4.0 Web Publishing, Managing and Maintaining

McMaster’s presence on the World Wide Web promotes University activities and educational opportunities by providing current and effective interactive communication and on-line service to a wide audience with the goals of assisting and building broad based support for the University’s mission of academia, research, and service.

Content of all University web pages must comply with Canadian laws and McMaster’s policies, rules, and regulations. Further, the reputation and image of McMaster University is determined, in part, by the quality of information published electronically by its students, faculty, staff, and affiliations. Maintaining a consistent Web presence allows the highest possible search ranking results by search engines.

Purpose of the Web Policy that is based on a previous policy is to ensure accuracy, consistency, integrity, and protection of the identity and image of the University by providing a set of minimum standards and guidelines for Web sites of McMaster’s departments, schools, facilities, organizations, and affiliates.

4.1 Naming conventions and domains

The creation of a web site or application does not guarantee granting of a URL. URLs are granted on a case-by-case basis depending on the availability of the specific name. URLs must be unique and cannot conflict with other network registration and naming conventions. The following best practices will be followed for any domain requests:
Requested name relates to an actual entity within McMaster University with certain accountability
Consideration is made to add new content to existing pages
Consideration is made to add new pages to existing domains
Consideration is made to add new directories or levels to existing domains

URLs cannot exceed the fourth level domain space, e.g. services.uts.mcmaster.ca.

Any domain name associated with McMaster University needs to reflect positively on the University, and should not denigrate or reflect poorly on the image of the University in any way.

Web servers must be configured to resolve to one URL if multiple URLs are registered for one web site.

Web servers must be appropriately configured to accept the URL prior to entry into the DNS records. If the URL requested already exists but appears unused, contact must be made with the "owner" or administrator of the site and ask the "owner" to relinquish the name first by removing the name from the DNS records.

4.2 Branding Standards

All current and future websites must comply with the approved web branding. Approved templates and style sheets must be used to retain a consistent image of McMaster University. The University has provided templates and a style guide for University websites through the Office of Public Relations.

4.3 Web Accessibility and Alternative Formats

Ontario Accessibility law and standards are intended to ensure that information provided on McMaster website is accessible to all.

General rules include:

- Include "Alt" Tags on All Images and Buttons
- Don't Rely on Colors to Convey Information
- Don't Use Flickering, Blinking, or Scrolling Text
- Use Simple Language
- Make Any Time Restraints Flexible
- Content is available in alternative format

Additional accessibility information, provided by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), is available at http://www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT/
4.4 Web Security and Commerce

Any websites offering e-commerce functionality (e.g. online payments) must be PCI (Payment Card Industry) compliant and adhere to the Policy for Acceptance of Payment Cards.

Any information made available on the website must be consistent with FIPPA (Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act). HTTPS must be used for the websites that transmit secure information.

4.5 Advertising and Sponsorship

No commercial activities are allowed on McMaster web pages. Websites may not contain advertising for, or link to, commercial sites unless:

- the purpose of the advertising or link is consistent with the University mission
- the advertising or link is essential to the purpose of the site
- the advertising or link does not imply University endorsement of the product or service.

Any sponsorship must conform to all existing policies and procedures for the acceptance of external funds, including, but not limited to, clearance by University Advancement and approval by the relevant senior officer. Further details can be obtained from University Advancement.