

Customizing Your OJS Journal

As the global OJS community increases, the need to customize individual journals using our open source software has become increasingly important. This document provides a brief overview of a few customizations to your OJS 2.x journal, including:

- Changing the Background Colour and Fonts
- Changing the Header
- Adding a Unique Image for Each Issue
- Adding Navigation Links
- Providing News and Updates
- Integrating Blogs, Wikis, Forums and More
- Adding a Multilingual Interface
- Adding a Splash Screen
- Adding MP3 Support

Changing the Background Colour and Fonts

A newly installed version of OJS comes with a default style sheet, with an attractive choice of colours and fonts.



Figure 1: OJS Out of the Box

You may prefer, however, to customize your journal, making it stand out from other default installations. A couple of easy and noticeable adjustments are to change the background colour and fonts.

Notice the extensive colour changes made for *Critical Studies in Improvisation* (<http://www.criticalimprov.com/>):



Figure 2: Colour customizations

To do this, you will need to access your style sheet. You will find it in the OJS directory on your server, in the styles folder. Open the common.css file. This is the default style sheet for your OJS journal.

To change the background colour and font, find this entry:

```
body {
  margin: 0;
  padding: 0;
  background-color: white;
  color: #111;
  font-family: Verdana,Arial,Helvetica,sans-serif;
}
```

The `background-color: white;` line allows you to enter a new colour, such as white. You can also add a hexadecimal value such as `#FFFFFF`.

The `color: #111;` line allows you to change the colour of the font in your journal. In this example, the hexadecimal value is used.

The font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif; line lets you change the font face of your journal, for example, to Times New Roman.

Once you've made these changes, you can place the common.css file back in the styles folder, or you can upload it from within OJS, as the Journal Manager (see Journal Setup, Step 5 – The Look).



Figure 3: Uploading a style sheet

If you have some experience working with style sheets, you will be able to make extensive customizations to the “look and feel” of your new journal.

Changing the Header

Another change to consider adding is a unique header image for your journal. This example is from *Acadiensis* (<http://dev.hil.unb.ca/Texts/ojs2/index.php/Acadiensis>):

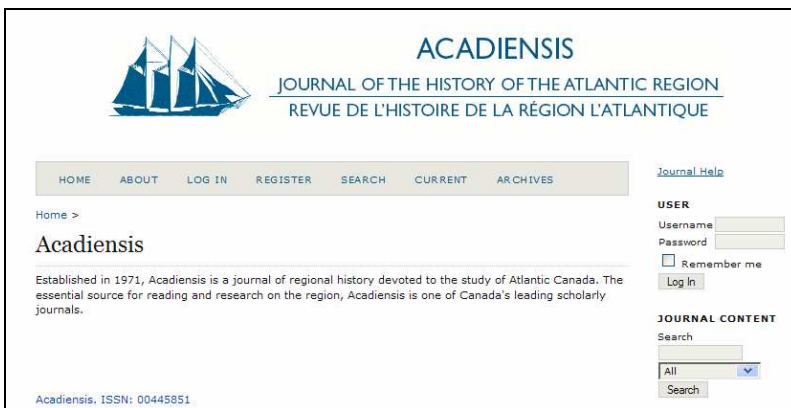


Figure 4: Adding your own header

This was done by the Journal Manager, in Journal Setup, Step 5 – The Look, by uploading an image file into OJS:

5.3 Journal Page Header

A graphic version of the journal's title and logo (.gif, .jpg, or .png file), possibly a smaller version of the one used on the homepage, can be uploaded to appear as a header on journal pages, which will replace the text version that otherwise appears.

Journal title

Title text

Title image

Figure 5: Adding a custom header

This image will then appear at the top of each page of your journal.

Adding a Unique Image for Each Issue

Another interesting enhancement is to add a unique cover image to each issue of your journal. This, of course, requires a sustainable source of artwork!

The journal *Postcolonial Text* (<http://postcolonial.org/>) makes good use of this feature in their version of OJS:



Figure 6: Cover art

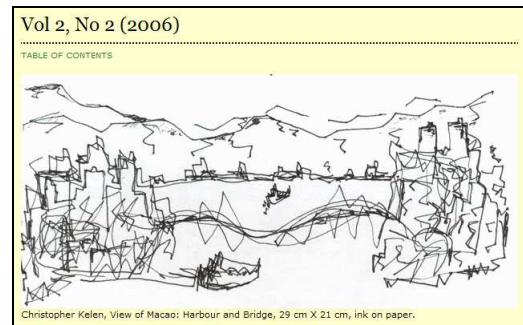


Figure 7: More cover art

These images are added when each issue is created by the Editor, in the Create Issue section:

Cover

Create custom cover page for this issue.

Cover image Use Save to upload file.
(Allowed formats: .gif, .jpg, or .png)

Cover caption

Figure 8: Uploading cover art

Adding Navigation Links

Another useful way to enhance your OJS journal is to add new links to the default navigation bar. The *Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies* (<http://ej.lib.cbs.dk/index.php/cjas>) has added links to their Asian Research Centre web site:



Figure 9: Adding links to the navigation bar

New navigation links can be added by the Journal Manager, in Journal Setup, Step 5 – The Look:

5.5 Navigation Bar

Navigation bar items can be added to the current set (Home, About, User Home, etc.) that appear at the top of the page.

Label name

The label value is a literal string (e.g., "Journal Setup") rather than a localization message key (e.g., "manager.setup")

URL

URL is an absolute URL (e.g., "http://www.example.com") rather than a path relative to the site (e.g., "/manager/setup")

Figure 10: Adding navigation links

Multiple new links can be added to the navigation bar, pointing to either a file on your server, or to an external URL.

Adding News and Updates

The front page of journal can either contain the Table of Contents for the latest issue, or it can be used as a communication space with your readers, announcing new information about your journal, such as a call for submissions:



Figure 11: Announcements on the home page

These announcements can be added by the Journal Manager, in Journal Setup, Step 5 – The Look:

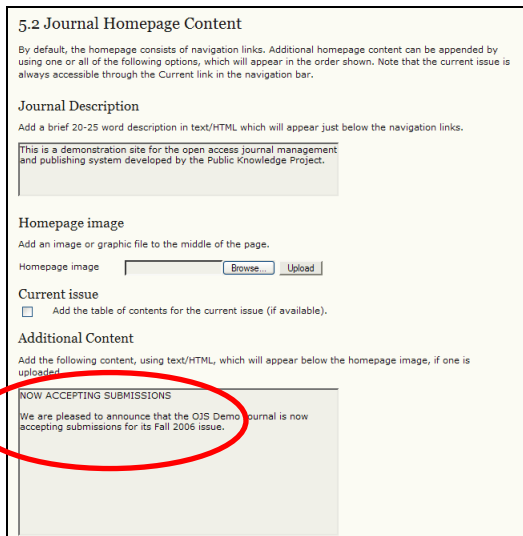


Figure 12: Adding a notice to the home page

Integrating Blogs, Wikis, Forums and More

An interesting use of additional navigation links is to add a blog or wiki for your journal, allowing for more interaction with your readers, and the development of an online community. The journal *Copyright* (<http://www.copyrightjournal.org>) has made extensive use of this feature, adding links to their blogs, forums, and more:



Figure 13: Adding new navigation links

Adding these options makes reading their journal a much more interactive experience.

Adding a Multilingual Interface

OJS Version 2.x currently supports English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese. Translations are also underway for additional languages in the near future. This allows your readers to have all of the links, text, and help files in their own language.

You can make your journal unilingual in any of the languages supported by OJS, or you can make your journal multilingual, by activating a drop-down language selector:



Figure 14: Multilingual Interface

To do this, your Site Administrator will need to choose Languages from the Site Management menu. From here, the Site Administrator must install any available languages to use with the journal, check them off as supported by the journal.

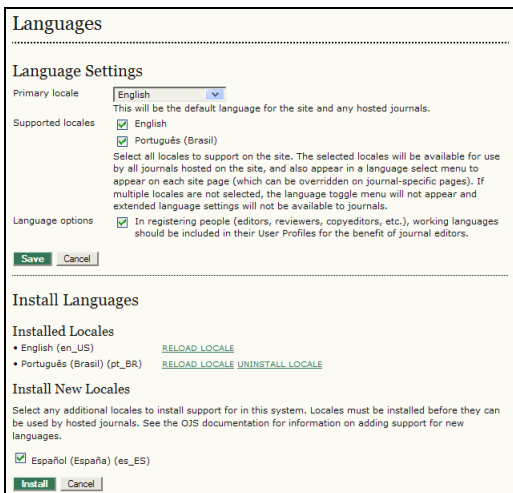


Figure 15: Installing languages

Second, your Journal Manager must activate the all of the languages you wish to support, in the Languages section of the Management Pages:

Languages

OJS can be made available to users in any of several supported languages. As well, OJS can operate as a partially multilingual system, providing users with an ability to toggle between languages on each page, and allowing certain data to be entered in up to two additional languages.

If a language supported by OJS is not listed below, ask your site administrator to install the language from the site administration interface. For instructions on adding support for new languages, please consult the OJS documentation.

Primary locale*
This will be the default language for the journal site.

Supported locales
 English
 Español (España)
 Português (Brasil)

Select all locales to support on the site via a language select menu to appear on each page. The menu will only appear if more than one locale is selected.

Alternate Locale #1
 Alternate Locale #2

This system optionally allows certain critical information to be entered in up to two additional languages. To use this feature, select one or two alternate locales and choose from the options listed below.

Language options
 Title image, page header, etc. will be uploaded in each of the journal's languages.
 Authors should be asked to provide titles and abstracts in the other language(s), with the option of having this done by journal staff.

Figure 16: Languages

Adding a Splash Screen

Another way to add some artistic appeal to your journal is by adding a splash screen, which appears before users are taken to the journal. *Cosmos and History* (<http://www.cosmosandhistory.org>) provides a very nice example of this:

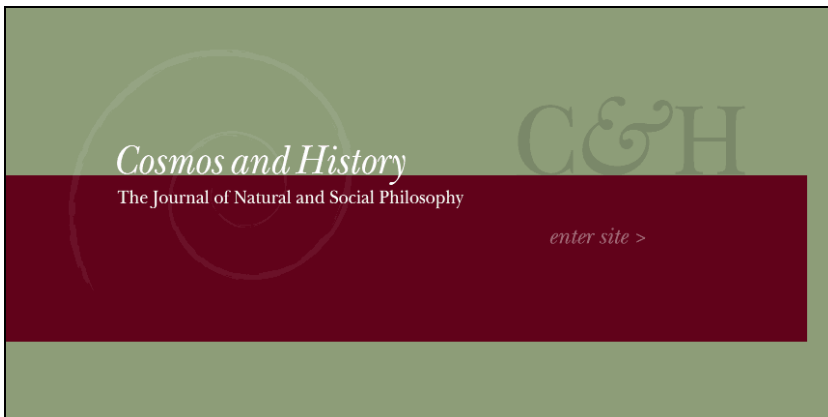


Figure 17: Adding a splash screen

This is done by simply creating an index.html file for the splash screen, and adding a link to the journal home page. In this case, the link is labelled “enter site”.

Adding MP3 Support

An innovative customization from *The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning* (<http://www.irrodl.org/>) is the addition of audio versions of their articles, using MP3 files:

Table of Contents	
Main Section	
Editorial <i>Peter S. Cookson</i>	HTML PDF MP3
Theoretical Challenges for Distance Education in the 21st Century: A Shift from Structural to Transactional Issues <i>Randy Garrison</i>	ABSTRACT HTML PDF MP3
Digital Learning Environments: New Possibilities and Opportunities <i>Otto Peters</i>	ABSTRACT HTML PDF MP3
Research in Distance Education: A Status Report <i>Farhad Saba</i>	ABSTRACT HTML PDF MP3
Rethinking the Research Agenda <i>Hilary Perraton</i>	ABSTRACT HTML PDF MP3
Beauty Lies in the Eye of the Beholder <i>Judith Calder</i>	ABSTRACT HTML PDF MP3
Current Developments and Best Practice in Open and Distance Learning <i>Armando Rocha Trinidad, Hermano Carmo, José Bidarra</i>	ABSTRACT HTML PDF MP3

Figure 18: Adding audio files

The audio files were recorded outside of the OJS system, but were uploaded as supplementary files, associated with each article. This was done by the Section Editor, in the Submissions Summary section:

Submission	
Authors	Mark Jordan
Title	SFU Library's Online Room Booking System
Original file	14-95-1-SM.DOC 2005-04-08
Supp. files	None ADD A SUPPLEMENTARY FILE
Submitter	Mark Jordan
Date submitted	April 8, 2005 - 10:33 PM
Section	Articles <input type="button" value="Change to"/> Articles <input type="button" value="Record"/>

Figure 19: Adding a supplementary file

These could also be added by the author, as part of their submission process.

To find out more about OJS, visit our web site (<http://pkp.sfu.ca>), read the OJS Technical Reference and OJS in an Hour, and take a look at our online support forums.