Allowing admins to configure TinyMCE toolbar

# Introduction

In Moodle 1.9 we had an admin settings page for TinyMCE HTML editor where admins were able to configure the look (background colour, font family, font size, ...) of the TinyMCE HTML Editor and hide certain toolbar buttons. These admin settings have been taken away in Moodle 2.x. We have used CSS rules in the OU-theme to hide certain buttons in TinyMCE. Here at the OU and also within the Moodle community, it seems to be required to reimplement the admin settings page for TinyMCE in Moodle 2.x, so that admins can decide which pull-down menus or toolbar buttons can be displayed in TinyMCE HTML editor.

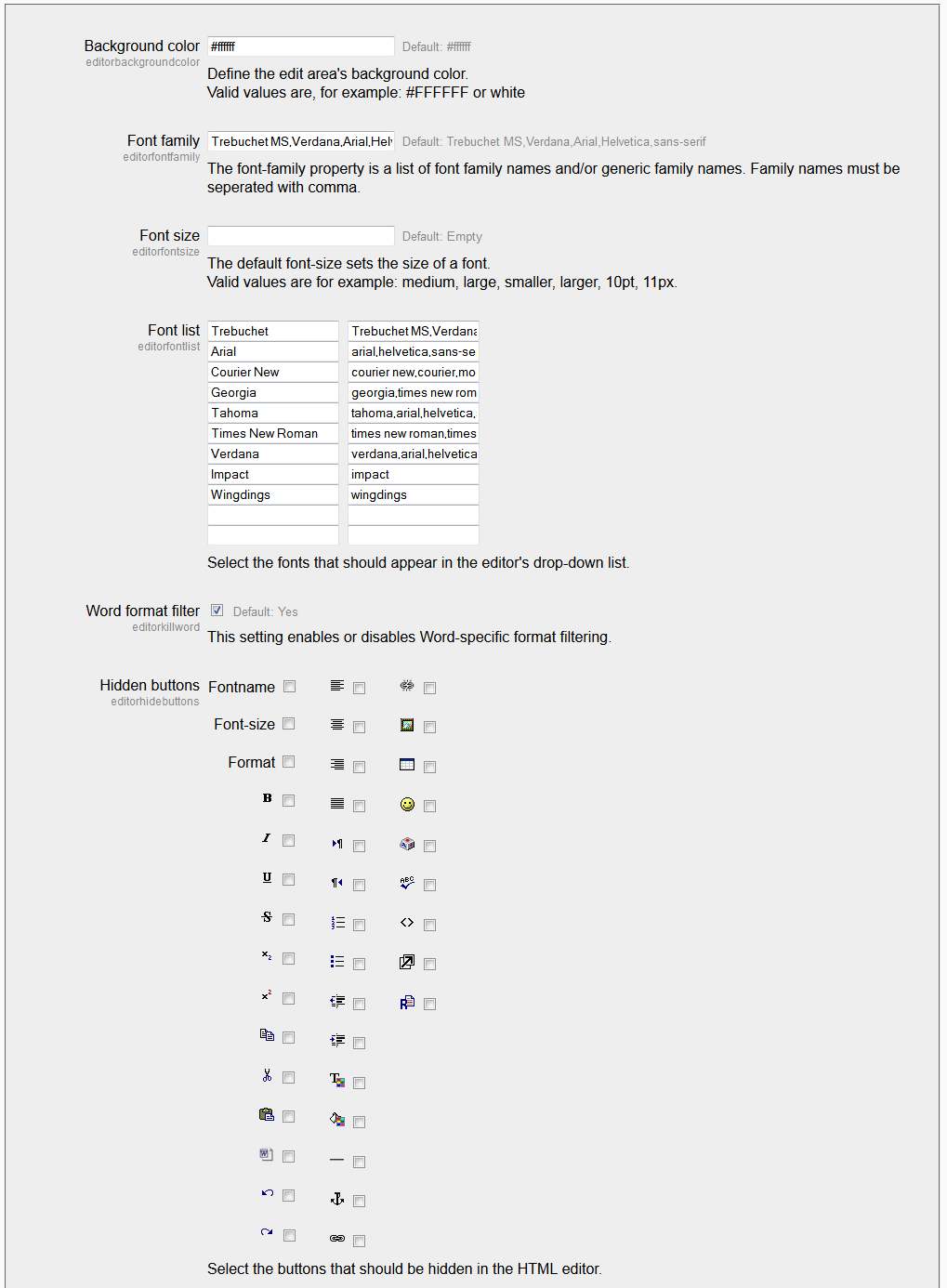
I propose that we divide the toolbar buttons into logical groups and then typify the groups into 2 major types. Type1 that can be shown / hidden at group level and type2 which can be controlled at group level for the entire group members (show / hide this group) as well as at group member level (individual buttons). This will give admins the flexibility to customise the toolbar of the HTML editor and minimises the risk of inconstancy among content generators who use TimyMCE HTML editor in Moodle forms.

# Moodle 1.9 vs. Moodle 2.x

We need to do a comparison between Moodle 1.9 and Moodle 2.x. to highlight the differences in settings pages and the way thatTinyMCE HTML editor toolbar buttons are displayed..

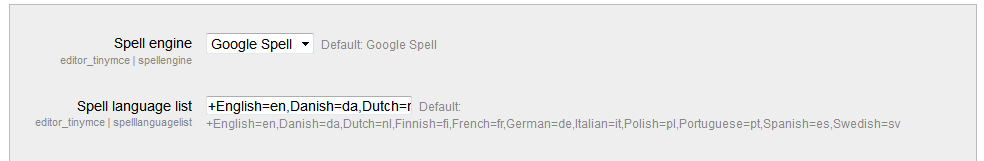
## Settings pages

The settings page in 1.9 gives the admins the flexibility to set *background colour, Font family, font size, font list,* as well as the option of enabling or disabling *word format filter* and the ability to hide any *toolbar buttons* (cf. SS1). In 2.x, on the other hand, a pull-down menu provides the options of *Spell engine* and the supported languages can be listed in the *Spell language list* filed (cf. SS2). However, the flexibility we had in 1.9 is not there anymore, we cannot easily hide toolbar buttons, unless there is a hack such as css rules in OU theme (cf. SS5 and SS6).



SS1. Moodle 1.9 TinyMCE HTML editor settings page

In 1.9 apart from being able to set the background colour, font family, font size and the font list, we were able to hide any toolbar button.



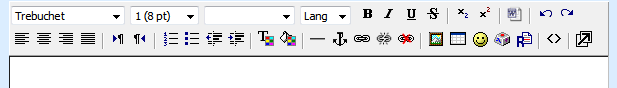
SS2. Moodle 2.x TinyMCE HTML editor settings page

## Displaying toolbar select menus and buttons

The text editor has a toolbar with a few pull-down menus for selecting font family, font size, text format (paragraph, heading, address) and a number of buttons (cf. table 1). There are minor differences between 1.9 and 2.x (cf. ss3 – ss6).



SS3. Moodle 1.9 TinyMCE HTML editor display page using standard theme



SS4. Moodle 1.9 TinyMCE HTML editor display page using OU theme



SS5. Moodle 2.x TinyMCE HTML editor display page using standard theme



SS6. Moodle 2.x TinyMCE HTML editor display page using OU theme

# Proposed implementation

Considering that there is a desire within the module community as well as here at the OU to have the settings page for TinyMCE HTML editor toolbar buttons in order to minimise the number of buttons and customise the toolbar so that we only displaying useful buttons.

The button can be divided into three catecories:

1. Exclusive buttons: These buttons normally appear in pairs and the usage of one excludes the usage of other implicitly. Therefore, it only make sense to show / hide them together (e.g.: left-to-right, right-to-left, or undo and redo buttons).
2. Alternative buttons: These are group of buttons that offer alternative functionality. However, we may want to hide some of the alternatives and therefore, they are not necessarily exclusive (e.g.: align right, align left, …,). For instance, we have hidden the justify button in OU theme.
3. Independent buttons: These are single button and are not related to any other buttons (e.g.: fullscreen mode button). These type of buttons do not have be grouped necessarily.

Considering the above categories, we divide the toolbar buttons into logical groups and then typify the groups into 2 major types. Type1 that can be shown / hidden at group level and type2 which can be controlled at group member level (individual buttons).

The implementation will be based on Moodle 2.3 core. In Moodle 2.x we have already a settings page under:

**Site administration->Plugins->Text Editors->TinyMCE HRML editor**

At the moment, this allows admins to choose *Spell engine* from a pull-down menu and enter a list of languages in the field *Spell language list*. We could use the same UI for other settings. We can enhance this settings page by adding all other useful options used in 1.9.

Following table demonstrates the underlying logic and default settings in terms of suggested show / hide value in the settings page, as well as, default values within a group. For instance, the ‘Align left’ used as default for ‘Alignment’ group.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **type** | **Group name** | **Pull-down menu,**  **Button (Icon)** | **Default**  **display** | **Default**  **value**  **when not displayed** | **Description** |
| T2 | Font | Font name  Font size | hide  hide | Settings  Settings | Chosen font name and front size |
| T2 | Format | Format | show | Paragraph | Text format. Paragraph, heading, address, … |
| T1 | Action undo-redo | Undo (Ctrl+Z)  Redo (Ctrl+Y) | show | NA | undo or redo the previous action |
| T1 | Search | Find  Find/replace | show | NA | Find button , find and replace |
| T2 | Screen mode | Full screen mode | Hide | 0 | Using HTML editor in full screen mode |
| T2 | Formatting | Bold (Ctrl+B)  Italic (Ctrl+I)  Underline Ctrl+U)  Strikethrough  Subscript  Supperscript | show  show  show  show  show  show | 0  0  0  0  0  0 | Formatting the text |
| T2 | Alignment | Align left  Aligin center  Align right  Justify | hide  hide  hide  hide | 1  0  0  0 | Aligning the text |
| T2 | removing/pasting | Cleanup messy code  Remove formatting  Paste as plain text  Paste from word | hide  show  show  show | NA | Removing formatting, pasting text into HTML editor |
| T1 | Colour | Text colour  Background colour | show | #000000  #FFFFFF | Colour contrast, background and text |
| T1 | Directions | Left-to-right  Right-to-left | hide | 1  0 | Direction of the text |
| T1 | List | Unordered list  Ordered list | show | NA | List |
| T1 | In-out-dentation | Outdent  Indent | show | NA | Indenting or outdenting the text |
| T1 | Linking | Insert/edit link  Unlink  Prevent automatic linking | show | NA | Adding or editing a link |
| T2 | Insertion | Image  audio/video  non-breaking space char  custom char  a new table | show  hide  show  show  show | NA | Inseting, images, media files, special chars, etc. |
| T1 | Edit source | Edit HTML source | show | NA | Editing HTML source |
| T1 | Spellchercker | Spellchecker | show | Settings | Calling a spellchecker |

Table 1. Toolbar buttons

Table1 shows an overview of the toolbar buttons, their type and grouping structure. I have divided them into two major types T1 and T2.

In the setting page we consider the functionality of these select menus or buttons and allow them to be shown / hidden individually or as a group. T1 (type 1) group can be set to show / hide (checked / unchecked) as a group of buttons because they may exclude one another or as a button pairs they reverse each other’s performance. For instance, the group “Directions” is a T1 group and can be checked to show on the Editor’s both “left-to-right” and “right-to-left” buttons. Of course, the “left-to-right” would be set as default and if we are certain that we do not need to use “right-to-left” text direction, we can hide this group. In other words, we are going to have only one checkbox for this group in the settings page (we either show or hid both buttons).

For T2 groups, on the other hand, we can have two level of showing / hiding the toolbar select menus / buttons. A checkbox can be ticked to show or unchecked to hide the whole group. At the same time each individual group member can be represented with a checkbox in the setting page, so when the group is checked, then all buttons in that group are set to their default values (checked / unchecked) and the admin can decide to check / uncheck any button within that group or if necessary unchecked the group to hide the whole group. I looked at the code in 1.9 and 2.x, some of the code from 1.9 can be reused and refactored to enhance the TinyMCE settings page in Moodle2.x.

I have based the buttons / icons inventory on what is used in Moodle1.9 and 2.x. We may need other icons to be added to the toolbar.

# Related Issues and more info about TinyMCE

[Allow admins to configure which TinyMCE toolbar buttons are used on their site](http://tracker.moodle.org/browse/MDL-20139)

<http://www.tinymce.com/>

Related discussions:   
<http://moodle.org/mod/forum/discuss.php?d=122460#p546841>  
<http://moodle.org/mod/forum/discuss.php?d=130470>