

Macrotone EU Cookie Guide

Macrotone
Consulting Ltd.

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Abstract

This manual covers the use of the Macrotone Consulting Joomla EU Cookie plug-in which provides compliance with the EU Cookie Directive that requires Web Sites within the European Union to display Cookie information and to require acceptance of the same from their users.

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Preface

EU Cookie

Joomla

Extension

Author: G S Chapman
Date: 08th January 2016
Version: 1.1.3

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Date	Changed By:	Remarks
1.1.1	April 2014	G S Chapman	First public version of the documentation. Previously only available in-house.
1.1.3	January 2016	G S Chapman	Update with minor changes for 1.1.3 release.

PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

This is the public documentation for the Macrotone Consulting Ltd's Joomla Extension EU Cookie Plugin. It provides details of the extension and its capabilities.

Part I. System Documentation

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Chapter 1. Introduction

With the introduction of the EU Cookie regulations, we originally used a plugin from Channel Computing which performed the task adequately. As time passed it was decided to introduce some additional functionality and for that reason the plugin was developed until it reached the stage that it is today. The changes that were made were generally performed 'on the fly' with direct editing of the code upon the server

A request from one of our users influenced our decision to package up the plugin into a suitable form for others to possibly use.

Figure 1.1. EU Cookie icon



This plugin was originally modified directly upon our live site, with changes made directly as and when required. Changes to colour schemes were hard coded and it was necessary to add plugin 'option's to permit easier changes and permit other features to be included. The current version has been checked against Joomla 3.4 without any problems.

Table 1 - Latest Release Versions

Type	Version	Comments
System plug-in	1.1.3	Current released version. Packaged up with language strings and options to control the functionality.

Versions are released when they have been through internal testing and no known problems exist.

Version numbering

For transparency and insight into our release cycle, and for striving to maintain backward compatibility, our Joomla components will be maintained under the following Semantic Versioning guidelines as much as possible.

Releases will be numbered with the following format: <major>.<minor>.<patch>

And constructed with the following guidelines:

- Breaking backward compatibility bumps the major (and resets the minor and patch)
- New additions without breaking backward compatibility bumps the minor (and resets the patch)
- Bug fixes and miscellaneous changes bumps the patch

Testing

All development and testing is carried out on our own Joomla systems. Due to the vast complexity of maintaining multiple versions of Joomla it is not possible to guarantee that the releases will function without problems on every possible combination of options, although great care is taken to document any known problems. The latest releases are always tested prior to release.

The released version is also installed and is in use upon our live web site.

Chapter 2. Installation

Installation uses the standard Joomla install method.

Important

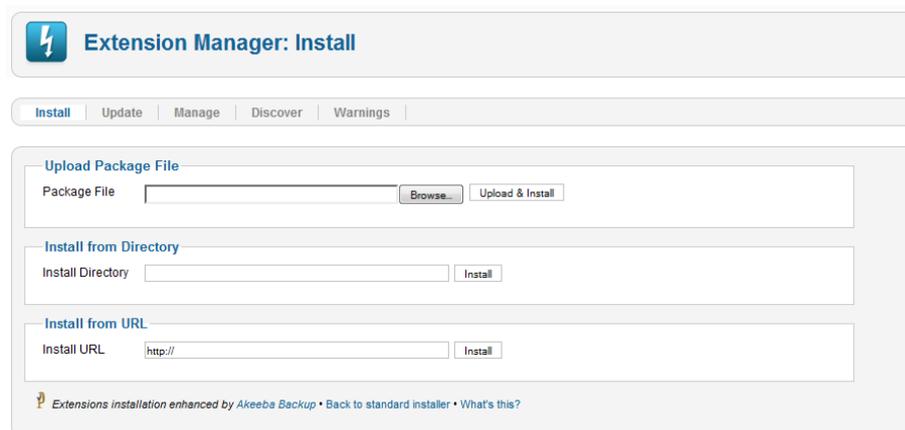
Do NOT uninstall Macrotone EU Cookie before updating it! Uninstalling will remove your current configuration information.

Download the Latest Version

Once you have downloaded the latest version, you are ready to install the component. The steps outlined below are generic and apply to the installation of most Joomla components.

Step 1 of 3 - Install the Component: Login to your Joomla Administrative centre and in the Extensions menu, click on the Browse button and navigate to the file location where you downloaded the file. Click on the file and then click on the Install/Uninstall button.

Figure 2.1. Initial Installation Screen.



Step 2 of 3 - Once the Plugin is installed, enable the Plug-in in the Extensions menu, click on Plugin Manager and find your newly installed plugin called System - eucookie. A screen similar to the following will be displayed.

Figure 2.2. Plug-in screen



Enable your eucookie Plugin by marking the box on the left hand side opposite the plugin name, and then click the Green Enable button. After you click on it, the plugin should turn into a Green Tickmark.

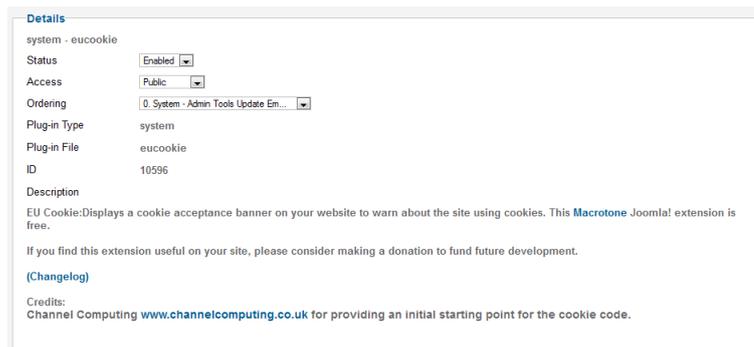
Step 3 of 3 - Configure The Plugin: Whilst on this same page, click on the link System - eucookie. This will take you to the Plugin settings. In the Plugin Parameters section, enter your desired options. Settings are described in the relevant sections below.

Chapter 3. EU Cookie Usage

Configuration

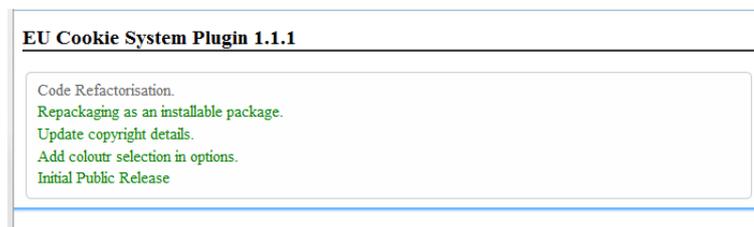
When entering the administrator plugin screen for the EU Cookie system plugin, the following screen will be displayed. Note that the text displayed will vary between releases.

Figure 3.1. Administrator Plugin Screen



Clicking upon the various links will navigate to the specified screen. For example clicking upon the 'Changelog' will show a popup window with the changes for each release. An example of the changelog display is shown in the figure below:

Figure 3.2. Plugin Changelog



Basic Settings

The following screen shows the configuration parameters part of the plugin screen for the system plugin. It is here that one specifies the details for the control of the eucookie plugin. Most of the required parameters are self evident and do not require any further explanation here.

Hovering over the parameter label with the mouse will display a tooltip for the particular parameter, with more details if appropriate.

Figure 3.3. Basic Control Settings

The screenshot shows a settings panel titled "Basic Options" with the following fields and values:

- Ignore Private Addr.: No Yes
- Width px (0 = full width):
- Position: top bottom
- Warning Message:
- Policy text:
- Policy name:
- Policy link title:
- Policy URL:
- Button Text:
- Show EU Legal Link: No Yes
- Body Nudge Down:
- Background Colour:
- Text Colour:
- Text Shadow:

Note

The above display shows the default text as present in the en-GB language file as a convenience to readers. When installed these fields will be empty as the text in the en-GB language file will be used. Any text entered in these fields is used in preference to the language file entries.

- **Ignore Private Addresses:** This instructs the plugin not to display the banner if the IP address is identified as belonging to a 'private address range'. An IP address is considered private if the IP number falls within one of the IP address ranges reserved for private uses by Internet standards groups.

These private IP address ranges exist:

- 10.0.0.0 through 10.255.255.255
- 169.254.0.0 through 169.254.255.255 (APIPA only)
- 172.16.0.0 through 172.31.255.255
- 192.168.0.0 through 192.168.255.255

Private IP addresses are typically used on local networks including home, school and business LANs including airports and hotels. We have noticed upon our live site that there is usage of 'private addresses' in use by our visitors to the web site, which should not be possible according to the regulations, so we advice that this is only used upon internal networks and very cautiously upon internet sites in general..

- **Width:** The width across the screen that the banner should be occupy. We have generally used 100% which is the full width of the display screen.
- **Position:** Specifies if the banner should be displayed at the top or the bottom of the screen.
- **Warning Message:** Some descriptive text to display within the banner. The default text shown is "Cookies to improve our website and your experience when using it. Cookies used for the essential operation of the site have already been set." This is the text as stored in the language file. For a site

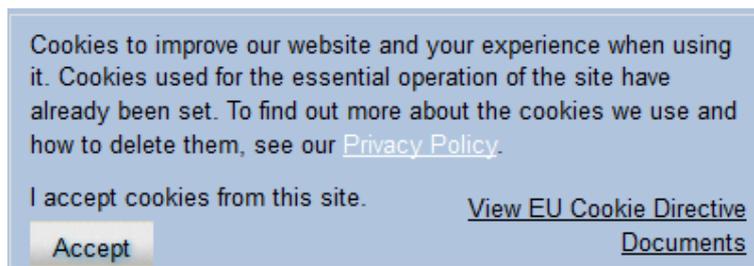
with only a single language one may enter what ever text one desires to be displayed directly in the field and this will be used in preference to that specified in the language file. Change the text to suit your purposes. If this is a multi-lingual site then it is better to leave this field blank so that the text is used from the appropriate language file.

- **Policy text:** Some description text to insert before the site Policy Name IF the policy display is to be shown, The default text is "To find out more about the cookies we use and how to delete them, see our ". This is the text as stored in the language file. For a site with only a single language one may enter what ever text one desires to be displayed directly in the field and this will be used in preference to that specified in the language file. Change the text to suit your purposes. If this is a multi-lingual site then it is better to leave this field blank so that the text is used from the appropriate language file.
- **Policy Name:** The name to be used for your Privacy Policy. Some sites may use another descriptive name for their specific policy. i.e. They may have a specific 'Cookie Policy' This is the text as stored in the language file. For a site with only a single language one may enter what ever text one desires to be displayed directly in the field and this will be used in preference to that specified in the language file. Change the text to suit your purposes. If this is a multi-lingual site then it is better to leave this field blank so that the text is used from the appropriate language file..
- **Policy Link title:** Text to be displayed when hovering over the policy link. Default is "View our privacy policy page". This is the text as stored in the language file. For a site with only a single language one may enter what ever text one desires to be displayed directly in the field and this will be used in preference to that specified in the language file. Change the text to suit your purposes. If this is a multi-lingual site then it is better to leave this field blank so that the text is used from the appropriate language file.
- **Policy URL:** The link to the site policy document. The default is "index.php?" which is interpreted to mean that NO privacy document is to be linked to.
- **Button text:** The text to be shown on the acceptance button which the user clicks to acknowledge acceptance of the site usage policy. This is the text as stored in the language file. For a site with only a single language one may enter what ever text one desires to be displayed directly in the field and this will be used in preference to that specified in the language file. Change the text to suit your purposes. If this is a multi-lingual site then it is better to leave this field blank so that the text is used from the appropriate language file.
- **Show EU Legal link:** Whether there should be a link to the Official EU documents that relate to the EU Cookie Directive displayed in the banner.
- **Body Nudge Down:** Enter some CSS to nudge the banner down the page slightly. This is used when there is another banner to be displayed in the (usually) top of the display. This is common when WordPress is installed upon the site.
- **Background Colour :** The colour of the banner displayed. Clicking in the entry box displays a colour chart from where one may pick a specific hue. Alternatively enter the specific hex code of the colour required
- **Text Colour:** The colour of the text displayed in the banner. Clicking in the entry box displays a colour chart from where one may pick a specific hue. Alternatively enter the specific hex code of the colour required.
- **Text Shadow :** The colour of the text shadow in the banner. Clicking in the entry box displays a colour chart from where one may pick a specific hue. Alternatively enter the specific hex code of the colour required.

Front end displays

Depending upon the options chosen, the front end display will vary. The figure shown below illustrate using a width of 400 pixels using the colours we use upon our live web site.

Figure 3.4. Typical display



Chapter 4. Version Changes

This chapter describes the various releases but also some details of the various features and provides a good background to some of the parameters and their usage.

The following is a list of the principle changes that have occurred during each release.

Release Versions

EU Cookie 1.1.3

- ~ Update copyright year to 2016.
- ~ Change to use btn class on settings.

EU Cookie 1.1.2

- ~ Change images to be relative not absolute.
- + New option to specify button height to ensure it covers the 'Acceptance' text.
- + Add ability to specify acceptance text.
- ~ Clean up credits etc.

EU Cookie 1.1.1

This release was built from the modified code used upon our live web site and has been packaged up suitably for general distribution.

It was based upon an early plug-in release by Channel Computing, significantly enhanced to meet our specific requirements.

- ~ Code Refactorisation.
- + Repackaging as an installable package.
- + Update copyright details.
- + Add colour selection in options.
- + Allow for multi-lingual sites.
- + Initial Public Release.

EU Cookie 1.0.0

This release was never released publicly.

- + Initial Internal Release

Chapter 5. Logic Flows

This section describes the logic flows for the plugin events. There is only one Joomla event used by the plugin, which is the onAfterRender event.

Event onAfterRender

1. If this is the back end or Joomla Debug is on, then return
2. If not being displayed for Private IP address then return.
3. Get specified colours and ensure they are valid.
4. Check if a cookie exists and has been accepted. If so return.
5. Build the cookie HTML code based on specified settings.
6. Check if the cookie exist.
7. If cookie not set then enter HTML in header and return.

Notes:

- a. Being based upon a previous plugin, the same cookie name that is stored in the browser is retained so that users that already have the cookie in their browser will not be forced to 're-accept' the cookie policy.

Chapter 6. General Questions

Functionality

Does this module block cookies?

This plugin does not block cookies, it merely advises the user about them and obtains the user's consent for them to be placed in their browser, as well as optionally providing linkage through to the site cookie policy page. When the user consents for the cookies to be placed then the notice disappears. If the user wants to block the cookies they can do so through their browser but the plugin is specifically designed and intended not to interfere with the running of any web site, or the cookies placed by it.

Does this plugin comply with the ICO's rules?

The plugin being based upon an early version from Channel Digital is a close replica of a plug-in widely used in the Wordpress community, and similar to the functionality upon the ICO's own web site, although others are also available.

To our current knowledge there have been no test law cases which can be used as a guide upon how the law will be interpreted, this no one can be entirely sure which approach is best. The ICO have however indicated that making an attempt to deal with the issue will tend to count FOR a web site owner, so whichever approach is taken, this would appear to be preferable to doing nothing.

The ICO's stance is explained in this link dated May 2012 (which may of course be subject to change): ICO: no fines for breaking cookie rules [<http://www.pcpro.co.uk/news/enterprise/374734/ico-no-fines-for-breaking-cookie-rules>] - *"The watchdog stressed that sites that have taken some steps to reach compliance were unlikely to face any action."*

In answering a freedom of information request to the ICO, they stated that there have been no web sites yet prosecuted in the UK for breach of the cookie rules: https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/cookie_law_statistics

The following document can be used as guidance by web site owners on implementation of the Cookie laws: ICO practical guidance for webmasters on the Cookie Law [http://www.ico.org.uk/for_organisations/privacy_and_electronic_communications/the_guide/~media/documents/library/Privacy_and_electronic/Practical_application/cookies_guidance_v3.ashx] The sections on "Prior Consent", "Implied Consent", and "Specific and Informed" are all very useful.

Note also as an example of best practise the way the Cookie Law is implemented on the ICO's own web site: <http://www.ico.org.uk/> Note the text of their opt-in banner: *"We have placed cookies on your computer to help make this website better. You can change your cookie settings at any time. Otherwise, we'll assume you're OK to continue."* Our website uses cookies. You can find details of our Cookie Policy [here](#).

Troubleshooting

The EU Cookie Plugin has been found to work well upon all of the Joomla web sites that we have tried, however we cannot guarantee compatibility with every possible Joomla installation, plugin and server configuration.

Below is some general recommendations that may assist in resolving problems that may be encountered.

The Cookie banner doesn't disappear after the Agree button is clicked!

The first thing to check is that the browser is configured to accept cookies. To check if your browser accepts Cookies, please click your browser from the following links;

Internet Explorer [<http://www.timeanddate.com/custom/cookiesie.html>]

Google Chrome [<https://support.google.com/accounts/answer/61416?hl=en>]

Mozilla Firefox [<http://support.mozilla.org/en-US/kb/enable-and-disable-cookies-website-preferences>]

Safari [<http://support.apple.com/kb/ph5042>]

If cookies are enabled then the next most likely cause is that there is a Javascript issue. It is possible to turn off Javascript in the browser, so check that the browser has Javascript turned on.

If Javascript and Cookies are both turned on and enabled, then there may be a conflict with some other Javascript running upon the site.

The best way to check for conflicts is to turn on the Java console, and observe the errors and warnings displayed when the cookie acceptance is clicked. The messages may help identify the cause of the problem, otherwise it may be necessary to start removing the other Javascripts one by one to find out which one is causing the conflict.

If the site is using standard caching this may also cause a problem. Joomla caches the a page the first time it is visited. When the user clicks on the 'Accept' button the plugin will attempt to redisplay the page without the banner. However, if Joomla recognises the page URL it may serve the user the version within its cache which is the page with the banner displayed. One solution is to disable the standard Joomla caching. Another solution (preferred) is to make use of an alternative caching plugin. One such that we have used ourselves is JotCache, which handles cookie correctly.

Note that caching can occur at many places both in the server and in the browser and any of them can also produce this effect

How do I set up a multilingual site

The plugin has provided English text for all of the options. The plugin options provide for an easy override of the default text in the en-GB language file. Simply enter your desired text in the fields provided.

If this is used upon a multi-lingual site then there will be different language files for each installed language, or language overrides are being used. In this situation simply leave the plugin optional text fields blank and the language file contents will be used in preference for the display.

The Cookie banner displays twice

This can happen if iFrames is being used upon the site, or if lightboxes are being used to load the Joomla head code more than once.

The Cookie plugin attaches it's HTML code before the closing `</head>` tag in your code. If a lightbox is opened that loads a fresh copy of the Joomla headers within it, then the Cookie banner will again display within the lightbox.

Well written lightbox code should not load all of the headers again, so in most cases the plugin should work fine with lightboxes.

However if this problem is encountered it is recommended that an alternative lightbox code/plugin is considered. See the Joomla Extensions Directory [<http://extensions.joomla.org/>] for some possible alternatives.

How do I display the Cookie message in just one line.

To get everything on one line, one has to modify the code of the plugin itself.

The plugins' formatting is built using tables and divs, so it necessary to remove the need for the second row, modify some of the CSS styles, and place the content in the first row so that everything is present in one line.

The code is in the main file:

```
/plugins/system/eucookie/eucookie.php
```

The code should to be modified to suit your needs.

Mobile styling

The EU Cookie plugin has been designed to be mobile friendly, however, if the width of the Cookie plugin is modified in the parameter settings, then depending upon the size of the screen, one may observe that the Cookie banner is displayed incorrectly.

For example, if the Cookies width is set to 600 pixels and the website is viewed upon a smart phone, then the cookie banner may be too wide for the screen. In this case, it will necessary to add some responsive styles to your CSS stylesheet. The following block of CSS is one possible suggestion for adding to your stylesheet, to make sure that the cookie banner always fills the screen on mobile devices:

```
/* Only Phones and Tablets */
@media (max-width: 959px) {
    div#cookieMessageContainer {
        width: 100!important;
        bottom: 0px!important;
        left: 0px!important;
    }
}
```

Known conflicts

The Cookie plugin is built using a combination of Javascript, PHP and CSS. The Javascript file itself contains only a few lines of code and a single function, which sets a Cookie in the users browser.

If you are having trouble, then it is highly likely that some other code in your Joomla installation may be conflicting with one of the files used by the Cookie plugin.

Possible expansion options

At the current time there are no definite plans to change or add additional features to the plugin. The principle of 'keep it simple' having been applied. This does not mean that it a sufficiently enticing feature were to be defined that it would not be considered and possibly included.

Part II. Appendices

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Appendix A. GNU General Public License version 3

Version 3, 29 June 2007

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The precise terms and conditions for copying, distribution and modification follow.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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To "propagate" a work means to do anything with it that, without permission, would make you directly or secondarily liable for infringement under applicable copyright law, except executing it on a computer or modifying a private copy. Propagation includes copying, distribution (with or without modification), making available to the public, and in some countries other activities as well.

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1. Source Code.

The "source code" for a work means the preferred form of the work for making modifications to it. "Object code" means any non-source form of a work.

A "Standard Interface" means an interface that either is an official standard defined by a recognized standards body, or, in the case of interfaces specified for a particular programming language, one that is widely used among developers working in that language.

The "System Libraries" of an executable work include anything, other than the work as a whole, that (a) is included in the normal form of packaging a Major Component, but which is not part of that Major Component, and (b) serves only to enable use of the work with that Major Component, or to implement a Standard Interface for which an implementation is available to the public in source code form. A "Major Component", in this context, means a major essential component (kernel, window system, and so on) of the specific operating system (if any) on which the executable work runs, or a compiler used to produce the work, or an object code interpreter used to run it.

The "Corresponding Source" for a work in object code form means all the source code needed to generate, install, and (for an executable work) run the object code and to modify the work, including scripts to control those activities. However, it does not include the work's System Libraries, or general-purpose tools or generally available free programs which are used unmodified in performing those activities but which are not part of the work. For example, Corresponding Source includes interface definition files associated with source files for the work, and the source code for shared libraries and dynamically linked subprograms that the work is specifically designed to require, such as by intimate data communication or control flow between those subprograms and other parts of the work.

The Corresponding Source need not include anything that users can regenerate automatically from other parts of the Corresponding Source.

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