

Joomla 1.7 And Beyond

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If you have not heard yet Joomla recently released their new version 1.7. With this new release comes a new standard of a major Joomla version release every six months. One of the biggest new features available in 1.7 is a simple to use backend upgrade tool. This means you are no longer required to navigate to joomla.org where you would download patches, and manually extract them on your server. Now, you simply click a button to upgrade, which is a very nice addition to the Joomla CMS and much more user friendly!

With the release of 1.7 we wanted to update you on the plans we have here at Shape 5. First off, all of our existing 1.6 site shapers released to this point have been updated and packaged with Joomla 1.7! We also would like to point out that all of our 1.6 extensions and templates are also compatible with Joomla 1.7. So you can go right ahead and update to 1.7 with no issues. Don't let the new version number scare you, Joomla is on a much more consistent framework now for upgrades. Upgrading from 1.6 is nothing like upgrading from 1.5 to 1.6.

If you are upgrading from 1.6 be sure to read Joomla's tutorial here: http://docs.joomla.org/Upgrade_1.6.5_to_1.7. The most important thing to know is that you must be running at least 1.6.5 to perform the upgrade. We have seen many posts of people saying they have successfully upgraded from 1.6.3 straight to 1.7.0. Although it may appear to work there are a few database changes that will not take effect if you're upgrading from a version lower than 1.6.5. If you are not on 1.6.5 or 1.6.6 just use the following patch to upgrade http://joomlancode.org/gf/download/frsrelease/15378/66849/Joomla_1.6.0_to_1.6.6-Stable-Patch_Package.zip and then you can successfully upgrade to 1.7.

This also brings a new change to Shape5, particularly with naming conventions. With a new version of Joomla being released every six months that will cause problems for our current naming and organizational methods at Shape5. Take our template Paradigm Shift for example. The name of Paradigm Shift's template file is `Shape5_Paradigm_Shift_template_16.zip`. The version number is also listed in our downloads area and on the template's article detail page. Now that 1.7 has been released that means we'd have to update the name of the file, update the download link, update the download description, update the content article, etc. All just because of a new version number and rarely any changes to the files themselves. Hopefully you can see the problem when you're dealing with hundreds of files. We've thought long and hard about the best way to handle this, and most importantly to keep it simple for our members to understand. The solution is simple, the version number will no longer be listed in the file name, downloads, content, etc. instead we list the file simply as "current" with a link to the following page:

http://www.shape5.com/joomla/product_compatibility/current_joomla_product_compatibility_list.html

This one stop page for all of our products will tell you what version of Joomla a particular product is currently compatible with and what version of Joomla our site shapers are packaged with. We do hope you find this new page easy to use and helpful.

Finally, now that Joomla is on a six month release cycle we have decided to discontinue our stand alone SQL dumps of demo data for new versions of Joomla. There was a day when SQL dumps were very important before we packaged our products in site shapers. Now we do not feel their need is as great as a site shaper, and the same data will be included in our site shapers. Also, by eliminating these it frees more time up to produce conversions of products much quicker into new Joomla versions.