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Joomla Jumps to the Enterprise

– Vangie Beal, CIO

March 16, 2012

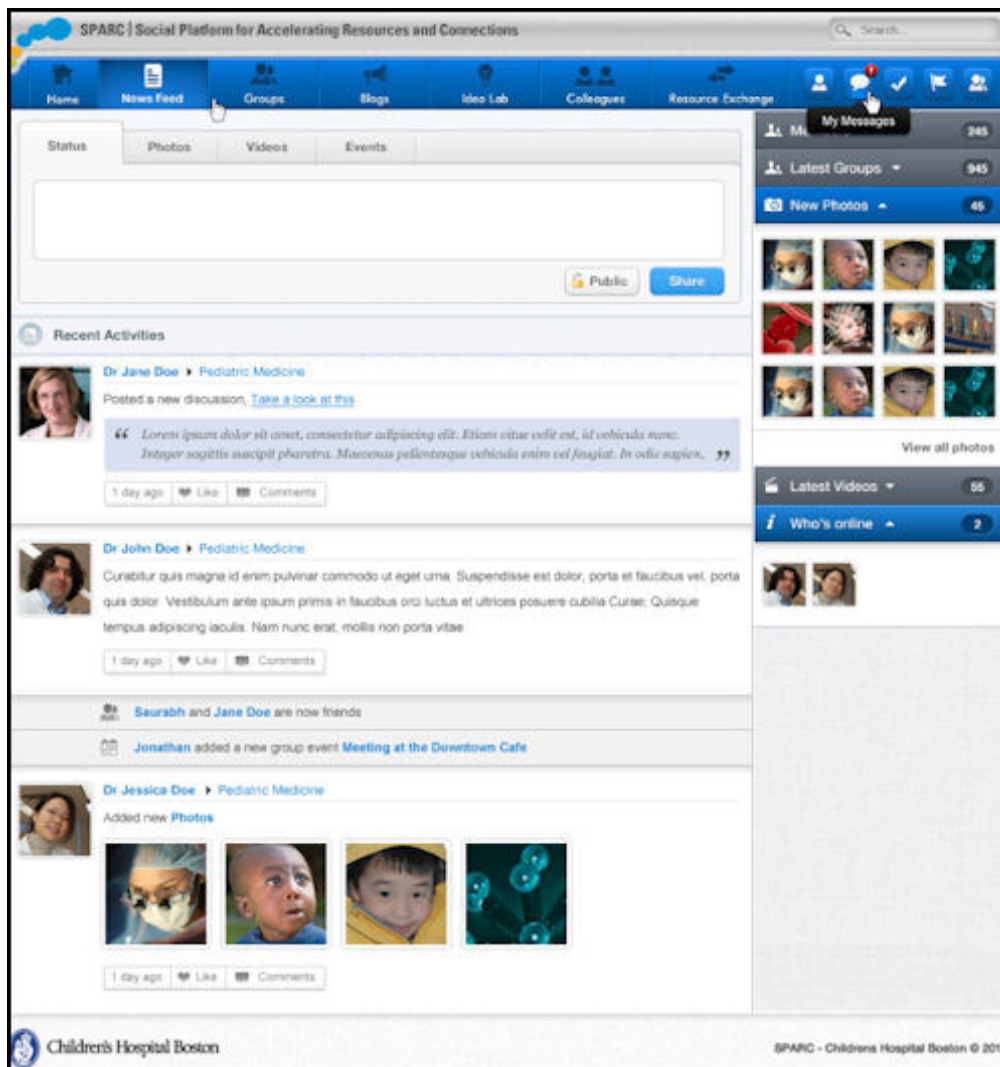
Seven years ago, developers behind [Mambo](#), an open source software project for publishing websites, split over a dispute regarding control of the project. The project fork resulted in [Joomla](#), a free and open source content management system (CMS) for publishing web content and sites.

Today, Joomla—the name is a phonetic spelling for the Swahili word "Jumla," which means "as a whole"—is one of the most popular open source content management systems (CMS), claiming that 2.7 percent of the Web is Joomla-based sites.

If you were to drop Joomla on a straight line with other popular [open source CMS projects](#), it would fall somewhere between WordPress and Drupal. Joomla, which is offered under the General Public License (GPL) version 2.0, is more robust than WordPress, while Drupal is usually favored by those with a developer background.

"Joomla really fits nicely between WordPress and Drupal," says Ryan Ozimek, president of Open Source Matters, a nonprofit organization that provides organization, legal and financial support to the Joomla project.

"We've built a community and have a focus on reaching out to the average user and administrators of a website, but we also give under-the-hood tools to the developers and engineers trying to do something more complex," he adds.



Joomla powers the Children's Hospital Boston social intranet, providing a "Facebook-like" social environment and handling more than 2,500 concurrent users.

Behind Joomla is a strong ecosystem of developers, users and businesses offering products and services. When you join the community, you're not left on your own to figure it all out—there's more than a half-million people registered in the international forums and 25,000 registered developers to connect with and learn from.

Joomla Jibes With Small to Mid-Sized Businesses

With such a large community and abundance of products and services, the small and medium-sized business (SMB) market is where this open source CMS is a strong contender. Small businesses like having access to thousands of add-ons that make it easy to extend basic website functionality.

"We've encouraged an economy around being able to productize add-ons. A small business can install a Joomla site by following a five-step tutorial on the Web, download the add-ons in a single zip file and end up with a professional site," said Ozimek.

Ozimek said that small businesses typically use Joomla-based sites for standard brochure-like websites, to add functionality to communicate with customers using support ticketing or for ecommerce.

The SMB market is where Joomla earned its reputation, but now all eyes are on the enterprise and what Joomla can do there.

Joomla Makes Strides in the Enterprise

This year, the enterprise is the big picture evolution for Joomla. It's still a core CMS offering but new

focus gives developers tools to build any sort of Web application that goes well beyond the good old-fashioned Joomla site.

In the enterprise, open source CMS software is highly visible. Kathleen Reidy, Senior Analyst at [451 Research](#), said acceptance and availability of open source CMS projects has grown. Ten years ago open source CMS projects existed, but there wasn't many options for a commercial entity for an enterprise to partner with for development and support. Today, this isn't the case.

Reidy said that open source software in the enterprise does have benefits over proprietary software. "One benefit with open source is that you can download and try it on your own instead of going through a vendor-led process of RFP, proof-of-concept and demos," she explains.

For Joomla, its enterprise push is backed by support from companies like Microsoft and eBay who have significantly enabled the Joomla community to push the boundaries beyond the SMB market.

"eBay has 16,000 employees running on an intranet system that was built using the Joomla CMS and Joomla framework. The system does social networking and grabs terabytes of data for eBay to run reports on," said Ozimek. "Under the hood is a new generation of technology that allows developers to go beyond the basics of having a blog or brochure base website. "

One of the more recent enterprise Joomla deployments is a social networking Intranet for [Children's Hospital Boston](#), a Harvard medical school pediatric teaching hospital.

Sarah Mahoney, the hospital's innovation community manager, looked at open source options because the proprietary system being used at the hospital prevented them from making much-needed upgrades.

Mahoney said that Joomla looked to be the best option, and the hospital contracted CloudAccess.net for support in building the site and the private memory cloud for hosting and maintenance. Knowing that Joomla was moving to the 2.5 version, Gary Brooks, CEO of [CloudAccess.net](#), felt that Joomla was the perfect fit for Children's Hospital Boston.

"The application needed to be scalable and handle an intranet with 2,500 plus people all accessing it at one time," says Brooks, describing the project requirements.

CloudAccess.net also needed to build hardware systems under a private HIPPA system to create a safe environment for the hospital to communicate, and the hospital also had an existing login authentication system that the Joomla platform needed to connect to.

The result is a new "Facebook-like" social environment where staff at Children's Hospital Boston can see the social wall, participate in discussions and also create, share and collaborate on documents.

The same technology that helps businesses make a Joomla websites that displays properly can now help build a social networking system for the enterprise. It's a big bit step forward for an open source project entering its seventh year.

The Technology Behind Joomla's Enterprise Push

A lot of the enterprise push comes with the newest release of Joomla. Multi-database support in this version helps position Joomla as "enterprise glue" to connect separate and proprietary systems and data stores and allow companies to internally display the data.

Most open source CMS run on the MySQL database, but with the most recent version of Joomla you can use Microsoft SQL Server, Azure cloud services, Oracle or PostgreSQL. This kind of multi-database support is important for Joomla - it removes the need to spend more money and time integrating additional software to get Joomla to communicate with existing enterprise databases.

Today, Joomla is not the "little CMS that could" project that started in 2005 as a Mambo fork. It's now really two parts: one part is the CMS for websites and the second part is the Joomla platform (which is kind of like an operating system - or the brains) for the CMS.

By splitting Joomla in two parts, Ozimek said the same developers that have worked with Joomla add-ons and have deployed Joomla websites can now use the same skills they've learned over the years , but start doing some crazy things with Joomla. For those working with the Joomla platform it's the same

native language and same way of doing things to go beyond the CMS .

"The reality of where technology is today, you've got to keep up and continuously evolve your skill set," said Ozimek. "As a community I'm impressed by the engineering leadership and the developers who have said we're not going to just sit here and try to keep being the best CMS because that's a dead-end. That's where I think the Joomla platform really separates itself from where the other CMS communities are going."

Ozimek predicts that 2012 is going to be the year we see a lot of apps being built with the Joomla platform.

"We're hearing that from the work eBay has done and from the support of Microsoft and other large enterprises, he said. "There's fuel in the engine to start doing some cool stuff. "

Based in Nova Scotia, Canada, Vangie Beal has been covering small business, electronic commerce and Internet technology for more than a decade. You can tweet with her online [@AuroraGG](#).

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