ANNUAL REPORT
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

2021 - 2022

uOttawa
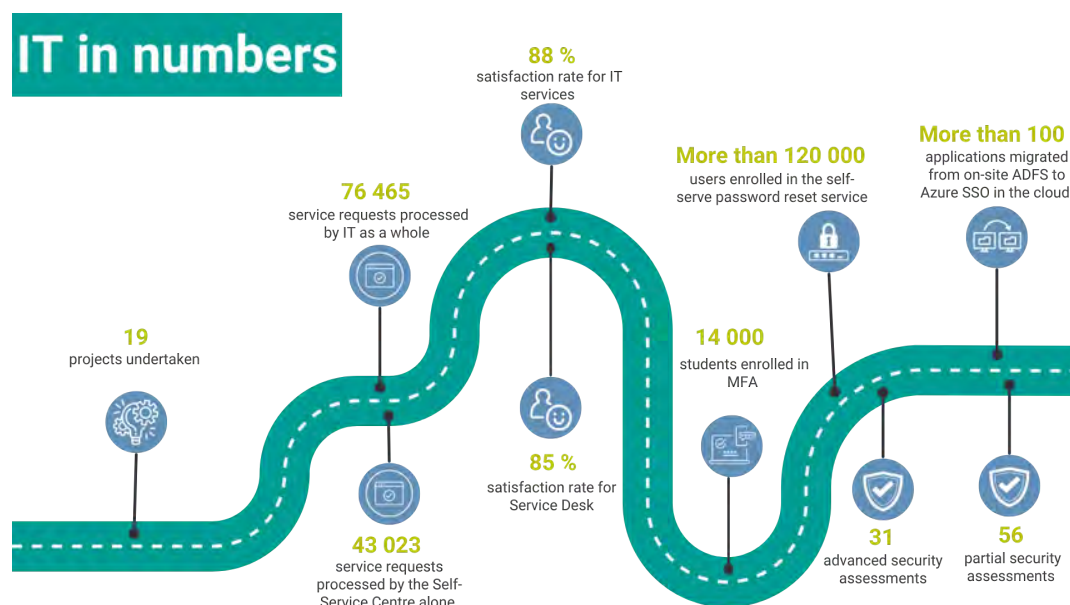
Technologies de l'information
Information Technology

AN ACHIEVEMENT-FILLED, AMBITIOUS YEAR

Innovating to enrich our community's digital experience and working together to build the university of tomorrow.

*This report presents the **highlights** of the past year in Information Technology.*

In every project we undertake, we are driven by **innovation** to improve the University of Ottawa's IT services, and by **diligence** in our **digital transformation**. Our **staff** are our biggest resource. They make it possible to do what we do.

The digital security of our community is our priority. Despite the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic and their impact on our work processes, we were able to meet the needs of our user community.

IT in numbers

88 %
satisfaction rate for IT services

More than 120 000
users enrolled in the self-serve password reset service

More than 100
applications migrated from on-site ADFS to Azure SSO in the cloud

76 465
service requests processed by IT as a whole

19
projects undertaken

14 000
students enrolled in MFA

85 %
satisfaction rate for Service Desk

43 023
service requests processed by the Self-Service Centre alone

31
advanced security assessments

56
partial security assessments

Message from the Chief Information Officer

I am pleased to present the work and numerous achievements of Information Technology this past year.

We are continuing to strengthen our partnerships with the faculties and services and with our external partners, including the Professional Development Institute at the Telfer School of Management; OGIX, to enhance Internet connectivity for uOttawa and the National Capital Region; ORION, to make our IT network more resilient and better support the research community, professors, students and innovators in the Ottawa region; and Telus, for our first steps towards 5G adoption.

Innovative projects were launched to enhance the experience for our user community. They include the creation of a new collaborative webpage for technical support; a new student IT care service, made by and for the University students; the introduction of multi-factor authentication (MFA) to strengthen student account security; and the mobile application management project for support staff and professors. We are proud to be contributing actively to the University's signature project, Workday, a new system that will help transform our administrative, financial and human resource services. The University will begin using this new technology solution in winter 2023, once users have received the necessary training.

After pivoting quickly to remote work due to COVID-19, we continued to meet the University's immediate needs as regards to administration, research, teaching and the student community. We rearranged our priorities in line with our community's evolving needs, and made maximum use of digital resources in transitioning swiftly to online service delivery. Our Women in Innovation initiative is continuing its commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) both at and outside the University of Ottawa. A digital journal was created to collect and share the intellectual leadership of the women and men involved in this movement.

It gives me great pleasure to share with you the high-quality work and achievements of our staff at Information Technology in 2021. Demands and expectations have continued to grow these past few years. I would like to thank and congratulate our staff for their dedication to our wonderful University community." — Martin Bernier, Chief Information Officer

Happy reading!
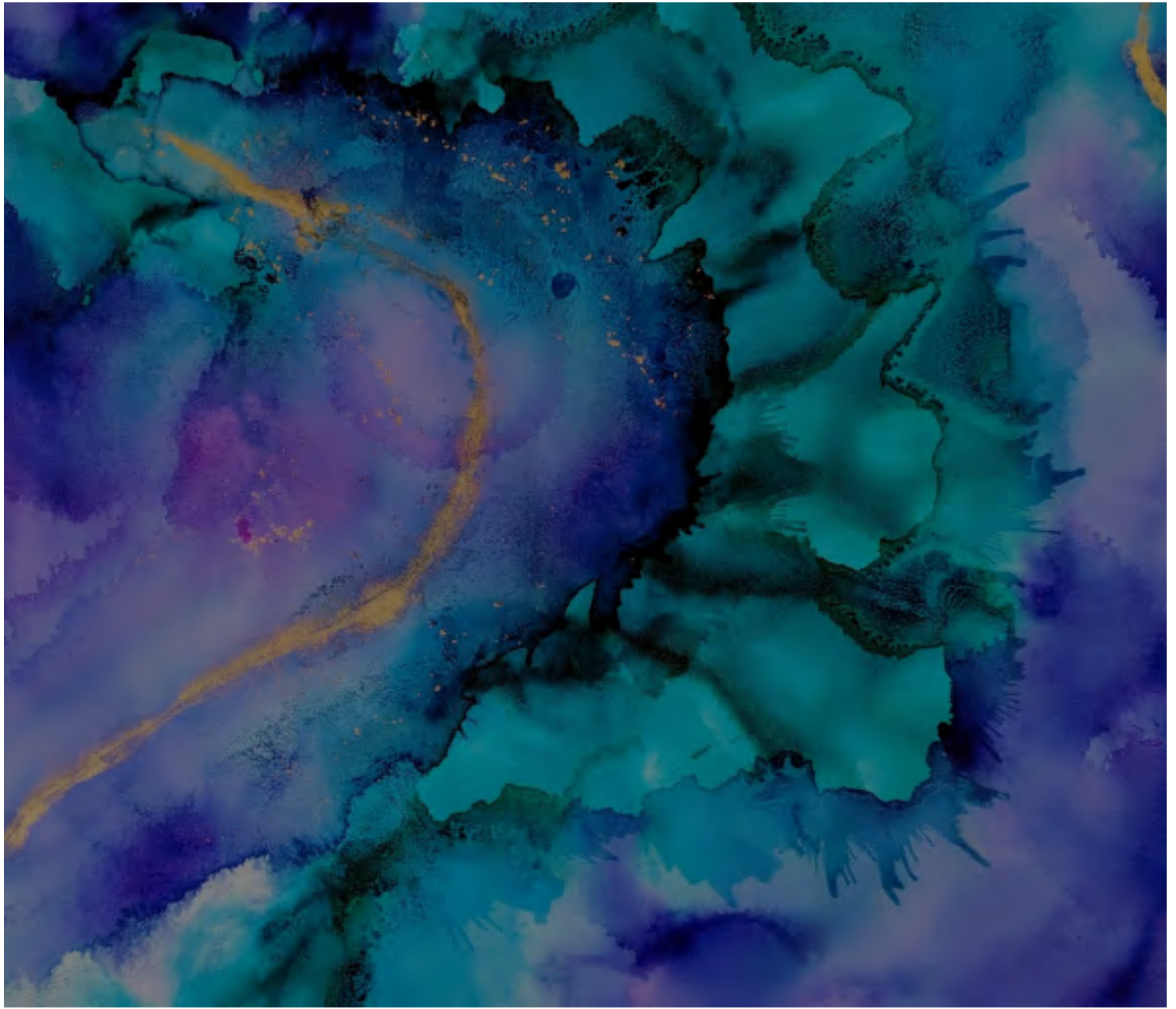
DIGITAL CAMPUS TRANSFORMATION PLAN: KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The University is continuing its digital transformation and is using many indicators to ensure maximum success. The University is:

More agile: Rate of availability of critical services: 99.92%.

More sustainable: Improved our security posture by providing information security training, with our level now at 90%.

More connected: Enhanced access to information and services that meet their user needs in a timely and effective manner via the self-service tool, with a satisfaction rate of 75%.

More impactful: A sound organizational culture, with IT staff engagement reaching 83.1%.

EVOLUTION OF WORK DURING COVID-19

The pandemic has shown just how critical IT infrastructure and systems are for operations and communications. Despite rapid changes and difficult choices, Information Technology rose to the challenge and was able to keep working on major projects thanks to collaborative efforts and effective team communication.

We are continuing to work in hybrid mode. We have the technologies and space we need to support a healthy home/office work model for everyone. More than ever, our success is guided by our digital transformation — we are more connected, more impactful, more agile and more sustainable as we cope with the pandemic and continue to build the university of tomorrow.

We developed the COVID-19 Assessment Tool to support the University community and protect it from the risks that COVID-19 and its variants continue to pose. In partnership with our colleagues from the COVID-19 Recovery Task Force (CRTF), we launched the Vaccination Declaration and the Daily Health-Check-In tool.
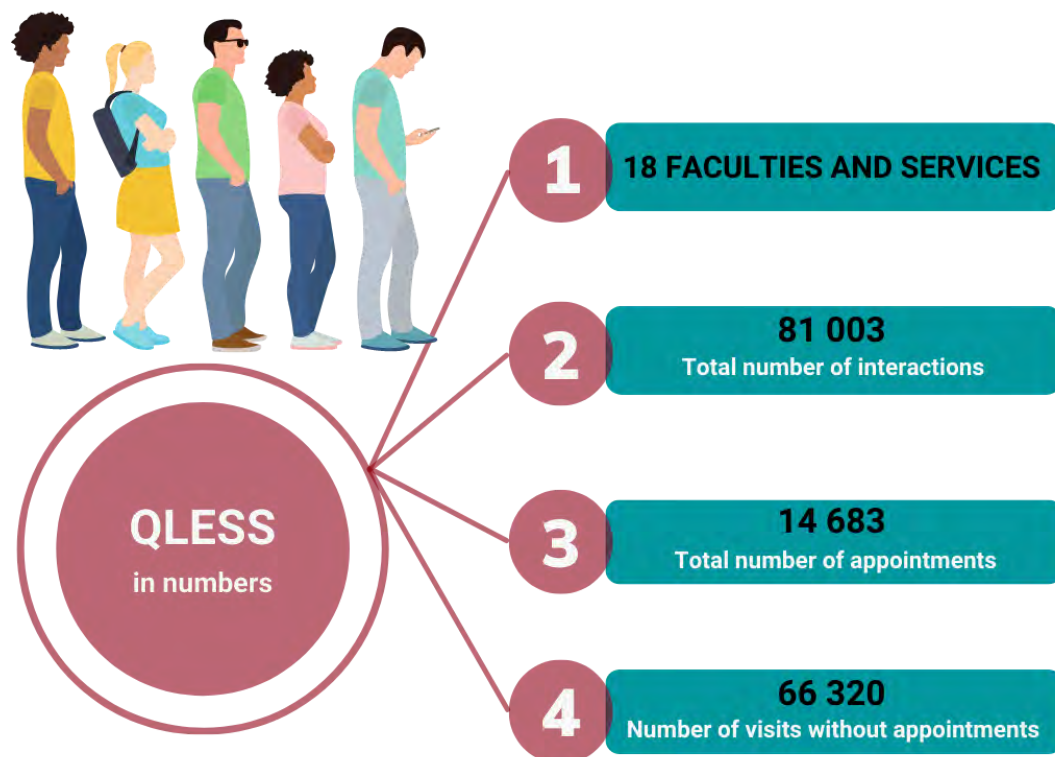
CREATING A BETTER STUDENT EXPERIENCE WITH VIRTUAL QUEUES

In December 2021, together with our supplier **QLess**, we presented our rollout of the virtual queue platform to North

American institutions of higher learning. The webinar's focus was on how the University of Ottawa utilizes the platform and on the benefits of virtual queues for students in these challenging times. We gave an overview of how we optimized our processes and **enhanced service visibility and mobility in order to create a better student experience.**

With this tool, faculties and services are continuing to ensure an outstanding student experience by offering in-person and virtual options. We noted a **reduction of lengthy in-person queues, especially during peak periods.**

QLESS in numbers

1 18 FACULTIES AND SERVICES

2 81 003
Total number of interactions

3 14 683
Total number of appointments

4 66 320
Number of visits without appointments

STAFF, PROFESSORS, RESEARCHERS, AND STUDENTS

We value our community members and our partners, and are grateful for the trust they all place in us. They continue to be the focus of our decision making.

Once again this year, we blazed new trails to provide them with the best experience possible, and worked hard to increase technological security for everyone.

1. STAFF

We cannot say it enough: our staff are our **most important resource**. Each year, we pay tribute to the exceptional achievements of the people who have been recognized for their years of hard work and dedication to the University. Discover our long-time staff!

A survey by McLean & Company found that most (55.4%) staff members feel energetic, passionate, devoted and very involved in their work and in the organization. The survey also showed that 27.7% of staff are either partly engaged or on the verge of becoming totally engaged. Staff were also asked to what extent they would recommend Information Technology as an excellent place to work to a qualified friend or family member. The response (16.9%) was significantly higher than the overall average (8.0%) for all organizations of higher learning. With meaningful data in hand, staff set up an employee engagement and satisfaction committee to work closely with the IT community and gather their thoughts and feedback on how to address the factors contributing to average and below-average results and to measure progress from year to year.

We promote the **growth** and **well-being** of our staff, with an emphasis on **solidarity** and **collaboration**. Staff can feel it.

Thanks to all of you for your involvement and support throughout the year!

2. PROFESSORS

The Professor Advisory Committee resumed activities and held five meetings this year. The meetings are an opportunity for professors to make their concerns known to Information Technology.

This collaboration has a positive impact on the professors' teaching experience. Their needs are considered, and Information Technology resolves issues that are raised.

For example, improvements to classroom hardware and the rollout of the mobile application management system to secure devices provided by the University were well received by professors.

Learn more about the Professor Advisory Committee's impact.

You can be part of the process! Email the Professor Advisory Committee.

"The interactions we had with the technology team were wonderful. We were able to voice our concerns, whether big or small, and all our feedback was received in a positive and constructive manner. I am thinking, for example, of the discussions we had about the service request console, the integration of MS Teams, the multiplicity of systems and VPN access problems reported by bachelor's and master's students. In every instance, our concerns were heard, and solutions were either

implemented or are in the process of being implemented. To give an example, I had to manage an access problem for a group of undergraduate students wanting to use systems hosted in the United States. Access for students in Iran was blocked by the U.S. company. A VPN access solution that was discussed at the last committee meeting will allow me to take care of this issue going forward. The committee works like all committees should, but as few actually do, by listening to one another, adopting a constructive mindset, and striving to come up with solutions instead of excuses." — Guy-Vincent Jourdan, professor, Faculty of Engineering

"I am delighted to be part of a committee whose focus is on professor-driven ideas and feedback regarding services and software that support research and teaching at the University. In my opinion, the progress achieved through the efforts of the Professor Advisory Committee is invaluable for professors, researchers and the University community as a whole." — *Melissa Brasgold, Specialist, Educational Development and Digital Learning (TLSS)*

3. RESEARCHERS

This year, we extended our support to scientists in the research community thanks to funding from our partner in the Canadian Network for the Advancement of Research, Industry and Education (CANARIE). We provide these researchers with development assistance and support, in addition to seminars

and workshops several times a year on programming and accessing data, and on generating the results they need.

In April, the Research Software Development Team (RSDT) issued its second call for proposals, inviting University of Ottawa researchers to request support for their software development projects. The selected research groups have access to professional expertise and qualified graduate student developers who have been trained by the RSDT.
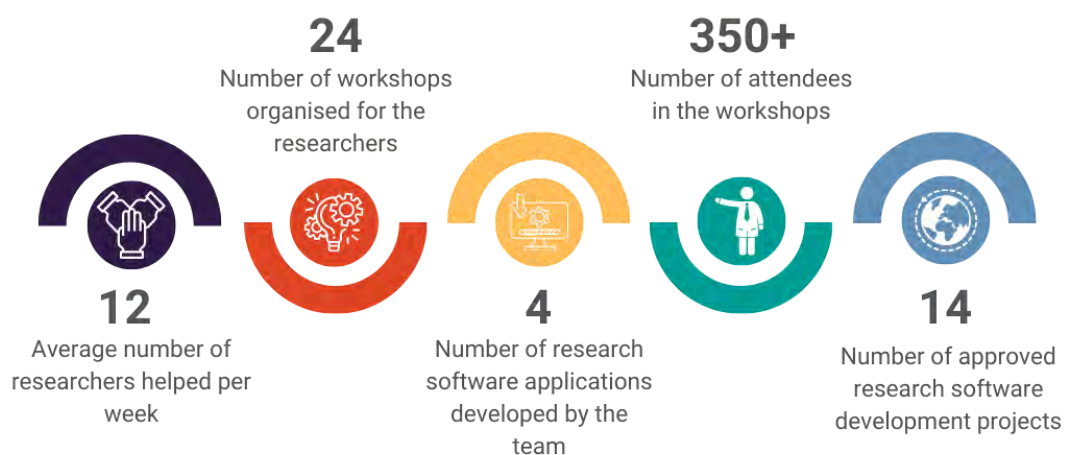
We are currently working on a second funding application and on a model for offering this service on a permanent basis.

Did you know that you can make better decisions by using the University of Ottawa's new Datahub? The Datahub was created to gather data and conduct analyses for making informed business decisions.

Discover the uOttawa Datahub and make it work for you!

"RSDT provided invaluable support for the development of the Inclusive Entrepreneurship Education and Training Research Program website, and for numerous international surveys. RSDT also assisted the research team in contemplating next steps in enhancing data collection and knowledge mobilization. Today, more than 90 academic experts in 19 countries are involved in this CIHR-funded project." — Barbara Orser, full professor, Telfer School of Management, Inclusive ntrepreneurship ducation and Training esearch rogram.

4. STUDENTS

Numerous tools were deployed this year to meet student needs and strengthen digital security.

The year began with the rollout of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) for students in all faculties. The goal? To allow students

to access uOttawa systems and applications safely and to significantly **reduce the number of compromised accounts.**

In addition, the Student IT care service, was created to **improve the user experience**. The service helps students solve technical problems. It also provides customized training on the systems they use — uoZone, Brightspace and Zoom, to name but a few. Student requests are processed by their peers, adding value and taking pressure off the Service Desk.

"Online, hybrid and bimodal learning are becoming more and more commonplace in colleges and universities. Several modern communication technologies have been used in classes to enhance collaborative interactions between students. Discussion forums have proven useful and more effective in improving students' critical thinking skills and feedback. Moreover, there have been discussions about the relationship between active student participation and the knowledge they

have acquired through discussion forums. Such forums have the potential to enhance knowledge acquisition and collaboration." — Linda Diokpa, Communications Student, Faculty of Arts

Information Technology interacts directly with students to solicit their feedback on IT initiatives and their digital experience. One way it does so is through the Student Discussion Forum for IT.

See how we are using student feedback to develop more effective technologies.

5. PARTNERSHIPS

We work closely with our partners to provide every student, professor and staff member with the best experience possible.

Partnership agreements were signed with external organizations to strengthen our internal network and provide better services.

We are going even farther with our new partner, Telus, in order to connect to the 5G network. This innovative shift will open up numerous R&D opportunities in such areas as health care, smart medicine and cybersecurity.

Learn more about uOttawa and 5G

"The University of Ottawa is not just deploying a network. Rather, it is capitalizing on it to enrich research, teaching, learning, services and communication, and to make the University more inclusive." — Lysanne Lessard, Associate Professor, Telfer School of Management

"5G can make data transfer more effective. It will facilitate collaboration and open up teaching opportunities where data can be consulted in real time." — Mathieu Lavallée-Adam, Associate Professor, Faculty of Medicine

To provide greater flexibility, we migrated the TOPdesk management system to the new Canadian Data Centre. This significant change affected all our users — students, professors and staff. The University of Ottawa was the first university in Canada to choose this product as an IT management solution. We are pleased with the benefits this system offers: enhanced security, fewer service outages, quicker response time, and faster connections to the self-service tool.

"You can look for your own solutions by consulting the knowledge base articles. You can follow up on your requests, since they are all located in one place. You can find all of the services that are available and submit your requests online effectively and quickly. Since you identify yourself when you access the portal, we know who you are and what services are available for you. More and more departments that serve our University community are adding their services to our portal" — Jean-François Dion, IT Manager, Service Management Team

Initiatives were also conducted by other IT groups at the University. For example, the Faculty of Engineering team led a number of initiatives that strengthened user security. Check out the five projects transforming IT at the Faculty of Engineering.

Medtech, the Faculty of Medicine's information management service, has also been active on the innovation and technological collaboration front. See the new services for Faculty of Medicine staff and students.

We are constantly looking to maximize our IT investment to support our digital transformation. See how projects are selected and categorized by priority.

The Information Technology team is delighted to be working with its partners to continue building the university of tomorrow.

WORKDAY

The University of Ottawa will soon be adding the Workday system to the range of technology tools it offers to the community. Workday represents a major investment for our institution, one that will modernize our administrative services in the areas of finance and human resources. However, the investment is not only financial — more than 350 staff members from across the University have contributed to the project, and more are signing on and rolling up their sleeves to make it a success.

"It's definitely a major undertaking for the University. Its impact will be felt across our entire community, beyond the systems level. The benefits will be felt in every area of staff activity by facilitating information sharing and simplifying our business process approach." — Jasmine Liboiron, Manager, Change Management
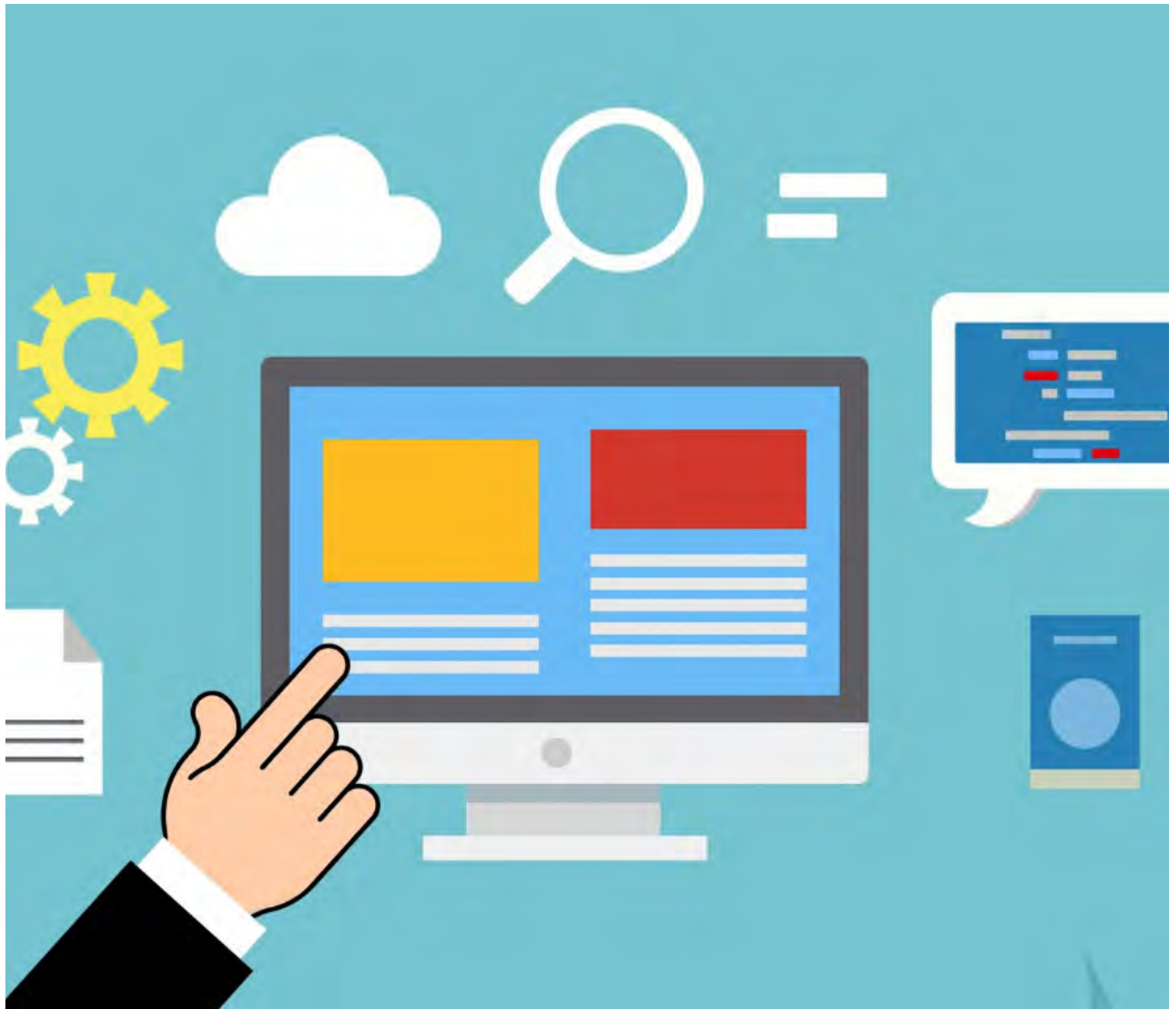
WEB: IMPROVING THE USER EXPERIENCE WITH DRUPAL 9

The University of Ottawa has been revamping service and faculty websites to make our institution more agile, more

impactful, more interconnected and more sustainable, as set out in the Transformation 2030 strategic plan.

The objective is to guide users to what is relevant to them, in the most effective and efficient manner possible. That is what they expect.

Learn about the Web Perspective Project.

The Web Perspective Project did 39 launches, including 118 websites from July 15, 2021, to April 27, 2022. A new digital design system was deployed for this purpose, facilitating content creation and sharing.

The web content management system has been updated from Drupal 7 to Drupal 9. It also contains new web functions, such as cloud hosting and content syndication, which were added via Acquia.

"Thanks to the WPP team for supporting us in the transition to a new website. It was a big step, with lots of content and many Faculty sectors involved. The end result was well received, and the web team is always available to meet our needs."
— Augustin Denis, Web Programmer, Faculty of Law

"It was a pleasure to work with such a dedicated group of professionals —the University of Ottawa web community and the PWP team. There is still some content to be revamped and some functions to be added, but the resulting solution is such that everyone, can easily and quickly publish content across multiple sites without any technical intervention. The new design and platform are agile, flexible, speedy and suited for mobile devices. It provides a more consistent experience for visitors

> *and allows for content sharing between sites. I am very pleased with the final product, and I would like everyone who contributed to it, to know just how grateful the team is to have worked with you!" — Dominic Wong-Fortin, Applications Manager*

SECURITY: MOBILE APPLICATION MANAGEMENT

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The "new normal" of telework has made it more necessary than ever for Information Technology to ensure digital security for

the members of our community who use their personal mobile devices to access University applications. To that end, we implemented mobile application management (MAM), which adds protective barriers and allows users to access resources around the clock.

This major project will be completed by the end of 2023, and we hope that staff in all of the faculties and services will have installed the application on their smartphones. Phase one, which is underway, includes mobile application management for support staff. Phase two, for professors, vice-presidents and service managers, will be starting soon.

See Mobile Application Management: Telfer picks up the mantle on being an early adopter

"The mobile application management (MAM) project means the University can offer mobile access to its data while maintaining a high level of security. Since many people are now working both remotely and on site, we had to make sure that we were offering our users flexibility while protecting sensitive information. To date, the MAM project has recruited nearly 600 users in 13 sectors thanks to collaboration between central IT and the services and faculties. We are looking forward to completing the work to have all University support and academic staff part of it." — Alex Dipietro, Manager, IT Infrastructure and Operations

We hope you have enjoyed reading about our achievements during this fiscal year.

STAY CONNECTED

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