

SECOND EDITION

INCLUDES COMPLETE COVERAGE OF JOOMLA! 3.0

WRITTEN BY
RIC SHREVES

Joomla!® BIBLE

THE COMPREHENSIVE TUTORIAL RESOURCE

DESIGN AND BUILD A
JOOMLA!-BASED WEBSITE

GET THE VERY MOST
OUT OF THE 3.0 RELEASE

ADD SEO AND SOCIAL
NETWORKING TO YOUR SITE

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Joomla!® BIBLE

Second Edition

Ric Shreves



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Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Wiley for asking me to return as the author of the second edition of *Joomla! Bible*. We worked together to produce the first edition three years ago. In the intervening years, much has changed with both the web CMS landscape in general and with Joomla! in particular. Much of my excitement for this revision text stems from the fact that the newest version of Joomla! is a major step for the project — one that I hope receives the broad audience that it deserves. Having the chance to dig into Joomla! 3 in depth while researching and writing this title has been a brilliant learning experience and has left me with a very positive view of the newest version of Joomla! — something that I hope I have communicated adequately in the pages of this book.

This project ran on an incredible schedule, largely due to the measured guidance of my project editor Jade Williams. We had a very aggressive deadline to meet and without Jade's experience and ability to prioritize, I never would have made it. I also want to say thank you to Stephanie McComb, a Senior Acquisitions Editor at Wiley. She's the person responsible for pushing through both the Joomla! and Drupal Bible titles at Wiley, and has been a steady champion for these projects internally.

Introduction

Welcome to *Joomla! Bible*. As with all books in the Bible series, you can expect to find both hands-on tutorials and real-world applications, as well as references and background information that provide a context for what you are learning. This book is a comprehensive resource on the Joomla! open source content management system. After you have read *Joomla! Bible*, you will be well prepared to build and maintain a Joomla!-based website.

Joomla! is in the forefront of one of the most dynamic trends in open source software: the rise of open source content management systems. Historically, a web CMS was a very expensive investment. Open source has changed all that. There are now a number of options that allow website developers and website owners to tap into the power of CMS-based websites.

Of all the web CMS options that exist in the market today, perhaps none is more popular than Joomla! — certainly none is growing more quickly. The Joomla! system powers millions of websites and is one of the dominant forces shaping the way people interact with information online. It has empowered developers and website owners around the world to build the websites that allow them to express themselves, to sell their products, to publicize their news, and to build communities. With the arrival of Joomla! 3, the system moves into new ground with expanded functionality and support for mobile devices.

If you are a designer looking to build functional websites for your clients, Joomla! is an excellent tool. If you are a developer looking for a framework upon which to develop custom functionality, Joomla! can meet your needs. And if you are simply a website owner wanting to take control of your website, then you need look no further than Joomla!. Whatever your goals, welcome to *Joomla! Bible*.

In keeping with the comprehensive theme of the Bible series, this book seeks to provide a range of information suitable to a wide variety of potential readers. While I have strived to present information that is relevant to the largest possible group of users, certain sections of this book are logically more relevant to certain categories of users.

If you are looking to take your first steps with an open source content management system, the book progresses logically from the first section of introductory materials through the final sections on customization and website maintenance.

If you are already familiar with Joomla!, the opening sections will probably add little to your understanding of the system, but the sections that follow will help you unlock its full potential. Joomla! is a complex system, and the middle sections of this book explore in depth how to get the most out of it.

If you are a designer or developer, the middle and final sections will be your focus, as they take you through creating and configuring a Joomla! website and cover the basics of customizing the appearance and functionality of the system.

Finally, if you are a website owner or administrator, this book should serve as a reference, providing you with an easy-to-use guide to the ongoing ownership of a Joomla! website.

Is This Book for You?

This second edition of *Joomla! Bible* has been extensively updated to focus on coverage of the Joomla! 3 series of releases. With the arrival of Joomla! 3, the system has seen a complete change in the administration interface, new functionality, and numerous changes in the work process.

This book provides new users with all the information they need to install and configure a Joomla! website. Thereafter, the book stands as a reference for the various content management and component functionalities, all of which are documented and explained in detail. New users will also find the sections on maintaining and securing the system particularly helpful.

If you are familiar with Joomla! but ready to move up to the new Joomla! 3, this book provides all the information you need to get up to speed with the new interfaces quickly. If you are familiar with the first edition of this book, you will find the organizational schema to be very similar, but the contents have been almost completely refreshed and in many cases, expanded.

How This Book Is Organized

This book is divided into six parts, including an Appendix with useful resources.

Part I: Getting Started with Joomla!

Part I covers the basics of getting started with Joomla!. It assumes you do not know anything about the system. I introduce you to Joomla! and open source and content management systems and then walk through obtaining and installing Joomla!. The third chapter takes you on a guided tour of the front end and back end of the default Joomla! installation. The final chapter in this section covers getting the most out of Joomla's many configuration options.

Part II: Working with Content and Users

In Part II, you learn how to work with content and users, the heart of the Joomla! CMS. I cover creating, editing, and managing content items in great detail. I include a separate

discussion on advanced content management techniques, including managing content from the front end of your Joomla! website. Chapter 8 is dedicated to Joomla!’s menu system, with a comprehensive review of all the menu item types included in the default installation. Chapter 9 looks at various techniques for creating an effective home page and managing the content on your home page. Managing users is the subject of Chapter 10, with an extended look at user groups, and how you can manage user permissions and privileges in Joomla! The final chapter in this sessions deals with creating a multilingual website and a look at all the language management tools in Joomla! 3.

Part III: Working with Components, Modules, and Plug-Ins

Part III focuses on the functionality that is included in the default system. I’ve included separate chapters for the default components in order to take an in-depth look at how to use and configure each component. The various Joomla! modules are also detailed in two chapters, one focused on the Site Modules, the other on the Administrator Modules. The modules chapters not only detail the purpose of each of the modules, but they also include examples of uses and complete coverage of the configuration options available for the modules. The final chapter covers the default Joomla! Plug-ins and the options they give website owners.

Part IV: Customizing and Extending the System

Part IV moves into how to customize the appearance and functionality of the system. The first chapter in this section takes an in-depth look at Joomla! templates. I explain how the templates work, how to customize their appearance, and even how to create your own templates from scratch. There is also discussion of template frameworks and examples of using Twitter Bootstrap in Joomla! 3. The next chapter looks at the core components, modules, and plug-ins, with an eye towards explaining the underlying MVC architecture, and how the elements work. Customization of the components and modules is also covered. The final chapter in this section looks at extending your Joomla! website. In that chapter, I also look at a set of extensions you can add to Joomla! 3 to address common website issues.

Part V: Overseeing Website Maintenance and Management

Part V covers the ongoing maintenance of a Joomla! website. This final section of the book is focused more on website ownership issues and will be of more interest to webmasters and website owners. The first chapter in the section looks at implementing a security regime and at the related topic of patch management. The second chapter looks at how you can enhance the performance of your website and how to improve accessibility of your content. The final chapter in this section looks at techniques for enhancing the search engine friendliness of your Joomla! website.

Part VI: Appendixes

Part VI contains the Appendixes, which provide supplemental information, including a look at all the sample data installation options, and a guide to finding all the key files in your Joomla! installation. I also cover how to install the XAMPP and MAMP server packages on your computer, thereby allowing you to create a local development installation. In the final appendix, I look at using the VirtueMart extension to add e-commerce functionality to your website.

How to Use This Book

To get the most out of this book, you need access to an installation of the Joomla! CMS. Typically, this requires a server running a combination of the Apache web server, the MySQL database, and PHP. Website management is handled through a browser with a connection to the server. Full technical requirements and recommendations for optimal versions are discussed in Chapter 2.

In Part IV, where the topics focus on working with the Joomla! code, you want to have access to your favorite code editor. In this part and elsewhere in the book, having access to an FTP client is also useful.

NOTE

This book focuses on version 3.x of the Joomla! CMS. These releases are significantly different from the previous series.

About the Icons

Many different organizational and typographical features appearing throughout this book are designed to help you get the most from the information.

Whenever I want to bring something important to your attention, the information appears in a Tip, Note, Caution, or Cross-Reference.

CAUTION

The Caution icon means that you should pay special attention to the information or instructions so that you do not experience a problem.



The Cross-Reference arrow refers you to a related topic elsewhere in the book. Because you may not read this book straight through from cover to cover, you can use the cross-references to find the information you need quickly.

NOTE

A Note icon alerts you to some important point that requires special attention, or additional information that may be helpful.

TIP

A Tip shows you a way to accomplish a task more efficiently or quickly.

Where to Go from Here

It is my hope that you will take away from this book an increased awareness of the capabilities of the Joomla! system and a higher comfort level when working with websites based on Joomla!.

If you spend some time around open source software, you will quickly discover that the rate of change in these systems can be impressive (sometimes even a bit daunting). Joomla! is a community-driven, open source system. The community behind it is large, dynamic, and ever changing. New features are developed at a rapid pace, and new extensions, tips, tricks, and tools arise even more quickly.

If you want to get the most out of Joomla!, I strongly suggest you make an effort to keep up with the project. In Chapter 1, I list the official Joomla! project websites. You should bookmark those websites and visit them regularly. The Joomla! Forum is a great place to visit and learn what is new and of interest. Several of the official websites also provide RSS feeds and other easy ways to stay up to date with project developments.

If you want to send me feedback on this book, you can reach me directly by visiting my personal website, <http://ricshreves.net/>; there is a contact form on that website that is sent directly to me. You can also provide feedback by visiting the official John Wiley & Sons website (www.wiley.com).

