

# Case Study

## Canada Company Switches Their Web Content Management System from Joomla to Cascade Server

### Key Points

- Cascade Server makes your website more secure than most other content management systems do.
- Canada Company's two interns were able to move from Joomla to Cascade Server and implement a new responsive website in only two months.
- Adding new Employer Partners in Cascade Server takes a fraction of the time that it took in Joomla.
- Page load times have drastically improved since implementing Cascade Server.



### About Canada Company

Canada Company is a registered Canadian charity that serves families of the Canadian military in a number of different ways. The organization assists Veterans of the Canadian military to transition into civilian careers after their service has been completed. In addition, Canada Company helps family members of fallen soldiers with scholarships and other initiatives.

### Problems To Solve

Canada Company used Joomla, an open source tool, to manage their web content for both their public facing site and their Military Employment Transition (MET) site. The most critical problem with this setup was the fact that the sites were not as secure as was needed by Canada Company and their Canadian government partners in the MET program. A known exploit in one of the editor plugins made it potentially possible for hackers to gain access to the company's Java server. Another pain point was that it took too many steps to accomplish simple tasks, such as adding a new Employer Partner to the site. In Joomla, five or six files had to be created, exported into a WAR file, and then be deployed. The process was cumbersome and resource-heavy.



It also was not possible to modify any of the PHP code directly in the Joomla environment. In addition, testing was challenging, as it had to be done on a separate Joomla server. Another drawback of Joomla was its limitations with regard to structured content. Using the default article was a workaround, but the team needed a system that was more flexible with regard to custom content fields. Finally, during traffic spikes, which typically occurred when Canada Company sent out their “Hot Jobs” email campaign to transitioning Veterans, page loads often took an unacceptable amount of time.

## The Selection Process

When Canada Company decided that it was time to upgrade to a new content management system, the team captured their requirements, which included the following:

- The system had to satisfy the stringent security requirements of the Canadian government’s Department of National Defence, who was a partner in the MET program
- The system had to allow web developers to edit the PHP code from within the CMS
- The process of adding new content to both websites needed to be quick and intuitive
- The implementation of the new CMS and content migration had to be easy enough to be completed within two months, using minimal resources
- The system had to allow contributors to enter content into structured data fields
- The system had to support responsive web design

Upon reviewing multiple solutions, Canada Company chose Cascade Server based on functionality, security, favorable pricing, and references.

## Implementing Cascade Server

Canada Company had two months to create a new responsive design, implement it in Cascade Server, and migrate all of the web content from Joomla into the new CMS. The resources for this project consisted of two interns from the University of Waterloo, plus one intern on standby to help migrate the content upon completion of the page build-outs in Cascade Server. First, the team chose a new Twitter Bootstrap template that would best suit the needs of the two websites. Next, they customized the look and feel and the page structure for optimal branding and usability. Once the design had been completed, it was time to integrate the page types in Cascade Server. One of the two interns had participated in a two day training session, so he was comfortable training the other intern. One of the key considerations was to heavily utilize Data Definitions in order to streamline the process of adding new employer partners quickly and sharing structured content across the site. JSP includes were used to handle the user logins to the MET site. The team chose Velocity over XSLT as the transformation language, as it had a lower learning curve. The entire project, including design, integration in Cascade Server, and migrating all of the content for both sites in both languages, took only two months.

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## The Results

**Security:** Through monitoring and testing, Canada Company was completely satisfied with the security afforded by Cascade Server.

**Content Creation and Publishing:** The time to input and publish Employer Partners has been cut down by multiple days compared to how long the process took with Joomla. Users simply enter structured content in the Data Definitions and publish their pages.

**Content Sharing:** Content can easily be shared between sites and pages. Due to the separation of content from the presentation layer, Canada Company can display the same content block differently on multiple pages.

**Flexibility:** Cascade Server provides the team with the flexibility to update code from within the CMS, to use include files and embed them in templates, blocks, and pages, which they had not been able to do in Joomla. Developers have not found anything that they couldn't do with Cascade Server, according to Mackenzie Gray, the intern who led the project. Building out new pages can be done quickly. For instance, a blog was built in just under two hours.

**Testing:** Testing new functionality or new page types does not require another server. Cascade Server allows you to manage multiple sites and to make copies of existing sites for testing purposes. Furthermore, publishing content to a test web server and then promoting it to production can be accomplished with just a few clicks.

**Performance:** Previously, pages could take up to 30 seconds to load during high volume traffic times. Since implementing Cascade Server, Canada Company has not seen any degraded performance.



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Canada Company continues to reiterate how pleased they are with their decision to move to Cascade Server as their CMS of choice. According to Donna Mills, Canada Company's Military Employment Transition (MET) Program Administrator,

**“The entire migration to Cascade Server has been easier than we could have imagined. The support team is responsive, the intuitive nature of Cascade Server makes it easy for new Canada Company team members to begin contributing within an hour of their first login, and the time savings we have enjoyed makes the team able to focus attention on our core business: providing valuable service to our Military members and their families.”**

## The Bottom Line

By switching their web content management system from Joomla to Cascade Server, Canada Company was able to provision much more secure web sites and completely eliminate the potential for successful attacks. Users are able to add, edit and publish content in a fraction of the time it took in the previous system. Developers enjoy the flexibility of Cascade Server, the ability to use include files, and editing code directly in the CMS. Finally, Canada Company's websites now provide a better user experience as pages load faster than ever.



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