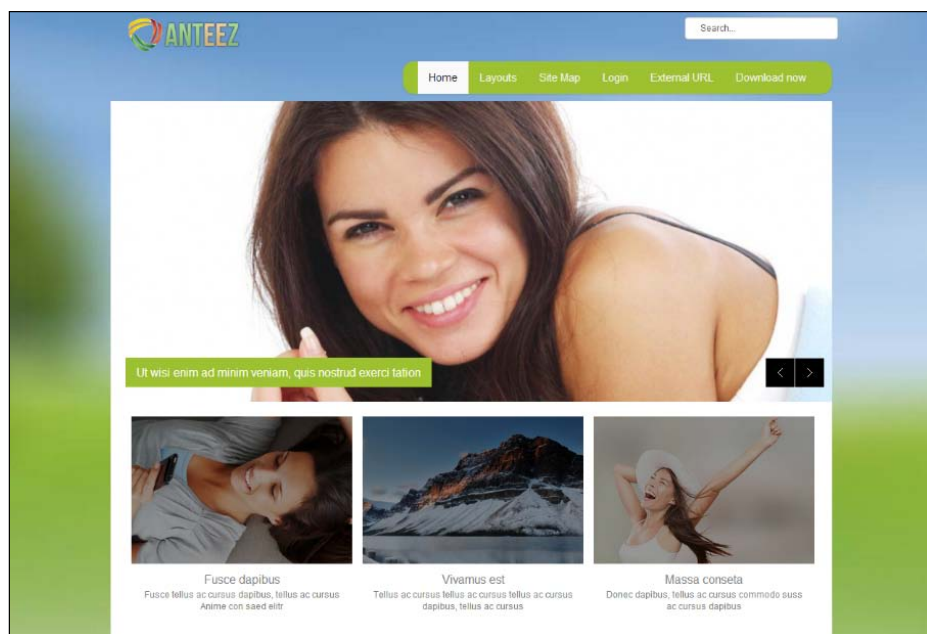
All in all, templates determine just about any part of the design—from the number of columns to the position of elements, the colors, the graphics, or the choice of fonts.

Why are templates so much fun?

Artsy, basic, flashy, grungy, playful, corporate, or clean—whatever your taste in templates may be, you're very likely to find a template that meets your needs. The following screenshots are a tiny selection of the free Joomla templates on offer on the Web. These are showcasing just a few of the great designs possible. The 2066 template is shown in the following screenshot:



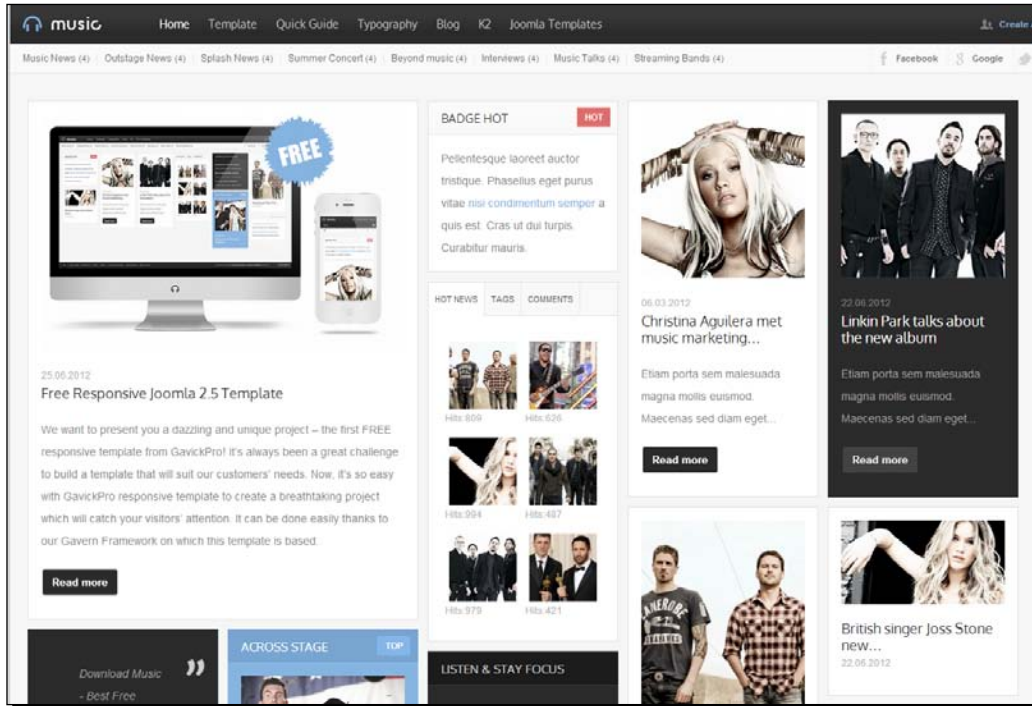
The Ol anteez template is shown in the following screenshot:



The BaseLine template is shown in the following screenshot:



The Music template is shown in the following screenshot:



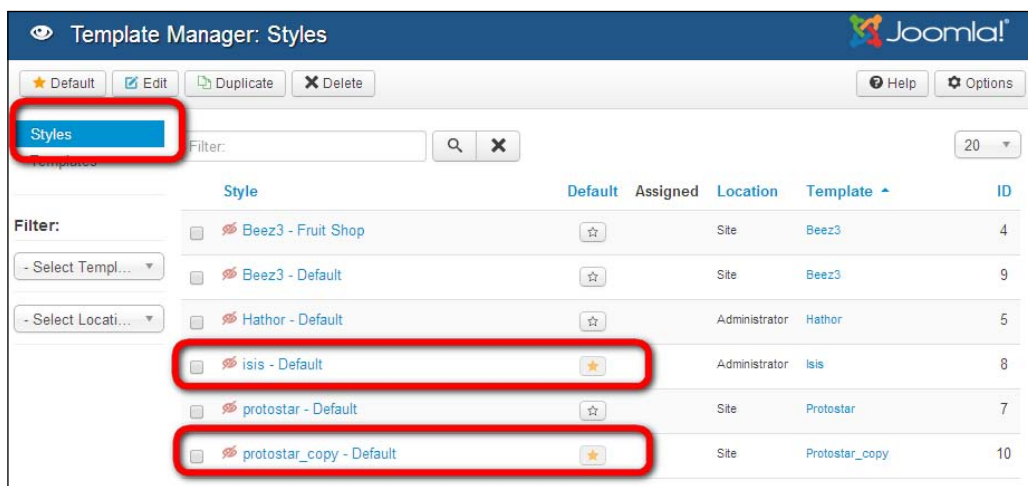
The details of these examples can be found at <http://astemplates.com> (2066 template), www.olwebdesign.com/ (Ol anteez), <http://joomlatemplates.youjoomla.info/> (BaseLine), and www.gavick.com (Music).

It isn't hard to find Joomla 3.x (often free) templates on the Web. However, you should be picky; it's not just about good looks. A template should be easy to customize and it shouldn't slow down your site, which basically means that developers should use good coding practices. At the end of this chapter, you'll learn more about where to find good templates and how to judge a template for more than just its visible quality.

To start with, we'll have a look at the templates that come with Joomla. First, you'll activate one of the templates that ship with Joomla. After that, you'll download and customize a new one from the Web.

Changing the settings of the current template

Your starting point to manage and customize the current templates is the **Template Manager** screen (which can be found by navigating to **Extensions | Template Manager**). The **Template Manager** screen consists of two main screens that can be accessed through the menu on the left-hand side: **Styles** and **Templates**. In the **Template Manager: Styles** screen shown in the following screenshot, you can select which of the available templates you want to use. The current default frontend template is called Protostar. The default template for the backend of the site is called Isis. If you've followed along with the exercises in *Chapter 4, Web Building Basics – Creating a Site in an Hour*, your current default template should be called **protostar_copy - Default**. You've created this copy to avoid the risk of your customized template being overwritten by a new version of the default Protostar template when you update Joomla.



The function of template styles

Why is the first screen that you see in the Template Manager called **Template Manager: Styles**? You might expect that this screen enables you to customize CSS styles and style sheets that control the template design. However, this is not the case. A template style is a variation that you can create based on an existing template. Joomla allows you to save a template, including all customizations you've made using the built-in options, as a template style. You can then assign this template style to one or more menu items. In other words, styles allow you to have individually styled pages or sets of pages, all based upon the same basic template.

One example of this is that you can set the home page to use a green color scheme (the first template style) and the other pages a blue color scheme (the second template style). We'll have a look at working with template styles in the section *Applying template styles to individual pages*.

The two meanings of the word "default"

In the **Template Manager: Styles** screen, the word default is used with two different meanings. In the top button bar, the **Default** button works as you would expect; it allows you to make the selected template the default one for either the frontend or the backend. When you do this, an orange star appears in the **Default** column.



However, you'll also notice that there are templates with the word Default in their names, such as **protostar - Default** and **Beez3 - Default**. In this case, default means that the template is using its normal settings (in other words, its default, unchanged template style). This is to distinguish default templates from templates with a specific style applied, such as **Beez3 – Fruit Shop**. The latter template is based upon the Beez3 template, but it's saved separately as a specific template style for the example Fruit Shop site.

Customizing the current template using the built-in options

Templates can include all sorts of options, allowing the site administrator to change the template width, colors, column layout, and much more without touching a single line of the HTML or CSS code. The number of options can vary—basic templates offer just a few settings, but more elaborate templates sometimes offer you dozens of settings. Let's find out what the main options of the current template (the default style of the Protostar template) are, and how they affect the look and feel of the template.

Time for action – changing the site color and layout options

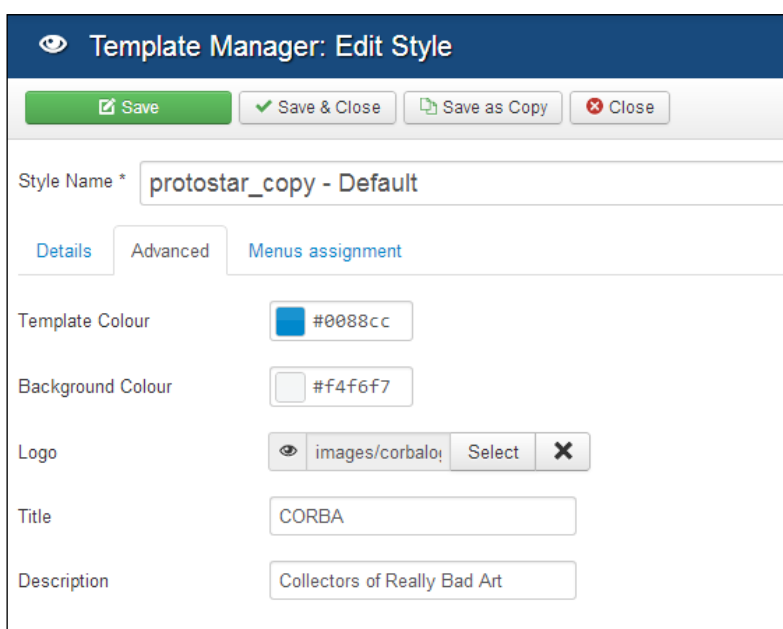
We'll first have a look at some settings that affect the overall color scheme and the layout.

1. Navigate to **Extensions | Template Manager**. The **Template Manager: Styles** screen is displayed.

2. In the list of available templates, click on **protostar_copy - Default** as shown in the following screenshot:

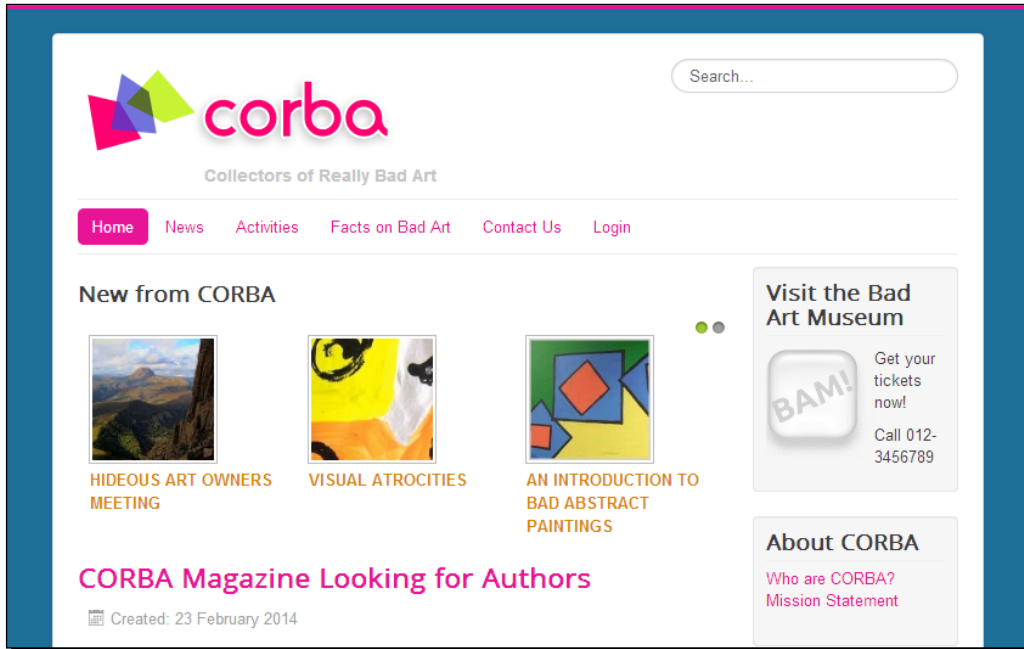


3. You're taken to the **Template Manager: Edit Style** screen. Click on the **Advanced** tab to reveal the available template settings, as shown in the following screenshot:



4. We'll have a look at the effects of these customization options. The **Template Colour** option allows some quite powerful changes to the look and feel of the site. Click on **Template Colour** to select the color for accents on the website: the colored line at the top of the page and the color of menu links and headings. A color palette appears that allows you to pick a color of your choice (in this example, I picked the red color). Click on **Select** inside the palette pop up to confirm your choice.
5. Do the same for the **Background Colour** option. This is the color for the background of the page (which, by default, is light gray). In this example, I selected a blue hue.

- Click on **Save** and then click on **View Site** to see the following output:



As you can see in the previous screenshot, the **Template Colour** setting changes the colors of headings, links, and more.

- Finally, let's find out what the effects of the Google Font Name setting are. By default, Protostar uses the Open Sans font for all headings. Open Sans is a free font, available in the Google Fonts collection. This is a freely available collection of hundreds of open source fonts that are optimized for the Web. You can choose from hundreds of fonts that you can find on <http://www.google.com/fonts>. Enter the font name of your choice in the Joomla backend (for example, Bitter). Save your changes to see the output on the frontend. All headings are now in the Bitter font, as shown in the following screenshot:



What just happened?

Using the built-in template options, you've changed the colors and fonts of the site. Every template has its own specific set of options. In this case, the template developer has added just a few basic settings that allow you to modify the site's logo and colors. Apart from setting template options, you can also customize the template by changing the CSS code. We'll see an example of this later in this chapter.

Changing the site's logo



One of the first things that people new to Joomla do is change the logo to put their mark on the site they've just started to build. In *Chapter 4, Web Building Basics – Creating a Site in an Hour*, you've already seen how you can add your own logo using the **Options** panel of the Protostar template. If you don't have a logo image, the Protostar template also allows you to use a text logo instead. In the **Advanced Options** tab, locate the **Logo** option and click on the clear button (a cross icon). The template will now display the contents of the **Title** field instead of the logo image.

Switching to a different template

Until now, we've worked with Protostar, the default template in Joomla. However, there are more templates available in the Joomla package. To see an overview, navigate to **Extensions | Template Manager** and click on the **Templates** link in the menu on the left-hand side to go to the **Templates Manager: Templates** screen. This is shown in the following screenshot:

The screenshot shows the Joomla! Template Manager interface. The title bar reads "Template Manager: Templates" and includes the Joomla! logo, a Help icon, and an Options icon. Below the title bar, there is a search bar labeled "Search in template name or folder n" with search and clear buttons. On the left, there are tabs for "Styles" and "Templates", and a "Filter:" section with a dropdown menu labeled "- Select Locat...". The main content area displays a table of templates with columns for Template, Location, Version, Date, and Author.

Template	Location	Version	Date	Author
Beez3 Details and Files No preview available. You can enable preview in the options.	Site	3.1.0	25 November 2009	Angie Radtke a.radtke@derauftritt.de http://www.der-auftritt.de
Hathor Details and Files No preview available for	Administrator	3.0.0	May 2010	Andrea Tarr hathor@tarconsulting.com

Here, all available templates are displayed with thumbnail images, giving you a quick impression of the page design. In the **Location** column, you can see if it's a frontend or a backend template. Joomla comes with two frontend templates (**Location** is **Site**) and two templates that can be used in the backend (**Location** is **Administrator**). To get a better impression of what any of the installed templates look like, click on the template thumbnail in the **Template Manager: Templates** screen to see an enlarged image.

The templates that come with Joomla!

A main change since Joomla 3 is the use of Bootstrap, a framework of layout elements that's commonly used in web development. Both the frontend template (Protostar) and the backend template (Isis) are based on Bootstrap, which is created by the developers of Twitter (visit <http://getbootstrap.com/>). Bootstrap makes it easier to quickly define the look and feel of websites. It contains ready-made CSS code for layouts, buttons, forms, icons, table styles, and countless other design elements. The idea behind this is that web developers don't have to start from scratch; Bootstrap offers them a reliable, standard-based code library. Instead of developing such a library for Joomla itself, the Joomla developers have chosen to rely on the popular Bootstrap framework as a base for both the frontend and the backend of Joomla. This is great as it offers Joomla template developers a fixed set of design elements that they can easily tap into.

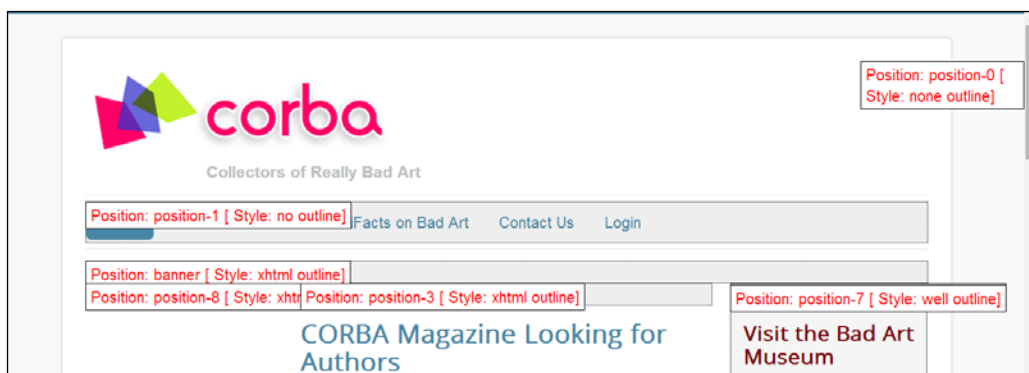
One of the advantages of using Bootstrap is that all templates that come with Joomla 3 are mobile friendly. The template layout automatically adapts to the screen size of different mobile devices.

The following table gives an overview of the templates that come with Joomla:

Template Name	Description
Beez3	This is the successor to Beez2, the default template in the previous version of Joomla. It's now updated for Joomla 3 and it's powered by Twitter Bootstrap.
Protostar	This is the default template in Joomla. In <i>Chapter 4, Web Building Basics – Creating a Site in an Hour</i> , and earlier in this chapter, you used the built-in options to adapt Protostar to your needs.
Isis	This is the default template for the administrator backend. This is the backend template we've used throughout the book.
Hathor	There's one other administrator template available—Hathor. It's built according to accessibility rules, allowing people using different browsers and different devices to have equal access to the site.

Previewing the available templates

Clicking on any of the thumbnails in the **Template Manager: Templates** screen opens a pop up screen that displays a preview image. Oddly enough, the text next to the thumbnails says that there's no preview available. This is because there are two ways to preview templates. To see the true preview of a selected template in a separate browser tab, first go to the **Template Manager** options and set the **Preview Module Positions** option to **Enabled**. After you've saved this setting, you can see what the template looks like through the **Preview** link. This preview also displays an overlay that names all available module positions, as shown in the following screenshot for the Protostar template:



Setting a different template as the default

If you've followed along up to now, you've built an example website using Joomla's default template, Protostar. Let's assume your client has some more specific requirements. They have introduced a new visual identity and want their website to reflect this. They think it is time for a general overhaul of the site's look and feel. As the first step, you'll explore the alternative templates available in Joomla.

Time for action – activating a different template

Let's try a different template on for size. In this example, we'll choose the Beez 3 template. This can be done as follows:

1. Navigate to **Extensions | Template Manager**.

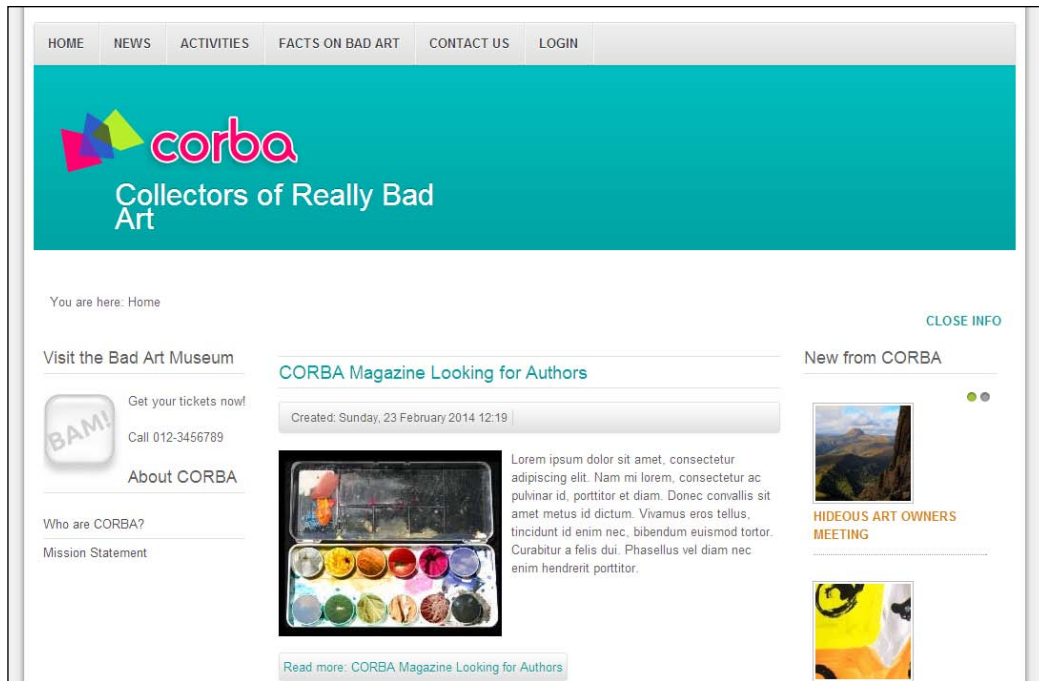
2. Click on the star in the **Default** column of the **Beez3 - Default** template. This sets Beez3 as the default template. Click on **View Site** to see the result shown in the following screenshot:



As this template uses other module positions than Protostar, the module contents are displayed in different screen positions. Another effect of the new template is that the default site name (**Joomla! Open Source Content Management**) is displayed in the header. First let's fix this.

3. Click on the template named **Beez 3 - Default** in the **Template Manager: Styles** page. In the **Template Manager: Edit Style** screen, click on the **Advanced** tab. As the **Logo Image**, select the CORBA logo image file that you've used previously. Enter the appropriate site title (in our example, we used `corba`) and description (`Collectors Of Really Bad Art`).

4. As the template color, select **Turquoise**. This will affect the header graphic and replace it with a smooth gradient color. Save the changes and take a look at the output on the frontend, which is shown in the following screenshot:



The new template looks much better now. As you can see, I've changed the **Content Slider** module settings to display only one column of teaser texts (**New from CORBA**, in the right column). If we were to use this template, you could also consider moving other modules to the new positions available in this template. For now, we're just trying this template on for size, so we won't bother fixing the details. You can easily switch back to the Protostar template by making it the default template in the **Template Manager: Styles** screen.

What just happened?

By setting a new default template, you've given the site a completely new look—same content, different design. The ability to change templates in a few clicks is one of the things that really makes Joomla stand out. Without needing any coding skills, you can completely transform the site's appearance.



Not every template contains the same set of options. Template builders can decide to add dozens of options or just one or two. Having less built-in options doesn't limit your customization options though. It's often even easier to customize basic templates; templates with a lot of options can be complex to configure. Using a basic template, you can edit the template properties by looking under the hood and changing the CSS or HTML code. We'll dive into this later in this chapter.

Applying template styles to individual pages

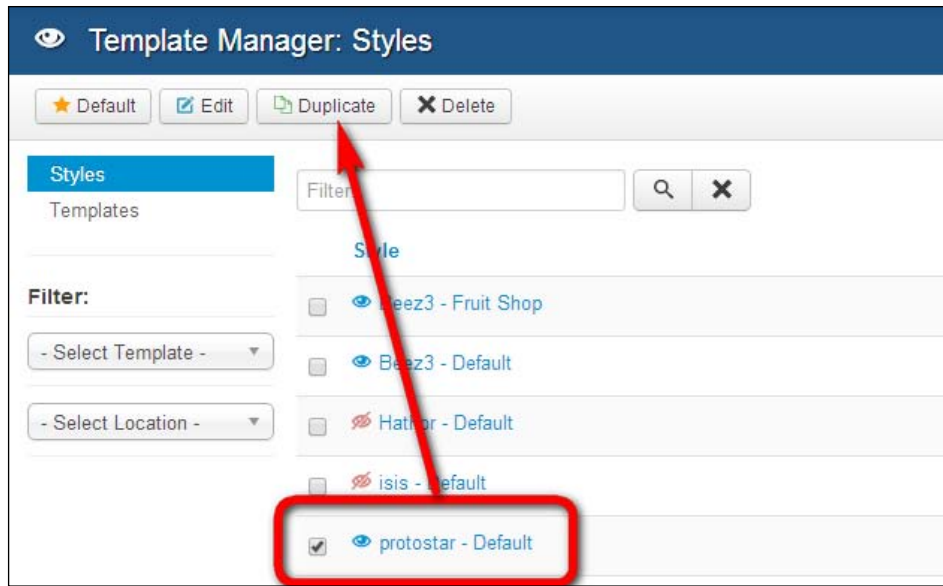
Most websites probably use just one template. However, in Joomla, it's possible to assign specific templates to style individual pages or groups of pages. If your site is divided into five main categories, why not use five different styles—each with their own set of options selected.

Time for action – creating a template style for one specific page

Let's assume your client has a few special pages on the site about a special event. They want to make this event page stand out from the rest of the site. To create this effect, we'll create and apply a template style. We'll create a copy of a template and use it to style only the pages that are linked through one specific menu link. This can be done as follows:

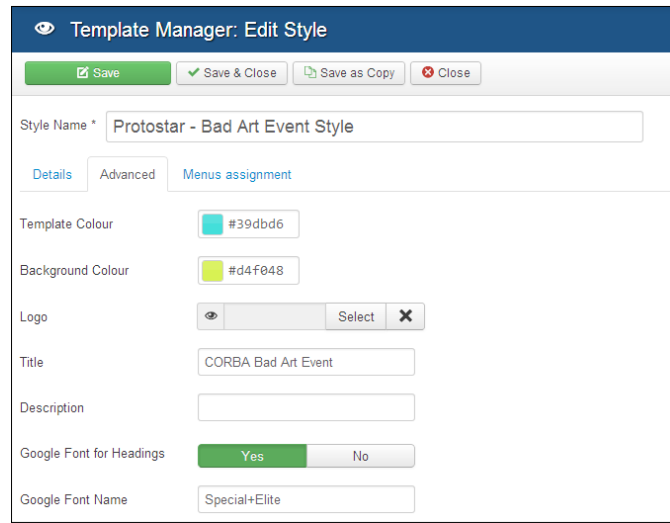
- 1.** First, we'll make a dummy page and a menu link that points to it. In this example, we'll create an article page named **Visit the Bad Art Event** and a **Main Menu** link of the **Single Article** type, which is named **Bad Art Event**.
- 2.** Go to **Extensions | Template Manager** to access the **Template Manager: Styles** screen.

3. We'll use the Protostar template and create a copy of it. Select **protostar - Default** by ticking the select box to the left-hand side of the template name. Then, click on the **Duplicate** button. This is shown in the following screenshot:



4. A copy of the template appears in the list, and it is called **protostar - Default (2)**. Click on this name to edit the new style. In the **Template Manager: Edit Style** screen, select the settings that will distinguish this style from the default Beez template.
1. In the **Style Name** field, enter `Protostar - Bad Art Event Style`.
 2. Click on the **Advanced** tab to access the options panel. In the **Title** field, enter `CORBA Bad Art Event`. Don't fill out the **Description** field. This way, the event name will be displayed instead of the default logo file.
 3. As the **Google Font Name**, enter `Special+Elite`. This is an arty typewriter font that can be found on <http://www.google.com/fonts>. Because the Special Elite font has a space in its name, we need to replace the space with a plus sign.

4. As the **Template Colour**, select a fresh color for the header texts. In this example, I've selected a light blue shade. As the **Background Colour**, select any color of your choice. In this example, I've selected a light green shade.



5. In the **Menus assignment** tab, select the **Bad Art Event** menu link. This will ensure the template is only applied to the one page that this link points to.
5. Click on **Save**. A message is displayed, confirming that the selected menu items have been assigned to the new template style. Now, click on **View Site**. On the home page and on other pages of the site, nothing has changed. However, when you click on the **Bad Art Event** link, you'll notice that the new template style is active, as shown in the following screenshot:



What just happened?

You've assigned a template style to one specific page, the **CORBA Bad Art Event** page. The page looks quite different. That's not only because of the different color scheme, but also because instead of a logo, you've chosen to display just the site's title. As the site's title is displayed in the same font as the headings, you've given this part of the site a distinctive look.



Assigning templates directly from a menu item

As templates are linked to specific menu items, you can also assign templates (or template styles) directly when editing a menu link. This means that you can control template assignment both from the template settings screen (via the **Menus assignment** tab) and the menu item screen. In the menu item details section, use the **Template Style** drop-down box to assign templates.

Downloading and installing a new template

Of course, the templates that are shipped with Joomla are only a few examples of the possible designs. Do you need a really different layout or do you want a more attractive design? There are tons of templates available on the Web. You can download the template files as one compressed file and install this compressed template file through the **Extension Manager** screen. Once it's installed, you can activate it through the **Template Styles** screen as described earlier in this chapter.



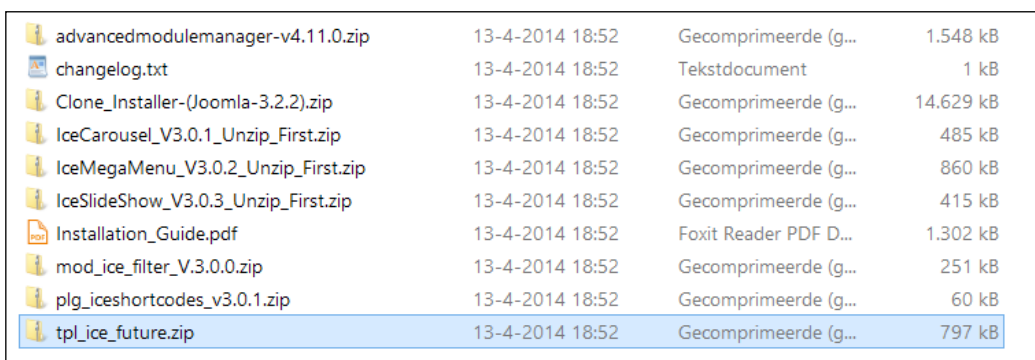
Physically, a Joomla template is a bunch of files. When you download a template, these files are packed together in a compressed format (usually a ZIP file). Joomla provides you with a powerful one-click-method to upload and unpack the ZIP file, installing all of the required template files on the web server, ready for use.

Imagine your client wants something really different, a site with its own specific layout. In that case, you probably don't want to settle for any of the default Joomla templates. You can search the Web for a template that fits the clean new logo and corporate style of your client. Let's see how you can download a free template from a professional template developer.

Time for action – downloading and activating a new template

For your site's redesign, you've hit upon a great looking template on the Web. In this example, we'll use the Future template developed by IceTheme. It is a clean and basic template that offers enough opportunities to customize the layout and appearance. This can be done as follows:

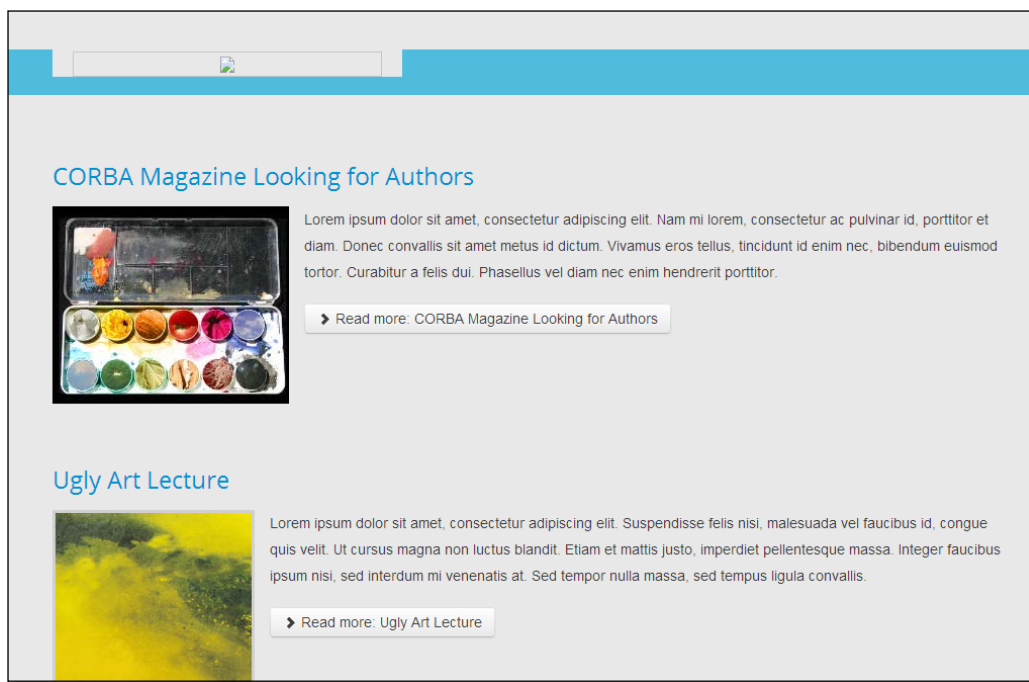
1. Navigate to <http://www.icetheme.com/Downloads/Joomla-Templates/Free-Joomla-Templates/Future/View-Category>.
2. Click on the **Download** button. The compressed template file (IT_Future_V.3.0.1-(unzip-first)-9544626154.zip) is saved on your computer.
3. Navigate to the ZIP file on your computer and unzip it. The ZIP file contains several other ZIP packages: the template, an installation guide, and several free extensions that come with the template. After you've decompressed the ZIP file, the files shown in the following screenshot should be available:



advancedmodulemanager-v4.11.0.zip	13-4-2014 18:52	Gecomprimeerde (g...	1.548 kB
changelog.txt	13-4-2014 18:52	Tekstdocument	1 kB
Clone_Installer-(Joomla-3.2.2).zip	13-4-2014 18:52	Gecomprimeerde (g...	14.629 kB
IceCarousel_V3.0.1_Unzip_First.zip	13-4-2014 18:52	Gecomprimeerde (g...	485 kB
IceMegaMenu_V3.0.2_Unzip_First.zip	13-4-2014 18:52	Gecomprimeerde (g...	860 kB
IceSlideShow_V3.0.3_Unzip_First.zip	13-4-2014 18:52	Gecomprimeerde (g...	415 kB
Installation_Guide.pdf	13-4-2014 18:52	Foxit Reader PDF D...	1.302 kB
mod_ice_filter_V3.0.0.zip	13-4-2014 18:52	Gecomprimeerde (g...	251 kB
plg_iceshortcodes_v3.0.1.zip	13-4-2014 18:52	Gecomprimeerde (g...	60 kB
tpl_ice_future.zip	13-4-2014 18:52	Gecomprimeerde (g...	797 kB

4. After you've uncompressed the main ZIP file, you should also unzip the following files: IceMegaMenu_Unzip_First.zip and IceCarousel_Unzip_First.zip. Using these extensions isn't obligatory, but you can choose to deploy them to add an advanced menu system to your site and a homepage slideshow. You can ignore the Clone_Installer-Joomla3.2.2.zip file; this is only used to create a full copy of the IceTheme demo site for this template.
5. Navigate to **Extensions | Extension Manager**. Click on the **Upload Package File** tab and browse and navigate to the tpl_ice_future.zip file on your computer. Select this file and click on **Upload & Install**. A notice saying **Installing template was successful** is displayed.
6. To activate the new template, go to **Extensions | Template Manager**. In the **Template Manager: Styles** page, tick the check box next to ice_future. Then, click on the **Default** button in the toolbar.

7. Click on **View Site**. The new template is now active, as shown in the following screenshot:



What just happened?

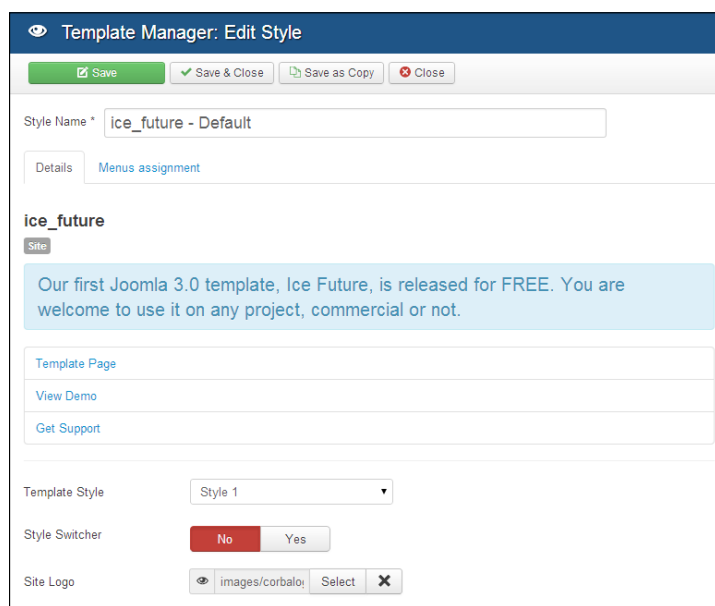
You've just downloaded and activated a new template. Although the new design is applied, you'll notice that it doesn't look good yet. Many elements of our original layout (such as menus) don't show up. You may notice that instead of a logo image, a rectangle appears with an icon indicating that an image hasn't loaded. This is because the template contains code pointing to a logo image, but no image file has been assigned yet. This is common when you step over to a new template. You'll often need to add your logo file, change module positions, and fix a couple of other settings.

Time for action – adding the logo file

Let's add the CORBA logo to the new template and set a few template options.

1. Navigate to **Extensions | Template Manager** and open the Ice Future template.

2. Click on the **Select** button next to the **Site Logo** field. Then, upload and select the new graphic logo file for the CORBA website (`corbalogo_restyled.png`). This is shown in the following screenshot:



3. The template options also include the possibility to add Facebook and Twitter buttons to the site. As we won't add these buttons, set the **Facebook** and **Twitter** options to **No**. It's also a good idea to set the **Style Switcher** option to **No**, as we don't want our site visitors to be able to switch between template styles.
4. Set the **IceTheme Logo** option to **No** if you want to hide the logo and the link to the template developer.
5. Save the changes and preview the output. It is shown in the following screenshot:



What just happened?

You've added a graphic logo file and changed a few settings. However, this is just the first step in preparing our new site design for the limelight. We'll now make sure that the menus and other modules are visible again.

Time for action – adding a menu module

The template we've downloaded, Ice Future, comes with a couple of free modules. You don't really need them in order to be able to use the template. However, they can add useful functionality to your site. Especially the IceMegaMenu module has many advantages in comparison to the Joomla menu module, and it renders a menu that blends in nicely with the template design. Let's add this module.

- 1.** Navigate to **Extensions | Extension Manager** and click on the **Upload Package File** button. Then, click on **Browse** to navigate to the downloaded menu module, that is, the `mod_icemegamenu_v.3.0.2.zip` file. Install this module.
- 2.** Next, select the `plg_icemegamenu0.zip` plugin and install this plugin too.
- 3.** Enable the plugin. Go to **Extensions | Plug-in Manager** and locate the IceMegaMenu plugin. Click on the red cross in the **Status** column. It will change into a check mark, which means that the plugin is now active.
- 4.** Now, we can also enable the menu module and change its settings. Navigate to **Extensions | Module Manager** and open the IceMegaMenu module. Change the settings as follows:
 - Change the **Status** to **Published** and change the **Position** to **Mainmenu [mainmenu]**.
 - Choose **Select Menu: Main Menu**.
 - Click on the **Menu Assignment** tab and choose **On all pages**.
- 5.** Save your changes. You're done!

What just happened?

There's now a horizontal drop-down menu that perfectly fits the blue bar at the top. In the following example screenshot, you can see that I've added a few submenu links to the **Activities** main link to illustrate the drop-down effect:



The great thing about this menu is that it's responsive just like the template itself. You can try this out right away; if you make the browser screen smaller, the drop-down menu changes to fit the new screen size. This is shown in the following screenshot:



You've now changed a couple of template settings and added a better menu module. However, in the CORBA site, we have a few other modules that aren't visible in the new template. Next, we'll fix this problem.

Getting the most out of the IceMegaMenu extension

Usually a template only contains the files that take care of the site design and layout, but the Ice Future template comes with a separate IceMegaMenu module. It's offered as a part of the free Ice Future bundle. After you've installed this extension and the accompanying plugin, you'll find a set of extra features for every menu link in the main menu.

Using a mega menu, you can add more content to the menu than just menu links. For example, you can add descriptions to menu links and create drop-down menus with two or more columns. It's even possible to add module contents to the drop-down menus (for example, to display a login module in a drop-down menu).

How do you use this mega menu functionality? Go to **Menus | Main Menu** and open any menu link that contains submenu links. Here, you'll find the IceMegaMenu **Parameters** tab. Click on this tab to enter a subtitle in the **SubTitle** field (a few words of explanation that will appear below the actual menu link text). You can also set the number of columns for every drop-down submenu. The output might look like the following screenshot:



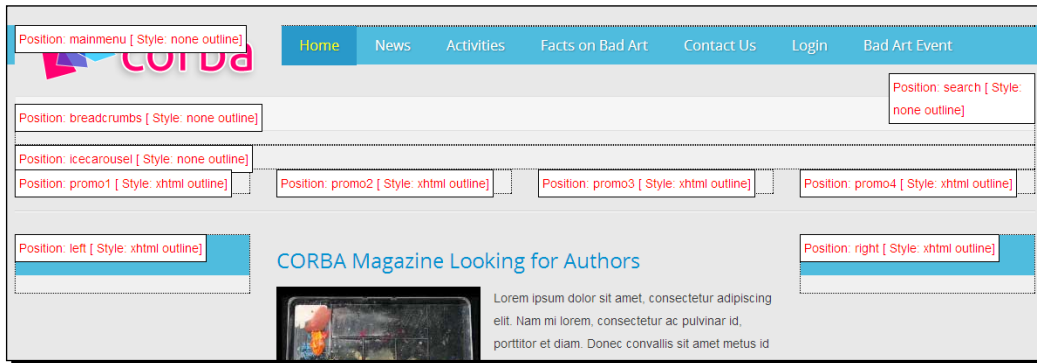
The screenshot displays the IceMegaMenu extension's output. At the top, a horizontal mega menu is shown with four items, each labeled 'Example Item' and having a subtitle 'your sample subtitle'. Below the menu, a 'Description' section is visible, containing placeholder text. To the right, a 'Login Form' is displayed, featuring input fields for 'User Name' and 'Password', a 'Remember Me' checkbox, a 'Log In' button, and links for 'Forgot your password?', 'Forgot your username?', and 'Create an account'.

To find out more about the features of the IceMegaMenu extension, have a look at the installation guide PDF file that's part of the extension package.

Time for action – placing modules in new template positions

After you have installed a new template, not all module blocks will show up. This is because different templates contain different (and differently named) module positions. As you saw in the previous chapter, templates contains positions that are referred to as left, position-1, position-2, and so on. In this case, the new template positions are different from the positions in the Protostar template. The next step is to assign modules that we have used in the example site to their new template positions.

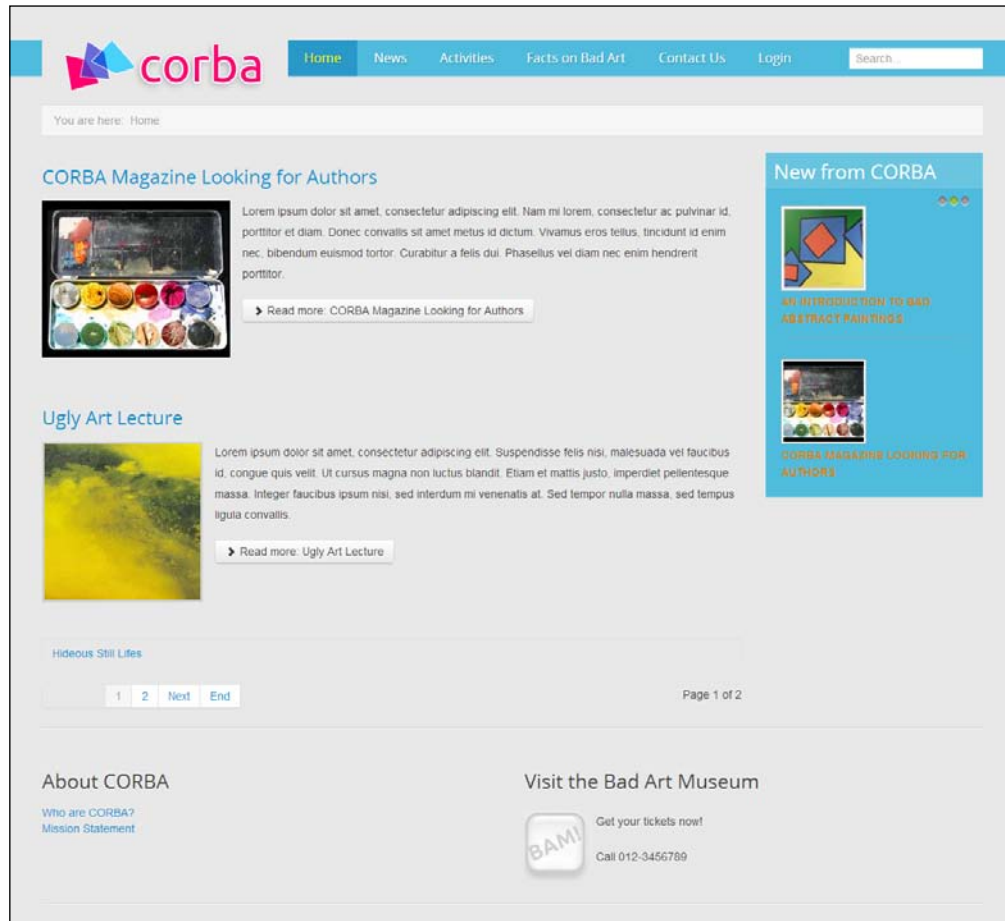
1. To find out what module positions are available, navigate to **Extensions | Template Manager | Templates** and click on the **Preview** link for the Ice Future template. The positions available in the current template are shown in the following screenshot:



2. Navigate to **Extensions | Module Manager**. Open the following modules and assign them to the appropriate positions:

Module name	Type	New position
Visit the Bad Art Museum	Custom HTML	footer2
New from CORBA	BT Content Slider	right
Search	Search	search
About CORBA	Menu	footer1
Breadcrumbs	Breadcrumbs	breadcrumbs

3. Save the changes and click on **View Site**. The modules are displayed again, as shown in the following screenshot:

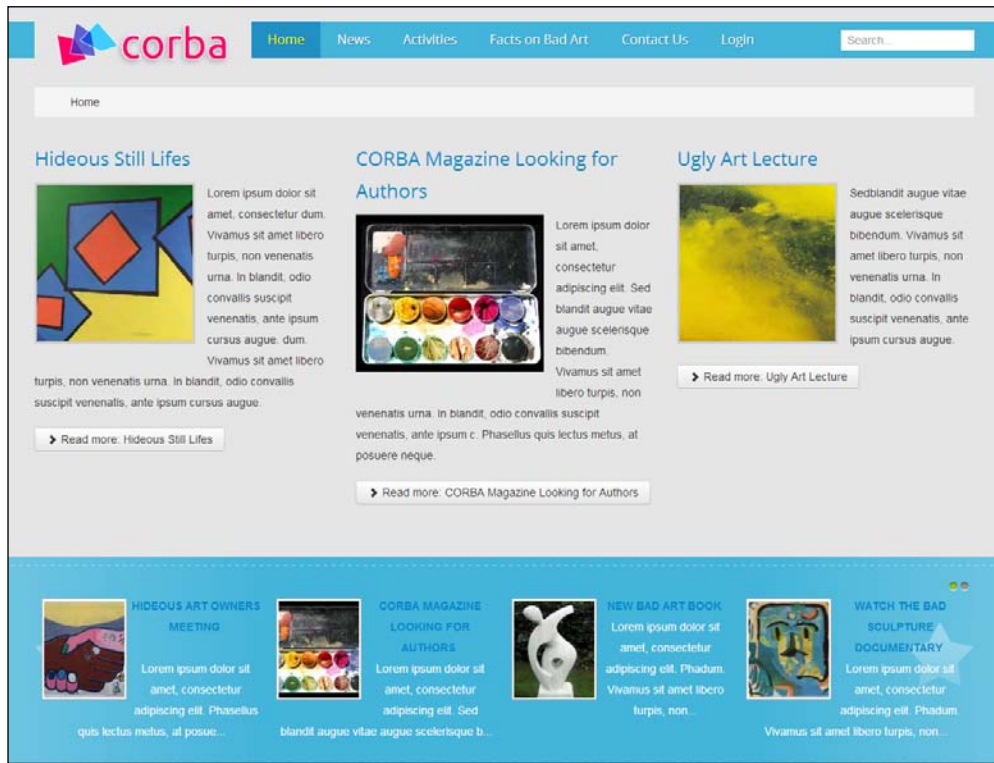


What just happened?

You're almost done restyling your client's site. You've downloaded and installed a new template, you've changed a few settings, and you have made sure all the modules are displayed in their desired positions. The site looks pretty good now and it's quite different from your average Joomla-powered site. In the next few sections, you will learn how you can tweak it further by filling more module positions and how to change the design by customizing the template CSS code.

Have a go hero – changing the page and module layout

The fun of templates is that you can easily change the appearance of your site—not just by applying a new template, but also by playing around with the template options and experimenting with moving modules to the available module positions. Here's an example of how the design and layout can change after adjusting a few options:



How can you achieve a layout like the one shown in the preceding screenshot? This can be done by performing the following steps:

1. You'll notice that the Content Slider module position has changed; instead of being displayed in the right column, it's now shown in the promotion position of the Ice Future template. The template contains the code to check whether any content is assigned to this position; if it is, a big blue bar is shown in the background of the module contents. To get the module contents to fill this horizontal bar, the module properties have been set to display four teasers next to each other (in four columns).
2. The **Home** menu link settings have been changed to display three introduction texts next to each other in three columns.

Feel free to experiment with the settings of the **Home** page menu link, the placement of modules, and the template settings. Your choices can result in an entirely different look and feel for the site.

Customizing a template – tweaking CSS styles

In this chapter, you saw how to customize templates using the built-in options. However, as not all templates contain the same set of options, sometimes you'll have to dive under the hood to change a file or a few lines of code to get the template to look just the way you want. You've experienced this in *Chapter 4, Web Building Basics – Creating a Site in an Hour*, when you wanted to change the tagline of the Protostar template and had to change a line of CSS code.

In the beginning of this chapter, you learned that CSS take care of your website's look and feel. If you want to change the way the site looks, you'll edit the styles in their CSS file (or CSS files, as the template designer often splits the necessary code in different style sheet files).

If you're not familiar with CSS and what it does, have a look at the basic explanation in the following section. After that, we'll see some examples of how tweaking the CSS code of a Joomla template works. Later in this chapter, you'll find some useful resources that explain CSS in more detail (see the *Expanding your CSS knowledge* section of this chapter).

Understanding the very basics of CSS

If you'd like to further customize the template we've just installed, you'll need to know a thing or two about CSS. So, let's have look at the basics of CSS coding. In Joomla, HTML and CSS codes are contained in separate documents. This way, several web pages (HTML documents) can be linked to the same CSS style sheet. That's a huge advantage in terms of customizability. By updating a few lines in just one style sheet, you can change the look of several pages (without having to touch the underlying HTML code).

Joomla provides a simple text editor to open up the CSS files that the template uses and to modify the code. This is great when making some quick changes to the template. Luckily, the basics of CSS code aren't difficult to understand. Typically, the rules in a CSS style sheet look like the following code:

```
h1 {
  color: red;
  font-weight: bold;
}
```

This rule applies to the `h1` element (a top level heading) in the HTML document. It tells your browser to style this heading by setting the text `color` option to `red` and the `font-weight` option to `bold`. CSS rules are always enclosed in curly braces. The lines that are part of a CSS rule (declarations such as `color: red;`) are always separated by semicolons.

If you want to change the background color of all H1 headings to blue, you adjust the `h1` style rule in the CSS file and replace the original value (that is, `red`). The code is as follows:

```
h1 {
  color: blue;
  font-weight: bold;
}
```

The following code is another example of a CSS style rule:

```
.lead {
  margin-bottom: 18px;
  font-size: 20px;
  line-height: 27px;
}
```

This style has its own class name, `.lead`. In this example, the properties `margin-bottom`, `font-size`, and `line-height` will be applied to any element in the HTML page with the `.lead` class. Assigning this class name to any text will make the browser render the text in a relatively big (20 pixels) font size and add some extra space between lines (`line-height`) and below the paragraph (`margin-bottom`).

That's it—this concludes your 5 minute crash course on CSS. If you want to dive deeper into CSS, you'll learn more about some great web resources on this subject later on. For now, let's see what changing a few lines of CSS code can do for our example site.

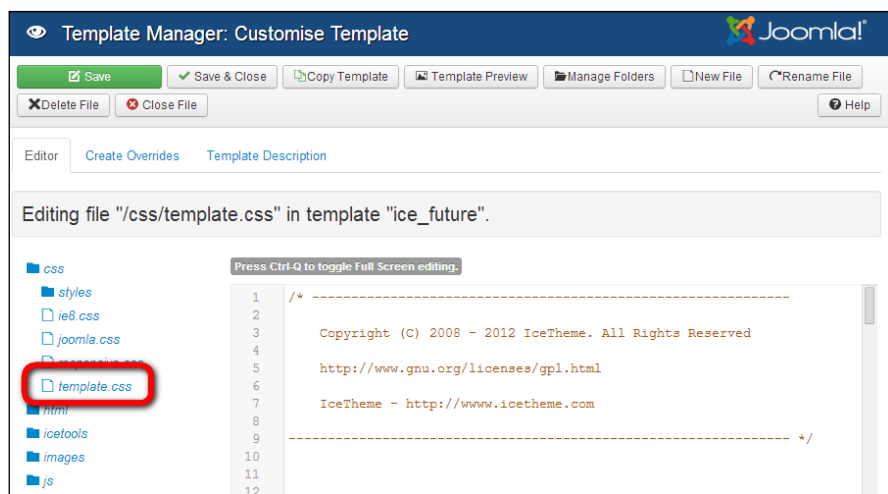
Time for action – customizing the background color using CSS

Customizing the CSS code of the template can be relatively easy, especially when it comes to changing properties such as colors, font types, and images. You can edit the template style sheets from within the Joomla backend. The steps are as follows:

- 1.** Navigate to **Extensions | Template Manager**. In the menu on the left-hand side, click on **Templates**.
- 2.** Now, click on the link of the template you want to edit. In this example, click on **Ice_future Details and Files** as shown in the following screenshot:



3. In the **Template Manager: Customise Template** screen, you can see the template folders and files. Click on the **css** folder and then click on the **template.css** file. This will open the source code of the style sheet in an editor screen, as shown in the following screenshot:



4. In the **Editor** screen, locate the body style declaration. It should look like the following code:

```
body {
    background:#e5e5e5;
    line-height:26px;}
```

Change the highlighted line as follows:

```
background:#ffffff;
```

This will change the background color of the site to white (the color code for white is #ffffff).

5. The site's logo also has a gray background. We'll change this as we changed the background color of the website. Locate the the #logo style. It should look like the following code:

```
#logo {  
    float:left;  
    background:#e5e5e5;  
    display:inline-block;  
    padding:0 20px;  
    font-size:18px;}
```

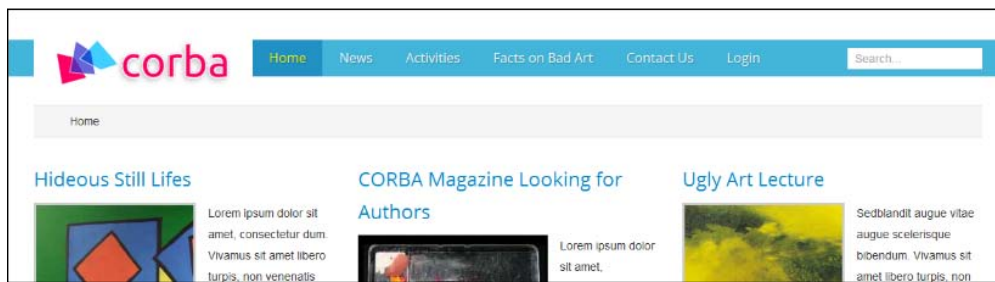
Change the highlighted line as follows:

```
background:#ffffff;
```

6. Save your changes and have a look at the frontend of the site.

What just happened?

You'll notice the site now has a fresh, white background color, as shown in the following screenshot:

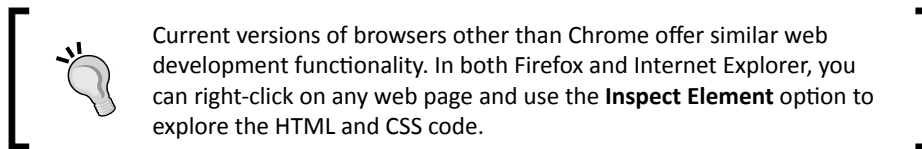


(If you don't see any changes, press *F5* or refresh to force your browser to reload the page.) Of course, you can change the color to any value you like; just do a web search for CSS color codes to find an overview of the codes to apply.

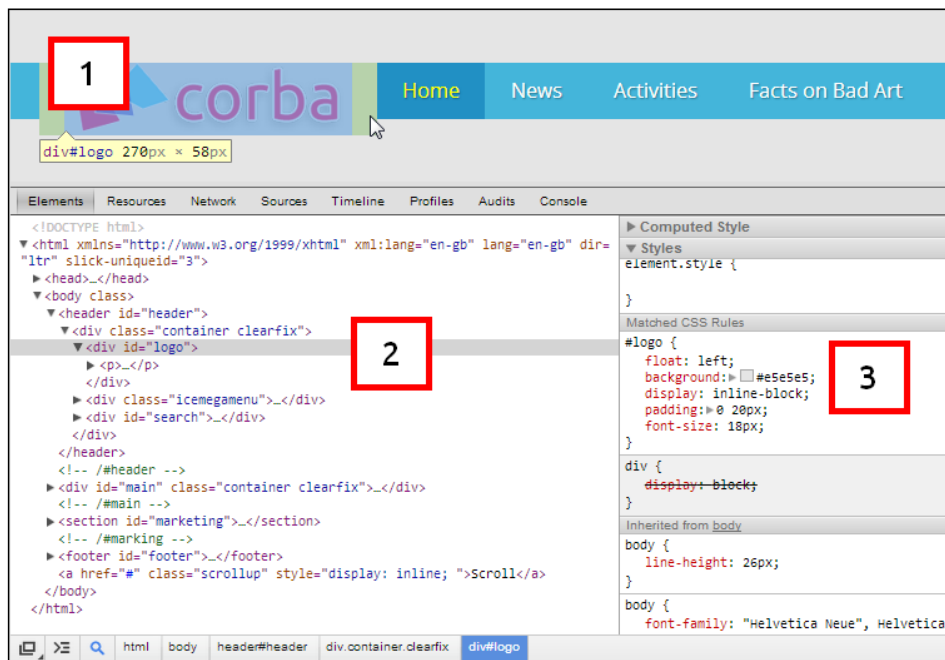
Diving deeper into Joomla! CSS – using developer tools

In the previous examples, you changed a few lines of CSS code in the Joomla editor, but you may be wondering how you can find out which particular CSS styles you have to edit in order to get the desired effect. How do you find out, for example, that a particular blue block you want to change is styled through the #marketing .container style?

In Joomla, your best chance is to go to the **Template Editor** and try to figure out what the appropriate style is by analyzing the CSS style sheet. However, there's a much easier way. Using the **Inspect** feature of the Chrome browser, you can inspect any web page and analyze the current HTML and relevant CSS styles, which are shown in a separate window. You can even edit the CSS code and immediately see the effects. Your edits aren't stored; the browser doesn't have access to your Joomla files. To commit changes, you need to edit the original CSS files using the Joomla CSS editor or any other text editor and save the CSS files.



Let's take a look at an example using the Chrome browser. Suppose you want to find out what CSS code you need to change to customize the logo background color in the current template. Open your Joomla-powered website in Chrome, right-click anywhere in the window, and select **Inspect element**. In the bottom-half of the browser window, two screens will display the HTML and the CSS code of the current web page. Now, you can start inspecting page elements by clicking on the little lens icon at the bottom of the browser screen and hovering your mouse cursor over the web page. Select any part of the web page to see all related code. This is shown in the following screenshot:



By clicking on the logo area on the web page (1), we see that the logo background is styled through the `div#logo` style. In the bottom-left of the screen (2), the HTML code of this `div` element is visible. In the bottom-right of the screen (3), the relevant CSS code is shown. In this case, the background color is set to `#e5e5e5`.

Now, here's the fun part; you can edit the CSS code of this web page and type another color code (for example, `#FF0000` for red) to immediately see the effects. This is a great way to test code changes. Your edits aren't stored, as the browser doesn't have access to your Joomla files. To commit changes, you need to edit the original CSS files using the Joomla template editor (as shown previously in this chapter) and save the CSS files. The inspector tool even tells you exactly what CSS file contains the current code.

To find out more about using the Chrome developer tools, have a look at the tutorial at <http://webdesign.tutsplus.com/tutorials/workflow-tutorials/faster-htmlcss-workflow-with-chrome-developer-tools>. A very similar tool for Firefox is the Firebug plugin; visit <http://www.w3resource.com/web-development-tools/firebug-tutorials.php> for more information.

Expanding your CSS knowledge

Do you want to get deeper into the fine art of creating and editing style sheets? You'll find plenty of helpful resources on the Web. Just search for CSS tutorial or take a look at the following links:

- ◆ A basic tutorial article, *CSS from the Ground Up*, can be found at www.wpdfd.com/issues/70/css_from_the_ground_up.
- ◆ The CSS tutorial site at <http://www.csstutorial.net/introductionCSS.php>.
- ◆ W3Schools' CSS tutorials, examples, and demos can be found at http://www.w3schools.com/css/css_intro.asp.

Editing the template HTML

If you want to make more fundamental changes to a template, Joomla also allows you to edit the template HTML code. There's an HTML editor available in the Joomla backend, much like the CSS editor. If you want, you can change any template code. You can add, change, delete, or move any existing page element—columns, header, footer, and whatever you like. Of course, you should only do this if you know your way around in HTML; don't risk messing up the site's layout.



Even if you're not aiming to immerse yourself in the nitty gritty of HTML, being able to change the template HTML code directly in Joomla is still useful. It allows you to change or remove unwanted items that are sometimes hard coded (that is, a fixed part of the HTML code) in the template, such as a footer text or copyright notice. To access the HTML editor, navigate to **Extensions | Template Manager**. On the **Templates** page, click on the template name's link (for example, **Ice_future Details and Files**). In the next screen, click on the **index.php** link. You're taken to the HTML editor screen. This works similar to the CSS editor screen; you can change the code and store your changes immediately in the original file.

Backing up and restoring a customized template

Editing a template directly in Joomla is a great way to tweak the layout as you go. You're able to apply changes in the backend and immediately preview the effects of every adjustment you've made. However, there is a drawback; all changes in the template files are only stored on the web server. If for some reason you were to reinstall the template, these changes would be lost.

To prevent this from happening, back up the template as soon as you've finished customizing it. The steps are as follows:

1. Start up your FTP program and browse to the folder that contains the template you want to back up (for more information on using FTP software, please refer to *Chapter 2, Getting Joomla! Up and Running*). In case of the Ice Future template, the location would be something like `/httpdocs/templates/ice_future`. Here, `httpdocs` is the root folder of the Joomla installation on the web server; in your situation, the root folder might have another name, such as `www` or `htdocs`.
2. Download the template folder (including subfolders and their contents) to your computer.

This folder contains all the template files. If you want to reinstall the template later, just upload this folder to the same location on the web server again, that is, the `templates` folder in the root directory of the Joomla installation.

Where can you get a new template for your site?

If you search the Web for Joomla 3 template, you'll get a dazzling number of results. It can take hours to find the one template that's just right for your goals. Instead, you might want to start your template search in dedicated Joomla template gallery sites.

- ◆ Good starting places are template sites such as www.joomla24.com, www.bestofjoomla.com, and www.cmslounge.com. These sites offer hundreds of templates. Browse the collections and check out live previews of the templates you like.
- ◆ Check the collections of professional Joomla template developers, such as www.rockettheme.com, www.joomlashack.com, www.gavick.com, www.yootheme.com, and www.joomlabamboo.com.

How do you find the perfect template that has the quality and the design approach that suits your needs? It's good to be picky; after all, the default template Protostar is already pretty versatile. It's suitable for smartphones and tablets, you can customize colors and fonts, and it contains many module positions that give you a lot of freedom to determine the page layout. Here are a few more things to keep in mind when you're looking for a template:

- ◆ The template shouldn't be too complicated. Some developers add more and more options to their templates. Although that may seem advantageous, it also means that it takes time to get the template to work just the way you want it to. Beware of *heavy* templates with a lot of code, scripts, and large images, as they can slow down your website. Templates that feature all kinds of eye candy and dozens of advanced options may look great, but they often come with lots of specific scripts and PHP and CSS code. This makes it harder to configure them and to customize the code for your needs.
- ◆ You'll be able to find quality templates that are completely free. There are also many templates offered by commercial developers. Note that makers of free templates sometimes require you to keep a copyright link in the footer, which points to the developer's website. Often, it's a matter of trying out the template and checking its license restrictions.
- ◆ These days, your template should be viewable on all screen sizes and all devices. Luckily, more and more templates are responsive (just like the default Joomla template). This way, they will automatically adjust their layout for different devices.
- ◆ Make sure that the template you download is suited for Joomla 3 (and preferably a higher version number). Older templates won't work in newer releases.

Always obtain templates from reliable sources, either the website of the original developers or well-known template sites such as <http://www.joomla24.com>. Templates found at file sharing sites are mostly illegal because of copyright infringement: premium templates are offered for free. Using these templates is also unsafe, because scripts might have been added to the code that can break your site or give hackers unwanted file access.

Creating your own template

Using an existing template (and customizing it) will help you get great results while saving lots of time, compared to creating your own template from scratch. However, if you want full control or need a unique layout, you can make a Joomla template all by yourself. It isn't complicated, but it does require a good deal of HTML and CSS coding skills. If you know how to build a website using HTML and CSS, then you won't experience any problems converting your design into a Joomla template. Most of your time and effort will go into creating a page design from the ground up, rather than into the adjustments needed to adapt that design for Joomla.

As it is mainly a question of HTML and CSS coding, we won't cover template creation in full detail here. To get you started, here are a few pointers. These are the five main steps it takes to create your own template.

- ◆ **Sketching:** In this step, design an overall layout for your website. Where do you want the main content, the navigation, and the other page elements? Think in terms of blocks, just like Joomla does. Divide the page into blocks that contain menus, articles, and images. The result is a schematic representation of the page.
- ◆ **Designing:** In this step, create a layout in a graphic editor, such as Photoshop or GIMP. The result is a mockup of the site design. You'll only use bits and pieces of that image in the final template, such as the logo image or some image parts that contain shadow effects.
- ◆ **Coding:** In this step, turn your design into real web page code using HTML and CSS. You can use a web development tool such as Dreamweaver or Expression Web that allows you to immediately see the results of your coding.
- ◆ **Customizing the code for Joomla:** In this step, adapt the CSS and HTML code to create Joomla template files. In the main template file, you'll insert code that will tell Joomla where it should place its dynamic content (such as modules).
- ◆ **Putting your template together:** Any template consists of a set of required files, such as a file containing information about the template (author name, copyright, and so on). Finally, you'll include all of these files in a compressed file (a ZIP file). Now, your template is ready to be uploaded and you can install it by navigating to **Extensions | Install & Uninstall**.

Template building resources

There are many tutorials on the Web that can help you on your way when you want to create Joomla templates. A web search for `Joomla template tutorial` will surely help you on your way. However, since Joomla 3, the technique behind templates has changed substantially. The main change is the integration of the Twitter Bootstrap web development framework you read about earlier in this chapter. The following tutorials can help you start building a Joomla template:

- ◆ *Building a Basic Joomla 3 Template with Bootstrap*, which can be found at <http://www.inmotionhosting.com/support/edu/joomla-3/create-template>.
- ◆ *Tutorial: Make a Joomla 3.5 Template*, which can be found at <http://www.barryflood.com/create-a-template-for-joomla-35.php>.

Using a template generator program



What if you want to create your own template from scratch, but don't feel confident using coding languages? You could consider using a special Windows-based software program to create Joomla templates for Joomla, called Artisteer. It's a very user-friendly program that allows you to use example templates or design suggestions, but you can also choose full manual control over the layout and appearance of the site. You can export your design as a Joomla template and install it in the usual way. There are a few caveats; the program isn't free (it costs about \$100), and the code it generates is less optimized than custom-made HTML and CSS code. However, it can be a great solution if you're creative and want to have full control over the site design. You can download a trial version at www.artisteer.com.

Using a template framework as the base for your own template

Instead of downloading a ready-made template or creating your own template from the ground up, there's also a third option: using a template framework. A framework is basically a template with a huge number of built-in options, which allows you to define the layout, module positions, menu styles, colors, fonts and sometimes much more directly from the template control panel. You'll find more information on template frameworks on the website that accompanies this book, www.joomm.net.

Pop quiz – test your knowledge of Joomla! templates

Q1. What does a Joomla template actually do?

1. It changes the colors and the header graphic.
2. It determines the overall layout and design.
3. It allows you to set all sorts of layout options.

Q2. After installing a new template, you notice some empty spaces in your site layout. What does this mean?

1. Something went wrong and you should reinstall the template.
2. You have to assign modules to the available (empty) positions.
3. You have to add content to some (empty) modules.

Q3. What's the use of adding Firebug to your Joomla toolkit?

1. You can preview CSS edits and automatically save changes to your template.
2. You can edit CSS code in the backend of your Joomla site.
3. You can analyze and edit the CSS styles of any website, and you can preview the effects of any changes you make.

Summary

In this chapter, you learned much about the power of Joomla templates. A Joomla template is a set of files that contain the HTML and CSS code that defines what your web page looks like. Joomla comes with a few different templates. Most templates have built-in options that allow you to tweak their look and behavior.

If you want a different layout, there are tons of templates you can download from the web, and a good many of them are available for free. Customizing an existing template is a great way to personalize the look and feel of the website. Joomla's Template Manager allows you to change the CSS styles that the template uses, for example, when you want to change the color scheme or replace the default logo image.

If you need a customized template for your site, you can consider either building your own template from the ground up or using a template framework as a base for your own design.

As far as content, functionality, and looks are concerned, your site is about finished; but there are still a few important things to take care of. In the next chapter, you'll learn what measures you can take to attract visitors and get search engines to pick up your site.

12

Attracting Search Engine Traffic – SEO Tips and Techniques

You've created a great site. Now, it's time to get the world to discover that it's there! So far, you've focused on the site's content, navigation, extra features, and design. In this chapter, let's see what you can do to attract more visitors (or site traffic, as it's usually called). You'll deploy some essential techniques and basic settings in Joomla that can influence your search engine rankings. This is called Search Engine Optimization.

In this chapter, you'll learn about the following topics:

- ◆ Optimizing articles
- ◆ Adding metadata to your content
- ◆ Using search engine friendly URLs
- ◆ Creating internal hyperlinks
- ◆ Redirecting visitors to updated URLs

Working on search engine optimization

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is a subject surrounded with many secrets and myths—and with gurus claiming they have the definite answers to all questions. As search engines obviously won't reveal the secret algorithms they use to calculate the rankings of their search results, these definite answers do not exist. There's no SEO technique or mix of SEO techniques that will bring you overnight success. However, there are some common sense techniques that you can apply in your Joomla-powered site to optimize your visibility to search engines and to get them to pick up your content.

The first and foremost SEO rule is to make sure you offer great content. If you don't have a site that's regularly updated with quality content, people won't bother to visit (and they certainly won't bother to come back). Only if your site offers relevant content, it is worth optimizing that content for best search engine results.

Why do you need to accommodate search engines?

Search engines are probably the main tool that people will use to get to your site. To add your site to their database, search engines use software to scan the World Wide Web looking for relevant content. Of course, search engines can't see your site. They'll analyze the source code text of the site (as shown in the following screenshot) and try to understand what your site is about and what data could be important to search engine users:

```
140         <div class="items-row cols-3 row-0 row-fluid">
141             <div class="item column-1 span4">
142                 <h2 class="item-title">
143                     <a href="/index.php/news/107-join-the-bad-art-course"> Bad Art Course
144                 </a>
145             </h2>
146                 <p>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet,
148                 consectetur adipiscing elit. Sed blandit augue vitae augue scelerisque bibendum.&nbsp;</p>
149                 <a class="btn" href="/index.php/news/107-join-the-bad-art-course"> <i class="icon-
150                 chevron-right"></i>
151                 Read more: Bad Art Course </a>
152             </div>
153             <div class="item column-2 span4">
154                 <h2 class="item-title">
155                     <a href="/index.php/news/109-magazine-out-now"> Magazine Out Now</a>
156                 </h2>
157                 <p>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur
159                 adipiscing elit. Sed blandit augue vitae augue scelerisque bibendum. Vivamus sit amet libero turpis, non
```

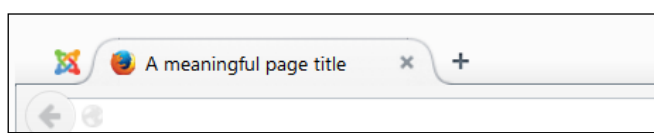
All SEO techniques really boil down to increasing the visibility of your content to the search engines. How can you make it as easy as possible for search engine robots to interpret your web pages' source code and to find, understand, and index your content? We'll explore a few different techniques, starting with the stuff it's all about: **articles**.

Optimizing articles to make them easy to find

When writing or editing articles in Joomla's article editor, what can you do to optimize your content for search engine visibility? Let's start with some simple good practices.

The article title – making it meaningful

The first thing to think about carefully is the article title, the very first piece of data you enter in the article editor. In Joomla, the title entered in the article **Title** field will be displayed in two key positions. It's of course shown above the article itself, but it's also displayed in the browser title bar or in the current browser tab, as shown in the following screenshot:



It's a good idea to use strong, meaningful, descriptive, and specific titles. Don't use similar titles for different articles. Make sure you know what people are looking for on your site; if possible, use relevant keywords in your article titles. If you're aiming at amateur painters, it's good to have clear titles carrying keywords that appeal to your readers, such as *Ten tips to create better paintings*, *How to paint like the pros*, or *Painting techniques tutorial*. Being as specific as you can means it's better to have a title such as *The Ugly Painting Society's Annual Meeting*, rather than a general title such as *This Year's Meeting*. In the example site, we've used a few randomly picked titles. You'll notice that there's room for improvement there. A title such as *The Art of Bob Ross* doesn't make it clear that the article is about a lecture on this subject. Something more specific can be *Art Lecture on Bob Ross Paintings*.

Although it's good to be specific, you should also aim to keep things short. Bear in mind that the page title will usually be shown as the first line in the site description on the search engine's results page (and might be truncated). Google, for example, will only display the first 66 characters.

The article structure – using clear formatting

Don't use headings in your articles that are just plain text styled as bold type. Your visitors may recognize those lines as headings, but search engines won't. Search engines scan HTML documents for headings that follow a hierarchical structure. The main page heading should be formatted with a Heading 1 (or H1) style, the secondary level headings should have a Heading 2 (H2) style, and so on.

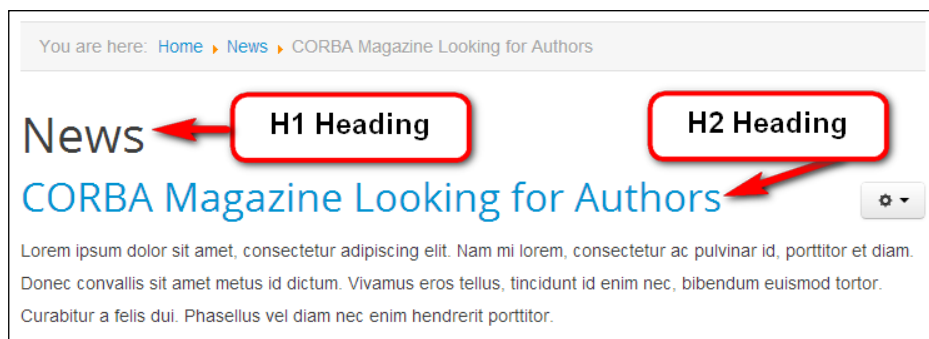
In Joomla's article editor, you apply Heading 1 through Heading 6 using the article editor's **Format** drop-down box. As search engines give headings more weight than regular article text, it's a good idea to use keywords in your page headings. Instead of generic headings (*Lesson Two* or *Improve your art skills*), use specific headings (*How to Paint Great Landscapes*).

Adding H1 heading

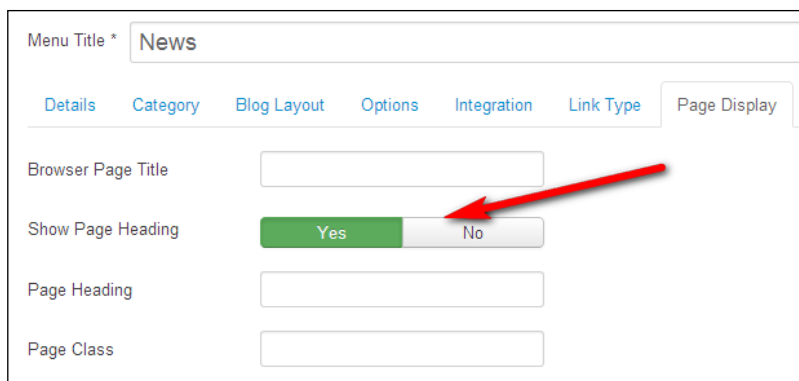
Joomla uses the H2 tag for article titles, which is a good practice. Consider the following screenshot:



However, Joomla can also display a page heading using the H1 tag. This will display the text of the menu link pointing to the current page, such as **News** in the following screenshot:



These H1 page headings are only displayed if you select them in the options of the menu link pointing to this page. This can be done under the **Page Display** tab by selecting **Yes** in the **Show Page Heading** option. This is shown in the following screenshot:



Menu Title * News

Details Category Blog Layout Options Integration Link Type Page Display

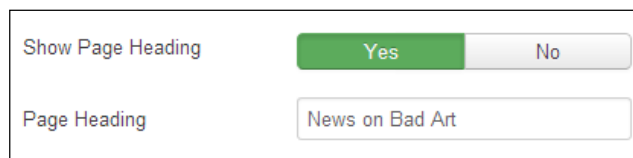
Browser Page Title

Show Page Heading Yes No

Page Heading

Page Class

Instead of using the **Menu Title** text as the page header, you can also choose to write an alternative H1 page heading. This will be better for SEO, as it allows you to use a more meaningful page title than just repeating the menu link text. For example, you can include important keywords in this alternative H1 page heading. Setting this page heading is also done through the menu link settings. When you create a new menu link, in the **New Menu Item/Edit Menu Item** screen, under the **Page Display** tab, you'll find the **Page Heading** field. Here, you can enter a specific page heading. This is shown in the following screenshot:



Show Page Heading Yes No

Page Heading

Using this option, you can customize the H1 heading for any article that's directly linked through a menu item. In the frontend of the site, the new page heading is displayed just above the first article title, as shown in the following screenshot:



News on Bad Art

CORBA Magazine Looking for Authors

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit.

Page Heading and Page Title – what's the difference?



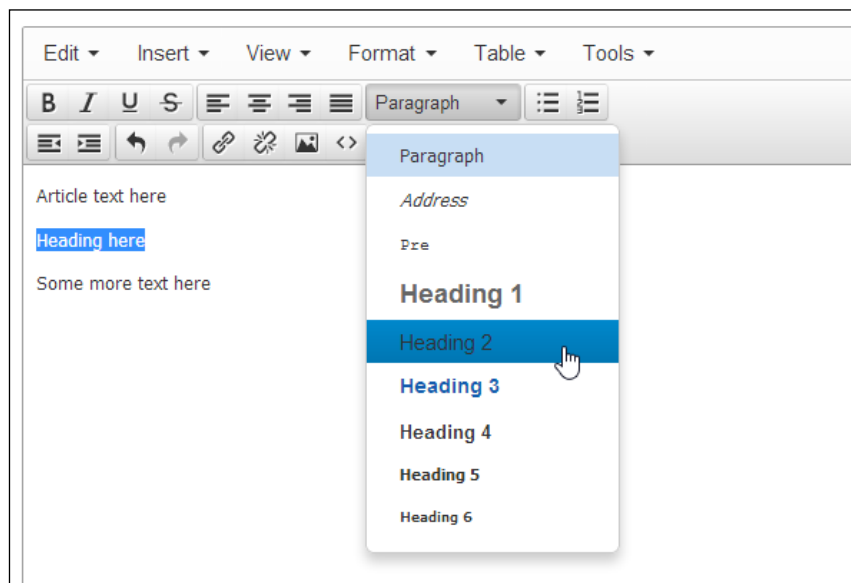
In the **Page Display** tab of a menu link, you can set both a page heading and a browser page title. As you've just seen, the page heading is the text in the H1 element. The browser page title is the text contained in the HTML title element. In other words, you can set both the H1 element and the title element for any menu item. You'll learn more about the HTML title element in the section *Configuring HTML page titles* later in this chapter.

Adding H2 Headings

In the previous example, you saw that the second heading level, H2, is automatically applied to the main content headings. On a Joomla article page, H2 is the article title heading.

Adding H3 through H6 headings

In the article editor, you can apply any heading tag from H1 to H6. These formatting options are available in any text editor, whether you're using the default editor shown in the following screenshot or the more advanced JCE editor. This is described in *Chapter 10, Getting the Most out of Your Site: Extending Joomla!*. As H1 is already used for the page heading and H2 is used for the article title, you should use only H3, H4, H5, and H6 headings for the article text. This is shown in the following screenshot:



Optimizing the use of H1 headings

Using the approach described in the previous section, you can have a page structure as follows:

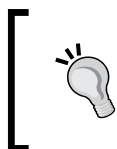
- ◆ **H1:** This is the heading level for the main page heading set through the **Menu Title** option (for example, Web Design Trends)
- ◆ **H2:** This is the heading level for the article heading set through the **Article Title** option (for example, An Overview of Current Web Layouts)
- ◆ **H3 to H6:** These are the heading levels for the article subheadings set in the article text itself

This default setup means that you can end up with pages without an H1 heading, if you don't add page headings. In those cases, it will be better to use the H1 element for the article heading, as it is the only remaining page heading. Unfortunately, Joomla doesn't allow you to display the article title using H1 tags instead of H2 tags.

However, if you want more control over heading tags in your site, there's a great free plugin available called Header Tags. This plugin changes the existing heading tags according to your specifications. After installation, it checks whether there is an H1 tag in the output. If there isn't, the first H2 tag will be changed into an H1 tag. Problem solved! Visit <http://extensions.joomla.org/extensions/site-management/seo-a-metadata/metadata/14835> for more information on this plugin.

The article body text – using relevant keywords

It's a good idea to use relevant keywords in your article body text. When writing or editing your text, ask yourself what words your visitors would use when searching for the content you offer? Try to anticipate the different search terms, synonyms, and abbreviations that different types of visitors will use.



If you're stuck for keyword inspiration, you should definitely consider using one of the many online tools available. The Google AdWords Keyword tool is an excellent example, which you can find at <https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>.

Make sure you use keywords and synonyms throughout the article, but don't stuff your article with keywords just to get search engines to pick up your article—their robots won't be amused and neither will your human visitors.

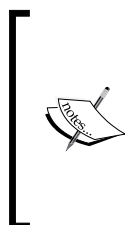
Updating articles regularly

Try to regularly add quality content to your site. Search engine spiders visit your site regularly. Aim to have some new content added when they come around. However, this doesn't mean that the bigger the site is, the better your search results will be. It's a good practice to delete or archive outdated content.

The images – giving more information

To search engine spiders, an image is just a meaningless data file. This means that you can help search engines by using distinct filenames for any image you use. Moreover, when inserting an image in the Joomla article editor, add specific alternate text.

This alternate text (or alt text) is the short description that is shown when the image itself isn't displayed for some reason. You may also want to add a similar description to the **Title** field (under the **Advanced** tab). This title text pops up when the visitor's mouse pointer hovers over the image.



More on SEO-aware writing

Of course, creating great content isn't a Joomla-specific art. If you want to read more on SEO-aware writing, there are many resources on the Web. To get a clear overview of the basics, download Google's *Search Engine Optimization Starter Guide* from www.google.com. Sites such as copyblogger.com offer numerous tips on writing effective copy for the Web.

Configuring HTML page titles

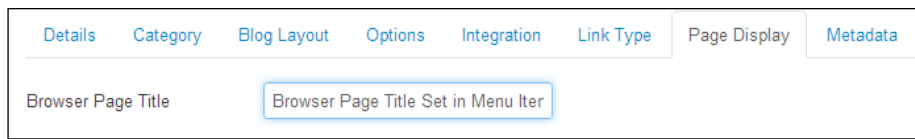
It's considered good SEO practice to not only add a specific page heading (contained in the `H1` element), but to also make sure that each page has a descriptive HTML page title (the `title` element). Page titles are one of the most important ranking factors for search engines, so it's important to make sure that they contain relevant information about the content. The contents of the `title` element aren't displayed on the web page itself, but they're shown in the current browser tab.

Time for action – setting the HTML page title

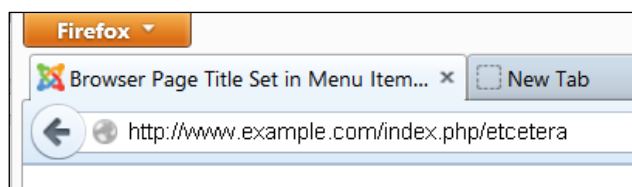
By default, Joomla bases the HTML page title upon the menu link text (the menu item's **Menu Title** field). However, you can also control the page title text manually. If you want the HTML page title to be different from the menu item title, you can set a specific HTML page title in the menu link details. Let's find out how this works:

1. Navigate to **Menus | Menu Manager** and select the menu that contains the link you want to edit. In this example, let's select the **Main Menu**.

2. Click on any menu link to edit it. In the **Page Display** tab, enter the desired text in the **Browser Page Title** field. For testing purposes, you can enter something like **Browser Page Title Set in Menu Item**. This is shown in the following screenshot:



3. Click on **Save & Close** and then click on **View Site** to see the output on the frontend. Navigate to the menu item that you've changed to see the new title in the browser title bar (and in the current browser tab), as shown in the following screenshot:

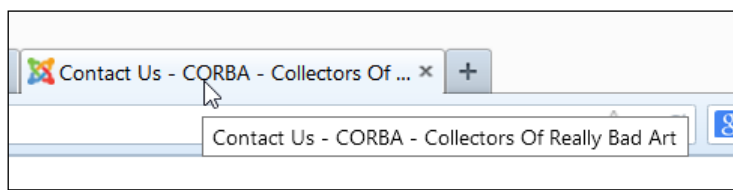


What just happened?

You've seen how to control the browser page title by editing the menu item details. However, you can't change the page title for an article that isn't directly linked through a menu link. If, for example, an article is displayed through a link on a **Category Blog** page, Joomla will base the browser page title on the article title (which is set in the article edit screen details).

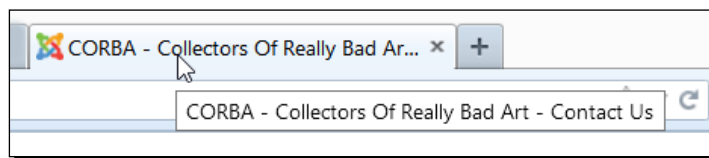
Adding the site name to the page title

Another way to configure the HTML page title is to append the site name to it. In the current browser tab, the site name can be displayed with the current page title (if there's room for it). It will also be displayed in a little pop up when the mouse cursor hovers over the tab, as shown in the following screenshot:



The site name that's added here is the name you've entered when installing Joomla. This can also be entered or changed in the **Site Name** field found by navigating to **System | Global Configuration | Site Settings**. The benefit of having the site name is that all the pages will display both information about the site and about the current page content.

To add the site name to the page title, navigate to **System | Global Configuration**. In the **SEO Settings** section, the option **Include Site Name in Page Titles** can be set to **After** (as shown in the previous screenshot) or **Before**, as shown in the following screenshot:



How do you choose between placing the site name before or after the page title? For search engines, the first words in the `title` tag are the most relevant. When you expect people to search for your brand name, putting it first in the HTML title can boost your ranking. However, if people search specifically for the topics of your pages—and your site name or brand name isn't well known or doesn't describe the topic—you might want to add the site name at the end of page titles.

Adding meaningful metadata

So far, we've focused on actual content. You've seen how you can optimize articles to present their content in a clear and well-structured way. However, web pages also contain information that's not shown to site visitors, but it is aimed specifically at search engine robots. This information is called metadata.

Metadata is information about the contents of the HTML document hidden in the document's source code. Browsers (and search engines) will read it; humans won't know it's there (unless they specifically look for it by selecting the **View source** option in their web browser). Search engines may present the content of the meta description tag in the search results page. Although meta keywords aren't of importance for many search engines anymore, it won't hurt to add meaningful metadata to your site.

In Joomla, you can enter metadata on the following four levels:

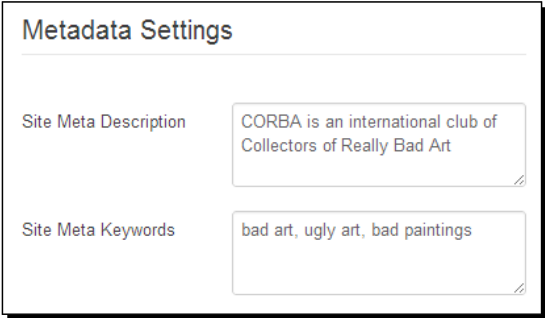
- ◆ Site-wide, through the **Global Configuration** screen
- ◆ For individual menu links
- ◆ For individual categories
- ◆ For individual articles

By default, your Joomla-powered site will only contain some dummy metadata consisting of a short description and a few Joomla-related keywords. Let's change these to something more appropriate.

Time for action – personalizing the site metadata

You'll find the controls to optimize your site for search engine traffic in the backend configuration panel. First, let's add some global keywords that characterize the site's content:

1. Navigate to **System | Global Configuration**. In the **Site** tab, there's a section called **Metadata Settings**.
2. Change the global **Site Meta Description** default text to a short summary of the content of your website. In our example, we'll enter `CORBA is an international club of Collectors Of Really Bad Art`.
3. In the global **Site Meta Keywords** textbox, enter a few keywords that match the content of your website. Make sure to use the words and synonyms that the visitor might use to search for your site's contents. You'll probably use a few words that are also part of the site description. In our example, we'll enter these keywords: `bad art, ugly art, and bad paintings`. The **Metadata Settings** section should now look similar to what is shown in the following screenshot:



The screenshot shows the 'Metadata Settings' configuration panel in Joomla!. It contains two main sections: 'Site Meta Description' and 'Site Meta Keywords'. The 'Site Meta Description' field contains the text 'CORBA is an international club of Collectors of Really Bad Art'. The 'Site Meta Keywords' field contains the text 'bad art, ugly art, bad paintings'.

4. Click on **Save & Close**.

What just happened?

You've added some keywords and descriptive text to your site. This information will be included in every page of your Joomla-powered site. Although search engines don't give much weight to meta keywords anymore, the site description is still very important (and they will show up when your site appears on a search results page).



It's a good idea to keep your meta description as concise as possible. Google will only use the first 155 characters.

Choosing what metadata to set

You can override the global metadata description and keywords on three sublevels. Which of these meta tags are used on the actual web page? The principle is that metadata set on more specific levels override other metadata. In other words:

- ◆ Global metadata (which is set by navigating to **System | Global Configuration**) is used if you haven't set other meta information.
- ◆ You can override the global data by entering metadata for specific menu items. Entering this metadata is done in the **Metadata Options** panel in the **Edit Menu Item** (or **New Menu Item**) screen.
- ◆ You can override global metadata or menu item metadata by adding metadata for a specific category. You can enter metadata for article categories and also for categories in other components, such as contact categories.
- ◆ Finally, you can set metadata on the level of individual articles. These override global, menu item, or category metadata.

Now that you can set metadata on four levels, do you need to use them all? It's a good idea to set global metadata, as this provides search engines with general information on the nature of your site. You can choose to set metadata for specific menu items, categories, and individual pages if these are important from an SEO point of view. However, there will probably be many pages that you don't have to bother adding metadata for. For example, a site policy page or a disclaimer article are probably much less important than specific pages that describe the services or products you want to sell.



Using metadata tags specifically for social media

Copying and pasting URLs and sharing them using Facebook is a common practice these days. Facebook uses specific meta tags that can add more meaningful data to the the URLs pasted from your site, making the resulting hyperlink more attractive and inviting. To add metadata tags specifically for Facebook links (called Open Graph metadata), several Joomla extensions are available. For more information, visit <http://extensions.joomla.org/extensions/site-management/seo-a-metadata/open-graph>.

Have a go hero – find metadata to fit your site

All that bad art business is okay for the example site, but what particular metadata description and keywords will fit your particular site best? First, do a little research and use the Google keyword tool mentioned earlier (or a similar tool) to get a few keyword ideas. Another way to get going is to have a look at how others do it—what kind of keywords and descriptions do similar sites use? Of course, you won't copy that text (as that will be of little use in making your site a unique source of information), but it may inspire you.

To explore metadata, point your browser to a site you'd like to explore and select the option that allows you to look under the hood of the current website; it's probably called something like *View Page Source*. A new browser window or tab will open showing the HTML source code of the current page. You'll find the meta tags in the `<head>` section of the document.



Don't forget to choose the perfect site name

One of the first things you do when you set up a new site is enter a name for it. You'll be prompted to enter a name when installing Joomla!; after that, you can change this text in the **Global Configuration** screen. It's a good idea to think very carefully about the site name, as this will appear in the browser title bar of the home page.

Using search engine friendly URLs

So far, we've focused on SEO techniques that you can apply when writing and formatting articles and when adding metadata. Another technique that can make search engines pick up the content of your site more easily is to make your URLs clear and readable.

You don't have to do anything to make this happen. By default, the **Search Engine Friendly URLs** option is set to **Yes**. In the **SEO Settings** window (found by navigating to **System | Global Configuration | Site Tab**), you can set the **Search Engine Friendly URLs** option to **Yes** if it is not already set. This is shown in the following screenshot:

SEO Settings	
Search Engine Friendly URLs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Use URL rewriting	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Adds Suffix to URL	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

The resulting URLs are readable and easy to understand. For example, `http://www.example.com/index.php/getting-started`. This is good news for site administrators, as they don't have to change any settings here. The default URLs are fine for search engines.

There's still some room for improvement. All default Joomla URLs still share the `index.php` file bit. You can get rid of this part of the URLs using the **Use URL Rewriting** option found in the **SEO Settings** section. However, this requires a bit more work than just setting this option to **Yes**. If your site is hosted on an Apache-powered web server (which is very common), you'll also have to rename the `htaccess.txt` file in the Joomla root folder on the web server to `.htaccess` (with a leading dot). Not all hosting providers allow you to use the `.htaccess` files or have the necessary Apache module installed. If you're not sure whether your account supports this, check with your hosting provider. If your web host runs IIS web server software, consult the documentation at [http://docs.joomla.org/Enabling_Search_Engine_Friendly_\(SEF\)_URLs_on_IIS](http://docs.joomla.org/Enabling_Search_Engine_Friendly_(SEF)_URLs_on_IIS).

By setting the **Add Suffix to URL** option to **Yes**, the HTML suffix is added to the URLs. This is recommended because this makes the Joomla output look like pages in static sites. Search engines tend to prefer static pages to dynamic output, which is likely to change all the time.



What if the pretty URLs function doesn't work? First, check whether you've renamed `htaccess.txt` file properly to `.htaccess` (mind the leading dot!). If you still get error messages when checking out the frontend of the site, it's possible that your web server doesn't support the advanced requirements of the second option (using `mod_rewrite`). To check this, go to **System | System Information** and click on the **PHP Information** tab. Search that page for `mod_rewrite`; it should be mentioned under **Loaded Modules**. If it's not, you should see if setting only the **Search Engine-Friendly URLs** option of the **SEO Settings** window to **Yes** does the trick.

Adding extra links to the site's content

Search engines rate your site higher if it's an active part of the World Wide Web community. That means it's good to create links to other sites (outbound links) that offer relevant quality content on related subject matter.

Of course, it's great if other quality sites contain links to your site. One way to get the world to notice your site is to notify Google, Bing, and others that they're welcome to index your content; all search engines have a service that allows you to submit your site. Another way to get others to link to your site is by submitting your site to several useful directories. Other sites or blogs might want to link to your site if you offer good and relevant content. You can also consider writing articles for related sites, on the condition that these sites allow you to link back to your site.

It's also worthwhile to add internal links (that is, links within your site). By adding these, you'll make it easier for both visitors and search engines to find your content. You can manually create links in your articles, but Joomla also allows you to automatically create internal hyperlinks. It allows you to set all article titles to be hyperlinks to the main article text, and it enables you to dynamically create lists of hyperlinks. A great way to add more internal links to groups of content is using the Joomla tags system. By adding tags to articles (or other content), you automatically create internal hyperlinks to related content.



By default, the titles of articles displayed with introduction texts (on the home page or on overview pages) are hyperlinks to the full articles. It's best to leave this setting unchanged, as it provides an extra link to the article contents (apart from **Read more** links).

Creating an automatically generated list of hyperlinks

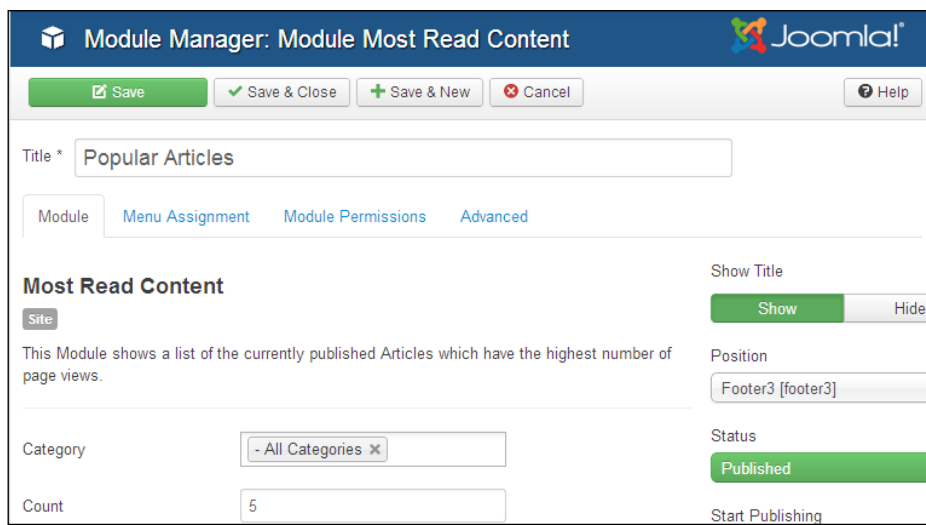
Another way to easily create internal hyperlinks in Joomla is by adding link lists. Joomla contains a few modules allowing you to add different hyperlink lists, for example, a list of links to the most popular articles on the site or to the articles that have been added most recently.

Time for action – adding a list of links to popular articles

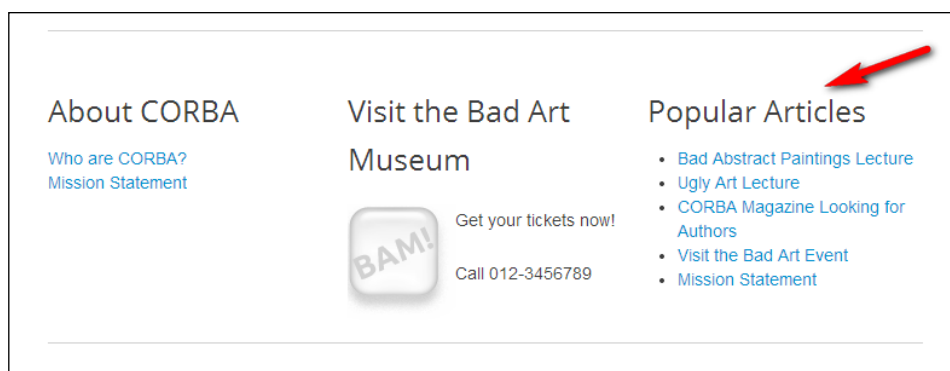
Let's add a list of links to popular articles on the example site. This can be done as follows:

1. Navigate to **Extensions | Module Manager**. Click on **New**.
2. Select the **Most Read Content** module. In the **Module Most Read Content** screen, enter the details for this module. In the **Title** field, enter `Popular Articles`.

3. In the **Position** field, select the **Footer3 [footer3]** option to show this module at the bottom right-hand position of the Ice Future template (covered in the previous chapter). This is shown in the following screenshot:



4. Leave the other settings as they are. By default, the settings in the **Menu Assignment** tab will make the module display on all pages. The basic options are set to show a list of five hyperlinks from all articles.
5. Click on **Save** and then click on **View Site** to see the output on the frontend of the site. This is shown in the following screenshot:



What just happened?

You added the **Most Read Content** module to your site to display a list of popular articles. These are the articles that have the highest number of page views. Having lists like this on your site is again good for both your real visitors (who'll be able to find out what other visitors like to read) and for your robot visitors (who appreciate regularly updated links to different articles within the site).

Have a go hero – adding link lists

Have a look at the other link list modules that Joomla contains, such as the **Latest News** module (that displays recently added articles) and the **Articles - Related Articles** module (that shows a list of articles related to the current article that the visitor is seeing). Articles are considered to be related if they share at least one keyword in the article's metadata information. If you've got lots of content on your site, it's a good idea to offer visitors several ways to find popular, related, or recently added articles.



Using a site map

A site map is a one-page overview of your site's content containing links to all pages. Adding a site map will automatically create internal links to all pages, and both real visitors and search engine robots will benefit from it as it presents a clear overview of the site's content. In small sites that have a simple, basic structure (such as our example site), a site map doesn't add much value. However, when you've got lots of categories and lots of content, displaying a clickable tree structure of the site content can be useful. You may want to experiment with Joomla's built-in basic site map capabilities. There's a **Menu Item Type** option available called **List All Categories**. It displays a list of hyperlinks to all article's categories. However, it doesn't display contents other than just plain articles. If you need a more powerful sitemap, try out the Xmap extension found at <http://extensions.joomla.org>.

Adding microdata to your content

By adding microdata to the HTML code of your web pages, you can help search engines to understand the actual content of those pages. Microdata is a set of HTML tags that add structured information to text strings on the page. They explain, for example, that two words used on the page are a person's first name and surname, or that another string of words is that person's job title, or that a particular place mentioned on the page is an address, or a region, and so on.

Microdata isn't displayed on the web page, but it's read by search engines. By offering information (such as names and places) in a structured way, microdata allows search engines to interpret content and display it in a more meaningful way in search results lists. This gives a better preview of the sites listed. The idea behind microdata is that people searching the Web should find the content they're looking for easily.

Joomla 3.3 will automatically add microdata on your Joomla-powered site. By default, in the **Article Manager** options, the **Enable microdata** option is set to **Yes**, as shown in the following screenshot. This means Joomla will add structured information, such as author details, to its HTML output in a format that can be read by search engines.



To find out more on microdata, you can visit <https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/176035?hl=en> and <http://schema.org/docs/gs.html>.

Redirecting visitors after pages have been moved

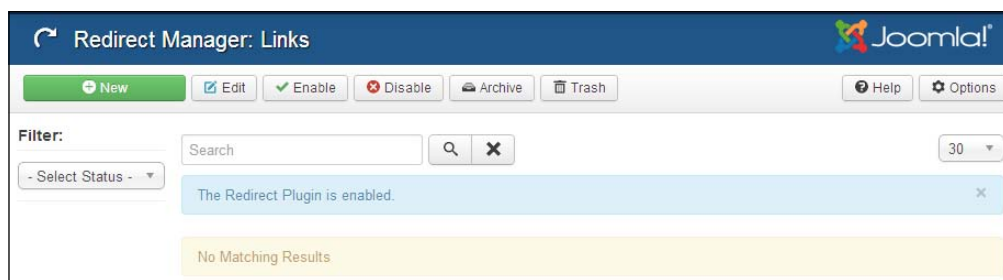
Joomla features a component called Redirect Manager. It works in conjunction with a plugin called Redirect, which is enabled by default. The Redirect Manager and plugin keep track of any **Page Not Found** errors that occur when visitors are trying to visit pages in the current domain that have been removed or deleted. On the **Redirect Manager** screen, these URL errors are listed. This way, you can keep an eye on the old URLs that still attract visitors, but just generate **Page Not Found** errors. For each of these URLs, you can choose to redirect future visitors to the right pages.

This feature can be quite useful, especially if you're migrating to a new site. URLs from your old site are bound to change, resulting in broken links from other sites that still point to expired URLs. Using URL redirection will also help search engine spiders to detect valuable content, instead of just hitting a dead-end error page.

Time for action – creating page redirects

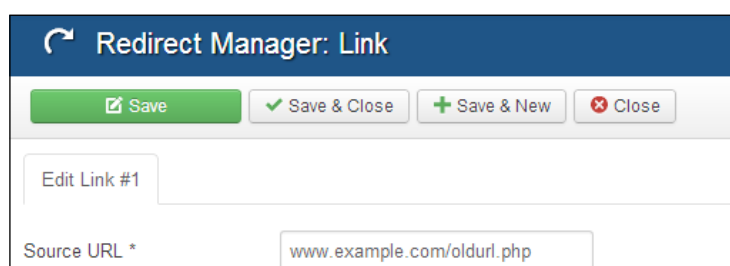
Let's assume you've replaced your old site with a brand new one. We'll try out how the Redirect Manager component works by entering a nonexisting, old URL and telling the Redirect Manager what new page it should show instead. This can be done as follows:

1. Navigate to **Extensions | Plugins** and search for the Redirect plugin. Click on its status icon to toggle the status to **Enabled**.
2. Go to **Components | Redirect** to open the **Redirect Manager: Links** screen, as shown in the following screenshot:

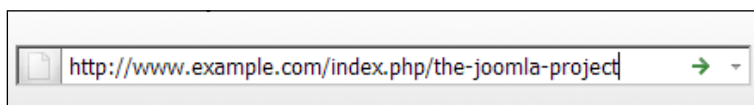


Through the course of time, this screen will automatically be populated with broken links (expired URLs). These are URLs that visitors have entered or clicked on in their browser and that have generated an error page. Clicking on an expired URL will allow you to enter a redirect URL. However, if you've just installed Joomla or if your site isn't live yet, the **Redirect Manager: Links** screen won't contain any expired URLs.

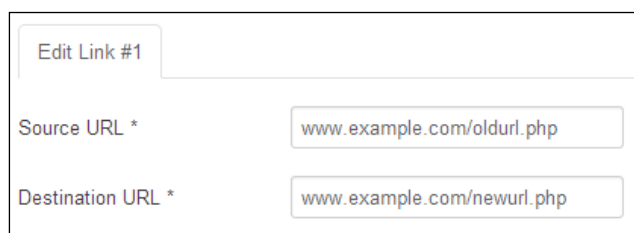
3. Click on **New** to open the **Redirect Manager: Link** screen.
4. In the **Source URL** field, enter the outdated URL. Make sure that you don't enter any wrong URL; it should contain the domain name from the current site. To test the redirect functionality, enter the URL of any of the articles on the current site. Replace `www.example.com` in the example in the following screenshot with your own domain name:



5. To find the URL you want to redirect visitors to, navigate to another page (the new page) to copy the URL from the browser address field. To do this, click on **View Site** to open the website in a new browser tab. Navigate to the page you want to redirect visitors to. Don't copy the example URL in the following screenshot; navigate to an existing page on your site. This is shown in the following screenshot:



6. Copy the URL in the browser URL field by pressing *Ctrl* + *C*. The URL data is now stored in the clipboard.
7. Click on the browser tab that takes you back to the backend of your site, displaying the **Redirect Manager: Link** screen again.
8. In the **Destination URL** field, paste the copied URL by pressing *Ctrl* + *V*. This is shown in the following screenshot:



9. In the **Comment** field, you can enter a short note about the nature of this redirect. For example, *redirecting from the old About Us page*.
10. You can leave the status unchanged. The redirect is turned on by default, so that's OK.
11. Click on **Save & Close**. Now, unpublish the article whose URL you have entered in the **Source URL** field. This way, Joomla will have to redirect you when you try to visit this page.
12. To test the redirect, navigate to the frontend of the site and enter the expired URL. You shouldn't get any error messages now; you're immediately taken to the new URL.

Getting to know more about your site's traffic

In this chapter, you've focused on optimizing your site to get search engines to notice its content and to entice people to explore it and to visit your site regularly. However, the best way to improve your sites visibility is to get to know your visitors really well. Where do they come from? What search words do they use to end up on your site? What are the articles they favor? A great free tool to help you discover all there is to know on your site traffic is Google Analytics.

Using Google Analytics will help you understand what makes your visitors tick and can make it easier to effectively adapt your content, the language, the keywords you use, and even your choice of subjects to what your visitors care for. It's easy to use Google Analytics to analyze Joomla sites, and it's free. Make sure to get an account at www.google.com, then go to www.google.com/analytics and sign up for this service. Add the domain you want to keep track of. Google will then verify whether you're the domain owner (you'll have to upload a specific file to your site). In Joomla, you need to add a code provided by Google to your template's HTML file. This will enable Google to start analyzing and keep track of your site traffic. To get a quick overview of the possibilities of Google Analytics, visit <http://www.google.com/analytics/tour.html>.

More SEO resources

Using your favorite search engine to do a web search for Joomla SEO will help you on your way when you want to know more about optimization techniques. If you want to delve a little deeper into the principles of SEO for your website, make sure you have a look at the Google starter guide on SEO at <http://www.google.com/webmasters/docs/search-engine-optimization-starter-guide.pdf>.

You might also want to have a look at the following sites:

- ◆ Read through the SEO tips for Joomla on the Joomla Blogger site at <http://www.joomlablogger.net/seo>.
- ◆ Take a look at the Joomla community magazine on SEO at <http://magazine.joomla.org/issues/issue-feb-2012/item/675-5-great-SEO-Resources-Be-Your-Very-Own-SEO-Expert-for-Free>.
- ◆ Browse the SEO, metadata, and SEF categories of the Joomla extensions directory at <http://extensions.joomla.org> to get an idea of the many extensions available. This will assist you in optimizing your site's search engine visibility.

Pop quiz – test your knowledge of Joomla! search engine optimization

Q1. What's the use of adding metadata descriptions to the articles of your website?

1. Site visitors can quickly find out what your site is all about.
2. Search engines can display the descriptions in their search output.
3. They're not really useful, because search engines ignore descriptions.

Q2. What do you do to optimize search engine friendly URLs in Joomla?

1. You have to rename Joomla files on the web server.
2. You have to check the appropriate SEO settings in the **Global Configuration** screen (and maybe rename a file on the web server).
3. You have to install a special SEO extension.

Q3. What kind of links are important for SEO?

1. Links from other sites to your site and links from your site to other sites.
2. Links within your site.
3. Links to, from, and within your site.

Q4. What's the SEO benefit of the Joomla's Redirect component?

1. It allows you to redirect visitors and search engines that visit your site through links to outdated URLs.
2. It allows you to analyze traffic (visits) on your site.
3. It allows you to direct visitors to the most popular pages.

Summary

In this chapter, we've covered some search engine optimization techniques that will help in getting your site's content picked up by search engines. We learned the following topics:

- ◆ First of all, making sure your site contains valuable and relevant content is the best way to optimize search engine visibility.
- ◆ It's important to use the appropriate heading elements to organize the article text (such as H3, H4, H5, and H6). Another way to tell search engines what your site is about is by adding metadata.
- ◆ Joomla generates search engine friendly URLs; the browser address bar displays readable URLs that match the content of the page.

- ◆ Linking is very important. It's good to link to other sites, it's great if other sites link to your site, and it's also useful to create links within your site. Joomla allows you to automatically create internal hyperlinks—lists of links to popular or recently updated articles.
- ◆ The Redirect Manager in Joomla helps you to direct visitors and search engine spiders from expired URLs to new URLs.

A

Keeping the Site Secure

You've created a great site, customized its design, and added valuable content. That's an investment worth protecting. Rest assured, most Joomla sites will run for years without any hiccups. However, it's a good idea to take some precautions to minimize the risk of your website getting broken into. A few simple measures can make it a lot harder for malicious hackers to get access to your site and mess up its contents. Backing up data regularly can get you out of trouble fast if you run into hardware disasters (such as crashing hard drives) or software trouble (such as installing extensions that somehow mess up your existing site). Fortunately, these problems are rare, but it's definitely worth the little extra time investment needed to minimize risks.

How can you protect your site and how do you get your site up and running again when something has gone wrong? This appendix contains some essential tips and best practices to keep your site in perfect health (and save yourself some headaches too).

Choosing a web host that meets your security requirements

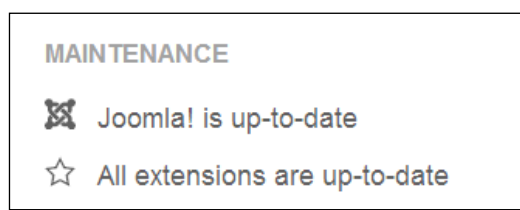
In this appendix, you'll learn what you, as the site administrator, can do to keep your site safe. However, there are also some basic but critical security measures that your web hosting company should take. You'll probably have a shared hosting account, where multiple sites are hosted on one server computer and each site has access to their part of the available disk space and resources. Although this is much cheaper than hiring a dedicated server to host your site, it does involve some security risks. Good web hosting companies take precautions to minimize these risks. When selecting your web host, it's worth checking if they have a good reputation of keeping their security up to standards. The official Joomla resources site (<http://resources.joomla.org/directory/support-services/hosting.html>) features hosting companies that fully meet the security requirements of a typical Joomla-powered site.

Tip 1 – Download from reliable sources

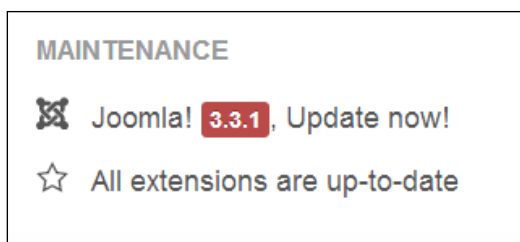
To avoid installing corrupted versions, it's a good idea to download the Joomla software itself only from the official website (www.joomla.org) or from reliable local Joomla community sites. This is also true when downloading third-party extensions. Use only extensions that have a good reputation; you can check the reviews at www.extensions.joomla.org. Preferably, download extensions only from the original developer's website or from Joomla community websites that have a good reputation.

Tip 2 – Update regularly

The Joomla development team regularly releases updates to fix bugs and security issues. Fortunately, Joomla makes keeping your site up to date effortless. In the backend control panel, you'll find a **MAINTENANCE** section in the quick icons column displaying the current status of both the Joomla software itself and of installed extensions. This is shown in the following screenshot:



If updates are found, the quick icon text will prompt you to update by adding an **Update now!** link, as shown in the following screenshot:



Clicking on this link takes you to the **Joomla! Update** component (which can also be found by navigating to **Components | Joomla! Update**). In this window, you'll see the details of the update. Just click on **Install the update**; the process is fully automated.



Before you upgrade Joomla to an updated version, it's a good idea to create a backup of your current site. If anything goes wrong, you can quickly have it up and running again. See the *Tip 6 – Protect files and directories* section in this appendix for more information on creating backups.

Joomla! Update

Purge Cache

A Joomla! update was found

Installed Joomla! version	3.3
Latest Joomla! version	3.3.1
Update package URL	http://developer.joomla.org/cms-packages/Joomla-Update_Package.zip
Installation method	Write files directly

Install the update

If updates for installed extensions are available, you'll also see a notice stating this in the **MAINTENANCE** section of the control panel. However, you can also check for updates manually; in the backend, navigate to **Extensions | Extension Manager** and click on **Update** in the menu on the left-hand side. Click on **Find Updates** to search for updates.

After you've clicked on the **Find Updates** button, you'll see a notice informing you whether updates are available or not. Select the update you want to install and click on the **Update** button. Be patient; you may not see much happening for a while. After completion, a message is displayed that the available updates have been installed successfully.

The update functionality only works for extensions that support it. It's to be expected that this feature will be widely supported by extension developers; but for other extensions, you'll still have to manually check for updates by visiting the extension developer's website.



The Joomla update packages are stored in your website's `tmp` directory before the update is installed on your site. After installation, you can remove these files from the `tmp` directory to avoid running into disc space problems.

Tip 3 – Choose a safe administrator username

When you install Joomla, you also choose and enter a username for your login account (the critical account of the almighty Super User). Although you can enter any administrator username when installing Joomla, many people enter a generic administrator username, for example, `admin`. However, this username is far too common, and therefore poses a security risk; hackers only have to guess your password to gain access to your site.

If you haven't come up with something different during the installation process, you can change the administrator username later on. You can do this using the following steps:

1. In the backend of the site, navigate to **Users | User Manager**.
2. Select the **Super User** user record.
3. In the **Edit Profile** screen, enter a new **Login Name**. Be creative!
4. Click on **Save & Close** to apply changes.

Log out and log in to the backend with the new username.

Tip 4 – Pick a strong password

Pick an administrator password that isn't easy to guess. It's best to have a password that's not too short; 8 or more characters is fine. Use a combination of uppercase letters, lowercase letters, numbers, and special characters. This should guarantee a strong password.

Don't use the same username and password you use for other online accounts, and regularly change your password. You can create a new password anytime in the backend **User Manager** section in the same way as you enter or change a username (see *Tip 2 – Update regularly*).

Tip 5 – Use Two-Factor authentication

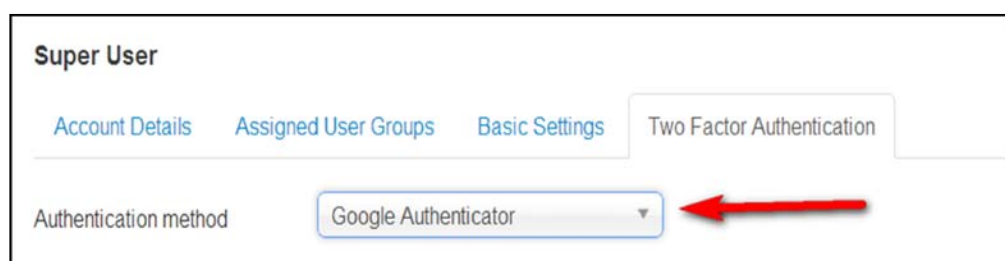
By default, logging in to the administrative interface of your site just requires the correct combination of username and password. A much more secure way to log in is using the Two-Factor authentication system, a recent addition to Joomla. It requires you to log in with not just your username and password, but also with a six-digit security code. To get this code, you need to use the Google Authenticator app, which is available for most Android, iOS, Blackberry, Windows 8, and Windows Mobile devices. The app doesn't store the six-digit code; it changes the code every 30 seconds.

Two-Factor authentication is a great solution, but it does require a little extra effort every time you log in to your site. You need to have the app ready every time you log in to generate a new access code. However, you can selectively choose which users will require this system. You can decide, for example, that only the site administrator has to log in using Two-Factor authentication.

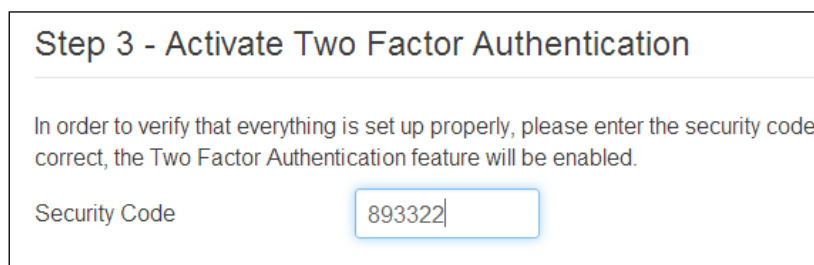
Enabling the Two-Factor authentication system of Joomla!

To enable Joomla's Two-Factor authentication, where a user has to enter an additional secret key when logging in to the site, follow these steps:

1. To use this system on your site, first enable the Two-Factor authentication plugin that comes with Joomla. In the Joomla backend, navigate to **Extensions | Plugin Manager**, select **Two Factor Authentication – Google Authenticator**, and enable it.
2. Next, download and install the Google Authenticator app for your device.
3. Once this is set up, you can set the authentication procedure for any user in the Joomla backend. In the user manager section, click on the account name. Then, click on the **Two Factor Authentication** tab and select **Google Authenticator** from the **Authentication method** dropdown. This is shown in the following screenshot:



4. Joomla will display the account name and the key for this account. Enter these account details in the Google Authenticator app on your device.
5. The app will generate a security code. In the Joomla backend, enter this in the **Security Code** field, as shown in the following screenshot:



Save your changes. From now on, the Joomla login screen will ask you for your username, password, and a secret key. This is shown in the following screenshot:



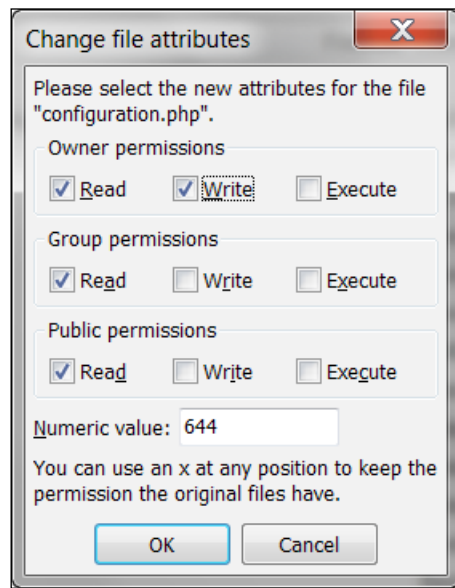
There are other secure login systems available besides the Google Authenticator app. Joomla also supports Yubico's YubiKey, a USB stick that generates an additional password every time it is used. After entering their usual password, the user inserts the YubiKey into the USB port of the computer and presses the YubiKey button. Automatically, the extra one-time password will be entered in Joomla's **Secret Key** field. For more information on YubiKey, visit <http://www.yubico.com>.

Tip 6 – Protect files and directories

Obviously, you don't want everybody to be able to access the Joomla files and folders on the web server. You can protect files and folders by setting access permissions using the **Change Mode (CHMOD)** commands. Basically, the CHMOD settings tell the web server who has access to a file or folder and who is allowed to read it, write to it, or to execute a file (run it as a program).

Once your Joomla site is set up and everything works OK, you can use CHMOD to change permissions. You don't use Joomla to change the CHMOD settings; these are set with FTP software (for more information on FTP programs, see *Chapter 2, Getting Joomla! Up and Running*). You can make this work using the following steps:

1. In your FTP program, right-click on the name of the file or directory you want to protect. In this example, we'll use the open source FTP program FileZilla.
2. In the right-click menu, select **File Permissions**.
3. You'll be presented with a pop-up screen. Here, you can check permissions and change them by selecting the appropriate options, as shown in the following screenshot:



As you can see, it's possible to set permissions for the file owner (that's you), for group members (that's likely to be only you too), and for the public (everyone else). The public permissions are the tricky part; you should restrict public permissions as much as possible.

When changing the permission settings, the file permissions number (the value in the **Numeric value:** field in the previous screenshot) will change accordingly. Every combination of settings has its particular number. In the previous example, this number is **644**.

4. Click on **OK** to execute the CHMOD command and set file permissions.

Setting file permissions

What files should you protect and what CHMOD settings should you choose? Here are a few pointers:

- ◆ By default, permissions for files are set to 644. Don't change this; it's a safe value.
- ◆ For directories, a safe setting is 750 (which doesn't allow any public access). However, some extensions may need access to certain directories. In such cases, the 750 setting may result in error messages. In this case, set permissions to 755.
- ◆ Never leave permissions for a file or directory set to 777. This allows everybody to write data to it.



You can also block direct access to critical directories using a `.htaccess` file. This is a special file containing instructions for the Apache web server. Among other things, it tells the web server who's allowed access to the directory contents. You can add a `.htaccess` file to any folder on the server by using specific instructions. This is another way to instruct the web server to restrict access. Check the Joomla security documentation at www.joomla.org for instructions.

Tip 7 – Use extensions to secure your site

There are many things you yourself can do to keep your site safe, but there are also dedicated security software available. Just like you've probably installed a firewall and antivirus software on your computer, you can install security extensions to add a layer of protection to your site and prevent intrusions and hacker attacks.

The Joomla extensions site has a special security category at <http://extensions.joomla.org/extensions/access-a-security>. Following are just a few examples to give you an idea of what's available:

- ◆ A relatively simple plugin is AdminExile, which prevents hackers from gaining access to the backend of your site by blocking the possibility of using the `www.mysite.com/administrator` login page. Users can only get to the login page using a secret key.
- ◆ A much more elaborate system (a combination of a component and plugin) is Securitycheck. It functions as a web firewall, performs security vulnerabilities checks for components, and much more.

It's a good idea to browse the **Access & Security** section of the website now and then to see what's available and read user reviews.



Don't install too many extensions

Joomla makes it very easy to install new extensions and try them out on your site. However, it's best to limit the number of extensions you add to your site. Potentially, every piece of code added to your site creates an extra security risk. If you've tried an extension and decided not to use it, uninstall it by navigating to **Extensions | Extension Manager | Manage | Uninstall**.

Using the Joomla! Captcha plugin to avoid spam

To prevent spam bots from using site forms (such as the contact, login, and registration forms), consider using the new ReCaptcha extension that comes with Joomla. This plugin requires anyone filling out a form to copy a few words which are displayed in an image of distorted text before they are allowed to actually send the form data.

To enable ReCaptcha spam control in Joomla, you need a Google account. Perform the following steps:

1. Go to www.google.com/recaptcha to sign up and get two unique codes, which are the ReCaptcha keys. These keys are restricted to the domain name you specify.
2. Copy these codes to Joomla. In the backend, navigate to **Extensions | Plug-in Manager | Captcha - ReCaptcha** and enter both codes.
3. Finally, activate the captcha system by navigating to **System | Global Configuration | Captcha Settings** and select **Captcha - ReCaptcha**. From now on, Joomla will display a ReCaptcha field on every form that you add through the **Contacts** component. This is shown in the following screenshot:



Tip 8 – Have a backup ready

Although this is one of the last tips mentioned, it may be the most important one. Whatever precautions you take, be prepared for catastrophes. Always have a backup ready to restore your site to its most current healthy state.

There are a few great Joomla extensions that automate the backup process. A very popular and user-friendly one is Akeeba Backup. It will back up all necessary files (all Joomla files and the database contents) to recover your site. Akeeba will allow you to restore the backup file to any location (not just to its original location).

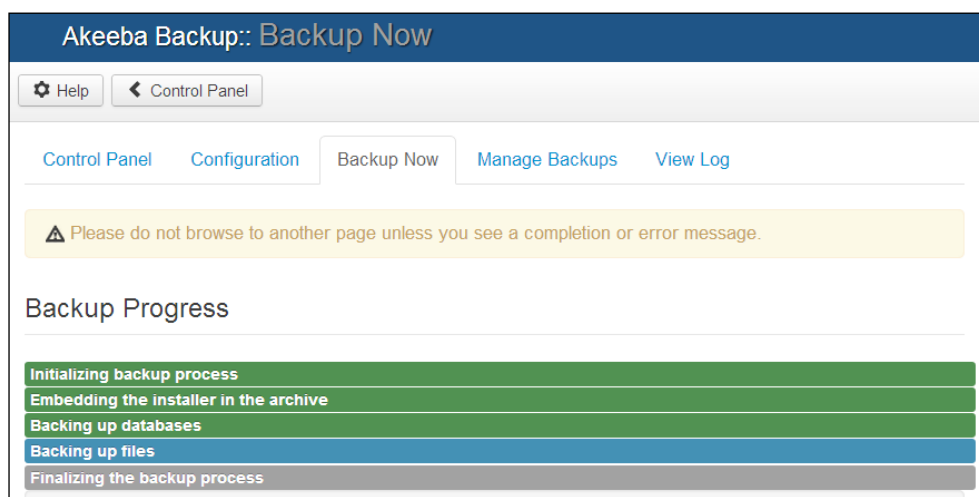


Akeeba makes it easy to create working backups of your online site(s) on your own computer. In *Chapter 2, Getting Joomla! Up and Running*, you can read how to install Joomla on a local web server (see the section *Installing Joomla! on your own computer*). Just as you can put a backup back online on its original location, you can restore it on your own computer. This way, you can back up your website and regularly restore a copy on your own computer to test it and make sure the backup is okay.


Creating a backup with Akeeba Backup

To install Akeeba Backup and create a backup, perform the following steps:

1. Go to <http://www.akeebabackup.com> to download the Akeeba Backup core extension file. Navigate to **Extensions | Extension Manager** to install the extension. Alternatively, you can use the one-click installer in Joomla. In the **Extension Manager** screen, on the **Install from Web** tab, search for Akeeba and click on **Install**.
2. After the installation, navigate to **Components | Akeeba Backup**. In the post-installation configuration screen, click on **Apply these preferences** to confirm the default settings. The Akeeba configuration wizard will now run a series of tests to optimize the server configuration. This may take several minutes, but it's something that needs to be done only once. Finally, the **Finished Benchmarking** screen is displayed.
3. Click on **Backup Now** to make a backup using the default settings. In the next screen, start a new backup by again clicking on the **Backup Now** button. The backup starts immediately and the **Backup Progress** screen is displayed, as shown in the following screenshot:



4. Backing up your site may take a while, depending on the size of the website and the speed of the web server. Although a progress bar is displayed, you may not see anything happen on the screen for several seconds. Don't close the browser screen before you see a completion message.
5. When the backup is complete, you'll see the message **Backup Completed Successfully**.
6. To save the backup file on your computer, click on **Manage Backups**. Select the backup file and then click on the **Part 00** button in the **Manage & Download** column, as shown in the following screenshot. A file with a JPA extension will be downloaded to your computer. A **JoomlaPack Archive (JPA)** file is a compressed file in the special archive format used by Akeeba Backup.

ID	Description	Start	Duration	Status	Origin	Type	Profile	Size	Manage & Download
2	Backup taken on Tuesday, 29 April 2014 07:13	2014-04-29	00:04:48	OK	Backend	Full site backup	1	19.50 Mb	site-071318.jpa  Part 00

If you have any problems downloading the backup file in your browser, you can also use your FTP program. This is a more reliable method to transfer large files to your computer. Navigate using your FTP program to the root folder of the website. You'll find the backup file in the `administrator/components/com_akeeba/backup` folder.

Restoring a backup file

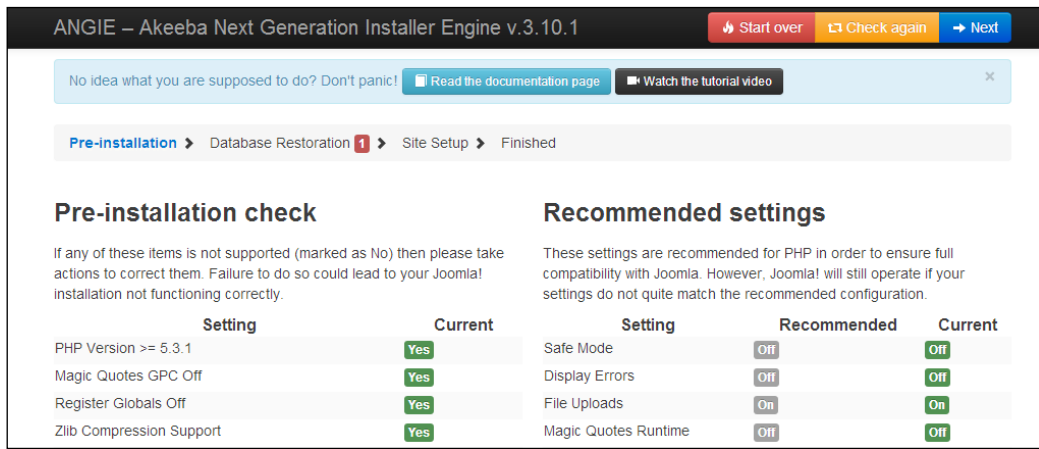
To restore a backup file, perform the following steps:

1. To decompress the backup file on the web server, you need a special Akeeba utility called Akeeba Kickstart. Download it from www.akeebabackup.com. Extract the ZIP file containing the `kickstart.php` file and several other files in a folder on your computer.
2. Using an FTP program, upload the following files to their original location:
 - The JPA file (the backup file created by Akeeba)
 - The decompressed files of Akeeba Kickstart
3. Upload these files to the web server directory where you want to restore Joomla. If you want to restore the site to another location, upload the files there.
4. When all files have finished uploading, point your browser to the URL of the original site (or the new location) after adding `kickstart.php` at the end of the URL. For example, `www.yoursitename.com/kickstart.php`.
5. Akeeba Kickstart will start with a warning screen. Close this pop-up screen.

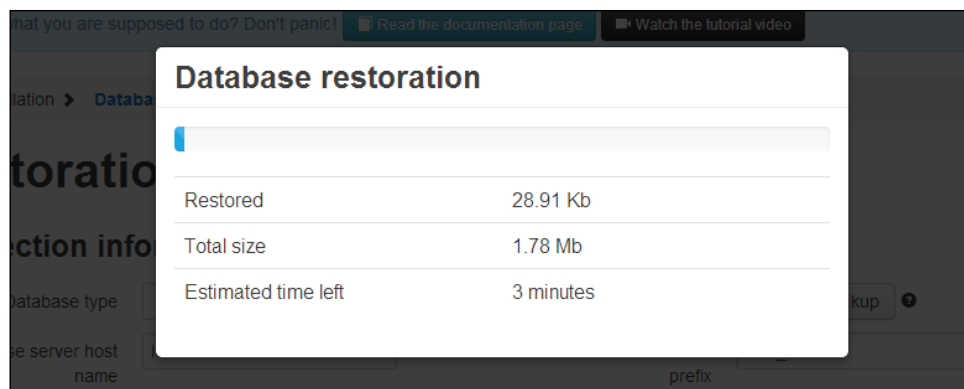
- Click on **Start** to run Kickstart using its default settings and begin decompressing the backup file. This may take some time. The decompression progress is shown in the following screenshot:



- As soon as this is done, click on **Run the installer**. The Akeeba Backup installer screen will appear, as shown in the following screenshot:



- When you're installing to a location other than the one you backed up from, Akeeba will display a warning and allow you to enter the new database details. When this is done, click on the **Next** button to see the database restoration progress. This is shown in the following screenshot:



- Click on **OK** to proceed to the next step. In the **Site Setup** screen, check if the site details (such as the site name) are okay. Then, click on **Next**. In the **Finish** screen, click on the **Remove the installation directory** link. You'll see a notice confirming the deletion. Click on **OK**. This will take you to the restored site.

You're done! To enter the administrative interface, as usual, add `/administrator` to the site URL.



There are other ways to restore websites using Akeeba Backup; whether these are useful in your situation depends on the web server configuration. Not all web servers support Akeeba's more advanced features. To find out more, have a look at the step-by-step tutorial and extensive documentation on Akeeba Backup at <https://www.akeebabackup.com/documentation.html>.

Tip 9 – Stay informed!

Obviously, there's much more to learn about keeping your site secure. For more tips, have a look at the following links:

- ◆ Joomla's administrator security checklist at http://docs.joomla.org/Category:Security_Checklist.
- ◆ The official Joomla security forum at <http://forum.joomla.org/viewforum.php?f=714>.

To be up to date with the latest news on Joomla security issues, visit <http://developer.joomla.org/security>. If you use a news reader software, you can subscribe to Joomla security announcements there.

B

Creating a Multilingual Site

One of the advantages of the current version of Joomla is that it makes it really easy to create a multilingual website, without installing extensions. This is especially the case if you want to set up a multilingual site from scratch; while installing Joomla, you can follow a couple of extra steps to automatically install and enable the multilingual functionality. In this appendix, you'll find a complete walkthrough of the steps involved.

If you've already got a Joomla-powered site with content in one language and want to make it multilingual afterwards, a bit more effort is required. You need to add the required language packs and extensions yourself. You'll find more information on this procedure in the second part of this appendix.

Creating a new site with multilingual capabilities

In this example, let's assume you want to have a bilingual site. The default site should be in English. For users speaking another language, there should be a language switch that will give them access to the same content in a different language. In this case, we'll use Dutch as the second site language, but that's just for demonstration purposes. You can follow along with the steps mentioned in this section using any extra language(s).

Installing Joomla! with multilingual support

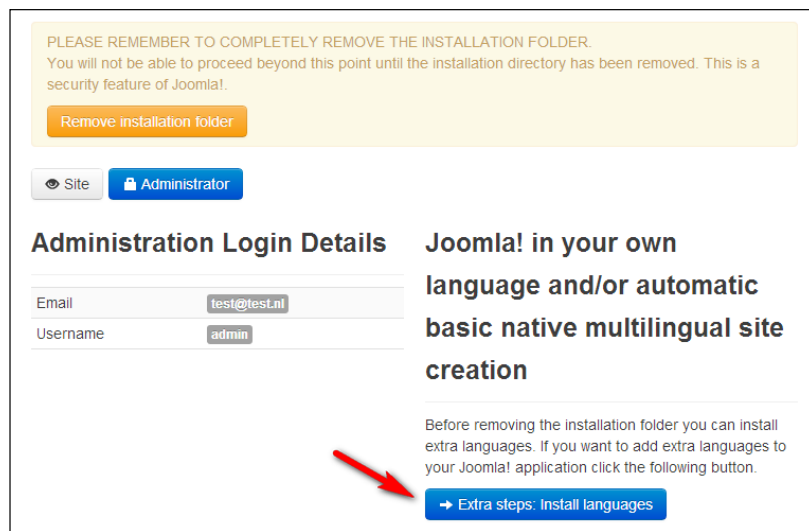
When you choose the appropriate settings in the installation wizard, Joomla will automatically create an empty site with multilingual capabilities. After the installation, you'll have separate home pages for as many languages as you choose, different menus for each language, and a language switcher to enable the visitor to select their preferred site language. Joomla will also create one content category for each installed language (which are the containers where you'll place the content for each language) and one article containing dummy content for each category. The result is a great base to start building your own multilingual site. Let's see how this works.

First, install Joomla by following the steps described in *Chapter 2, Getting Joomla! Up and Running*. You can follow the procedure up to the **Finalisation** screen (as described in the section *Time for action – running the Joomla! installation wizard*). From there on, you need to make the following specific choices:

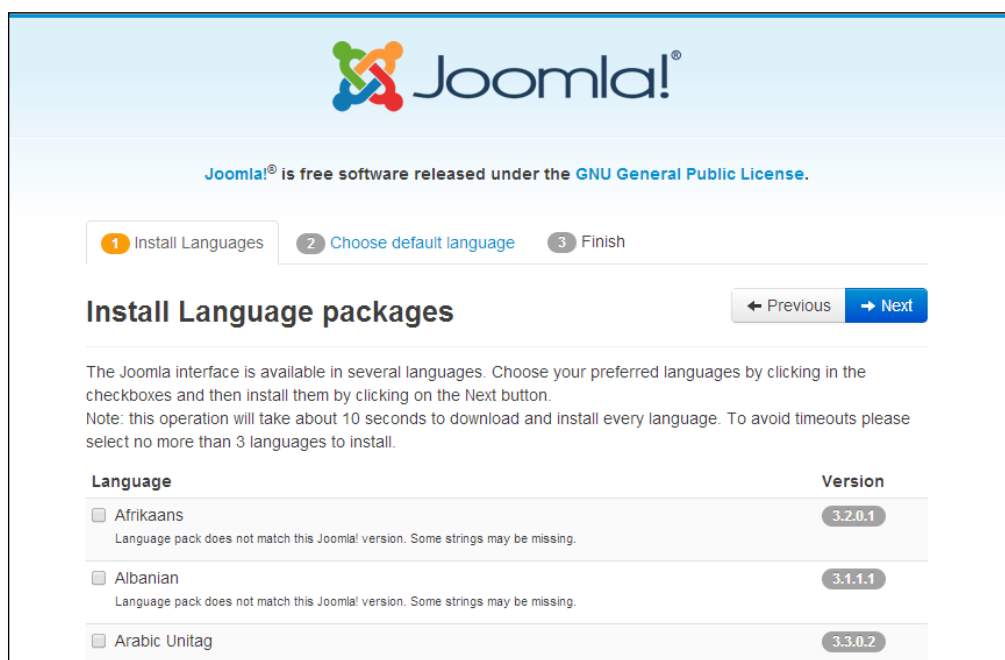
1. In the **Finalisation** screen, make sure you don't install any sample data. Select **None** in the **Install Sample Data** field, as shown in the following screenshot:




2. Continue the installation wizard till the final screen. Here, you are prompted to remove the installation folder. However, you should not click on the **Remove installation folder** button at the top, as this will end the installation with just one site language installed. Instead, click on the **Extra steps: Install languages** button you find in the bottom half of the screen, as shown in the following screenshot:



3. Clicking on the **Extra steps: Install languages** button will take you to the **Install Language packages** screen. Here, you can choose the languages you need on your multilingual site. This is shown in the following screenshot. The English language has already been installed, as this is the default language pack of the international Joomla version when it is downloaded from <http://www.joomla.org>.

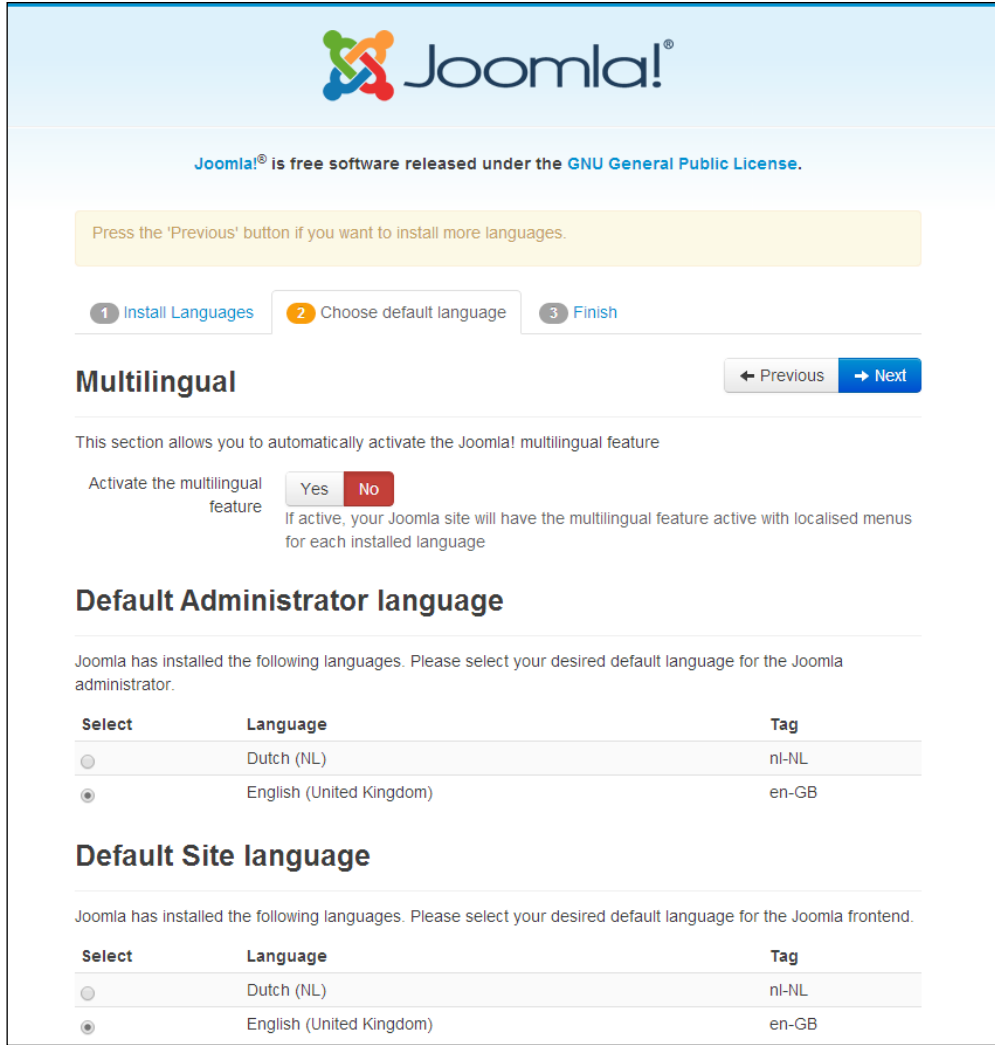


 The default English language pack is English (United Kingdom). If you need to use another English language pack, such as English (United States), you can install this separately.

In our case, we only need to select one additional language. In this example, scroll down until you see **Dutch** (Netherlands) and select this language. This is shown in the following screenshot:



4. Install this language by clicking on the **Next** button. After the selected language has been downloaded and added, you're taken to the second screen with the tab reading **Choose default language**, as shown in the following screenshot:



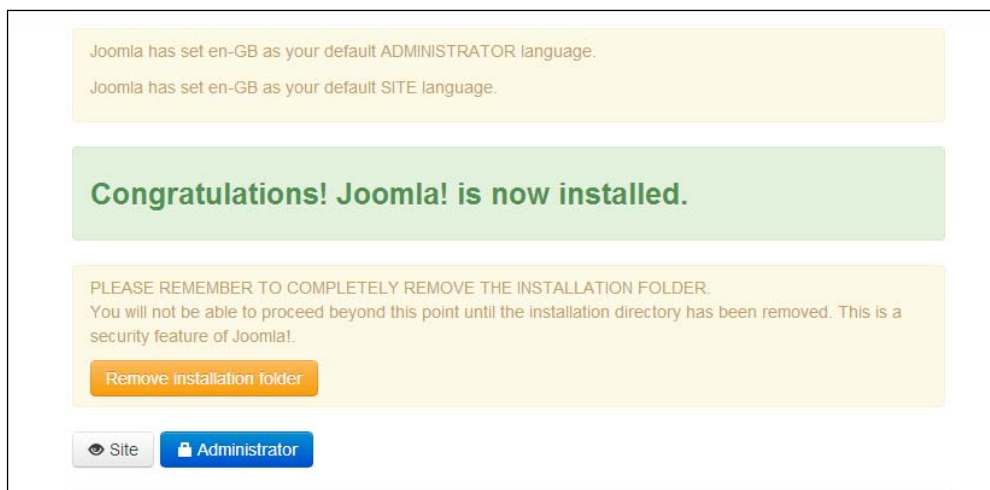
The screenshot shows the Joomla! installation interface. At the top is the Joomla! logo and the text "Joomla!® is free software released under the GNU General Public License." Below this is a yellow box with the instruction: "Press the 'Previous' button if you want to install more languages." A progress bar shows three steps: "1 Install Languages", "2 Choose default language" (which is highlighted), and "3 Finish". There are "Previous" and "Next" buttons. The main heading is "Multilingual". Below it, a text box says: "This section allows you to automatically activate the Joomla! multilingual feature". There is a toggle for "Activate the multilingual feature" with "Yes" and "No" options. Below the toggle, it says: "If active, your Joomla site will have the multilingual feature active with localised menus for each installed language". The next section is "Default Administrator language". It says: "Joomla has installed the following languages. Please select your desired default language for the Joomla administrator." Below this is a table with three columns: "Select", "Language", and "Tag".

Select	Language	Tag
<input type="radio"/>	Dutch (NL)	nl-NL
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	English (United Kingdom)	en-GB

The next section is "Default Site language". It says: "Joomla has installed the following languages. Please select your desired default language for the Joomla frontend." Below this is another table with three columns: "Select", "Language", and "Tag".

Select	Language	Tag
<input type="radio"/>	Dutch (NL)	nl-NL
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	English (United Kingdom)	en-GB

5. In the previous screen, the first option under the **Multilingual** heading is **Activate the multilingual feature**. For this option, select **Yes**. Now, the following extra options are displayed:
 - ❑ **Install localised content:** For this option, select **Yes**. This way, Joomla will automatically create a content category for each installed language and one dummy article in each category.
 - ❑ **Enable the language code plugin:** For this option, select **Yes**. This is helpful for search engine optimization, as this plugin adds the ability to use the appropriate language code in the HTML pages that Joomla generates.
6. In the **Default Administrator language** and **Default Site language** sections of this page, select the default language for the Joomla backend and frontend. In this example, we'll leave this set to **English (United Kingdom)**.
7. Finally, click on the **Next** button. You're taken to the final screen of the installation wizard. It states which languages you've installed. Now, click on the **Remove installation folder** button to proceed. This is shown in the following screenshot:

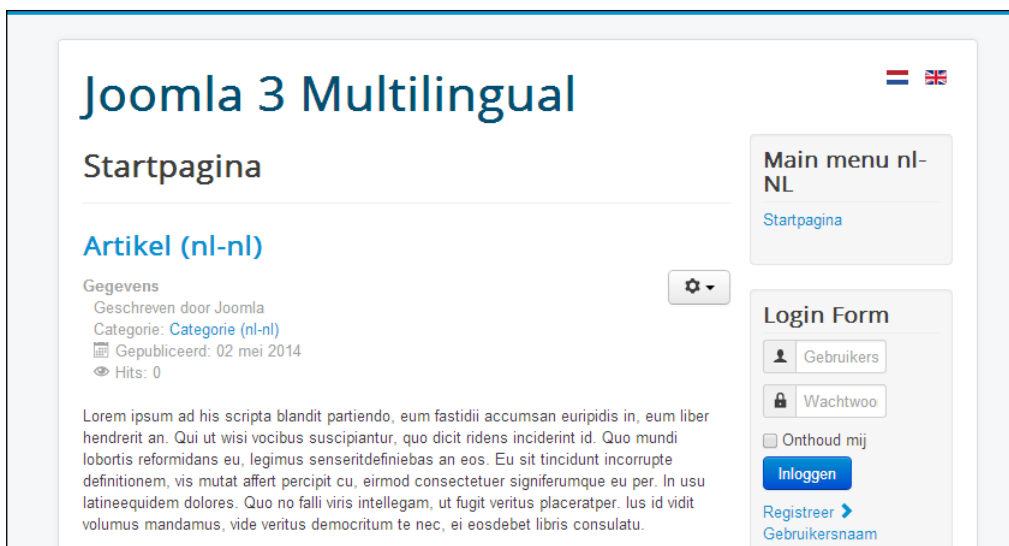


Exploring the frontend of the new multilingual site

By installing Joomla with its multilingual capabilities enabled, you've created a site that's mostly empty, but it does contain a few crucial extras. Point your browser to the newly installed site. It looks like the following screenshot:



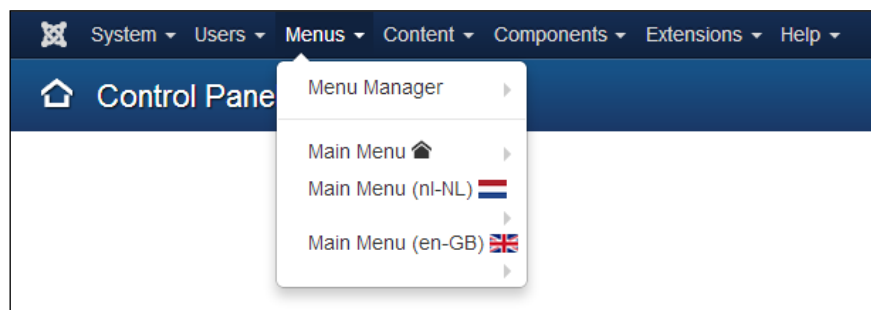
You'll notice that the site contains one dummy article on the home page and the **Main menu** (with just one link) for the content in the default language. In the top-right corner of the screen, you'll notice little flag icons. The flags are displayed through Joomla's language switcher module, and they enable the visitor to switch to the translated version of the site. In this example, clicking on the Dutch flag takes us to the Dutch site. This is shown in the following screenshot:



As you can see, now the Dutch home page is displayed. It also contains one article (called **Startpagina**, which is Dutch for home page). Apart from the article itself, the article details are also in the Dutch language. The **Main menu**, which contains just one link, is now in Dutch.

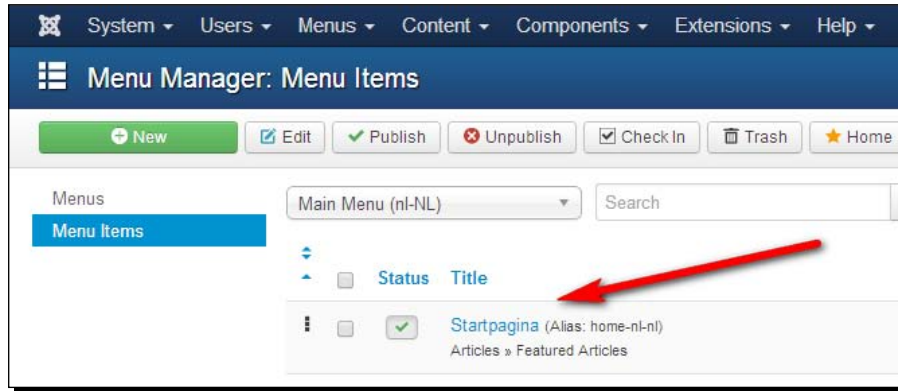
Exploring the backend of the new multilingual site

Log in to the backend of the website (by entering the site URL followed by / administrator) to see what's different in this multilingual installation of Joomla. One example is the **Menus** submenu, where there are three different versions of the site's main menu. This is shown in the following screenshot:

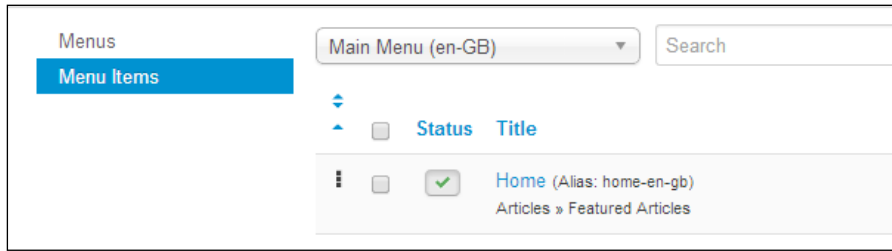


As shown in the previous screenshot, the **Main Menu** button with the little home icon is the base menu. This isn't populated with menu links as it's needed for the site to function properly. Apart from this, there are two localized menus, one for the Dutch content and one for the English content.

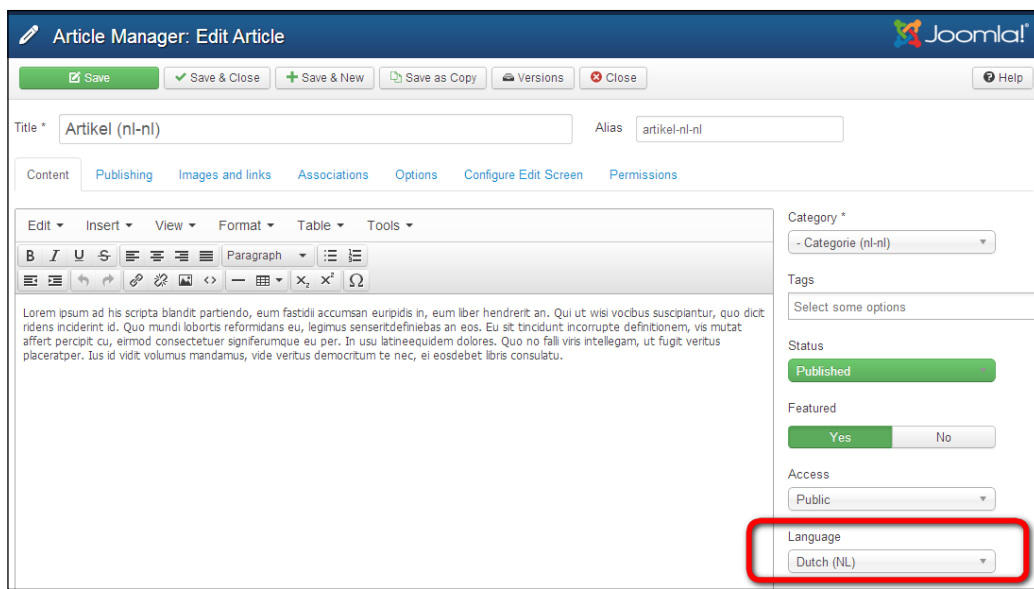
Each of the menus contain one link of the **Featured Articles** menu item type; these links point to the localized versions of the home page. To see the properties of this menu link, navigate to **Menus | Main Menu (nl-NL)** and click on the **Menu Items** menu link on the left-hand side of the screen. In our example, it contains one translated home link (called **Startpagina** in Dutch). This is shown in the following screenshot:



The English version of this menu contains a link to the corresponding page in English, as shown in the following screenshot:



To see what's different about the articles in this multilingual site, open one of the dummy articles for editing. Notice that in the article details, the **Language** option is set to the appropriate content language (in this example, **Dutch (NL)**). This is shown in the following screenshot:



Adding new multilingual content

You've now got a great base to build your own multilingual site. From now on, when you add new articles and menu links to the multilingual site, make sure to assign the appropriate content language. The following are the steps involved:

1. Create an article in the default language (in this example, English) and a second, translated version (in this example, a Dutch article). Make sure both articles have the appropriate language set in the article details.
2. Create a menu link in both main menus; one in the English menu, which points to the English article, and one in the Dutch menu, which points to the Dutch article. When creating the menu item, there are two extra settings to take care of:
 - In the menu item details, make sure to select the appropriate language.
 - In the menu link details, there's an **Associations** tab. This serves to tell Joomla! what Dutch article should serve as the translated alternative of a particular English menu item and vice versa. For each menu link, you can create an association with its translated counterpart.

When you add content and menu links this way, Joomla! will display a menu link to the new English article in the English menu and a link to the corresponding new Dutch article in the Dutch menu.

Creating a translated version of an existing site

In the previous section, you've seen how you can create a multilingual website in Joomla from scratch. However, in some cases, you may decide that you need a multilingual site at a later stage, after you've already made a site in just one language. This is possible too; however, you'll have to install Joomla's multilingual capabilities manually. In this section, you'll find a short walkthrough of the steps. If you're interested in finding out more about the subject, you'll find a referral to a full step-by-step tutorial on the subject on the website accompanying this book . This can be found at <http://joomm.net/index.php/joomla-tips-and-tutorials/creating-a-multilingual-site-in-joomla-3>.

Let's assume you've built a site in English and want to have a bilingual site. In this example, we'll use Dutch as the second site language.

Adding a new language

First, you need to install the language files for the second language on the site. By navigating to **Extensions | Language Manager**, install a site language for the Dutch language. This contains the translated versions of all texts that come with Joomla (such as the read more text).

Moreover, you need to add the appropriate details for this language. To do this, you need to add what Joomla calls a **Content Language**, which is a language profile that contains the details needed for Joomla to be able to use the English or the Dutch language as switchable content languages. In the **Language Manager** window, click on the **Content** menu link to add a new content language.

Enabling Joomla! to switch between languages

The next step is to enable Joomla's Language Filter plugin, which enables CMS to recognize the different installed languages and display only the content relevant to the current language. This plugin will try to detect the language settings of the site accessed by the visitor's browser and display the site in this language (if it is present). Find the Language Filter plugin in the **Plugin Manager** window and enable it.

Adding multilingual content

To organize the actual content on your site, you need to create top-level categories holding (in this example) English and Dutch content. Moreover, you'll need to tell Joomla what language the content belongs to. Assign the appropriate language setting (English or Dutch) to both the categories and to the articles they contain.

Creating menus for multilingual content

Next, you need two menus: the existing main menu that points to the English articles and a new menu pointing to the Dutch articles. For all menu links, you need to tell Joomla what language the menu link belongs to (through the language setting in the menu details). Finally, select what menu link should be the default link; the home page to be displayed should be for either the English site or the Dutch site.

Connecting menu links to their translated counterparts

The next step is to draw lines between menu links in different languages. In other words, you need to tell Joomla what Dutch article should serve as the translated alternative of a particular English menu item. For each menu link, you can create an association with its English counterpart. This is done through the **Associations** tab of the menu item.

Finalizing the site menus

As is the case with every new menu created in Joomla, you have to add a menu module in order to be able to display the menu on the site. Again, you should assign these modules to the appropriate languages.

Apart from the new menus, Joomla will still need the default main menu (and the home link it contains) to function. However, as the main menu doesn't need to be displayed any more, you can remove the menu module associated with the main menu.

Enabling the visitor to select a language

The multilingual site is almost done. When the user visits the site using a browser that is set to use the English language, Joomla will display the site with the English content, that is, all articles and modules that have been assigned English as their content language. However, we also want the visitor to be able to switch to the translated content in another language. To add this functionality, install the language switcher module that comes with Joomla. Should visitors wish to see the Dutch version of the site contents, they can click on the Dutch flag icon in the language switcher. After the visitor has clicked on the Dutch flag, Joomla will serve the Dutch articles and the Dutch menu.

Reading the step-by-step tutorial on multilingual sites

The previous sections only give a general overview of the steps involved in creating a multilingual site when you've already got an existing site in just one language. Please refer to the website accompanying this book for a full step-by-step walkthrough. This can be found at <http://joomm.net/index.php/joomla-tips-and-tutorials/creating-a-multilingual-site-in-joomla-3>.

C

Pop Quiz Answers

Chapter 2, Getting Joomla! Up and Running

Pop quiz – test your knowledge of installing Joomla!

Q1	2
Q2	2
Q3	3
Q4	2

Chapter 3, First Steps – Getting to Know Joomla!

Pop quiz – test your knowledge of Joomla! basics

Q1	3
Q2	2
Q3	3

Chapter 4, Web Building Basics – Creating a Site in an Hour

Pop quiz – test your basic Joomla! knowledge

Q1	2
Q2	2
Q3	3
Q4	1

Chapter 5, Small Sites, Big Sites – Organizing Your Content Effectively

Pop quiz – test your site organization knowledge

Q1	3
Q2	2
Q3	2
Q4	2

Chapter 6, Creating Killer Content – Adding and Editing Articles

Pop quiz – test your article expertise

Q1	All three options are correct
Q2	2
Q3	3
Q4	2
Q5	3
Q6	3

Chapter 7, Welcoming Your Visitors – Creating Attractive Home Pages and Overview Pages

Pop quiz – test your knowledge of home pages and overview pages

Q1	2
Q2	3
Q3	3
Q4	4

Chapter 8, Helping Your Visitors Find What They Want – Managing Menus

Pop quiz – test your menu knowledge

Q1	2
Q2	2
Q3	3

Chapter 9, Opening Up the Site – Enabling Users to Log in and Contribute

Pop quiz – test your knowledge of Joomla! user management

Q1	2
Q2	1
Q3	2
Q4	3

Chapter 10, Getting the Most out of Your Site – Extending Joomla!

Pop quiz – test your knowledge of Joomla! extensions

Q1	1
Q2	3
Q3	2

Chapter 11, Creating an Attractive Design – Working with Templates

Pop quiz – test your knowledge of Joomla! templates

Q1	2
Q2	2
Q3	3

Chapter 12, Attracting Search Engine Traffic – SEO Tips and Techniques

Pop quiz – test your knowledge of Joomla! search engine optimization

Q1	2
Q2	2
Q3	3
Q4	1

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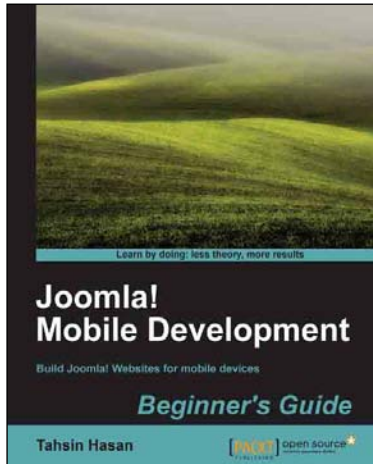
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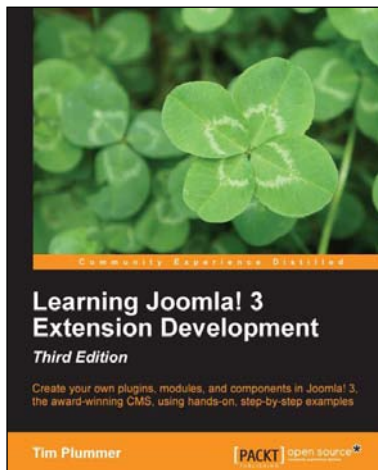
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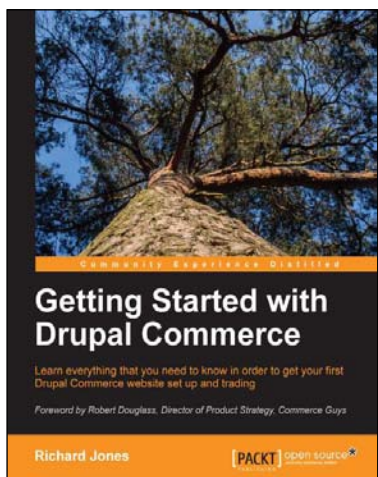


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