

2020 Vision - A Joomla Retrospective

By the time New Year's Day had come around the fires had already been raging for months. Joomla's birthplace in the land down under had been experiencing wildfires that were being described as [the worst wildlife disaster in modern history](#). While fires ravaged the landscape, Joomlaers were posting images of smoke-filled Australian cities and neighborhoods.

Half a world away, Europe was enthralled with [the drama of Brexit](#) and its implications for Europe and the rest of the global community. Surely these international dramas were to be the biggest news of 2020.

The world had survived Orwell's 1984. Y2K was still five years before Joomla was born and presented an existential threat at the dawn of the new millennium. The world did not end in 2012 as the Mayans had prophesied. After all these previous dire predictions, 2020 was to be nothing but optimism; a perfect vision of a better future.

It was over a decade ago that I first saw an organization use the clever metaphor of perfect eye sight as a way to set long term goals and to look forward to what felt like the next milestone year. I started seeing reports titled "Vision 2020" or something similar.

On an internal level, the Joomla community entered this milestone year with a more measured approach. In mid-January a significant number of stakeholders gathered in Spain at [the Forum for the Future](#). It was an opportunity to assess from where we had come as a project and where we are headed in four key areas. The conversations focused on Professionalism in an all-volunteer organisation, Volunteer Engagement, Marketing, and Technology.

The conversation around technology at the Forum laid the foundation for establishing the action plans that have us on the brink of Release Candidate status for Joomla 4. This major release has been years in the making, but the dedication of those involved and the plans discussed charted the course to the stable release. Thank you to [George Wilson](#) and [Marco Dings](#), the Joomla 4 Release Lead and Production Department Chairs respectively.

Many left the Forum energized and excited about continuing the momentum and the conversation. There was special enthusiasm for [JandBeyond originally scheduled for Lisbon, Portugal during the last week of May](#). In what felt like an alignment of the open source planets, [WordPress was hosting Wordcamp Europe in Porto just three days later](#). Two of the world's largest open source Content Management Systems were hosting major international conferences just days apart and within a 3 hour drive of each other.

However, something strange happened between Spain and Portugal. As many were headed home from the Forum for the Future, there were already warnings at international airports for special screenings for anyone coming from Wuhan province, China. COVID-19 was upon us.

In the coming months, travel restrictions were put in place, lockdowns were enforced, businesses closed, and technology conferences were cancelled or brought online. Open source organizations that had become accustomed to meeting in person to share ideas and build community were restricted to teleconferencing, online forums, and chatting remotely.

Joomla felt the full impact of all this. In what was to be the first of many such situations, JandBeyond took their conference virtual. The JandBeyond team did an exceptional job of running a worldwide, around the clock, 24 hour virtual conference. Speakers presented remotely with moderated question and answer sessions posted in chat. [Robert Deutz](#), [David Jardin](#), and the whole JandBeyond team set the example for how to successfully pivot to the virtual conference format. It allowed the Joomla community to stay connected and enthusiastic about moving forward in spite of all the restrictions presented by the first few months of the COVID pandemic.

In the coming months, [Djamel Kherbi](#) and other members of [the events department](#) made efforts to assist Joomla User Groups into moving gatherings online. The Educational Outreach Working Group was re-established with new leadership from [Todd Woodward](#) and [SD Williams](#). This was all a reflection of the action plans developed at the Forum for the Future being well-executed.

While the world was in various stages of lockdown Joomla volunteers the world over were finding ways to accelerate production and improve volunteer engagement.

While all of the above played out in the first half of the year, several incidents of police violence in the United States unleashed massive protests in major cities across the globe that were focused on issues of race and the criminal justice system. The protests resulted in dozens of additional deaths, over 14,000 arrests, and hundreds of millions of dollars in damage. Competing political agendas, slogans, and organizations were calling for public statements from anyone with a following.

[As an organization founded on principles of equality, freedom, trust, and community](#), Joomla found itself in a strange position. The world was demanding hashtags and bumper sticker slogans around values that Joomla had been working to embody for the last 15 years. Dozens of [leaders within the Joomla community came together to share in a statement](#) that spoke to the immediacy of the moment. It also speaks to the enduring values of our community.

2020 was a year of incredible turmoil. It presented external challenges to everyone. In the meantime, there was a need to continue to focus on the internal needs of our community and how it can function most effectively.

The later half of the year saw exceptional efforts in a rebooted Marketing Department under the leadership of [Marianela Queme](#). There have been new and renewed efforts in Education and Volunteer Engagement coming off the Forum for the Future with huge thanks to [Jaz Parkyn](#) and everyone working within the Programs Department. And, there has been strong effort from [Hugh Douglas-Smith](#) heading the legal and finance department to provide greater clarity and

presence for an area that had an extended period of turnover and vacancy prior to his taking the role. Those efforts have greatly improved Joomla's sponsorship relationships leading into 2021.

Capturing the events of 2020 for the Joomla community, I am struck by the contrast of the external turmoil of the world around us and the quiet, methodical, internal workings of our volunteers. There is a voice within Joomla that says over and over again that the world is a better place when people are engaged and able to share life and work "all together." This ethos has been with us since the beginning, but I feel as though 2020 has encouraged us to appreciate and embrace it with greater depth and meaning.

While the world continues to catch its breath from a year of natural disaster, political unrest, racial tension, and global pandemic, Joomla as a community looks forward to 2021. Togetherness is the new flavor of the month for many businesses and organizations trying to make sense of everything. For Joomla, togetherness is not a marketing campaign, it is who we are.

I look forward with great anticipation to seeing how Joomla will meet the triumphs and challenges of 2021 - all together.