



Finalsite webinar recap and outage FAQ

FAQ Updated Sunday, January 9, 2022 at 5:00 PM EST

Webinar panelists: Jon Moser, Finalsite CEO & Founder; Jason Barnes, Chief Revenue Officer; Risa Engel, Chief Marketing Officer; Lauren Barth, Chief Product Officer; Tim McDonough, Chief Client Officer; and Morgan Delack, Director of Communications.

Opening comments from panelists

We understand what an inconvenience and stress this situation has been for you and are terribly sorry that we are meeting with you today under these circumstances.

We want to open with what we do know: more and more of your websites are going back online every hour.

Many of you have said, why haven't you been more upfront with us about what is happening until now? As you've read in our letter, because of the nature of the incident, we have had to hold back some information until now and are grateful for your understanding of these difficult circumstances.

Although this is a ransomware issue, we do want to share that we have full access to our data and files, and made the decision to pull our websites offline initially in order to protect this data. There is no evidence to suggest that school data has been compromised. Third-party forensic specialists are assisting us in bringing things back slowly and carefully to ensure the environment is safe and stable.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When will Finalsite websites be restored?

A: At this time, 99.9 percent of websites have been restored including front end and admin access. Our team is continuing work to restore eNotify, File Manager and Media Manager assets, and integrations.

Q: Has any client data been compromised?

A: To date, we have no evidence that client data was compromised. If we determine otherwise through the course of the investigation, we'll act swiftly to notify you and take appropriate action.

Q: If we have all of the data needed to restore sites, what took so long to get things up and running?

A: After isolating and shifting away from the affected infrastructure components, we needed to rebuild aspects of our network. It took us longer to tune this rebuilt infrastructure than we originally anticipated.

Q: Finalsight is a trusted name in the industry, and is known for being strict with security measures. How did this incident happen?

A: Ransomware is an ongoing security threat for organizations around the world. Attacks have become extremely common across all industries, even for the most secure technology companies like ours.

The Finalsight security team has strict security measures in place to protect the information in our care, and have worked to add further technical safeguards to our environment. We've invested \$2.5 million into hosting security and our team monitors our network systems 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We take security extremely seriously and are frequently updating protocols based upon any new knowledge or information.

As we learn more about this incident, we are taking additional steps to further secure the environment and prevent this type of attack from occurring again.

Q: How can schools communicate this with their parents and school communities?

A: Finalsight has created a [communications template](#) you are welcome to use to explain the situation to your families as well as an FAQ for the media.

Q: When websites are restored, will any information or data be missing, or should schools see full functionality?

A: The process of bringing sites back online is happening as follows:

- Restoring connectivity to the front end of your websites;
- Monitoring performance to ensure sites are stable; and
- Restoring core admin functionality.

Please understand you may see intermittent error messages on your website until we reach full functionality. We recommend that you refrain from relying on admin functionality (instructing users to log in to portals, complete forms, sending bulk emails etc.) until we've notified you that we've completed this full process.

Q: Is Finalsight doing anything to compensate clients for the outage?

A: We are still working at full capacity to get your websites restored and all of our people are dedicated to that effort right now. Once we get through this and get everyone back online we'll be able to focus on this question and decide the right path moving forward.

Q: Will this outage impact my SEO ranking?

A: We can confidently say that website downtime will not have long-term effects on search rankings. Google's algorithm bases rankings on quality of content and user experience, and that does not include website disruptions caused by technical issues.

Google's John Mueller has gone on record stating that it takes roughly a week of downtime until there's a noticeable drop in indexed pages by Google, and even then, the recovery time is not major. Google can take anywhere from hours to months to recrawl websites, so our clients can rest assured that strictly speaking to SEO, it is unlikely that they will see a negative impact after less than a week of downtime.

For those who are still concerned: Once your website is back to operating as usual, we recommend re-submitting your sitemap to Google Search Console to alert Google that your website is ready to be recrawled.