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 ~/$temp_fooder/$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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