



Mensa Czech Republic IT

2022-02-13, Tomas Kubes, tomas.kubes@mensa.cz

Mensa Czech Republic uses several independent IT systems. Each is discussed separately.

Intranet (intranet.mensa.cz)

- **Use case:** system covering most of Mensa “business”
 - member database (personal data, interests, user search, dues payment (incl. by card), automated payment processing) + back office
 - IQ testing (registration for tests, payments, recording of results, emailing of certificates), plus necessary backoffice
 - social functions (photogallery, discussion, polls, document sharing)
 - member communication (mailing groups, notices)
 - activities (add activity, register for activities)
- **Technical:** core of the system is from 2000
 - System is built on PHP 5.6 and MySQL runs on a dedicated VPS
 - ~100 000 records of all ppl. tested, ~12 000 activities, ~100 000 of registration, ~100 users per day
- **What we learned, recommend or would share:**
 - Volunteer made system with a history (and code) way back to 2000.
 - It is a big pain now. Its age and complexity make it hard to maintain and update.
 - We would be happy to share the code, but it is so bad you do not want it.
 - We would like to get rid of it and replace it by something like Mensa in a Box 2.

Mensa for Children Internet+Intranet (deti.mensa.cz)

- **Use case:** Mini-intranet for children’s Mensa (from 2012)
 - Database of children, their parents and teachers, incl. user profiles, search, etc.
 - Activities (anyone can create or register for an activity), discussions, photos
 - List of interest groups, participating schools, kindergartens and clubs
 - List of articles, publications, professional seminars + backoffice to manage all this
- **Technical:**
 - Developed and hosted by a professional agency on commercial terms in 2012.
 - ~1000 children/parents, ~300 teachers, ~500 users per day (open to public)
- **What we learned, recommend or would share:**
 - Even though the price was steep, in retrospect, it was a good investment.
 - I would love to share this, but we do not have the rights to do so directly.



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Activities (akce.mensa.cz)

- **Use case:** support large events like annual gatherings or conferences
 - Publish and manage information about the event (info, programming, availability)
 - Registration of users, their profiles, and choices of individual programming
 - Management of payments (incl. connection for credit card payments).
 - We used it for EMAG 2010 and EMAG 2021, for all our bi-annual gatherings and several conferences for teachers.
- **Technical:**
 - Php 7.0 + MariaDB, runs on a cheap commercial web hosting
 - Can easily support EMAG, tested 2x. :)
- **What we learned, recommend or would share:**
 - Works well and is small enough to be maintained by a single person.
 - **We are happy to share the system and we might be able to provide manpower to set it up for you** (depending on the amount of work, it might involve a small payment, as the author is not a Mensa member).

Mensa Voting System (now offline)

- **Use cases:** Simple stand alone system to run board elections.
 - Upload candidates, register votes - with 2 factor voter authentication.
- **Technical:**
 - Php 7.0 + Nette and MariaDb, runs on dedicated VPS for security
- **What we learned, recommend or would share:**
 - System is a result of a bachelor project at Czech Technical University
 - **We would be happy to share this system.**
 - **We might be able to provide you with manpower to set it up.** It might involve payment as the author is not a Mensa member.
 - We are planning a significant security update, but the timeline is unclear.

Google Suite

- **Use cases:**
 - @mensa emails, private calendar, video calls, and documents for members.
 - Document sharing + meeting software for the board.
- **Technical:**
 - Provided by Google for free to nonprofits.
- **What we learned, recommend or would share:**
 - I would really recommend it. Around 1% of members hate Google, for the rest, this is the most satisfactory service we provide, many use it as primary email.



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Other Systems

- Mensa public web (www.mensa.cz), built on a proprietary CMS, is a very big pain.
- Mensa magazine (casopis.mensa.cz), built on different proprietary CMS, is a big pain.
- Logical olympics (logickaolympiada.cz), web system + system to run the contest.

Summary of Our Experience

1. In our experience, smaller systems tend to perform better as long as they can be managed and updated by a single volunteer. Although this introduces critical person risk, in our experience the benefits of one person feeling the direct “ownership” trumps maintenance by a committee both in terms of reliability and work done.
2. In future we would prefer to build our solutions as an array of connected but independent micro-services and micro-sites (each as a separate project with separate owner) rather than a monolithic system.
 - a. Ideally we would implement Single-Sign-On and put together existing services.
3. We accepted that for some core functionalities, it is better to pay to get the work done in a timely and professional manner, rather than rely on volunteer work.
4. We cooperate with Czech Technical university, where students can implement something for Mensa as part of their bachelor projects. We had a great experience with it. Requires someone with relevant professional/academic experience to lead such projects.

What do we need in Czech Mensa?

1. We are looking for replacement of our core intranet system and would very much prefer to jump on board of a common project.
 - a. We are willing to invest resources into this (our dev. time and money).
 - b. We would prefer NOT TO build anything from scratch, unless there is broader consensus that this is the one system for all.