

Well, after ensuring that I continue to post regularly, I am climbing the ladder, so to speak, on my quest to be ranked #1 under the search phrase “ [best web designer in Canada](#) ”.

I hit spot #11 this morning, although I am still on page 2 of the search results, still not bad I think given that just 2 weeks ago I wasn't listed in the top 1,000 results.

To further my current blog discussion on website design, today I will discuss customizing [Joomla CMS](#) based sites.

As I designer I encounter websites built by other programmers, designers and individuals. Most of these sites have been really messed up as the creators attempt to rewrite Joomla to do what they want it to do. This would appear to be the simplest or traditional approach in website building, code, code, code.

This is not the way to build a Joomla CMS website. Joomla is a content management system, that handles this task in a very good way. In addition to this, it includes a framework, where extensions can be installed to extend what Joomla can do. Joomla or an extension can be "hacked" (meaning the the code is altered) to provide a desired change. This method of website development has the following negative long (and short term) effects:

- 1.

Other designers/programmers need to figure out what the original creator did, before they can make additions, changes or upgrades,

- 2.

Adding new extensions can have questionable results, especially if Joomla core presentation files have been modified,

- 3.

Updating Joomla and extensions can have questionable results. Joomla as well as all extensions are regularly updated to improve, fix bugs and address security issues. These updates can remove customized coding and cause websites to stop working,

4.

Coding costs more as the site owner is paying 100% of the website customization.

The proper way to customize a Joomla website is through the use of extensions. The following steps should be pursued when designing/building a website:

1.

In all cases, currently available extensions should be sought that addresses the web function requirement. Extensions may be found in the [Joomla JED](#) , as well as through searches with [Google](#)

,  
[Yahoo](#)

,  
[Answers](#)

or your favorite search provider. Should the extension design not blend with the site template, a new extension template should be created (where possible).

2.

Should an extension not be available that can be configured to suite the website requirement, an extension should be created that addresses the need, then released to the open-source community in return for using the Joomla CMS and other open-source extensions.

Every aspect of Joomla and extensions can be customized in this manner to produce the desired website look and operation. These steps eliminate the risk of core files being changed, add to the extensions available to the community and create a website that can be maintained and updated by anyone.

Knowing and following these steps in designing a website are some of the reasons that I should be listed as the [best web designer in Canada](#) .