

A Researcher-Centred Model: Rebuilding Brock's Research Website

Research Support Fund (RSF) investments enabled a full revamp of Brock's institutional research website (brocku.ca/research), repositioning it as a genuine communications and partnership-building tool rather than a static repository of information.

The redesign was approached with intention from the outset. Rather than a top-down content refresh, the project was built through multiple layers of consultation: researchers across faculties were engaged to understand how they actually use, and want to use, the site to access information/resources, learning about the Research Enterprise at Brock, and connect with funding and partnership opportunities. Associate Deans, Research, communications colleagues, and central IT partners across Brock were brought in throughout the redesign process to align the site's structure with institutional priorities and technical realities, while ongoing feedback loops with the research community shaped navigation, content hierarchy, and messaging.

This researcher-first approach meant the site was designed around how people search for and use research information, not around existing organizational charts or legacy content structures. Priorities included clearer pathways to expertise and partnership opportunities, more current and accurate representation of Brock's research strengths, and content that reflects the institution's evolving research priorities rather than static, outdated descriptions.

The result is a website that more effectively supports research communications, partnership development, funding opportunities, helping position Brock to attract and retain top researchers. Just as significantly, the process itself - grounded in genuine, iterative consultation rather than a single stakeholder's vision - has become a reference point for other website and digital-project revamps across the institution. Colleagues undertaking their own web renewal projects have looked to this process as a best-practice model for how to balance user needs, institutional voice, and technical constraints while keeping the people the site is meant to serve at the centre of every decision.

This work directly supports RSF's objectives for Research Facilities: maintaining and enhancing infrastructure that helps attract top researchers, and ensuring the institutional website remains a current, effective tool for research communication and partnership building. With the foundational rebuild complete, ongoing maintenance will keep the site aligned with Brock's evolving research priorities and community needs going forward.