

Quickly Set Up Your Own Home Intranet With ocPortal

posted on October 6, 2011 by [Ryan Dube](#)

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Have you ever thought about what it might be like to have a “portal page” for your family, just like many companies offer to employees? Wouldn't it be convenient to have a central web-based repository of important documents, files and schedules for your family? Unfortunately, when it comes to operating a portal site, it's difficult to find a free solution that isn't scaled down in functionality. Most portal software out there comes at a hefty price, and any free scripts are either very simple demonstration sites or trial versions.

Luckily, there is an open source Portal that you can install on your own home web server. What this means is that you can create an Intranet start page in your home where all of your family members can access photos, videos, music, calendars, web links and any other resource that's stored on the home web server.

Unsure whether you have what it takes to create your own web server to install ocPortal onto? Have no fear – all you have to do is connect a PC to your home network, and then install and set up XAMPP as Dave described [in his article](#). You could also use some of the XAMPP tips I offered in my article on setting up a [USB stick web server](#).

The prerequisites to installing the ocPortal on your home web server is to install XAMPP, and then create a MySQL table using PHPMyAdmin. Remember to create a user name and password on the table as well, ocPortal will need this information during the installation.

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The screenshot shows the phpMyAdmin interface. On the left, a list of databases is shown, with 'hportal' highlighted by a red arrow. The main area displays the 'localhost' server status and a list of navigation tabs: Databases, SQL, Status, Variables, Processes, Export, Import, and Synchronize. A green message box indicates 'You have added a new user.' Below this, SQL code is shown with a red arrow pointing to the 'CREATE USER' statement: `CREATE USER 'huser'@'localhost' IDENTIFIED BY '****';`. The 'Edit Privileges: User 'huser'@'localhost' - Database-specific privileges' section is also visible, with a note that MySQL privilege names are expressed in English.

Once XAMPP is running and you've got the database ready, go ahead and download the [ocPortal software](#). On XAMPP, your public HTML folder is `htdocs`. Within this folder, you should create a subfolder called "Portal", and then upload all of the ocPortal software files there. Then, go to `http://localhost/portal/install.php`.

This will kick off the ocPortal installation routine. One of the first options is to choose whether you intend to use a forum. Unless you have some other forum software from the list installed on your web server, just go with the ocPortals forum.

The screenshot shows the 'Forum software' selection screen. A list of radio buttons allows choosing between various forum options, with 'ocPortal's own forum (recommended)' selected. Below the list, two 'Advanced' questions are posed with 'Yes' and 'No' radio button options. The first question asks if forum and portal data should be in different databases, with 'No' selected. The second question asks if joining a network of multiple ocPortal sites is intended, with 'No' selected. At the bottom, a dropdown menu for the database choice is set to 'mySQL 4.0+ (mysql driver)'.

Don't forget to change the database to mySQL, since this is what XAMPP uses. The next step of the installation will be to identify the domain. You should have your web server set to a static IP (use Karl's instructions in his [network domain article](#) to do this).

Use that static web server IP as the domain, and as part of the base URL settings. Leave the table prefix as is, and choose your preferred password.

General settings	
Domain You may wish to remove <code>www.</code> For example, <code>example.com</code>	192.168.1.107
Base URL The URL to the base of your installation. If you have multiple domain name variations (e.g. with and without <code>www</code>) then enter the one you wish to use. The base URL must start <code>http://</code> . For example, <code>http://example.com/portal</code>	http://192.168.1.107/portal
Table prefix The prefix your tables will be given. This allows you to have multiple ocPortal installations in a single database. For example, <code>ocp7_</code>	ocp_
Master password Choose a master password (this is used for configuration file maintenance: it is not attached to any username)	••••••
» Master password Confirm password	••••••
Use persistent database connections This option may reduce the time your script takes to start, but may also tie up server resources. Check with your server operator that you may use this.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Keep default settings on subsequent steps, and once you reach step 10, you'll see the following completion screen if the installation completed without a hitch.

ocPortal installer: step 10 of 10

The ocPortal installation log for step 9 is below:

Install log:

- Installed module `login`
- Installed module `recommend`
- Installed module `filedump`
- Installed module `supermembers`
- Created custom profile fields
- Installation completed

Congratulations! ocPortal is now successfully installed! The final step is to delete this file, which prevents other users from running this installation script, which would allow them to delete the file. ocPortal will not work until you delete `install.php` from the server. It is also a good idea to set permissions for a PHP script, to prevent potentially malicious users writing into the file.

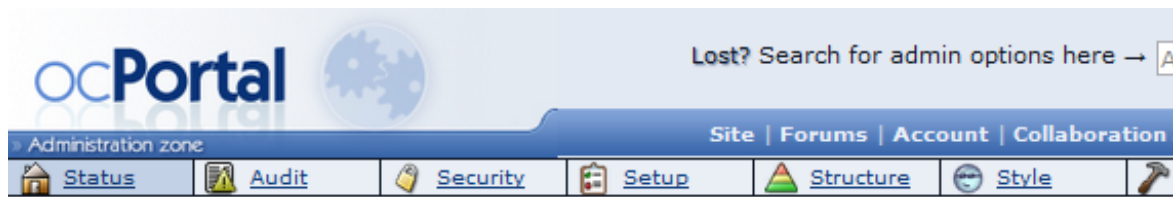
If you need to run this installer again, you will need to upload this file again, so you should keep a copy on your hard drive.

Your ocPortal is not yet configured, which can be done at any time from the Administration Zone:

- » [Configure my ocPortal first \(Recommended\)](#)
- » [Go to my new website now!](#)

Go to your `htdocs/portal/` directory and make sure to delete the `install.php` file, or your portal will not work without flashing a warning at you on every screen. Now that your new portal software is installed, all you have to do is go to the IP address of your web server, like this: `http://192.168.1.107/portal/`, and you'll see your portal page. If you log in under the admin account you created during setup, you can click on the "Administration Zone" link to set up the portal.

On the main admin page, you'll see a status with reminders for each step of what you need to set up to get content loaded onto your Portal as quickly as possible. The nice thing about ocPortal is that it comes with lots of dynamic tools like a calendar, file sharing, an internal chat system and a whole lot more.



Status

You are in the Admin Zone, and this is your website's dashboard

If you're not sure how the admin menu above is categorised, hold the mouse to see a tooltip explanation

For help, see the [docs](#). Add content/categories from the [content management zone](#). Manage site s

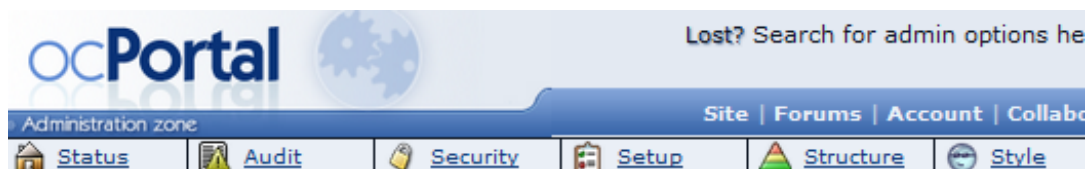
To Do

Show all Checklist

Regular tasks

- [Add news](#) (due for first time now)
- [Send out issue](#) (due for first time now)
- [Choose image of the day](#) (due for first time now) [0 in queue]
- [Download of the week](#) (due for first time now)
- [Make backup](#) (due for first time now)
- [Blog](#) (due for first time now)
- [Choose which poll is active](#) (due for first time now) [0 in queue]













If you're using the ocPortal for your family, like I am, the first thing you'll want to do is establish the member accounts. You'll find the Members panel under "Tools" in the Admin zone.



Members

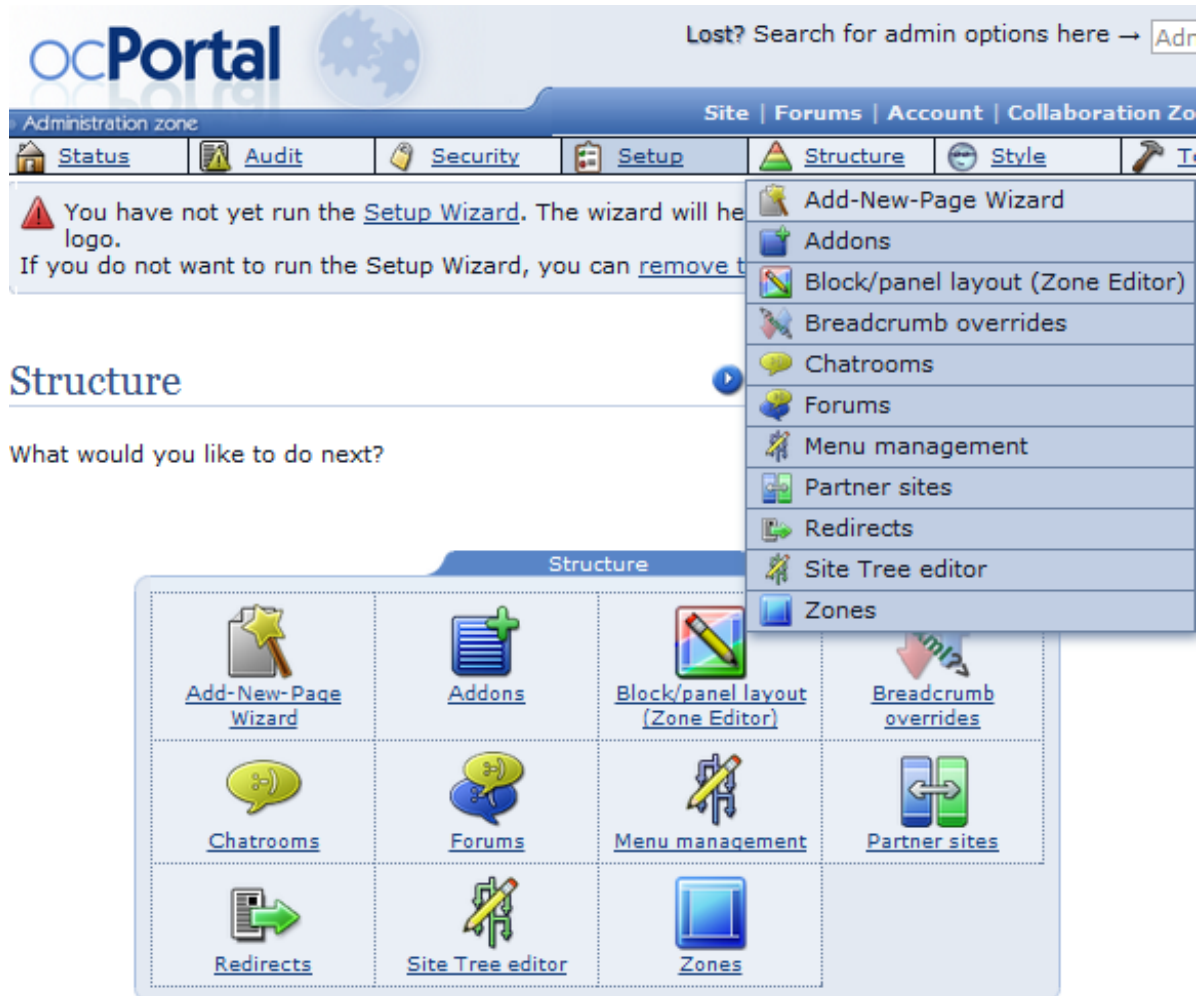
Home > Admin Zone > Tools

What would you like to do next?

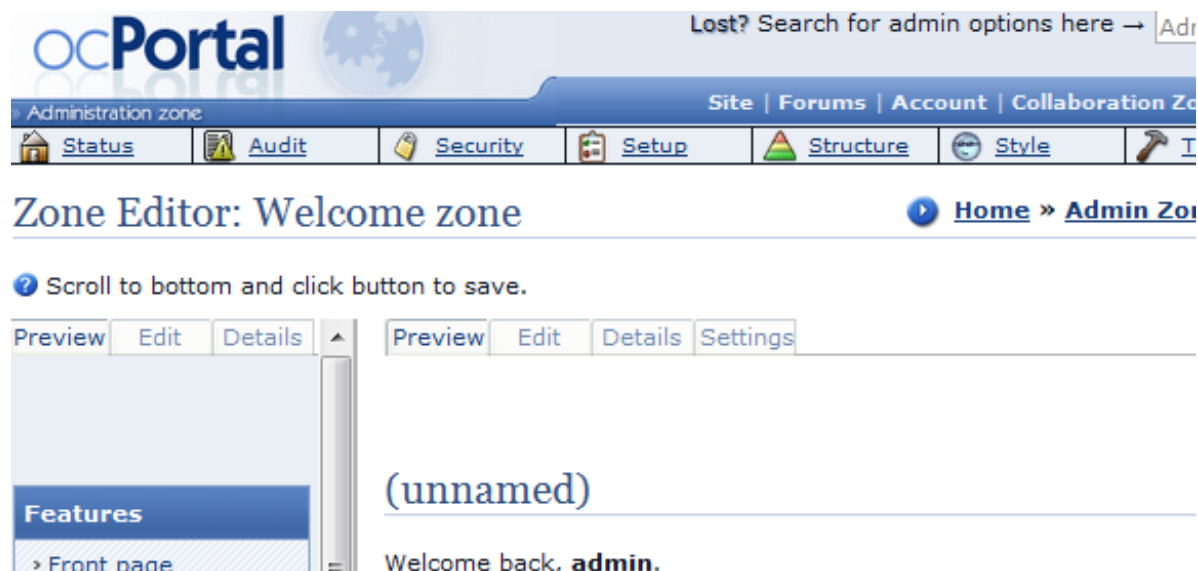
 Add member account	 Edit account	 Merge members	 Delete lurkers
 Download member spreadsheet (CSV)	 Import member spreadsheet (CSV)	 Custom Profile Fields	 Welcome e-mails
 Investigate user	 Temporary usergroup	 Usergroup subscription	 Usergroups



The majority of the time you'll be spending, as the administrator/creator of the site, is in the editing areas. To get there, click on the Administration Zone, and then click on the "Structure" menu item to get to the website design page. You can access all of the same icons under the Structure menu list itself.



The "Site Tree editor" is probably my favorite method to design the site, because you can view sections of your portal in a tree-format. Clicking on any of the portal pages in the tree lets you choose to edit that "zone." When you edit a zone, you'll enter the "Zone Editor" where you can view the page and then edit the sections or "blocks" that you want to change.





Below is what my first attempt to redesign the main page looks like. I removed the poll, added an image of the day, included a schedule/calendar block to the right menu bar, and added in a news section that I can update every day.

Welcome to The Dube Family Portal

Welcome back, **Ryan**.

Image of the day



Katrina's First Match

[Add image of the day] | [View all] | [View (0 comments)]

News

Our family portal page is open!

Posted 1:59 AM

Well, I've finally finished our portal page - I hope you like it!


It's where we'll have our family calendar, our plans, notes to eachother and all that good stuff.

Enjoy it and have fun!

Love,
Dad

Read more (0 comments)

Ryan



Search

[Search]

[More options]

Users online

[Details]

Site statistics

Sep 2011

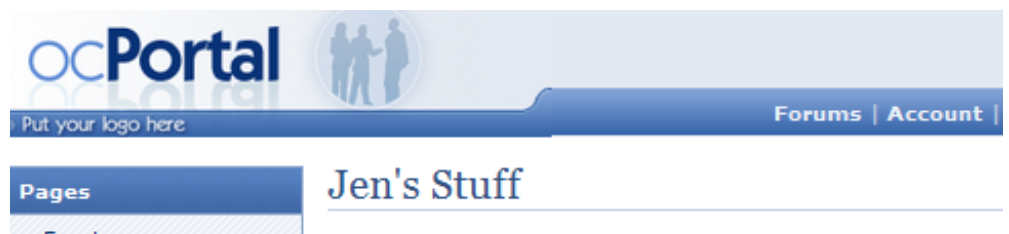
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Shoutbox

[Edit in zone editor]

It's also really easy to add new pages to the portal by editing the left menu and then clicking to add those pages to your portal. Here, I've created individual pages for each family member, with items, features and links that matter most to them.

The beauty of ocPortal is that it takes so much less time to set up than if you were going to try and build an HTML portal page yourself on your web server. Installing this PHP application includes



everything you need to build a fully-functional family or small-business portal site in just minutes.

So take ocPortal for a test drive on your own web server and see what you and your family think. Does it have all of the add-ons you need, and how is the learning curve? Share your experiences and your opinions in the comments section below.

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[Edit menu](#)

Ryan

- [[Account](#)]
- [[My Profile](#)]
- [[My Points](#)]
- [[Admin Zone](#)]
- [[Logout](#)]

Sep 2011				
M	T	W	T	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

Upcoming Events	
09 October 2011	
12:00 PM	Ryan's Birthday

Favorite Links:

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