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## Cut the malarkey. Lets hook up!

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Let's connect to talk more about how Joomla Development can grow your business by:

- Utilizing the worlds best content management system
- Giving you or your staff the option to maintain your own site
- Giving you an unfair advantage over your competition by having a superior website

Lets get started

07 JUNE  
2013

## 8 Questions with Gary Brooks of CloudAccess.net

GARY'S GLOBAL COMPANY ATTRACTS CUSTOMERS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD



The esteemed Gary Brooks of [CloudAccess.net](http://CloudAccess.net) is our blog guest today. Gary's been an instrumental member of the Joomla community and has a fascinating story of starting his business from scratch - from the basement up, to become a successful enterprise that provides

free demos for Joomla.org and launches over 1,000 sites a day.

## The professional scoop

**1. Curious Joomla newbies used to go to Joomla.org to experience a free trial of the Joomla content management system. But your website changed that. Now anyone who's interested in using Joomla can try it for 30 days at [demo.joomla.org](http://demo.joomla.org) through CloudAccess.net. It's my understanding that the trial experience is much improved over the old demo. Why is a great trial experience so crucial for selling services, specifically content management systems?**

First of all, Joomla is actually an entire community of extremely devoted and hardworking people all focused around developing and promoting the CMS. The old demo trial of Joomla was only active for 30 minutes before it was recycled. Users only had the ability to play for 30 minutes before their content was lost. I proposed the idea of giving users 30 days to play and develop their demo site.

It's matriculated, over time, into a business model for us because we convert a good percentage of demo users into active, paying CloudAccess.net clients. Each demo trial is ready immediately, but we work really hard to convert those clients. We offer a ton of support through free webinars, training documents, and videos, and our demo users have access to our support team - they can use live chat, submit tickets, or call an actual human being to get help with their Joomla site. We are an IT company but are human beings, and we know that offering an insane amount of support would translate into customer conversions. That's why we call it Insane Support™.

**2. You're the only company on the web that offers cloud servers for hosting Joomla sites. For our readers who speak less of the web development language, can you explain what it means to "host" a site?**

One of the best parts about Joomla is that it's open source - users have access to the core code, they own what they create, and they can take it with them wherever they want. They also have the ability to turn their home computer into a server, to install and configure a database, and then to install the Joomla software. That's a fairly technical process and it can be daunting for anyone. A "host" is a company that does all the server-side set-up. We optimize each server specifically for Joomla sites. We configure a MySQL database for each site and we do that work for our clients. We constantly monitor and update each server so security and versioning becomes a lot easier to manage through our platform.

**3. We've noticed an unsettling trend in hosting companies lately that their security has let them down. There have been a lot of hacked sites from larger hosting companies that come to us for help. How can your company at CloudAccess.net assure people that security is taken seriously?**

Tell me about it. We see hacked sites every single day. [I recently wrote a blog](#) about managing security and a new feature we have on our platform that allows people to lock down their site. Essentially, when a site is hacked, the majority of the time, it's because of one of two reasons: 1) the site administrator has failed to update Joomla or an extension they are featuring on their site, or 2) someone has hijacked their password. We saw this a lot when Joomla 1.5 reached its end of life. There were millions of vulnerable 1.5 sites out there because no one updated the CMS. The truth is that 1.5 is no longer secure and clients should consider upgrading to a newer version. We offer newer versions on our platform and encourage our clients to upgrade, but we also give them the ability to lock down their site files and their database tables. This is done at the server level and leaves the site in a hack-proof read-only mode.

**4. With both employees and customers worldwide, I'd imagine that working on a global scale is advantageous for your business and also challenging at times. What is it like to work with people all over the world? Do you get to travel often to work with these employees (at your India or Poland offices) or customers in other countries?**

We have 33 employees now with four different offices around the world and we have clients in over 170 countries worldwide. We started in a basement a few years ago and it's really amazing how it's all grown. We're a global company and Joomla is a truly global community. There are Joomla events all over the world and I've attended many of them. Most recently I went to the Joomla World Conference in San Jose, CA. I was invited to attend the upcoming Joomla and Beyond Conference in The Netherlands. I can't attend every event, but they're always a great time, and real learning takes place because there are so many committed community members who are devoted to Joomla. Internally, we use technology to our advantage so we can communicate in real time even though our employees are spread out. We use a task management system to communicate about projects we're working on, but we're also really active on Skype. Quite literally, I collaborate in real time with our employees in Poland, India, and in the U.S. on a daily basis. We also host free and live webinars and anyone with an Internet connection can speak with our Joomla teachers.

## The personal scoop

**1. A lot of successful people have backgrounds doing all kinds of odd jobs. Did you**

**have any unique or colorful jobs back in high school or college that are totally unrelated to what you do now?**

I use to work at Marty's Cones and Carry Out in East Jordan, Michigan. I flipped burgers and served ice cream. I also worked at the Boyne Resort as a security guard before I got a job at a local dial-up ISP back in the 90's. That was it for me - I geeked it out once, learned how to connect modems to the Internet, went all through fiber optics and all the way to hosting.

**2. I noticed you're from Michigan. I myself went to college in Holland - it's a lovely town. But I'm bummed that I never got to travel up north. What's Traverse City like, and what are your favorite things to do up there?**

Goodness, you were in Holland and you never came up to TC? For shame. TC is a great place - we'll always be headquartered here. There is actually a really robust tech industry presence - IT companies of all types can be found around town and we have regular geek gatherings.

TC is also a tourist destination - every week there is a different festival. Traverse City is the "Cherry Capital" of the U.S. and we have the National Cherry Festival every summer. There is also a pretty well known Traverse City Film Festival in the summer and an up-and-coming comedy festival in the winter that attracts top comedians. "Good Morning America" named our Sleeping Bear Dunes the most beautiful place in America last year, and, of course, we have the Great Lakes and all the inland bodies of water and rivers for water activities. If you're a fan of beer, there are countless microbreweries and, as you might have guessed, countless beer festivals year round. We have a great school system and it's just a really nice place to live. Drive 10 minutes in any direction and you're in the country.

We're just south of the 45th Parallel and winter is, well, wintry. But the people are warm and they sell electric socks at the mall.

**3. Everybody's afraid of something. What are you afraid of? (If you're willing to share!)**

Aliens. Not the kind ones that want to exchange gifts - they're welcome. I'm afraid of the vicious ones that are angry with us because they think we're stealing their sun. We're not stealing your sun!

**4. What do you feel is your biggest achievement to date? What makes it stand out compared to your many other achievements?**

Personally, I have two sons, Iain and Kole, and they will always be my greatest achievement. My boys are the most important thing in my world. Professionally, I'm most proud of the team we've

put together. It wasn't always easy finding the right folks and getting the right person on the bus (as Jim Collins would say). After three years, we've got a solid team with a variety of talented and skilled professionals. I'm lucky to have each of them.

**Gasp - a bonus question! There's a ton of competition in the web development field, with many companies offering web design and development services, as well as SEO and internet marketing. But it's an important field because technology is such a vital part of our lives and will be in the future, too. How can a person differentiate themselves, or their company, in this field?**

If you want people to notice you, build better control panels and build a better orchestration software than the next cloud. That, and care about your customers. Make their business your business.

Thanks for such an engaging interview, Gary. I'd like to encourage our lovely audience to check out his site at [CloudAccess.net](http://CloudAccess.net), or follow him on Twitter at [@garyjaybrooks](https://twitter.com/garyjaybrooks).

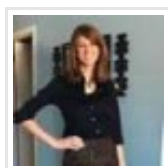
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## About the Author



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