Akeeba Kickstart 3.0 User's Guide

Nicholas K. Dionysopoulos

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Abstract

This book covers the use of the Akeeba Kickstart web-based archive extraction software. It includes reference for its interface, as well as instructions for automating its operation.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1. Overview

Kickstart is a PHP executable file (*script*) use to automate the steps required before and after the restoration of site backed up with Akeeba Backup in a great extent. It can be used as a simple and efficient method of extracting the Akeeba Backup archives directly on the target server, or even used to extract other archive files including CMS and script installation files (e.g. Joomla!™, WordPress, Drupal, phpBB), update packages (Joomla! and WordPress can especially benefit from this use) or even archives containing large amounts of files you need to get on your server, fast.

When used with backup archives, Kickstart streamlines the archive extraction - uploading - restoration - post-restoration workflow by allowing you to omit unnecessary steps. As a matter of fact, you only need to upload Kickstart and the backup archive on the server you want to restore your site to. Kickstart will extract (i.e. "unzip") the archive *right on the server* , rename your `.htaccess` and php.ini files and give you a button to start the restoration script included in the backup archive (for example, Akeeba Backup Installer). When you're done with the restoration script, you click on the new button appearing on the Kickstart interface and it will rename back your `.htaccess` and php.ini files, remove the installation directory, delete the backup archive and finally remove itself as well. Housekeeping is taken care of itself!

Kickstart is also localisable, meaning that it can display itself in your own language. All you have to do is to upload your language's translation INI file in the same directory as `kickstart.php` .

2. Why do we need Kickstart, anyway?

Even though Akeeba Backup is designed as an effortless way of backing up your site, it is only good up to the point of having a backup archive. Restoring it is a pretty much different story.

At first, you have to download the file to your PC. Then extract it. Then upload all the files, via FTP, to you site (and, man, this is slow or what?). Then rename `.htaccess` to `htaccess.txt` and `php.ini` to `php.ini.bak` in order to avoid any conflicts. Go through the restoration process, which is the easy part. Then remove the installation directory. Finally, rename `htaccess.txt` to `.htaccess` and `php.ini.bak` to `php.ini`.

Did you notice something? Most of this is a common predefined procedure. The only human intervention truly required is for the restoration process part. Moreover, FTP'ing all those 3000+ files of even the smallest full site backup is an overkill. Because of all of this, Kickstart was born.

Kickstart works in conjunction with the ZIP / JPA archives, directly on the target server. Nothing else is required. You just upload kickstart.php and your archive to the server, visit `http://www.yourdomain.com/kickstart.php`, select the archive, wait, go through the restoration process, click the cleanup button and presto! Your site is up and running; the kickstart.php, the backup archive and the installation folder all gone, automatically. Even the `.htaccess` and `php.ini` renaming took care of itself. Isn't this too good to be true?

Well, almost. You actually need to either turn off PHP Safe Mode, or make sure the target folder is owned by the same user as the one your web server runs on: this is a PHP limitation we can't overcome. Alternatively, you can supply FTP connection information and Kickstart will use the - much slower - FTP mode to write the extracted files to your site.

3. What Kickstart is and what it's not

Kickstart is an interactive archive extraction script and a clean-up tool. Counter-intuitively, it is *not* a site restoration utility per se. Kickstart performs the steps required before and after site restoration, whereas the site restoration procedure itself is carried out by the installer script which was included in your backup archive at backup time. To make it crystal clear, here is the flow of a Kickstart-powered site restoration procedure:

- Uploading files. This is done manually. You upload `kickstart.php` and the backup archive (ZIP or JPA format) to the intended site's root.

- **Archive extraction** . This is done by Kickstart. The backup archive is extracted. At this point your site is not yet ready to work.

- Restoration process. This is done by installer which was included in the archive and now extracted on your server. You are asked some questions, the database dump data is restored to the new database and the new CMS configuration file is written on the disk. At this point, your site may or not be ready to work, depending on the reliance upon a `.htaccess` file.

- **Restoration of `.htaccess`** and `php.ini` . This is done by Kickstart. The automatically renamed copies of your original `.htaccess` and `php.ini` files are renamed back to their proper names to allow correct site operation.

- **Cleanup of unnecessary files**. This is done by Kickstart. The backup archive, the installation directory and `kickstart.php` are no longer needed and therefore deleted.

As you can see, Kickstart is a very generic tool, not strictly limited to restoring Akeeba Backup backup archives. As a matter of fact, we have used it to easily upgrade our sites to newer CMS versions without the hassle of uploading tons of PHP files!

> **Tip**
>
> The correct way to see Kickstart is as a generic, interactive, web-based archive extraction script which can also clean up after itself.

4. About the name

The naming of this script is a small tribune to one of the first computing platforms I came to know: the Amiga 500. The initial boot loader, pretty much responsible for initializing the operating system's boot process was called Kickstart. This script has an analogous function in the restoration process of Akeeba Backup-generated backup archives: it takes care of everything up to the point the actual restoration process starts.

Chapter 2. Before using Kickstart

1. Getting Kickstart

Kickstart is part of the Akeeba Backup release system. As such, it can be downloaded from our site, `http://www.akeebabackup.com`. All packages are named `kickstart-VERSION.zip`, where VERSION is the version number. Each package contains kickstart.php itself, as well as all the available translation files. You have to extract this archive and upload kickstart.php and any translation INI files you may need to your site.

The latest Kickstart version can be always retrieved by visiting http://www.akeebabackup.com/latest.

2. Requirements

Kickstart is a PHP 5 application. It will not work with PHP 4. The full list or required server configuration is:

- PHP 5.2 or greater. It will throw a Fatal Error is you are using PHP 4.

- Apache 1.3 or above. It should also work with IIS, but it hasn't been tested.

- PHP mod_zlib available. This is available by default.

- PHP Safe Mode disabled, or correct directory ownerships, or FTP connection parameters must be entered

The last requirement must be further explained. PHP with Safe Mode enabled will refuse to create folders inside another folder which is not owned by the same user as the one the web server (Apache) runs under, even if the folder is otherwise writable. Kickstart will fail in this case. Alternatively, if you supply the FTP connection information, Kickstart will try to use FTP to connect to your site and write the extracted files.

Important

If you use the FTP mode, Kickstart will require the specified temporary directory to be directly writable by PHP (usually, 0777 permissions help) or it will attempt to create a temporary directory of its own. If this procedure fails, Kickstart will notify you that the temporary directory is not writable.

Moreover, if you already have a site installed on the target server you have to ensure that all folders and files are writable. If not, Kickstart will fail and leave your site in a possibly broken state.

Finally, if your server doesn't support base64 decoding (e.g. the base64_decode function is disabled) you need an Internet connection. Normally, the required jQuery library is fetched from a base64 encoded resource inside the kickstart.php file. If the decoding is not possible, Kickstart will fall back to loading it from Google's AJAX API Library CDN, which requires an Internet connection and access to Google's CDN not be restricted by your firewall or Internet security suite.

Chapter 3. Using Kickstart

1. Preparing for the extraction

The first step is to download the latest release of Kickstart. It can be always retrieved by visiting http://www.akeebabackup.com/latest. It comes as a ZIP package. *Do not* try to install it in Joomla!. Instead, you'll have to unzip it first. The extracted files are `kickstart.php` and a series of INI files. The `kickstart.php` file is required for Kickstart's operation and self-contained, i.e. it doesn't need any other files (or Joomla!) to be installed on your server. The INI files are translation files. You only need them if you want Kickstart to appear localized in your language. You can safely delete any INI files which represent languages you do not understand.

The second step is uploading those files to your server. Upload `kickstart.php` and any translation INI files you may need to the server path you want the restored site to be installed. If you want the site to be extracted to your domain's root (something like `http://www.example.com`) you'll have to locate your web root. On most servers it appears as a directory named `public_html`, `httpdocs`, `htdocs`, `www` or something similar when you connect to your account by FTP. If unsure, ask your host. They know which directory it is without having to guess.

The third step is getting your archive file to the server. This can be currently performed only by having you manually upload the archive by FTP to the same directory as the one `kickstart.php` is in.
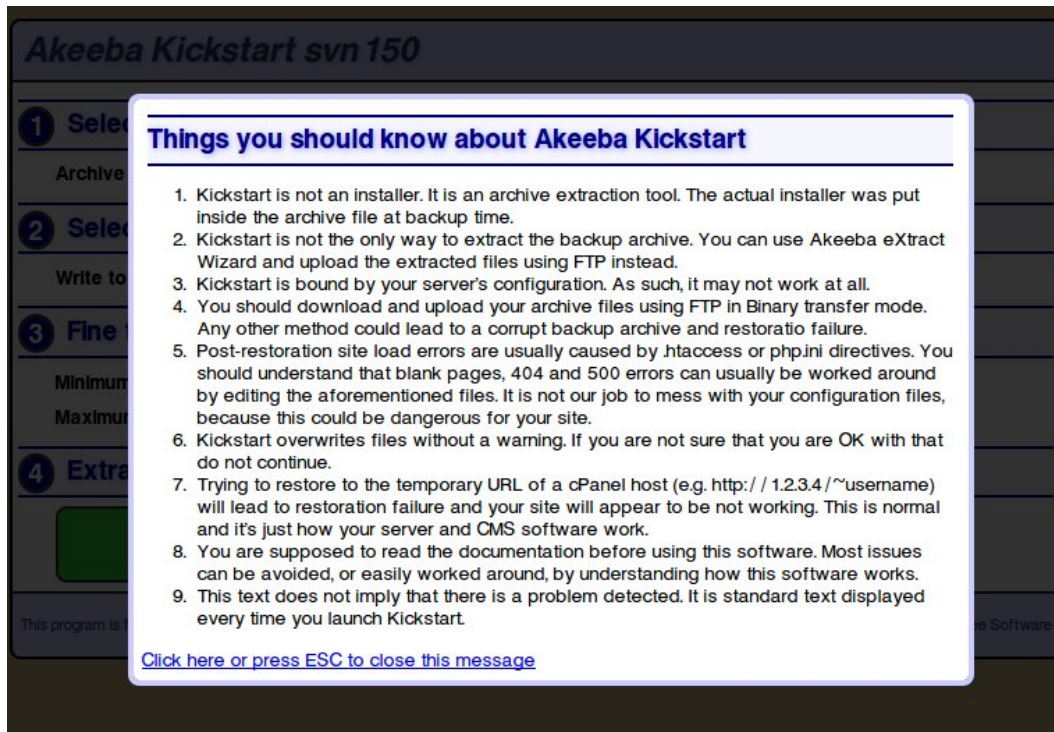
Two words of caution:

1. Always, no matter what, use the Binary transfer mode to upload your backup archives by FTP. If you are using FileZilla you can do so by clicking on the Transfer menu, then the Transfer Type submenu and making sure that Binary is selected. If you do not do that, most FTP software will fall back to ASCII file transfers which will corrupt the backup archive and cause extraction issues.

2. If you had created a multi-part archive you have to transfer all files. In the case of a JPA file they have the same name and extensions of .jpa, .j01, .j02 etc. In the case of a ZIP file they have the same name and extensions of .zip, .z01, .z02 etc. If any of the parts is missing, an extraction error will occur.

   Do note that the installer is included in the beginning of the archive. Even in the event of a partial restoration you will most likely be able to start the restoration procedure but your site *will not work properly* as many crucial files will be missing!

When you are done, you can launch Kickstart by visiting its URL. It usually has the form of `http://www.example.com/kickstart.php`.

2. Kickstart's interface

2.1. Initial dialogue

Once you launch Kickstart, you'll first get a standard notice regarding the top things that you should be aware about:

1. Kickstart is not an installer. It is an archive extraction tool. The actual installer was put inside the archive file at backup time.

2. Kickstart is not the only way to extract the backup archive. You can use Akeeba eXtract Wizard and upload the extracted files using FTP instead.

3. Kickstart is bound by your server's configuration. As such, it may not work at all.

4. You should download and upload your archive files using FTP in Binary transfer mode. Any other method could lead to a corrupt backup archive and restoration failure.

5. Post-restoration site load errors are usually caused by .htaccess or php.ini directives. You should understand that blank pages, 404 and 500 errors can usually be worked around by editing the aforementioned files. It is not our job to mess with your configuration files, because this could be dangerous for your site.

6. Kickstart overwrites files without a warning. If you are not sure that you are OK with that do not continue.

7. Trying to restore to the temporary URL of a cPanel host (e.g. http://1.2.3.4/~username) will lead to restoration failure and your site will appear to be not working. This is normal and it's just how your server and CMS software work.

8. You are supposed to read the documentation before using this software. Most issues can be avoided, or easily worked around, by understanding how this software works.

9. This text does not imply that there is a problem detected. It is standard text displayed every time you launch Kickstart.

Once you have read all of the above and you feel comfortable with this information, please press the ESC key to close this dialog box.

2.2. The setup page

The setup page contains of four steps.

The first step is selecting a backup archive. Kickstart automatically scans the directory it's in for JPA and ZIP archives, populating the drop-down list with these results. If there are multiple archives present, please click on the drop down list and select the one you would like to use.

The second step is the selection of the extraction method. There are two supported methods:

Directly   With this method, Kickstart will try to write directly to files. This is the ideal method if your server is using suPHP or if you have no Joomla! site installed yet. Since Kickstart runs in PHP, which in turn might run with your web server's privileges, you have to ensure that there are adequate permissions to write to the directory Kickstart is in and any existing files and directories with the same name as files and directories in the archive. If you are not sure, first try to remove everything except `kickstart.php` and the backup archive from your server. If you still get errors regarding the inability to write to files, you'll have to use the FTP mode.

Use FTP   In this mode, Kickstart tries to extract the files in a temporary directory, then use FTP to "upload" them to their final location. The ability to run Kickstart in this mode depends on your server setup. For example, some servers have a very strange firewall setup which doesn't allow Kickstart to connect to your site's FTP. Also note that Kickstart support FTP and FTPS (FTP over implicit SSL). It does not support the SFTP protocol, widely known as Secure FTP or FTP over SSH, as it is an entirely different protocol with very poor PHP support on commercial hosts.

The only implication in using the FTP mode is that you need a writable temporary directory. More on that later.

When you choose this option, a list of several options will expand underneath it. You have to fill them in for Kickstart to be able to work.

Important

Kickstart 3.1 or later, when extracting any ZIP archive or JPA archives created by Akeeba Backup 3.1 (or later), will also try to restore the last file modification time to match that of the source server. If you activate the FTP mode this will not be possible, as FTP does not support "touching" (changing the modification date and time) of files.

The FTP options which get to be displayed, should you choose the FTP mode, are:

FTP Host Name
If you are using the FTP mode, this defines the address of the FTP server used for uploading the files. Do note that you must enter only the domain or IP address, without the protocol. This means that `ftp.example.com` is correct usage, while `ftp://ftp.example.com` is *incorrect*.

FTP Port
The TCP/IP port of the FTP server to use. Normally you want to use port 21 (default plain FTP port). Only use something different if your host tells you so, or if you are using FTPS (FTP over SSL).

Warning

If your host tells you to use port 22, their connection mode is not compatible with Kickstart. Port 22 is used by the SFTP protocol, which is entirely different that the supported FTP and FTPS protocols. In this case you have to ask your host for plain FTP access to your site.

Use FTP over SSL (FTPS)
Check the box if you want to use the FTPS (FTP over SSL) protocol. The default is unchecked which means that Kickstart will use an unencrypted connection. Do note that Kickstart *does not support* SFTP, as it is an entirely different protocol than FTPS. The names look alike, but the protocols have nothing to do with each other.

Use FTP Passive Mode
Check the box to use the FTP Passive mode (default), or uncheck it to use the FTP Active mode. Most probably you want to use the default value (checked), as it is the only way to work around the firewall of your host. A very small minority of hosts require the Active mode, but they will tell you so in their FTP connection instructions.

FTP User Name
The FTP username.

FTP Password
The FTP password.

FTP Directory
The *absolute FTP path* to your restored site's root. **THIS IS NOT THE SAME AS THE FILE SYSTEM PATH TO YOUR SITE'S ROOT!!!** The easiest way to figure this out is to use FileZilla. Connect to your target FTP server with FileZilla. Navigate to the web server's root (usually it's a subdirectory named httpdocs, htdocs, public_html, http_docs or www). Above the right-hand folder pane you will see a text box with a path. Copy this path and paste it to this setting.

Temporary Directory
As PHP can't directly upload files while they are being extracted, Kickstart is extracting them to a temporary directory using direct file writes first, then uploads them to their final destination using FTP. Normally, Kickstart will try using the directory it's stored in to extract the temporary files. Many web hosts configure their servers in such a way that this is not possible. Using this option you can customise the location of the temporary directory to somewhere with adequate permissions. You can use either an absolute or a relative (to Kickstart's directory) path for this setting.

If unsure, you can follow an easy workaround. Create a directory named `kicktemp` in your site's root using FTP and give it 0777 permissions (or world-write privileges, e.g. full control to the
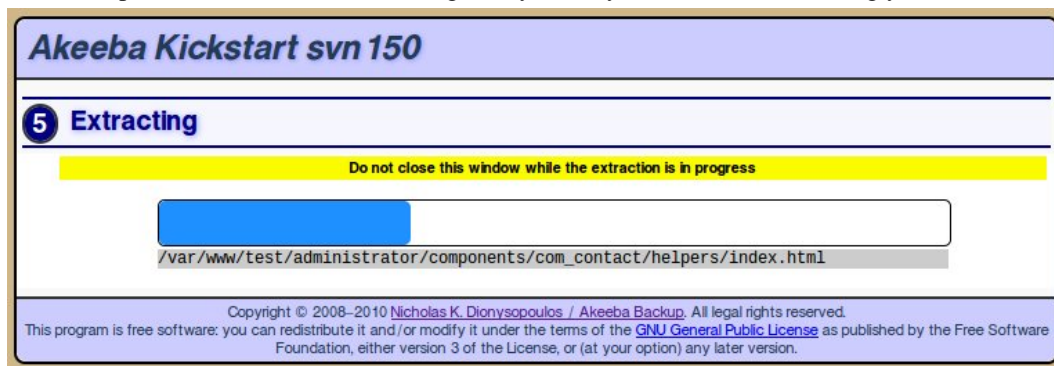
Everybody pseudo-user, if you are using a Windows server). Then type in `kicktemp` as this option.

The third step is the Fine-Tuning of the extraction engine. You have to understand how it works first. Kickstart will start extracting files until the Maximum execution time threshold is reached. In fact, Kickstart allows for a 20% uncertainty of the accuracy of the elapsed time measurements, so the real duration may be somewhat less than that. If there are more files to extract, it will continue extraction in the next step. This approach allows it to work around the PHP time limit imposed by all hosts. However, if a step takes too little time, it is possible that your host mistakenly identifies this behaviour as a Denial of Service attack. As a result, Kickstart will force each step to last at least as much as the Minimum execution time value is. These two settings are expressed in seconds and can be perceived as a combined "from-to" step duration setting.
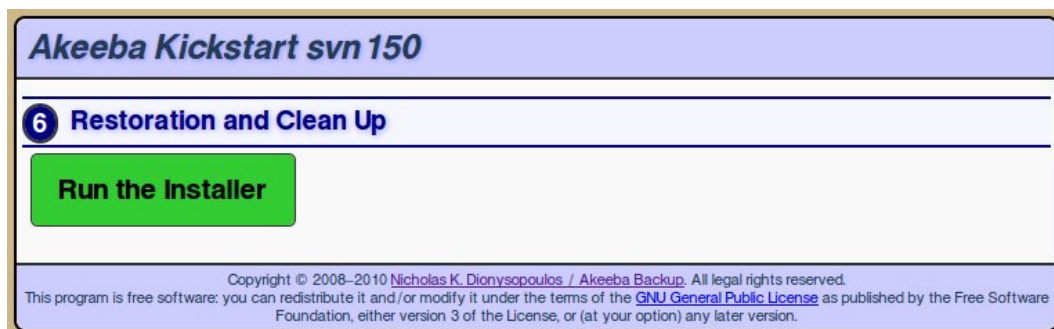
Finally, you will find the options for the Stealth Mode in the Fine Tuning pane. The Stealth Mode allows you to display a static HTML page (optionally with images and SWF animation) to all visitors to the web site except yourself while you perform the restoration and only works with Apache or any other server supports mod_redirect functionality using .htaccess sites (even some versions of IIS with third party add-ons do). This will prevent accidental disclosure of sensitive information while the restoration is in progress. This is performed by directing all traffic not coming from your IP address to the page you define in here. The first, obvious, setting is the Stealth mode check box. When you tick it, the stealth mode will be activated. The HTML file to show to web visitors option allows you to define the name of the static HTML page to show to your visitors. The file and its resources (images, CSS, Javascript files) must reside inside your to-be-restored site's root. You must only define the name of the file to use, not its URL. This means that `offline.html` is a valid setting, whereas `http://www.example.com/offline.html` is INVALID and will result in a 404 error thrown to your visitors.

Tip

If you are worried about SEO, fear not. The redirection happens with a "temporary redirection" HTTP status code, which will instruct search engines to revisit your site in a later time. As a result, you are not penalized for duplicate content or otherwise negatively affect your SEO while restoring your site.
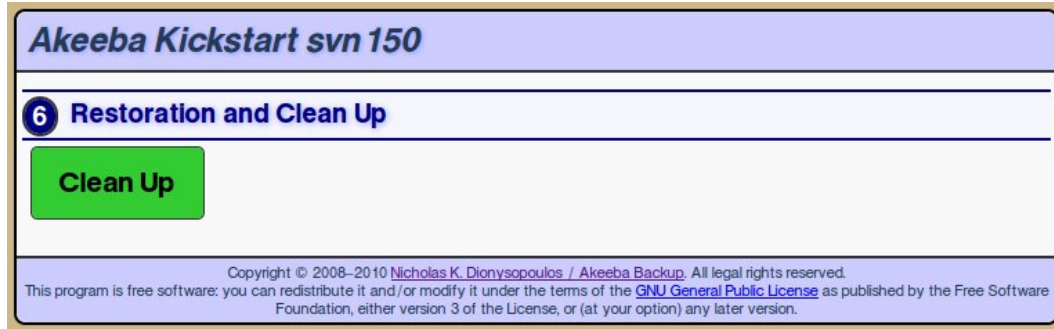

The fourth step is the fun part. Just click on the big, friendly Start button and sit back while Kickstart extracts your archive.
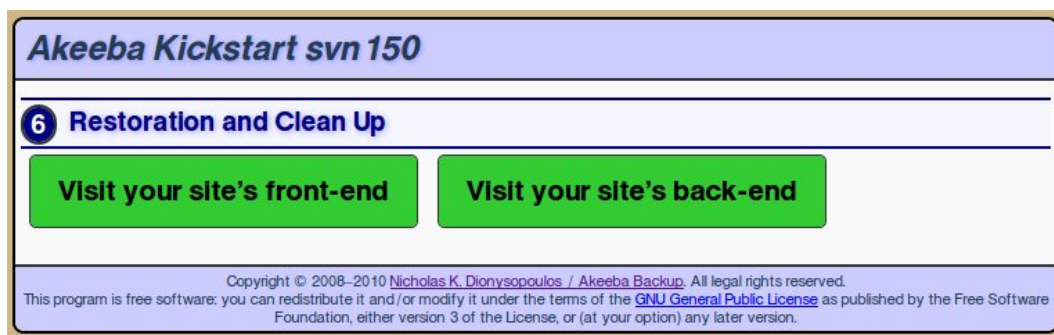
When the extraction is complete, you will be presented with an option to launch the installer. Clicking on the large green button will launch the `installation/index.php` relative URL to a new window. If you were extracting a backup archive taken with Akeeba Backup, this will cause the Akeeba Backup Installer (ABI) which was included in your archive and just extracted to be launched. Technically, you will not be running Kickstart at that point, so you have to refer to the Akeeba Backup documentation for more information on how the restoration script works. **Please do not close Kickstart's window**. You will need it later.

After you have completed your site's restoration and you close the installation script's window, you will get back to Kickstart. The interface has changed slightly in the meantime:

Just click on the Clean Up button. The following actions will be performed:

- The `installation` directory is removed as it is no longer required.

- If you had a `.htaccess` and/or `php.ini` files in your backed up site's root, these files have been extracted under the temporary names of `htaccess.bak` and `php.ini.bak` respectively. At this point, the temporary named files are renamed back to their original names.

- The backup archive (and all its parts, if it is a multi-part archive) is removed.

- `kickstart.php` itself and all of its translation INI files, if present, are removed.

At this point you can simply close Kickstart's window. Alternatively, you click on either button (or both!) to open the respective area of your site to a new browser window/tab.

2.2.1. Troubleshooting

I am getting an AJAX error...

Kickstart tells me that this is not a valid JPA archive?

First, ensure that you have downloaded and uploaded the backup archive using FTP in Binary transfer mode. If not, do it now. This is the mest common cause of issues. Then, make sure that you have tried both file writing modes (direct

file writing and FTP mode) and neither works on your site. The next step would be lowering the Maximum execution time setting to 2 or 3 seconds and setting the Minimum execution time to 1 second. If you are still getting this error message, please take a screenshot of the entire message (*do not downscale it*, we'll need to be able to read it) and post it in a post on our support forum [http://www.akeebabackup.com/forum.html]. Please include as much information as you can regarding the error condition, how you took your backup, which *EXACT* version of Akeeba Backup you were using ("latest" means nothing, something like 3.0.rc1 does), which EXACT version of Kickstart you were using and the PHP version of your host. Remember that the less information you give us, the more time it will take us to figure out what's going wrong and the less happy you'll feel about our support. We need you to help us help you.

I am getting "Can't open xyz for writing" or "Can't create directory xyz" error messages

The first thing you have to check, even though it sounds silly, is that you have enough free disk space. Most probably you have an account quota limit. Since you are extracting an archive, you must have at least as much as 2-3 times free space as your backup archive. This means that if you have a backup archive weighing 100Mb, you need another 150-200Mb to extract it. In total, you'd need 250-300Mb of free disk space before you begin uploading files and extracting the archive with Kickstart.

Important

Some hosts claim "unlimited" disk space. Sadly, this is not always the case. Most hosts have "hidden" limits, such as the amount of files you can host under one account. If you go over that limit, you'll get extraction errors. Another thing is that you "unlimited" host is physically bound to the size of their hard drives. If their hard drive was close to completely filling up, trying to extract your site will also lead to a restoration failure. If nothing else helps with this kind of errors, do contact your host and ask them if you are hitting a file count limitation or their hard drive is full.

Moreover, some hosts have a limitation on the maximum file size PHP can create. For example, Strato allows PHP to create files of only up to 10Mb. Trying to extract bigger files from the archive will lead to such an error. Do note that you might be able to upload large files, such as your site's backup archive, through FTP. However, if you try to extract a large file from the archive (e.g. a large non-split database dump, a large video or music file, etc) it will fail. Your ONLY way to perform the restoration is to extract the archive on your local PC, e.g. using Akeeba eXtract, and uploading all the extracted files by FTP. All you'll have to do next is visiting the restoration URL which is in the form of `http://www.yoursite.com/installation/index.php`. Please refer to Akeeba Backup's documentation (the chapter on restoring your site) for more information.

Finally, it may be a classic case of wrong or mixed file and directory permissions (a "permissions hell" situation). This is very easy to happen if you are restoring to a host with an existing installation of Joomla! which doesn't use suPHP, i.e. the majority of hosts. You might want to try using the FTP mode. If this still doesn't work for you, try removing all existing files and directories from your server before restoring the backup archive. It's very easy to mix up ownerships and permissions on a shared host, effectively entering into a "permissions hell" which is virtually impossible to work around unless you have root privileges on an SSH console or, more easily, removing all files from the account. Do note that removing files might require using both an FTP program and your host's control panel, or raising a ticket with your host.

Chapter 4. Advanced features

1. Automating Kickstart

Kickstart's automation is part of our 1-click site restoration initiative. The only prerequisite is that your backup archive must be created using the "Akeeba Backup Installer" (a.k.a. ABI) embedded restoration script. This is the default and only option, as of Akeeba Backup 3.0.

The automation procedure covers the entirety of the extraction/restoration process. Once you start Kickstart, it will extract the archive, call the ABI restoration script, it will automatically proceed through all of its pages and then allow you to click on the final Kickstart button which removes `kickstart.php`, the archive file and the installation directory.

Everything is controlled by the contents of a single file which must be named `abiautomation.ini` and located in the same directory as `kickstart.php`. So, you only need to upload three files: `kickstart.php`, the archive and `abiautomation.ini`. If you do that, accessing kickstart.php from your browser will result in a fully restored site, without any user intervention (unless an error happens; in this case the process will halt for you to review and correct the error).

The INI file is comprised of different sections. The section named `[kickstart]` is where all Kickstart-related parameters are stored.

```
[kickstart]
kickstart.setup.sourcefile=backupfile.jpa
kickstart.tuning.min_exec_time=1
kickstart.tuning.max_exec_time=5
kickstart.procengine=ftp
kickstart.ftp.host=ftp.example.com
kickstart.ftp.port=21
kickstart.ftp.ssl=0
kickstart.ftp.passive=1
kickstart.ftp.user=myuser
kickstart.ftp.pass=mypass
kickstart.ftp.dir=/public_html
kickstart.ftp.tempdir=/var/www/mysite/public_html/kicktemp
```

All those variables correspond to the options you are presented with when running Kickstart.

kickstart.setup.sourcefile REQUIRED. The name of the backup archive to extract. You can enter a relative or absolute pathname.

kickstart.tuning.min_exec_time The minimum time each extraction step may last, in seconds. Defaults to 1 second. It is advisable not to modify this parameter.

kickstart.tuning.max_exec_time The maximum time each extraction step may last, in seconds. Defaults to 5 seconds. If you are getting timeout errors or HTTP 500 errors, you might want to lower this.

kickstart.procengine How to write the extracted files to the disk. It can either be `direct` or `ftp`. In direct mode, all files are written using PHP file writing. In FTP mode, the files are first extracted to a temporary directory, then "uploaded" using FTP to their final location. The FTP mode is much slower, but it might be the only way for Kickstart to work on many servers.

kickstart.ftp.host If you are using the FTP mode, this defines the address of the FTP server used for uploading the files. Do note that you must enter only the domain or IP address, without the protocol. This means that ftp.example.com is correct usage, while ftp://ftp.example.com is *incorrect*.

kickstart.ftp.port The TCP/IP port of the FTP server to use. Normally you want to use port 21 (default plain FTP port). Only use something different if your host tells you so, or if you are using FTPS (FTP over SSL).

Warning

> If your host tells you to use port 22, their connection mode is not compatible with Kickstart. Port 22 is used by the SFTP protocol, which is entirely different that the supported FTP and FTPS protocols. In this case you have to ask your host for plain FTP access to your site.

kickstart.ftp.ssl Set it to 1 if you want to use the FTPS (FTP over SSL) protocol. The default value is 0 which means that Kickstart will use an unencrypted connection. Do note that Kickstart *does not support* SFTP, as it is an entirely different protocol than FTPS. The names look alike, but the protocols have nothing to do with each other.

kickstart.ftp.passive Set to 1 to use the FTP Passive mode (default), or use 0 to use the FTP Active mode. Most probably you want to use the default value of 1, as it is the only way to work around the firewall of your host. A very small minority of hosts require the Active mode, but they will tell you so in their FTP connection instructions.

kickstart.ftp.user The FTP username.

kickstart.ftp.pass The FTP password.

kickstart.ftp.dir The *absolute FTP path* to your restored site's root. **THIS IS NOT THE SAME AS THE FILE SYSTEM PATH TO YOUR SITE'S ROOT!!!** The easiest way to figure this out is to use FileZilla. Connect to your target FTP server with FileZilla. Navigate to the web server's root (usually it's a subdirectory named httpdocs, htdocs, public_html, http_docs or www). Above the right-hand folder pane you will see a text box with a path. Copy this path and paste it to this setting.

kickstart.ftp.tempdir As PHP can't directly upload files while they are being extracted, Kickstart is extracting them to a temporary directory using direct file writes first, then uploads them to their final destination using FTP. Normally, Kickstart will try using the directory it's stored in to extract the temporary files. Many web hosts configure their servers in such a way that this is not possible. Using this option you can customise the location of the temporary directory to somewhere with adequate permissions. You can use either an absolute or a relative (to Kickstart's directory) path for this setting.

If unsure, you can follow an easy workaround. Create a directory named `kicktemp` in your site's root using FTP and give it 0777 permissions (or world-write privileges, e.g. full control to the Everybody pseudo-user, if you are using a Windows server). Then type in `kicktemp` as this option.

Do note that defining Kickstart's parameters in `abiautomation.ini` is the first step to automating the restoration procedure. There are more sections for the `abiautomation.ini` file described in Akeeba Backup's documentation, under the "Automating the Akeeba Backup Installer" section.

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