

FHS IT Services: MacSites Web Hosting Services

Version: 1.1- Last Reviewed: July 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Faculty of Health Sciences has assessed its IT service needs and developed its service offerings and delivery models to ensure effectiveness, avoid duplication and gaps, and take advantage of synergies with IT groups across McMaster. Based on this assessment, models for FHS IT core service offerings were developed and implemented.

Public facing websites are key communication tools for FHS groups. Leadership within the FHS, including the assistant vice-president, the director of public relations, the director of IT, and their support staff, have assembled a web team dedicated to ensuring FHS websites are aligned with University and Faculty strategic directions, meet government legislation, and provide appropriate security for assets on the public Internet.

The FHS has partnered with Media Production Services (MPS) to provide the MacSites solution to FHS groups seeking websites. MacSites is a McMaster branded platform that offers a simple web solution based on the WordPress Content Management System (CMS). MacSites is a streamlined, standardized, and largely self-directed website creation tool. CSU offers pre-configured 'starter sites and online training. Support is provided in partnership between CSU and public relations via the MyCSU portal.

This document details MacSites Web Hosting Services (MCSHS) provided to the FHS via the CSU. The service offering is a hybrid differentiated/core service. The core service is available to FHS groups without cost, however there is a cost recovery service option available for groups that want assistance with the service, or custom work. It outlines operational procedures, accountabilities, support models, and other key details of the service. This service is designed to create only public facing websites which are principally read only. Collaborative websites, file sharing, intranets, etc. are better served by other core services, and outside of the scope of this service.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES & BENEFITS

- To provide a sustainable, branded, responsive core web site service to FHS groups.
- To realize cost savings for service users and the Faculty.
- To provide response support for FHS groups in creating and maintaining website content.
- To achieve a more cohesive web strategy across the Faculty through partnership with MPS.
- To reduce risk to FHS groups and McMaster through a single, supported, maintained, solution.

SERVICE DETAILS

What are these services?

The MacSites Web Hosting Services provide branded, maintained, secure websites and support within the FHS. Some examples of these services include:

- MacSites (WordPress) installation and updates.

- Server hosting & maintenance (provisioning, updating)
- Security services (websites encryption certificate management)
- Website backup services
- Online training & support (self-directed training material creation, CSU support)
- Limited content and design support (Semi-support service model)
- Full content creation support via MPS at cost recovery (Full-service model)

While the MacSites services are meant to be a comprehensive set of website tools, there are some elements of website creation which are beyond the scope of these services. Some examples of these services include:

- Site planning, content consultation, or content creation unless provided for within the service level of the offering.
- Custom application development services provided by the FHS web team or by MPS which is outside the scope of the MacSites solution
- Websites not connected to the FHS organization such as other Faculties, departments, affiliates and community partners.
- Any services which CSU cannot reasonably accommodate due to availability of resources or other considerations as determined by the service manager.

What are the key locations associated with these services?

The FHS datacentres are central to the service and located in the McMaster University Medical Centre (MUMC), rooms 2D11 and 4H16.

MacSites Web Hosting Services will be administered and managed within the FHS CSU within the CSU Infrastructure Management service stream.

Who owns the services & their products?

Most services will be owned by CSU, though ownership of hosted websites will remain with the FHS group. Any data stored on or moving across the network will be owned according to laws and policies, not necessarily by CSU.

SERVICE SCOPE

Who are the intended users of the services?

The MacSites Web Hosting Service is intended for McMaster Faculty of Health Science members and groups. This service is currently also provided to some arms-length clients (VEGA, RISE, PTER, etc.). As hosted systems are public facing, many users external to McMaster and public users are also included in the service offering.

What kind / how many projects will the services support?

The mandate of CSU is to support core technologies within the FHS. Any FHS group that supports the mission of the FHS, or its departments is within these services' scope. In all cases, any requested website request will be assessed by CSU, and eligibility to access the service may be denied in cases where the proposed project creates a duplicate service, would create undue risk, or is otherwise determined to not



be within scope of the service offering. In cases where the project's eligibility is in question, the FHS Director of IT, CSU management, or the FHS-ITC will provide recommendations regarding eligibility.

SERVICE PROCESSES/PROCEDURES

How do users access these services?

FHS faculty and staff seeking a new website must create an online ticket through the [MyCSU portal](#) describing their proposed site, audience, and content. Public relations and CSU will collaborate to gather any required information to determine if the request can be accommodated under the service offering.

How are the services tracked?

All requests and work efforts are tracked in a ticket tracking helpdesk system. This system handles issue allocation, communications, work tracking and reporting.

How are services terminated?

Service users request termination, and CSU will establish a service end date. The client will have an opportunity to export any data or have it archived (e.g., burned to DVD, provided for download, etc.) before termination. Alternately, the client may elect to export their data according to a mutually agreed-upon schedule. Once complete, the website will be taken offline and deleted. As MacSites is based on the WordPress CMS, archived data may not be readable by clients without re-installation on a suitable web server.

Who approves access to and continued use of these services?

The FHS-ITC, FHS Public Relations, the FHS Director of IT, CSU management, and service users, may be part of the approval process. CSU will determine the relevant parties during initial consultations and document them in the tracking system.

SERVICE AGREEMENTS & ACCOUNTABILITIES

What are the supported hours of the services?

Most of the services will be available during regular working hours. Due to the availability requirements of hosted systems being as close to 24x7x365 as possible, overtime or irregular hours may be required. In these cases, CSU will follow standard procedures for approval or cost recovery of time and communications with clients.

How are the websites hosted and maintained?

As servers form the backbone of many online services, routine scheduled maintenance is key. CSU will schedule and conduct monthly support days. As service availability may be affected, these will be scheduled off-hours, when possible, to minimize disruptions to service users. Due to the mission-critical nature of the service, CSU has a variety of additional proactive standard operating procedures (SOPs) and support processes that include:

- Constant monitoring of servers and systems
- Security updating for servers
- Security updating for MacSites Software

- Daily visual inspections
- Environmental maintenance (Fire suppression systems, Air Conditioning)
- Physical security & access controls

How are client communications handled?

CSU will send broad communication of changes or events, including scheduled maintenance periods, to clients via email. Clients will be responsible for informing their system users. CSU will also share updates on the CSU website.

How are issues prioritized and responded to?

Client requests will be as an online service request ticket. CSU will collaborate with Public Relations to investigate incidents, assess impact, and provide service according to the associated service definition and agreements. Where possible, CSU's support will be scheduled in coordination with key stakeholders to minimize downtime of resources and maintain business continuity.

What are the client accountabilities associated with the services?

- Providing an accurate representation of website purpose, audience, stored data, and other requirements to provide websites securely and efficiently
- Requesting changes, fixes, service cancellations, etc.
- Client communications for any downtime created by MacSites software updates
- Managing any data on the website appropriately and adhering to the [McMaster IT policy framework and acceptable usage policy](#)
- Making payments directly to MPS for any costs associated the full support level of this service

What are the CSU accountabilities associated with the services?

- Regular maintenance of the servers and datacentres supporting the service
- Ensuring underlying network connectivity, server infrastructure, and housing for the service
- Maintaining detailed records and website documentation
- Providing clear and responsive communications
- website software provisioning, hosting, maintenance, and management

SERVICE COSTS & PAYMENTS

Are there costs associated with the services?

Costs to the client will vary depending on the service level chosen. The service is available in in three service levels:

1. Self-serve (i.e. no support, no cost): CSU provisions the website template and the client is responsible for all design and content creation.
2. Semi-Support (i.e. best effort support, no cost): CSU provisions the website template, and assists the client with basic design and content creation. Assistance is provided on a best effort bases, and not warranted to be available. This option may delay website creation vs other service levels as clients share available resources with other service level users.

3. Full Service (i.e. Full support via MPS, at cost): Clients may elect to work with MPS in their full-service Model. CSU will provision the website template. Clients will have to fill out an onboarding for with MPS to request assistance. MPS will assess the clients' needs, and provide costs etc. Clients are responsible for payments directly to MPS for these services.

How are payments for the services to be made?

Payments to CSU for any cost recovery items must be from a McMaster account via a valid McMaster Chartfield. A valid client Chartfield will be required as part of the scope where any cost recovery elements are anticipated. Any special arrangements outside of this will be at the discretion of the FHS Director of IT. Payments to MPS will be according to the arrangements between the client and MPS.