RFP 26003 Website Hosting, Replatforming, and Design Consulting

Q&A

1.Platform and Hosting
Does ETSU have a preferred content management system or hosting setup in mind for the new site? If not, is the selected vendor expected to recommend and manage hosting after launch, or will that be handled internally?

Answer: ETSU has piloted using Webflow and is open to that platform. However, we are also open to other recommendations and are looking to the winning proposer to suggest a complete tech stack (which may include multiple software solutions) to meet our needs. The vendor is expected to manage hosting after launch either directly or through partnership with subcontractors or hosting providers. How hosting will be managed should be described in the vendor's proposal.

2. Scope of the Project
Should our proposal include the redesign or migration of satellite sites, such as department or medical college subsites, or will the project focus only on the main ETSU website?

Answer: The proposal should include all ETSU pages and subsites on the ETSU domain (etsu.edu) or any subdomain of etsu.edu. Currently, that includes about 40,000 webpages. ETSU staff will handle much of the manual work of reviewing content and will rely primarily on the vendor to provide a strategy and assist with any bulk (automated) content migrations.

3. Accessibility
Beyond meeting WCAG 2.0 AA and Section 508 requirements, does ETSU use any specific accessibility tools or internal review processes (for example, Siteimprove or Monsido) that we should plan to work with?
Answer: No. The vendor is asked to include a proposed solution as part of their proposal.

4. Security and Data
Can you share more about ETSU's expectations around data security, such as how user information is handled, data retention policies, or any particular compliance standards vendors need to follow?

Answer: The ETSU website only collects data through third-party tools (Salesforce and Hubspot), so most data security issues are tied to those tools and not the site itself. However, as outlined in the RFP, the vendor should plan for standard data security and privacy practices in line with GDPR and CCPA. Additionally, we must be able to selectively disable analytics tools, such as Google analytics, on certain subdomains of the site.

5. Post-Launch Support
Is ETSU looking for a long-term partner to provide ongoing support, analytics, and accessibility monitoring after launch, or should proposals focus mainly on delivering the redesigned site and handing it off?

Answer: We are looking for a partner for a five-year contract (with potential for renewal), as outlined in the RFP. We will likely not need assistance with analytics or accessibility, assuming the partner has proposed user-friendly tools as part of the recommended tech stack sought through this RFP. However, we will likely require occasional help with integrations, more advanced development work or alterations, and, as noted earlier, managed hosting services. We suggest vendors provide a proposal for a bank of hours or an hourly rate for various services.

1.) In addition to content strategy, will ETSU need the vendor to create and/or rewrite new content? If so, approximately how many pages will need to be created?

   Answer: No. However, we will likely need some assistance in developing design components and templates.

2.) We need to confirm whether ETSUHealth is included in the redesign project:
ETSU_Web_Linux - https://www.etsu.edu/
ETSUHealth - https://www.etsuhealth.org/

Answer: Content housed on etsuhealth.org or any subdomain of etsuhealth.org is not included in this project.

1. What is driving the dates of this project?
2.   In regards to content migration:
    a. Will you require content migration services?
    b. Will the entire .edu domain need to be migrated?
    c. Are there parts of the site that will not be migrated?
    d. Are there additional domains that need to be migrated?
    e. In regards to migration, how many different page layouts do you have on your current site?

Answer: We may elect to mass migrate some sections of the site. However, that is not our overarching strategy. Our inhouse team plans to review most content manually and rebuild pages on the new site in order to minimize the amount of outdated content published and optimize content for GEO and user experience. We currently utilize two primary layouts, one with a lefthand navigation and one that is full-page. Proposed platforms should allow us to easily build a variety of reusable design components and variables for versatility and ease of design. We are basing our design strategy on the principles outlined in the Atomic Design System.

3. Who currently hosts your website(s)?

> **Answer: The site is currently hosted on in-house servers and managed by ETSU's ITS team.**

4. What is the established budget for this project?
Answer: ETSU has budgeted approximately $1 million to support a three-year project to replatform and redesign its website. This figure includes the cost of both consulting and technology and hosting for that time period.

Is this a new contract or is there an incumbent delivering this work?
Answer: This is a new contract, and we are seeking new solutions.

Will ETSU consider accepting a digital signature on the submission?
Answer: No, we require wet signatures.

Per RFP Section 4.25, item 4 prohibits a limitation of liability, which is unusual for technology contracts. Will ETSU consider a reasonable LOL, consistent with industry norms?
Answer: Please submit your concerns in your proposal, legal will entertain request during contract negotiations.

Can ETSU confirm if there are any specific state or institutional data residency requirements for hosting, such as data being stored strictly within the United States, Tennessee, and/or requirements for compliance with HIPAA, FERPA, or similar regulations?
Answer: No - there are no data residency requirements that would be applicable for this project. The ETSU website only collects data through third-party tools (Salesforce and Hubspot), so most data security issues are tied to those tools and not the site itself. However, as outlined in the RFP, the vendor should plan for standard data security and privacy practices in line with GDPR and CCPA. Additionally, we must be able to selectively disable analytics tools, such as Google analytics, on certain subdomains of the site.

Does ETSU have any preferred or mandated cloud/hosting providers (e.g., AWS, Azure, Google Cloud), and are there any security or technical requirements we should be aware of regarding the use of public versus private cloud infrastructure?* Would ETSU consider or prefer a hybrid hosting model (partially on-premise/partially cloud), or must all hosting be fully managed and external to the university's existing infrastructure? Does the Prime contracter need to host the site or can they use a third party to do so?
Answer: We do not want to host on-prem or provide any internal hosting support. The contractor may elect to host and manage the site with a third-party provider. However, we are seeking a single contract and payment for such services must be routed through the winning vendor. In other words, we will not write a check directly to a third-party. If

proposing a third-party hosting provider and/or management service, please provide specifics in your proposal.

The RFP frames multi-tiered incident definitions (Critical, High, Medium, Low). Can ETSU provide examples of what it considers a "Critical" incident versus other levels to ensure proper alignment on response prioritization
Answer: Defining these is part of our request for proposal and the vendor's responses will be considered as part of the value offered.

Are there required security certifications or compliance frameworks (e.g., SOC 2, ISO 27001) that the hosting provider must maintain during the contract term?

Answer: At a minimum, the hosting provider must demonstrate adherence to industry-standard security and compliance practices. While ETSU does not currently require a specific certification such as SOC 2 or ISO 27001, all providers should:

- **Follow best practices for** data encryption in transit and at rest
- **Maintain** regular penetration testing and vulnerability assessments
- **Offer** role-based access controls (RBAC) **and** multi-factor authentication (MFA)
- **Provide clear** incident response protocols **and disaster recovery planning**
- **Be willing to submit** security documentation or summaries **upon request**

If a proposer does not maintain a formal certification but can demonstrate equivalent controls and policies, that will be considered as part of the evaluation.

Should the university seek to transition hosting services back in-house or to a different provider after contract completion, what level of transition support and documentation does ETSU expect from the awarded vendor?

Answer: Should East Tennessee State University (ETSU) elect to transition hosting services back in-house or to a different provider at the end of the contract period, the awarded vendor will be required to provide comprehensive support to ensure a smooth and secure transition. Proposers may want to bid this as part of their proposal for ongoing service (for details, see previous questions). Expected support includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Technical Documentation

The vendor shall deliver complete and clear technical documentation covering:

- *CMS setup and configuration, including all modules, plugins, and integrations*
- *Hosting environment specifications (e.g., server architecture, CDN settings, caching configurations)*
- *Custom-developed code, scripts, and templates, with accompanying documentation*
- *Deployment and update processes, including CI/CD workflows*
- *Content structure and relationships (taxonomy, tags, reusable components, dynamic content feeds)*

2. Data and Asset Transfer

The vendor must support the secure transfer of all digital assets and structured content, including:

- *Full export of all site content, databases, digital assets (images, videos, PDFs), and metadata*
- *Exports in non-proprietary, reusable formats that retain accessibility, SEO, and content relationships*
- *Assistance with reconfiguring content and media for use in the new hosting environment*

3. Knowledge Transfer

The vendor shall:

- *Conduct at least two live knowledge transfer sessions with ETSU's technical team or designated third party*
- *Provide system administration guides, training manuals, and troubleshooting resources*
- *Be available for technical Q&A during the transition window*

4. Transition Timeline and Support

- *ETSU expects a minimum of 60 calendar days of transition support following contract completion*
- *Vendor shall respond to support requests in a timely manner, based on defined severity levels*
- *Any handover plan should include clear points of contact and roles during the transition period*

5. Intellectual Property and Licensing

- *All custom-developed software, templates, components, and documentation produced under the contract shall become the sole property of ETSU*

- ***The vendor must assist in transferring or retiring licenses for any third-party services that are ETSU-funded and used within the platform***
- ***There shall be no vendor lock-in or restrictions on ETSU's ability to modify or repurpose exported assets***

Does ETSU have a planned schedule or process for major platform upgrades or technology refreshes that should be reflected in long-term hosting and support plans?

Answer: We do not and would value recommendations from the successful proposer.

What is ETSU's budget for this work?
Answer: please see response above.

1. The RFP specifies that ETSU seeks a single vendor and will not issue payment to multiple companies. For clarity, does ETSU require that the content management platform, hosting, and associated services all be contracted and invoiced through one entity, or will ETSU allow a lead contractor to engage a licensed platform partner (such as a SaaS provider) under a subcontracting arrangement?
   Answer: The lead contractor may engage subcontractors or SaaS providers as needed. However, ETSU will only pay the primary contractor directly. Costs for SaaS licenses or subcontractors should be included in vendors' proposals.

2. Additionally, given that many cloud-based platforms require annual or upfront licensing, will ETSU consider accommodating those standard payment terms if included under a single contract?
   Answer: Please identify estimated licensing costs in your proposal and payment schedule, this will be addressed during contract negotiations.

   Academic Catalog Integration
3. On page 32, the RFP references catalog integration requirements. Could ETSU clarify its current academic catalog system and the intended expectation for the new solution? Specifically, is the goal to manage catalog content directly within the CMS, or to integrate an external catalog system with the new website?
   Answer: ETSU currently uses Modern Campus Acalog and Curriculog to manage academic catalog and curriculum content. This system integrates with our existing CMS through an API, primarily leveraging XML feeds. Additionally, our team uses Bitbucket to manage and deploy content via repositories. For the purposes of this project, ETSU prefers a solution that allows us to integrate catalog content from the registrar, rather than requiring manual entry of catalog data into the CMS. While full automation is ideal, we recognize that catalog content does not change frequently; therefore, semi-automated approaches—such as scheduled XML imports, API pulls, or even CSV-based workflows—are acceptable. The primary goal is not to recreate catalog content directly within the CMS, but to seamlessly surface accurate and up-to-date catalog information on the website through a stable and maintainable integration.

Dynamic Menus and Database Integration

4. The RFP references menus "populated by a database." Could ETSU elaborate on the use case and data sources behind this requirement? Understanding how these dynamic menus are currently used (and which systems provide the data) will help ensure accurate technical planning.
   Answer: Here is an example of a menu on our current site that is populated by a database:
   https://www.etsu.edu/ehome/majors/bachelors/default.php

In-House Role in Design System and Site Build

5. The RFP indicates that ETSU's in-house team will maintain responsibility for the design system, much of the site build, and the migration effort. Could ETSU share more about the rationale behind this structure, whether it is primarily driven by cost considerations or by a long-term goal of internal ownership?
   Answer: ETSU's long-term goal is to maintain ownership of the website's day-to-day management, including content updates and design refinements, within our in-house team. Our team is highly comfortable working with no-code and low-code tools, as well as front-end technologies like HTML and CSS. This structure allows us to remain agile and responsive to internal needs while maintaining consistency across the site. However, we recognize the value of deep technical expertise and will rely on our external partner for critical functions such as hosting, security, backups, system updates, and advanced development work. This may include support for back-end integrations, custom feature development, or work requiring scripting or programming beyond front-end code. This model is driven not only by cost-efficiency, but by a strategic emphasis on long-term flexibility, as our internal team will always be more in-tune to our content strategy, the needs of our campus partners, and emerging needs and opportunities.

6. Additionally, would ETSU be open to a proposal that shifts more of the design system development and site build to the selected vendor while still ensuring your team is fully equipped to maintain and evolve the site post-launch?
   Answer: Yes, ETSU is open to proposals where the selected vendor takes on a greater role in developing the design system and building out the site- provided this is done in close collaboration with our in-house team. Our priority is to ensure that, post-launch, our team is fully equipped to maintain, update, and evolve the site independently. To that end, any such proposal must include: 1) Comprehensive knowledge transfer throughout the build process, 2) Editor-friendly tools that enable design and structural changes without requiring advanced coding expertise, 3) Ongoing collaboration during design system development to ensure alignment with our institutional brand and internal workflows.

Website Traffic Data

7. Could ETSU provide recent analytics data for etsu.edu, including average monthly pageviews and unique visitors? This information will be important for accurately estimating CMS licensing and hosting requirements.
   Answer: Average monthly visitors: 220,000
   Average monthly page views: 1.1 million

Hosting Architecture and Environments

8. The RFP references managed hosting but does not specify expectations for development, staging, or production environments. Could ETSU clarify whether multiple environments are a strict requirement, or if the institution would be open to a modern hosting model that achieves the same objectives such as quality assurance, testing, and version control through other means*? Answer: We are open to proposer's recommendations here and would consider more modern approaches.*

Accessibility and Compliance Tools

9. The RFP states that all proposed solutions must include built-in tools to evaluate accessibility compliance prior to publishing. Could ETSU clarify whether native accessibility capabilities within the CMS are sufficient, or if the institution expects integration with third-party tools? *Answer: We are open to either option. Proposals should detail the advantages of the proposed solution.*

Technology Roadmap and Integrations

10. The RFP notes a desire for future integrations with various technologies (e.g., chatbots, forms, and service systems such as TOPdesk). Could ETSU share any specific platforms or tools currently in use or under consideration that should inform the proposed architecture?
Answer: As noted in the RFP, ETSU currently makes use of the following tools: ETSU makes use of or plans to make use of the following tools, which must integrate with our website: Salesforce Marketing Cloud, Regroup Safety and Alert app, TargetX, Mainstay Chat Bot, Paciolan.

Calendar Functionality and Licensing

11. The RFP references calendar functionality that appears to require integration with third-party software. Could ETSU clarify whether the institution expects this capability to be delivered through a native CMS feature, or if an external calendar platform or plugin would be acceptable?
Answer: External platforms, microservices, or plugins are all acceptable. Costs for such tools should be included in the proposal. The selected vendor will be expected to procure or contract with any third-party vendors. In other words, ETSU will not pay directly for plugins or software subscriptions.

12. If a third-party license is required, would ETSU be able to procure and pay for that license directly, outside the scope of this contract? *Answer: No.*

Webflow

13. The RFP notes that ETSU has piloted Webflow for the News site and is open to other CMS options. If another CMS is selected, does ETSU intend to continue using Webflow for specific sites, or would it be phased out entirely? *Answer: We have not made this decision yet. We are currently only using webflow on a single subdomain (news.etsu.edu).*

Automated Migration

14. Would ETSU be open to automated or semi-automated migration approaches if they improve efficiency and reduce cost while maintaining quality control? *Answer: Yes, but we also feel like there is a lot of "junk" on our current site and are*

concerned about simply moving the mess to a new platform. We also feel that our site's content is not optimized for external users. Our long-term plan is to redesign, clean up, and optimize all content.

Integrations and Data Flows

15. The RFP lists several systems for integration, including Salesforce Marketing Cloud, Regroup, TargetX, Mainstay Chatbot, and Paciolan. Could ETSU clarify how these integrations currently function and which data flows or use cases are most important to preserve or improve in the new solution?
Answer: The most important functionality to preserve will be the embedded TargetX forms and the Mainstay Chatbot. You can view an example of an embedded TargetX form here: https://www.etsu.edu/go-beyond/ . The chatbot is available on the homepage (see the "ask Bucky" popup). You can view source code to learn more about the integration. Additionally, another function we would like to preserve is the ability to easily add popup CTAs sitewide or to specific pages. We currently do this through an integration with Hubspot, but are open to other solutions for this feature.

16. Do you have a year-one development budget?
Answer: Please see prior response above to similar question.

17. To remain compliant, could you please advise whether a specific attachment form should be signed and placed at the front of both the technical and cost proposals?

     1. For the technical proposal, should this be Attachment 6.5? There is no space or box for a signature and date. ***Answer: Refer to Section 3 of the RFP Document. The Technical response should follow the guide numbering and address each statement. It should be sealed in a separate envelope labeled Technical response.***

     2. For the pricing proposal, should this be Attachment 6.6?
Answer: Yes, this form needs to be completed, signed. You may attached additional pages to provide more detail, but everything should be on attachment 6.6. and sealed in separate envelope and labeled Cost Proposal.

18. If we advance to the presentation stage, will these take place online?
Answer: Yes

     1. How much notice will be given to prepare in advance? ***Answer: about 1 week***

     2. How much time will each vendor be given to present? We typically request 90 minutes for our product demonstration. ***Answer: We will allow up to 90 minutes for a presentation.***

     3. What is your desired/preferred agenda for the presentation?

     Answer: Team introductions, roles, experience, and expertise

Proposed scope of services

Proposed CMS and tech stack

Alignment of proposed solutions to ETSU's goals

Proposed project road map

Ongoing support

Q&A

19. You mention your website is currently hosted on in-house servers. Can we confirm you are looking to move away from this and adopt cloud hosting/web infrastructure? *Answer: Confirmed – we want to completely outsource hosting and hosting management/services.*

20. As well as providing your Cost Proposal document with our submission, may we also provide a separate copy of our costings document? *Answer: Yes*

21. You mention that you'd like to integrate the following with your website:
i) Salesforce Marketing Cloud: Is this an embed of forms? And/or links to the application?
Answer: We plan to use Marketing Cloud to embed forms, deliver dynamic content, and track user behavior to deliver more seamless and personalized communication.
ii) Regroup Safety and Alert app: Is this to feed the alert automatically onto the website? Does the website currently include this integration? *Yes. We need alerts posted in the app to show up in an alert banner on the site. We are currently using a different tool (see ETSU homepage > advisories), but will be switching to Regroup soon.*
iii) TargetX: Is this an embed of forms? And/or links to the application? *Both.*
iv) Mainstay Chat Bot: Is this simply the JavaScript embed to include it on all pages? *Yes.*
v) Paciolan: Is this just a link from events to this platform to purchase tickets? *This may also include embeds as well as user tracking for retargeting and the delivery of dynamic content*.

Can you provide a use case/scenario for each integration? For example, is it a link to a third-party application? Are you intending to pull content from the third-party application onto the website? Is it a JavaScript embed on the website? **Answer: *Proposals should be designed to accommodate a wide variety of use cases and ongoing shifts in technology.***

22. You mention that the "ETSU's full-time team will maintain responsibility for creating the web design system, implementing much of the site build and for the day-to-day work of content migration." but then state that "The Institution will expect the vendor to provide a comprehensive solution design and road map for implementation, including developer

support." Our understanding is that you expect the vendor to assist in the initial audit, strategy and information architecture, and then to provide support and best-practice consultancy to your in-house team to develop the design, configure the CMS platform templates, and migrate the content. Is that summary of the services accurate? If not, please elaborate on the distinction of duties between the vendor and your team.
Answer: ***This is accurate. Our team is highly comfortable with UX design, working with no-code and low-code tools, and with front-end technologies like HTML and CSS. However, we will rely on our external partner for critical functions such as hosting, security, backups, system updates, and advanced development work. This may include support for back-end integrations, custom feature development, or work requiring scripting or programming beyond front-end code. Additionally, we would value the guidance and expertise of a vendor who has worked with other large-scale organizations on major web redesign and replatforming projects who can help us avoid pitfalls and tackle this project efficiently.***

23. There is no specific line item in your Cost Proposal for training but we assume that will be required. Where should training be considered within that table? Do you anticipate that the vendor will be responsible for training your content editors, or would you prefer a Train the Trainer approach? **Answer:** ***We would prefer a train the trainer approach. Please include training costs within your year 1 costs for strategy and strategic consulting.***

24. Do you have a preference for an open-source or a commercial solution? **Answer:** ***We will rely on vendors' recommendations. When submitting your proposal, please outline the advantages of your proposed solution.***

25. What are your principal pain points with your current web CMS?
Answer: Our current CMS presents several significant challenges that limit both functionality and strategic growth. The platform is not intuitive, making it difficult for non-technical users to confidently create and manage content without substantial support. We are unable to build or manage a cohesive, reusable design system. There is no efficient way to create shared components or templates, which leads to inconsistencies and duplication of effort across the site. The platform lacks robust built-in reporting tools, making it difficult to measure performance, track engagement, or make informed content strategy decisions. Even routine updates often require manual coding. This slows down workflows and limits the pool of contributors to those with advanced technical skills, which is not scalable for a university environment. The CMS does not support authoritative content syndication or structured content reuse, which restricts our ability to develop a modern, centralized content strategy that serves multiple audiences and channels. Optimizing content for responsive design is cumbersome and largely manual, making it difficult to ensure a seamless user experience across devices. The platform

lacks fine-grained user access controls, which restricts our ability to delegate content management responsibly across a large, distributed team.

26. Can you tell us more about the evaluation team members and their roles?
Answer: Jessica Vodden, Vice President for Marketing and Communications; Amerrica Duggan-Torbert, Web Strategy Manager; Lindsey Mumpower, Web Content and Accessibility Specialist; Emily Goepel, Associate Director of Recruitment Communications; Don Rice, Systems Analyst; Lee Frakes, Systems Administrator; Kristen Early, Director of Marketing and Communications for the Quillen College of Medicine

27. For Search - what is your monthly search volume?
Answer: We're not sure if this question is referring to traffic from search or the volume of searches conducted through onsite search. If the former, we receive about 7.6 million monthly impressions with a click through rate of 3.3 percent. If the latter, there were a little under 54,000 queries through our onsite search tool over the past 30 days.

1. When you note that you are looking for a new tech stack, does that mean that you would like to move off your current CMS platform? **Answer: Yes.**

2. Webflow is a great tool, but we have not seen it used much in the Higher Education space due to the complex governance requirements. *Can you share a little more about what parts of Webflow appealed to you?* **Answer: We like the low-code model, the ability for non-technical users to easily add content, and the ease of adapting designs for various viewports. We are open to other proposed solutions though.**

3. What is your budget for this project? ***Answer: Please see similar question above.***

4. If you're able to share a budget, please specify whether ongoing CMS licensing costs are included in your budget or if they will come out of a separate budget. ***Answer: Ongoing CMS licensing should be included in years 2-5 of the bid.***

5. When was your last website overhaul? **Answer: *2014.***

6. What version of Modern Campus CMS are you on?
Answer: 2025.3

7. Can you tell us more about the marketing and e-commerce tools you envision incorporating into the site? **Answer: *See previous questions related to integrations.***

8. Are you interested in receiving information for optional post launch support? ***Answer: Yes, we expect proposals to include post launch support (across five years) as outlined in the RFP.***

9. What specific qualities are you looking for in an agency partner? ***Answer: We're seeking a collaborative, forward-thinking partner with deep technical expertise, strong communication skills, and a user-first approach. The ideal agency will support our in-house team through knowledge sharing, flexible implementation, and long-term sustainability—while helping us build a modern, accessible, and scalable web platform. As noted previously, we are very comfortable with design, styling (HTML and CSS), low-code and no-code tools, and use of SaaS platforms. We need help with hosting management, more complicated integrations, and more in-depth design or structural alterations. We also want advice and expertise in navigating this complex project, which will affect every part of our large and complicated organization.***

10. Can you provide examples of higher education websites or even those outside of higher ed that you aspire to / favor and why? ***Answer: https://www.uga.edu/; https://www.ttu.edu/ ; wearegeorgia.uga.edu; https://www.hausofwords.com/en. We like these because of the visual, scroll-based storytelling, clean feel, and magazine-style approach. However, even though we like the aesthetics of these, we also want a site that optimizes content for AI and data-driven platforms. We envision our site as a single-source of truth for our content, which we know will be repurposed and republished through a variety of tools and apps.***

11. Do you have an intranet and/or portal for current students? Is that in the scope of this redesign? ***Answer: We do not have an intranet but do recognize the need to create one. We did not include it in the scope of this project but if proposers have expertise in this area, we would welcome learning about it through this proposal.***

1. Web Governance & Change Management Reducing from 600 to 100 editors represents a major organizational shift. Have you already identified which departments/roles will retain editing access, or do you expect the vendor to help design and facilitate this transition? We want to understand if our scope includes change management support or if ETSU is handling the internal communications and stakeholder management. **Answer: *We recognize the organizational change and have already begun a campuswide communications plan to facilitate buy-in. We feel this is best handled by our team, but would welcome advisory support and guidance from vendors under the "consulting and strategy" portion of this request.***

2. Content Migration & IA Strategy Of the 40,000 pages and 500,000 files, what's your target end state - are we talking 10,000 pages or 25,000? Have you conducted a content audit,

or should we budget for discovery work to help you identify what to keep, consolidate, archive, or eliminate? Understanding whether this is vendor-led, collaborative, or ETSU-led will significantly impact our staffing and timeline.

Answer: We began a content audit a little over 18 months ago and are making good progress. We always welcome advice on how best to move through this, but this process is also well underway. Ideally, we'd love to get our site to around 20,000 pages, but are not placing arbitrary limitations. We do know that a lot of the content currently on our site is either outdated or duplicative, so we seek a solution that helps us govern our content better in addition to presenting it.

3. Content Migration: Does ETSU expect the vendor to handle content migration or primarily to assist and guide internal teams? How does ETSU envision dividing responsibilities between its internal team and the selected vendor for content migration? **Answer:** *We plan to handle much of the migration ourselves and seek advice and technical assistance from the vendor. See previous questions for more detail.*

4. CMS Solution: Are you open to an open source like WordPress or Drupal? They both meet the CMS requirements included in the RFP. Would you like us to include a CMS audit (culminating in a recommendation) as part of our discovery? **Answer:** *Making a recommendation for a CMS is a requirement of submitting a proposal. We are open to open source and vendors should outline the advantages of their proposed solutions within their responses.*

5. Hosting: Are you able to provide any specifications of the current hosting environment (total designated CPU, RAM, SSD Storage, Bandwidth)? **Answer:** *Please see below specifications and diagrams.*

Production Stack:

Load balancer pair in HA mode

www.etsu.edu Content

Staging node (Content from Modern Campus loaded here, then copied to the service nodes)

Alma Linux 8
CPU   2
Memory   4GB RAM
Storage   100GB

Web service nodes (2 in main data center, 1 in backup data center)

Alma Linux 8
CPU   2

Memory   4GB RAM
Storage   80GB

Web service node (IIS only content)

Microsoft Windows Server 2016 STD

CPU   2
Memory   16GB RAM
Storage   80GB

Web Application service node (Packing App and others)

Alma Linux 8
CPU   2
Memory   4GB RAM
Storage   60GB

Test/Dev stack:

Web Service \ Staging node (Content from Modern Campus loaded here)
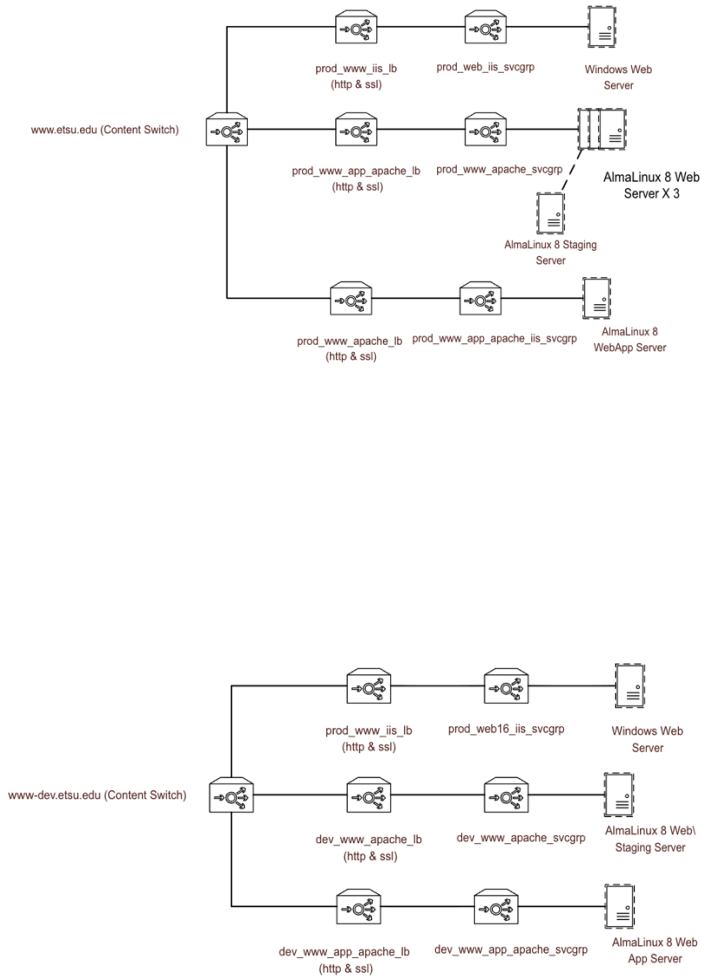
Alma Linux 8
CPU   2
Memory   4GB RAM
Storage   100GB

Web Application service node (Packing App and others)

Alma Linux 8
CPU   2
Memory   4GB RAM
Storage   60GB

6. Integration Expectations: Are you able to provide additional requirements for the following platforms: Salesforce Marketing Cloud, TargetX, Paciolan? ***See answers to previous questions.***

7. Training & Documentation: What level of training and documentation does ETSU expect for staff managing post-migration content updates? ***See answers to previous questions.***

1. ETSU notes a preference for a single vendor for contracting and accountability. Would the Institution be open to a prime vendor partnering with a specialized firm for strategy, information architecture, governance, and analytics — presented as a unified proposal with a single point of contact? ***Yes – see additional details in answers to previous questions.***

2. Would ETSU prefer to see distinct deliverables outlined for the strategy/governance partner and the CMS partner, to ensure clear accountability and alignment? ***More detail is always appreciated.***

3. Would you like support developing a GA4 taxonomy and data layer strategy aligned with your enrollment funnel and content hierarchy? ***Perhaps, but that is not a primary focus of this project.***

4. Does ETSU want an ongoing analytics and optimization retainer post-launch to support data-driven improvements? ***We would be open to that, but hosting support and more advanced development support are the priorities.***

5. How does ETSU currently connect website conversions to CRM or enrollment data, and should that integration be enhanced as part of this engagement? ***That is outside the scope of this project.***

6. Should analytics dashboards include both marketing KPIs (traffic, conversions) and governance KPIs (content freshness, accessibility compliance, broken links)? ***We are open to this, but it is not a primary focus of this project as we have in-house resources to assist with this. That being said, we are seeking a long-term partner who can provide guidance and expertise to inform our total digital strategy.***

7. Would ETSU like support developing a web governance playbook that includes roles, processes, content maintenance policies, and review cycles? ***Yes – we would consider that to be part of the strategic consulting portion of this RFP.***

8. What governance model is envisioned when reducing editors from 600 to roughly 100, and what level of approval workflow is expected? ***We have asked all units on campus to identify a unit-level web editor who will work closely with our central team and review, manage, and update all content for their unit. Currently, there are multiple editors per unit. Unit-level editors will have the authority to make day-to-day content updates (adding a staff member, posting a blog story), but not major content or design changes. These will be handled by the central staff.***

9. Should we include training and change-management support to help editors transition to new governance structures? ***We will need training and guidance for our central team, but not beyond that.***

10. Does ETSU currently maintain a design system or component library (e.g., typography, colors, grid, UI elements)? ***Yes, but we plan to refresh it. Also, it is not built in a very flexible manner due to the limitations of our current CMS.***

11. Would the chosen vendor provide structural wireframes and component guidance to inform design decisions in the design system? *If so, what kind of deliverables would ETSU be looking for — Figma files, HTML/CSS, or both?* ***We envision this being led by our in-house team with feedback and guidance from the selected vendor. However, we are open to a collaborative approach.***

12. Should the guidance include governance rules (e.g., accessibility standards, responsive behavior, usage documentation) to maintain consistency across units? ***We are always open to best practices and are seeking a thought partner to help us develop this.***

13. Should the guidance define relationships between content structures and design components (e.g., "program card" linked to "program content type")? ***This is probably a little too in-depth, given that much of this will be managed by the central team and not campus-level editors.***

14. Does ETSU want assistance aligning the design system to structured content models so that future updates and new templates remain consistent? ***We would value assistance and insight on this.***

15. Does ETSU need help defining a content inventory or content audit process to support content consolidation? ***We are always open to hearing advice and best practices, but we began a content audit and clean-up about 18 months ago. This process is already underway.***

16. How important is AI-readiness for ETSU's content — ensuring pages are structured, tagged, and machine-readable for generative search and discovery tools? ***Incredibly important. We envision our site as a single-source of truth for our content, which we know will be repurposed and republished through a variety of tools and apps.***

17. Would ETSU like support defining metadata, schema, or structured-content standards to enhance search and AI performance? ***Yes.***

18. Does ETSU plan to explore AI-driven site search or content summarization in the future, and should we plan for that capability? ***Yes.***

19. How does ETSU envision maintaining long-term site quality and governance after launch? ***We are expanding our central web team to improve management and governance. We also hope to make these processes more efficient through implementation of a better set of tools***

(procured through this RFP). We would like vendors to provide us with strategic guidance in planning for this.

20. Would periodic strategy and governance audits (e.g., annual or biannual) be helpful to ensure continued alignment with enrollment and brand goals? *We'd prefer a DIY model for this, with the vendor helping us build a system where we can easily conduct these ourselves.*

21. Will the CMS need to integrate with ETSU's existing authentication system (e.g., Shibboleth, CAS, Azure AD)? *Yes – we use Azure*

22. What are ETSU's expectations regarding CMS security audits, penetration testing, or compliance (e.g., FERPA, GDPR)? *See answers to previous questions.*

23. What third-party systems or campus data sources will need to integrate with the CMS (e.g., events, faculty/staff directory, course catalog, forms, CRM)? Should integrations be real-time via APIs, or can they rely on scheduled data imports/exports? *We expect proposers to identify a calendar/events solution and factory/staff directory solution as part of this proposal. Integrations ca be scheduled. Answers to other facets of this question can be found in answers to previous questions.*

24. Are there existing feeds (RSS, JSON, XML) that need to be consumed or published by the CMS? *Yes – RSS and XML.*

25. Do you plan to integrate the CMS with your digital asset management (DAM) system or marketing automation tools? *We do not have specific plans to integrate with our DAMs (Canto and Canva). However, we would like a versatile tool that allows for a robust set of integrations should the need arise. We do plan to integrate with Salesforce. More details can be found in our answers to previous questions.*

26. How many distinct content contributors and approvers will be using the CMS? *Approximately 100 contributors and 10-15 approvers.*

27. Do you have existing content approval workflows that need to be replicated? *No, we want to redesign our governance process as part of this project and are looking for guidance in terms of strategy. See answers to previous questions.*

28. Should departmental sites have flexibility in layout and design, or must all sites. *We seek a robust set of components that offer flexibility but do not want departments to create totally unique designs.*

29. How tightly should branding and visual identity be controlled across academic and administrative units? *Tightly.*

30. Are you looking for a built-in search feature, or are you comfortable with an integration with an enterprise search tool? ***Integrations are fine.***

31. How many pages or sites will need to be migrated into the new CMS? ***See answers to previous questions.***

32. Is content migration expected to be automated, manual, or a hybrid process? ***See answers to previous questions.***

33. What level of training are you expecting for end-users versus administrators? ***See answers to previous questions.***

34. Will there be ongoing post-launch support expectations beyond the initial implementation? ***See answers to previous questions.***

35. Will the CMS platform itself be evaluated separately from the redesign and implementation services? ***No. However, vendors are welcome to propose up to two options.***

36. Are there required technical demonstrations or sandbox evaluations? ***No, but we do expect a presentation detailing proposed solutions.***

37. Are you open to seeing live examples of higher education sites currently running on the CMS? ***Yes.***

38. Does ETSU plan to manage multiple sites (e.g., admissions, alumni, colleges) within a single CMS instance? ***Yes***.