PLUS4J
Power Tools for Joomla!®

USER MANUAL

P4J - Content Explorer

Installation and use

Version 1.1.0 · October 2026
For Joomla!® 5 and 6

Contents

1 Overview

- 1.1 What Content Explorer does
- 1.2 Main features
- 1.3 Requirements

2 Installation

- 2.1 First installation
- 2.2 Upgrading from a previous version
- 2.3 Updates
- 2.4 Uninstalling

3 The interface

4 Working with files

- 4.1 Browsing folders
- 4.2 Uploading files
- 4.3 Creating a folder
- 4.4 Renaming
- 4.5 Deleting
- 4.6 Editing text files
- 4.7 Downloading

5 Using it safely

6 Troubleshooting

7 Support

1 Overview

1.1 What Content Explorer does

P4J - Content Explorer is a file manager for the Joomla! administrator. It lets you browse, upload, edit, rename, download and delete the files and folders of your website directly from the administrator panel.

Small everyday jobs, such as replacing an image, fixing a line in `.htaccess` or downloading a log file, no longer need an FTP client or the hosting control panel.

1.2 Main features

- **The whole site at hand**: every folder from the root of your Joomla! installation.
- **Clear file list** with type, size and last change, sortable by any column.
- **Quick navigation** through the path bar and the .. row.
- **Upload** of several files at once, by drag and drop, with a progress bar.
- **New folders, renaming and deletion**, with a confirmation before deleting.
- **Built-in text editor** for PHP, HTML, CSS, JavaScript, XML, JSON, INI, Markdown and many other text files.
- **Download** of any file with one click.
- **Super Users only**: other administrators do not see the component.
- **English and Italian** included.

1.3 Requirements

Item	Requirement
Joomla!	5.x or 6.x
PHP	8.1 or later
Account	A Super User account, to install the extension and to use it.
Browser	Any up-to-date browser with JavaScript enabled.

2 Installation

2.1 First installation

1. **Download the package**
   Download `com_contentexplorer_v1.1.0.zip` from the Plus4J download area.
2. **Open the installer**
   In the administrator panel go to **System → Install → Extensions**.
3. **Upload the package**
   In the *Upload Package File* tab drag the ZIP file in, or use *Or browse for file*. Joomla! confirms that the extension has been installed.
4. **Open Content Explorer**
   Go to **Components → P4J - Content Explorer**. The list of the files in the root of your site appears straight away: there is nothing to configure.

2.2 Upgrading from a previous version

If Content Explorer is already installed, install the new package as described above: there is no need to uninstall the old version first.

- In the menu the component now appears as *P4J - Content Explorer*, next to the other Plus4J extensions.
- The component stays reserved to Super Users.

2.3 Updates

When a new version is available, Joomla! shows it in its update notifications. Updates are installed manually:

1. **Open the download area**
   The *Update* button, or the link in the message that follows it, takes you to the Plus4J download area. Log in with your Plus4J account if asked.
2. **Install over the current version**
   Download the new package and install it as in section 2.1.

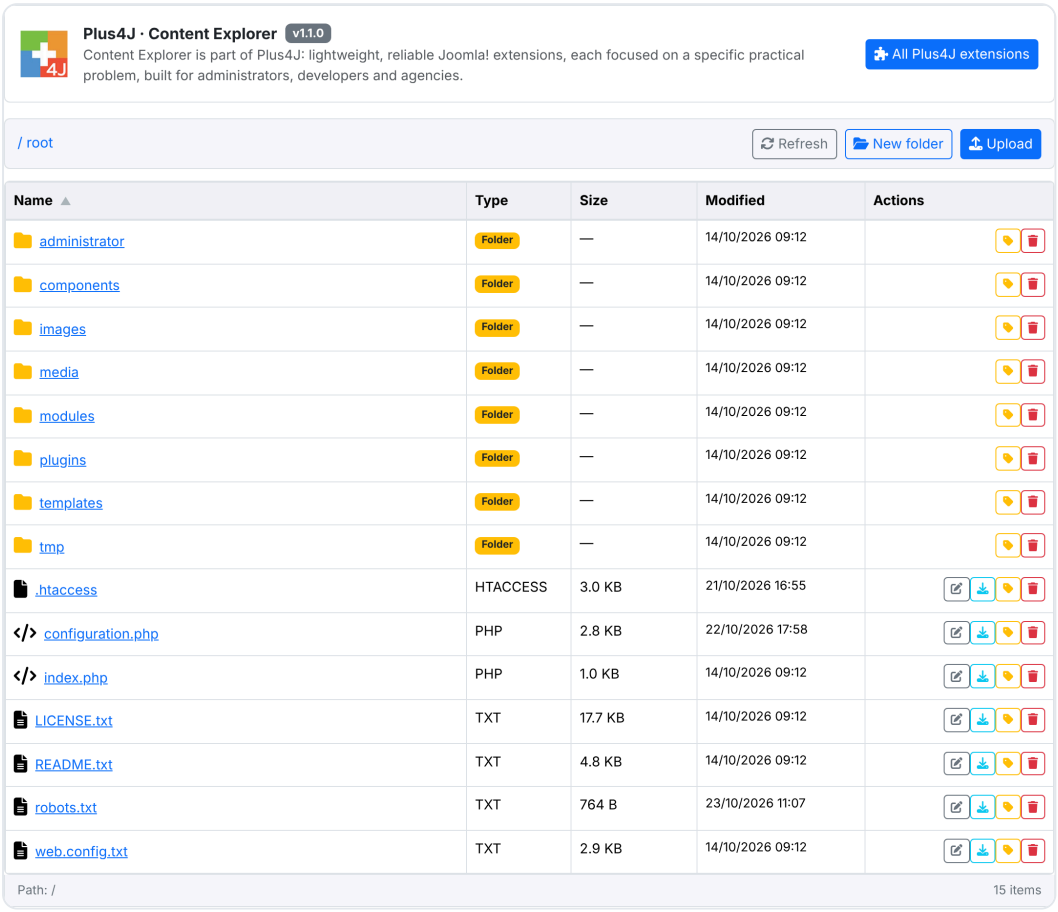
2.4 Uninstalling

Go to **System → Manage → Extensions**, search for *P4J - Content Explorer*, select it and click *Uninstall*.

> **Note.** Uninstalling removes only Content Explorer. The files and folders of your site are not touched.

3 The interface

Open **Components → P4J - Content Explorer**. The page is reserved to Super Users: other administrators do not see it in the menu.



The Content Explorer page

Area	What it contains
Plus4J bar	Installed version and the *All Plus4J extensions* button, which opens the Plus4J catalogue.
Toolbar	On the left, the path of the current folder: click any part of it to go back to that folder. On the right, the *Refresh*, *New folder* and *Upload* buttons.
File list	The content of the current folder: folders first, then files. Click a column heading to sort by name, type, size or date; click it again to reverse the order.
Actions	The buttons at the end of each row: *Edit* (pencil, text files only), *Download* (arrow, files only), *Rename* (label) and *Delete* (bin).
Status bar	The current path and the number of items in the folder.

4 Working with files

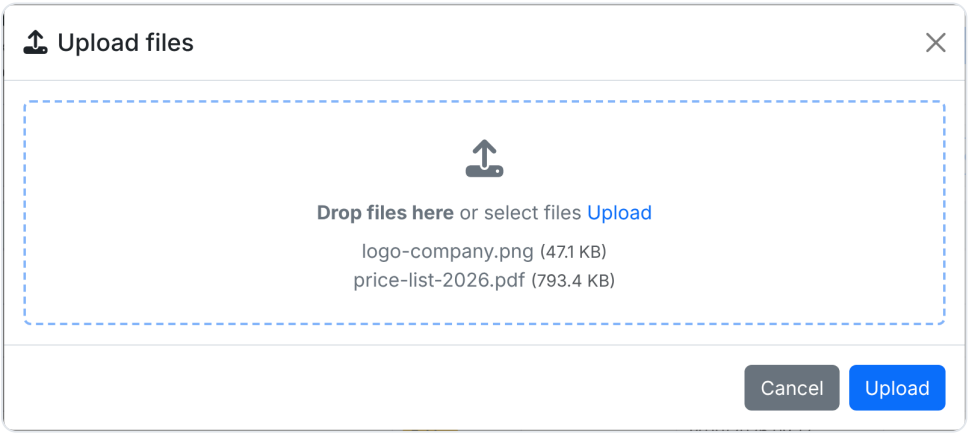
Every operation takes place in the folder you are viewing. After each change the list updates by itself and a short message confirms the result.

4.1 Browsing folders

- Click the name of a folder to open it.
- Click the .. row at the top of the list to go up one level.
- Click a part of the path in the toolbar to jump to that folder; */ root* takes you back to the root of the site.
- Click *Refresh* to reload the list, for example after copying files by FTP.

4.2 Uploading files

1. **Open the folder**
   Go to the folder that must receive the files.
2. **Choose the files**
   Click *Upload*, then drag the files into the dotted area or click it to select them. You can choose several files at once; each appears with its size.
3. **Start the upload**
   Click *Upload*. The bar shows the progress; at the end the window closes and the files appear in the list.



Two files ready to be uploaded

> **Watch out.** A file with the same name as one already in the folder replaces it.

4.3 Creating a folder

1. **Click *New folder***
   A small window asks for the name.
2. **Type the name**
   Use letters, numbers, spaces, hyphens, underscores and dots; other characters are removed.
3. **Confirm**
   Press Enter or click *Create*. The new folder appears in the list.

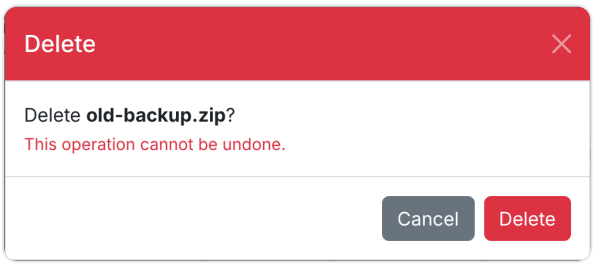
4.4 Renaming

1. **Click *Rename***
   Use the label button in the row of the file or folder.
2. **Change the name**
   The current name is already selected: type the new one.
3. **Confirm**
   Press Enter or click *Rename*.

> **Watch out.** Before renaming, make sure the folder does not already contain an item with the new name: an existing file could be replaced. Renaming files used by Joomla! or by an extension can stop them from working.

4.5 Deleting

1. **Click *Delete***
   Use the bin button in the row of the file or folder.
2. **Check the name**
   The window shows the name of the item you are about to delete.
3. **Confirm**
   Click *Delete*, or *Cancel* to stop.



Confirmation before deleting

> **Watch out.** Deletion is permanent: there is no recycle bin. A folder is deleted together with everything it contains.

4.6 Editing text files

Text files (PHP, HTML, CSS, JavaScript, XML, JSON, INI, TXT, Markdown, SQL, YAML, `.htaccess` and similar) show the *Edit* button and open in the editor when you click their name.

1. **Open the file**
   Click its name or the pencil button.
2. **Make your changes**
   The Tab key inserts four spaces, to make indenting code easier.
3. **Save**
   Click *Save* or press Ctrl+S. The message *Saved.* confirms the change; the window stays open, so you can go on editing.
4. **Close**
   Click *Close* when you have finished.



Editing robots.txt

The editor opens files up to 2 MB. Larger files and non-text files, such as images, archives or PDFs, can be downloaded instead.

4.7 Downloading

- Click the *Download* button (arrow) in the row of any file.
- For non-text files, clicking the name also starts the download.

The browser saves the file in its usual download folder.

5 Using it safely

Content Explorer works on the real files of your website, with the same freedom as an FTP client. A few habits avoid unpleasant surprises.

- **Make a backup first.** Before editing important files, such as `configuration.php`, `.htaccess` or template files, make a backup of the site, or at least download a copy of the file.
- **Check the path.** Before deleting, renaming or uploading, look at the path in the toolbar to be sure you are in the right folder.
- **Remember there is no undo.** Deletions are permanent, and a saved file cannot be brought back to its previous content.
- **Leave Joomla! files alone.** Folders such as `administrator`, `libraries` and `media` belong to Joomla! and its extensions: change them only if you know exactly why.
- **Do not leave the session unattended.** Log out of the administrator panel when you step away from the computer.
- **Keep Super User accounts few.** Only Super Users can use Content Explorer: grant that group only to the people who really need it.

> **Tip.** Downloading a file before editing it is the quickest way to keep a copy: if something goes wrong, upload it again.

6 Troubleshooting

I cannot see P4J - Content Explorer in the Components menu.

The component is reserved to Super Users. Log in with a Super User account. Other administrators who open its address receive an access error.

A file does not open in the editor.

The file is larger than 2 MB or is not a text file. Download it with the *Download* button instead.

An upload fails or a file is missing after the upload.

The file may exceed the maximum upload size set by your hosting, or the folder may not be writable. Try a smaller file or another folder, and ask your hosting provider about the upload limit and the folder permissions. Click *Refresh* to reload the list.

I cannot rename or delete an item, or save a file.

The file or folder is protected by the permissions set on the server. Change them from the hosting control panel, or ask your hosting provider.

An error message appears at the top of the page.

Your administrator session may have expired: reload the page and, if asked, log in again. If the message says that a security filter of the hosting may have blocked the request, the server refused that operation. Send the text of the message to your hosting provider and ask them to allow the requests of the Joomla! administrator.

After an update the page does not look right.

Reload the page with the browser cache cleared, and clear the Joomla! cache from **System → Clear Cache**.

7 Support

Downloads, updates and the other Plus4J extensions are available on the Plus4J website.

Website	https://plus4j.com
All extensions	https://plus4j.com/extensions
Download area	https://plus4j.com/area-download
E-mail	info@plus4j.com

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