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Slower on purpose: the new Update Queue, and why it is off by default

Firing every update at once is what takes a shared server down. The new Update Queue runs one update at a time per server, with live progress and cancellable jobs. It is opt-in and off by default, and this explains why.

Phil E. Taylor | 25 August 2026

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Select every out-of-date site, click update, walk away. It is the whole point of managing sites from one dashboard, and for most people it works fine.

Then you get an account with a thousand sites on a single shared server, all of them selected, and the updates go out at once. The server does not survive that. On core updates it falls over under the load. On extension updates you can break an individual site instead, because two updates race inside the same install and neither expected company.

The new **Update Queue** fixes that by doing less at a time. It runs at most one update per server, and everything else waits its turn. It is opt-in, it is off unless you switch it on, and it will make your big batches take longer. That is the feature, not a side effect.

What actually goes wrong when you update everything at once

Two different failures, and they need separating because they have different victims.

The first is the server. A Joomla or WordPress core update is not a small job: download, extract, run the post-install work, hit the database. One of those is unremarkable. Several hundred at the same moment on one box is a load spike, and shared hosting is where the sites-per-server count is highest and the resource headroom is smallest. The server goes down and it takes every site on it with it, including the ones you were not touching.

The second is the individual site. Two extension updates running against the same install at the same time can collide: both writing files, both touching the database, neither aware of the other. You end up with one site broken by its own maintenance.

The assumption we got wrong

We very nearly left WordPress plugin updates out of the queue, on the belief that WordPress serialises bulk plugin updates anyway and could not collide with itself. It does not. Each plugin is updated in its own request, and the bulk update button fires those requests concurrently rather than one after another. The serialisation we were relying on was never there. WordPress plugin updates are in the queue for the same reason Joomla extension updates are.

What the Update Queue does

When queueing is on, every update you trigger joins a queue for the server that site lives on. One update runs, the rest wait, and the next starts the moment the previous one reaches a conclusion. It covers Joomla core, WordPress core, Joomla extensions and WordPress plugins, and it does not matter how you started the update: the dashboard, the API and the MCP tools all go through the same queue.

You are not left guessing what it is doing. There is a progress bar in the header while a batch is running, a page showing each server with its running job and everything queued behind it, and anything that has not started yet can be cancelled.

Because one update of any kind runs per server at a time, you also get the same-site collision fixed for free. A core update and an extension update on one site cannot overlap, because they are both in the same lane.

One lane per server, not one queue for everything

The queue is not a single global line. It is one lane per server, so a slow update on one host never holds up a completely unrelated host. Ten servers means ten updates running at once, one on each.

The detail worth explaining is what identifies a server, because getting it wrong would have been worse than not building the feature. Lanes are keyed on **your account plus the server hostname**, never the hostname on its own.

Hostnames are not unique. Hosting companies hand out the same generic names again and again, so the same string turns up across customers who have nothing to do with each other. In our own data one such name appears on 340 sites belonging to unrelated people, and another on 403. (Both are real counts from our platform; we have changed the names here.) Had we keyed lanes on the hostname alone, one customer's slow update would have blocked a stranger's, and neither would have been able to work out why.

About fifteen per cent of connected sites do not report a hostname at all. Those fall back to a lane of their own, per site, which is the cautious answer: it still prevents a site colliding with itself, and it never lets one unidentifiable site block anything else.

Why is it off by default?

Because queueing is slower, and most accounts do not need it.

If you have a handful of sites, or your sites are spread across a lot of different hosts, they were never colliding in the first place. Turning queueing on for those accounts would mean waiting for a problem you do not have. It starts to matter somewhere around twenty or more sites on the same server, which is where "update everything" and "take the server down" become the same action.

There is a version of this feature that ships on by default and quietly makes every customer's mass update slower to protect the minority who need it. We did not want to build that one. You know your own hosting, and whether your sites are stacked on one box or scattered across twenty, far better than we can infer it. So it is a switch, and it is yours.

> **Note**
>
> Queueing does not add artificial delay. A single update on an idle server is admitted immediately and starts within seconds, rather than waiting for the next tick of a timer. The waiting only appears when there is genuinely something ahead of you on that server.

How do I turn it on?

Open **Tools** and choose **Update Queue**, or press Cmd+K and use the hotkey `u q`.

On that page, click **Enable update queueing**. Three things happen: updates start queueing per server from that moment, the queue is starred in your menu so you can find it again, and the page starts showing you lanes instead of an explanation.

The setting is company-wide rather than per-user, so it applies to everyone on the account rather than just the person who flipped it. If someone else on your team turns it on, your updates queue too.

Switching it off is the same journey and takes effect immediately. Updates go back to applying the moment you ask for them, and past queue activity stays on the page.

What it deliberately does not do

It does not retry failures. A failed update is marked failed, the error is kept and shown on the queue page, and the lane moves on to the next job. Nothing tries again on its own. An update that failed once usually fails the same way twice, and automatic retries on a half-finished update are how one broken site becomes several. Read the error, fix the cause, trigger it again yourself.

It does not reorder your work. Jobs run oldest first within their lane. There is no priority scheme to learn and nothing jumps the queue.

It does not make the updates themselves any faster or slower. Each update takes exactly as long as it always did. The only thing that changes is how many of them are allowed to happen at once.

It is not a substitute for backups. Queued updates are still updates. Take a backup first, the same as you would if you were applying them one at a time by hand, which in effect is now what is happening.

Who should turn this on

Turn it on if a meaningful number of your sites share a server, and especially if you have ever had a mass update coincide with a site or a server going down. If you are on shared hosting or a reseller plan with a lot of sites on one box, this is aimed squarely at you.

Leave it off if you have a small number of sites, or if your estate is spread thinly across many hosts. You would only be adding a wait.

If you are not sure which describes you, the Servers view groups your connected sites by the server they are on, which answers the question in about ten seconds. If one server has a long list under it, you are the person this was built for.

You can also just try it. It is a toggle, it applies immediately, and switching it back is one click. Run one mass update with it on and see whether the wait bothers you more than the risk did.

Further Reading

- How to mass upgrade Joomla and WordPress sites from one dashboard
- How to update Joomla, Joomla extensions, WordPress and WordPress plugins from mySites.guru
- How to enable Joomla extension auto updates
- Automatic updates for any Joomla extension
- Updating Joomla in the official Joomla documentation
- Updating WordPress in the WordPress developer handbook

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Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Update Queue?

It is an opt-in setting that makes mySites.guru run one update at a time per server instead of firing them all at once. When it is on, every update you trigger joins a queue for the server that site sits on, and the next one starts as soon as the previous finishes. It covers Joomla core, WordPress core, Joomla extensions and WordPress plugins, and it applies to updates started from the dashboard, the API and the MCP tools alike.

Why is it off by default?

Because it is slower, and most accounts do not need it. If you have a handful of sites, or your sites are spread across different hosts, they never collide with each other and queueing would just make you wait. It matters when you have twenty or more sites on the same server, which is exactly where firing every update at once is what takes that server down. You know your hosting better than we do, so it is your call rather than ours.

How do I turn the Update Queue on?

Open Tools and choose Update Queue, or press Cmd+K and type the hotkey u q. On that page, click Enable update queueing. The setting is company-wide rather than per-user, so it applies to everyone on the account, and enabling it stars the queue in your menu so you can get back to it. You can switch it off again at any time, and updates go back to applying immediately.

Does it retry an update that fails?

No, and that is deliberate. A failed update is marked failed, the error is shown on the queue page, and the queue moves straight on to the next job for that server. Nothing retries by itself. Automatic retries on a broken update tend to turn one problem into several, so re-triggering is left to you once you have read the error.

Will queueing make my updates take much longer?

A big batch takes as long as your servers need, and that is the trade you are making. The queue does not add artificial delay: a single update on an idle server starts within seconds rather than waiting for a timer, and each finished job admits the next one immediately. The wait only shows up when many sites share one server, which is the situation the queue exists for.

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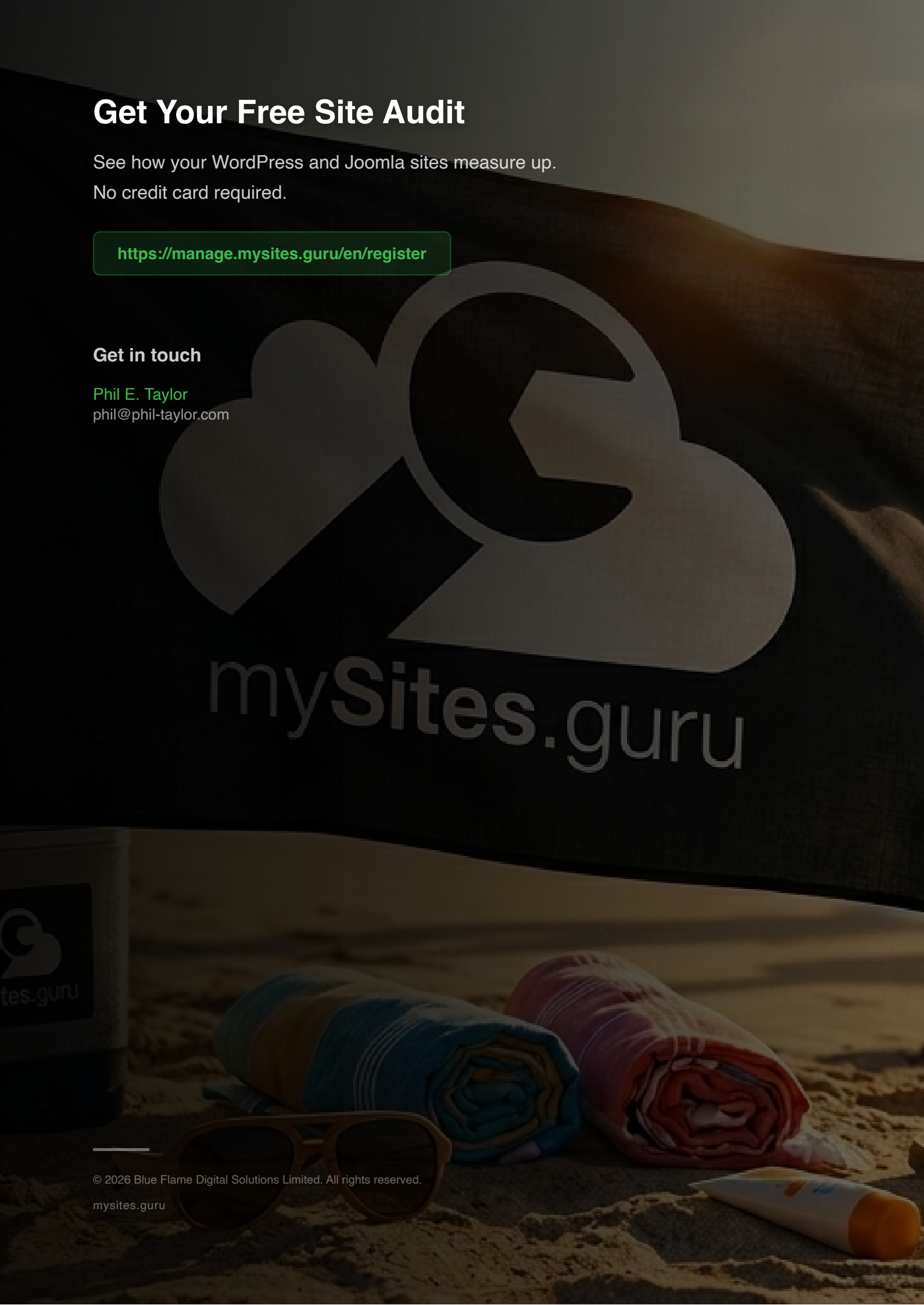

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