

1. Requirements

In order to work correctly, K2Compare needs the following system parameters:

- a. Joomla! 2.5.x – latest available version of Joomla!
- b. K2 v.2.5.x – latest available version of the component
- c. PHP 5.2/5.3
- d. MySQL 5.0.4+

2. Installation

To install the component you need to download the K2Compare package from our site (<http://styleware.eu>).

The package includes the component, module and two plugins. These four extensions are needed for the proper work of the component.

After you download the pkg_k2compare.zip file from our site, you need to install it in your Joomla! site. The installation of the package is standard as every Joomla! extension installation.

Follow the next steps to install the K2Compare package:

1. Go to Administration of your Joomla! site (<http://mysite.com/administrator>)
2. Navigate to Extensions → Extensions manager
3. In the "Upload Package File" section of the page, select the Browse button and navigate to the pkg_k2compare.zip file on your computer.
4. Select the file and then click on Upload & Install to install the K2Compare package
5. After the installation you will receive this message:
"Installing component was successful.
Thank you for installing K2Compare by StyleWare"

Now you successfully installed the K2Compare package.

3. Configuration

After the installation you need to make some configurations to the component and the module.

a. Plugins

K2Compare has two plugins that support the component. The plugins are automatically installed with "Enabled" status. In order to work correctly the plugins must stay enabled.

The plugins are responsible for loading JS and CSS files and displaying a "Add to compare list" link under every item.

Since the link is added by the plugin, this allows you to display it in K2 component and every module that trigger the K2 plugins.

Example: If you have mod_k2_content in the left column of your site, you can add the "Add to compare list" link under the items displayed by module.

b. Module

With the package you also receive the K2Compare module. This module allows you to show K2 Items added for comparison.

When the user click on "Add to compare list" link, the K2 item is added in the module without refresh of the page, this is possible due to the fact that the K2Compare module is AJAX based.

In the administration you can edit the following parameters of the module:

- Image – displays or hides the image of the selected for comparison K2 item
- Intro text – displays or hides the intro text of the selected K2 item
- Intro text limit – in this parameter you can set the number of words that will be displayed as intro text
- Select template – the module allows you to have different templates for him. This is useful if you want to have custom designs for different menus of your site

K2Compare module also support all standard Joomla! features: MVC structure, templates, many instances of the module, different menu assignments, module class suffix and etc.

c. Component

The component is the main part of the K2Compare package and is responsible for the comparing of the items and displaying the comparing table.

After the installation you may need to check the component options.



Go to Joomla! Administration → Components → K2Compare, after that navigate to the Options icon upright in the toolbar. A modal form will be open with all settings of the component. From here you can show or hide parts of the K2 Items in the comparing view.

You can choose to show or hide following parts: Title, Image, Rating, Date created, Author, Full text, Intro text, Extra fields, Hits, and Date modified.

By adding a value in "Maximum words in full text/intro text" you can set the length of the text that will be displayed as full text or intro text.

"Max items to compare" allow you to control how many items can be compared at once. This useful when you want to optimize the comparing view according to your template width.

"Yes" value/ "No" value – these settings are used by the component to find which values must be transformed from text to icons:

- "Yes" value will be transformed to 
- "No" value will be transformed to 

From the component options you can also change the compare view template and on which categories to be displayed the "Add to compare list" link.

d. Menu item

You can add the comparing view of the component as menu item. This will allow you to have SEF URL for the view, different templates for every compare menu and also you can assign specific modules. Go to Menus -> Your menu -> New, then from menu type select K2 Compare -> Compared Items, add name for the menu and save it. Now you can have SEF URL, specific modules and custom design for the compared items view.

4. Adding weight to values

K2Compare use the Extra Fields of K2 for comparing of the items.

To create Extra Fields for your K2 Items, you need first to create Extra Field Group. After that from "Extra Fields" section of K2 you need to create some extra fields in order to be able to compare the items. Last, you need to open your K2 category and attach the extra field group to it.

After you complete the steps above, you need to add values for the extra fields of your items.

K2 Compare compares the values of the extra fields, so you can't compare items without extra fields or those who don't have extra field values.

Since the values of the fields in K2 could be from all types, especially text string, to compare them, you need to add weight for every value.

Example:

Category: Laptops

Extra Field Group: Computer fields

Extra Fields: CPU, RAM, Hard Disk

In this category you have 2 items: Asus N53 and Lenovo Y530

Extra Fields	ASUS N53	LENOVO Y530
CPU	Intel i7	Intel i5
RAM	8GB	16GB
Hard disk	700GB	520GB
Display	15"	15"

To add weight (coefficient) of the value of the field, you need to go to K2Compare component. In the main view of the component are listed all K2 Extra Fields.

To view all values of the field you need to click on the name of the field, then will be opened the "Add Coefficient" view of K2Compare.

In this view are listed all values that are added in K2 Items for that field.

For every value you can add decimal number for weight in the "Coef" column.

If we go back to the example above, when you open "CPU" field you will have the following table:

#	Value	Field type	Coef
1	Intel i7	Text field	2
2	Intel i5	Text field	1

The value "Intel i7" has biggest weight, so when you compare the Laptops all fields that contain "Intel i7" will be marked as better.

5. How the comparing works?

When you click on the "Compare" link of the module you get the compare view of the component with all selected items.

The items are displayed one by one in HTML table and every part of the item is a separate row – title, image, text, extra fields and etc.

For every extra field the component calculates which value has higher weight and adds "better" class for this value. In the current style of the component this values are displayed in with green color.

Also the component calculates which item is with the highest score is – this is the items with most values that have highest weights (coefficients).

Let's take a look on our example:

Extra Fields	ASUS N53 (BEST)	LENOVO Y530
CPU	Intel i7 (2)	Intel i5 (1)
RAM	8GB (5)	16GB (8)
Hard disk	700GB (1.2)	520GB (1.1)
Display	15" (4)	15" (4)

The weights are in the brackets and the values with highest weight are marked in green:

CPU: Intel i7 > Intel i5

RAM: 8GB < 16GB

Hard disk: 700GB > 520GB

Display: 15" = 15" – none of the values are marked as better

Overall ASUS N53 has 2 values as better and LENOVO Y530 has only one, in this case the ASUS N53 has a higher score and it's marked as **BEST**.

6. Other

There a few other things that you must know when you work with K2Compare.

The component work with sessions, so when you select few items for compare, they are saved in the session and when you navigate on your site or even close it, when you go back the items will waiting for you in the K2Compare module.

Another useful feature is that you can copy the compare view link and send to someone else. The link contains the information of the items that

you have compared and the receiver of the link will open the exact same items.

Example:

<http://extensions.styleware.eu/component/k2compare/?view=compare&Itemid=177&items=85,84>

"&items=85,84" this URL parameter contains the IDs of the compared items.

K2Compare have all standard Joomla! benefits. The component have MVC structure and template structure, so you can override the output of the component or have different templates for the modules or for the views.

7. Support

If you have any questions or need support you can always rely on Styleware.

You can find us at office@styleware.eu or in our forum: <http://styleware.eu/forum>.

StyleWare Team
<http://www.styleware.eu>