

Akeeba Backup Quick Start Guide

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Abstract

The easiest way to get started with backing up and restoring your website with Akeeba Backup Core and Akeeba Backup Professional.

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Chapter 1. About and Credits

1. About Akeeba Backup

Akeeba Backup is a complete site backup solution for your Joomla!™ powered website. As the successor to the renowned JoomlaPack component, Akeeba Backup builds on its strong legacy to deliver an easy to use, yet powerful, solution to backing up, restoring and moving your site between servers of the same or different architecture.

Its mission is simple: backup your entire site - including all files and database contents - inside a standalone archive. You can then restore your entire site from the contents of this archive, without the need of installing Joomla!™ prior to the restoration. You can do so in a single click manner, without the tedious work required to set up and test external utilities, without changing your server configuration and without having to dive into obscure configuration options.

If you want absolute power and flexibility, Akeeba Backup is right for you, too! It puts you in charge of fine-tuning your backup, choosing which directories, files or database tables to exclude. It can even allow you to backup non-Joomla!™ content, as long as you specify which off-site directories and databases you want to add.

Akeeba Backup was awarded at the J and Beyond 2010 [<http://jandbeyond.org/blog/item/209-joomla-open-source-creative-and-artistic-recognition-award-winners.html>] international Joomla! conference as the best Administrator Only Extension and has received the second place in other community voting competitions. Our desire to provide the best backup software for Joomla! is only strengthened by these awards. We need you to succeed, though. If you get stuck, don't hesitate to contact us on our forum. We're here to help!

Important

Akeeba Backup and its utilities require PHP 5 or later to be installed and activated on your server. They will not work at all on PHP4 hosts. In fact, PHP4 is not maintained since August 8th, 2008 and is now considered insecure and vulnerable. Do not ask us to continue supporting PHP4. It's like asking us to support Windows 3.1. Do note that some servers have an option to switch between PHP4 and PHP5. If you get a parse error trying to use Akeeba Backup or Akeeba Kickstart, please ask your host how to make PHP5 the default.

2. About this document

The User's Guide is mostly the complete reference to all functions. On the contrary, this Quick Start document focuses on step-by-step instructions to most common usage scenarios and a brief yet concise introduction to the basic concepts and operations of Akeeba Backup. If you want to learn more, please feel free to read the full 100+ pages User's Guide which you can always find on-line on our website [<http://www.akeebabackup.com/akeeba-backup-documentation/index.html>], or download it in PDF format for off-line viewing.

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Chapter 2. Backing up your site

The most basic operation in Akeeba Backup is installing the component in order to take a backup of your website. This chapter will guide you through all the necessary steps to achieving this goal, as well as tackle the basics of scheduling your backups for this extra peace of mind.

1. Installing Akeeba Backup

Akeeba Backup comes in two different releases, both distributed under the terms of the liberal GPL v3 license [<http://www.gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html>]. Akeeba Backup Core is distributed free of charge and contains all the functionality you need for simple to medium complexity backup jobs. You can download the latest version from our Downloads page [<http://www.akeebabackup.com/download/akeeba-backup.html>]. Akeeba Backup Professional is distributed to subscribers – with a subscription rate starting at about 50\$/year – and contains all the functionality of the Core version, plus some additional features like cloud storage support, extended CRON options and integrated restoration. Once you have subscribed to it and logged in our site you can download it from the same Downloads page.

Once you have downloaded the component package – its name being something like `com_akeeba-3.1-core.zip` – login to your site's administrative back-end. Once in there, click on the Extensions, Install/Uninstall menu item.

The Extensions installer menu item

In the next page, under the Upload Package File header, click on the Browse button and locate Akeeba Backup's installation ZIP file. Then, click on the Upload File & Install button.

Uploading Akeeba Backup's installation package

When the installation is over, the component installation summary page will appear:

The installation summary page

That's it! Akeeba Backup is now successfully installed on your site! Do note that the previous step installs not only the Akeeba Backup component, but also the backup status icon module for your administrator area and our plugins. There is no need to install those extra items separately.

1.1. What if it doesn't install?

Since Akeeba Backup uses the standard Joomla! extensions installer to install itself, a failure to install it can mean three things: problems with permissions, a wrong temp-path or the need to run a manual installation. We have compiled a comprehensive installation troubleshooting document [<https://www.akeebabackup.com/documentation/troubleshooter/abinstallation.html>] to help you with that.

2. Taking your first backup

After installing the component, click on the Components, Akeeba Backup menu item in the main Joomla administrator menu:

Launching Akeeba Backup

This will take you to the component's Control Panel page:

Akeeba Backup's Control Panel page

In order to let Akeeba Backup automatically configure itself to work optimally on your server, all you need to do is click on the Configuration Wizard button. This will run a series of automated tests and adjust the configuration settings without your intervention. Clicking on the button opens a new page:

Akeeba Backup's Configuration Wizard page

Stepping through all tests will last about 2 minutes. If you see the process getting stuck after the Optimizing Database Dump engine settings, i.e. the timeout bar at the bottom fills up, just reload the page by clicking on the Back button at the top right corner and then clicking again on the Configuration Wizard button. When the wizard completes, it presents you with two options:

Akeeba Backup's Configuration Wizard has just finished

In order to take a simple backup, just click on the Backup Now button to take your first backup. Please note that a button with the same title is also available in the Control Panel page. You can use the latter to take backups of your site in the future. Clicking on either of the backup buttons, gets you to the Backup Now page of the component:

Akeeba Backup's Backup Now page

By default, a short description including the date and time of the backup is included. You can change it if you want and you might even type in a longer comment in the Backup comment box. Then, simply click on the Backup Now button. The backup progress page shows up:

Akeeba Backup's backup progress page

Please note that the progress bar and its percentage reading are approximative due to technical reasons. You may observe some jumping back and forth. This is normal and expected.

Depending on the speed of your server and the size of your site, this will take anywhere between half a minute to several minutes. Once Akeeba Backup is done backing up your site, it presents you the final backup page:

Akeeba Backup just finished backing up a site

That's it! Your backup is now complete.

3. Fine-tuning and problem solving

3.1. My Control Panel page looked broken or I can't start the backup after clicking on the Backup Now button

This is a common problem with many hosts, attributed to the permissions given to Akeeba Backup's folders and files by Joomla! during its installation. In this case, you must give 0755 permissions to directories and 0644 permissions to files in the `media/com_akeeba`, `components/com_akeeba` and `administrator/components/com_akeeba` directories and all of their contents. Normally, Akeeba Backup does this automatically but on some servers it's impossible and you have to do that manually. This can be accomplished with an FTP program of your liking, such as FileZilla.

Using FileZilla, this is simple. For each of the aforementioned directories right click on it and choose File Permissions:

Editing the permissions of a directory using FileZilla

In the numeric value type in 755, then click on Recurse into subdirectories and Apply to directories only and click on OK

Setting folder permissions

Then, again right click and choose File Permissions. This time, in the numeric value type in 644, then click on Recurse into subdirectories and Apply to files only and click on OK

Setting file attributes

That's all! Reload the Akeeba Backup Control Panel page and everything should be fine. Do note that if you don't do this step, Akeeba Backup will not work properly or at all!

3.2. I got an AJAX Error message or my backup refuses to start

Sometimes, you'll get some backup issues which will prevent you from taking that first backup. Do not despair! We can sort them out.

Most common problems which have to do with your host's configuration can be solved very easily by clicking on the Configuration Wizard button in Akeeba Backup's Control Panel page. If the wizard seems to hang after the database options step, please try running it a second time. If it's completely impossible to run it, or if running it didn't help, please follow the rest of the instructions in this section.

Try visiting the Configuration page and clicking on Save. This may be necessary if you just upgraded. This simple move will refresh your configuration and pick up the default values for any new parameters which might have been introduced in the new release.

First, make sure that you have adequate free space on your account. Most hosts give you a finite amount of disk space you can use on your site, simply referred to as the "quota". As a rule of thumb, we suggest that you have about 40%

to 50% of your quota free before taking a backup. If you do not have enough disk space, the backup will of course not work. Makes sense, right?

The other thing you might bump into is the permissions of the backup output folder (by default it is `administrator/components/com_akeeba/backup`). Due to the nature of the backup process (appending to files), Akeeba Backup can't use Joomla's FTP layer even if it is enabled. As a result, it needs PHP to have write access to the backup output directory. If you are unsure about this, you can try a simple workaround. Using your favorite FTP program, give this directory 0777 permissions. Inside this directory there is a `.htaccess` file. Give this file 0444 permissions. If you're not sure how to do that, take a look at the previous section for detailed instructions on changing file and directory permissions. If you are security-minded, do note that this set of permissions is perfectly safe; even though the directory is writable by anyone, the `.htaccess` file which restricts web access is not and therefore these settings are as secure as they can be.

Another common problem is that some hosts (e.g. Strato, 1and1, 000webhost and Freehostia) impose a maximum size to the files you can create in their systems. In this case, we can modify Akeeba Backup's behavior so as to create a "split archive", i.e. split the backup archive in several files to get over this restriction. In order to do that, first click on the Configuration button in Akeeba Backup's Control Panel page. This will open the Configuration page. In there, find the Archiver engine setting under the Advanced configuration header and click on the Configure... button on its right. This will open a new pane underneath this line:

Changing the part size for split archives

Click on the drop-down next to the Part size for split archives setting and select the 2Mb setting. If you are on a free web host, you might want to try an even lower setting, such as 500Kb or even 250Kb. Now click on the Save button on the very top of the page and retry backing up your site.

Note

Not all archiver engines support this option. We recommend using the JPA format engine, or the JPS format (encrypted archives) engine.

Similarly, you can change the part size for the MySQL dump file. The reason you might want to do that is that the SQL dump file is first written to disk and then written inside the archive. If the dump file grows beyond your host's file size limits, it will crash the backup. Furthermore, splitting your SQL dump will have one positive side-effect: it will improve the compression ratio of your backup, result in a much smaller overall backup size!

Go to Akeeba Backup's Configuration page. Find the Database Dump Engine option. Next to it, there is a Configure... button. Click it. A new pane opens right below. In this pane, locate the Size for split SQL dump files option. Select the 500Kb option from the list. Save the configuration and retry backup.

If you are using the ZIP archive format it is possible that you run into timeout or memory outage errors. These usually manifest itself as AJAX Errors or Internal Server Error 500 error pages. The problem with the ZIP format is that we have to read each file twice. We read it once in order to calculate a "file signature" (properly called a "CRC32 checksum"), then we read it again in order to add it inside the archive. Unfortunately these steps can't be combined and, on top of that, the very slow signature calculation step must be able to run in one go. With larger files and slower hosts this will consistently lead to timeouts. If you suspect this is the case, please use the JPA format setting in the Archiver Engine option of the Akeeba Backup's Configuration page.

Some other hosts are not compatible with Akeeba Backup's default AJAX method of communicating with the server while backing up your site. On those hosts you can use a simple workaround method. Simply go to Akeeba Backup's Configuration page and check the Use IFRAMEs instead of AJAX option:

Enabling IFRAMEs instead of AJAX

After you do that, just click on Save and retry backup.

Some servers have a very strict limit on the maximum execution time of PHP scripts. By default, Akeeba Backup is configured with a maximum execution time allowance of 14 seconds. In order to work around such hosts, please go to your Akeeba Backup Configuration page and scroll all the way down to the Fine Tuning pane. You will find an option labeled Maximum Execution Time. Select the "Custom..." option and type in 7 in the text box that appears to the right of the drop-down. Click on the Save button and retry backing up your site. We have heard of hosts which require settings even lower than that. If in doubt, ask your host what their PHP `maximum_exec_time` setting is, then subtract one second and use this value in Akeeba Backup's Maximum Execution Time setting.

First try using a different browser. I recommend using the latest version of Google Chrome. Make sure you disable all browser extensions.

If you have AVG antivirus, please disable the Link Checker feature and *reboot* your computer. That feature of AVG is very intrusive and kills timing-sensitive Javascript procedures, like the backup procedure. If this doesn't work, try disabling any antivirus/firewall/Internet security application. Windows Firewall and Windows Defender are safe to leave enabled. Please remember to reboot your computer after changing antivirus or firewall options.

If nothing of the above works, please try using a different PC, ideally connected to the Internet through a different ISP. We had many cases where the PC setup was broken and using a different computer did the trick. In many other cases, the Internet connection was behind a firewalled router or the ISP imposed a firewall of its own and killed the backup process. In those cases, switching to a different Internet connection made all the difference.

3.3. How do I know that my backup archive works?

We strongly recommend testing your backup files, at least the first time you produce a backup and whenever you make major changes/upgrades to your site. Testing the backup archives is a matter of restoring them to a local server. Please take a look at the section of this document dealing with archive restoration for detailed instructions.

3.4. I followed all of the above but I still have a problem

Should you run into problems not covered by this document, you are welcome to post to our forums. We respond to all support requests within one or two business days, usually within a few hours. Posting to the support forum requires a free user account registration. That's right! We will not charge you for support! We take pride for being one of the few Open Source projects which provide top quality software, thorough documentation and fast support from the project's team for free.

In order to get fast and accurate support, we will need:

- A clear description of your problem. Saying "Um... it just doesn't work" is not a clear description. Tell us exactly what you were trying to do, at what exact operation it failed and any error messages which were output on the page. If you can copy & paste the error message or even get a screenshot of the error message that's even better!
- Exact version of Akeeba Backup. It's visible on the right-hand pane in Akeeba Backup's Control Panel.
- Joomla! version. It is best to tell us the exact version, for example 1.5.15.
- If possible exact MySQL and PHP version. From your Joomla! back-end go to Help, System Info and report the values in the Database Version and PHP Version rows.
- A copy of the back-end debug log taken with log level set to All Information and Debug when the problem happened. You can download a copy of the log from within the View Log page. If it doesn't work for you (for example, you get an empty file), the log is available inside the configured output directory, named `akeeba.backend.log`. Since our forum rejects certain file extensions, ZIP it before attaching it. If you are concerned about the possibility of revealing

potentially sensitive information, password-protect the ZIP file and send a private message with the password, addressed to user `nicholas`.

Please do not use any other archiver formats, such as RAR. Also, please do not upload the ZIP archive containing the log files to a free file hosting facility which imposes a time delay before downloading (i.e. RapidShare). Doing any of the above —unless we explicitly tell you to do so— makes it very hard for us to provide support to you and is guaranteed to give your post the lowest priority possible.

Also, do not contact us directly by PM, IM or email unless we explicitly tell you to do so. Even if you have subscribed to our Professional services, no subscription level grants you this option. In all cases you should use either the free support forum or, if your subscription level allows it, our Private Ticket System. We regret to inform you that direct contacts for support are treated as de facto consulting contracts which are charged 100€/hour with a minimum charge of two (2) hours.

- If you are writing about an error related to the restoration process do not forget to tell us the exact version of Akeeba Backup which produced the archive file and how you extracted the archive file, i.e. using Kickstart or using Akeeba eXtract Wizard. Remember to note the exact version of Kickstart or Akeeba eXtract Wizard you used. Also inform us about the method you used to download the backup file to your PC - if applicable - and the method you used to upload the backup file to your host, for example "I used FTP in Binary mode", "I just clicked on the download link and ignored the warning box".
- On select cases, we may ask you for direct access to the affected site if we run out of other support options. Please supply the requested information using the Personal Messages link in the User Menu of our site. Do not directly email us or use any other method, including Instant Messaging. Information on our site is secured using strong cryptography. Email and IM messages are not. Also note that we destroy the information you supplied upon solving your issue and all such information is bound by our strict privacy rules. In other words, we treat your site's information with utmost secrecy and privacy at all times.

Help us help you! The more information you provide the faster and more accurate a response you'll get. In any case, please tell us just the symptoms. Do not attempt to find an explanation yourself and present that explanation as the problem you experience. More often than not this will derail our support efforts and it will take us significantly longer to effectively help you. We've had cases where the solution was trivial but it took us a week of post exchanges because the user was giving us his interpretation of the issue and not the facts. Bear in mind that we can help you faster and better if we're given just the facts. Thank you!

4. Downloading your backup archives

There are two methods of downloading your backup archives, the easy one and the recommended one.

The easy method

The easy method can be performed directly from the component. From the component's Control Panel page, please click on the Manage Backups (formerly "Administer Backup Files") button. In the following page, you will see a list of all your backup attempts. Those marked with an OK status have their archives still on the server:

Akeeba Backup's Manage Backups (formerly "Administer Backup Files") page

By default, the most recent backup attempt appears on the top of the list. In order to download the backup archive, simply click on the file name in the Archive column. If you have a multi-part archive (default), the file name will not be linkable, but it will display Part 00, Part 01, etc links. Click on the links and download *all of the backup parts*. If you skip even one part, your archive cannot be restored!

Note

Depending on your PC, browser and server settings this method may lead to corrupt backups. Please try extracting the downloaded files using Akeeba Kickstart or Akeeba eXtract Wizard. If the extraction doesn't work, please follow the recommended download method below.

Once you download the backup archive and all of its parts, you should delete the backup archive from the server in order to conserve disk space and enhance your site's security. In order to do that, please tick the checkbox on the leftmost column and then click on the Delete Files button on the toolbar. The files will be removed and the status of the backup record appears as Obsolete.

The recommended method

The problem with the easy method is that sometimes it might not work, or your browser (especially earlier versions of Internet Explorer) might corrupt the download. Therefore, the recommended – and guaranteed – method of downloading backup archives is using FTP in Binary transfer mode. In this example we are going to use the FileZilla FTP client. First, connect to your server and navigate to the backup output directory (by default this is `administrator/components/com_akeeba/backup` under your site's root). You will see a list of the backup archives and log files:

Viewing the backup archives in FTP

Before transferring a file, click on the Transfer menu, expand the Transfer type submenu and select Binary from the list.

Important

This step is extremely important! If you leave it to the default setting (Auto) or choose ASCII the transferred archive will be corrupt and you cannot restore it!

Setting the transfer type to Binary

After you do that, just download the backup archive and, if it is a multi-part archive, all of its parts as well. The multi-part archives have the same base filename and extensions of `.jpa`, `.j01`, `.j02` etc or `.zip`, `.z01`, `.z02` etc. Do not forget to download all of the parts. Even if one of them is missing the restoration will fail. Afterwards you can delete the backup archive and its parts from the server to conserve disk space and enhance the security of your site.

Chapter 3. Automating your backup

Backing up your site regularly is of paramount importance to the security of your site. However, doing that regularly against many sites is a tedious routine, even when using an automated backup component such as Akeeba Backup. Lazy as most of our users, we provide a plethora of ways to automate your site's backup. The core idea is that your site should backup itself instead of you backing it up! Here we will present the easiest way to do that, available in all editions (Core and Professional) of our software for over three years already.

Important

For more ways to automate your backups –especially if you have Akeeba Backup Professional– please take a look in our Akeeba Backup User's Guide.

1. Using a regular CRON job

The front-end backup feature is intended to provide the capability to perform an unattended, scheduled backup of your site. The front-end backup URL performs a single backup step and sends a redirection (HTTP 302) header to force the client to advance to the next page, which performs the next step and so forth. This is specially designed to be used in CRON jobs.

Tip

Akeeba Backup Professional offers even more CRON options, like the native CRON helper script. Consult the full User's Guide for more information.

In order to enable the front-end backup feature, please log in as a Super Administrator and go to the Control Panel page of the component. Click on the Component Parameters icon. A new page opens in a modal dialog (lightbox) on your browser. You will need to modify two settings:

Front-end backup settings

First, set Enable front-end and remote backup to Yes. Then, type in a Secret Word. This is a password, used for launching front-end backups from a CRON job. In order to avoid any problems, please only use alphanumeric characters (a-z, A-Z and 0-9) in the secret word. Do note that it is case sensitive, i.e. ABC, abc and Abc are three different secret words.

The next step is to set up the actual scheduling of the backup which allows you to automate the backups of your site. There are two alternatives. You can use the low-cost third-party webcron.org service or your host's CRON feature. Webcron is the most flexible and reliable, but it's a for-a-fee third party service (albeit daily backups usually cost around 1\$ *per year*). Your host's CRON feature is free but it's usually harder to set up and some hosts don't even offer it, or severely cripple it (e.g. halting the CRON job after 2 minutes, which means that your backup will never complete).

Using webcron.org

The easiest way to schedule a backup is using the low-cost webcron.org [<http://www.webcron.org>] service. Webcron is a third party service which allows you to call a URL you specify on preset intervals. You can use that to call Akeeba Backup's front-end backup URL in order to automate your backup. The cost is proportional to the amount of time required to execute a backup. With most backups lasting less than 5 minutes, a rough cost estimate is less than 2\$ for one full year of daily full site backups.

The rest of this section assumes that you have already opened a webcron.org account. For the sake of this example, we will assume that you have entered ak33b4s3cRet in the Secret Word field of Akeeba Backup's configuration. We will also assume that your site is accessible through the URL `http://www.example.com`.

Note

Webcron.org is not affiliated or endorsed by AkeebaBackup.com. Webcron.org is a third party service which has been tested by the developers of Akeeba Backup and found to be a good (and, sometimes, even better) alternative to using server-side CRON jobs.

Log in to webcron.org. In the CRON area, click on the New Cron button. Here's what you have to enter at webcron.org's interface:

- **Name of cronjob:** anything you like, e.g. "Backup www.example.com"
- **Timeout:** 180sec; if the backup doesn't complete, increase it. Most sites will work with a setting of 180 or 600 here. If you are not sure how long your backup takes, go to your site's back-end, take a new backup with Akeeba Backup and then click on Manage Backups (formerly "Administer Backup Files"). You will see that the topmost row is your new backup. Take a look at the duration. That's how long your backup takes.
- **Url you want to execute:** `http://www.example.com/index.php?option=com_akeeba&view=backup&key=ak33b4s3cRet`

Note

If you have multiple backup profiles, you can also specify the profile number in the URL. For example, in order to execute the backup profile with an ID of 123 you have to enter a URL like this:

```
http://www.example.com/index.php?option=com_akeeba&view=backup&key=ak33b4s3cRet&profile=123
```

- **Login and Password:** Leave them blank
- **Execution time** (the grid below the other settings): Select when you want your CRON job to run.

Important

The default setting is to run the CRON job every minute, of every hour, of every day, all year long! This is NOT what you want. In order to run a daily backup at 3 a.m. you need to select the following: Every Year, Every Month, Every Day, 3, 0.

- **Alerts:** If you have already set up alert methods in webcron.org's interface, we recommend choosing an alert method here and not checking the "Only on error" so that you always get a notification when the backup CRON job runs. Akeeba Backup itself can be configured to send you a (free) email on backup completion.

Using a CRON job on your own server

Most hosts offer a control panel of some kind. There has to be a section for something like "CRON Jobs", "scheduled tasks" and the like. The help screen in there describes how to set up a scheduled job. One missing part for you would be the command to issue. Simply putting the URL in there is not going to work. This also means that if your host only allows you to put a URL to run as a "CRON job" then this method *will not* work for you. In that case, it's best to use the plugin method described in the previous section.

If you are on a UNIX-style OS host (usually, a Linux host) you most probably have access to a command line utility called `wget`. It's almost trivial to use:

```
wget --max-redirect=10000 --output-document=/dev/null  
"http://www.yoursite.com/index.php?option=com_akeeba&view=backup&key=YourSecretKey&format=
```

This command goes in a *single line*. Replace `www.yoursite.com` with the real domain of your site and `YourSecretKey` with the Secret Key you set up in the previous step. If your host doesn't support `wget`, it might support the `curl` command. This is especially true for the SiteGround host, but also works for many other hosts. In this case, use the following command:

```
curl -b /tmp/cookies.txt -c /tmp/cookies.txt -L --max-redirs 1000 -v  
"http://www.yoursite.com/index.php?option=com_akeeba&view=backup&key=YourSecretKey&format=
```

This command also goes in a single line.

If nothing of this works, please consult your host about the proper way to schedule calling a web page with redirects on their servers. You may also want to browse through our User's Guide for more information and workarounds.

Chapter 4. Moving the backup off-site

Storing your backup archives on your site is as secure as photocopying all your personal documents and storing them in a carton box under your bed. It's easy for a thief to find them and misuse them and, more importantly, you don't protect them in case of a fire or other disaster. Backups are like photocopies of your site. You need to keep them out of hackers' hands and somewhere safe so that you can restore your site should the unthinkable happens. Storing the backup archives off your site is the best approach. Akeeba Backup goes one step further and automates this process for you.

1. Use a cloud storage service

Note

This feature is only available in the Akeeba Backup Professional release, distributed for a fee.

While the backup to email feature is good for small sites, if you have a larger site it simply won't cut it. Luckily, there is an abundance of cloud storage services, i.e. commercial offerings from companies which will host your files privately and securely on their servers. Akeeba Backup Professional currently integrates with RackSpace CloudFiles, DropBox, Box.net, Amazon S3, Microsoft Windows Azure BLOB Storage and also offers the ability to upload the archives on remote FTP servers. The list is going to greatly expand in the future. In this example, we'll be using Amazon S3.

If you were using Akeeba Backup 3.0.x or 3.1.x please note that since Akeeba Backup 3.2, the Amazon S3 engine is capable of performing multipart uploads, i.e. it will upload each backup archive part in 5Mb parts, ensuring that the network speed won't cause a timeout during file uploads. All you have to do is configure the cloud storage integration. In order to do that, first click the Configuration button in the component's Control Panel. Then, find the Data processing engine setting and select the Upload to Amazon S3 option. Then, click the Configure... button next to it. A new pane with settings opens right below.

The Process each part immediately will try to send you each backup part as soon as it's ready, making backing up a site with only a little free space left possible. If left unchecked, all backup parts will be sent to you at the finalization stage of the backup (recommended). The Delete archive after processing will instruct Akeeba Backup to erase the backup archive from the server as soon as it's sent to you. This is a good security practice and we feel you should turn it on. The rest of the options per data processing engine are detailed in the full documentation, our User's Guide, which is both available in the Documentation section of our site for on-line reading, as well as a PDF download for off-line reading.

Important

Akeeba Backup relies on your host being able to transfer data to the external cloud storage server. You first have to make sure that your server has the curl PHP module installed and enabled. Moreover, if the process fails, you may need to talk with your host so that they can open ports 80 and 443 to the cloud storage service's endpoint. In the case of Amazon S3 that's `s3.amazonaws.com`.

Tip

Akeeba Backup Professional includes support for a wealth of cloud storage services besides Amazon S3 — such as CloudFiles, Microsoft Azure, DropBox, Box.net, remote FTP servers— and the list is growing bigger with every release.

Chapter 5. Restoring your backups

There is an old mantra in the computing world: a backup not tested is not a backup. We strongly believe that you should routinely test restore some of your backups on a local server, at least every time you upgrade Joomla! or one of its components. This will not only ensure that your backup is valid, but will also give you confidence that you can restore your site should the unthinkable happen. For the purposes of this guide we will assume that you are using a Windows™ computer, but links are provided for the necessary software on the popular Linux™ and Mac OS X™ operating systems.

Do note that the restoration procedure is nearly identical no matter if you are restoring on a local or a live server. All Akeeba Backup archives are produced in a way which makes it possible to restore them on any host, not just the one you backed up from. As a matter of fact, template companies like JoomlaXTC and Magic Themes are using our software to distribute their all-in-one packages (Joomla! with a preinstalled template), thanks to this property of the Akeeba Backup archives.

1. Preparing a local server

Most of the software written for Joomla! 1.6 and later versions require PHP 5.3 or later, therefore it should be able to restore correctly on any modern pre-packaged server like XAMPP, MAMP and so on. If unsure, please ask the developers of all of your extensions (components, modules, plugins and **templates**). Our software compatibility can be found in our Version Compatibility matrix [<https://www.akeebabackup.com/compatibility.html>].

2. What you need before beginning

A. A method to extract the backup archive

In theory, all you need to restore your site is your backup archive! The backup archive contains everything you need: the files, a copy of the database and the restoration script which automatically reconfigures the base Joomla! site to use the new server environment. However, in order to restore the backup archive you need to extract it. There are three different ways to do that.

OPTION 1: For starters, if you are using the ZIP file format you should be able to extract the archive using your favorite archive manager application. Do note that some popular free archive managers implementing the InfoZIP library —such as 7-zip and Linux' “unzip”— cannot handle split archives and will mistakenly report them as corrupt! We recommend using a tool such as WinZIP, or PKZIP for Windows. Once you extract the files, just move them to the site where they will be restored and access the installation script as <http://www.yourdomain.com/installation/index.php> and then consult the “Using the restoration script (ABI)” section of this Quick Start Guide.

OPTION 2: If you are using the JPA or JPS formats, or if you are using the ZIP format but don't have access to a compatible archive extraction utility, we have a solution for you. Our free Akeeba eXtract Wizard is available for Windows, Linux (32 and 64 bits) and Mac OS X and will extract the backup archives locally, just like any other archive extraction utility. The rest of the process is the same as the previous case. You can download it free of charge from our website.

OPTION 3 (recommended): Finally, you may want to use our Akeeba Kickstart archive extraction script. Kickstart is a single PHP file which allows extracting a backup archive directly on the server. Since you transfer only a single bulky archive and a small PHP file to your server, it cuts down the upload time by up to 50%. Kickstart is smart enough to give you direct links to the installation script of the extracted archive, as well as clean up after the restoration is over. It's so neatly integrated with the rest of the Akeeba Backup restoration process that many people still confuse it as a restoration script when it's nothing but an archive extraction tool which runs on your server instead of your desktop.

Tip

If you are a subscriber to AKEEBAPRO or AKEEBADELUXE, you can use Akeeba Kickstart Professional instead of the plain old Akeeba Kickstart Core. The main difference is that Akeeba Kickstart Professional allows you to import files directly from Amazon S3, without having to download them to your PC and upload them back to your site. Kickstart handles the download from Amazon S3 to your site, saving you time. One more reason to go professional if you haven't done already!

Important

You are advised against restoring on top of an existing site of a different Joomla! version family. A Joomla! version family is denoted by the first two numbers of its full version number. To make it more clear with an example, the Joomla! version family of Joomla! 2.5.14 is 2.5. Restoring a backup on top of a site with a different Joomla! version family will render your site unusable. For example, restoring a Joomla! 2.5 site on top of a Joomla! 3.x site (or vice versa) will usually make it impossible to log in to the restored site.

We strongly recommend restoring on an empty space (all files and folders deleted before starting the restoration) or –if you are sure you know what you're doing– restore on top of a site of the same Joomla! version family.

This is not a limitation of our software. It's how Joomla! is designed to work. Newer versions of Joomla! will remove or move around certain files. If the old files are still present they take precedence in the load order, causing old code to be loaded and leading to operational failure of your site. Our archive extraction and restoration scripts are designed NOT to delete any files or folders. We've found that deleting files and folders usually has catastrophic effects on poor quality hosts (the majority of hosts out there) and in case of human error (e.g. restoring a partial backup on top of a live site – oops, all your content is instantly gone).

B. A database for your site

Before you begin the extraction process you will also need to create a database for your site's data, or note down the connection information to an existing database if you are installing on top of an existing site. You can skip this step if and only if you are restoring to the same site as the one you backed up, i.e. you are replacing the site with a backup. In all other cases you will need the following information:

- Database host name. This is usually `localhost`, but you may need to check with your host
- Database name. The name of the database you are restoring to. If you are on a host powered by cPanel or Plesk do note that the name of the database includes an account-specific prefix. If your account name is `foo` and the name of your database you asked to create is `bar`, the full database name is `foo_bar`.
- Database user name. The user name you use to connect to your database. The same thing about the naming prefix on cPanel and Plesk hosts is true for the username as well.
- Database user password.
- Your preferred table name prefix. This is not something your host will tell you, it's just a matter of your personal preference. The default database table prefix is `jos_`, but you may use anything you want. It's best to pick a name consisting of three to four letters and a single trailing underscore, i.e. `tst_` or `test_`. Do not use `bak_` as it is a reserved prefix for keeping copies of replaced tables when you select the Backup old tables option in the installer later in the process.

If your host gives you such an option—or if you are using a local server—it's a good idea to set the default collation of the database to `utf8_general_ci`. If you are not given such an option, don't worry. The installer can work around

this limitation with its Force UTF8 collation on tables option on MySQL databases. For other database types you have to specify the correct collation on the database when creating it.

3. Using Kickstart to extract your backup archive

In order to use Kickstart, begin by downloading Kickstart itself from our site. You will download a ZIP archive which you have to extract first. Inside it you will find `kickstart.php` and several INI files. You need to copy the PHP file into the root of the to be restored site. For example, if you are restoring on a subdirectory named `joomla` in the root of your XAMPP for Windows installation, you need to copy the file inside the `c:\xampp\htdocs\joomla` folder. Conversely, if you are restoring to a live host, upload the PHP file using FTP in your site's root.

The INI files in the Kickstart ZIP package are translations. Kickstart will query your browser's default language and look for the respective translation file. For example, if the default browser language is Greek (el-GR) Kickstart will try to load the `el-GR.kickstart.ini` file in order to present you with a localized interface. If you want to take advantage of Kickstart's localization copy the respective INI file in the same directory as the `kickstart.php` file.

The final step before being able to extract the archive is, well, copying the archive itself in the same directory as `kickstart.php`. If you have a multi-part archive remember to upload all of the archive parts, otherwise the extraction will, of course, fail. Moreover, if you are restoring to a live server please upload the backup archive and all of its parts using the Binary transfer mode. We suggest using FileZilla to do that. As soon as you connect to your site and right before uploading any files click on the Transfer, Transfer Type, Binary menu item. This will ensure that the backup parts will not be corrupted during transfer.

Note

Special note for most shared live hosts

If you are restoring on a shared live server which doesn't use suPHP (the majority of live servers) you may need to use Kickstart's FTP mode if and only if the Directly mode (default) doesn't work. In this case, creating a temporary directory is necessary. First make sure that your site's root directory has 0755 permissions. If unsure, ask your host. Then, create a directory named `kicktemp` inside the directory `kickstart.php` is in and give it 0777 permissions. Remember to remove this directory as soon as you are done restoring your site, for security reasons!

Once you're ready with the preparation, launch Kickstart by visiting its URL which looks like `http://localhost/mysite/kickstart.php` on local hosts, or `http://www.yoursite.com/kickstart.php` on live hosts.

The first page is a reminder of key facts about Kickstart:

Kickstart's first page

After reading it, press ESC to close the information window and display the main interface:

Kickstart's main interface

In the first step, select your backup archive file. Usually, there is only one file and it is pre-selected for you. In the second step, you have to choose an extraction method. The Directly method is the fastest and should work on all local

and most live hosts. If you get error messages about unwritable files in later steps, you'll have to use the Use FTP mode here.

If you are using the FTP mode, a new pane with the FTP-specific options opens below with the following options:

Kickstart's FTP Options

FTP host name	Use the domain name to access your site's FTP server. Do not prefix the domain name with protocol! For example, <code>ftp.example.com</code> is correct whereas <code>ftp://ftp.example.com</code> is WRONG.
FTP Port	Leave the default value (21) unless your host tells you otherwise. Do note that Kickstart only supports plain FTP and FTP over SSL connections, but not SFTP. If your host tells you to use port 22 – which is used only by SFTP – it won't work.
Use FTP over SSL (FTPS)	Use only if your host tells you it is supported. FTPS is not the same as SFTP, do not confuse those two!
Use FTP Passive Mode	It's a good idea to turn it on, as most servers require it. If your host told you they require active mode, uncheck this option.
FTP user name and password	What they claim to be, the user name and password to connect to your site's FTP server
FTP directory	The absolute FTP path to your site's root. The easiest way to find it is using FileZilla to connect to your site and navigate to your site's root, which is usually a directory named <code>htdocs</code> , <code>httpdocs</code> , <code>http_docs</code> , <code>public_html</code> or <code>www</code> . Look at the right hand pane, above the folder tree (Remote site text box). This is what you want. Copy it and paste it in Kickstart's FTP directory box.
Temporary directory	If you followed the steps above, you have already created a <code>kicktemp</code> directory with 0777 permissions. If not, do it now. After that, just append <code>/kicktemp</code> to the Temporary Directory box.

Click on Test FTP connection before proceeding to make sure that Kickstart can connect to your site through FTP before proceeding.

You can leave the other settings as they are and click on the big green Start button. Kickstart will start extracting your site's files:

Extraction progress

If you get an “Unwritable file” error message, go back and enable the Use FTP option before re-trying extraction. If all else fails, extract the archive locally and upload the extracted files to your site by FTP.

If you get an error message that the archive is corrupt, you have to check two things. First, make sure that you have uploaded all archive parts. In a multi-part archive situation, there is the main .jpa, .jps or .zip file and several “part files” with the same name as the main file but with extensions like .zip, .z01, .z02, etc (ZIP) or .jpa/.jps, .j01, .j02, etc (JPA/JPS). You have to upload all of those files for the extraction to work.

The other think you must check is how you downloaded and uploaded the backup archives. As mentioned in "The recommended method" section, you should use FTP in Binary transfer mode. This holds true for uploads as well. Try uploading the backup archive again, using FTP in Binary Transfer mode and retry. This usually does the trick.

The blue bar fills up while your site files are being extracted. When the extraction is over, Kickstart offers you a link to open the restoration script which was included in your archive file and is just extracted to your site:

Extraction finished

Click on this button and start reading the next chapter, detailing the use of the restoration script. Do not close Kickstart's window/tab yet! You will need it to clean up after the restoration is over.

Note

Kickstart extracts the `.htaccess` and `php.ini` files in your site's root (if they exist in the backup archive) as `htaccess.bak` and `php.ini.bak` respectively to avoid any incompatibilities during site restoration. Do note that these files are restored to their original names during the last step of the restoration procedure. Should you use Kickstart just for extracting your site's files, please keep this information in mind as you will have to rename those files manually.

4. Using the legacy Akeeba Backup Installer (ABI) restoration script

Akeeba Backup Installer (ABI) was the default backup restoration script in Akeeba Backup 3.0 up to and including Akeeba Backup 3.7.4. Newer versions of Akeeba Backup will instead include the newer Akeeba Next Generation Installer Engine (ANGIE) installation script. If your screen looks completely different to the screenshots in this section please read the section on ANGIE instead.

4.1. Accessing ABI

Accessing the restoration script (Akeeba Backup Installer, or ABI for short) can be accomplished with two different ways. If you are using Kickstart, simply click the Run the Installer button as soon as Kickstart finished extracting your site's files. If you are not using Kickstart, you can access the restoration script by typing `http://www.example.com/installation/index.php` in your browser's address bar, substituting `www.example.com` with your site's domain name. If you don't see anything on the page (blank page), or get a page full of strange errors, take a look at this troubleshooting page [<https://www.akeebabackup.com/documentation/troubleshooter/abiphperrors.html>].

Since Akeeba Backup 3.3.4, each page of Akeeba Backup Installer has a link back to the relevant section of this Quick Start Guide. If you ever feel that you got lost, you can click on the link at the top of the page to come back here for reference.

4.2. The System Check Page

The first page you see is ABI's welcome and basic system check page:

If any of the settings under the Required Settings header is red, most probably the restoration will fail, or Joomla! will not run properly. Several users have reported that even when the MB language is default is set to No your site does get restored and does work properly. Take this reported success with a grain of salt, as the Joomla! project recommends otherwise and continue the restoration at your own risk.

You can click on the Optional Settings to view a series of settings and their recommended values. If any of those values is in red, your site will be restored and will most likely work without a problem. It is common to have 2-4 red

items on most commercial hosts and we can attest that Joomla! works just fine on them. If you want more information about that, please take a look at our relevant troubleshooting page [<https://www.akeebabackup.com/documentation/troubleshooter/abiredsettings.html>].

Note

If you see a message that your session save path and your installation directory are both unwritable, you may need to give the installation directory 0755 or 0777 permissions using your favorite FTP client, e.g. FileZilla, then reload the installer's page in your browser. If reloading ends up in a blank page or a "500 Internal Server Error" page, change the permissions back to 0755. If reloading ends up displaying the same message, or if you had to revert the permissions to 0755, try clicking on the Next button anyway. If it throws the error message "Database definitions not found", please contact your host and ask him to fix the PHP session save path so that it's writable by your account.

For more information, please read our troubleshooter page [<https://www.akeebabackup.com/documentation/troubleshooter/abisession.html>].

When you're ready, please click on the Next button to proceed to the database setup page.

4.3. The database restoration page

If Akeeba Backup detects that you are restoring the backup to a new site, it will present you with a warning dialog:

This doesn't mean there is a problem. On the contrary! As the dialog reads, the database connection information Akeeba Backup Installer "remembers" are those of the old site. Click on "Yes" to clear all the database connection information and let you specify new information.

Important

If you are restoring to a new site -even if it is a dev subdomain- you **MUST** create a new database before the restoration. Akeeba Backup Installer can not do that for you. It's not that we didn't think of it (the code is there, if you take a look), it's that on most server environments you don't have adequate database server permissions to create a new database. For detailed instructions on creating new databases, take a look at the relevant page of our Troubleshooting Wizard [<https://www.akeebabackup.com/documentation/troubleshooter/abidatabase.html>].

The first thing you see in the database restoration page is the Connection parameters pane. It is pre-populated with the connection settings of the site you backed up. If you are restoring to a different site, you must change it.

Start with the database type. It depends on your database server type. If you're using a MySQL database this option should usually be `mysqli`. Just leave the default option and move on. If the database restoration fails, try toggling between the `mysql` and `mysqli` options. The rest of the connection options are those mentioned in the "What you need before beginning" chapter.

Warning

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO RESTORE TO A DIFFERENT DATABASE TECHNOLOGY. IT WILL NOT WORK, IT IS NOT SUPPOSED TO WORK AND IT CANNOT BE MADE TO WORK. For example if you took a backup from a site using a MySQL database you **CANNOT** restore this database on a PostgreSQL, Microsoft SQL Server or Windows Azure SQL database.

For your information: the structure of tables is extremely different between different database server technologies. There is no one-to-one correspondence between the structures among two different database server

technologies. As a result the conversion process is a very manual and tedious job which involves a lot of trial and error and knowing the code which is going to be using this database. To give you an idea, converting the tiny and easy database structure of Akeeba Backup to MS SQL Server and PostgreSQL took about 20 hours and involved making a lot of changes to our code to cater for the new databases. That was the preparatory BEFORE we started working on the actual database backup code. This is something which cannot be automated.

The other available options you need to set are:

- Database server host name. The MySQL server host name. Usually it's localhost, but you must ask your host for this setting, or consult your hosting account control panel, as this setting is usually displayed there.

Important

Despite what you think, `localhost` and `127.0.0.1` are two completely different things for PHP's MySQL drivers. It is possible -especially on a Mac OS X local or live server- that your database server does not connect when using `localhost`. Just use `127.0.0.1` and it will! I think that this will save you a lot of hair pulling if you're dealing with MAMP or ever try to test restore your site to a Mac.

- Username. The username of the database server user. Again, consult your host.
- Password. The password of the database server user. Again, consult your host.
- Database name. The actual name of the MySQL database you want to restore to. If you choose an existing database, existing tables will be overwritten by default. You may want to ask your host for the correct value of this setting.

After entering this information, go to the Advanced Options header:

The Existing tables option lets you decide what to do with tables which have the same name as those currently being restored. The default Drop existing tables option will delete same-named tables without asking. The Backup existing tables option will keep a copy of those tables, changing their name prefix to `bak_`, i.e. an existing `jos_users` table will be renamed to `bak_users`. Existing `bak_` tables will be deleted before the rename.

The Database tables prefix is up to your liking. For security purposes it's best to not leave the Joomla! default prefix (`jos_`). Ideally, you should use three to four letters followed by an underscore, e.g. `tst_` or `test_`.

Next up, we have the Fine-tuning header:

Suppress Foreign Key checks while restoring allows you to restore cross-linked tables without MySQL errors. Leave it on. Use REPLACE instead of INSERT may be required if you keep getting MySQL errors about rows already existing in your tables. Force UTF8 collation on tables should be enabled on all sites which use non-ASCII characters in their contents, e.g. accented Latin characters, German umlauts, Cyrillic, Greek, Chinese or any other characters which are not normally used in the English language. If unsure, make sure it's checked.

The other setting (Maximum execution time) should be left at its default values unless you get AJAX or timeout errors while ABI is restoring your database. In this case, try setting it to 3, 2 or even 1. This will slow down the restoration a bit, but it will make it more resilient to timeout issues.

When you're ready with all those settings, click on the Next button on the top right corner of the installer page to start restoring your database. The restoration dialog appears:

While your database is restoring, you will see the progress bar filling up and the information line below informing you of the processed and total size of the database dump file. Should an error occur, you can close the dialog, modify the settings and retry by clicking the Next button again. If you feel a little lost, you can check out our troubleshooting

instructions [<https://www.akeebabackup.com/documentation/troubleshooter/abidatabase.html>]. Once the restoration is over, the OK button appears. Just click on it. If you have more databases to restore (only backups made with the Professional version, using the Multiple Database Definitions feature of Akeeba Backup Professional) you will see the database setup page again, but the header will read the name of the extra database instead of Site's main database. If you don't have extra databases to restore, upon clicking OK you will be taken to the Site Information page. If you don't see that page, maybe you want to take a look at this troubleshooting page [<https://www.akeebabackup.com/documentation/troubleshooter/abiafterdb.html>].

4.4. The Site Information page

The Site Information page consists of four panes which can be used to optionally modify details of your restored site. It's not mandatory to go through its options if you are restoring on top of the same site you backed up from. All of the information in this page is pre-populated with the values read from the configuration.php file which was present in your backup archive's root.

The first pane is called Site Parameters and contains the most basic options for your site:

The Site Name is the name of the restored Joomla! site which appears throughout the Joomla! application. The Site e-mail address is the e-mail address from which all e-mail sent out from your site will appear to originate from. Similarly, the Site e-mail sender name is the sender's name appearing in those e-mails' From field.

The Live site URL is optional and normally not required on the vast majority of hosts. If your site doesn't seem to work properly – e.g. missing pictures, all links resulting in 404 errors, etc – you may want to fill in your site's URL, for example `http://www.example.com` (include the `http://` part, but not a trailing slash or `index.php!`).

If you have a site based on Joomla! 1.6 or later you will also see two more settings here regarding cookies. Under normal circumstances, both of them should be left empty. You only need to edit them if they are not blank and you are transferring your site to a different directory or domain name. The Cookie domain is the domain name of your site, without the protocol and, usually, without the `www` part. For example, if you are restoring to `http://www.example.com`, the Cookie domain is `example.com` (I will stress that again: there is NO `http://` in there!!). The Cookie path is the subdirectory of your site, relative to the domain's root. If you are restoring to the root of a domain, e.g. `http://www.example.com`, then it is `/` (a single forward slash). If you are restoring to a subdirectory it's a slash followed by the directory's name. For example, if you're restoring to `http://www.example.com/joomla` then the Cookie path is `/joomla` (WITH a leading slash, but WITHOUT a trailing slash).

Warning

If the Cookie domain and/or Cookie path settings are non-empty and do not correspond to the location (domain name and directory) you are restoring your site to, **YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO LOG IN** in the front- or the back-end of your site. On most servers you can just leave them blank (strongly recommended). Be advised that if you request support for this issue you will be ignored because there is nothing we can support you with; you are simply entering the wrong values in these fields. You have to either retry the restoration or edit your configuration.php file and modify the `cookie_domain` and `cookie_path` parameters.

The Override tmp and log paths is a handy feature if you are restoring to a subdomain or subdirectory of the site you backed up from. It will force the paths to the `tmp` and `log` directories to point inside the restored site's `tmp` and `log` directory respectively. If you don't check this box, it is possible that the restored site will reference the old site's `tmp` and `log` paths, potentially causing issues in the long run. As a rule of thumb: always check this option unless you know what you are doing!

The next pane, dubbed FTP Options, contains the necessary settings for enabling Joomla!'s FTP layer:

The Enable the FTP layer will activate Joomla!'s FTP layer, which forces the Joomla! core and several conforming extensions to write to your site's files using FTP instead of direct file access through PHP. This is designed to work around permissions issues with the majority of shared hosts. If you had to use Kickstart's Use FTP option or if you uploaded the extracted files manually through FTP you must enable it and go through these settings, unless your host told you that they are using suPHP.

The rest of the FTP settings are exactly the same as those you had to fill in Kickstart:

Host name	Use the domain name to access your site's FTP server
Port	Leave the default value (21) unless your host tells you otherwise. Do note that Joomla! only supports plain FTP. If your host tells you to use port 22 – which is used only by SFTP – it won't work.
Username and password	What they claim to be, the user name and password to connect to your site's FTP server
Directory	The absolute FTP path to your site's root. The easiest way to find it is using FileZilla to connect to your site and navigate to your site's root, which is usually a directory named <code>htdocs</code> , <code>httpdocs</code> , <code>http_docs</code> , <code>public_html</code> or <code>www</code> . Look at the right hand pane, above the folder tree (Remote site text box). Copy it and paste it in the Directory box.

The second to final pane is the Super Administrator settings one:

In this pane you can change the details of one of the Super Administrators on your site. First, select the username of the Super Administrator you want to modify from the User name drop-down list. Then, simply type and retype the new password in the two fields below. The final field, E-mail address, is the e-mail address linked to that Super Administrator. Make sure the address you type in here is not used already used by another user of the site or you will be unable to reset your Super Administrator password if you forget it.

Important

This feature can change the password of exactly one Super Administrator account (the one selected in the drop-down box). Its reason of existence is to allow you to reset the Super Administrator password should you forget it or quite simply don't know it (e.g. restoring a client's site to a dev server).

Finally, we have the Fine-tuning pane with advanced settings meant for power users and site builders:

The two options you can modify are the Temporary Directory and Logs Directory paths. For your convenience, the absolute path to the site's root is displayed above. You should only need to use these fine-tuning parameters if you want to place the `tmp` and `log` directories outside your site's root. Both of them must be absolute paths. For your convenience the absolute path to the site's root is printed above so that you can get them right every time.

Finally, click on the Next button to let the installer write your site's new `configuration.php` file and display the final page.

4.5. The “Finish” page

Normally, you should see a success message like this:

If ABI could not write to the `configuration.php` file, it will present you with a dialog box informing you of this fact. You can close the message by clicking on the "X" button on its top right corner. You can then copy the contents of

the text area and paste it into your `configuration.php` file - replacing any and all existing content - manually. This is only required if your `configuration.php` file was not writable in the first place. Under most circumstances this won't happen. Do note that if you get this message and you do not copy the text box's contents to the `configuration.php` file, your site will not work. You have been warned! **YOU MUST ABSOLUTELY AND WITHOUT QUESTION COPY THE TEXT BOX CONTENT INTO YOUR CONFIGURATION.PHP FILE.**

You now have three options to proceed, depending on how you extracted the backup archive.

If you used Kickstart to extract the backup archive, close the window/tab of the restoration script and return to Kickstart's window. You will see a big "Clean Up" button:

Just click on it and it will automatically remove the installation directory, the backup archive, `kickstart.php` and its translation files, as well as rename `htaccess.bak` to `.htaccess` and `php.ini.bak` to `php.ini` respectively. No further action is necessary. Your restored site is ready for use.

Important

If you had created a `kicktemp` directory for Kickstart's FTP mode to work properly, you must remove it manually with your FTP client application. Kickstart will not do that automatically.

If you were not using Kickstart, you can try clicking on the Remove the installation directory link to have ABI try to remove the installation directory automatically. If it succeeds, it will present you with a success dialog:

Just click on the OK button to visit your site's front page. However, if you used Kickstart to extract your files and clicked on this link accidentally instead of using Kickstart's Clean Up button you need to manually rename `htaccess.bak` to `.htaccess` and `php.ini.bak` to `php.ini`, as well as remove the archive file, `kickstart.php` file and all its INI files and the `kicktemp` directory (if one is present) manually.

If you uploaded the extracted files manually, you must remove the installation directory from your site using your FTP client application before visiting your restored site. If you don't, the restoration page will appear again. In this case do not run the restoration again. Just remove the installation directory through FTP and retry visiting your site.

5. Using the new Akeeba Next Generation Installer Engine (ANGIE) restoration script

Akeeba Next Generation Installer Engine (ANGIE) is the installation script included by default with all backups taken with Akeeba Backup 3.7.4 or newer, unless you specified otherwise. If your screen looks completely different to the screenshots in this section please read the section on ABI instead.

5.1. Accessing ANGIE

Accessing the restoration script (ANGIE) can be accomplished with two different ways. If you are using Kickstart, simply click the Run the Installer button as soon as Kickstart finished extracting your site's files. If you are not using Kickstart, you can access the restoration script by typing `http://www.example.com/installation/index.php` in your browser's address bar, substituting `www.example.com` with your site's domain name. If you don't see anything on the page (blank page), or get a page full of strange errors, take a look at this troubleshooting page [<https://www.akeebabackup.com/documentation/troubleshooter/abiphperors.html>].

Each page of ANGIE has a link back to the relevant section of this Quick Start Guide. If you ever feel that you got lost, you can click on the link at the top of the page to come back here for reference.

5.2. The session fix page

Important

This is an optional page and you may not ever see it during your site's restoration. Read below for more information on when it is shown.

In order for ANGIE to work it needs to be able some temporary data between page loads. This data is stored in files inside the `installation/tmp` directory of your site during the restoration. Depending on your server and the way you extracted the backup archive this directory may end up being unwritable for PHP and, of course, ANGIE itself. The easiest way to work around it is giving this directory 0777 permissions using your favourite FTP programme. We have, however, found out that many of our users feel lost when they are told they have to change permissions. As a result we have made ANGIE very smart and capable of fixing this problem by itself, as long as you give it your FTP connection information first. Therefore, in case that this problem is detected, you will see the following page:

You have to provide the following settings:

Host name	Use the domain name to access your site's FTP server
Port	Leave the default value (21) unless your host tells you otherwise. Do note that Joomla! only supports plain FTP. If your host tells you to use port 22 – which is used only by SFTP – it won't work.
Username and password	What they claim to be, the user name and password to connect to your site's FTP server
Directory	The absolute FTP path to your site's root. The easiest way to find it is using FileZilla to connect to your site and navigate to your site's root, which is usually a directory named <code>htdocs</code> , <code>http-docs</code> , <code>http_docs</code> , <code>public_html</code> or <code>www</code> . Look at the right hand pane, above the folder tree (Remote site text box). Copy it and paste it in the Directory box.

Tip

You can instead fill in all of the other information, leave this field blank and click on the Browse button next to it. If your FTP information is correct a popup directory browser appears. You can now browse to the site root directory. It's the one where you can see your site's `installation`, `includes` and `libraries` directories. Once you're in there click on the Use this button.

Then click on the Apply changes button. If all of the FTP connection information is correct, PHP can connect to your site by FTP and your FTP server allows changing permissions you will see the main page of ANGIE. Otherwise you will see the session fix page again. In this relatively rare (less than 5% of servers out there, according to our experience) case you will have to change the permissions of the `installation/tmp` directory manually.

5.3. The password page

Important

This is an optional page and you may not ever see it during your site's restoration. Read below for more information on when it is shown.

Your backup contains all of the database connection information and, sometimes, the FTP connection information as well. This means that anyone who has access to the backup restoration script over the web can learn this information. This is a security risk. While Kickstart allows you to use Stealth Mode (which locks the site for everyone except your

own IP address) this only works on servers using the Apache web server. With alternative web server software such as IIS, NginX, Litespeed and Lighttpd becoming more popular this doesn't cut it any more.

This is why we added support for password protection to ANGIE. You can enable it in Akeeba Backup, in the Configuration page of the component. You also get the chance to override that password when taking a backup from the back-end of your site, by providing it your desired password to the "ANGIE password" field in the Backup Now page. The password is stored in the backup archive encrypted, making it more difficult to be accidentally exposed to a hacker.

If you have specified a password for ANGIE you will see the ANGIE password page when you launch it. Just provide your password and ANGIE will show its main page. If the password is incorrect you will be shown the password page again.

Important

Just like with passwords on most web sites and devices you may have used, ANGIE passwords are case sensitive. This means that ABC, abc and Abc are three different passwords.

5.4. The main page

First you see ANGIE's initialisation page:

At this point ANGIE is performing system checks. If your browser gets stuck at this page please try disabling any browser plugins, firewalls and antivirus applications which might be interfering with the Javascript on the page. The most likely culprits we've seen are NoScript (a Firefox plugin which disables Javascript) and AVG Antivirus' "Link Checker" feature which ultimately breaks Javascript on most pages. If that doesn't help please try using a different computer, with a different browser and connected via a different ISP to the Internet. Sometimes computer policies, proxies and other network settings can interfere with web applications such as ANGIE or Joomla itself.

The next page you will see is the main system checks page:

If you are restoring to a different site or a server with a different PHP version than the one you backed up from you will see warnings in yellow background at the top of the page. Please note that the existence of these warnings doesn't mean that the restoration won't work. They are there to warn you to the fact that your restored site may or may not work in the new server because the server configuration may be different and some extension may not be compatible with it. It's the kind of information that is impossible to know before finishing the restoration.

If any of the settings under the Pre-installation check header is red, most probably the restoration will fail, or Joomla! will not run properly. Several users have reported that even when the MB language is default is set to No your site does get restored and does work properly. Take this reported success with a grain of salt, as the Joomla! project recommends otherwise and continue the restoration at your own risk. Please note that if any of these settings is shown in red you have to ask your host for support. Please do not ask us for support; we are not your host and we cannot change your server's configuration.

Recommended settings contains a series of optional settings and their recommended values. If any of those values is in orange, your site will be restored and will most likely work without a problem. It is common to have 2-4 orange items on most commercial hosts and we can attest that Joomla! works just fine on them. If you want more information about that, please take a look at our relevant troubleshooting page [<https://www.akeebabackup.com/documentation/troubleshooter/abiredsettings.html>].

Below these areas you can find two information sections. The Backup Information column shows you information about the site you backed up from. Please note that this is the information Akeeba Backup recorded while taking the backup and they are presented here for your information only. Next to it you will find the Site Information column. This shows information about the current site you are restoring to. This is shown for your information.

When you're ready, please click on the blue Next button in the upper right hand corner of the page to proceed to the database setup page.

5.5. The database restoration page

Important

If you are restoring to a new site -even if it is a subdomain or directory of the main site- you **MUST** create a new database before the restoration. ANGIE can not do that for you. It's not that we didn't think of it (the code is there, if you take a look), it's that on most server environments you don't have adequate database server permissions to create a new database. For detailed instructions on creating new databases, take a look at the relevant page of our Troubleshooting Wizard [<https://www.akeebabackup.com/documentation/troubleshooter/abidatabase.html>].

At the top of the page you see which database you are about to restore. The first database you will be restoring is the "site's main database" which means that it's the database Joomla! uses to store its data. If you had defined multiple databases you will be restoring one database after the other, but the "site's main database" is always the first one to restore. If you do not wish to restore a particular database you can click the orange Skip Restoration button in the top right hand corner of the page.

The first thing you see is the Connection information column in the left hand side of the page. It is pre-populated with the connection settings of the site you backed up. If you are restoring to a different site than the one you backed up from it will be blank, indicating that you must specify the correct connection information for the new server.

Start with the database type. It's usually `MySQLi` (with the "i" at the end), unless you have a server with an outdated PHP version or suboptimal server settings. The other option, `MySQL` (without the "i" at the end) is the old MySQL driver which is slower and was ultimately removed in PHP 5.5.0 released on June 2013. If you are restoring a site which was using a Microsoft SQL Server or Windows Azure SQL database you will instead see the options `SQL Server` and `Windows Azure SQL`. For PostgreSQL databases you need to select the `PostgreSQL` option. If you see no option then your new server is not compatible with the database technology which was being used by your site at backup time. That is to say that you cannot restore a site which was using MySQL on Microsoft SQL Server or PostgreSQL or vice versa; they are completely incompatible and a conversion between them is a lengthy and very difficult process which cannot be automated. Please remember this: **RESTORING SITES TO A DIFFERENT DATABASE SERVER TYPE IS NOT GOING TO WORK, IS NOT SUPPOSED TO WORK AND CANNOT BE MADE TO WORK.**

The other available options you need to set are:

- Database server host name. The database server host name. Usually it's localhost, but you must ask your host for this setting, or consult your hosting account control panel, as this setting is usually displayed there.

Important

Despite what you think, `localhost` and `127.0.0.1` are two completely different things for PHP's MySQL drivers. It is possible -especially on a Mac OS X local or live server- that your database server does not connect when using `localhost`. Just use `127.0.0.1` and it will! I think that this will save you a lot of hair pulling if you're dealing with MAMP or ever try to test restore your site to a Mac.

Note

If you are restoring on Microsoft SQL Server / Windows Azure SQL you must specify the server instance name (e.g. `.\SQLEXPRESS`) or the server's domain or IP address. Please consult your host.

- Username. The username of the database server user. Please consult your host.

- Password. The password of the database server user. Please consult your host.
- Database name. The actual name of the database you want to restore to. If you choose a database which already has tables in them, existing tables with the same name as the ones being restored will be overwritten (replaced) by default. You may want to ask your host for the correct value of this setting.

After entering this information, take a look at the the Advanced options column on the right hand side of the page.

The With existing tables option lets you decide what to do with tables which have the same name as those currently being restored. The default Drop option will delete same-named tables without asking. The Backup option will keep a copy of those tables, changing their name prefix to bak_, i.e. an existing abc_users table will be renamed to bak_users. Existing bak_ tables will be deleted before the rename.

The Database table name prefix is up to your liking. For security purposes it's best to not use the legacy Joomla! default prefix (jos_). Ideally, you should use three to four letters followed by an underscore, e.g. tst_ or test_.

Warning

Only use two to five lowercase letters a-z (without accents or diacritics) and numbers 0-9 followed by exactly one underscore. Anything else may cause restoration problems due to the way databases work on most operating systems.

The following options only apply to MySQL databases. They have no effect on SQL Server and Windows Azure SQL.

Suppress Foreign Key checks allows you to restore cross-linked tables without MySQL errors. Leave it on. Use REPLACE instead of INSERT may be required if you keep getting MySQL errors about rows already existing in your tables. Force UTF-8 collation on database and Force UTF-8 collation on tables should be enabled on all sites which use non-ASCII characters in their contents, e.g. accented Latin characters, German umlauts, Cyrillic, Greek, Chinese or any other characters which are not normally used in the English language. If unsure, make sure it's checked.

Important

Not all of these options are supported on all databases:

- Suppress Foreign Key checks while restoring does not work on PostgreSQL.
- Use REPLACE instead of INSERT only works on MySQL and MySQLi.
- Force UTF8 collation on tables only works on MySQL and MySQLi.

Where not supported these options will do nothing when selected.

You will find the Fine Tuning area towards the bottom. The setting Maximum execution time should be left at its default values unless you get AJAX or timeout errors while ABI is restoring your database. In this case, try setting it to 3, 2 or even 1. This will slow down the restoration a bit, but it will make it more resilient to timeout issues. The Throttle time (msec) should be left at 250 unless you are told by our support staff to change it.

When you're ready with all those settings, click on the Next button on the top right corner of the installer page to start restoring your database. The restoration dialog appears:

While your database is restoring, you will see the progress bar filling up and the information line below informing you of the processed and total size of the database dump file. The estimated time left is a very rough approximate. Should an error occur, you can close the dialog, modify the settings and retry by clicking the Next button again. If you feel a little lost, you can check out our troubleshooting instructions [<https://www.akeebabackup.com/documentation/troubleshooter/abidatabase.html>]. Once the restoration is over, the Next step button appears:

Just click on it. If you have more databases to restore (only backups made with the Professional version, using the Multiple Database Definitions feature of Akeeba Backup Professional) you will see the database setup page again, but the header will read the name of the extra database instead of Site's main database. If you don't have extra databases to restore, upon clicking Next step you will be taken to the Site Setup page. If you don't see that page, maybe you want to take a look at this troubleshooting page [<https://www.akeebabackup.com/documentation/troubleshooter/abiafterdb.html>].

5.6. The site setup page

The Site Setup page consists of four areas which can be used to optionally modify details of your restored site. It's not mandatory to go through its options if you are restoring on top of the same site you backed up from. All of the information in this page is pre-populated with the values read from the configuration.php file which was present in your backup archive's root.

The first area is called Site Parameters and contains the most basic options for your site.

The Site Name is the name of the restored Joomla! site which appears throughout the Joomla! application. The Site e-mail address is the e-mail address from which all e-mail sent out from your site will appear to originate from. Similarly, the Site e-mail sender name is the sender's name appearing in those e-mails' From field.

The Live site URL is optional and normally not required on the vast majority of hosts. If your site doesn't seem to work properly – e.g. missing pictures, all links resulting in 404 errors, etc – you may want to fill in your site's URL, for example `http://www.example.com` (include the `http://` part, but not a trailing slash or `index.php!`).

You will also see two more settings here regarding cookies. Under normal circumstances, both of them should be left empty. You only need to edit them if they are not blank and you are transferring your site to a different directory or domain name. The Cookie domain is the domain name of your site, without the protocol and, usually, without the www part. For example, if you are restoring to `http://www.example.com`, the Cookie domain is `example.com` (I will stress that again: there is NO `http://` in there!!). The Cookie path is the subdirectory of your site, relative to the domain's root. If you are restoring to the root of a domain, e.g. `http://www.example.com`, then it is `/` (a single forward slash). If you are restoring to a subdirectory it's a slash followed by the directory's name. For example, if you're restoring to `http://www.example.com/joomla` then the Cookie path is `/joomla` (WITH a leading slash, but WITHOUT a trailing slash).

Warning

If the Cookie domain and/or Cookie path settings are non-empty and do not correspond to the location (domain name and directory) you are restoring your site to, **YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO LOG IN** in the front- or the back-end of your site. On most servers you can just leave them blank (strongly recommended). Be advised that if you request support for this issue you will be ignored because there is nothing we can support you with; you are simply entering the wrong values in these fields. You have to either retry the restoration or edit your configuration.php file and modify the `cookie_domain` and `cookie_path` parameters.

The Override tmp and log paths is a handy feature if you are restoring to a subdomain or subdirectory of the site you backed up from. It will force the paths to the `tmp` and `log` directories to point inside the restored site's `tmp` and `log` directory respectively. If you don't check this box, it is possible that the restored site will reference the old site's `tmp` and `log` paths, potentially causing issues in the long run. As a rule of thumb: always check this option unless you know what you are doing!

The next area, called FTP Layer Options, contains the necessary settings for enabling Joomla!'s FTP layer.

The Enable the FTP layer will activate Joomla!'s FTP layer, which forces the Joomla! core and several conforming extensions to write to your site's files using FTP instead of direct file access through PHP. This is designed to work

around permissions issues with the majority of shared hosts. If you had to use Kickstart's Use FTP option or if you uploaded the extracted files manually through FTP you must enable it and go through these settings, unless your host told you that they are using suPHP.

The rest of the FTP settings are exactly the same as those you had to fill in Kickstart:

Host name	Use the domain name to access your site's FTP server
Port	Leave the default value (21) unless your host tells you otherwise. Do note that Joomla! only supports plain FTP. If your host tells you to use port 22 – which is used only by SFTP – it won't work.
Username and password	What they claim to be, the user name and password to connect to your site's FTP server
Directory	The absolute FTP path to your site's root. The easiest way to find it is using FileZilla to connect to your site and navigate to your site's root, which is usually a directory named <code>htdocs</code> , <code>http-docs</code> , <code>http_docs</code> , <code>public_html</code> or <code>www</code> . Look at the right hand pane, above the folder tree (Remote site text box). Copy it and paste it in the Directory box.

Tip

You can instead fill in all of the other information, leave this field blank and click on the Browse button next to it. If your FTP information is correct a popup directory browser appears. You can now browse to the site root directory. It's the one where you can see your site's installation, includes and libraries directories. Once you're in there click on the Use this button.

The third area is the Super Administrator settings.

In this pane you can change the details of one of the Super Administrators on your site. First, select the username of the Super Administrator you want to modify from the User name drop-down list. Then, simply type and retype the new password in the two fields below. The final field, E-mail address, is the e-mail address linked to that Super Administrator. Make sure the address you type in here is not used already used by another user of the site or you will be unable to reset your Super Administrator password if you forget it.

Important

This feature can change the password of exactly one Super Administrator account (the one selected in the drop-down box). Its reason of existence is to allow you to reset the Super Administrator password should you forget it or quite simply don't know it (e.g. restoring a client's site to a dev server).

Finally, we have the Directories fine-tuning pane with advanced settings meant for power users and site builders.

The two options you can modify are the Temporary Directory and Log Directory paths. For your convenience, the absolute path to the site's root is displayed above. You should only need to use these fine-tuning parameters if you want to place the `tmp` and `log` directories outside your site's root. Both of them must be absolute paths. For your convenience the absolute path to the site's root is printed above so that you can get them right every time.

Finally, click on the Next button to let ANGIE write your site's new `configuration.php` file and display the final page.

5.7. The “Finished” page

Normally, you should see a success message like this:

If ANGIE could not write to the `configuration.php` file, it will present you with a dialog box informing you of this fact. You can close the message by clicking on the "X" button on its top right corner. You can then copy the contents of the text area and paste it into your `configuration.php` file - replacing any and all existing content - manually. This is only required if your `configuration.php` file was not writable in the first place. Under most circumstances this won't happen. Do note that if you get this message and you do not copy the text box's contents to the `configuration.php` file, your site will not work. You have been warned! **YOU MUST ABSOLUTELY AND WITHOUT QUESTION COPY THE TEXT BOX CONTENT INTO YOUR CONFIGURATION.PHP FILE.**

You now have three options to proceed, depending on how you extracted the backup archive.

If you used Kickstart to extract the backup archive, close the window/tab of the restoration script and return to Kickstart's window. You will see a big "Clean Up" button:

Just click on it and it will automatically remove the installation directory, the backup archive, `kickstart.php` and its translation files, as well as rename `htaccess.bak` to `.htaccess` and `php.ini.bak` to `php.ini` respectively. No further action is necessary. Your restored site is ready for use.

Important

If you had created a `kicktemp` directory for Kickstart's FTP mode to work properly, you must remove it manually with your FTP client application. Kickstart will not do that automatically.

If you were not using Kickstart, you can try clicking on the Remove the installation directory button to have ANGIE try to remove the installation directory automatically. If it succeeds, it will present you with a success dialog:

Just click on the Visit your site's front-end button to visit your site's front page. However, if you used Kickstart to extract your files and clicked on this link accidentally instead of using Kickstart's Clean Up button you need to manually rename `htaccess.bak` to `.htaccess` and `php.ini.bak` to `php.ini`, as well as remove the archive file, `kickstart.php` file and all its INI files and the `kicktemp` directory (if one is present) manually.

If you uploaded the extracted files manually, you must remove the installation directory from your site using your FTP client application before visiting your restored site. If you don't, the restoration page will appear again. In this case do not run the restoration again. Just remove the installation directory through FTP and retry visiting your site.

6. Dealing with post-restoration issues

We have compiled a nifty Post-Restoration Troubleshooting Guide [<https://www.akeebabackup.com/documentation/troubleshooter/post-restoration.html>]. According to our experience, 99% of all problems you might ever encounter can be solved by blindly following the guide's advice.

Chapter 6. Help! I am stuck!

If you get stuck and you can not find the solution yourself, you may use our support services.

If you are a subscriber to our AKEEBABACKUP, ESSENTIALS or DELUXE plans you are entitled to support by our team by filing a public or private support ticket. Just login and use the “Support” link on our site's front page. When you use a private ticket you may also give us your site's access details so that we can directly fix the problem on your server without lengthy exchange of communication. Support tickets are usually answered within minutes during office hours (GMT+2 timezone) and within a few hours outside office hours. The ticket system is closed on weekends and bank holidays. Please do not directly e-mail or request support by different means unless we ask you to as you will most likely receive no reply.