

How to Fix Common CMS and Application Errors

QUICK GUIDE



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Navigating the world of CMS and application errors can sometimes feel overwhelming. Whether you're managing a WordPress site, working with a Joomla platform, or troubleshooting a mobile app, these errors can disrupt your workflow and cause unnecessary stress. That's where our guide comes in! We'll walk you through common issues, their causes, and how to fix them, helping you get everything back on track smoothly.

What are CMS and Application Errors?

CMS errors are specific to content management systems like WordPress, Joomla, or Drupal. These issues often arise from plugin conflicts, outdated themes, or incorrect configuration settings. Such errors can disrupt your site's appearance and functionality, impacting user experience and content management. To fix these, you usually need to update or reconfigure parts of the CMS.

In contrast, application errors can occur in any type of software, whether it's a web app, desktop program, or mobile app. These errors might be caused by coding mistakes, database issues, or problems with external integrations, leading to crashes, data loss, or security vulnerabilities. Resolving these errors often requires more technical solutions, such as debugging code or addressing database and integration issues.

In a nutshell, CMS errors are specific to content management systems like WordPress or Joomla, while application errors can pop up in any kind of software. Each type of error needs its approach to fix it.

WordPress Errors

WordPress Memory and Resource Errors

Fatal Memory Exhaustion Error

Definition	
The "Fatal Error: Allowed Memory Size of Bytes Exhausted" in WordPress occurs when a script uses more PHP memory than allocated, leading to a blank page or site inaccessibility.	
Causes	How to Fix
• The default WordPress memory limit is too low. • Plugins or themes require more memory. • Faulty scripts are consuming excess memory. • Older PHP versions use more memory.	1. Increase PHP Memory Limit: • Edit wp-config.php to set <code>define('WP_MEMORY_LIMIT', '512M');</code>. • Ensure php.ini memory_limit matches or exceeds wp-config.php. 2. Disable All Plugins: • Temporarily disable plugins to identify if one is causing the issue. LEARN MORE

Upload Max Filesize Exceeded Error

Definition	
The error related to “upload_max_filesize” in php.ini occurs when a file being uploaded to the server exceeds the maximum file size limit set in the server’s PHP configuration.	
Causes	How to Fix
• File size exceeds the upload_max_filesize value. • Low default upload_max_filesize setting. • Plugin or theme conflicts.	• Edit php.ini: Set upload_max_filesize and post_max_size to 256 M. • Modify wp-config.php: Add @ini_set('upload_max_size', '256M'); • Edit .htaccess: Add php_value upload_max_filesize 256M and php_value post_max_size 256M. LEARN MORE

Request Entity Too Large Error

Definition	
The “413 Request Entity Too Large” error occurs when a file being uploaded exceeds the server’s size limit.	
Causes	How to Fix
• File size exceeds the server’s upload limits. • Server settings restrict large file uploads.	• Increase upload limits in server settings. • Compress the file to reduce its size. Use FTP for uploading large files directly to the server. LEARN MORE

File and Upload Errors

File Type Not Allowed Error

Definition	
This error occurs when you try to upload a file type that WordPress doesn't allow by default.	
Causes	How to Fix
• Attempting to upload a file with an unsupported extension by WordPress.	• Change File Format: Modify the file extension to one that is supported by WordPress. • Update wp-config: Add <code>define('ALLOW_UNFILTERED_UPLOADS', true);</code> to the wp-config.php file to temporarily allow all file types. Remember to remove this line after uploading for security. LEARN MORE

Image Upload Problems

Definition	
Common issues encountered when uploading images to WordPress, affecting the ability to upload or display images correctly.	
Causes	How to Fix
• Incorrect permissions on WordPress core folders or image files. • Database configuration issues, such as incorrect auto-increment values. • The file size exceeds the maximum upload limit. • Unsupported file types due to WordPress security settings. • Images uploaded via FTP are not registered in the Media Library.	• Reset Permissions: Adjust file and folder permissions to default via Site Tools. • Database Fix: Set AUTO_INCREMENT for the _posts table in PHPMyAdmin. • Upload Large Files: Use FTP or File Manager for large images, placing them in the correct directory. • Allow File Types: Add define('ALLOW_UNFILTERED_UPLOADS', true); to wp-config.php for unsupported file types. • Register FTP Uploads: Use the "Add From Server" plugin to register images uploaded via FTP in the Media Library. LEARN MORE

Database Connection Error

Definition	
This error occurs when a WordPress site cannot connect to its database, preventing data retrieval needed to display web pages.	
Causes	How to Fix
• Incorrect database credentials in the configuration file. • Insufficient database user privileges. • Corrupted database tables or WordPress files. • Incorrect website URLs in the database. • The database server is down or overloaded.	• Inspect wp-config.php: Verify database credentials and host settings. • Check User Privileges: Ensure the database user has all necessary permissions. • Repair Database: Use WordPress's built-in repair mode. • Verify Site URL: Check and correct the site URL in the database using phpMyAdmin. • Restore Backup: Revert to a recent backup if necessary. • Contact Hosting Provider: Seek assistance if the issue is server-related. LEARN MORE

Admin Panel Access Issue

Definition	
Inability to access the WordPress dashboard, which is essential for managing website content and settings.	
Causes	How to Fix
• Incorrect or forgotten login credentials. • Security plugin blocking access. • Stuck in a “Database Update Required” message loop. • “Error Establishing a Database Connection” issue. • Conflicts from newly installed plugins.	• Reset Password: Use the password reset feature via the login page or hosting tools. • Disable Plugins: Temporarily disable all plugins to identify conflicts. • Fix Database Loop: Rename or delete object-cache.php in the wp-content folder. • Resolve Database Connection Issue: Follow the steps to correct database connection errors. • Remove Problematic Plugin: Rename the plugin’s folder in wp-content/plugins. • Restore Backup: Revert to a backup from when the admin panel was accessible. LEARN MORE

Database Update Loop Error

Definition	
A recurring message prompting a database update after a WordPress core update, preventing access to the admin panel.	
Causes	How to Fix
• Incomplete or incorrect update process. • Caching conflicts, particularly with object caching.	• Rename/delete the file object-cache.php: Locate this file in the wp-content folder and rename or delete it to resolve the loop. • Re-enable Caching: If using caching plugins, re-enable Memcached or similar functionalities as needed. LEARN MORE

Missing MySQL Extension Error

Definition	
An error message indicating that the MySQL extension, required for WordPress to connect to the MySQL database, is missing or improperly configured.	
Causes	How to Fix
• Incompatibility between older WordPress versions and newer PHP versions (PHP 7+). • Outdated PHP version (PHP 5.6 or lower). • Missing or disabled MySQLi extension.	• Check PHP Version: Ensure you are using a supported PHP version (PHP 7.3 or higher). • Update WordPress: Ensure your WordPress core and plugins are up-to-date. • Install MySQLi Extension: Verify and enable the MySQLi extension via your hosting provider. • Check PHP Extension Configuration: Ensure the PHP configuration file (php.ini) is correct and doesn't have incorrect paths. LEARN MORE

Email and Communication Errors

Email Sending Issue

Definition	
A problem where WordPress fails to send emails, affecting notifications, contact forms, and other email-related functionalities.	
Causes	How to Fix
• Incorrect server configuration or PHP mail() function issues. • Use of unprofessional or unrecognized email addresses. • SMTP misconfigurations lead to email delivery failures.	• Configure SMTP: Set up WordPress to use SMTP instead of PHP mail() for reliable email delivery. • Use Professional Email: Switch to a recognized and professional email address for sending emails. • Check Server Settings: Ensure the hosting server is properly configured to support email functions. LEARN MORE

General Errors

White Screen of Death

Definition	
A common WordPress error where the website displays a blank white screen, often with no error message.	
Causes	How to Fix
• Faulty or incompatible plugins. • Issues with the active theme. • PHP errors or memory limit exhaustion. • Server configuration issues.	• Enable Debugging: Add <code>define('WP_DEBUG', true);</code> and <code>define('WP_DEBUG_LOG', true);</code> to <code>wp-config.php</code> to identify errors. • Clear Cache: Clear browser and site cache to ensure you're viewing the latest version. • Check Plugins: Deactivate all plugins and reactivate them one by one to find the culprit. • Switch Theme: Change to a default WordPress theme to see if the issue is theme-related. • Review Error Logs: Check the <code>php_errorlog</code> for error details to pinpoint the problem. LEARN MORE

General Error in WordPress Site

Definition	
Errors on a WordPress site that occur due to issues with plugins or themes often prevent access to the site or admin panel	
Causes	How to Fix
• Incompatible or faulty plugins. • Issues with the active theme. • PHP errors or server misconfigurations.	• Enable Debugging: Activate debugging by adding <code>define('WP_DEBUG', true);</code> and <code>define('WP_DEBUG_LOG', true);</code> to <code>wp-config.php</code> to identify errors. • Check Error Messages: Look for specific error messages that mention problematic plugins or themes. • Disable Plugins/Themes: Deactivate all plugins and switch to a default theme to isolate the issue. • Restore from Backup: Revert to a backup from when the site was functioning correctly. • Contact Developer: If issues persist, seek assistance from a WordPress developer for further troubleshooting. LEARN MORE

Domain Already Used by Another Site

Definition	
An error indicating that the domain you are trying to use is already associated with another site on your account.	
Causes	How to Fix
• The domain is parked on another existing site. • The domain is set as the primary domain for another website.	• Check Parked Domains: Go to Site Tools > Domain > Parked Domains to see if the domain is parked. Remove it if necessary. • Remove Existing Site: Ensure the domain is not the primary domain of another site. Delete the site using Client Area > Websites > Kebab menu > Delete if needed. LEARN MORE

Migration Errors

Migrator Permissions Error

Definition	
An error indicating that file and folder permissions are incorrect, preventing the transfer process.	
Causes	How to Fix
• File permissions are set below the required level (644 for files). • Folder permissions are set below the required level (755 for folders).	• Check Permissions: Ensure all files have permissions set to 644. • Check Folders: Ensure all folders have permissions set to 755. • Use File Manager or FTP: Adjust permissions using a file manager or FTP client. LEARN MORE

Migrator cURL Error: Connection Timed Out

Definition	
An error indicating a timeout when trying to connect from your host server to the SiteGround Migrator API.	
Causes	How to Fix
• Outgoing connection to the Migrator API is blocked or not properly established. • The host server cannot resolve the API hostname.	• Contact Host: Request your host to allow outgoing connections to wp-transfer-api.sgvps.net on port 443. • Verify Hostname Resolution: Ensure the server can resolve the API hostname. • Restart Transfer: Once resolved, restart the transfer process from the plugin. LEARN MORE

Transfer Token Parsing Error

Definition	
An error indicating that the migration token used in the SiteGround Migrator plugin is invalid or improperly formatted.	
Causes	How to Fix
• Incomplete or incorrect token entry. • Extra spaces before or after the token.	• Verify Token: Ensure the full token is copied and pasted correctly without any spaces. • Generate New Token: Create a new migration token from your Site Tools and use it. LEARN MORE

Migrator Installation Completion Error

Definition	
An error indicating that the migrator cannot install a new WordPress instance on the destination server.	
Causes	How to Fix
• The presence of an existing application or WordPress installation in the destination folder. • Conflicts with existing files and directories.	• Delete Existing Application. Manually remove all files and directories of any existing applications on the destination server. • Ensure important data is backed up before deleting to prevent data loss. • Once the destination is clear, restart the WordPress Migrator transfer process. LEARN MORE

General Application Errors

cURL Error 28: Connection Timeout

Definition	
An error indicating that a request using the cURL library took longer than the specified time limit, resulting in a timeout.	
Causes	How to Fix
• Firewall or security plugin restrictions are blocking connections. • Conflicts with WordPress plugins. • Outdated server software (cURL, OpenSSL). • Incorrect SSL configuration.	• Temporarily disable the firewall in any security plugin to check if it resolves the issue. • Deactivate all plugins, then reactivate them one by one to identify any conflicts. • Ensure server software meets minimum version requirements (PHP 7.4.13+, cURL 7.74.0+, OpenSSL 1.1.1+). • Correct SSL Configuration: Ensure your site is properly configured to use HTTPS. LEARN MORE

Too Many Redirects

Definition

ERR_TOO_MANY_REDIRECTS is a browser error that happens when a webpage gets stuck in an infinite redirection loop, meaning the site keeps redirecting between URLs and never loads.

Causes

- Corrupt cookies or cache in the browser
- Conflicting SSL/TLS settings (especially with CDNs like Cloudflare)
- Misconfigured redirects (e.g., HTTP ↔ HTTPS loop)
- Redirects set at multiple layers (server, CMS, .htaccess)
- Incorrect URL settings (e.g., in WordPress or CMS)
- Faulty plugins (common in WordPress)

How to Fix

- Clear browser cookies & cache
- Clear website, server, and CDN cache
- Check and fix redirect rules (in .htaccess, server, CMS)
- Review and correct SSL/TLS settings in the CDN
- On WordPress:
 - Ensure Site URL and WordPress URL match
 - Deactivate all plugins and reactivate one by one
 - Use redirect checker tools to inspect loops

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FTP Resource Parameter Error

Definition	
The error message “ftp_nlist() expects parameter 1 to be resource, null given” typically indicates a problem with the FTP connection in WordPress, often related to insufficient disk space on the hosting account.	
Causes	How to Fix
• Insufficient disk space on the hosting account.	• Delete unnecessary files using the hosting account's File Manager (e.g., Site Tools → Site → File Manager). • Ensure you back up your website files before deletion to prevent accidental data loss. • Consider upgrading to a hosting plan with more disk space if you're consistently running out of space. LEARN MORE

Joomla, Drupal, Moodle

XML Setup File Not Found Error in Joomla

Definition	
The error “Could not find an XML setup file” in Joomla! Occurs when attempting to install extensions, indicating that Joomla! Cannot locate the necessary XML setup file required for the installation process.	
Causes	How to Fix
• Issues with the ZIP archive on the hosting server. • A corrupted or incomplete extension package.	• Extract the extension archive on your local machine. • Upload the extracted files to your hosting server via FTP. • Use Joomla!’s “Install from Directory” feature in the extension installation interface to complete the installation. • Ensure the extension package is complete and not corrupted. If issues persist, download a fresh copy of the extension from a reliable source and attempt the installation again. LEARN MORE

Module Installation Error in My Drupal

Definition	
The error “The specified file temporary://filename could not be copied” in Drupal occurs during module installation, indicating a problem with the temporary directory configuration or permissions.	
Causes	How to Fix
• Incorrect temporary directory setting. • Improper file or directory permissions.	• Navigate to Configuration > Media > File System in the Drupal admin panel. • Change the temporary directory value from /tmp to tmp. • Ensure that the temporary directory has the correct read and write permissions for the web server user. LEARN MORE

Backup Creation Failure in Moodle

Definition	
Backup creation failures in Moodle occur when the system is unable to complete the backup process, often due to configuration issues or permission settings.	
Causes	How to Fix
• Server timeout during the backup process. • Data directory not writable due to incorrect permissions.	• Navigate to your Site Tools > Site > File Manager. • Right-click on the data directory folder and select “Change Permissions.” • Set the permissions to 755 and click “Confirm.” • Ensure all files under the data directory have their permissions set to 755. • Ensure server settings (like timeout limits) are configured to accommodate the backup process duration. LEARN MORE

Conclusion

In this guide, we've explored a variety of common CMS and application errors, clarifying their causes and solutions. Understanding these issues will help you tackle them with confidence, ensuring your website or application runs smoothly.

Following the steps and solutions provided can help you quickly resolve problems like memory errors in WordPress, installation issues in Joomla, or backup failures in Moodle.

With the right knowledge and resources, you'll be well-equipped to fix any challenges that come your way and maintain a seamless digital experience.

Need more help?
Enhance your hosting experience
with SiteGround!

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