

Getting started with jSeblod CCK: a brief hands-on tutorial

# Part 1: Overview

If you’ve ever wanted to do something more sophisticated in Joomla than just a simple article submission, you have probably found that there is an extension for that. But, what if there isn’t? A different approach to solving the problem is to simply build some additional flexibility into the concept of an article. The types of content that can be managed then become as diverse as the imagination. Users of other content management systems (CMS) like Drupal have long ago grasped this concept. The need to have flexible content creation systems led to what is known as a “Content Construction Kit,” or CCK. A CCK is really just an article with some extra flexibility.

## Hungry for some flexibility: Content Types

Let’s take a look at a concrete example of how a CCK can be used to flexibly make a new content type. Let’s say you want to create a section on your website to appease your hunger: recipes. Your site has thousands of users, and you would like your users to be able to submit a recipe online. You would like to display the submitted recipes in an eye-pleasing way. You could contact all of your website users, show them how you would like a recipe to look, and then ask them to free-form submit articles as recipes. You can imagine that the format would not be very standard, users would find it tedious to create the articles, and in general, this just sounds like a bad idea. Enter a CCK. You can define additional fields and elements to augment the standard article with a CCK. After some work, you will have a new “content type”: a recipe.

## Gathering the ingredients: Fields

You could imagine a recipe in a lot of different ways. What are the parts that you want your recipe to include? After some brain storming, you will come up with the concept of a recipe, something to really “wow” your users. You want your recipe to include the following things:

* Title (“Chicken Tikka Masala”, “Wood Baked Pizza”)
* Category (Italian, Japanese, French, Indian)
* Preparation time (10 mins, 15 mins, 2 hours)
* Ingredients list
* Cooking instructions
* Food picture (fresh tossed red and blue fruit and vegetable salad image, steaming green beans with herbed butter sauce image)

In jSeblod language, these items are called “Fields”. jSeblod includes 40 different field types in the default installation. Each different type of field has a different purpose in either getting information from or displaying information to your users. Some examples of other field types are submit buttons, color pickers, checkboxes, image uploads, etc. Some of the Field types are very powerful. For example, if you wanted to store each ingredient in a separate field rather than as one big text field, “FieldX” fields allow users to add or delete additional fields on-the-fly as needed. For programmers, SQL or PHP equipped field types are also available.

## Mixing and baking: Adding Fields to a Content Type

Once you have conceptualized the idea of a recipe and created the Fields needed to actually make a recipe, it is time to start finalize this concept into a content type. The way you do this is to create a new Content Type. This is the step that moves the concept of a recipe to a defined Content Type in jSeblod. As mentioned above, you have to create the Fields first.

jSeblod is perhaps unique because the setup of Content Type is also tied to the setup of forms.

## Need some input? Forms

Forms allow users (and yourself) to add recipes from the frontend and from the backend. A form is a way to put all of your fields in one place and allow users to submit data. While Joomla itself only has a single “form” (the default article submission form), jSeblod extends this form, customizes it, and makes it useful for anything you can think of. And because it is just a regular article from Joomla’s point of view, your content still works with all of the other system components and extensions.

Joomla has a different submission system for frontend users and backend users. jSeblod does too, and allows you to create separate forms for the frontend and backend. If you want, the frontend and backend forms can be exactly the same or completely different – it is all up to you.

In no time, you’ll have users submitting their cheesecake, tofu wraps, and buffalo chicken recipes for all to enjoy.

In Joomla, menu items are how users typically interact with articles, and similarly, to display the jSeblod forms for content submission, you just add appropriate menu items.

## Best when shared

Once you have the new custom content data in Joomla, you still need a way to share this with users. jSeblod has an incredibly rich system for specifying how your data is displayed. The most basic way to display data is simply to add an article link via Joomla’s layout displays through the menu manager. However, if you need something more powerful, jSeblod also has advanced Content Templates that can be customized.

# More awaits under the hood

This introduction really just scratches the surface of the power of jSeblod. Some of the real power lies in special fields briefly mentioned above, the flexibility to reuse Fields across different Content Types, the ability to make customized display templates, and more.

# Part 2: Step-by-step tutorial

In part two, we’ll show you how to actually make a simple recipe content type. If you haven’t read Part 1 yet, take a moment to read it for a nice introduction to jSeblod. For the sake of brevity, we’ll include just two fields, but this should give you the general idea.

## Step1: Create Recipe Fields

1. Create the Field for users to enter in a recipe title.
	1. Open the “Field Manager” from either the main Joomla administrator page or the jSeblod CCK Control Panel.
	2. Click “New” to add a new Field.
	3. Select Field Types>Form>Input>Text on the left.
	4. Fill in the details
		1. Title: This is the “human friendly” name of the Field. Enter “Recipe Title”
		2. Name: This is the “machine friendly” name of the Field (it can’t contain spaces). Enter “recipe\_title”.
		3. Category: This is the “Field Category”, which is just an easy way to group fields together later (since there may be a lot). You can add your own Field Categories. For now, select “Quick Category”.
		4. Label: This will be the text label next to the field when it appears on a form. If you leave it blank, the Title you entered above will be used. Enter “Recipe”
		5. Required: Select “Yes”.
	5. Click “Save”
2. Create the Field for users to upload an image.
	1. Open the “Field Manager” from either the main Joomla administrator page or the jSeblod CCK Control Panel.
	2. Click “New” to add a new Field.
	3. Select Field Types>Files/Folders>Upload>Image on the left.
	4. Title: Enter “Recipe Image”
	5. Name: Enter “recipe\_name”
	6. Category: Select “Quick Category”.
	7. Folder: This is the path to where the image will go. Enter “images/stories” (or wherever is appropriate for your Joomla install).
	8. Click “Save”

## Step 2: Create a new “Recipe” Content Type

1. Open the “Content Type Manager” from either the main Joomla administrator page or the jSeblod CCK Control Panel.
2. Click “New” to add a new Content Type.
3. Fill in the Details
	1. Title: “Recipe”
	2. Published: “Yes”
	3. Category: “Quick Category”
4. Leave the “Default Templates” and “Admin Form Views” alone. These are advanced features that we will skip in this tutorial.
5. Add Fields to the Forms using the controls on the right. First, well add Fields to the Site Form.
	1. Click on the “Site Form” tab.
	2. First, add Joomla’s Content Fields
		1. Filter to Joomla content Fields by selecting “Content Fields” from “All Field Categories –“ below the “Available” column heading,
		2. Add the following fields by double clicking:
			1. Content Section Id
			2. Content Category
			3. Content Front Page
			4. Content Title
			5. Content Alias
	3. Next, add your custom Fields
		1. Filter to your custom Fields by selecting “Quick Category” from “All Field Categories –“ below the “Available” column heading,
		2. Add your two custom fields by double clicking
	4. Now, add some fields to help with data entry
		1. Filter to form related Fields by selecting “Form” from “All Field Categories –“ below the “Available” column heading,
		2. Add the following Fields by double clicking:
			1. Button Reset
			2. Button Submit
6. Next, add Fields to the Admin Form.
	1. First, highlight all of the Fields you just added to the “Site Form” tab.
	2. Next, click the “-> Admin” button. This will copy all of the Fields to the “Admin Form” tab.
	3. Click on the “Admin Form” tab and confirm that the Fields are all copied.
7. Click “Save”

## Step 3: Add a submission form to Joomla

1. Open the Joomla Menu Manger.
2. Add a new item to menu of your choice (see Joomla tutorials if you are not familiar with this process).
3. Select Menu Item Type>JSeblod CCK>Article Submission Layout
4. Content Type: Select “Recipe”
5. Click “Save”.

## Step 4: View your recipes submitted recipes from the frontend

1. Open the Joomla Menu Manager.
2. Add a new item to the menu of your choice.
3. Select Menu Item Type>Articles>Category>Category Blog Layout
4. Category: Select “jSeblod CCK/Default Submission

# Part 3: Summary

Now you’ve created a very simple Content Type and better understand some of what jSeblod is all about. You learned how CCK can create flexible content that is limited only by your imagination. You learned how Fields are the building blocks of Content Types and your Content Types are linked to a Site Form and an Admin Forms to submit from the front and backend. You learned the Joomla menu provides one way to let users submit or view data from the frontend.

This tutorial is not all-encompassing. In fact, it only scratches the surface in terms of what jSeblod has to offer in terms of robust data handling and data presentation. Most likely you will, at some point in the future, want to make your display more eye-pleasing, and that is where Content Templates come in. You may need to display data differently on different parts of your website. jSeblod can do that.

Good luck! If you need help, join our active discussion boards for advice from developers and other jSeblod users.

This tutorial was created by a jSeblod novice who was extremely impressed with the power of jSeblod. It was adapted from the existing introductory tutorial by kfawcett.