



Joomla 4,5 & 6

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Before You Start

This guide covers the everyday tasks of keeping your municipal website up to date: writing and editing pages, adding links, adding pictures, adding documents such as agendas and minutes, and adding items to menus.

To reach the part of the website where this work is done, type your website address into your browser followed by /administrator, for example www.yourmunicipality.ca/administrator. Enter the username and password you were given. This area is not visible to the public.

Nothing you do while editing takes effect on the public website until you save. If you are partway through something and it does not look right, you can leave without saving and start again.

Words You Will See

These terms come up throughout this guide and throughout Joomla.

- **Article.** A single page of content, such as a contact page.
- **Category.** The group an article belongs to. The category controls where the article appears on the website.
- **Menu item.** The link in a menu that takes a visitor to an article.
- **Module.** A block that appears around the main content, such as a sidebar menu or a search box.
- **Alias.** A short version of the title that forms part of the page address.
- **Checked out.** An article that someone has open for editing. While it is checked out, nobody else can open it.
- **Published and Unpublished.** Whether the public can see the article.
- **Editor.** The typing area where article content is written. The editor on your site is JCE Editor Pro.

Viewing Website Content (Articles)

In the main left side menu of the Joomla Administrator, click **Content** → **Articles** or click **Home Dashboard** and then click the **Articles** button to access all articles on the website.

On the Articles page, all articles are listed. To find one, click the **Filter Options** button, which reveals several drop-down menus. To see articles by category, click the **Select Category** drop-down menu and choose the category, or type part of the category name into it. To narrow the list further, use one of the other drop-down menus, for example **Select Status**. Articles can also be filtered by **Featured**, **Access**, **Author**, **Language** or **Tag**. There is also a search box at the top of the list, which is usually the quickest way to find a page by name. To open an article, click its **title** in the **Title** column.

Creating an Article

A single article is often associated with a specific page on a website. To create a new article, start by clicking **Content** → **Articles** from the main left side menu and then click the **New button** (toward the top left) or click the **Plus button** in the main left side menu next to the **Articles button**. Another way to create an article is to go to the Content Dashboard (4 square buttons to the right of **Content** on the main left side menu) and click the **Articles + button**. This takes you to the **Articles: New** page.

There are several tabs across the top of the page. The **Title** field appears above them. On a new article, the tab shown is **Content**, which is where you type. On an article you return to, Joomla opens whichever tab you used last, so click **Content** if you do not see the typing area.

Leave the **Alias** field blank. Joomla fills it in automatically from the Title when you save. Once an article has been published, do not change the alias. It forms part of the page address, and changing it can break existing links to that page, including links saved by residents and links printed in council packages. If you see an error saying the alias already exists, another article in the same category is using it: change the Title slightly and save again.

Category is the most important setting on this page. It decides where the article appears on the website. An article filed in the wrong category may appear on the wrong department page, or may not appear anywhere at all. If you are not sure which one to use, look at where similar existing pages sit. Do not create a new category. Categories shape the structure of the whole site.

The remaining settings on the right side of the **Content** tab are: **Status**, **Featured** (Yes puts the article on the Featured Articles page), **Access** (leave as Public unless you have been told otherwise), **Tags**, **Note** and **Version Note**. The Note appears under the title in the Articles list and is useful for leaving yourself or a colleague a reminder. The Version Note is explained under Editing Content in an Article.

The **Options** tab changes how this one article is laid out, overriding the settings used across the rest of the site. Do not change anything here.

The **Publishing** tab holds dates controlling when an article is created, published and finished. It also holds the **Meta Description**, which may be used as the summary shown under the page title in search results. Writing one or two plain sentences there is worth doing for important pages.

Do not change settings in the **Images and Links**, **Schema**, **Configure Edit Screen** or **Permissions** tabs.

Once you have typed your content, save the article using the toolbar at the top left. **Save** saves the article and keeps you in the editor. **Save & Close** saves the article and returns you to the Articles page. **Cancel** returns you to the Articles page without creating the article. The drop-down arrow beside **Save & Close** offers **Save & New** and **Save to Menu**. These are explained in the next section. On an article you are creating, the third button reads Cancel; on one you are editing, it reads Close. They do the same thing.

Editing Content in an Article

Editing an article in Joomla is no more difficult to do than using a simple text editor. The material covered here relates to the editor, **JCE Editor Pro**.

Start by clicking **Content** → **Articles** in the main left side menu and then click the **New button** (toward the top left) to create a new article or click the **title** of an existing article.

The editor opens in **Editor** mode, where you work with the text directly and never see code. You may also see a **Code** button, which shows the hidden HTML behind the page. Leave it alone.

To edit an article, click where you want to add or edit content. Just as in a standard text editor, content can be selected, deleted, modified, reformatted, etc.

To format content, start by selecting the text to be formatted. Then click the button for the effect you want, for example **Bold**  or **Italic** . Hovering the mouse over any button shows its name.

There are instances when text formatting is not available through the toolbar buttons. Instead, standard predefined styles can be found in the **Format** drop-down list and customized styles in the **Styles** drop-down list. An applied style can be removed by selecting the content that has been formatted and then clicking the **Remove Formatting** button. Hover over a button to see its name if you are unsure which one it is.

To turn a line of text into a heading, select the text, click the **Format** drop-down arrow and choose a heading, for example Heading 2. Use headings in order and do not skip levels: a Heading 3 should sit under a Heading 2, not directly under a Heading 1. People using screen readers navigate a page by its headings, so do not apply a heading simply to make text bigger or bolder.

When you have finished editing, save the article using the toolbar at the top left of the page. Three buttons appear there:

- **Save** saves the article and leaves it open for further editing. Save often when working on a long article.
- **Save & Close** saves the article and returns you to the Articles page.
- **Close** discards any unsaved changes and returns you to the Articles page.

Three further options are on the drop-down arrow beside **Save & Close**:

- **Save & New** saves the article and opens a blank Articles: New page, ready for the next article.
- **Save to Menu** saves the article and opens the Menus: New Item page, where a menu item can be created for it.
- **Save as Copy** saves your changes and creates a second article based on the original, ready to be edited. The original article is left as it was.

Whichever you choose, use one of these buttons. Closing the browser tab or clicking the browser back button will lose your unsaved changes and leave the article checked out to you.

While an article is open for editing it is checked out to you, and nobody else can open it. If you close the page without using one of the save buttons, the article stays checked out and remains locked to everyone else. If it is still checked out to you, open it again and click **Save & Close** to release it. If it is checked out to someone else, ask that person to open it and click **Save & Close**.

Once an article has been saved, it can be returned to an earlier version. Click the **Versions** button in the toolbar. A window titled **Versions** opens, listing the saved versions by date. Click the checkbox beside the version you want, then click the **Restore** button. Adding a **Version Note** each time you save makes this list far easier to work with later.

Text pasted from Word or Google Docs can bring hidden formatting with it, which makes the page look inconsistent and can break the layout. Paste plain text instead. In the editor, hold Ctrl and Shift and press V, or use the **Paste as Plain Text** button in the toolbar. The text arrives unformatted, and you then apply headings, bold and lists using the editor buttons.

Read More Breaks

On pages that list several articles, such as a news or public notices page, only the opening part of each article is shown, followed by a Read More link. You decide where that break falls.

Place the cursor between two paragraphs at the point where the summary should end, then click the **Read More** button. Depending on how your site is set up, it appears either below the typing area or in the toolbar under the **Joomla** button. A marked line appears in the editor showing the break. If you do not insert a break, the whole article may appear in the list.

Unpublishing an Article

To take a page off the public website without losing it, open the article, change **Status** from Published to **Unpublished**, and click **Save & Close**. The article stays in the system and can be published again at any time. This is the right choice for a page that is temporarily out of date.

Avoid **Trashed** unless you are certain the page is no longer needed by anyone.

Before unpublishing or trashing an article, check whether a menu item points to it. If one does, the menu link will lead visitors to an error page.

Adding a Table

Tables suit information that genuinely has rows and columns, such as a fee schedule, a meeting calendar or office hours. Do not use a table to position text or pictures on the page.

Place the cursor where the table should go and click the **Insert Table** button in the toolbar. Choose the number of rows and columns and click **Insert**. Rows and columns can be added or removed afterwards using the table buttons in the toolbar.

Set the first row of the table as a header row. Screen readers use it to announce which column each figure belongs to, and without it a table of numbers is very hard to follow. Keep tables simple. Avoid merged cells, and never place a table inside another table. Both cause problems for screen readers and neither displays well on a phone.

Internal Links

To link to another page on your own website, select the text that will become the link, then click the **Insert link** button . The **Link** window opens, listing the kinds of link you can create. Most pages are reached through a menu, so click **Menu**. An indented list of the site menus and their pages appears. Work down the list to the page you want, click it, then click **Insert**. Typing a word or two into the Search field and clicking Search is usually quicker.

Some articles are not reached through any menu item. To link to one of those, click **Content** in the same list. An indented list of the site categories appears below it. Click the category the article belongs to, click the article name, then click **Insert**.

To save the new link click the **Save** button in the top left toolbar of the **Articles: Edit** page.

External Links

To link to a page on another website, select the text that will become the link, then click the **Insert link** button . When the **Link** window opens, type or paste the full web address into the URL field near the top, then click **Insert**. Include the https:// at the start.

Links normally open in the same window, and that is the better default. If you do set a link to open in a new window using the **Target** field, say so in the link text, for example “Annual Report (opens in a new window)”.

Write link text that describes where the link goes. “2026 Budget” is useful on its own; “click here” is not, because someone using a screen reader may hear only the link text without the sentence around it.

Adding an Image to a Page

To add an image to an article, place the cursor where you would like the image to appear then click the **Insert Image** button .

After clicking **Insert Image** the **Image Manager** dialog box appears. By default the **Image** tab is open. This tab contains fields that set image parameters. Enter Alternate Text describing what the image shows. This is required for making images accessible to people who use screen readers, and it helps with search engine optimization. Describe the content, not the file: “Mayor signing the twinning agreement” rather than “photo1.jpg”. If the image is purely decorative and carries no information, leave the Alternate Text empty so that screen readers skip it.

In the File Browser panel in the lower half of the Image Manager dialog box, you will see images in the default **Root** folder. If you know that the desired image exists in a different folder, then navigate to it by clicking that folder and then select the image. Once an image is chosen a preview image appears in the **Details** pane on the right side with information about the image above the preview.

Click the **Insert** button (lower right corner) to place the image on the page.

Once the image is on the page you can change how it sits in the text. Click just beside the image so the cursor is in the same paragraph, then click the **Styles** drop-down button in the toolbar and choose a style.

Instead of finding and inserting an image that has already been uploaded to the website you can upload an image from your computer. To do that click the **Insert Image** button to open the **Image Manager** and then click the **Upload** button above the Details pane on the right side. The **Upload** dialog box appears. There are two methods. The first is to click the **Browse** button to view images in your file manager application, navigate to and select the image or images to be uploaded, then click the **Open** button. The files are listed at the top of the Upload dialog box. Click **Browse** again

to add more images to the list, then click the **Upload** button. The image or images are uploaded to the folder that is currently open. The image titles will be shown in bold with a checkmark in the left checkbox. To insert an image click its name and then click the **Insert** button.

Rather than click the Browse button to upload one or more images you can drag and drop images from your file manager directly onto the Upload dialog box. Once the file or files are dropped onto the Upload dialog box, they form a list of files. To upload the image(s), click the **Upload** button and the image(s) will appear in the Image Manager under the **Name** column.

Working with Images

Save photographs as **.jpg** (also **.jpeg**). Save screenshots, charts, and any image that needs a transparent background as **.png**. Those two formats cover almost everything you will put on the website.

You may also see **.svg** files in the media folders, usually the municipal crest, department logos, or icons. Insert them as you would any other image, but do not try to resize, crop, or recolour them with the editor tools.

Keep images within the limits set for your site, for example a maximum width of 900 pixels and a file size under 250 kb. Large images make the page slow to load for residents on slower connections.

To check an image before uploading it, open File Explorer on Windows and switch to Details view. Image dimensions are not shown by default. Right-click anywhere on the row of column headings, choose **More...**, scroll to **Dimensions**, tick its checkbox, and click **OK**. Dimensions and file size will now appear in the file list. On a Mac, select the file in Finder and press **Command + I** to see the same information.

If an image is too large, you do not need separate software. JCE Editor Pro includes an image editor that resizes, crops, and rotates images directly in the Image Manager, and Joomla's own Media Manager offers the same tools. Use these rather than an online image editing website. Municipal images may form part of the public record, and uploading them to an outside website sends municipal material outside the municipality's control.

Lists

A bulleted list is built from separate paragraphs, so each item must be its own paragraph. Press Enter at the end of each item as you type. Do not hold Shift while pressing Enter: that inserts a line break rather than ending the paragraph, and text separated that way collapses into a single bullet when you apply the list. To make the list, select the paragraphs and click the **Unordered List** button. Clicking it again turns the items back into ordinary paragraphs.

To create a numbered list instead of a bulleted one, select the paragraphs and click the **Ordered List** button.

Adding a Menu Item to a Menu

Once a new article page has been created, it cannot be accessed until it is linked from a menu or a link on a page. To add a menu item to a menu that links to a page, start by accessing a Menu. Do this by clicking **Menus** in the main left sidebar menu and then select the desired menu, for example, **Main Menu**. You are then taken to the **Menus: Items (Main Menu)** page for that menu.

To create a new menu item link, click the **New** button in the top left area of the page. The **Menus: New Item** page appears.

The first field in the **Details** tab is **Menu Item Type**. Click the **Select** button beside it. A window opens listing the kinds of link available. Click **Articles**, then **Single Article**. The words **Single Article** now appear in the Menu Item Type field. Next, click the **Select** button beside the **Select an Article** field. A window opens listing the articles, and it works the same way as the Articles page: use the search box, or click **Filter Options** to filter by category, status, access, author, language or tag. Click the article name in the Title column. You are returned to the Menus: New Item page with the article name filled in.

Next, enter a **Menu Title**. This is the wording visitors will see in the menu, so keep it short and plain, for example “Education”. If this item should sit underneath another one, choose the item above it from the **Parent Item** drop-down menu. Leave the other settings, such as Status: Published and Access: Public, as they are.

Then save using the toolbar at the top left. **Save** keeps you on the page. **Save & Close** returns you to the list of menu items. **Cancel** leaves without creating the link. The drop-down arrow beside Save & Close offers **Save & New** if you have several menu items to add in a row.

When the **Save** button is clicked, the **Ordering drop-down menu** becomes active. By default, when you click on the Ordering drop-down menu, the new menu item appears at the bottom of the list. To change the order of the new menu item, click the Ordering drop-down menu and select the menu item that will go above the new menu item. Click the Save button again to complete that change.

Adding a Menu to a Page

Menus are a type of Module, and where a module appears is controlled by settings that apply across the whole site rather than to one page. Read this section carefully before changing anything. If you are not sure what the current assignment means, leave it unchanged. Sidebar

menus are normally set up so that a menu appears automatically once its menu item sits underneath a parent item rather than at the top level.

If a menu does not appear where it should, click **Content → Site Modules** in the main left sidebar menu, or go to **Home Dashboard** and click the **Modules** button. This takes you to the **Modules (Site)** page. To shorten the list, click **Filter Options**, then the **Select Type** drop-down menu, and choose **Menu**. Click the menu name in the **Title** column, then click the **Menu Assignment** tab.

At the top of that tab is a **Module Assignment** drop-down menu. Before changing it, note what it is currently set to and which boxes below are already ticked. Do not change the assignment until you have identified every page that should keep the menu.

This setting affects every page on the site, not only the one you are fixing. **Only on the pages selected** means the menu will appear on the ticked pages and nowhere else, so any page you do not tick loses the menu. If the menu already appears correctly on other pages, tick those pages as well before saving. There is also **On all pages except those selected**, which is often the safer choice when a menu should appear nearly everywhere.

Once the correct boxes are ticked, click **Save** in the top left toolbar, then check the public website to confirm the menu appears where it should and has not disappeared from anywhere else. If the result is not what you expected, restore the assignment to the setting and selections you noted before making the change.

Adding a Document to the System

Documents such as agendas, minutes and bylaws are managed with **DOCman**. To add one, click **Components → DOCman → Documents** in the main left sidebar menu. The Documents page appears.

On the left side is a list of folders containing files. Select the folder where you would like to upload a file to the website and then click the **Upload** button.

In the Upload dialog box, you can drag one or more files over the text “Drop files here” from a separate file manager application or click the **Upload** button. Locate and select the file or files to upload and then click the **Open** button. The file or files will upload (a blue progress bar appears during the upload). Once the file(s) are uploaded, click the Green Save button. Once saved, you’ll see a green bar with the text “Documents have been successfully created. Click here (underlined) to close the uploader.” When the dialog box closes, you’ll see your new document(s) on the right side panel.

You can edit a document’s settings by clicking on its **name** in the **Title column**. After changing a setting, for example, its name, click the **Save** or **Save & Close button** (top left menu bar). After clicking **Save & Close**, you are returned to the Documents page.

Removing a Document

Before removing a document, find out whether any article links to it. Once the file is gone those links stop working, and there is no easy way to find them afterwards. Keeping a note of where you link each document, at the time you link it, saves a great deal of searching later.

To remove a document, go to the Documents page (**Components → DOCman → Documents**), tick the checkbox to the left of the document name, and click the **Delete** button in the toolbar.

After removing the document, open each article that linked to it and either remove the link or point it at the replacement file. A link to a document that no longer exists sends residents to an error page.

Adding a Document Link to an Article

To link a Document to an article, first access an article in edit mode. In the editor, select the text that will link to the document. Next, click the **Document** button (below the editor). The Document dialog box appears. Navigate through the folders to find the desired document. When the document you want is listed, click on the name. Click the **Insert document link** to link the document.

Click the **Save or Save & Close** button (top left menu bar) to save the change.