

# Mzalendo Operations Manual

This is a **work in progress** - please add comments to highlight any missing content.

## Introduction

This document contains all the information needed to run a Mzalendo site - such as how the data is stored, how to deal with user feedback, how to request changes to the code and how various parts of the site can be configured.

It is a public document so no private information such as passwords should be stored in here. Write access should be granted to anyone running a Mz site so that they can make additions as required. Commenting is enabled for everyone.

## Community

There is a mailing list for users of Mzalendo which is probably the best place to ask questions and get support. If you are developing a site with Mzalendo please join.

<https://groups.google.com/forum/?fromgroups=#!forum/mzalendo-users>

## Mzalendo Overview

Originally written for <http://www.mzalendo.com>, a Kenyan monitoring site, the code is now being reused in other countries. “Mzalendo” means “patriot” in Kiswahili. Development was done by <http://www.mysociety.org> - a UK based charity and the code is open source and available at <https://github.com/mysociety/mzalendo>.

Mzalendo is based on a web framework called Django. This provides a structure for the code and also a built in admin interface to the data in the database.

## User Feedback

Users of the site are able to leave feedback on any page and it is stored in a queue accessible via the Django admin. We store the url of the page they were on, their comment and an optional email address. If they are logged in we store who they are as well, but anonymous feedback is permitted.

Feedback can be anything from corrections to the information on the site, to suggestions for site improvements, to random ranting.

## **Misdirected feedback**

Often people leaving feedback on a person's page will think that they are sending comments directly to that person. In most cases it is sufficient to email them back explaining their mistake. Suitable wording is:

INSERT RESPONSE WORDING HERE

## **Spam**

Spam bots tend to stuff rubbish into the feedback form :(

We try to combat this in two ways: There is a honeypot field (one that is visible to spambots but not to humans) that if filled in means that the feedback is labeled as spam. Any feedback that starts with an HTML tag is also labeled as spam. This is a very crude approach, but appears to be effective.

It is possible to view all the spammy feedback in one go and delete it all. This makes it easy to process. In future we may add the ability to automatically delete the spam, but we'd need to be sure that we weren't discarding genuine feedback by mistake.

## **Comments**

Comments are provided through the external comment service Disqus: <http://disqus.com>. To enable them create an account on Disqus and then add the shortname to the website configuration. Comments will then appear on most pages. Administration of comments is done on the disqus website.