

Weird charactes in the page

Just happens, that after you publish new content, this shows up on your Joomla page with weird characters. The causes, and the cures for it may be many, but sometimes a simple hack can solve your problems.

So, wich ones can be the most common issues? First of all you should check your content, to see if the behaviour is caused by something described below, before you try to perform the hack.

Generally this occurs with your punctuation marks. If you see the weird characters instead of your expected apostrophes, commas, semi-colons and periods, the explanation can be the following fact: the word processor you use " and almost all are behaving this way, not only the infamous MicroShit products " try to "enhance" your documents, in most of the cases as you type them. To achieve better look they are replacing exactly these punctuation items with typography standard ones. And there are a lot of them, for example there are at least 5 different types of apostrophes used in classic typography, but only one of them, the plain-vanilla basic apostrophe is contained in the so called restricted US-ASCII character set. And you have full support only for these basic character codes contained in this set across the OS-es and browsers.

To be worse, the representation/replacement of these fancy typographic elements is varying across the OS-es and word processors, so when you cut&paste ready made content from a given word processor, the result is simply unpredictable.

So, the advice here is simple: don't do that! Try to apply one of the workarounds described below!

You can check if this is your case in very simple way: open the misbehaving content item, and look to it's HTML source code. Depending of the WYSIWYG editor you have installed the method may vary, but generally it's a HTML button somewhere in your editor's icon row, click on it. Examine the code, and see, if there are correct punctuation marks in source where you want to be shown, or instead you have HTML special characters. (You know, those beginning with ampersand and ending with semicolon). If you have the right characters, you need the hack described at the end of this page. If not, you may need to read all this tip.

So, if you have those weird characters, you can use one of the possible workarounds below:

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Use the best web authoring/text pre-processing tool around ;) called Notepad. Paste here first your content, make the eventual corrections, save it, and only after that save made, cut it again and paste it into the WYSIWYG editor. This will clean out most of the useless and misleading formatting you otherwise will paste in to your content.

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Use your favourite text editor, but paste the content in Joomla in the content editor in so called HTML mode described above. Drawback: you will lose not only the ballast you usually carry over from your word processor, but all formatting, including the paragraph marks.

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Use a decent word processor, as the Open Office (www.openoffice.org). This recognizes almost all existing, widely used word processor formats. Open your original documents here, save them as HTML documents, then you can cut&paste from here what you need. This technique will produce a much cleaner code.

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If you can, don't use any word processor, type in directly in Joomla!

But if the content is okay, you need to hack in, because there is a discrepancy between the codepage used by Joomla/your template and the MySQL database.

The hack is simple!

Locate the file `globals.php` in the root directory of your Joomla install. Make a backup! Open it with your preferred editor.

Add this line at the end of the file (just before the php closing tag `?>`):

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header("Content-Type: text/html; charset=UTF-8");
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Save it!

And enjoy your site!