

Ingo Renner

# TYPO3 4.2

## User Friendliness in Sight

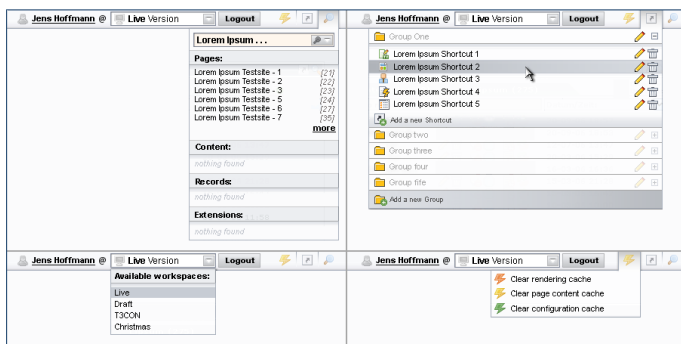
The development of TYPO3 4.2 continues after the release of the first alpha version at the beginning of September. The focus of the core developers is on the continued improvement and simplification of the backend. TYPO3 4.2 is not only interesting for users, the switch to PHP 5 is also very useful for developers

First of all TYPO3 will not offer any support for PHP 4; PHP 5.2 is a requirement for running the new version. Though TYPO3 has been runnable with PHP 5 since Version 4, now the change is being made permanently. TYPO3 was one of the first projects to join the GoPHP5 initiative [1], which promotes the conversion to PHP 5. In the meantime the PHP developers themselves have announced the end of PHP 4. Towards the end of the year they will wind up their support for PHP 4; errors critical to security will only be fixed until 8 August 2008.

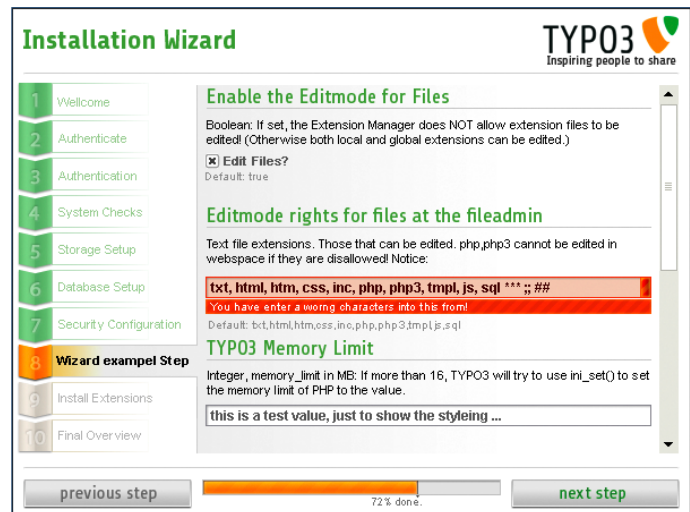
But TYPO3 users will not only have to farewell PHP 4; more demands are being made of MySQL. Thus TYPO3 4.2 needs a current version of MySQL 5 in order to be able to use its better UTF8 support. When TYPO3 4.2 is first installed the system is set to file saving in UTF8 format from the beginning. For established systems TYPO3 4.2 offers a corresponding upgrade path. With that complicated character set recoding and incorrect characters in the frontend and backend should become a thing of the past.

### Focus on User-friendliness

Since the 4.x branch already has an almost complete range of functions, future versions will concentrate primarily on improving user-friendliness. In doing so TYPO3 will come up with a technically new backend. The new backend not only comes with improvements to detail, but also looks different from the previous one. Several familiar elements will reappear in the same places. Thus, for example, the elements of the previous shortcut frame, the log-out button and the cache-emptying function will be moved to a toolbar in the top right-hand corner. This also contains an improved search function, which perspicuously groups its results. Shortcuts are contained in a menu, which also allows grouping. The combination of symbols and the described text will additionally facilitate the differentiation of similar shortcuts.



TYPO3 has a new toolbar which has menus for searching, shortcuts, workplace selection and caches.



The TYPO3 installer (here a draft is depicted) was thoroughly reworked in TYPO3 4.2 and now appears tidier and more appealing.

First of all the new TYPO3 backend will no longer be based on frames. Instead TYPO3 renders all elements directly into a central HTML document. Only the large content domain will be embedded as an 'iframe'. The menu will no longer be produced as a table, but as a semantically correct, un-ordered list. That will allow developers and administrators to easily change the menu with CSS; even a horizontal arrangement with drop-down menus at the top edge of the screen becomes thinkable.

The page tree now has a search box with which users can filter the tree. Pages that do not correspond to the search terms are rendered grey. That allows pages, especially those in large page trees, to be found more quickly. The drag and drop function for the moving of pages within the page tree was also improved; a line now shows the point at which the page was introduced.

TYPO3 4.2 comes with a completely reworked installer. This was not only created to be more user friendly and visually appealing, it can now take over the functions of the setup module. All the installer's setting options are indexed with tags; this allows settings to be easily found by means of an integrated search. The basic installation of a TYPO3 system continues to occur in three stages. In addition one can expand the installation with additional steps instead of having to contend with a long list of all options.

Workspaces, with which editors can work on pages without their changes immediately becoming visible live, have gained a long awaited function with TYPO3 4.2: pages and datasets can also be moved in the preview workspace. Previously this was only possible in the live workspace, which meant that changes immediately appeared on the website.

## Developer functions

New code for the TYPO3 core will in the future be developed exclusively in PHP 5 so that (along with much else) it will be able to use the advanced functions of object-oriented programming. The conversion to PHP 5 should also assist extension developers, since this will actively encourage object oriented programming in the community.

For the easier use of TYPOScript TYPO3 4.2 special editor will be integrated into the backend which supports syntax highlighting. TYPOScript objects and key words are highlighted in colour, which allows source texts to be better inspected and edited.

Since the first alpha versions of TYPO3 4.2 there has been a reworked frontend admin panel, which now also highlights objects that have gone over a set time limit for their calculation and release. Especially during the development of extensions or for the general analysis of page performance this can be useful.

## The future of TYPO3 4.x

According to the roadmap [2] the final version of TYPO3 should be complete by the end of January 2008. Until then all TYPO3 users are called upon to comprehensively test the alpha and beta versions and to register any errors in the bugtracker [3].

Many will ask themselves, especially after T3CON07 with its strong focus on TYPO3 5.0, how the development of TYPO3 4.x will continue. Are the developments made so far secure? Is it still worth developing for 4.x or is one better off waiting for 5.0?

The answer is actually quite simple: since TYPO3 is an established open source project, the development of Version 4.x will continue as long as there is interest on the part of the developers. The appearance of TYPO3 5.0 will have to wait one or two years and until then at least two or three more Version 4s will be released. But with the appearance of Version 5.0 the development of Version 4.0 will not come to an abrupt halt. Rather there will be a flowing transition to 5.0, during which the further development of 4.x through the preparation of the necessary infrastructure and support will be guaranteed by the core team.

## Links and Literature

 *Softlink 2005*

[1] GoPHP5 initiative: <http://gophp5.org>

[2] Roadmap: [http://wiki.typo3.org/index.php/Roadmap\\_for\\_4.2](http://wiki.typo3.org/index.php/Roadmap_for_4.2)

[3] TYPO3 bug tracker: <http://bugs.typo3.org>

### THE AUTHOR

Ingo Renner has been working with TYPO3 for four years. Early on he performed tasks in various teams such as the Content Rendering Group and the Kickstarter Team. His blog extension TIMTAB is also well known. He himself uses it under <http://www.ingo-renner.com> to blog about TYPO3. Since the beginning of 2007 he has been an official member of the Core Development Team and since the 2007 Developer Days has been the release manager for TYPO3 4.2. Alongside his work for TYPO3 he is active as a freelancer and is currently completing a Masters thesis on 'Collaborative Document Editing'.