

XOOPS Aurora -- an eye of the community - Newsletter

NEWS_PDF_AUTHOR: tom

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In this article I hope to address some of the frustration felt by many members of XOOPS including my own. This article should also brief some of the current changes and future changes that are hopefully about to happen.

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If your wondering how you can offer assistance on this site, well that's easy, why not write documentation for various modules available to XOOPS, or if your a talented developer why not write some simply 'how to' guides, after all you may remember what it was like getting started in the coding world, perhaps you have some words of wisdom which could save someone time and even money, that you once lost.

<http://www.xoopdocs.net>

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The next step will be the transfer of xoops.org, which will be starting very soon, and once complete the community will be informed

Module Repository

With all the redesigning and restructuring on the horizon, the module repository is one of the most important features in the end users mind, and we're only moments away from witnessing the re-birth.

The work done on this new repository up until now has been rather secluded, however a recent news article called again for the community to become involved, and this was largely successful.

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The community cry for a new release is huge, on a weekly basis there is at least one new topic posted in the forum by a member, questioning and suggesting ways forward.

It's not always amicable, but never-less it's still been done, and change is still being called for.

So what can we expect to see?

Up until now XOOPS branches 2.0.16 and 2.2.5 were not going to be merged for a fair while, and the only branch that would continue to be active was 2.0.16 through 2.3.

As your aware this was not pleasing news to those stuck on 2.2.5, however this has now changed, in what could become an XOOPS revolution, soon you will see a new code release merging both 2.0.16 and 2.2.5 branches together.

So what does this mean for you?

That means that whatever 2.x version you're actually using, you'll all be able to upgrade to the next version. However, as focus will be on this particular point, some of the most important changes present in the 2.3 branch of the SVN repository may be kept for later and won't be included in it.

The next question to be raised would be when?

Well there is no set date, however we're informed this won't be a few months, it will be sooner.

There would be no point in the community pushing for a date, if the release was delayed even by a day this will inevitably lead to disappointment.

The XOOPS Dev Team is requesting that the community gets involved and participates, there are still numerous bugs waiting to be fixed or reviewed on the Sourceforge site. Your help is welcome.

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One of the other big questions on the minds of XOOPSers is how all the restructuring will look when done.

Well there's the new design, XOOPS as you know it now will be archived, so no information will be lost, it's still there for all XOOPSers, but at the same time a clean slate will be developed.

The birth of three new sites will be given:

Addons - XOOPS module and themes.

Community - The new and revamped XOOPS Community website

XOOPS Project - Official homepage of the XOOPS Project.

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Who is part of the of the Addons team?

The final team is still to be configured, currently there have been several selected people who have contributed to its construction, doing custom templates and customizing certain downloads/uploads features, work which is still in process but is expected to be done soon. Active members of the XOOPS community whom have shown their dedication and responsibility to the XOOPS project will be elected to form the official team who will take charge in handling its content once the structure is ready and prepare for the inauguration of the site.

What modules will be used on the new Addons site?

Thinking of the future of it and it's growth, it has been thought to keep the site tools as simple as possible and shouldn't need more than the downloads module and content pages, leaving open the possibility to easily upgrade and maintain the modules, in this case the most essential one being wf-downloads.

We know that XOOPS is about to change, could you enlighten us on what's about to happen with regards to the work your conducting?

The opening of a site where once again XOOPS users will be able to find updated stable modules that are compatible with the most recent XOOPS version, in a repository neatly organized. Provide users with information of featured modules or themes that stand out because of their functions. Be able to consult user reviews of the experiences other users have with the modules.

Will users be able to submit their modules and themes again?

The submission of modules and themes will be done exclusively by the author's of each, the authors can base their descriptions on the ones written by the community (if they chose to do so) to ease the submission process.

Is there anything that the Addons team would like to share with the community?

We believe that the new network of sites will create a much better environment for users to participate, contribute, and enjoy using XOOPS as well as motivate the formation of working groups.

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As XOOPS grew, there was an obvious need for a server team, who were the original guys we need to show our appreciation too?

Ackbarr was the original server admin. When our XOOPS Servers were compromised, JMorris was asked to join the team to help monitor and harden the server. Later, when Ackbarr and JMorris both became too busy with their "day jobs" to monitor the servers, JDSeymour was asked to join to help with the management tasks. Ackbarr has since become VP at the company he works for and has taken on more of a consultant role.

JDSeymour has become busy with his "day job", so he is more of an emergency alternate.

(JMorris) I'm now working as a designer and Consultant full-time, so I manage the bulk of the Admin tasks with the assistance of JDSeymour and the Surpass support team.

Who is currently part of the Server Team?

JDSeymour & JMorris

The Surpass Support team is also part of our team in a way because they bundled management services in with the hosting package. In fact, they were instrumental in getting the custom Apache/PHP config setup that we wanted.

Who are Surpass?

Surpass hosting <http://www.surpasshosting.com/>

They have been a strong supporter of the XOOPS Project for quite some time. Many XOOPS users choose Surpass because of their excellent support for the XOOPS Application.

What experience did the current team have, prior to joining XOOPS?

Ackbarr has been a Systems Administrator for EPC USA for years. EPC USA is the company who has been donating our current servers.

JDSeymour is self-taught, and very experienced, he offers consulting services in this field.

JMorris has an AAS with an emphasis in Computer and Information Technology. He holds a CompTIA A+ and Network+ Certifications. He also has 5 years experience in working with LAMP configurations. He's worked as a technician for WVU-P and Woodcraft Supply, LLC.

What would you consider the most difficult obstacle so far in managing the servers for XOOPS, and how did the team overcome this?

MySQL Load

The current xoops.org web site overwhelms a LAMP server with dual 2.8GHz PIV processors and 6GB of RAM. Even after optimizing MySQL, Apache, and PHP as much as it can be, the current site is too much for the server it is hosted on.

Between that and managing limited server space are the 2 reasons why we needed new servers.

Since EPC USA has moved away from the hosting business, we sought a strategic partner whose primary business is hosting so that we would be sure to have the resources available that we need.

How we overcame the issue with MySQL is that we negotiated a new, dual server package with Surpass hosting. Our new servers have the following basic specs

Server 1:

Apache/PHP

Dual Xeon 2.8

4GB ram

320GB SATA drive

Server 2:

MySQL

Dual Core Dual AMD Opteron 265

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Also, where our old configuration ran a full LAMP setup on both of our dedicated servers and just hosted different sites on different machines, the new server uses an Enterprise class architecture where Apache/PHP and MySQL are hosted separately.

MySQL runs on its own dedicated server to maximize performance and availability.

We also further fine-tuned the MySQL configuration by taking advantage of built-in caching functionality.

Examples are the `thread_cache_size`, `query_cache_size` and `table_cache` settings in `my.cnf`.

JMorris, how have you seen your role change in XOOPS and how do you see it changing again in the future?

Yes, since 2003, my role in XOOPS has changed several times.

Started as a "lurker" in 2003 then, once I had learned the application, I registered and started giving back to the community by answering questions in the forums.

When the XOOPS servers where hacked, I joined the Server Admin Team.

Shortly after that, starting a Moderator Team was approved and I oversaw that initiative, which placed me on the "Management Team". When I started working at Woodcraft Supply, LLC, I no longer had time to fulfill these roles and I stepped down as Management Team member and Chief Moderator.

Since leaving Woodcraft, I've had more time for XOOPS and have taken on a more active role in server administration and helping out in the community forums.

Since 2003, I've also released some free themes and modules in an attempt to give something back to the community.

As far as future plans go, I plan to remain an active member of the community and trying to give something back to the project that has given me so much.

Is there anything the Server Team would like to share with the Community?

We would like to thank Spacejoe, the webmaster of <http://www.casafree.com/> whom also assisted in the server testing and configuration by providing a custom script that helped us stress test the search functionality of XOOPS and by suggesting optimization techniques for the new server.

The community and support staff at Surpass was instrumental in configuring and testing the new XOOPS dedicated servers. This collective effort made it possible for us to have a hosting solution that will not only meet the current needs of the XOOPS Project and community, but will also ensure that the resources will be available for future growth.

We are grateful for all of the assistance received and we would like to point out that this open collaboration is a perfect example of how much a community can accomplish when they pulled together and work as one big team. Thank you all!

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Those of you following the forums will be aware of the above, however it was mentioned this should all be documented as one article, which is what I've done here for the community.

After all this, what else can we expect eh?

There are a vast amount of changes about to happen, however things are still being discussed and finalized, therefore with that in mind it would be unfair to the community to release this information as things will inevitable change.

If your aware of my stance in the community you will also know that I share the same concerns as many others, lack of communications, releases, and so-forth, however along with the support

of some key players here I've had an insight into what's happening, I've not seen the whole picture, but I have seen enough to believe that a real wave of change is upon us, all it will take on our part is a little patience and support.

Once these changes start to happen the key aim is to once again put you back in the driving seat of Community Support, resurrecting the slogan 'Powered By You'.

I hope this article has helped to put you, the community at some ease.

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Well this is already a long article, so rather than going over it all again, I think this should simply end as "The Wave Of Change Is Upon Us" and soon "XOOPS Community Will Be Powered by You Again".

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