
Operation guide

by Xoops Documentation Team

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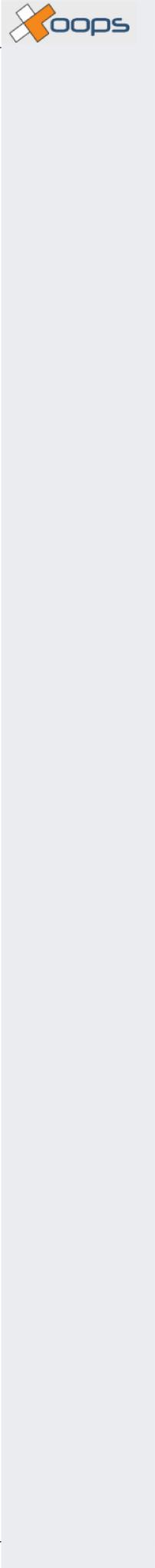


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Chapter 1. General principles

XOOPS is at once a software package, a network of Web sites and a very friendly and supportive community spread all over the world. The tie that binds together software, sites and community is the Web, the graphical face of the Internet.

To learn about the sites all you need to do is to point your browser to any of the **XOOPS** sites and there you'll feel the warmth and strength of the community. To learn about the software, your best bet is to download the latest package and to begin playing with it. What? No documentation? Yes, we know (remember? We've also been there). **XOOPS** suffers from a lack of enough good documentation, and though this has been an effective incentive for many a webmaster, for many more it has been a turnoff.

That's part of the reasons behind this manual. It's part of a really much wider and deeper collective effort that goes under the moniker "XOOPS Documentation Project" and that is being tackled slowly but surely by a team of dedicated *xoopers* (or *xoopers*, as some others call **XOOPS** fans: *xoopies?*).

So this manual will explain, with enough detail to also serve as a reference guide, the main workings of **XOOPS**, the software. Since there's already another document called "XOOPS Installation Guide (XU-002)", we'll assume in this document that you've already installed your **XOOPS** package and have now a live **XOOPS** site. We'll deal here with that oh-so-very-common-question that comes up once an again: what do I do after I install my **XOOPS**?

Ok. We're ready to begin. If you're set, let's proceed at the beginning.

XOOPS is a tool to manage dynamic Web sites. This simple definition may serve you to have an initial grasp of the usefulness of this singular package. But it's so general that it's almost as saying nothing. Let's try again. **XOOPS** is an open source set of scripts written in PHP that, when installed in an Internet host that has support for PHP, a web server such as Apache, and a MySQL database manager, allows the easy creation of dynamic, complex and content-rich Web sites, from personal weblogs all the way up to corporate portals.

XOOPS means eXtensible Object Oriented Portal System, and even though some call it ex-oh-oh-pi-es, the standard pronunciation of **XOOPS** is more like "zoops"

Derived from other open source projects (**XOOPS** is a descendant of the venerable PHPNuke, through a branch called myPHPNuke. A good part of the package was completely rewritten, although there are inside the scripts pieces of old code that show their age when compared with the most recent parts.

As its ancestors, **XOOPS** is strongly oriented towards the construction of community sites. But it is flexible enough to serve as a single-webmaster site (a blog, for instance) and as an enterprise content-oriented portal.

In this introductory chapter, we'll take a quick look at some of **XOOPS** main features. In later chapters we'll see in detail how is it that **XOOPS** does its magic.

1.1. The XOOPS core

An easy way to think about **XOOPS** is to think of it as a commercial mall. In a mall, many different kinds of stores and businesses and services are lodged under the same roof, each with its own personality yet within the general frame of the mall's design. To the outside world, the mall has huge windows that show some of the merchandise that can be found in the inside. To the individual store owners, the mall is like a turtle's hull: it provides not only the physical space, but also a lot of basic services: electricity, water, air conditioning, some marketing, security, parking lot... the list goes on.

Now let's take a look at **XOOPS** under this metaphor. **XOOPS** is the mall; it's the general hull that provides services to its tenants. Have you seen a mall with no stores? There's no reason to go there at all; the same is true about **XOOPS**. If you see just the hull, there are not many reasons to visit the site.

Modules are this mall's tenants. If **XOOPS**, the mall, is a bunch of scripts that provide the general framework of a dynamic Web site, then modules, the tenants, are smaller packages made up of scripts that provide a particular content offer to the site's visitor. One module provides news; another, a picture gallery; another one, a discussion forum; yet one more, an area to download files. All these offer reasons for users to visit the site. And the general idea, as in a physical mall, is that the result is greater than the arithmetic sum of the parts.

In what other way are modules like the mall's tenants? Well, to get installed in the site they must follow some



rules. Some of them are coding rules: if a module doesn't have a `xoops_version.php` file, **XOOPS** doesn't even know it's there. If the module doesn't take advantage of the mall's services, it would need a lot of code to accomplish common things. **XOOPS**, the mall, provides the modules things like user management, security, structure, functions and classes, and so on. There are also some presentation rules. Just as a mall's store has to follow some of the building codes, a **XOOPS** module has to follow rules to create blocks and rules to present content using the Smarty template engine.

In the outer wall, a mall showcases the stores within. In its homepage, a **XOOPS** site showcases the modules within. The mall does it with shop windows; **XOOPS** does it with blocks. The mall administrator decides what merchandise to highlight in the shop windows. The equivalent, which is the **XOOPS** webmaster, decides what blocks to highlight in the home page.

Of course, a metaphor can only go so far before it gets s funny. Let's not pursue this any more, or we'd need to explain that **XOOPS** the mall has some advantages over the real mall: it can switch between personalities to have a different look (using themes, called skins in other contexts); it can easily change the structure of the home page, the labels of the modules, etc. But the general idea is useful, as it separates clearly three basic components of the **XOOPS** system:

- “The core”, where the general functionalities of the site reside. The core also provides some extra features such as the notification options, that let users be informed about specific changes in a module's content; the commenting system, that lets users leave on the site comments about specific content items; and the installation routine that makes sure a module complies with the elementary rules to be automatically incorporated to the site.
- “The modules”, which hold the actual content of the site, and which can be as simple as a block that displays a daily quote, or as complex as a full e-commerce package that allows the webmaster to make live commercial transactions on the Web.
- “The blocks”, which are “windows” to a module's full content, though some blocks have an existence of their own.

The **XOOPS** core is actually a package of interrelated PHP files that in an appropriate setting provide the functions needed to operate the website. Many of these functions are completely hidden from the end user, and are only used by modules in order to work properly. Many more are visible to the user and to the webmaster through the System module, which gives the user some essential functions such as the login procedure, the main menu and the user menu, a hint of who's online, access to the search function, and some theme-switching capability, to name a few. The core and the System module also give the webmaster the admin area, the place where most of the control over the site happens.

To sum up, then, the **XOOPS** core comprises a lot of power hidden under calls to classes or functions, provides the functional framework, the templating engine, the handling of languages and much more. It accomplishes part this through the System module, which is the only one installed in a default **XOOPS** package, as it's through this module that the webmaster decides what other modules will be part of the live site.

1.2. Modules

As mentioned before, modules are the software constructs that, taking advantage of the infrastructure that **XOOPS** provides, let the webmaster offer the site's users dynamic or static content generated using a Web interface that more often than not is very easy to use.

Part of the power of **XOOPS** resides in the way modules are managed. The webmaster can easily install, uninstall, activate or deactivate any specific module (except the System module, for obvious reasons). It's also possible to rename modules, and to determine the order in which they will appear to the end user in the site's menu –if you want them to appear at all–, because you can also provide hidden functionality, defining active modules that have no visible presence to the casual user. For instance, you could install a News module, edit its `xoops_version.php` file so that the installation directory is something difficult to guess (let's say: `gaeqhweas`), and then define this module as not visible by defining its menu position as zero (“0”). Then you could send private messages to an elite bunch of your users and tell them to access that directory typing the address in the URL field, something like `http://www.yoursite.com/gaeqhweas`. They could access that News module as a regular News module.

Up to now, **XOOPS** has been distributed including a set of “official” or “core” modules. Soon there will be no

“officially” modules, that is, **XOOPS** will be offered as a framework or operating core, and **XOOPS** webmasters will decide what modules to install. There will be, on the other hand, a reviewing process that will serve to identify modules built by xoopers and that operate correctly under **XOOPS** framework. These modules will be marked with an “approved” seal and as such will have the **XOOPS** core team endorsement as secure to use in a **XOOPS** Web site.

1.3. Blocks

Blocks are like a newspaper’s front page: they are teasers that incite readers to read more complete stories in the inside pages. Blocks offer small bits of dynamic content with links to the actual content stored in the module.

Part of the things that happen under the hood or behind curtains when a module is installed in a **XOOPS** site is that the module’s blocks are registered in the system so they can be used at will by the webmaster.

What can a webmaster do with a block? Well, mostly, decide about where in the site the block will be shown (the equivalent of defining a shop window, which in this case can be in the outside, the home page, or even in the inside: a block can be defined to be shown in other modules), and when shown, where in a page will it be seen.

Every module that is installed in a **XOOPS** site registers its blocks in the system, and the webmaster can decide where it will be shown, in what part of the page it’ll appear and what kind of relevance, weight or position will it have. The site administrator can also edit the block’s label and, if knowledgeable enough, can even edit the template that underlies the block’s presentation.

1.4. Users and groups

At the heart of **XOOPS** main functions is a robust user management system. Going back to our mall metaphor, it’s like saying the **XOOPS** mall allows the mall administrator to present different visitors a different mall depending on who they are. A **XOOPS** administrator can build a site that offers nothing to some users, part of the content to other users, and all the content to still other users.

Since **XOOPS** was born out of systems designed to build online communities, its user functionalities reflect this past. **XOOPS** allows the site administrator to define as many groups of users as deemed necessary.

By default, **XOOPS** is configured with three groups of users: anonymous users, which have direct access to whatever the administrator configures as visible for them; registered users, which usually have access to more content once they log in the site; and webmasters, which have management roles over different parts of the site. The site’s administrator can give users of this group differential control over some of the modules.

The site manager can search for users by different criteria, as well as send mail messages or private messages to groups or subgroups of users.

As to users, they have access to their profile, have some control over most of the information that will be visible to other users, and have also an inbox to receive private messages from the site administrator or from other users. They have besides control over what changes in the site will trigger personal notifications. And depending on the permissions set by the site manager, they can see content and participate in the site’s life by uploading content, writing stories or comments, rating content and in general giving their feedback to what they see on the site.

Summing this up, **XOOPS** gives the site manager a lot of control over how the site’s users are grouped, and also over what can specific groups see and do in specific areas of the site.

1.5. Content

Have you ever seen an unsuccessful mall? There are some. They have nice stores, an adequate location, a nice infrastructure, yet visitors are few and they languish until the managers or owners give up. The same thing can happen to a **XOOPS** Web site: it can have good modules, an adequate theme, all the necessary functions, and still attract few visitors.

What’s the matter? That’s a tough question to answer, but more often than not the answer might lie in the realm of content. In the Web, says common wisdom, content is king. If you have a nice News module but you update once every two months, or if your news items are badly written, or if they have little relevance for users, why should they visit often?

Content is the key to a successful site. And in the past many a webmaster complained about how difficult it was

to keep pace with the Internet's frantic rhythm. Change a site's content? Are you out of your mind? Who has time to change all that HTML? The advent of content managers, Web interfaces that allow for an easy update of the content changed all that. XOOPS' infrastructure offers modules a lot of power to define nice content management interfaces, so as a XOOPS webmaster you'll be concerned with what to show and not with how to show it.

A XOOPS site's content is stored in a MySQL relational database, so it can be easily retrieved, stored, archived or otherwise used.

1.6. Language files

Although XOOPS at the moment has no multilanguage capabilities (for that, users have built a usable hack), it does offer the possibility of defining the site for a specific language, and to edit all the site's strings without needing to touch the code. Meanings are stored in language files that can be easily translated to adapt XOOPS to your particular language.

Unlike some other packages, XOOPS fully supports multi-byte languages, which means it can be used to deploy sites in Japanese, Chinese (both simplified and traditional), Korean, etc.

Since the XOOPS community is spread all over the world, chances are there's already a support community for your specific language. There are at least a dozen support sites worldwide, and many xoopers have translated language files to many more languages. Just search and, if you don't find what you need, ask around.

1.7. Themes and templates

XOOPS allows for some separation between the actual presentation of the site (the "skin" or user interface) and the code that runs in the back. The first one is handled by a sophisticated mechanism based on graphical themes. A theme may include, in its basic form, the essential HTML templates that define the visual interface of the site, as well as the style sheets and images needed to complement that visual interface. Themes are switchable in the administrative interface, so changing the whole appearance of a XOOPS site it's just a matter of changing the value of a selector and clicking on "Accept". XOOPS also provides site administrators with the ability to let users choose among some available themes.

Generally speaking, a theme is the high level visual framework of a site: the theme defines, for instance, the general layout of the site; on the other hand, it does not usually define the specific distribution of content within a block. This is handled by a different entity called a template set. A template set is an ensemble of HTML templates that define the presentation of content within all the blocks that form a XOOPS Web site. If we want a more clear metaphor for this, we could say that the theme is like the architect of a house, while the template set is like the interiors decorator. The first one sets the walls and defines the general distribution, but it's the second one who's in charge of "dressing" those walls.

If the active theme is a simple one that only includes a theme file, CSS files and some images, XOOPS employs the default template set to define the presentation of blocks. However, some complex themes like the one called x2t are sophisticated enough to include their own template set. In this case, the site administrator must use the administrative interface to set both the theme and the template set.

How is the theme magic accomplished? That is, how can HTML templates include dynamic content? This is done not with mirrors and smoke, but with a clever template engine called Smarty that makes the function of what used to be called variable interpolation. Expressed in a simple way, we could say that the XOOPS system uses PHP files to hold the logic of the modules (access to the database, allocation of variables, management of rights...), HTML files with Smarty variables inserted to manage the actual visual interface, and the Smarty engine to insert values and strings in specific places within the HTML that builds the pages seen by the end user. All in all, what this means to you can be easily summarized: thanks to its theming system, XOOPS lets site designers build more interesting and visually stunning sites without much concern about what happens under the hood.

Chapter 2. The Admin Interface

2.1. Logging in

The **XOOPS** content management system comes with an integrated membership registration section. Once registered, users can login by entering their username and password in forms displayed in a login block on the page. New registration is accomplished by pressing the [**Register now!**] link. This opens a page where an anonymous user may register by inputting basic details, like a user name and contact email. Registration allows access to restricted content of the site as defined by the site administrator. Site administrators can elect not to display the login form if they wish, or simply disallow registration. However the form is displayed on the home page by default on initial installation.



Figure 2.1. Logging in

Login is required to access any restricted content of the site. Successful login is accomplished by inputting a correct username and password as confirmed during the registration process.

If an unregistered user submits a URL that deliberately or accidentally calls a file or page that is designated as “restricted content”, then the login page is automatically returned by default. This defeats the URL call until authorised access is confirmed by successful login.

Site administrators need to login to access the admin part of a site.

Registered users may login to access other parts of the site that have been designated as registered members content. Registered users may also be given extra rights, such as posting in forums, commenting and submitting news items etc.

Administrators of a site can also define extra-restricted areas (not accessible to registered members) that display unique content. They can then assign any registered member access rights to that area.

All these access features are defined and controlled in the “groups” section in admin and are discussed in detail later in the manual.

For now let's describe the login procedure as follows:

- As site administrator
- As registered user
- Failed login procedure
- Logging out

2.1.1. As Site Administrator

During the installation of **XOOPS** you were asked to input an “Admin name” and “Admin password” Both these strings are case sensitive and should be used to login to your site as “site administrator”. A site administrator has unrestricted access to the site and allows entry to the website administration section, as well as the normal registered user section. Both usernames and passwords may be changed in the **administration->edit** user section. Make certain your login strings are unique and secure, as they will grant access to any user who inputs them!

Once logged in as administrator a new menu section appears in your home page sidebar with a link to [**Site administration**]. This link appears because of your login status as administrator and is the link to the main control center for your site. It is possible to promote any registered user to site administration level, though for security reasons this is usually assigned to select trusted personnel only.

2.1.2. As Registered User

Any visitor may register with your site (if you allow site registration) granting access to restricted content, interactivity and privileges, depending on how your site is configured. They will not have access to the site administrator's link to the admin section, nor will they be able to gain access by inputting the admin URL in the address bar. (Access is combined with a cookie function)

Users can only register using unique usernames and password combinations. As administrator you may also assign certain usernames (in Site **admin->user** info settings) that you want to prevent new registrants using. Once any combination of username/password strings has been used the system will not allow duplication for security reasons.

Registered users can change their passwords at any time by updating their account information. Once a registered member logs in successfully, they are returned to the site page they were viewing. Other features and menus of the site may now be available to them, depending on how the site is configured.

2.1.3. Incorrect Login Procedure

If for any reason an unrecognised combination of username and password is used during login, the system will return an “Incorrect login” page. A subsequent page displaying the login form quickly follows this. There is also an extra input form for requesting a new password by email should it be lost or become insecure. Users should re-enter their login details and try again, or request a password replacement by email. The login box also displays a [**Lost Password?**] link that goes directly to this page.

If a new password is required, fill in your email address in the appropriate form. A registration confirmation email is sent to the address entered if it is recognised in the database. Click on the link in the email to activate another email post containing the new password. Use the new password along with your original username to login on the next visit. You will probably want to change the password back to something more memorable in your account details.

2.1.4. Logging Out

When logged in it is always advisable to end your session by logging out before leaving a site or leaving your computer unattended for periods of time. This is simply good security practice to prevent any unauthorised access.

2.2. Control panel home

Having logged in successfully as a site administrator you are now shown a new menu called “user menu” in the home page. Click on the link [**Administration menu**]. This link is unique to you the Webmaster, or site administrator, as we shall refer to in these pages. Click this link to open your Control panel home page!

The control panel home page is the nerve centre for your whole site. You will certainly be spending many happy hours here creating content and administrating, so take some time to become familiar with the functions and facilities available. That “rather empty home page” will soon take on the appearance and usefulness of a truly professionally built Website, providing you plan thoughtfully and experiment with care and some background knowledge.

2.2.1. Some preliminaries before we get started in the

admin area

2.2.1.1. JavaScript

JavaScript is used in various functions of the administration section, both to display menus and also within scripts. Please make sure JavaScript is enabled on your local machine. If JavaScript is enabled you will see pop-up menus appear when you hover over “system admin” icon in the control panel home page. If you decide not to activate JavaScript, simply click the icon to return a new page of menus as detailed below.

2.2.1.2. Cache

Much of your site creation and administration will involve changing layout, images, text, and module functions. If you want to see these changes immediately by visiting your web pages, it is important that your browser displays fresh content from the server and not old cache data from your local machine! This particularly affects images. Make certain your browser is set to ignore cache memory when updating your site content.

Let’s begin exploring, learning and creating our site by working through the menus displayed under “System admin” icon. We will work through these alphabetically for convenience, however you may decide to visit the **preferences->general settings** section first in order to review and set some important options. There is no specific or recommended order for administrating your site, although you may wish to simply create a content block and activate a module, just to see how things work!

2.3. Avatars

Avatars are small graphics or pictures that can be used in various content settings around the site. They are often used next to a user name to add a bit of ‘visual identification’. Typical applications are the forum.

The Avatar Manager allows the Site administrator to add, edit or delete System Avatars as well as Custom Avatars. System Avatars are images uploaded by the Site administrator in the Avatar Manager section. Custom Avatars are images directly uploaded by a user. For a user to be able to upload an avatar, the correct option must be configured in the User Info Settings of the Site Preferences.

2.3.1. Adding avatars

The Site administrator can add an avatar by filing these fields in the Avatar Manager:

Field	Description
Name:	This is the name that the user will see when selecting an avatar.
Image File:	The path of the file to be uploaded. The image file can be selected by clicking the 'Browse button' This opens a selection box on your local machine.
Display order in image manager:	This is the value used by the image manager to sort avatars.
Display this image:	If the item 'No' is checked, the avatar will not be display to the user in the list of selectable avatars a user can choose.

Table 2.1. New Avatar

2.3.2. Edit and delete Avatars

Selecting the ‘List ‘ next to ‘System Avatars’, the Site administrator can edit the name and the display order of all the System Avatars, as well as deleting anyone of them. Note that if the Site administrator deleted an avatar that is used by a user, this user will lose his avatar.

2.4. Banners

2.4.1. What are they?

Banners are advertisements displayed in the top section of the page. They may be images or flash movies, e.g. the wildly gyrating **XOOPS** banner that is part of the default installation. **XOOPS** has a built in system for managing banners and creating accounts for advertising clients, which is found in the **System Module->Banners**. You can have multiple banners on a **XOOPS** site – the display area rotates through each of the active banners in turn each time a new page is loaded.

Each time a banner is displayed to a visitor this counts as one “impression”, which is the common trading currency of banners. Clients typically pay for a certain number of impressions – i.e. to have their advertisement displayed a certain number of times.

Please note: If you are in the business of selling banners based on the number of impressions there is one important thing you should do: Go to **System Module->Preferences->General Settings** and fill in the [Your IP Address] field (if you have one). This will prevent your visits to the site from being included in the impression count. Failure to do this could be considered somewhat dishonest (noting, however, that many Administrators don't have a permanent IP – e.g. those using dial up modems).

The Banner Administration section of the control panel is divided into several sections, described below:

2.4.2. Current active banners

A summary of the details of banners currently being displayed. ‘Banner ID’ is simply a unique identifier. ‘Impressions’ is the number of times the banner has been displayed. ‘Imp. Left’ is the number of paid impressions remaining. ‘Clicks’ is the number of times a visitor has clicked on the banner. This is used to calculate ‘% Clicks’ which is a useful gauge of the effectiveness of a banner – the higher the better. ‘Client Name’ is the owner of the banner.

Current Active Banners						
Banner ID	Impressions	Imp. Left	Clicks	% Clicks	Client Name	Functions
1	1007	Unlimited	2	0.198%	Highland Aquaculture	Edit Delete
2	1048	Unlimited	3	0.286%	XOOPS	Edit Delete
3	951	49	0	0%	XOOPS	Edit Delete

Figure 2.2. Current Active Banners

2.4.3. Add new banner

You can add new banners to your website through this form. The fields are as follows:

Field	Description
Client Name:	Assign the ownership of a banner via this drop down box. The client must be registered first!
Impressions purchased:	Enter the number of impressions the client has paid for here. Enter ‘0’ to give them unlimited impressions (this is useful for your own advertisements, or arrangements based on time rather than impressions).
Image URL:	Enter the URL to retrieve the banner here.
Click URL:	Clicking on the banner will open the URL assigned here. This would normally be the client’s website or a page describing the product.
Use HTML?	You may wish or need to use HTML in your banner. Check this box to enable it (it is disabled by default).
Code HTML:	If you want to use HTML, enter it in this box.

Table 2.2. New Banner

2.4.4. Editing banners

Select the 'edit' link to open a form that displays the banner and its details. The fields are almost the same as above and may be changed freely. The only difference is that the 'Impressions Purchased' field is now called 'Add More Impressions'; and the number of impressions already paid for / used is also displayed. You can reduce the number of impressions purchased by entering a negative number.

2.4.5. Finished banners

Banners are moved to this section of the control panel as they become inactive (i.e. when the number of impressions left = zero).

2.4.6. Advertising clients

A list of your current clients and their details:

Advertising Clients					
Banner ID	Client Name	Active Banners	Contact Name	Contact Email	Functions
1	XOOPS	0	XOOPS Dev Team	webmaster@xoops.org	Edit Delete
2	Bob Rosenberry	0	Rosenberry	bob@bobmail.com	Edit Delete
3	Joe Average	1	Joe Average	joe@joemail.com	Edit Delete

Figure 2.3. Advertising Clients

2.4.7. Add new client

Fill in the form to register new advertising clients. This creates an account that the client can login to view the current status of their banner advertisements:

Field	Description
Client Name:	Normally the name of the company.
Contact Name:	Your contact at the company.
Contact Email:	Make sure you get this right. A summary of current banner statistics will be sent to this address when the client requests a status report (see 'Client banner accounts' below).
Client Login:	Assign a login name for your client here. You will have to inform clients of their login and password manually. This is entirely separate from the main site login system.
Client Password:	Assign a password for your client's account here. The client cannot change this. Pick something secure.
Extra Info:	A discretionary 'notes' field, enter anything you like in here.

Table 2.3. New Client

Clients can check the status of their banners at any time by visiting <http://www.yoururl.com/banners.php>. This presents a login screen where the client must enter their login and password (assigned by you via the 'add client' form).

After login, clients are presented with a table summarising their banner statistics (described in 'Current active banners' above), and a display of their currently running banners. The 'Email Stats' link enables the client to send the current report, marked with a timestamp, to their contact email address. The client can re-point the banner to any URL they choose via the 'Change URL' box. This enables them to redirect the focus of their advertisement as needed.

Current Active Banners for Joe Average

ID	Imp. Made	Imp. Total	Imp. Left	Clicks	% Clicks	Functions
2	1	1001	1000	2	200%	E-mail Stats

Following are your running Banners in XOOPS Site



Banner ID: 2

Send E-Mail Stats for this Banner
This Banners points to this URL

Change URL:

Figure 2.4. Logging in

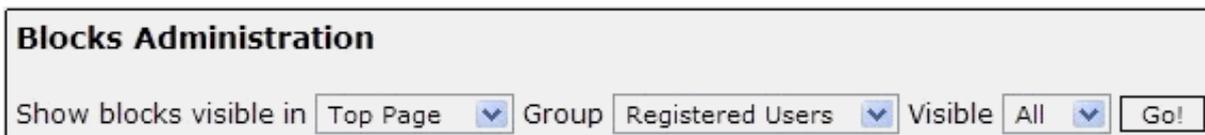
2.5. Blocks

Blocks are discreet sections of content that can be created and configured in the admin interface. Custom blocks can be created and are typically made up of text, graphics and pictures. The content in these blocks may be formatted individually or inherit the site formatting. Blocks may also be part of a modules display output. The blocks administration page is where all blocks are configured and administered.

2.5.1. Overview

The Blocks Administration page allows the Site administrator to organize the blocks for every page in the site. This page is divided in two sections. The first section displays the blocks configured in the system, filtered by three drop-down menu options at the top of the table. The second section is for the creation of a new block. As we have said, any installed modules are also displayed in this page; they will be discussed later in the guide.

First, to set properties of a block, it has to be displayed in the table of the Blocks Administration page. The following image represents the filters one can use to display the blocks information:



Blocks Administration

Show blocks visible in Group Visible

Figure 2.5. Blocks Administration

The three drop-down combo boxes select options for [Show blocks visible in] and [Group] and [Visible] . These options (together with the options set on each page) control much of the content and functions of the site, so it's really worth getting familiar with this section.

Let's look at fig.1. By default, the table will display the blocks that are defined to appear in the Top Page, for the "Registered Users". Let's have a look at some of the terms here.

- "Show blocks visible in" - This combo box sets the page where blocks are displayed. For example, the Top Page is the home page of the site. When a user types <http://www.yoursite.com>, the top page is what he sees. (This page can be set in the General Settings of the site). The other choices of this combo box will list the different modules of the site (Downloads, Web Links, Forum, etc...).

- “Group” - This combo box lists all the groups of the site. If the group “Webmaster” is selected, the table will display all the blocks for which the Webmaster group has access. Please note that the blocks permissions are defined in the Groups section and discussed later in this guide.
- “Visible” - The purpose of this combo box is simply to help the site administrator by filtering a specific visible status. This combo box has 3 items: “Yes”, “No” and “All”. The table will display the blocks that have their visible property set to that value. If “All” is selected, the table will return every block.

2.5.2. Configuring the blocks

Let’s have a look at the columns of the blocks table below these three menus.

Column	Description
Block Description	Gives a short description of what the block displays.
Title	The actual title of the block. This is the title that will be displayed by the block on the pages where the block is visible.
Module	The module that produces the block, i.e.; that puts the information in the block.
Side Left-Center-Right	<p>The position of the block. One of the 5 ‘option’ buttons must be selected for each block. For an easier explanation, we will give a number to each option, as represented on the image below:</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 1 will display the block at the left end of the page. • Options 2, 3 and 4 represent the central section of the page. If option 3 is selected, the block will be display across the complete width of the central section. • However, if option 2 or 4 is selected, the block will be display across the center left or at the center right. Selecting option 2 or 4 will result in a smaller block then selecting option 3, but it will allow two blocks to be displayed side by side in the central section. • Finally, selecting option 5 will display a block at the right end of the page. <p>If no blocks are displayed in the right section of the page, the central section will start at the end of the left section and will expand to the end of the page. However, if no block is displayed in the left section, it will not affect the width of the central section and the left section will just be blank. It is, of course, not recommended to leave the left section with no block.</p> <p>Also, the blocks that are defined with option 3 will always be displayed before the blocks that are defined with options 2 and 4.</p>
Weight	<p>The weight is the value used by XOOPS to sort the display order of blocks in a page. The sorting is done by section. This means that the weight of a block in the left section will not affect the order of a block in the right section. The normal page is divided into four sections;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The top panel, or banner.

Column	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The left hand section, or main navigation bar. The centre panel, or main page content. The right panel, or second navigation bar. <p>The general principle is the following: the higher the number, the lower the block will be. It is indeed exactly like weight in real life: heavier things go down faster. It is useful to input your block weight in 5 or 10 increments. This allows for inserting items later without needing to change other weights.</p>
Visible	For a block to be displayed, it has to have its visible property set to 'Yes'.
Action	This column will be blank if the block cannot be modified. If it can, the word 'Edit' will appear, on which one could click to edit certain parameters of the block. If the block is a Custom block, the Action column will also have the word 'Delete' to permanently delete the block.

Table 2.4. Block Administration

2.5.3. Editing a block

When the "Edit" option is available, the Site administrator can click on the 'Edit' link in the action column of a block. This will display the detail properties of the block and allow editing of some of these. Here are the properties and their descriptions:

Field	Description
Name	This is the name of the block. It cannot be modified here.
Block Type	This is the position of the block, as defined in the 'Side Left-Center-Right' row of the Table 2. It may be set here also.
Weight	This is the weight property of the block, as defined in the 'Weight' row of the Table 2. It may be set here also.
Visible	This is the visible property of the block, as defined in the 'Visible row of the Table 2. It may be set here also.
Visible in	This property sets the pages where the block will be displayed. In addition to all the modules, the combo box items have 'Top Page' and 'All Pages'. The 'Top Page' will display the block only in the top page; the 'All Pages' will display the block in every page of the site. Selecting multiple, non-consecutive pages is possible by holding "Ctrl" on keyboard.
Title	This is the title that will be displayed in the webpage for the block.
Content	The 'Edit Template' link will allow the Site administrator to edit the template of the block. Some HTML and/or PHP knowledge are required to do this.
Options	Many blocks have options that can be set to fully customize the block. As the options are different for each block, we will not detail each one of them here.
Cache lifetime	Cache lifetime is a useful feature for making a site run faster. If a block has fixed content that is unlikely to change on a regular basis, it is possible to instruct the browser to call the content from cache, rather than from the server. This is particularly effective if graphics are part of the content. Use the settings here to determine how long this content should be held in cache before returning to server fed data.

Table 2.5. Block Editing

2.5.4. Adding custom blocks

As we said before, the Blocks Administration page allows the Site administrator to add custom blocks. This is done by filling the fields of the [Add a new block] section. The properties are the same as the Table 2.5, “Block Editing” [12]. Only one new property has to be set: Content Type, which defines the type of content that is entered in the Content area: HTML, PHP, etc..

2.6. Comments

Site administrators have the option of providing a comments section for users. Comments can be added to many modules and displayed in a variety of ways. Comments can be screened, filtered, and made available to selected groups. This provides quick easy interaction from site users, while maintaining good moderation and security.

2.6.1. Overview

The Comment Manager allows the Site administrator to edit and delete any comment that has been posted to the site, originating in any module that supports the comments feature.

Like the Blocks Administration page, some filters options are available to help the site administrator manage the comments. Let’s have a look at these filters operated from three combo box menus:

The image shows a screenshot of the 'Comment Manager' interface. It features a title bar 'Comment Manager' and three dropdown menus: 'All modules', 'Any status', and '50'. To the right of these menus is a 'Go!' button.

Figure 2.6. Comment Manager

- “Module” - By selecting a particular module, the ‘List Comments’ will display the comments that were posted in the selected module.
- “Status” - By selecting a particular status, the ‘List Comments’ will display the comments that have the selected status. Here are definitions of the possible status options:

Status	Definition
Pending	By default, when a comment is posted, it has to be activated by the Site administrator in order to be displayed on the site. Comments that have not been activated keep this status. Note that automatic activation of comments can be set in the settings of each module that supports comments.
Active	Comments that have been activated by the Site administrator have this status. These comments are now displayed on the website
Hidden	The Site administrator can hide a comment by turning its status to hidden. A hidden comment will not be displayed on the website.

Table 2.6. Comments Status

- “Number of results” - This is the number of comments that the Comment List will display on the page at the time.

2.6.2. Manage comments

The List Comment table displays the comments that correspond to the previous filters. Here is the description of

the different columns:

Column	Description
Title	The title of the comment. Clicking on the title of the comment will display the actual comment.
Posted	The date and time that the comment was originally posted.
Poster	The registered username of the person who posted the comment. Clicking on the username of the comment will display the profile of this user.
IP	This is the IP address of the computer from which the comment was posted.
Module	This is the module from which the comment originated.
Status	This column displays the status of the comment, as previously explained.

Table 2.7. List Comments

The Site administrator can delete a comment by clicking on the 'Delete' link in the last column of the table.

The Site administrator can also edit the comment by clicking on the 'Edit' link. This action will display a page where all the comment properties can be edited.

2.7. Find Users

Find Users provides a wide range of options that you can use to search for specific users or to filter your membership. You can also obtain a complete list of members by pressing the 'submit' button without using any of the filters.

Most of the fields are self-explanatory but they are covered below anyway:

Column	Description
User Name	Search by user name. This is one of the best fields to use since it is mandatory (everyone has a user name, but most people don't bother to fill out the discretionary fields in their profiles). You have the following options to refine your search: Starts with (default); ends with; matches; contains.
Real Name	Search by real name.
Email	Search by email address.
ICQ Number	Search by ICQ member number.
AIM Handle	Search by America Online Instant Messenger username.
YIM Handle	Search by Yahoo Instant Messenger username.
MSNM Handle	Search by MSN Messenger username.
URL contains	Search by website address field of user profiles.
Location contains	Search by location field of user profiles.
Interest contains	Search the interest fields of user profiles.
Last login is more than X days ago	Use this to find people that have not logged in for a specified period. Bear in mind that (depending on the group access rights you have set) people don't always log into your site to when they visit.
Last login is less than X days ago	Use this to find recent users of your site.
Joined date is more than X days ago	Useful to filter out your more established members.
Joined date is less than X days ago	This is useful if you want to filter out new members, perhaps to send them a personal welcome message.
Number of Posts is greater than X	Use this to find your top posters.
Number of Posts is less than X	Use this to find infrequent posters.
Type of users to show	There are three options here that you can use to filter your search results:
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Column	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only users that accept mail; • Only users that don't accept mail; • All users (default). This relates to an option users selected when they registered their account. Bear in mind that people who chose not to accept mail don't want to hear from you!
Type of users to show	<p>There are three options that you can use to filter your search results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only active users (the default, this means people whose accounts have been activated); • Only inactive users (people who have registered but not yet activated their accounts) and • All users.
Sort by	<p>You can use this to sort your search results. Available options are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User name (default) • email • last login • joined date • number of posts
Order	<p>Another field for sorting your search results, you can choose from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ascending order (default) or • descending order
Number of users per page	How many entries to show on each page.

Table 2.8. Find Users

2.8. Groups

2.8.1. Overview

XOOPS provides a core system of user access rights through the “Groups” settings. This allows the site administrator to control and filter access on at least 3 different user levels. All modules and their associated blocks must have their settings for visibility, rights and access correctly defined in order to achieve correct display and function on the website. Put simply, if you don't grant these rights for a block to every available group, it won't be visible on the page

The three default user access groups are as follows:

- Anonymous users

- Registered users
- Webmasters (site administrators)

You can change the name of these default groups, but, you cannot delete them. Other user groups can also be set and defined as discussed later.

Let's explain the meaning of each default groups. Someone who visits your site is an "Anonymous User". If a visitor is registered AND logged in to your site, he will be recognized as a "Registered User". The "Administrators" group automatically contains the primary user you created during the installation.

In a typical web setup we may set group permissions as follows:

- "Anonymous users:" Anonymous users may be allowed to view certain content as displayed by a particular module, or groups of modules. When anonymous users visit your site they will automatically see a default level of content for this group without any action on their part.
- "Registered users:" Registered users of the site can be granted rights to view and interact with other modules not available to the anonymous group. On initial site visit, assuming there is no auto-login function, they see the default content like any other visitor. However, when they login with their correct user details, the page will reload to include any links, menus and module content accessible to the registered group. The site administrator can design a site to display totally different module content, or simply additional module content to registered users.
- "Webmasters" As the creator of the **XOOPS** site the Webmaster or site administrator has complete and overall rights of access and administration. However, it is possible to promote any registered user to Webmaster status and share your privileges. It is safer to create a custom group and grant module and administration access for selected modules if you wish to allow others to administrate areas of the site.

2.8.2. The different sets of rights

Go to System **admin->groups->Edit Groups** page.

The "Edit groups" page begins with a section called "Edit Groups" (see Figure 2.7, "Edit Groups" [17]). This allows you to select a specific group to work with and modify. Initially 3 default groups already exist, as described above.

Select a group from this list and click 'modify'.

Edit Groups

Edit Groups	
Webmasters	Modify
Registered Users	Modify
Anonymous Users	Modify
restricted	Modify Delete
Create New Group	
Name	<input type="text"/>
Description	<input type="text"/>
System Admin rights	<input type="checkbox"/> Avatars <input type="checkbox"/> Banners <input type="checkbox"/> Blocks <input type="checkbox"/> Comments <input type="checkbox"/> Find Users <input type="checkbox"/> Groups <input type="checkbox"/> Image Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Mail Users <input type="checkbox"/> Modules <input type="checkbox"/> Preferences <input type="checkbox"/> Smilies <input type="checkbox"/> Templates <input type="checkbox"/> User Ranks <input type="checkbox"/> Edit Users
Module Admin rights	<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda-X <input type="checkbox"/> Cjay Content <input type="checkbox"/> Downloads <input type="checkbox"/> Web Links <input type="checkbox"/> Forum <input type="checkbox"/> News <input type="checkbox"/> Sections <input type="checkbox"/> Polls
Module Access rights	<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda-X <input type="checkbox"/> Cjay Content <input type="checkbox"/> Contact Us <input type="checkbox"/> Downloads <input type="checkbox"/> Web Links <input type="checkbox"/> Forum <input type="checkbox"/> News <input type="checkbox"/> Sections <input type="checkbox"/> Polls <input type="checkbox"/> Members
Block Access Rights	Left <input type="checkbox"/> User Menu (ID: 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Login (ID: 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Search (ID: 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Waiting Contents (ID: 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Main Menu (ID: 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Site Info (ID: 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Who's Online (ID: 7) <input type="checkbox"/> Top Posters (ID: 8) <input type="checkbox"/> New Members (ID: 9) <input type="checkbox"/> Recent Comments (ID: 10) <input type="checkbox"/> Notification Options (ID: 11) <input type="checkbox"/> Themes (ID: 12) <input type="checkbox"/> Minical (ID: 13) <input type="checkbox"/> 7 Day Events List (ID: 14) <input type="checkbox"/> This Month's Events (ID: 15) <input type="checkbox"/> Cjay Content (ID: 16) <input type="checkbox"/> Counter Block (ID: 17) <input type="checkbox"/> Recent Downloads (ID: 18) <input type="checkbox"/> Top Downloads (ID: 19) <input type="checkbox"/> Recent Links (ID: 20) <input type="checkbox"/> Top Links (ID: 21) <input type="checkbox"/> Recent Topics (ID: 22) <input type="checkbox"/> Most Viewed Topics (ID: 23) <input type="checkbox"/> Most Active Topics (ID: 24) <input type="checkbox"/> Recent Private Topics (ID: 25) <input type="checkbox"/> News Topics (ID: 26) <input type="checkbox"/> Big Story (ID: 27) <input type="checkbox"/> Top News (ID: 28) <input type="checkbox"/> Recent News (ID: 29) <input type="checkbox"/> Polls (ID: 30)
	Center Right
	<input type="button" value="Create New Group"/>

Figure 2.7. Edit Groups

The modify group page is returned (see Figure 2.8, “Modify Groups” [18]). You can now change the name of this group and give a meaningful description in the form boxes provided.

Looking further down the page you will see 4 sections, which represent the 4 sets of rights that can be defined in the permission system. In every section, ticking a checkbox will grant this group the rights as described. If the checkbox is unchecked, this group will not have access to the selected resource.



Note

Whenever you make changes to the settings on a page, you must click the “Update Group” button at the bottom before changes take place.

Let’s look at each set of rights individually.

- “System Admin Rights” - As their name says, System Admin Rights are rights that will control access to the System module. Each item in this sections represent an item found in the **Administration Menu->System Admin->Preferences** menu. In order to see the System Admin module in the **Administration Menu->Control Panel Home** page, at least one item has to be checked in this section!
- “Module Admin Rights” - As for the Module Admin Rights, the Module Access Rights section lists all the modules currently installed on your site. In order for a group to access a particular module, the corresponding item must be checked in the present section. In addition to not being able to access a module which item has not been checked, the members of the group will not even see that module through the Main Menu. For example: if, for the anonymous users group, the “News” module is checked, when they visit your site, the “News” module will be shown in the main menu and they can access the content (pages) of ‘News’. If the “Forums” module is unchecked it will not show up in the main menu, and they will not be able to access any content in the “Forums” module.

However, using the search function, a member of this group will be able to perform a search in module for which his group does not have access. Of course, the member will only be able to see the title of the items returned by the search and will not be able to actually access the item.

- “Block Access Rights” If a module has specific blocks that are available as part of its functionality, they will appear in this section. Each block can be assigned a position on the page (this is detailed in the block section of this manual) If we have already assigned a page position to a block, it will be seen in that position in the “Block Access Rights” section.

Each block displayed is given a system ID number. The name is also a hyperlink to a “block edit” page. For further information on the Block Edit page, please see Section 2.5.3, “Editing a block” [12].

Groups Main >>> Modify Group

Modify Group	
Name	<input type="text" value="Registered Users"/>
Description	<input type="text" value="Registered Users Group"/>
System Admin rights	<input type="checkbox"/> Avatars <input type="checkbox"/> Banners <input type="checkbox"/> Blocks <input type="checkbox"/> Comments <input type="checkbox"/> Find Users <input type="checkbox"/> Groups <input type="checkbox"/> Image Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Mail Users <input type="checkbox"/> Modules <input type="checkbox"/> Preferences <input type="checkbox"/> Smilies <input type="checkbox"/> Templates <input type="checkbox"/> User Ranks <input type="checkbox"/> Edit Users
Module Admin rights	<input type="checkbox"/> Agenda-X <input type="checkbox"/> Cjay Content <input type="checkbox"/> Downloads <input type="checkbox"/> Web Links <input type="checkbox"/> Forum <input type="checkbox"/> News <input type="checkbox"/> Sections <input type="checkbox"/> Polls
Module Access rights	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda-X <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cjay Content <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contact Us <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Downloads <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Web Links <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forum <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> News <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sections <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Polls <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Members
Block Access Rights	Left <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> User Menu (ID: 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Login (ID: 2) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Search (ID: 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Waiting Contents (ID: 4) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Main Menu (ID: 5) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site Info (ID: 6) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Who's Online (ID: 7) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Top Posters (ID: 8) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Members (ID: 9) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recent Comments (ID: 10) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notification Options (ID: 11) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Themes (ID: 12) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minical (ID: 13) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7 Day Events List (ID: 14) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This Month's Events (ID: 15) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cjay Content (ID: 16) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Counter Block (ID: 17) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recent Downloads (ID: 18) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Top Downloads (ID: 19) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recent Links (ID: 20) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Top Links (ID: 21) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recent Topics (ID: 22) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Most Viewed Topics (ID: 23) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Most Active Topics (ID: 24) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recent Private Topics (ID: 25) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> News Topics (ID: 26) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Big Story (ID: 27) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Top News (ID: 28) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recent News (ID: 29) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Polls (ID: 30)
	Center Right
	<input type="button" value="Update Group"/>

Figure 2.8. Modify Groups

2.8.3. Edit members of this group

The final section on each “Modify group” page displays a list box of “Non-members” and “Members”. This list is specific to each group you are viewing.

All registered members will be shown in one of these list boxes. You can remove and add members for any group by using this feature.

The XOOPS Core Development Team recommends that each user be part of only 1 group. Doing this, you’ll be assured that no conflicts occurred.

2.8.4. Creating a new group

The final option you have is to 'Create new group'.

Go to **Administration Menu->System Admin->Groups->Edit Groups** page.

The Create a New Group section displays a familiar table that you have already seen in the 3 default groups with all the modules and blocks installed in the system. Notice they are listed against empty check boxes, until you assign the settings for the new group.

Enter a name and description for the new group. Assign rights and access for each module and block displayed, by filling the check boxes in the same way as the 3 default groups previously.

At the bottom you will see a button for **[create new group]**, click this to create the new group you have defined in the page.

Your new group will now appear in the list of groups throughout the site administration pages. Note that the newly created group does not have any members yet. You'll have to click Modify and add the users you want in the group, as seen on section Section 2.12.5, "Search Options" [34].

2.9. Image Manager

The image manager is a tool that enables people to upload, organise and retrieve images for use throughout the site. You must configure the image manager before you can use it (via **system->images**). This involves creating some categories to store your images and setting preferences on issues such as maximum image dimensions, file size and user group access rights. Each category is configured separately.

2.9.1. Adding image categories

You must create at least one category before you can upload images. The configuration options are summarised below:

Field	Description
Category name:	Give your category an appropriate name. Keep it short, as people will select it through a drop-down box.
Select groups for image manager use	Select the user groups that you want to be able to access the images in this category. These groups will be able to see and select images (for use in submissions etc.) but cannot upload new images. The Webmaster group has access by default.
Select groups allowed to upload images:	Select the user groups you want to permit to upload new images into this category. The default is upload by the Webmaster group only. Typically upload rights are given to trusted (administrative) groups only. Bear in mind that if you allow the general public to upload images they may send in some offensive ones.
Max size allowed (kb):	It is useful to impose a limit on the file size uploaded images. This prevents people from posting ridiculously large images that are difficult to download. The default is 50,000 bytes (it is not KB as stated, that is an error).
Max width allowed (pixels):	Set a maximum width on images to preserve the integrity of your layout. Consider what would happen if someone uses a 1024 pixel wide image on your 800 pixel wide site! If you have a 'standard' size you like to use for your site this is a good place to set it.
Max height allowed (pixels):	As above.
Display order in image manager:	You can set the order in which categories appear in the image manager drop down box here. If you want to have some flexibility in ordering the categories, assign them order numbers in (say) multiples of 10. That way you can always come back and insert a new category between them.
Display this category?	The default is "yes". If you choose "no", the category will be hidden when people access the image manager from the user side. This can be useful for hiding administrative categories from your users.
Images are uploaded to:	There are two options here (and you cannot change your mind afterwards). You can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> store images as files in the uploads directory (default), or store images as binary "blob" data in the database. <p>The difference is that option two actually stores the image in the database,</p>

Field	Description
	<p>while option one does not (it stores a reference to the image location instead).</p> <p>The advantage of option two is that when you back up your database you will back up your images as well. However, images take up a lot of space, so your database file will be much bigger. If your website is hosted remotely and you have to download the backup file it will take a lot longer.</p>

Table 2.9. Adding Image Categories

2.9.2. Editing and deleting images and categories

Once you have created some categories they will appear at the top of the image manager page in the system module. Each category has links to three options alongside it:

- “List:” This will display a list of the images in the category, along with their details. You can edit the name, display order of images here. You also have the option to reassign images to a different category, to show or hide them, and to delete them.
- “Edit:” This opens the configuration options for the category so that you can change them.
- “Delete:” Select delete to remove a category. If you are storing images as binary blobs in the database this will delete them permanently. If you are storing images as files in the `uploads` directory, your images will still be in the that directory (though they won’t be available through image manager).

2.9.3. Adding image files through the control panel

You must create at least one category before you can upload images.

Field	Description
Name:	Give your category an appropriate name. Keep it short, as people will select it through a drop-down box.
Category:	Choose the category that you want the image to be assigned to here.
Image file:	Press the browse button and navigate to the image that you want to upload.
Display order in image manager:	You can set the order in which images appear in the category here. If you want to have some flexibility in ordering the images, assign them order numbers in (say) multiples of 10. That way you can always come back and insert a new image between them.
Display this image?	The default is “yes”. If you choose “no” the image will be hidden when people access this category from the user side.

Table 2.10. Adding image files

2.9.4. Accessing the image manager from the user side

The image manager can be accessed by the user in some modules such as news, downloads, links, forums and many others. This allows people to illustrate news stories and other resources that they submit. It is accessed by pressing the image manager button available in the submission forms of relevant modules:

The Image manager opens in a new window. Users can select image categories via a drop down box. The categories that users can see depend on the group to which they belong (and on the access rights that have been

granted to that group).

When a category is selected a list of images is displayed along with three 'alignment' buttons (left, centre, right). Users choose an image to insert by selecting the appropriate alignment button next to it. This inserts the tags and URL needed to display the image into the submission form the user is working on. The window closes automatically.

If a user belongs to a group that has upload rights, an 'Add Image File' link is also available in the Image Manager window. This displays an upload form that allows users to name and browse to an image that they wish to submit. It also displays the constraints on image dimensions and file size that have been set for that category.

2.10. Mail Users

XOOPS has a built in messaging system that enables you to send a message to your entire registered user base or subgroups thereof. This can be in the form of a private message (i.e. through the **XOOPS** built-in messaging system) or through an email. A range of options is available for filtering out subgroups of users from your membership:

Field	Description
Send message to users whose:	Select one or more of your registered user groups you wish to mail (select multiple groups by holding down the shift or control keys). The default groups are Registered Users and Webmasters. You can define additional User Groups in System->Groups (see Section 2.12.5, "Search Options" [?]).
Group is:	
Last Login is after (Format yyyy-mm-dd, optional)	You can use this to filter out members that used the site after a certain date.
Last Login is before (Format yyyy-mm-dd, optional)	You can use this to filter out members that have not used the site since a certain date – this can be a useful way to help maintain contact/send reminders to people who haven't visited for a while.
Last Login was more than X days ago (optional)	You can use this to filter out members that have not used the site for a specified period.
Last Login was less than X days ago (optional)	You can use this to filter out members that have recently used the site within a specified period.
Send message only to users that accept notification messages (optional)	When people fill in the XOOPS registration form there is a check box they can use to indicate whether or not they are willing to receive occasional messages from administrators and moderators. Select this checkbox to respect the wishes of your members (a good idea). If you do not select the checkbox (which is the default), all of your members will receive the message whether they want to or not. Some of them may not appreciate that.
Send message to inactive users only (optional)	Select this checkbox to target inactive users only. If you use this option all of the other settings that lie above it in the table will be ignored. An inactive user is someone who registered an account on your website, but never actually activated it.
Registered date is after (Format yyyy-mm-dd, optional)	This enables you to filter out your more recent members, i.e. those that joined after a certain date.
Registered date is before (Format yyyy-mm-dd, optional)	Filters out your older members, i.e. those that joined before a certain date.
From Name (email only)	Enter the name that you want the message to appear to have come from here.
From Email (email only)	Enter your email address here.
Subject	Type the subject line of your message here. You can customise the message to include the name of each user by using the tag: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> {X_UNAME} will print the user name

Field	Description
	For example, if you send a bulk mail with the subject line “Hello {X_UNAME}” to users Bob and Sandy, Bob’s copy would say “Hello Bob” and Sandy’s would say “Hello Sandy”, and so on It’s similar to doing a mail merge in a word processor.
Body	Enter your actual message in this field. There are a few more tags you can use here to customise your message for each user that receives it (see above): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • {X_UID} will print the user’s id • {X_UNAME} will print the user name • {X_UEMAIL} will print the user’s email • {X_UACTLINK} will print the user activation link (good for sending reminders to inactive users – those people that have registered but not activated their account)
Send to	You can choose to send your message via email (in which case it will be delivered to the email address the member’s personal profile), or by private message (in which case it will appear in the member’s Inbox – accessible through the User Menu - next time they log on).

Table 2.11. Mail Users

2.11. Modules

Modules provide essential content for any **XOOPS** website. Once the administrator has installed the core scripts and configured basic functions in the administration control panel, they will need to consider which modules will fulfil the required content.

This needs some planning, both for the modules to be displayed and also the layout on the pages. It is a good idea to review other **XOOPS** sites and see which modules are used to display various types of content. This is easily done by opening any **XOOPS** site and hovering over the menu links on the left and right hand side panels. At the same time look at the URLs displayed in the status bar on your browser. You should see addresses like this: http://the_site.com/modules/wfsection/... All modules are stored in the /modules/ directory, thus the following sector of the address (in this example “wfsection”) shows the module that will display contents of that menu link.

If you open the page for the link it will show an example of how the module is used and the type of content it displays. Reviewing other sites like this will also give you some good insight into layout and design capabilities.

2.11.1. Acquiring a module

2.11.1.1. Module origins

All modules need to be specifically designed for the **XOOPS** content management system. Currently there are 3 grades of modules available:

- Official certified modules available from **XOOPS** parent sites;
- 3rd party certified modules;
- 3rd party uncertified modules.

The recommended guidelines for acquiring these are described elsewhere in this manual.

Modules are normally packed in a compressed file format such as .zip or .tar format. You will need a file expander tool like **WinZip** or **winrar** to decompress the package and make the files useable.

After downloading and decompressing the module package, it is important to maintain the current directory structure and distribution of all associated files.



Note

It is not essential to upload “ancillary files” such as `readme/changelog/install` and other non-operational files. Likewise, you may wish to remove any language packs that are not required in your installation. It is wise however to retain any index files in all directories, regardless of blank content. This is a security measure. Leave files alone, if you are unsure.

Once the module package is unzipped, study the structure of the files in the local computer. Some modules are ready for uploading to the root directory instead of just the `/modules/` directory.

Normally you will need to upload the files into the `/modules/` directory which will be a second level sub-directory within your site root: e.g. **`http://your_xoops_site.com/modules/your_new_module_package`**. However, some modules have extra files that need to be uploaded to other folders such as the `/include/` and the `/class/` directories.

It is important to upload **ONLY** the directory holding the main file set. Some modules are packed within nested sub-directories 2 or 3 layers beneath the package root, like this: `my_downloads V1.23/my_downloads/mydownloads/` (this directory contains the main file set)

In this case be certain to upload the directory holding the main file set, NOT the root (`my_downloads V1.23`) If you upload the module file set within nested directories by mistake the **XOOPS** install system will not register the new module package!

2.11.1.2. Ancillary files

Readme, install, changelog and other information files.

Always view any Readme, install or changelog files if included. They often give important details about module installation requirements, setup and usage. If you require further information and assistance, they may also contain the authors website address and/or email contact.

2.11.1.3. Copyrights and GPL notices

You may also see files relating to copyright and The General Public Licence. These may be viewed to verify the source, distribution rights, and conditions of use and authenticity of the module scripts within the package.

2.11.2. Uploading the module

2.11.2.1. Preparing the module files for upload to a remote server

Many module scripts are self-configuring once installed. However, some require some initial configuration as detailed in Ancillary files described above. Make sure you edit any files in a plain text editor, or application suitable for the file type. It is unwise to use web-authoring WYSIWYG applications such as FrontPage™ or Dreamweaver™ as they can add spurious code to your files. If you intend to make any extensive edits, prepare a backup beforehand.

2.11.2.2. Using FTP or browser file uploader

FTP is the preferred method of file transfer as it allows you to transfer a whole module directory automatically and maintain its structure.

If you use a browser upload with limited file transfers, be sure to maintain the original directory structure.

2.11.2.3. Upload the module package

When you are sure your files are ready, upload the file set complete in its directory to the `./modules/` directory on your server.

2.11.2.4. Setting file/directory permissions

You may need to change “read/write/execute” permissions for various files and folders, if stated in Ancillary files supplied with the package. Settings can vary between different server operating systems. Some modules will only work correctly with `register_globals`¹¹ set to “on”. Please be aware of these requirements when installing modules.



¹¹This is a setting which is controlled by PHP configuration.

Figure 2.9. Selecting “Modules” from the menu system

2.11.3. Installing the module

Once the file set is uploaded and permissions are set if required, you can now visit your Control panel home page and install the module.

Go to **system admin->modules**. Module administration page.

This section displays a table with any installed modules in the top section of the page. Beneath this is a section displaying any modules residing in the `./modules/` directory on your server that have not been installed, or have been deactivated.

In this section you will see a table with headings for “MODULE” “VERSION” AND “ACTION”.

Your new module should be listed here with a “module” under the module column, and an “install” and “information” icon under the “Action” column.

Click the “install” icon, as indicated below. This returns a confirmation page, click on the install button if you wish to proceed. If all goes well, you will see a new page with a list of files and any database tables created for your new module.

Module	Version	Action
	1	 

Figure 2.10. An un-installed module

Click [return to module administration] page.

You will now see your installed module in the top list of active installed modules.

Modules Administration

Module	Version	Last Update	Active	Order (0 = hide)	Action
 Systemeinstellungen	1	2003/10/26 21:37	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		 
 C-Jay Content	3	2004/11/20 19:55	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 	<input type="text" value="0"/> 	 

Figure 2.11. Installed module administration

2.11.4. Setting module visibility and menu order

The modules administration table has headings for: Module, Version, Last Update, Active, Order, and Action.

This page gives you options to “Activate” the module in your website or keep it installed but hidden from any menus or interaction. You can also deactivate and/or uninstall the module from this page, as we will describe later.

Ticking the “Active” box makes the module active in your website and admin section and also visible in your menu systems. Remember, you still need to select in which pages, position and groups the module will appear in.

Inputting an order number in the adjacent “order” column tells the module page link where to appear in the menu system. Leaving the order column with a “0” will keep the module active, but prevent any links appearing in the page menu systems. This is useful if you utilise custom menus or links to display pages.



Note

Click [submit] button at the bottom of this table to activate any changes made.

2.11.4.1. Deactivating and uninstalling a module

While we are still in the module administration page, let’s complete the options here by describing how to deactivate and uninstall a module.

- Looking at the table at the top of this page, you will see a list of your registered modules.
- There is a column with the label ‘Active’, as well as a checkmark for every active module. Unmark the module you want to uninstall and press [submit] at the page bottom.
- You’ll go to a confirmation page where the desired change is highlighted in red. Just press [submit] again to confirm.
- You’ll receive a success message stating that module you selected was successfully deactivated. Now click on the link [Back to module administration] .
- Back in the Modules administration page, in the “Action” column you will now see a new status icon. The module you just deactivated will have an additional icon at the centre, showing a tiny red light. This icon’s action is to complete the process by deleting the module. Click on the icon.

 HEADLINES Headlines	1	2004/12/7 20:47	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text" value="0"/>	
---	---	-----------------	--------------------------	--------------------------------	---

Figure 2.12. Deactivated module

- You’ll go to another confirmation page asking you if you’re sure you want to uninstall. Click [Yes] .
- You’ll see a page with the changes just made. What happens is the module has been now been deactivated and disconnected from the **XOOPS**’ system. However the physical files still reside on the server in the modules directory where you uploaded them. Click on ‘Back to module administration’ page
- The module you just uninstalled won’t be on the registered modules list at the top of the page, but now at the bottom of the page, among the modules that are available in **XOOPS**’ modules directory but haven’t been installed. You are now back where you started after initially uploading the module.



Note

Uninstalling a module deletes all content associated with that module - the tables defined by the module are dropped, and all blocks, templates, configuration options, comments, notifications, etc. associated with the module are removed from the database. Now the module is disconnected from the **XOOPS** core, if you wish to do so, you may safely delete the module files on the server manu-

ally.

2.11.5. Configuring module settings and options

Assuming you have not uninstalled your new module, let's go back to System admin>Modules. Modules administration page where your new module is displayed in the active section and continue with the setup procedure.

2.11.5.1. Renaming module

Your new module will now appear in a table in the upper section of the module administration page indicating a successful installation (see Figure 2.11, "Installed module administration" [25]).

Beneath the module icon you will see the module name in a small form box. You can rename the module here by inputting this form. The name supplied here will be the name displayed your site's main menu. This can also be changed elsewhere in the configuration, as we will see later.

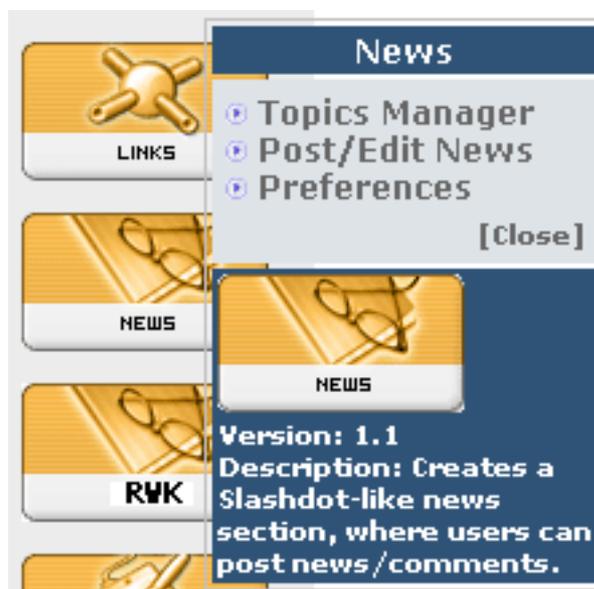


Figure 2.13. Module menu

When hovering or clicking on the module icon on the left of the page, some Modules will display a menu with links to specific settings and options only for that module. Some modules do not have an administration menu, in which case no menu is displayed.

Each module has individual functions and display options. Unless you have documentation for a module, you will need to experiment and explore the various options for using the module.

The following guidelines are for configuring the module within the system and not related to the particular workings of any one module.

2.11.5.2. Display and position options for the module

Go to system admin>blocks administration page.

This next section assumes the module is correctly installed and that no error messages were encountered during the install process.

Many modules share common properties with blocks, already described in Section 2.12.5, "Search Options" [34] in this manual. These are typically:

- The position of where the block is displayed on the web page.

- Which pages the block will be displayed in.
- Which user groups are allowed to see the block

Please refer to section 3.3 above for configuring these options.

Some modules have different components for their operation. Thus, for example a news module is divided into 4 blocks:

- Top news
- Big story
- Other news
- News topics

In these cases each block will be identified in a “block description” and the module it relates to in the “module column” of the blocks administration page.

2.11.6. Setting user access rights for a module

Many modules are interactive, that is they provide for user input and may produce display feedback and information as a result of that input.

As mentioned in a previous section, **XOOPS** provides a core system of user access rights through the “Groups” settings. When installing and configuring a new module, be sure to set the appropriate permissions in Administration Menu>System Admin>Groups>”Edit Groups”.

However, when installing a new module, some default permissions are applied to the groups of a **XOOPS** site.

- “The Webmasters Group” - It is assumed that the webmaster always requires ultimate control of the site, so when a new module is installed, the Webmasters/Site Administrator Group is granted with all the access rights, in all 4 sets of rights.
- “The Registered Users Group” - On installation of a new module, the Registered Users Group is granted with all the Module Access Rights and the Block Access Rights that are related to the newly installed module.
- “The Anonymous Group” - When a new module is installed, the Anonymous Groups does not get any access rights on the newly installed module. If you want the Anonymous Group to access this module, you will have to set the permissions yourself.
- “Groups created by Site Administrators” - All other groups that have been created by site administrators are not granted any rights upon the installation of a new module. As for the Anonymous Groups, site administrators have to set these rights themselves.

This concludes our first introduction to the **XOOPS** modules. There are many other refinements available to the more experienced user. These will be described in greater detail in the “Webmasters guide to XOOPS”

2.12. Preferences

The preference panels are where you configure your site-wide preferences. It is worth taking the time to work through them as some settings can have a significant impact on the performance, security and ease of use of your site.

2.12.1. General Settings

Field	Description
Site name	This will be used as the title of your site. This is what will be displayed in the <title> html tag of your site's pages (the name of current module is also appended).
Slogan for your site	The slogan of your site will be appended to your site name (title) if you select 'none' as the module for your start page (see below). It may also appear in on screen in some themes.
Admin mail address	Enter the email address you want to use for administrative purposes here.
Default language	If you have more than one language installed you can choose which one you want the site to display when a user first visits your site.
Module for your start page	You can select any installed module to be the 'home page' for your site – for example, many people like to use the news module. You also have the option to select 'none' – this gives you a blank page that you can customise as you see fit.
Server timezone	Enter the time zone that your server is located in.
Default timezone	Enter the time zone that you want to use for administrative purposes. This would normally be the one in which the owner or main clientele of the site live.
Default theme	Set the theme you want displayed when people first arrive at your site (if you have more than one installed).
Update module template .html files from themes/your theme/templates directory?	If this option is enabled, module template .html files will be updated automatically if there are newer files under the themes/your theme/templates directory for the current theme. This should be turned off once the site goes public.
Selectable themes	If you have several themes installed you can choose those that visitors are available for visitors to select from.
Default template set	If you have more than one template set installed you can select which one you want to use for the site. See section 2.3.12 for more detail on templates.
Username for anonymous users	Choose a name for visitors that are not logged in – the default is "anonymous".
Use gzip compression?	Gzip compression compresses files on server side. This means that files appear quicker in browsers. However, it puts a slight extra load on your server and you cannot have more than one script using it at the same time.
Name for user cookies	This cookie contains only a user name and is saved in a user pc for a year (if the user wishes). If a user has this cookie, their username will be automatically inserted in the login box the next time they visit the site. The default is "xoops_user".
Use custom session	If enabled, this allows the site to 'remember' a member for a specified period of time. Members can leave the site and return without having to login again so long as they do not exceed the time limit (see session expiration below). Leaving sessions open in this way may consume some system resources. The default is 'no'.
Session name	The name of session (valid only when 'use custom session' is enabled). The default is. xoops_session'.
Session expiration	The maximum idle time permitted for a custom session, expressed in minutes. This is only applicable if 'use custom session' is enabled, and it doesn't work unless you are using PHP 4.2.0 or later.
Debug mode	This provides several debug options that may be useful if you are experiencing problems with your website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHP debug; • MySQL/blocks debug; • Smarty templates debug.
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Field	Description
	<p>Debug offers important information for tuning and faultfinding. More detailed guidelines are given elsewhere.</p> <p>A running website should have debug mode turned off since notifications may be displayed on your pages.</p>
Activate banner ads?	The default is 'yes'. If you turn banner ads off the flash banners will no longer appear on your site.
Turn your site off?	If you select "yes" visitors will be redirected to a 'this site is closed' message of your choosing (see below). This is useful for gracefully closing your site to outsiders while you build it or conduct maintenance.
Select groups that are allowed to access while the site is turned off	You can allow certain groups to continue to access your site when it is closed. Users in the default webmasters group are always granted access. Your "closed page" will display a login screen for access to selected groups.
Reason for turning off the site	Enter the text to be displayed to the public when your site is closed.
Your IP address	This IP will not counted as impression for banners. If you are charging customers to display their advertisements a certain number of times you should exclude your own IP address from being counted.
Use SSL for login?	Enable this if you wish to use a Secure Socket Layer login for your site.
SSL Post variable name	The name of variable used to transfer session value via POST. If you are unsure, set any name that is hard to guess.
URL where SSL login page is located	If you are using SSL, you need to enter the URL required the SSL login page, otherwise leave it blank.
Default Comment Display Mode	<p>There are three options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Nested:" Comments are displayed in the order in which they are posted, and in full. However, child posts (replies to a particular comment) are indented and placed beneath their parent. This allows sub-threads of conversation to develop and makes it easier to follow them. • "Flat:" Comments are displayed in the order they are posted and in full. People can reply to any post in a thread but their reply will always be displayed at the end of the list. This is the mode preferred by most people. It also helps maintain the focus of a thread. • "Threaded:" Similar to nested. The full text of top-level comments is displayed in the order in which they were posted. Child posts appear in a list of titles beneath their parents - the main difference is that their full text is not displayed.
Default Comments Display Order	You can choose to have the newest or oldest comments to be displayed first.
Enable IP bans?	Users from specified IP addresses will not be able to view your site. This is useful for banning troublesome members. However, it can only work if they have a permanent IP address. It is not effective on people with dynamically assigned IPs – for example, anyone using a dial up modem.
Enter IP addresses that should be banned from the site	<p>The syntax for entering IP addresses is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ^aaa.bbb.ccc will disallow visitors with an IP that starts with aaa.bbb.ccc • aaa.bbb.ccc\$ will disallow visitors with an IP that ends with aaa.bbb.ccc • aaa.bbb.ccc will disallow visitors with an IP that contains aaa.bbb.ccc

Field	Description
Module-wide Cache	<p>You can enable the caching of module contents here and specify the cache time for each module independently.</p> <p>Caching reduces load on the server and enhances site performance. However, changes to module contents will not be visible on the site until the cache period expires and the contents are re-cached. This is a common source of confusion for people setting up their site layout. Turn caching off while you are experimenting with the site so that you can see the changes you make.</p> <p>Setting module-wide cache will override module item level cache if any.</p>

Table 2.12. General Settings

2.12.2. User Info Settings

Member registration preferences are configured in this area of the control panel. Some of the settings have implications for the security of your website.

Field	Description
Allow new user registration?	This is enabled by default. Disabling it will prevent anyone else from registering as a member of your site. A simple flash page is displayed showing a no registration allowed message when the [register now] link is pressed.
Minimum length of password required	The longer the minimum password the more secure it is. Short passwords are more vulnerable to brute force attacks. The default minimum is five characters.
Minimum length of username required	The username is the “nickname” or “handle” by which the member will be known on the site. The default minimum length is five characters.
Maximum length of username	The default maximum length is ten characters.
Allow users to change email address?	The default is “no”. Email addresses can provide an additional means of enforcing bans on troublesome members – they cannot register a new account using the same email address.
Notify by mail when a new user is registered?	You can elect to notify a particular user group whenever a new member registers on the site. This may be useful if you would like to send a personal welcome message or need to track membership for administrative reasons.
Select group to which new user notification mail will be sent	See above. Notification messages should generally be sent to the Webmaster group, other users might regard them as ‘spam’.
Select activation type of newly registered users	<p>There are three options here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires activation by user (recommended). When a user registers a confirmation email will be sent to the email address they supplied. They must click on a link in that email to activate their website account. This ensures that the user has supplied a valid email account and gives some degree of confidence that a human rather than a machine submitted the registration. This is the default. Activate automatically. The user’s account will be automatically activated on submission of their registration form, giving them immediate access to the site. This is the user-friendliest option (as it is the fastest) but it is also the least secure. Activation by Administrators. This is potentially the most secure option if Administrators take steps to confirm the identity of the user.

Field	Description
	However, users will probably be frustrated by the delay in having their account approved.
Select group to which activation mail will be sent	This setting is only valid only when 'Activation by administrators' is selected (option iii) above). You can pick a user group to alert when a registration is pending approval. This should normally be "Webmasters", which is the default.
Select the level of strictness for username filtering	There are three options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Strict" - This is the default; only alphabets and numbers are allowed in the username. • "Medium" • "Light" - This is recommended if your members are likely to want to use multi-byte character sets (for example, Asian fonts).
Allow custom avatar upload?	This enables members to supply their own choice of avatar, otherwise they can only use those supplied by the Administrators. The default is 'no'.
Minimum posts required. Enter the minimum number of posts required to upload a custom avatar	You have the option to give members custom avatar privileges only after they submit a certain number of posts. This option is disabled by default (set at zero).
Avatar image max width (pixel)	You can constrain the maximum dimensions of custom avatars. This prevents members from uploading large images that may interfere with the layout of your site. The default is 80 pixels.
Avatar image max height (pixel)	As above.
Avatar image max filesize (byte)	You can also set an absolute file size limit on custom avatars to help keep the size of your forum pages down to reasonable limits. A forum page can easily have (say) 10 different avatars on it, so putting a limit on avatar size can make quite a difference. The default is 35KB, which is quite large.
Allow users to delete own account?	The default is "no". This can be useful to prevent banned members from deleting and then re-registering an identical account.
Enter names that should not be selected as username	You can use this to reserve important, offensive or misleading usernames. Webmaster, and names beginning with XOOPS and Admin are reserved by default. You may wish to add others such as "Editor", "Administrator" or "Director-General"! Separate each entry with a pipe character " " <p>This preference is case insensitive. It is also regular expressions (regex) enabled. Regex is a pattern-matching language, you can use here to create rules for filtering names. A "newbie guide" to regular expressions is available from: http://www.newbie.org/gazette/xxaxx/xprmnt02.html</p> <p>The "^" character indicates that the matched string should be at the beginning of a line and the " " character is equivalent to a logical OR.</p>
Enter emails that should not be used in user profile	You can prevent people from using certain email accounts in the registration process. It may be useful to exclude "disposable" email accounts as a security precaution. The syntax to prohibit all addresses ending in homail.com, for example, is homail.com\$. <p>Separate each entry with a " ". This preference is case insensitive and regex enabled.</p>
Display disclaimer?	Select yes to display your disclaimer in registration page. Users will not be able to register unless they tick a checkbox that says "I agree to the above".
Registration disclaimer	Enter the text of your registration disclaimer here. This has a default text

Field	Description
	that you may edit or change completely.

Table 2.13. User Info Settings

2.12.3. Meta Tags and Footer

Meta tags provide information about your information – they describe the nature of your website. Their main use is to help search engines and their robots to index your website correctly, i.e. to help the right people find it. The information you supply is included in the header of each webpage. It should represent the content of the site as a whole - the meta information is the same on every page, it currently cannot be customised for different modules or pages.

Be aware that the major search engines use different strategies for indexing websites. They may place different weightings on meta tags or even ignore them completely. Careful use of meta information may help your website to gain better search engine rankings and it is useful to seek information on the indexing strategies of your dominant referrers (see your website logfile). This may help you to optimise your meta information or other aspects of your site design and content to improve your rankings.

Try to be accurate and honest in providing meta information. Don't try to "manipulate" search engines to gain a better ranking – they may recognise this behaviour and your site may be downgraded or blacklisted from their index.

The Meta Tags and Footer section of the control panel has the following options:

Field	Description
Meta keywords	<p>The keywords meta tag is a series of keywords that represents the content of your site. Type in keywords with each separated by a comma or a space in between. (Ex. XOOPS, PHP, MySQL, portal system). Choose words that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accurately reflect the content of your website and • are likely to be entered as search terms.
Meta description	<p>The description meta tag is a general description of what is contained in your web page, for example a short sentence. It should be accurate and concise.</p>
Meta robots	<p>The Robots Tag declares to search engines what content to index and spider. There are four options here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • index, follow • no index, follow • index, no follow and • no index, no follow. <p>“Index” asks robots to include this site in the search engine index; “No index” asks them to exclude the site. “Follow” asks robots to also look at pages linked from the site, and “no follow” asks them not to. Note that these are requests only - the behaviour and policies of a robot are controlled by its masters. Not all robots will recognise - or obey - these tags.</p>
Meta rating	<p>The rating meta tag defines your site age and content rating. Options are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general

Field	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 years • restricted • mature <p>This may be used by content “filters” as a guide to the appropriateness of your site for a given audience.</p>
Meta author	The author meta tag defines the name of the author of the document being read. Supported data formats include the name, email address of the web-master, company name or URL.
Meta copyright	The copyright meta tag defines any copyright statements you wish to disclose about your web page documents. If you want to claim ownership of your site’s content or preserve intellectual property rights you should provide this information.
Footer	The footer displays some information at the bottom of each page. Be sure to type links in full path starting from http://, otherwise the links will not work correctly in the modules pages.

Table 2.14. Meta Tags and Footer

2.12.4. Word Censoring Options

XOOPS can automatically censor undesirable words that may be posted by visitors to your site and replace them with a generic, alternative term of your choice. The censorship function does consume some system resources and may slow your site somewhat. It is disabled by default.

To implement censorship on your site select the “enable” radio button. You need to enter a list of unwanted words in the “words to censor” box, separating them with the pipe character. This function is case insensitive. Enter a suitable replacement term in the “replace bad words with” box. The default is “#OOPS#”.

2.12.5. Search Options

The search facility is one of the most important tools for locating information in a portal website. The **XOOPS** search categorises results by module – records are identified as news items, downloads, links or other types as per the modules you have installed.

Global searches of all resources on your site are enabled by default. If you disable global searches this facility will no longer be available and the search block will become non-functional.

The default minimum keyword length for searches is five characters. Any terms that are shorter will be ignored. This is useful for controlling the precision of searches, though not much use for terms like “site map”. Short keywords tend to be more common so they tend to return a greater number of records, many of which may be irrelevant. Longer keywords tend to retrieve fewer records but with a higher degree of precision.

Searching is relatively expensive in computational terms and so excluding short terms will reduce the load on the server. However, bear in mind that sometimes it is useful to be able to search for a short term.

2.12.6. Mail Setup

This section of the control panel is used to configure your email for the system. It is recommended that you leave the Mail Delivery Method on the default setting “PHP (mail)”. You do not need to fill in the Sendmail or SMTP fields unless you use an alternative mail delivery option.

Field	Description
FROM address	Enter the email address you want to use for administrative purposes

Field	Description
FROM name	This is the name that will be used when you send mail
FROM user	When the system sends a private message to a user, you can choose whom it appears to have been sent from here.
Mail delivery method	<p>Choose the method used to deliver mail here. The default is “PHP (mail)”. It is recommended that you do not change this unless you experience problems.</p> <p>The other options available are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sendmail • SMTP • SMTPAuth
Path to sendmail	Enter the path to the sendmail program (or substitute) on the webserver here (only if you use this mail delivery option). The default is “/usr/sbin/sendmail”
SMTP host(s)	Enter a list of SMTP servers to try to connect to here (only if you use SMTP, otherwise leave it blank)
SMTPAuth username	Enter your username to connect to an SMTP host with SMTPAuth here (only if you use this mail delivery option, otherwise leave it blank).
SMTPAuth password	Enter your password to connect to an SMTP host with SMTPAuth (only if you use this mail delivery option, otherwise leave it blank)

Table 2.15. Mail Setup

2.13. Smilies

Smilies are little graphic symbols that people can use to express themselves. They can be inserted anywhere in the text of an article, comment or post from both the user and admin sides of the system. **XOOPS** ships with a collection of 17 smilies built in. Some of these are displayed on the submission forms in various modules (including forums, news, downloads, links and others). Clicking on a smilie will insert it into the post. Smilies can also be inserted by typing in their unique ‘codes’ (keyboard shortcuts), for example typing :-D in a post will insert this smilie:

The full list of smilies available on your system and their codes is accessible through the Smilies section of the System Module. Here you can add, edit and delete smilies, and control which are displayed on submission forms (only nine of the 17 are displayed by default)

If you don’t want smilies on your system, you can either uncheck the “display in form?” box (in which case they won’t appear on submission forms, but will still be available via their codes), or use the [delete] link to remove them entirely.

2.13.1. Adding and editing smilies

You can add more smilies to your system using the form at the bottom of the page (there are many websites where you can obtain new ones). Simply enter a shortcut code for your new smile (this should be unique), a name for it, select the file you want to upload using the browse button, and decide whether or not you want it to be one of those displayed on submission forms. Select [submit] to upload it. Clicking on the [edit] link for an existing smarty will open up a form with the same options. You can even replace the image file if you want.

2.14. Templates

If you want to tweak the layout of your site this is where you do it. The Template Set Manager (**System Module-**

>**Templates**) allows you to add, delete, edit and duplicate the HTML templates that control block and module layout. Note that you specify the active template set elsewhere (indicated by the checkmark in the right column - **System Module->Preferences->General Settings->Default Template Set**).

Template Set Manager

Name	Created	Templates	Action	
default XOOPS Default Template Set	2003/11/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contact Us [List (1)] ▪ Downloads [List (11)] ▪ Web Links [List (11)] ▪ Forum [List (11)] ▪ News [List (8)] ▪ Spotlight - News [List (1)] ▪ System [List (26)] ▪ FAQ [List (2)] ▪ Headlines [List (3)] ▪ Members [List (2)] ▪ Partners [List (3)] ▪ Polls [List (4)] 	[Download] [Clone]	✓

Figure 2.14. Template manager

2.14.1. The default template set

XOOPS ships with one template set called “Default”. As a safety precaution you cannot edit or delete this set (if you should mess up your templates you will always have the default set to fall back on). The templates in each set are grouped together by module.

2.14.2. Cloning and downloading template sets

If you would like to create a custom template set you can make a copy of the default set (or any other) by selecting the [clone] link (you will be prompted to give the new set a name). Unlike the default, other template sets can be freely edited. You can also save a copy of a template set to disk by selecting the [download] link, or remove it with the [delete] link. You may also sometimes see an additional [Generate] link next to new modules for which templates have not yet been created.

2.14.3. Editing templates

You can obtain a full list of a module’s templates by selecting its [list] link. The list is broken into two parts: The first part lists the ‘page’ templates and the second lists the individual block templates (note that block templates are also accessible via the **System Module->Blocks menu->Edit**)

Template Set Manager >>> default_theme

Polls

File name	Last modified	Last Imported	Action
xoopspoll_view.html	2004-12-7 20:51:50		[Edit] [Delete] [Download] <input type="text"/> Browse...
xoopspoll_index.html	2004-12-7 20:51:50		[Edit] [Delete] [Download] <input type="text"/> Browse...
xoopspoll_results.html	2004-12-7 20:51:50		[Edit] [Delete] [Download] <input type="text"/> Browse...

File name	Last modified	Last Imported	Action
xoopspoll_block_poll.html Shows unlimited number of polls/surveys	2004-12-7 20:51:50		[Edit] [Delete] [Download] <input type="text"/> Browse...

Figure 2.15. The different templates for a single module

Here you have the option to delete an individual template, save it to disk ([download]), upload a new version of a template (using the [browse] button to select the appropriate file), or to edit it. Selecting the [edit] link will present you with the actual template code, which you may then modify directly:

Template Set Manager »» default_theme »» Edit template file

Edit template file	
File name	xoopspoll_block_poll.html
Description	Shows unlimited number of polls/surveys
Last modified	2004-12-7 20:51:50
HTML	<pre><{foreach item=poll from=\$block.polls}> <form style="margin-top: 1px;" action="<{\$xoops_url}>/modules/xoopspoll/index.php" method="post"> <table class="outer" cellspacing="1"> <tr> <th align="center" colspan="2"><input type="hidden" name="poll_id" value="<{\$poll.id}>" /><{\$poll.question}></th> </tr> <{foreach item=option from=\$poll.options}> <tr class="<{cycle values="even,odd"}>"> <td align="center"><input type="<{\$poll.option_type}>" name="<{\$poll.option_name}>" value="<{\$option.id}>" /></td> <td align="left"><{\$option.text}></td> </tr> </foreach> <tr> <td class="foot" align="center" colspan="2"><input type="submit" value="<{\$block.lang_vote}>" /> <input type="button" value="<{\$block.lang_results}>" onclick="location='<{\$xoops_url}>/modules/xoopspoll/pollresults.php?p /></td> </tr></pre>
<input type="button" value="Preview"/> <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	

Figure 2.16. Editing a template

The [preview] button will allow you to see the effect of changes in a new window without committing the changes (this is most useful for block templates, previews of page templates may be blank or show arcane fields of variable names). The [submit] button will save any changes you have made to the template.

While editing templates you must enable a preference that automatically updates module template .html files if there are newer files under the themes/your theme/templates directory for the current theme (**System Module->Preferences->General Settings->Update module template .html files from themes/your theme/templates directory?** -> "Yes"). This should be turned off once the site goes public.

If you accidentally mess up a template don't forget that you can retrieve a "good" copy from the default template set. If you are working with non-standard templates it may be a good idea to save a copy to disk before you start modifying them.

2.14.4. Uploading a new template set

You can install new template sets very easily using the form at the bottom of the Template Set Manager. Simply

use the **[browse]** button to select the appropriate template set package (it must be a tar.gz or .tar file with a valid template set structure). Enter a name for the set (or leave it blank to detect automatically) and hit **[upload]** to make it available.



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