

PLANNING FOR ROCK



Welcome

Welcome to Rock! We hope that over time Rock becomes more than software to you. Our desire is that it becomes a foundation for your ministry. We want you to come to work actually looking forward to using Rock because it empowers you throughout your day.

We've put in extra effort and countless late nights working to make Rock powerful yet simple to use. This document will walk you through preparing to transition to Rock at your organization and give you an overview of what to expect.

Roadmap and Long-Term Goals

Let's spend some time unpacking the full vision for Rock. While much of this will change, as future plans generally do, we want to give you at least a peek behind the curtain.

Release Schedule

We aim to take advantage of Rock's easy update capabilities by releasing new features often. You won't be waiting years for a pile of new features. We believe we should release early and often.

Beyond Core

No matter how good Rock is, we know that we can't make it "all things to all people." That's why we built it on an extremely powerful framework from the beginning. A framework you can extend with an integration so tight, that if you follow best practices, you won't be able to tell where our code stops and yours starts. We also see the value of a community that shares. We're currently working on a built-in app store for Rock where churches and external developers can share their creations in a simple and easy way.

Building An Ecosystem

With the extensibility and community tools of Rock, we encourage third party providers to support and extend Rock. We currently work with a variety of partners that provide some of the following services:

- Rock-Specific Web Hosting
- Paid Support
- Consulting
- Website Theme Generation
- Custom Modules
- Custom Reporting

As new resources come online we'll make you aware of them through our newsletter, Slack channel, and social media outposts.

What's This Gonna Cost Me?

Simply put, nothing. Sure you will need to host the application yourself (more on that below) and possibly purchase hardware for check-in and contribution processing, but there is no cost for the software.

So How Is This All Getting Funded

To date a majority of support to create Rock has come from a few large churches that value the impact of technology on reaching people and have a heart to share their resources with others. These churches have helped partially fund the creation of a new 501c3 non-profit called the Spark Development Network to help support the Rock project by managing the intellectual property and providing community tools to support the project. To-date, our developers are still spending much of their time working on custom side projects until full funding is established.

While we have gotten this far, we have a much bigger vision for Rock for the future. We hope that it's used by literally thousands of churches and organizations world-wide. To achieve this goal, we will need others to step up and carry some of the weight.

Building a Dream

To partner with us to achieve this vision, would you consider donating a small portion of what you used to spend on a management system to the Spark Development Network? This will help fund the expansion of our efforts and pay for expenses. This is definitely not a requirement, and if this is not possible we understand and hope that Rock is a blessing to you. If you are able to contribute we appreciate your support. Please visit our website for information on donating rockrms.com/Rock/Invest.

The Gift of Prayer

Whether you can commit financially or not you can give the gift of prayer. Rock is a serious undertaking that is honestly beyond the capabilities of everyone involved. We humbly ask you to pray for the project. Please consider adding us to your prayer list, but also please take a second to pray *now*.

Help Options

Unlike traditional software, there is no paid support for Rock. We do however have a well-considered plan to make sure you're successful. This plan includes three options.

Well-Crafted Documentation

We believe documentation can be useful if it's not an afterthought. From the beginning of the project, we've been strategizing about how to make our documentation different; an easy-to-use resource. This won't be the single thick manual that sits on your desk collecting dust. We plan on writing several concise, well-designed manuals that each cover a single function. These manuals won't insult your intelligence by telling you every button to push. Instead, they will give you a picture of what must be done, then give you steps to make it happen.

We also realize you aren't a cookie cutter ministry; each church is different. We're working on providing ministry recipes that will give you patterns for implementing Rock in a way that matches your church.

We hope that this document gives you an example of what you can expect in the future.

Still Have Questions?

We know that no matter how good the documentation is, there will still be a time when you need more assistance. With that in mind, we are creating tools for collaboration. As with any product, the people who know the most are the people who use it every day. The problem is that this knowledge is typically unavailable to the larger community.

The tools we've developed allow individuals to post a question and have others respond. It's very similar to a website every developer uses daily called StackOverflow.com. This tool collects the tribal knowledge of the community, and at the same time makes it fun through gamification techniques like points and badges.

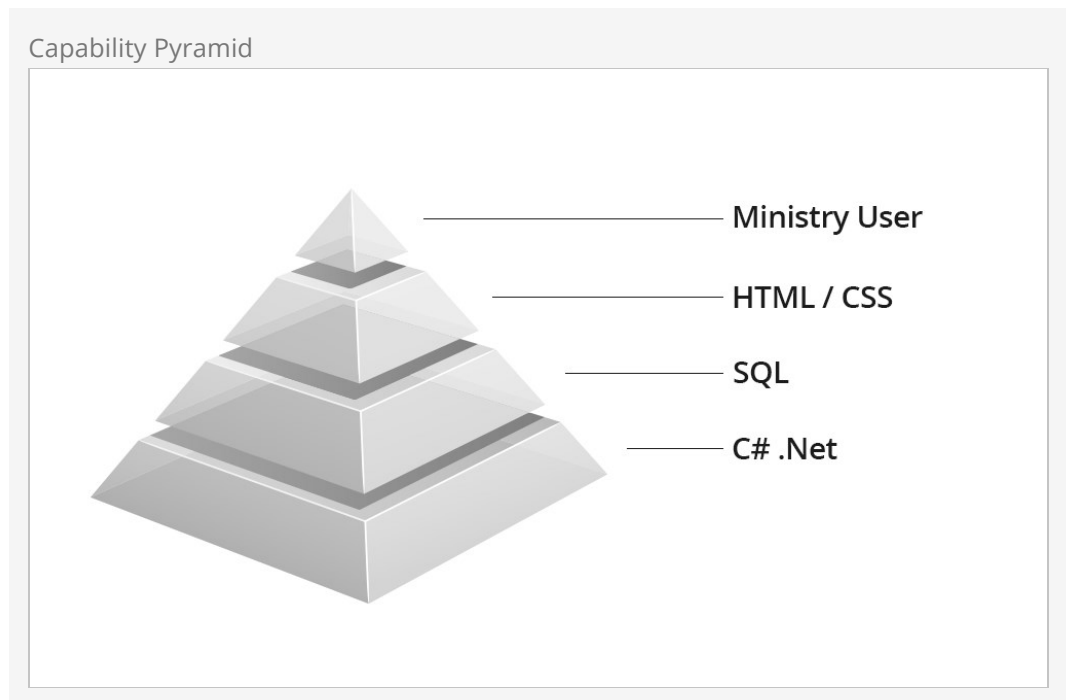
OK, But I Still Need Help!

We hope that our documentation and community tools will help to make Rock a success at your church. For those with advanced questions, or who need extra assistance there is one other option. As we mentioned in our strategy section, we are building an ecosystem of services around Rock. These services currently include Rock hosting, website themes and paid support, and will continue to grow to include new services, as well. You can find a complete listing of our partners and their services on our [Partners](#) page.

Prepare Now

Great Expectations

With Rock, as with all things in life, you will get out of it what you put into it. We like to use the concept of a pyramid. Starting at the top, you will find significant value in Rock from the beginning. As you move down the pyramid, adding effort, time, knowledge and skills (Notice we didn't say money. Refreshing, isn't it?), you will get exponential returns. For instance, any church, with the help of our documentation, should be able to get Rock installed and the basic features working. A ministry with knowledge of SQL, or better yet a programmer, will be able to do much more. Keep this pyramid concept in mind as you set your initial expectations for the project.



Build A Team

Rock is a team sport; don't go it alone. We recommend having the following roles on your implementation team:

- **Rock Administrator** – Since you're reading this guide, that's probably you. This is someone who is passionate about getting his or her church on a solid platform and has what it takes to get 'r done.

- **Champion** – Every Rock team should have at least one senior leader on it to make sure the team has the support it needs and to eliminate roadblocks. If you do not have this support, we recommend you get it before proceeding.
- **Technical** – Even if your church does not have a paid IT position, we recommend that you find someone in your church who has some experience with SQL and/or ASP.Net / C#.
- **Web** – If you do have a web designer, we highly recommend that you involve him or her early. The real power of Rock comes when you extend its capabilities outside of your office walls to your attendees. Having their early buy-in through the help of your web designer will make this much easier.
- **Ministry Leaders** – It's also highly advisable to have several ministry leaders on your team. Determine which areas you hope to implement first (e.g. groups, children's check-in, contributions, etc.) and be sure to invite them to your meetings.

Discuss With Your Team

OK, you have your team, so now what? Before you even install Rock we recommend that you meet with your team to discuss what your goals are for a Church Management System. A successful project can be summarized with the following equation.

$$\text{Success} = (\text{Technology} + \text{Process}) * \text{Effort}$$

Many projects focus solely only on technology, seeing it as a magic solution for all their problems. Technology, however, is only one facet of success. It must be paired with well-designed and consistently executed processes. An example of a process might be 'How does Rock note the progress of people moving from a desire to be baptized to showing that they have been baptized?'

The final ingredient to success is common to everything in life - Effort. The best technology and processes will get you nowhere if you don't get behind them and push.

As you meet with your team discuss these Top Questions below:

- What do we want to track about a person?
- What types of groups do we want to manage?
- How do we see check-in working?
- What are our first priorities for a Church Management System?
- Where will we host Rock?
- Who needs to be a part of our team? Do we have the skills we need to be successful?

Deciding Where To Host

Hosting Requirements

Rock was developed on Microsoft's ASP.Net platform and therefore requires a Windows Server environment to run. Below are specific requirements of the hosting platform:

Small Installs

1000-5000 records

Single server with the following specs:

- CPU: 2Ghz dual core or higher
- Memory: 2GB or higher
- Storage: 2TB
- Operating System: Windows Server 2008 or 2012
- SQL Server: SQL Server Express 2012/2014 (free) or SQL Server 2012 Standard or higher

Medium Installs

5000-15000 records

Two servers with the following specs:

Web Server

- CPU: 2Ghz quad core
- Memory: 8GB or higher
- Storage: 2TB
- Operating System: Windows Server 2012

Database Server

- CPU: 2Ghz quad core
- Memory: 8GB or higher
- Storage: 4TB
- Operating System: Windows Server 2012
- SQL Server: SQL Server 2012/2014 Standard

Large Installs

15000+ records

Two servers with the following specs:

Web Server

- CPU: 2.5Ghz quad core
- Memory: 16GB or higher
- Storage: 2TB
- Operating System: Windows Server 2012

Database Server

- CPU: 2.5Ghz quad core
- Memory: 16GB or higher
- Storage: 8TB
- Operating System: Windows Server 2012
- SQL Server: SQL Server 2012/2014 Standard

Hosting Options

Rock offers you the freedom of where and how to host the application. Many of you might already know how you want to host, but for those still on the fence, here are some tips below.

On-site Hosting

Many large ministries or organizations with strong technical resources may decide to install Rock on internal servers. This offers the best control, but at the cost of having to support and care for servers (think security patching, backups, upgrades, etc.). Keep in mind that Rock will not only be used by your internal staff, but also by your attendees. This requires that your servers be securely connected to the Internet.

Rock Hosting

Our hosting partners have developed customized hosting and data migration services for Rock. They have a variety of packages for organizations of all sizes. Whether you want a playground or are ready to get started, you can be up and running within the day. You'll want to check out the [Rock Solid External Hosting](#) guide for more information.

Traditional Web Hosting Providers

For those not interested in managing their own servers, traditional web hosting companies offer an affordable alternative. These services are usually focused on providing hosting for smaller websites with pricing as low as \$5 per month. Be careful to select a firm that provides a service compatible with Rock. We have tested Rock on the following hosting providers.

- Winhost <http://www.winhost.com/>
- 3 Essentials <http://www.3essentials.com/>

Just So You Know...

We do not have any relationship with, nor are we recommending, any specific web hosting companies. We have only tested and confirmed that Rock can be installed on the three services above. It is up to each organization to choose its service wisely.

Cloud Hosting

Today's cloud services companies offer a great hybrid of the power and scalability of on-site hosting with a simplicity similar to traditional webhosting. These services allow you to start small and add capacity as you need it. Setting up these services can be a bit trickier than traditional vendors, but once configured, you don't need to worry about server patches and backups.

While there are numerous cloud hosting providers (Amazon, RackSpace, AppHarbor to name a few), we would suggest that if you are interested in hosting Rock in the cloud, you consider Microsoft's Azure platform. It is by far the best technology fit for the Rock platform. Azure also allows you to start hosting at about \$25 per month for a basic site and be able to scale up to a size larger than any church would ever need.

Get More Details

For more information, see our [Rock Solid Hosting Guides: Rock Solid Internal Hosting and Rock Solid External Hosting](#)