

Trackback User Manual

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Abstract

This document describes the configuration options and general usage of the Joomla Trackback extension. It covers all necessary steps to run a Joomla installation with trackbacks.

1 Introduction

The Trackback extension is a free (as in freedom) and open-source component for Joomla. It provides Trackback and Pingback functionality for Joomla. This manual is intended to provide information about the usage of the component.

2 Trackbacks? Pingbacks?

The most important thing before using the component is a clear idea of what trackbacks and pingbacks are. So here is my (short) explanation. Bob has a weblog. Alice has a weblog. Bob publishes a very good article. Alice reads this article and writes an own article in her weblog which refers to Bob's article (by linking to it). At this stage, Bob does not know about Alice's article. In order to notify Bob of Alice's article, she sends a trackback to Bob's article (more precisely, she sends the trackback to his article's trackback link). Bob's weblog system receives the trackback and decides what to do with it (usually, it needs human interaction to be accepted and displayed at the article page). To make the trackback-sending a little easier for Alice, Bob could embed the trackback link in his article's HTML code (there is a standardized way to do this via an RDF tag), and when Alice writes her article (with the link to Bob's article in it), her weblog system can extract the link to Bob's article, then look the trackback-link up and automatically send the trackback. A similar concepts as these "auto-discovered" trackbacks are called pingbacks, again Alice's weblog system extracts the link to Bob's article, looks up the article page and finds information about how to send a pingback from Bob's page. It sends the pingback using an XML-RPC call, Bob's server then treats the incoming pingback like an incoming trackback. The trackback component enables all of these things in Joomla.

3 Features

The trackback extension has the following features:

- Send and receive trackbacks (for Joomla articles)
- Send and receive pingbacks (for Joomla articles)
- Spam protection
- API for using the features in other components

4 Send and receive trackbacks and pingbacks

This is the main purpose of the component. To send a trackback, log in the frontend of your Joomla site and navigate to the article from which you want to send the trackback. Of course you need the correct access rights, in general that means that you need to be the author of the article. Located just above the article, there is a field to enter the trackback link of the target article. Click on “send” to send the trackback to the remote site. Note that sending trackbacks to the same server is disabled by default.

Sending and receiving pingbacks is done using the XML-RPC specification. This means that you need to activate the Joomla “webservice” feature in the Joomla global configuration to receive pingbacks.

4.1 Options

Component options

- Autopublish: automatically publish incoming trackbacks/pingbacks (not recommended!)
- Send notice: send a notice to the website administrator when a new trackback arrives
- Keep https: if your trackback-link would normally result in a https-link (because you access your website via https), you can set this option to “no” in order to convert the https-link to http-links (this is especially helpful when using a self-signed certificate)
- Use SEF: use search engine friendly URLs (this also depends on the global Joomla settings for SEF)
- Handle spam: select whether to discard or mark spam (or do nothing at all)
- IP blacklist: comma-separated list of IP addresses to block
- Akismet key: API key from akismet.com to check incoming trackbacks for spam

- Botscout key: API key from botscout.com to check incoming trackbacks for spam

Content plugin options

- Keep https: see above
- Use SEF: see above
- Section IDs: if set, only allow trackbacks/pingbacks for the sections with the given IDs (comma-separated list)
- Exclude section IDs: exclude the given section IDs from trackbacks/pingbacks
- Send pingbacks: send pingbacks to all external links when a content article is saved
- Send autodiscovered trackbacks: send autodiscovered trackbacks to all external links when a content article is saved
- Embed RDF: embed the autodiscover-information for trackbacks in the article's html code
- Only new: send pingbacks/autodiscovered trackbacks only for new articles (recommended)
- Include local: allow trackbacks from the local server
- Show pingback hint: show a hint at the article page if pingbacks are allowed
- Show number of trackbacks: show the number of trackbacks for each article

XML-RPC plugin options

- Section IDs: see above
- Exclude section IDs: see above
- Automatically publish: see above
- Send notice: see above