



Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (RASC) Halifax Centre

Dedicated to the Advancement of Astronomy and Allied Sciences

G7: RASC Halifax Centre Website Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

(Adopted November 2, 2019; Revised September 3, 2024)

Background:

In October 2005, the standard operating procedures (SOP) for the RASC Halifax Centre website were developed and defined who was responsible for the various aspects of the Centre's website and for making changes to it.

During 2019, the Centre's website was upgraded to use a new content management system. The SOP was consequently changed to reflect the changes made.

Rationale:

The SOP defines the assignment of responsibility for making changes to the site on an ongoing basis.

Policies Relating to the RASC Halifax Centre Website Standard Operating Procedures:

1. The RASC Halifax Centre maintains web pages at <http://halifax.rasc.ca> and <http://novaeast.rasc.ca> on a server maintained by the Department of Astronomy & Physics, Saint Mary's University (SMUDA&P). Upload privileges are held by selected SMUDA&P staff, the RASC Halifax Centre webmaster and designated RASC Halifax Centre members.
2. The website is created using the Joomla content management system. All page editing is done using a web-based interface. The site for the centre (halifax.rasc.ca) and Nova East (novaeast.rasc.ca) are separate Joomla sites. These sites and associated email addresses and mailing lists are managed by the "Virtualmin" hosting management software on the shared server orion.smu.ca. The login for the Centre is at: <https://halifax.rasc.ca:10000/> and for Nova East is at <https://novaeast.rasc.ca:10000/> (passwords can be made available by SMUDA&P staff).
3. SMUDA&P keeps track of the Halifax RASC and Nova East passwords. If those passwords were to be changed on Halifax RASC's end, the password manager in SMUDA&P would be out-of-sync. SMUDA&P must be notified if the RASC Halifax Centre side changes passwords for the websites.
4. The Webmaster reports to the RASC Halifax Centre Board of Directors through the President and accepts new material for the web page from the Board.
5. Major changes to the web page and any changes to this SOP must be approved by the Board of Directors.
6. The Webmaster or their designate is responsible for maintaining the web pages on a day-to-day basis, including style, fixing identified problems, and adding new content, as directed by the Board of Directors and the Nova East Planning Committee (NEPC).
7. The Board of Directors is responsible for providing content for the web page, including linked documents such as the Centre brochure, "Getting Started in Amateur Astronomy", rules for awards, library information, privacy policy, bylaws, etc.

8. The President or designate is responsible for informing the webmaster of upcoming Monthly Meeting details.
9. The Observing Chair is responsible for informing the webmaster of upcoming dates of Members' Nights. Members declare their intent to visit SCO via the rascals@halifax.rasc.ca listserv.
10. The Newsletter Editor is responsible for providing a pdf file of Nova Notes to the Webmaster when it is ready to be published on the web.
11. The Librarian is responsible for maintaining an up-to-date list of Library books via the website.
12. The Webmaster shall ensure that the Joomla content management system is updated regularly and always runs a version that is supported for security updates. Any concerns about site security, including the PHP language version used, should be reported to SMUDA&P staff.
13. The server containing the websites is backed up automatically by SMUDA&P staff; however, the Webmaster should backup the sites independently, at least quarterly.