

Sneak Peek: Vertex 4 Coming Soon!

Here at Shape5 we are hard at work getting Vertex 4 ready for release. The new version boasts a brand new admin interface that simplifies all the options and features we've added over the years. As Vertex grew so did the amount of switches and options in the admin area. We felt the admin had started to become overwhelming for the end user. We are happy to announce Vertex 4 changes that. Vertex 4 is designed to increase simplicity and ease of use while maintaining the plethora of options and flexibility Vertex has grown into. In this overview below we'll focus on the menu and layout page. These two areas are what bring the concise, ease of use that Vertex 4 is designed to be.

New Layout Page:

This is the spotlight feature of Vertex 4. The new layout page combines, the backgrounds area, row sizes, fixed tabs, drop downs and scroll to top areas of Vertex into one GUI style laid out page. When you edit a row you can not only set the position sizes but also the background options for that row. And as you edit the row width sizes you can also now change the left, right and overall body widths. Having everything laid out with a GUI will cut down on development time and keep things organized.

New Menu Layout:

The new Vertex 4 admin menu system keeps things concise but the sub menu capability allows for drilling down into more complex or additional features. We've organized the entire framework down to 4 main menu items. Theme Specific, Main Config, General and JavaScripts. There are 3 additional menus items Overview, Language and Assignments but the actual Vertex side of things are these first 4 menu items.

Increased Speed, Decreased Load Time

In the 4.0 release of Vertex we are focusing on increasing the load time of our themes. We've done this on both the frontend and admin side of Vertex. In the frontend you'll notice that about 10 files now have a naming convention of .min.css. The original CSS files decompressed will be included so you can edit and make changes as desired but the files that will be compressed are ones that neither us or our end users touch very often. The main theme CSS files such as the flex menu, the theme itself and a few others that get frequent edits during development and end user tweaking won't be compressed. But you can always turn on our CSS compression feature to compress them.

Synonymous Across Joomla and WordPress

Currently Vertex running on Joomla and WordPress visually differs in style and layout a bit. This new version will visually look and work the same across both CMS's. This new change means updates to Vertex and changes in the admin GUI will be a lot easier between both CMS's.

Responsive

The backend in the new version of Vertex 4 will be fully responsive. The Layout page is the only section that won't make the responsive layout as its just not practical to try and edit such a large area on smaller screens.

Joomla 3.0 and Higher:

As Joomla.org has dropped support for Joomla 2.5 this past December we are also phasing out Joomla 2.5. This new version of Vertex 4 will only support Joomla 3.0 and higher.

We Believe in Backward Compatibility:

Why release a new version which doesn't support all our older templates/themes? This is why Vertex 4 will not force you to use new templates only but you can simply apply a patch and get your site up to date running the newest version. All Joomla 3.0 templates that run Vertex will be able to take advantage of this new version of Vertex.

A note on LESS, SASS and the like:

Many other frameworks incorporate a CSS compiler such as LESS. We wanted to give you our take and reasoning we've haven't and don't plan on incorporating one of these compilers into Vertex. First we believe things should be easy for the average user to edit and modify as they desire to. Using one of these compilers takes away the simplicity of CSS. Yes it can add some nice features but its yet one more thing to learn and it can take some time depending on the skill of the user at hand.

Second we always felt that it in some cases it adds bloat to the site. Some compilers require a JavaScript file to be added to the output of your site, increasing the site load by about 100kb. A lot of our CSS we try to consolidate in general by adding multiple class's or ID's to one line. So for example, when we create a theme with rounded corners of say 2 pixels, we'll only output this CSS once for the 2 pixel definition and then simply add multiple class's and ID's to be targeted by this rounded corner CSS. So in short, we try to consolidate in general and don't to complicate the end

product for our users. If you want to compress and consolidate the CSS we have our CSS compression option available that you can enable and it will do just this. Here is an article with a similar line of thought to ours:

<http://blog.millermedeiros.com/the-problem-with-css-pre-processors/>

Ultimately from what we gather LESS is more of an advantage to the developer by saving time while constructing the site, and not an advantage to you, the end users of Vertex. Since we are giving you an already completed work with our themes, LESS wouldn't be a huge benefit to Vertex. LESS is about saving the developer time so in summary its not something we see that is needed for Vertex.

Cheers and we hope the new Vertex 4 is here before we all know it