# BF Auction Plus User Guide

## The user guide for BF Auction Plus

**Tim Plummer**

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# Table of Contents

# Chapter 1. Introducing BF Auction Plus

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. What is BF Auction Plus

BF Auction Plus is an auction extension for Joomla 2.5.x and Joomla 3.x.

## 2. Support

If you have a problem with BF Auction Plus, please raise a support ticket [http://tamlynsoftware.com/contact-us/support-tickets.html].

## 3. System Requirements

Joomla 2.5.x or Joomla 3.x

GD Image Library - this is already installed on most web hosts, and is used for thumbnail generation when uploading images.

## 4. Installation

### 4.1. Installation - New Install

BF Auction Plus is installed the same way that most extensions are, via the back end.

• Extensions->Extension Manager

Browse for the install package then click Upload & Install

You should see `Install Component Success` message.

### 4.2. Installaion - Upgrade

BF Auction Plus uses the upgrade install method, so you can install over the top of previous versions.

> **Warning**
>
> Do not uninstall BF Auction Plus prior to upgrading, as you will loose all your data.

It is always a good idea to do a full site backup prior to installing any new software versions. I recommend using Akeeba Backup.

Best practice is to install any new software on a development copy of your site, and fully test prior to upgrading the live site.

# Chapter 2. Configuration

## 1. Setting component options

There are a number of component options that you can set to customise the component to suit your needs. This is also where you set the permissions. When you've adjusted as required, press save & close.

There are quite a lot of settings, which we will explore later, including setting the currecy and date format you would like to use for your auction.

### Warning

Note: if you have trouble uploading images, it can be due to the initial component options not getting set during install. In this case just go into options and save and close, and this will set a value for the maximum upload size etc and can solve this issue.

## 2. Setting up categories

You need to create categories to put your items in, for example "laptop", "desktop" etc.

```
Components->BF Auction Plus
```

Click new button (top right)

Fill in the title, and make sure it's published, then click save & close button.

Repeat for other categories you would like.

## 3. Adding Auction Items

```
Components->BF Auction Plus

Click new button (top right)
```

Complete the details as required, then click the save button.

Repeat for other items you would like to add.

- Category: Mandatory field that assigns item to category.

- Title: Mandatory field with brief description of item.

- Status: Only items with published set to Yes will be shown on the front end.

- Description: Detailed description of item. Can contain HTML and images.

- Opening Bid: Only shown when item has just been created or has not been bid on yet, this allows you to set a starting bid. This field is replaced with current bid once someone has bid on the item.

- Current Bid: Read only field that will show the current highest bid. Cannot be changed.

- High Bidder: Read only field that will display name of the person with the current highest bid. Cannot be changed. Value of 0 means that no-one has bid on the item yet.

- Auction End Date & Time: Date and time that the auction for this item will end. After this time, no more bids will be accepted.

- Item Location: Optional text field to record where the item is located.

- Delivery Method: Optional text field to describe how winning bidder will obtain item.

- Shipping: Shipping cost that is added to the winning bid.

- Image 1-5: These are the images shown on the auction item. The first image is shown as the main image. We'll talk more about uploading images later.

- Product ID (optional): This is your internal product reference number that is also passed to PayPal.

- Payment Type: If set to PayPal, buy now buttons will be shown to the winning bidder. Other payment gateways may be added in a future version.

- PayPal Email: This is the email address that the PayPal payment is sent to.

- Buy now price: A fixed price that the customer can pay now to purchase the item instead of attempting to win via bidding.

# 4. Image lightbox

Clicking on any image will trigger the lightbox popup

Size depends on the image size set in your component options.

# 5. Countdown timer updated via AJAX

The auction end time counts down to show how long is left before the auction ends for this auction. This time is updated via AJAX every 8-10 seconds, so if your auction end time increases near the end of the auction due to bids in the last few minutes, then this time will be adjusted accordingly without having to refresh to page.

# 6. Current bid updated via AJAX

The current bid is updated via AJAX every 8-10 seconds. This means that if someone else bids on an item, the current bid will be increased without you having to refresh the page.

Then your bid amount will also be increased based on the minimum bid increment.

For example, if someone bids on the above item while you are viewing, after 10 seconds you will see the new current bid and your bid.

# 7. Copying Items

BF Auction Plus also includes a copy button to help make managing your items easier. Just select on or more items and press the Copy button.

By default, any copied item will be unpublished.

# Chapter 3. Adding a menu item for your Auction

## 1. Adding a menu item for your Auction

In menu manager (menus->menu manager), select the menu you would like to add the auction to, eg. Main menu (or just click menus->main menu->Add New Menu Item).

Select "Auction" as the menu item type

Enter a title, for example "Staff Auction"

On the right hand side, in the Required Settings section, you can select a category to limit the auction to a specific category of items. If you want to show all auction items regardless of category, just set Show All categories to "Yes". If you only want to show one specific category, set this to "No".

There are a number settings in Auction Options that you can adjust to customise your auction.

- Show Disclaimer: Choose yes if you want to show a disclaimer message before the auction item listing.

- Disclaimer Text: This is the text of the disclaimer page. You can include HTML.

- Row shading colour: Used in conjunction with Alternate shading colour, this allows you to have alternate rows in the auction listing different colours. You can select the colour or just type it in.

- Send email notification: Choose yes if you want email notifications to be sent. There are several types of emails that you set up via the email templates.

- Currency Symbol: This is the symbol before all prices, eg. Dollars will show $

- PayPal currency Code: If you are using PayPal to accept payments for your auction items then this sets the currency used, eg. AUD for Australian dollar.

- Date format: This allows you to change the date format. Please refer to http://php.net/manual/en/function.strftime.php

- Bid Increment: This is the minimum bid increment. If the current bid is $10, and bid increment is set to 1, then the next bid must be $11 or more. Please note that each auction item can have it's own minimum bid increment which overrides this setting.

- Apply Daylight Savings Fix: Some places such as Sydney often find their Joomla! Sites are 1 hour out due to daylight savings. This parameter allows you to factor in for daylight savings if your location requires it. Only turn this on if your auction time is out by an hour even though you have the correct timezone set in your global config.

- Reverse Auction: This turns all your auction items into a reverse auction, where the bid starts out high and reduces each bid. The lowest bid wins, however note that price cannot be negative, so the lowest possible bid will be determined by the minimum bid increment.

- Only show user's own bids: This setting hides other people's bids in the bid history.

- Hide bid if buy now: Use this setting if you want all your auction items using PayPal buy now price to disable the bidding, so that item can only be purchased at fixed buy now price.

- Increase End time: When getting near the end of your auction item's end time, and a user bids in the last few seconds, you can increase the end time to give other people ample time to bid on an item. This avoids the issue of bid snipers when they wait till the last few seconds to place a winning bid. Use this setting in conjunction with the next two parameters.

- Last X minutes: Used with Increase End Time, this defines the period of time at the end of the auction where bids trigger an end time increase. For example, if set to 5 mins, a bid when there is 3mins left will trigger the auction end time for the item to be increased.

- Increase amount (mins): Used with above two settings, this is the amount of time that the auction end time is increased when bids are placed in the last few minutes of the auction.

- Commission percent: This allows you to add a commission amount on top of the bid price.

- Include Tax: This allows you to add tax on top of the bid amount. Used in conjunction with tax percent.

- Tax Percent: This is the percentage tax that is added to the bid amount.

- Show Total Price: This give a total that includes the commission and tax.

- Width of main image: This is the width of the large image on the item details page (bid).

- Maximum image width: This is the width of the larger image shown in the lightbox popup when you click on the thumbnail image.

- Maximum image height: This is the height of the larger image shown in the lightbox popup when you click on the thumbnail image.

- Thumbnail image width: This is the width of the thumbnail image used for the item listing and for images 2-5 on the item details page.

- Thumbnail image height: This is the height of the thumbnail image used for the item listing and for images 2-5 on the item details page.

- Max image size: Used for image uploads. Please note that the maximum image size possible on your server will be restricted by the upload_max_filesize setting in your php.ini, so do not set it larger than this limit. It needs to include the size of all 5 images (if you upload them at once).

# Chapter 4. Your auction item

## 1. By item minimum bid increment

Each auction item can have it's own minimum bid increment. If set to 0 it will use the default from the auction menu item.

## 2. Integrating plugins in your auction item

The description field uses content.prepare to display the output, you can now integrate any plugin that works for articles, for example Allvideos.

For AllVideos, make sure you have the plugin installed and published.

Now in your auction item, you can insert {youtube}Xr2mhMHhUMY{/youtube} into the description (where Xr2mhMHhUMY is the youtube id of the video you want to insert).

Your auction item now displays the youtube video.

## 3. Buy now button

You can set a buy now price, which will display the buy now button on the item.

Pressing the Yes commit to purchase will immediately end the auction, and set the bid to the buy now price.

If you have PayPal button turned on, you will also see the Pay Now button

If buy now price is lower than the current bid, it does not allow the purchase.

## 4. Ability to have a reverse Auction

A reverse auction is where instead of the bids starting low and increasing, the initial bid amount starts out high then each bid is lower than the current bid, so the winning bidder is the person who bids the lowest amount. Reverse auctions can be used when several suppliers are competing for business, and they all try to offer the lowest price for the product or service so that they can secure your business.

Bids cannot be negative, the lowest possible bid is the minimum bid increment.

To setup a reverse auction item, when you create your auction items you must set an initial opening bid

In your menu item auction options set Reverse Auction to Yes.

Warning, all items displayed through that menu item will operate as a reverse auction, so if you have normal auction items ensure that you limit the reverse auction to only one specific category of items.

Now the default next bid is the current bid minus the bid increment.

For reverse auctions, you cannot bid higher than the current bid

# 5. Redirect returns to item on unsuccessful bid rather than item list view.

If you bid is not accepted, the redirect will take you back to the item you were bidding on rather than the list of items.

# 6. Link to log in

If you click on an auction item and you are not logged in to Joomla, you now see a "Click here to log in" link, which will take you to the default Joomla login form.

# Chapter 5. Third Party Integration

## 1. Comments

Version 1.3.1 or greater integrate with Komento by Stack Ideas. Prior versions integrate with JComments.

# Chapter 6. Front end

## 1. Viewing your auction

Click on your menu item that you created above

Optional disclaimer will be shown if set in menu item parameters component.

If no disclaimer, it will go straight to auction items.

## 2. Bidding

Click on item title or bid now button

Only registered users that are logged in can bid on an item.

Once logged in, you will see the Bid Now button.

Successful bids will show Bid confirmed.

Bids must be greater than the current bid by at least the minimum bid increment

Bid history will show all bids on this item.

When item End Date & Time is exceeded, message will show that auction has ended.

You cannot bid on an item where the auction has ended.

## 3. Front End Auction Item management

BF Auction Plus allows you to maintain auction items via the front end of your Joomla site. To enable this you will need to set the permissions in the component options as well as adding an additional menu item.

The menu item required is My Auction Items

You must be logged in to see the My Items view on the front end.

If you want registered users to be able to create auction items on the front end, you need to give them create access to the categories you want them to see.

You also need to give them access to the component

In the my auction items view on the front end, to see the new button you need create access to the component.

To be able to edit the items, you also need edit permissions for the category that the item is in.

You also need to give them edit permission for the for BF Auction Plus component

You also need edit state to be able to publish/unpublish the items.

Now the user will see the categories you have given them permission to see, so that they can create auction items in that category.

Please note that the user can only see/edit auction items that they have created when using the My Items view on the front end. Back End Joomla users can see all items.

# Chapter 7. Customising your Auction

## 1. Language files

The front end language file /language/en-GB/en-GB.com_bfauction_plus.ini contains the text used in the auction for buttons, error message etc. If you want to translate into your own language, copy the English language file into /language/nl-NL/nl-NL.com_bfauction_plus.ini (where nl-NL is your language).

Each line of your language file will be in the format:

ENGLISH_TEXT="Translated text"

For example:

COM_BFAUCTIONPLUS_ACTIVE="Actief"

If you would like your language file to be included in a future version, please feel free to get in touch via our contact form.

If you would like to make minor changes to the current language files, it is better to create language overrides rather than edit these language files directly, that way you will not have to reapply your changes each time you upgrade the software version.

## 2. Customising to suit the look of your site

You can adjust the css styles in /components/com_bfauction_plus/css/bfauction_plus.css, however be aware that any changes you make will be overwritten each time you upgrade the software. It may be better to add these styles to your site template. You can use the !important keyword to ensure that your setting is used.

As an example, lets change the colour of the items view, by changing the background-color in both the header and the body styles, and change the font colour of the header.

Front end item view after CSS change.

As you can see, you can change the look and feel to suit the colour scheme of your site. Obviously I don't recommend the above colours, they are just to demonstrate how different you can make the auction listing with just some minor css changes.

# Chapter 8. Features

## 1. Image Upload With Thumbnails

First you need to set the image and thumbnail sizes via the component options.

Please note that the maximum image size possible on your server will be restricted by the upload_max_filesize setting in your php.ini, so do not set it larger than this limit.

The image upload has a browse button that allows you to select a file from your computer to upload

Now when you save your auction item, it will upload your file, and resize it and create a thumbnail.

This will create two files in /images/com_bfauction_plus folder in the form:

Itemidimgsequenceno.jpg (300 x 400 pixels main image because max image height parameter is 400 and it will resize proportionally). Eg. 11img1.jpg for the first image for item id 11, 11img2.jpg for the second image for item id 11, etc.

Itemidimgsequenceno_t.jpg (68 x 90 pixel thumbnail, since our thumbnail image height parameter was 90 and it is resizing proportionally)

Now on the front end, the item listing view shows the thumbnail

When you click on this the larger image is shown in a popup window

And on the bid page, the main image is the larger version of image 1, with the thumbnails of images 2,3,4 & 5 shown. When you click on any of these, a popup window will allow you to look at the larger version of all the images.

Now when you edit an existing auction item, it shows the thumbnail image, with a delete checkbox. If you click the delete checkbox and save the item, the image will be deleted.

You could also potentially browse for a different image to replace the current one.

If you try to upload an image that is larger than the max image size parameter, it will tell you that your picture is too big and it will not upload that image.

## 2. Automatic Bidding

Automatic bidding is sometimes referred to as proxy bidding. It allows you to set a maximum price that you would like to bid, and the auction will automatically increase you bid up to this price as other people bid on that item.

To turn on automatic bidding you need to adjust your auction menu item parameters. You should also set this in your component options.

So now as an example, if I bid on an item which has a current bid of $8 and min bid increment of $1, and set my maximum bid to $15

It records my bid as $9 (current bid plus min bid increment)

And it records my maximum bid of $15 in the database.

So now if another person comes along and bids $10

It tells them that their bid is not accepted, and it automatically bids on behalf of the first user, increasing their bid to $10

You can see in the database the how the second bidders bid has been recorded, then the automatic bid for the first person.

And you can see the bids in the bid history

However, if the second person bids more than the automatic bid amount (eg $16), their bid is accepted as per normal (assuming it is the min bid increment higher than the other bidders max bid).

# 3. Watch List

Watch list allows users to keep track of items they are interested in.

You need to adjust the menu item parameter "allow watchlist" to turn on the watch list feature, it's turned off by default. You should also set this in your component options.

Each item has a "add to watch list" button

Which adds the item to their watch list view (you need to add new menu item for watch list)

The delete button removes the item from their watch list.

# 4. Delivery Address

Firstly there is a plugin in joomla core called User – Profile which you need to enable.

This plugin will add additional fields to the user registration form and user profile

This plugin stores the values in jos_user_profiles table, with each field being stored in a separate record

You can add a user profile menu item to allow registered users to edit their details

Now assuming a user has filled out this information, when they win an item it will show their address from their user profile

The word delivery address is a url link that allows them to edit their profile. This address information is passed to PayPal via the Pay Now button

The address in their profile at the time of the winning bid is also included in the auction item record.

# 5. Retract Bid

In some cases you may wish to remove a bid from an item. Only administrators can delete a bid. You can do this by doing the following

- In the backend, components->BF Auction Plus->items

- Select the auction item

- Click the "Bid History" link at the bottom left

- Click the "retract bid" button for the bid you wish to delete.

# Chapter 9. Advanced

## 1. How to import auction items

The easy way to get the correct format is to create at least one auction item, then press the export csv button. You can then edit this export and import the updated version.

Be aware that mySQL expects dates to be in the format yyyy-mm-dd hh:mm:ss, so before you save your csv file in excel you need to apply a custom cell format of yyyy-mm-dd hh:mm:ss otherwise the import will screw up all your dates.

# Chapter 10. Troubleshooting common problems

## 1. Emails are not being sent

Email settings are in your global configuration

- site->global configuration

- server tab

- mail settings

I find SMTP to be the most reliable mailer type.

You can test the email settings by doing the following:

- components->messaging

- my settings button

- email new messages = yes

- log in as a different administrator

- components->messaging->new private message

- select the original user account as the recipient, and send a test message.

## 2. My auction is ending too soon or too late

Joomla stores dates in UTC format (previously called GMT or effectively the time in the UK). BF Auction Plus uses this timezone setting from the global config to convert the date time to the your local date time, if this is set wrong then that could potentially cause an auction to end several hours before or after the end time.

# Chapter 11. Migrating from BF Auction Pro to BF Auction Plus

## 1. How to migrate from BF Auction Pro (Joomla 1.5) to BF Auction Plus (Joomla 3)

Install BF Auction Plus on the new website, then run the following SQL commands in phpMyAdmin. I'm assuming you have copied the BF Auction Pro tables from your Joomla 1.5 site to your new Joomla 3 site, as well as the entries from the jos_categories table. It is best to do this on a staging/development copy of your site, not on the live website. Note, replace jos_ with your table prefix.

DROP TABLE jos_bfauction_plus;

RENAME TABLE `jos_bfauction_pro` TO `jos_bfauction_plus`;

ALTER TABLE `jos_bfauction_plus` CHANGE `published` `state` tinyint(3) NOT NULL default '0';

ALTER TABLE `jos_bfauction_plus` ADD `archived` tinyint(1) NOT NULL DEFAULT '0', ADD `approved` tinyint(1) NOT NULL DEFAULT '1', ADD `access` int(11) NOT NULL DEFAULT '1', ADD `language` char(7) NOT NULL DEFAULT '', ADD `created` datetime NOT NULL DEFAULT '0000-00-00 00:00:00', ADD `created_by` int(10) unsigned NOT NULL DEFAULT '0', ADD `modified` datetime NOT NULL DEFAULT '0000-00-00 00:00:00', ADD `modified_by` int(10) unsigned NOT NULL DEFAULT '0', ADD `parent` int(11) NOT NULL, ADD `publish_up` datetime NOT NULL DEFAULT '0000-00-00 00:00:00', ADD `publish_down` datetime NOT NULL DEFAULT '0000-00-00 00:00:00', ADD `image6` varchar(255) NOT NULL, ADD `image7` varchar(255) NOT NULL, ADD `image8` varchar(255) NOT NULL, ADD `image9` varchar(255) NOT NULL, ADD `image10` varchar(255) NOT NULL, ADD `image11` varchar(255) NOT NULL, ADD `image12` varchar(255) NOT NULL, ADD `image13` varchar(255) NOT NULL, ADD `image14` varchar(255) NOT NULL, ADD `image15` varchar(255) NOT NULL, ADD `image16` varchar(255) NOT NULL, ADD `image17` varchar(255) NOT NULL, ADD `image18` varchar(255) NOT NULL, ADD `image19` varchar(255) NOT NULL, ADD `image20` varchar(255) NOT NULL, ADD `imageShared` int(11) NOT NULL default '0', ADD `saleType` tinyint(1) NOT NULL default '0', ADD `address1` varchar(255) NOT NULL default '', ADD `address2` varchar(255) NOT NULL default '', ADD `city` varchar(255) NOT NULL default '', ADD `region` varchar(255) NOT NULL default '', ADD `postcode` varchar(255) NOT NULL default '', ADD `country` varchar(255) NOT NULL default '', ADD `phone` varchar(255) NOT NULL default '', ADD `relistid` int(11) NOT NULL default '0', ADD `quantity` int(11) NOT NULL default '1', ADD `quantityPurchased` int(11) NOT NULL default '0', ADD `deliveryOption` varchar(255) NOT NULL, ADD `supplier` varchar(255) NOT NULL, ADD `costPrice` FLOAT( 10, 2 ) NOT NULL DEFAULT '0', ADD `featured` tinyint(3) unsigned NOT NULL DEFAULT '0', ADD `alias` varchar(255) NOT NULL DEFAULT '', ADD `metakey` text NOT NULL, ADD `metadesc` text NOT NULL, ADD `metadata` text NOT NULL, ADD `params` text NOT NULL, ADD `url` varchar(250) NOT NULL DEFAULT '', ADD `created_by_alias` varchar(255) NOT NULL DEFAULT '';

DROP TABLE jos_bfauction_plus_bid;

RENAME TABLE `jos_bfbid_pro` TO `jos_bfauction_plus_bid`;

ALTER TABLE `jos_bfauction_plus_bid` ADD `quantity` int(11) NOT NULL default '1', ADD `deliveryOption` varchar(255) NOT NULL;

DROP TABLE jos_bfauction_plus_email;

RENAME TABLE `jos_bfauction_email` TO `jos_bfauction_plus_email`;

ALTER TABLE `jos_bfauction_plus_email` CHANGE `published` `state` tinyint(3) NOT NULL default '0';

ALTER TABLE `jos_bfauction_plus_email` ADD `archived` tinyint(1) NOT NULL DEFAULT '0', ADD `approved` tinyint(1) NOT NULL DEFAULT '1', ADD `access` int(11) NOT NULL DEFAULT '1', ADD `language` char(7) NOT NULL DEFAULT '', ADD `created` datetime NOT NULL DEFAULT '0000-00-00 00:00:00', ADD `created_by` int(10) unsigned NOT NULL DEFAULT '0', ADD `modified` datetime NOT NULL DEFAULT '0000-00-00 00:00:00', ADD `modified_by` int(10) unsigned NOT NULL DEFAULT '0', ADD `parent` int(11) NOT NULL, ADD `publish_up` datetime NOT NULL DEFAULT '0000-00-00 00:00:00', ADD `publish_down` datetime NOT NULL DEFAULT '0000-00-00 00:00:00';

DROP TABLE jos_bfauctionplus_watchlist;

RENAME TABLE `jos_bfauctionpro_watchlist` TO `jos_bfauctionplus_watchlist`;

ALTER TABLE `jos_bfauctionplus_watchlist` ADD `emailSent` tinyint(1) NOT NULL default '0', ADD `emailDate` datetime NOT NULL default '0000-00-00 00:00:00';

UPDATE jos_categories set `extension` = 'com_bfauction_plus' where `extension` = 'com_bfauction_pro';