

Joomla! 1.0 to 1.5 Migration: The long & short of it

Ross Farinella, TnR Global LLC
<http://www.tnrjoomla.com>



Section 1: Background

1.0 Conventions and Assumptions

This document will refer to "Joomla!" with the proper punctuation in the name (a single ! character appended to the end). There are many conventions and guidelines on how to use the Joomla! name and logo; more on this can be found at Joomla!'s [website on this topic](#). This document assumes that you have a website running the latest version of Joomla! 1.0 which, at the time of this writing, is Joomla! 1.0.15. Many developers and site owners are beginning to notice that Joomla! 1.0 is being phased out and the need to migrate to 1.5 is becoming greater. This document will discuss what it means to "migrate", the process that is followed for migration, and the implications, in terms of cost and time, that can be expected. Timing estimates will be denoted by a small clock icon 🕒 and will also include a short description about possible differences between the estimate and common real-world situations. Estimates should be treated as such; this document should convince you that no two Joomla! sites are the same and, therefore, estimates will vary by site.

1.1 History of Joomla! and its Relevance

Joomla! 1.0 was released as a branch of the Mambo project. Because of this, several underlying features, terms, and development styles are in place in Joomla! 1.0 as a result of this branch. By the time Joomla! 1.5 was released, the project had moved further away from its Mambo past and several left-over coding styles and terms ("mambot", for example) were removed. In addition, much of the core code was modified or rewritten for compliance with Joomla!'s license. The bottom line is that the move from 1.0 to 1.5 was a big one, which means that migrating is not to be considered an easy process.

1.2 Migration or Update?

One thing that should be cleared up from the start is the difference between a Joomla! migration and a Joomla! update. Updates are for minor version changes - 1.5.4 to 1.5.5, for example. They are applied by a systems (or site) administrator and seldom cause problems with a website, unless of course there are core modifications on the site. A migration, in contrast, involves separate websites - one old (e.g. 1.0) and one new (e.g. 1.5). Content must be migrated by a special process and **incompatibilities are expected** in almost any environment. Another key difference between a migration and an update is that **migrations differ greatly by site**. These differences are dependent on the extensions installed, environment differences and other configuration changes. Updates are almost always the same from one version to another - no components, modules, plugins, or languages break or change behavior. This is not true in a migration; most all extensions **will not work** in the migrated site and will require a manual re-install (if even possible). The bottom line here is that updates are relatively simple (usually) and migrations require much more work and individual consideration because of the complexities that exist per site and per extension.

1.3 Joomla! Versions Explained

To date, two major Joomla! versions have been released: 1.0 and 1.5. However, because a compatibility plugin was included in version 1.5 for extensions written for version 1.0, you may see three different versions listed in some documentation: 1.0 Native, 1.5 Legacy, and 1.5 Native. Version 1.5 Legacy simply refers to Joomla! 1.5 with the compatibility plugin enabled. This plugin can be very powerful but, as with most things, it does not come without drawbacks; the implications of using this plugin will be discussed later in *Section 2.2*.


Section 2: The Migration

2.0 Core Migration: Background

The Joomla! core team understood from the beginning that they needed to provide a somewhat easy way to move from version 1.0 to version 1.5 with limited hassles. They have produced a [wiki page](#) that outlines the general process of the entire migration. This page, however, assumes that 3rd party extensions will provide migrator plugins; unfortunately these plugins have not seen widespread adoption. In fact, at the time of this writing, there are total of two such plugins in the [Joomla! Extensions Directory section](#). Despite this limitation, the core team has made moving the core (e.g. articles, menus, contacts, etc.) quite easy by using the migrator plugin.

2.1 Core Migration: The Process

As outlined in the aforementioned [wiki page](#), users should follow the following steps to move core content from a 1.0 site to a 1.5 site.

-  This process is estimated to take approximately **3-5 hours** for an experienced developer
1. Notify site users and developers of a "site freeze" whereby no updates to any site content will be included in the 1.5 site
 2. Make a complete copy of the 1.0 site (using `mysqldump` and `tar/zip`)
 3. Publish the 1.0 copy to a local machine or other testing environment
 4. Install the migrator component from [joomlancode](#) into the 1.0 copy
 5. Use the migrator component to create an migration file from the 1.0 copy
 6. Save the resulting file to your local machine
 7. Create a new 1.5 Joomla! site, preferably on a non-local machine. You do not need to install sample data in this 1.5 install
 8. In the new 1.5 site, install the migration assistant component from [joomlancode](#).
 9. Use the migration assistant to upload the migration file into the new 1.5 site

Core content has now been migrated, but don't expect the new site to look anything like the old one; template migration is coming up soon.


2.2 Joomla! 1.5 Native or 1.5 Legacy: Decision Time

Now that the core content of your site has been moved into the 1.5 site, it's time to make a major decision: are you going to have the 1.0 Legacy Plugin enabled in your 1.5 site? There are several factors to weigh in making this decision. The main advantage to enabling the plugin is that your 1.0 template can be copied and installed directly into your 1.5 site. The major drawback of enabling the plugin is that the Joomla! developers have said that they will never release a legacy plugin for more than one version back. This means that the next

expected Joomla! version (1.6) will not have a 1.0 compatibility plugin. This will put users of 1.5 Legacy in a tight spot because, in order to upgrade to 1.6, they will have to completely remove any 1.0 features still hanging around. The bottom line here is if you have the time to move to 1.5 Native now, you should. If, however, it is more important to you to simply get a 1.5 site up-and-running and deal with updating your template to 1.5 later, you might consider enabling the 1.0 Plugin.

2.3 Template Migration to Version 1.5 Native

In the case that you've decided to move your template to 1.5, there are a few options depending on where you got your original template and how many modifications you've made to it. If you got your template from a 3rd party developer, you may be able to check back to see if they have released an updated 1.5-compatible version of the template. If you have relatively few modifications, it would be easiest to download the new version and customize it on your new 1.5 site. If, however, you've heavily modified a 3rd party template (or developed your own), you will need to modify the template to conform to 1.5 standards:

 This process is estimated to take approximately **1-2 days** for an experienced developer. Please note that this estimate **varies greatly** depending on the complexity and overall quality of the original 1.0 template. Very complicated or convoluted templates could easily take up to a week to convert in some cases.


- Change tags in the original template to conform to 1.5 standards. The following two links provide excellent information on what needs to change (licensing limitations prevent these tutorials from appearing in-line):
 - <http://forum.Joomla!.org/viewtopic.php?t=180145>
 - http://docs.Joomla!.org/Tutorial:Upgrading_a_Joomla!_1.0.x_template

2.4 Packaging and Installing a 1.5 Template

Depending on your decision in *Section 2.2*, you may need to create a new template manifest file (in XML format). The basic reason for this manifest file is to tell the Joomla! installer which files it needs to copy from the archive (tar.gz, zip etc) and where to put them when you use the Joomla! installer to install the template in your new 1.5 site. It also provides some details about the developer, release date, and other administrative information. The easiest way to create a 1.5 template manifest file is to see an example. Your manifest file should be named `templateDetails.xml` and should look something like this:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>
<!DOCTYPE install PUBLIC "-//Joomla!! 1.5//DTD template 1.0//EN"
"http://www.Joomla!.org/xml/dtd/1.5/template-install.dtd">
<install version="1.5" type="template">
  <name>template-name</name>
  <creationDate>1 January, 2009</creationDate>
  <author>Your Name</author>
  <authorEmail>you@example.com</authorEmail>
  <authorUrl>http://www.example.com</authorUrl>
  <copyright>Copyright 2009 You</copyright>
```


purpose? What do you need and what can be left behind? Many extensions now have Joomla! 1.5 Native versions in the Joomla! Extensions Directory and, as of June 2009, all 1.0 extensions [will be unpublished](#) from the directory. You should go through your 1.0 site and try to find 1.5 Native extensions that accomplish the same goals your 1.0 extensions did; if you find a version of the same component, great. However, finding new ones can also be beneficial.

 This process is estimated to take approximately **1-2 days** for an experienced developer on an average-sized site. Please note that this estimate **varies greatly** depending on the size and functionality of the site. Very complicated sites could involve weeks of research and development to install and configure necessary extensions.

Section 3: Wrap-Up and Further Information

3.0 Benefits of Joomla! 1.5

Regardless of your choice to move to 1.5 Legacy or 1.5 Native, there are some benefits that are inherent to Joomla! 1.5. One nice new feature, for example, is the ability to use search engine friendly (SEF) urls for any component. For more information on this, see the [Joomla! documentation](#). In addition to new features like SEF urls, you can continue to use the [Joomla! Extensions Directory](#) (JED) to install 1.5 Native (or Legacy) extensions. Possibly the biggest benefit of Joomla! 1.5 over 1.0 is that Joomla! 1.0 will not receive security updates after July, 2009. With the proper updates and security practices, however, your Joomla! 1.5 site should remain secure for years to come.

3.1 Joomla! 1.5 Extensions

Because the JED has so many Joomla! 1.5 extensions, it can be difficult to know which ones are useful or commonly used. Here is a list of the more common ones and an example of what they are used for:

- [Phoca Gallery](#) - a photo gallery that can easily be used to display a few or many photos of anything from vacation pictures to screenshots
- [QContacts](#) - an advanced contact manager that has a nicely-integrated contact form that can be used on a *Contact Us* page
- [MassContent](#) - allows you to create multiple articles, sections, and/or categories in one shot
- [JCE](#) - an advanced text editor that is more powerful than the default Joomla! editor

3.2 Conclusion

Hopefully this guide has been beneficial to you and you have been able to successfully migrate your Joomla! site to version 1.5. If you need additional help or have questions about migrating, the Joomla! community is always ready to help. The Joomla! [forums](#) and [documentation](#) are a wealth of knowledge that can help you solve almost any problem. In addition, there is an internet relay chat (IRC) channel, #joomla on [freenode.net](#), where Joomla! users and developers often frequent.

Best of luck in your current and future Joomla! endeavors!

Neither TnR Global nor the author are affiliated with or endorsed by the Joomla! Project or Open Source Matters. The Joomla! logo is used under a limited license granted by Open Source Matters the trademark holder in the United States and other countries.