



REPORT

From the offices of the...

Campus Media Ad-Hoc Committee

TO: Student Representative Assembly Members
FROM: Campus Media Ad-Hoc Committee
SUBJECT: Report on Findings and Recommendations: 93.3 CFMU
DATE: February 6, 2022

To the members of the Student Representative Assembly:

In April 2021, this committee was charged with the task to figure out a way to ensure there was a more cohesive bond between the campus media outlets under the McMaster Students Union. All three parties, *The Silhouette*, 93.3 CFMU, MSU, entered into these talks with a little hesitancy and pre-talk jitters.

Trust has been something that has been a core tenant of the discussions. That is to say that trust had to be established very early on for this group to succeed, and we can confidently say that this trust has been built.

Much like our time discussing *the Silhouette*, we've spent many hours both as a group and individually looking at areas for which we can continue to grow 93.3 CFMU.

We are proposing adding a CFMU Social Media Coordinator who can not only manage the various platforms the services operates on, but to communicate with the McMaster and Hamilton communities through other avenues such as Reddit and Discord. Both *The Silhouette* and MSU have roles similar to this. We are also proposing a look into finding a more permanent solution to advertising for CFMU. Finally we are proposing a complete overhaul of the 93.3 CFMU website due to the developers phasing out their current content management system. The website is the backbone of where students and the community can livestream 93.3 CFMU, watch video content and read blog posts.

These proposals will be explained in further detail later in this report.

Analysis and overview of emerging trends in media (Online Presence/Branding & Print):

Over the last several years, traditional media (print, tv, radio) has experienced a great deal of disruption. Social Media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok with millions of users,

have forced legacy media to adapt to a new media environment. Broadcasters that once created news, entertainment, and sports, specifically for their own distribution networks are now re-thinking and repackaging information as digital content, to be posted online or channeled through social media portals.

CFMU underwent a major rebrand in 2015 and with the guidance and expertise of Factore (now Operatic), a multidisciplinary team of creative, technology and marketing professionals, greatly improved its digital content creation and distribution. With a strong brand identity, and website functionality that includes streaming audio/video, podcasting, blogging and full schedule of archived radio programs, CFMU is without a doubt one of the best campus community radio stations in Canada. CFMU has thousands of followers and is constantly adapting to the ever-changing landscape of social media as seen through our Social Media Strategy document (reference a.)

Here is an example of content we provide and how we brand:

- **Morningfile:** This is CFMU's flagship morning show featuring in-depth conversations with local innovators and leaders on events, organizations, initiatives, and issues in Hamilton.

Radio: MF airs on 93.3 FM every weekday morning from 9-10am (due to covid, audio is taken from the Skype interview)
Podcast: Each show is archived for 8 weeks and tagged with the appropriate meta-data so that contents for each show will show up with our internal website search tool.
Video: A Skype interview is recorded, edited with B-roll clips and packaged. A teaser clip is then posted to IG and FB and linked to the full interview.
Promotion: Interview is promoted through our own SM and sent to applicable outside organizations that might like and share. Also posted in group forums like r/McMaster or certain Discord servers.
Branding: Each interview has an opening and closing branding and additionally watermarks placed on videos and thumbnail with branded fonts and color ways.

CFMU understands this shift in media consumption and understands that our listening audience spans several generations with varying demographics. Over the last 5 years we have substantially increased our online presence. However, radio broadcasting is still very important to us and serves our older listening audience. Having an FM license in Southern Ontario is a highly-coveted position, as frequencies on the FM dial are rarely available to new applicants. We're also part of the emergency broadcast system for McMaster and the City of Hamilton. CFMU is the third oldest campus station in the country and is supported by those who recognize that diversity and local programming are more crucial than ever.

It should be noted that two of CFMU's strengths remain constant, prior to the advent to social media through to today. First is its quality relevant programming, whether it is advancing Canadian or local music, student ideas and initiatives, or community and charity concerns. CFMU also supports those in need through its continuous food drive for Welcome Inn. In 2021, the station also donated a portion of its own fundraising campaign to food banks in Hamilton.

Second is CFMU's volunteer and staff engagement. Students involved with CFMU continually note that CFMU was a highlight of their student experience, and their roles with the station helped them grow and mature as individuals. Some of these students, especially staff, go on to find work in a related field, prepared for the workforce, in part, by their experience at CFMU. Some examples include former sports directors (Duncan Simmons joined the PR team with the BC Lions; Marshall Ferguson and Ben McClellan moved on to TSN), music directors (most notably Jeffrey Remedios, founder of Arts & Crafts Records and now president of Universal Music Canada) and community outreach coordinators (such as Lindsay Hamilton, who is now an anchor for SportsCentre on TSN).

Analysis of the current depth of integration between CFMU and The Silhouette:

In the past, CFMU and the Silhouette have collaborated to share air-time and print space for many years. Off the Pages is a radio program that aired on Friday afternoons for several years, then took a hiatus, and is back on Tuesday mornings. CFMU had a regular section in the Sil for our Top 10 albums, program spotlights and most recently a full page to promote the radio station to returning McMaster students as seen below:

The image shows a magazine spread. At the top left is the red CFMU logo. To its right, the title "The new school way for old school radio" is written in white. Below the title is a black and white photo of a man and a woman standing next to a large microphone. The man is wearing glasses and a suit, and the woman is wearing a dark top. At the bottom left, there is a portrait of Jamie Tennant with the caption "Jamie Tennant Program Director". The main text on the page discusses the evolution of campus radio and the unique nature of CFMU. A quote from Jamie Tennant is also present. The bottom right corner contains the text "PHOTO C/O CFMU Archives".

CF|M|U **The new school way for
old school radio**

Jamie Tennant
Program Director

Once upon a time, people thought campus radio looked like a bunch of heavy-lidded beret-clad weirdos drinking black coffee in the basement of the student centre, listening to Norwegian free jazz. Or a bunch of wide-eyed hemp-clad weirdos drinking free trade coffee in the basement of the student centre, screaming into a microphone about equal rights for Liberian dairy farmers.

Now, they just scratch their heads and think, radio? What year do you think this is?

Well, it's now. Right now. If you've got preconceptions about campus radio, it's time to set them aside.

CFMU is unlike any other radio station in the Hamilton/Wentworth region — and it's your station, operated by the McMaster Students Union. After four and a half decades, CFMU remains a vital part of alternative media and culture in the Hamilton area.

Part of that is radio. Old school radio still has a surprisingly robust fan base — especially when you're as unique as we are. We're a voice for the McMaster campus and community, a breeding ground for new talent, and an important independent medium for relating news and new ideas. We spread the word through Ham-

When it comes to content, let's clarify: we're all for Norwegian free jazz and we're

CFMU also provides spoken word programming on everything from queer issues

PHOTO C/O CFMU Archives

Digital Media Specialist

With the addition of the Digital Media Specialist in 2016, CFMU and the Sil have collaborated and shared content regularly. The DMS is a full-time position working equally between The Sil and CFMU one that has enabled digital content to be shared by both media organizations. [Welcome Week](#) and [Homecoming](#) are examples of this, as both CFMU and the Sil look to cover on-campus events, that can be covered by the same production team. The video is a co-presents and shared online while cross-promoting both services.

Sharing of Resources

- Human Resources: There's a recognition by both media organizations that sharing expertise will benefit both services. From developing and selling advertising packages to hosting videos such A Day in the Life or CFMU's panel discussion series [Mac Discussions](#) CFMU and The Sil have a good working relationship that allows for staff in one office to lend a hand at the other.
- Equipment: Through the Digital Media Specialist position, equipment for video and photography are shared regularly between departments. The DMS has access to all cameras, lenses, hardware and accessories as well as software, online stock libraries and server space.
- Documents: With the use of Google drives, both CFMU and The Sil are able to share documents for things like hiring committee information, stock photo library, project outlines (WW, MSU Elections) and for various other weekly operational tasks.

Communication

CFMU and The Sil are in regular communication either through bi-weekly meetings or instant messaging (Slack). Discussions usually revolve around upcoming joint projects, sharing metrics data or department updates. In the spirit of collaboration, it's also been suggested that both media should have one meeting a month where all CFMU and Sil staff can come together to brainstorm new ideas or work out the details of shared content.

We recognize that as media we have a strong commitment to collaborate on stories, projects or ideas that can serve the students of McMaster and the greater Hamilton community and therefore look to great an open-door policy among staff for both media services.

Identification of current gaps and challenges independently faced by, and shared between, CFMU and The Silhouette. These gaps and challenges should be identified within the context of the currently established mandates and goals of CFMU and The Silhouette.

Over its six-decade history, McMaster radio has grown from a club (BSB - Board of Student Broadcasting, in the basement of Wentworth House) founded by a small group of ambitious students to a full functioning FM radio station with a Full and Part-time staff and hundreds of volunteers. Originally, the BSB piped in audio to only the residences through close-circuit radio and today CFMU's FM signal can be heard throughout Hamilton-Wentworth and all over the world, streaming live on the internet 24/7.

In its second year of operation, the B.S.B. has successfully endeavoured to expand its facilities in the areas of technical, production, and operations. The "This is McMaster" series, and packaged radio specials, such as 'Remembrance Day', 'U.N. Day', 'Christmas Special', and the 'Easter Special', heard on several Canadian radio stations, have made McMaster Radio a recognized, familiar voice, as well as a reliable public information source. The B.S.B. looks forward to even more expansion in the coming year, and to eventual 'on-the-air' operation in late 1966.



Through it all, the station has overcome many challenges. With the rise of download audio and free on-demand streaming sites CFMU has had to be nimble enough to adapt to this change in listening audience behaviour.

As we're always looking to improve the station and be ahead of the broadcasting curve, we have identified the following gaps and challenges that currently impede our potential to grow and better serve our community.

Staffing and Job Descriptions

- CFMU Social Media coordinator: Over the years, we've noticed that students communicate with each other through various online channels (Mac Insiders, Spotted at Mac, Mac Confessions, r/McMaster) which over the course of time wax and wane in engagement. I believe that finding these forums where students discuss topics ranging from on-campus social events, living arrangements, mental health and course work is very important as it helps inform the type of content we develop and distribute.

The role of the Social Media coordinator would be two-fold; to inform the staff about what topics the McMaster and the Greater Hamilton community are interested in, and secondly to help develop and distribute content widely so that engagement is increased, either on our websites, or through our Social Media platforms (FB / IG / Twitter etc).

This position would also reflect the types of jobs that are offered in various industries as many companies post their product / service information where their customer base engages (often outside of company websites). Just type in Social Media into job sites like Indeed and you'll see that this is a growing field within Digital Marketing. I believe that a shared FT position (SOP) between the CFMU and the Sil would benefit both services.

We're in the attention economy and it's not enough to just produce great content, organizations need to find ways to target their online audience so that videos, blogs, podcasts etc...receive engagement in the form of comments, likes and increased subscribers. This engagement would then help us attract advertisers and perhaps open up new revenue streams (YT monetization, Patreon subscribers etc).

- Advertising: Until recently, CFMU and The Silhouette shared an Advertising Rep. who on a part-time basis would sell advertising on commission. The position has been vacant since the summer and handling advertising requests has been left to the CFMU Admin. Dir. and the Silhouette *Editor-in-Chief*. There have been discussions to continue using anyone interested in selling ads on commission. There may be an opportunity to re-visit this arrangement to find a more permanent solution.

Infrastructure Investment

- CFMU website upgrade: As previously mentioned, CFMU substantially increased its online presence with the development of the website, cfmu.ca in 2015. This website was built on a proprietary framework (Content Management System) called Tenon. The developers at Operatic who built and maintain Tenon have told us that they have decided to phase it out and that CFMU is one of their last clients that still uses this CMS.

After several meetings with Operatic it's been determined that the cost of updating our website maintaining full functionality will be approximately \$55K which includes a unused credit to the MSU for a previous contract.

CFMU.ca is the backbone of our online digital media presence. Besides the basic functions of a Program Schedule, Search utilities, menu and navigational design which format very well on both desktop and mobile, the site also allows us to stream audio and video and podcast our entire lineup of shows.

We thank you for your time, and should you have any questions about this report, please reach out to president@msu.mcmaster.ca or bhandari@msu.mcmaster.ca.