

# Contribution, Collaboration and Confusion

## Engaging with a Community

Mark Johnson  
Web Developer, Taunton's College, Southampton

E-mail: [johnsom@tauntons.ac.uk](mailto:johnsom@tauntons.ac.uk)  
Twitter: [@marxjohnson](https://twitter.com/marxjohnson)

# Contribution, Collaboration and Confusion

What is this presentation about?

- The Moodle community and my involvement in it
- What to expect from community involvement
- What to avoid!

# Contribution

- Giving your work to the community
- A great way to get yourself known
- Feels awesome
- Gives you a say in the project

# Contribution

- My way in – a one-line patch
- Porting some code to Moodle 2 when I got stuck



## Block's style.php in Moodle 2 not being included

by [Mark Johnson](#) - Wednesday, 5 August 2009, 03:28 PM



I've got a block that I'm trying to port to Moodle 2 which includes it's own stylesheet via a styles.php file. However, for some reason it isn't being included along with other blocks' stylesheets.

I've had a poke around in theme/styles.php and all I can tell is that it's not being added to \$files after get\_sheets\_for\_plugin\_type is called, although the other blocks with styles.php files are. Is there anything I need to look out for in 2.0 that could be causing this?



## Re: Block's style.php in Moodle 2 not being included

by [Tim Hunt](#) - Wednesday, 5 August 2009, 05:09 PM



Sounds like a bug. I changed that code recently. Please file a bug in the tracker (<http://tracker.moodle.org/>) and assign it to me.

# Contribution

- Discussed the issue on the bug tracker
- Debugged the problem
- Created a patch!

```
diff --git a/theme/styles.php b/theme/styles.php
```

```
index d94dcfc..e1d2f46 100644
```

```
--- a/theme/styles.php
```

```
+++ b/theme/styles.php
```

```
@@ -116,7 +116,7 @@ $files = array();
```

```
// here can be overridden by theme CSS.
```

```
if ($pluginsheets) {
```

```
    foreach ($THEME->pluginsheets as $plugintype) {
```

```
-     $files += get_sheets_for_plugin_type($plugintype);
```

```
+     $files = array_merge($files, get_sheets_for_plugin_type($plugintype));
```

```
    }
```

```
}
```

# Contribution

- Opened the floodgates...

CONTRIB-1152: MRBS prior to version 1.4.x mishandles timezones in some environments when displaying bookings made before change to daylight saving time when in daylight saving time. These booking times show as an hour early.

MDL-15800: Internet Explorer cannot load 'Edit Profile' page

CONTRIB-1569: Lots of notices for undefined settings in ILP block

MDL-19907: Mandatory fields accepting space as input

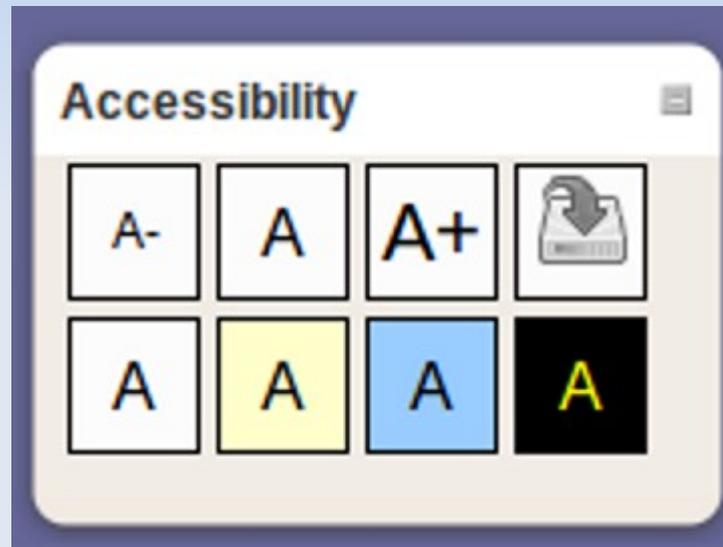
CONTRIB-1671: Force Booking function doesn't move bookings with DST timeshift applied

# Collaboration

- Working together to achieve a goal
- A cornerstone of Open Development
- Done correctly provides the best solutions and the best code

# Collaboration

My first plugin



# Collaboration

 **Finding current styles**  
by Mark Johnson - Monday, 6 July 2009, 12:23 PM

 Hi everyone.

I'm currently working on an accessibility tool for moodle. Is there a way of finding the current styles, such as the font size, that will be used for the current page?

I've had a look at `style_sheet_setup()`, which combines all the relevant stylesheets. Would it be possible to call that and parse the required properties from its output, or use some of it's code to generate the data I want?

Thanks

~~ **Re: Finding current styles**  
by Frank Ralf - Monday, 6 July 2009, 01:06 PM~~

~~ Hi Mark,~~

~~ The best way to analyse the CSS of any given web page is using [Firebug](#) and the [Developer toolbar](#).~~

~~Other useful resources are [CSS FAQ](#) and [Themes FAQ](#).~~

~~hth~~

~~Frank~~

~~ **Re: Finding current styles**  
by Carvell Fenton - Monday, 6 July 2009, 01:45 PM~~

~~Mark,~~

~~Frank beat me to the answer, but I will second his recommendation for [Firebug](#). Also, the most full featured version of Firebug is supported on the Mozilla [Firefox](#) web browser, so I would recommend you get that for testing purposes, even if you are working on something that will run through Internet Explorer. If you spend some time on the links Frank has provided, and the Firebug website, it is pretty straightforward to learn how to use it.~~

~~Firebug was a HUGE help to me in fixing an issue I was having with styles just last week. It may be information overload, but if you are interested here is the thread that related to that problem, and it includes some screenshots of Firebug in action.~~

~~<http://moodle.org/moodleforum/discuss.php?d=126935>~~

~~Carvell~~

# Collaboration

 **Re: Finding current styles**  
by [Mark Johnson](#) - Monday, 6 July 2009, 02:31 PM

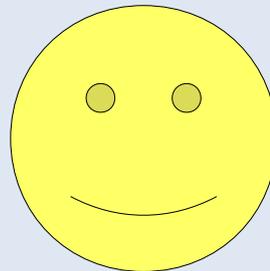
 Sorry guys, I don't seem to have made myself very clear.  
What I meant was that, in a **PHP** script being run by a moodle user, is it possible to determine the stylesheet that's going to be used for any pages being displayed to that user?  
I know that I can view it myself after it's been served up to the browser, but I need a way of finding a current style attribute from the stylesheet before it's served (e.g. when it's generated by code in `style_sheet_setup()` ).

 **Re: Finding current styles**  
by [Tim Hunt](#) - Monday, 6 July 2009, 05:11 PM

 What exactly do you want to do to the **CSS** in your accessibility tool?

 Are you sure you can't achieve the same effect another way, for example by sending an additional stylesheet with !important rules?

 If you really need to do this, you could call `style_sheet_setup` wrapped in `ob_start/_get_contents/_end_clean`, but that is probably an ugly hack.



# Collaboration



Re: Finding current styles

by [Enrique Robredo](#) - Friday, 28 August 2009, 01:03 PM

 [es\\_utf8.zip](#)

Hi Mark, this is the spanish (es\_utf) traslation. Congratulations for your work.



Re: Finding current styles

by [Joachim Vogelgesang](#) - Saturday, 7 November 2009, 12:38 PM

 [de\\_utf8.zip](#)

Hi,

the german translation=>

# Collaboration

## Milk It!



**Message History - Shiretoko**  
http://moodle.org/message/history.php?user1=355854

 **Re: Finding current styles**  
by [Joachim Vogelgesang](#) - Sunday, 29 November 2009, 07:18 PM

 [de\\_utf8.zip](#)

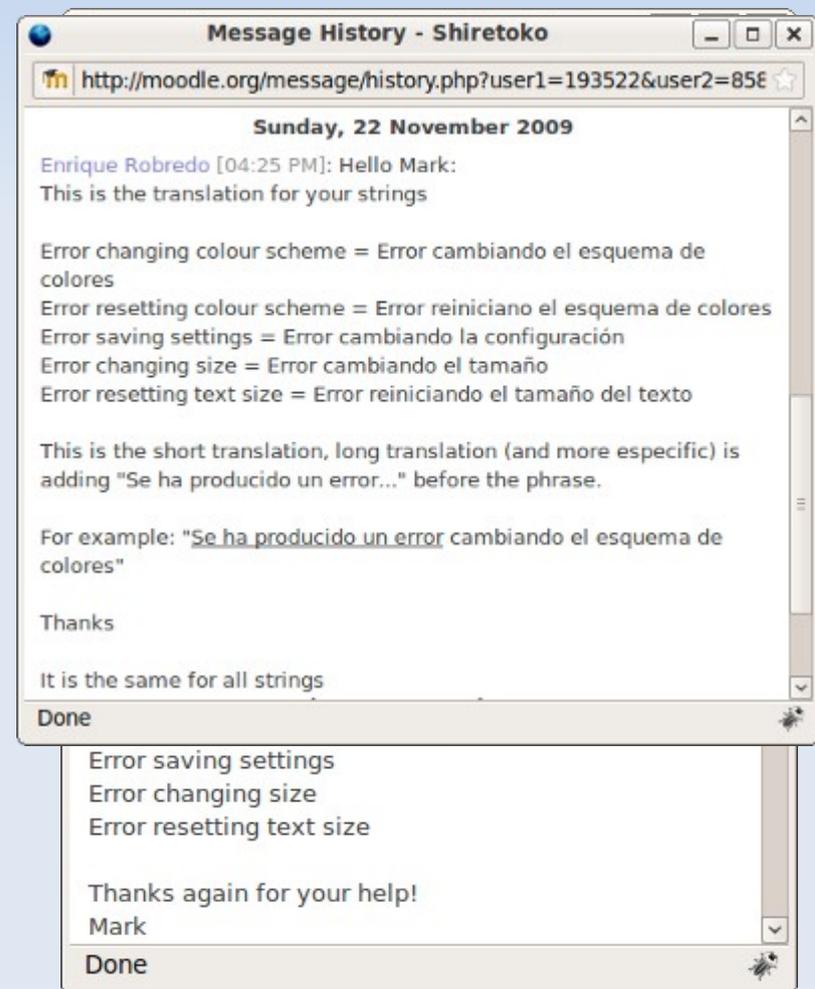
Hi Mark,  
the update of German translation

**Wednesday, 18 November 2009**

Mark Johnson [09:42 AM]: Hi Joachim,  
Hola Enrique,  
Thanks for translating my Accessibility block! I've just changed a few more bits of text to lang strings, I was wondering if you'd mind giving the me the translations to I could add them to CVS?  
They're as follows:  
Error changing colour scheme  
Error resetting colour scheme  
Error saving settings  
Error changing size  
Error resetting text size

Thanks again for your help!  
Mark

Done



**Message History - Shiretoko**  
http://moodle.org/message/history.php?user1=193522&user2=858

**Sunday, 22 November 2009**

[Enrique Robredo](#) [04:25 PM]: Hello Mark:  
This is the translation for your strings

Error changing colour scheme = Error cambiando el esquema de colores  
Error resetting colour scheme = Error reiniciano el esquema de colores  
Error saving settings = Error cambiando la configuración  
Error changing size = Error cambiando el tamaño  
Error resetting text size = Error reiniciando el tamaño del texto

This is the short translation, long translation (and more especific) is adding "Se ha producido un error..." before the phrase.

For example: "Se ha producido un error cambiando el esquema de colores"

Thanks

It is the same for all strings

Done

Error saving settings  
Error changing size  
Error resetting text size

Thanks again for your help!  
Mark

Done

# Confusion

- Not everything needs community approval
- As many opinions as people
- Design by committee – can be dangerous



GUCCI - baby's rattle By ozaking  
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/ozaking/4793380/>



Baby Einstein Discover and Play By gracobaby  
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/gracobaby/3269794712/>

# Confusion

- Not everything needs community approval
- As many opinions as people
- Design by committee – can be dangerous
- Design by community – disasterous!
- Ask the right questions, to the right people

# Confusion

First name*	<input type="text" value="Mark"/>
Surname*	<input type="text" value="Johnson"/>
Email address*	<input type="text" value="johnsom@tauntons.ac.uk"/>
Email display	<input type="text" value="Hide my email address from everyone"/> ▾
Email activated	<input type="text" value="This email address is enabled"/> ▾
Email format*	<input type="text" value="Pretty HTML format"/> ▾
Email charset*	<input type="text" value="Site (UTF-8)"/> ▾
Email digest type*	<input type="text" value="No digest (single email per forum post)"/> ▾

# Confusion



## Please comment: Changing the advanced form items symbol to ⚙

by Olli Savolainen - Wednesday, 5 August 2009, 07:08 PM



MDL-20011



As a great part of human population has color blindness (and red-green is a common type of that color blindness, see, for example <http://www.asktog.com/basics/firstPrinciples.html>) the advanced items in a form should be differentiated from the required items by more than just being green instead of red.

Reasoning for choosing this specific symbol are in the tracker item.



âš™

Waker

= ⚙ (U+2699)

Walt Disney Script v4.1

🐭 - GEAR (U+2699)

# Confusion

Re: Please comment: Changing the advanced form items symbol to @  
by Mauno Korpela - Sunday, 9 August 2009, 04:26 PM

Olli, I promise to keep quiet for a while after this final post but I don't still understand this original need for marking advanced fields with some symbol... I have tried to find some good examples but don't find any.

People often refer here for example to Drupal ... My account in Drupal (Drupal.org) has only 3 required fields marked with red asterisk: Username, E-mail address and Country. All other fields are optional and they don't have any symbols to name them advanced or optional features. User account fields are in 5 tabs: Account, Work, Drupal, Personal information and My newsletters.

In the future versions of moodle ideal user profiles could be more role based so that administrators could select which fields are shown for which role and in which order & group (fieldset or tab). This goes to be able to create such a new system for versions after

One interesting new study based on previous "best practice preview.aspx?doc\_id=3731860 particularly pages 35, /web\_forms\_design\_guidelines\_an\_eyetracking\_study

Re: Please comment: Changing the advanced form items symbol to @  
by Olli Sevalainen - Saturday, 15 August 2009, 04:08 PM

I believe strongly that this is ultimately not a problem for administrators to solve. It is good if such control is provided (without cluttering the config UI further....) to admins who know their users, but I tend to assume most don't.

There is a related thread about this where I outlined some reasons for collapsible fieldsets vs. advanced items.

Re: Please comment: Changing the advanced form items symbol to @  
by Paul Shires - Thursday, 6 August 2009, 03:02 PM

If my screen reader follows each option with the word lozenge (assuming any screen readers are unicode aware) what useful information does that convey to me? Compared to an image with an alt="Advanced Option". Although on hearing "Advanced Option" a number of times I might prefer "lozenge" for brevity

The wall of forms in Moodle is high on my list of dislikes so I love the idea of simplifying things.

I am not sure where these advanced options go but my 2c is that I don't think advanced options should be mixed up with regular options. If they should exist at all I think they should be in another fieldset, or in a tab, or another screen.

I don't even think there should be advanced options most of the time.

For most configuration UIs I would prefer the first tab (or fieldset or whatever) being general options with the absolute minimum required for 90% of cases with sensible defaults. And tabs or fieldsets or some other grouping labeled according to what these particular "advanced" options do for the rest. Only when the non-typical options require expert knowledge would I call them "advanced" (for instance the network prefs on osx) and unlike the "advanced" tab in firefox settings which don't seem to be any more or less advanced than any of the other settings.

I am new to Macs but the gear symbol on the Mac seems to be more of a context menu for a system with no guarantee of a right mouse button. As such I think it could be a really useful device to use on the web which is cursed with the same problem. But it doesn't automatically scream "advanced option" to me.

Its not even a matter of separating them in tabs , imho it doesnt make sense having tabs saying mandatory field and another saying optional fields, from usability point of you most users wont even care to visit the optional part then,

i think it will do good if its grouped properly in the page as two separate divisions with some interactive YUI stuff which by default contracts the optional fields but does show the user there exists more info which he can fillout.

I think they should be in another fieldset, or in a tab, or another screen.

I don't even think there should be advanced options most of the time.

For most configuration UIs I would prefer the first tab (or fieldset or whatever) being general options with the absolute minimum required for 90% of cases with sensible defaults. And tabs or fieldsets or some other grouping labeled according to what these particular "advanced" options do for the rest. Only when the non-typical options require expert knowledge would I call them "advanced" (for instance the network prefs on osx) and unlike the "advanced" tab in firefox settings which don't seem to be any more or less advanced than any of the other settings.

I am new to Macs but the gear symbol on the Mac seems to be more of a context menu for a system with no guarantee of a right mouse button. As such I think it could be a really useful device to use on the web which is cursed with the same problem. But it doesn't automatically scream "advanced option" to me.

anced

ys they work. If we did have clear e forms. During the process, we would d not be impossible. At the moment it is:

d MS Word UI (pre-2007) had loads of dvanced items are required, in the context pre-2007.) If we took those advanced in advanced option might not make sense d to have some reliable means of finding

ost of the users

it convey to me? vity

e has

ould exist at all I

# Confusion

- What should have happened?
  - Design and make a Gucci Rattle
  - THEN - Show it to the community
  - Get Feedback
  - Improve it
  - You don't HAVE to appease everyone – don't let your Rattle become a Discover and Play

# Conclusions

- Engaging with the community is immensely rewarding
  - Recognition
  - Quality checking
  - Motivation!

# Conclusions

- Great way to contribute to the project, even if you're not a coder!
  - Translators
  - Ideas
  - End-user experience
  - Bugs

# Conclusions

Communities need management to keep them on task and productive - avoid design by community!

# Contribution, Collaboration and Confusion

## Engaging with a Community

Mark Johnson  
Web Developer, Taunton's College, Southampton

E-mail: [johnsom@tauntons.ac.uk](mailto:johnsom@tauntons.ac.uk)  
Twitter: @marxjohnson