

Chapter 21: All about Parameters

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An Overview:

A parameter is a function that allows an administrator the ability to alter/modify script variables within the administration panel area. This allows changes to be performed without the need to open and manually edit PHP scripts or configuration files.

This "on-the-fly" approach is a simple and effective way to perform a change in value within a particular module, mambot, or configuration setting. By applying changes via a parameter, you save time, effort, and eliminate the need for opening a script file, searching for the variable that needs to be changed, making the alteration, and then uploading the script to the server.

Parameters also eliminate the possibility of manual editing errors and brings a solution to those who lack the ability to manually alter PHP code.

The parameter section(s) within the various configuration and content areas are an important aspect in the overall configuration and administration of your Joomla site. Through such variable parameter configuration, we unleash the true power and ease-of-use of the Joomla CMS.

Parameters Tab:

The parameters tab is located in various configuration areas in your Joomla administration panel including but not limited to the following:

- Mambot
- Site Module
- Administrator Module
- Components
- Menu Managers
- Other Managers

While some modules, components, mambots, and configuration areas have a parameters tab or the ability to alter a scripts function, others do not. The programmer in each instance must program the module to handle this option for it to be available.

Parameter Examples:

Below we have two examples. Example A outlines content parameters and Example B outlines component parameters associated with the syndicate component.

A: Content Example

/ com_content / edit

Modifications can be made to the following:

Parameters Tab:com_syndicate

Modifications can be made to the following:

Parameter Control:

- Page Class Suffix:This parameter allows for individual page styling. By giving a class to this parameter and altering your CSS with the changes you make here, you can have a different look and feel for individual pages.

- Back Button:This parameter allows you to show or hide the back button that allows the return to a previous page. The back button is usually located at the bottom of your pages depending upon the template design used.

- Page Title:This parameter allows you to show or hide the Items title.

- Linked Titles:This parameter allows you to make your items title linkable if the above Page Title parameter is set to show such.

- Intro Text:This parameter allows you to show or hide the intro text.

- Section Name: This parameter allows you to show or hide the section the item belongs to.
- Section Name Linkable: This parameter allows you to make the section text a link to the actual section page.
- Category Name: This parameter allows you to show or hide the category the item belongs to.
- Category Name Linkable: This parameter allows you to make the category text a link to the actual category page.
- Item Rating: This parameter allows you to show or hide the item rating. The selection is not a global site alteration, but allows for the changes to be made to this individual page only.
- Author Names: This parameter allows you to show or hide the item's author. The selection is not a global site alteration, but allows for the changes to be made to this individual page only.
- Created Date and Time: Show or hide the creation date. The selection is not a global site alteration, but allows for the changes to be made to this individual page only.
- Modified Date and Time: This parameter allows you to show or hide the item modification date. The selection is not a global site alteration, but allows for the changes to be made to this individual page only.
- PDF Icon: This parameter allows you to show or hide the item PDF button. The selection is not a global site alteration, but allows for the changes to be made to this individual page only.
- Print Icon: This parameter allows you to show or hide the item print button. The selection is not a global site alteration, but allows for the changes to be made to this individual page only.
- Email Icon: This parameter allows you to show or hide the item email button. The selection is not a global site alteration, but allows for the changes to be made to this individual page only.

B: Component Example

- Cache: This parameter allows you to cache feed files.
- Cache Time: This parameter allows you to set the cache so that it will refresh every X seconds.
- #Items: This parameter allows you to set the number of items to syndicate.
- Term Definition of term
- Title: This parameter allows you to alter the title of the syndication.
- Description: This parameter allows you to alter the syndication description area.
- Image: This parameter allows an image to be included in the feed.
- Image Alt: This parameter allows alternate image text to be displayed.

- Limit Text: This parameter allows you to limit the article text to the value indicated below.
- Text Length: This parameter allows you to alter the word length of the article text.

The above content and component examples show variable changes that can be made to both the function and display of your Joomla site. Using the above parameters allow for changes to be made without the manual alteration of the back-end PHP scripting.

Parameter Modification:

In the case of the two examples shown above, you will have a hover information button located to the right of most of the administrative parameter values. Reference to the description for details about the parameter value is available by hovering over this button. Properties selection for each parameter can be altered to fit the needs of your Joomla site for each of the parameter values.

For parameters that offer no selective choice, you will most likely find a blank input box. For this parameter type variable setting you will want to view the associated readme file belonging to the module, component, etc. for an explanation of the options available for such.

Conclusion:

In Chapter 12 we have taken a very brief look at how Joomla uses parameters and variable settings to better accomplish the task of altering the inner workings of your site. This use of parameter variable settings help the administrator accomplish the task of managing the site with a point and click approach. Once we have all the options set, we can save our preferences and verify the operation. If our configuration settings appear to work as we need, no further changes should be warranted.

Note: If you have suggestions/corrections for this chapter, please visit the doc forum.
<http://forum.joomla.org/index.php/board,59.0.html>

Thank you!

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