

Nervous about updaters?

Running an updater on a live site – especially for the first time – can make any site owner nervous. Still, if done calm and following a system, this does not need to cause problems with the site or create unwanted results after the update. As a webmaster, I have to do multiple updates for my clients, each time ECT publishes an updater but so far have not found it complicated even for heavily modded or sites or those where I manually changed the core script.

It's necessary to have a good system, which will assure that the site will not be down for more than a couple of minutes, may this be for just one site or sites for several clients.

1. While setting up a site, maybe changing the code in the core script, adding mods, I take detailed notes of everything, which are stored on the computer and a hardcopy is filed in the client's binder.

These notes look similar to:

- a. Resizing imageuploader mod from xyz installed, incprods.php + incats.php will be overwritten with the next updater.
 - b. Digital download mode from xyz installed, will not be affected by updaters
 - c. File incproddetail.php changed on line 333 from
xxx yyy zzz to
zzz yyy xxx – will be overwritten with the next updater
 - d. Etc. etc. etc.
2. Before updating any site, I contact the persons from whom I have purchased mods that will be overwritten and request a date for the updated version.
 3. After receiving the necessary mods, my first step is **BACKING UP** the files from the previous version. For this I open a new folder on my computer called "pre-ver5-4-1" and I ftp the complete vsadmin folder from my server into this new folder. This will also make sure that I have an "old" version of the languagefile, which is needed and explained further down.
 4. Now – with the files on the server in "root" or "public_html", I simply upload the complete vsadmin folder from the updater. No need to open it.
 5. Next I upload emailfriend.php and updatestore.php to the root or public_html.
 6. Now I open <http://mysite.com> in a browser and add updatestore.php to it – this will allow me to run the updater, which will install all new tables in my database.

7. Without reinstalling mods and other manual changes to the code, I open my admin panel to verify that the number of the new version shows at the top of admin home.
8. My next step is to run test purchases, using the email option of :
 - a. A regular product
 - b. A product with options
 - c. A product for digital download (if the site supports this)
9. Once the test purchases have been checked (confirmation received by email, orders checked in the admin panel, inventory checked if stock management is enabled, I am ready to reinstall my mods and “personal hacks”

I install these one by one and test any functions that these mods or “personal hacks” should provide before installing the next one. This way, if something does not work, I will know exactly which of the mods or hacks caused the problem.

10. Now I download the NEW vsadmin files from the sever to my computer by simply overwriting the files.
 - a. vsadmin/includes.php and vsadmin/db_conn_open.php are **NEVER** overwritten by an updater. So our parameters and database connection will not change
 - b. languagefile.php and langugeadmin.php are part of each updater and will overwrite your personalized files – which still ARE in your backup (see 3.) In most cases nothing needs to be done for languageadmin.php
11. All new text in these files is added to the top, so merging the old and new ones is simple.
 - a. Open the “old” (from the backup folder) languagefile.php in your preferred text editor (do NOT use DW or FP).
 - b. Open the “new” (from the updater) languagefile.php in your preferred text editor (do NOT use DW or FP).
 - c. Search in the NEW file for the first line that shows in your OLD file, now highlight everything above this line and copy it to the “old” languagefile.php.
 - d. Now click in “save as” and save this modified languagefile.php to your vsadmin folder (not the backup folder).
 - e. Upload the modified languagefile.php to your server, make sure it goes into vsadmin/inc

As a final insurance – writing this took me longer than running an updater on a site with 3 – 4 mods that need to be reinstalled.