

Upgrading Moodle 5.0 to Moodle 5.1 on a VPS

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Version 2

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Addendum

- Version 1 ~ October 12, 2025
- Posted "Quickie Presentation" on Moodle.org



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Addendum

- Version 1 ~ October 12, 2025
- Version 2 ~ November 25, 2025



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Objectives

- On my GoDaddy VPS
 - Upgrade Moodle 5.0 to Moodle 5.1
 - To demonstrate a method for future Moodle upgrades

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Moodle 5.1 – What's new?

1. A change in Moodle folders
 - A new /public/ folder
2. A "Server Configuration" change
 - Cannot go to www.mydomain.com/moodle/ folder
3. php.ini: Enable zend.exception_ignore_args=ON
4. Optional "Composer" accessory
 - No change in php or database versions
 - PHP 8.2
 - MySQL 8.4

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Overview and Preparation

- Moodle upgrading varies
 - Manual upgrade
 - Git upgrade
- Moodle's Upgrading docs are good
 - I use a slightly different order and method
- Tools
 - cPanel, Terminal, FTP, and Others
 - cPanel: File Manager, Manage Databases, Terminal, phpMyAdmin, Cron
 - Mac: Terminal, Forklift, Finder
- Upgrade to 5.1 - Moodle 4.3.2 or newer
- Requires "zend.exception_ignore_args = On" in php.ini

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Overview and Preparation

- Add “**upgrade key**” in config.php

```
$CFG->directorypermissions = 0777;  
$CFG->upgradekey = 'myfavoritepassword';
```
- Additional **plugin** versions for 5.1 **compatibility**
 - Remove those that are not compatible
 - Remove unused plugins
- **Code placement**
 - Folder **inside** or outside of web root
 - Web root (**public.html**, htdocs, docroot, www, or document root)
 - Within web root
 - Sub-domain
- **Experimental server** (herkysmith.com)
- **Goal:** Keep Moodle 5.1 inside web root

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Upgrading Moodle

Steps

1. Prepare a **new** Moodle by **downloading** and **unzipping** the code in a **temporary** location
2. Copy **config.php** from old to new
3. Manage plugins from old to new
4. Make any **code changes** to the new
5. **Backup** your old Moodle site
6. **Replace** the old folder with the new
7. * Create a **symbolic link** to the new Moodle
8. **Log in to Moodle** to complete the update

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1. Prep New Moodle

- Download latest from Moodle.org
- Move the downloaded file into a temporary location
- Extract it
- Rename it (e.g., moodle5)

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Step 2. Copy config.php

- `cp -p ~/public_html/moodle5/config.php
~/mdl_temp/moodle5/config.php`
- Use a shell script, then
 - "sh 2*"

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Step 3. Manage Plugins

- Rick's plugins
 1. Checklist
 2. Collapsed Topics
 3. Sharing Cart
 4. Configurable Reports
- Copy from old to new
- Shell script is **easiest**

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Step 4. Making Code Changes

- Generally **discouraged**
- Sometimes the only solution
- **SED** is a streaming editor utility
- Example (all on one line)
 - `sed -i'.bak' 's/VENDOR name="mysql"
version="8.4"/VENDOR name="mysql" version="8.0"/g'
$www/$temp_folder/public/admin/environment.xml`

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Step 5. Backup Old Moodle

- I do **nightly** site backups with a **script** run by **cron**
- Enable "maintenance mode"
 - `php ~/temp_foder/$moodle/admin/cli/maintenance.php --enable`
- Backup...
- Moodle code, Moodle database, moodledata folder
- Many examples on Moodle.org

```
# echo "Backup the current Moodle"
source "$buscript"
    where $buscript is the name of your backup script
```

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Step 6. Replace Old with New

1. **Remove** previous moodle_old folder, if it exists
2. **Rename** the old moodle folder, appending "_old" to its name
3. **Move** the new prepped moodle folder into place

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Step 7. Create Symbolic Link

- **Note:** This is a **new step** for **Moodle 5.1** and later
- **Create** a symbolic link file pointing to **"/public"** in moodle
 - Example:
 - `ln -fs ~/public_html/moodle5/public ~/public_html/moodle`
- **Edit config.php**
 - Ensure that `$CFG->wwwroot` uses the **link file name**
- **Rule:** Symbolic link file name cannot match the moodle folder name

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Step 8. Log in to Moodle

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Summary

- My website looks and functions fine, moodle5 is in public_html
 - No need to mess with "document root," Apache config files, or a subdomain
- Required:
 - Symbolic link file
 - Some items are in Moodle's /public folder

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Future Changes

- Rick's method
 - `up_m5.sh` – contains steps 2 through 7
- After initial upgrade of 5.0 to 5.1, in `up_m5.sh`
 - Change `mdl_public_folder` from "" to "public"
- Move moodle folder **outside** of web root
 - `mv -i ~/public_html/moodle5 ~/mdl_sites/moodle5`
 - `ln -fs ~/mdl_sites/moodle5/public ~/public_html/moodle`
- **Edit cron job** when moving Moodle folder
- Change `mdl_code_location` to "mdl_sites"

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Future Changes

- Placing Moodle code directly into web root
 - Create a symbolic link to (web root)/public
- Or
- Change the Document root to (web root)/public

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Moodle Resources



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