



THE OFFICIAL



Joomla!™

{book}

Jennifer Marriott
Elin Waring

Foreword by Andrew Eddie



The Official Joomla!™ Book

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The Official Joomla!™ Book

Jennifer Marriott
Elin Waring

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First printing, December 2010

To my husband, Pete

—Jennifer

To Tom, Bobby, and Linnea

—Elin

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Foreword

Joomla! is steeped in a rich and sometimes controversial history. During its tumultuous start in August of 2005, no one could have imagined how far this little project would stretch in terms of reach, nor could anyone have imagined how much it would grow in terms of depth of participation and resources available to the community. I still vividly remember the day I published the now famous “Open Letter to the Community” that you find in Chapter 1 of this book. Those were uncertain times for the 19 founders and hundred or so members of the forum team to leave comfortable surroundings and start over with nothing but courage and raw determination.

Today, I am writing this foreword having just attended a 200-person-strong local conference in San Jose, California, and my compatriot across the table is off to Italy to address 700 at a similar event. These are but two of dozens of such events held all around the world each year, on every continent (except Antarctica of course, but maybe one day), to celebrate as a community this amazing thing called Joomla! The right words are hard to find, but one is certainly appropriate: Wow!

Joomla!’s mission is “to provide a flexible platform for digital publishing and collaboration.” To that end, and at the time of this writing, we have 64 official languages; hundreds of professional service providers; over six-thousand (that we know about) Joomla! extensions; thousands of template designs to choose from; and tens of millions of Web sites deployed all around the world. Joomla! is arguably the easiest software program of its type—both to use and to master. It has been designed both for the most basic user and for the master artisan who wants to take a site beyond the normal limits of the core download. Joomla! carries a legacy of a user interface with pleasing eye-candy and a wide choice of the most beautiful templates available for any site-building system in the world. Particularly close to my heart is our passion for continuing to improve the way in which we deliver Joomla! to more and more people in their own languages.

All together by name and all together by nature, Joomla! (meaning “all together” in Swahili) sought from the very beginning to ensure it would be free for the entire community at its founding and into the future. It was set up deliberately to ensure that no one person could ever “own” Joomla!, a detail that gives Open Source Matters—the Joomla! nonprofit—the freedom to provide stewardship in the best interests of the project rather than a parent company’s bottom line. Combined with the two main project leadership teams for software production and community management, Joomla! as a whole has one of the most progressive and mature leadership structures of any open source project.

Five years after its founding—and on the heels of both Microsoft and eBay becoming collaborators and contributors to the Joomla! core source code—we begin another phase

in our life journey as a project: the inception of Joomla! Press and the first (with extreme emphasis on “first”) official Joomla! book. Joomla! is about allowing ordinary people to do extraordinary things, and that is exactly what the authors of this book do for its readers. So, without further ado, I present this book for your pleasure. It begins with how we began and takes you on a journey through which you can be empowered to reach the world.

—Andrew Eddie
Member of the Joomla! Production Leadership Team
October 2010

Joomla! Press Mission Statement

The mission of Joomla! Press is to enhance the Joomla! experience by providing useful, well-written, and engaging publications for all segments of the Joomla! Community from beginning users to framework developers. Titles in Joomla! Press are authored by leading experts and contributors in the community.

Preface

When planning what should be in a book about Joomla!, we thought hard about the process we go through when building Web sites and when helping others build sites. We decided that this book should be about building a Web site using Joomla! rather than how to use Joomla! to build a Web site. Even though you can make a Web site using Joomla! in a few hours (or less), most likely it won't be a great site, and it won't allow you take advantage of the power of Joomla! The focus should always be on how you envision your site, the goals of the site, and the audiences you want to reach rather than on the technology used to create it.

Fortunately, with its combination of power and ease of use, Joomla! lets you keep your focus on the big picture of your site and the small details of your content and not on mastering a complicated set of processes. This is why we start with a thorough discussion of things to think about *before* you start building your site.

We've also built a set of very simple sample sites that will give you a good idea of the initial process of thinking about and then building sites for various purposes. We hope that you'll follow along with the construction of those sites so that you understand the process that site developers use. If you do these tasks first, you will be ready to build your own site with confidence and a good plan.

In addition, we try to help you have a basic understanding of how Joomla! really works "under the hood" so that when you are ready to take advantage of the power that comes with its extensibility, you will have the knowledge to do that in the right way. We think that, like us, you will want to steadily increase the sophistication of your site and your knowledge and understanding of Joomla! So, we've written this book with the idea of giving you a strong foundation for the future of your site and other sites you may build in the future. Free and open source software is empowering, but you need to have solid knowledge of the fundamentals to take advantage of it.

We're passionate about Joomla!, and we hope that you will be, too. That's why we take time in this book to introduce you to the Joomla! project and the Joomla! community. We hope that you'll want to become an active participant in the Joomla! world. And we hope that you enjoy building your site so much that you end up building other sites for the friends, family members, organizations, or causes you care about.

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Acknowledgments

This book benefited greatly from the help of many people, named and unnamed. We thank them for their assistance.

We especially thank all the contributors to the Joomla! project who have worked so hard together to produce and support this amazing software. All of the people we interview in Chapter 12 have taught and inspired us day in and day out, many since the day the Joomla! was born, and we are lucky enough to consider them friends, too. Thanks to Andrew Eddie, Chris Davenport, Brad Baker, Wendy Robinson, Louis Landry, Ian MacLennan, Sam Moffatt, Mark Dexter, Ryan Ozimek, Vic Drover, and Gary Brooks. There are dozens of others whose knowledge we have built on including Anthony Ferrara, Michelle Bisson, Toni Marie Swats, James Vasile, Rob Schley, Dave Huelsmann, Lorenzo Garcia, Jean-Marie Simonet, Angie Radke, Andrea Tarr, Alan Langford, Leslie Hawthorn, and others.

We also thank all those participants in the Joomla! forums who answered our questions and asked us their own questions and contributors to the Joomla! documentation wiki, both of which taught us how to use Joomla! in more depth. The Joomla! Bug Squad has been a continuous source of inspiration.

Then there are the people who really made this book possible. Pete and Tom, Linnea and Robert, our families, and the Odd Sheep who were so supportive and put up with a lot while we were writing. Also, to our numerous friends who were given a sudden introduction to Joomla! and who gave of their time to read chapters and give encouragement and suggestions, thank you.

A very special thank you to Terrence H. Pocock for bringing home a Teletype, which inspired a lifetime love of technology in his youngest daughter. And to Joan and Fred Waring for showing their daughter a counter sorter.

Thank you to Gabrielle Heller, who read the whole manuscript, and of course Debra Williams Cauley at Addison-Wesley, who was a tireless advocate for Joomla! Press and kept us on track.

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About the Authors

Jennifer Marriott owns and operates a Web development company, Marpo Multimedia, that specializes in Joomla!-powered Web sites. Her company is located in northeastern Oklahoma, and although separated by distance, Jennifer stays close to her Canadian roots.

Jennifer joined the Joomla! community during the beginning days in 2005 and began volunteering as a forum moderator shortly after. Over the years she has taken on various roles in the community in addition to moderator, such as Joomla! Bug Squad member, Joomla! Google Summer of Code coadministrator and mentor, and Trademark and Licensing Team Leader. Although Jennifer has stepped down from her official roles in the Joomla! project, she remains an active community member.

In addition to her work in all things technology related, Jennifer is a professional musician. She has two CDs released, and in 2010 she went back into the studio to record her third release.

Elin Waring is a longtime Joomla! user and former president of Open Source Matters, the nonprofit organization that provides legal, financial, and organizational support to the Joomla! project. In that role, she led a number of initiatives ranging from writing the translation policy to obtaining a trademark for the Joomla! brand. She has made more than 6,000 posts on the Joomla! forums and wrote most of the Frequently Asked Questions for Joomla! 1.0. She is an active member of the Joomla! Bug Squad and participates in many Joomla! events.

Elin is a professor of sociology at Lehman College, City University of New York, where she teaches research methods. She has published a number of books, including *White Collar Crime and Criminal Careers* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), *Crimes of the Middle Classes: White Collar Offenders in the Federal Courts* (Yale University Press, 1991), and *Russian Mafia in America: Immigration, Culture, and Crime* (Northeastern, 2001) as well as scholarly articles in the areas of white collar crime, organized crime, and social organization.

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