



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

GOVERNMENT ON-LINE AND CANADIANS *January 2002*



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ONE: On-line Service Commitments to Canadians

The Government of Canada is moving its most frequently used services on-line, providing a new way of delivering high quality service to Canadians. What will Government On-Line (GOL) mean for Canadians?

More accessible government

... making information and services easier to find and use

- ◆ Information and services will be organized in a way that makes sense to Canadians.
- ◆ Information on government services and the most commonly used forms will be on-line.
- ◆ Government websites will be easily identifiable and easy to navigate.

Better, more responsive service

... implementing electronic service delivery

- ◆ Information and transactional services of most importance to individual Canadians and businesses will be on-line, providing fast and convenient service in response to citizen needs.
- ◆ Canadians will have opportunities to provide their views on-line about service quality and key policies.

Building trust and confidence in on-line delivery

... ensuring security and privacy

- ◆ Transactions with government will be protected and secure.
- ◆ Personal information and individual privacy will be protected.

Service for all Canadians

... ensuring choice of channels, formats and language

- ◆ Canadians will continue to have a choice of delivery channels – mail, fax, telephone and in-person, as well as on-line.
- ◆ On-line services will be available in both official languages in accordance with the *Official Languages Act*.
- ◆ On-line services will be accessible to persons with disabilities.

TABLE 1

Government On-Line (GOL) Commitments to Canadians – Summary

More accessible government	Better, more responsive service	Trust and confidence in on-line delivery	Service for all Canadians
<p>Accessible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ information and services will be organized in ways that make sense to Canadians ◆ information on government services and most commonly used forms will be on-line ◆ government websites will be easily identifiable and easy to navigate 	<p>Convenient:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ services of most importance to Canadians will be on-line <p>Responsive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Canadians will have the opportunity to provide their views on-line about service quality and key policies 	<p>Secure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ transactions with government will be protected and secure <p>Protected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ personal information and individual privacy will be protected 	<p>Choice of channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Canadians will continue to have a choice of delivery channels – mail, fax, telephone and in-person, as well as on-line <p>Choice of language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ on-line services will be available in both official languages in accordance with the <i>Official Languages Act</i> <p>Choice of format:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ on-line services will be accessible to persons with disabilities

Realizing Social and Economic Benefits

GOL will contribute to improving the efficiency of the Government of Canada and, by demonstrating innovative Internet applications, will help establish Canada as a leader in the knowledge-based economy and society.

TWO: Why Government On-Line?

Canadians are connected and want on-line government

Canadians are among the most connected to the Internet in the world. Canada ranks second in overall connectivity only to the United States (Conference Board, January 2001). Two-thirds of Canadians have Internet access, spending an average of nine hours per week on the Internet – more than any other nation ([Communication Canada – Spring 2001](#)). In 2000, 97% of businesses with 100 or more employees used the Internet, as did 63% of business enterprises with fewer than 100 employees. ([Electronic Commerce and Technology Survey, Statistics Canada 2000](#)).

What are Canadians doing on-line? We increasingly rely on the Internet as a tool for improving our skills, productivity and competitiveness. Individual Internet users bank, search for news, medical and health information, book travel plans, seek out education and training on-line, all at increasing rates ([Household Internet Use Survey, Statistics Canada 2001](#)). Businesses are using the Internet not only as a marketing tool, but also to improve management practices by networking and developing virtual communities of interest, and to improve productivity by linking functions with suppliers, avoiding duplicative paperwork and data entry.

It is not a surprise, then, that individual Canadians and businesses are looking to government to move services on-line. 56% of Canadian Internet users have visited a Government of Canada Web site ([Communication Canada – Fall 2001](#)).

A majority of Canadians believe that the Internet will improve the quality of service they receive from Government (see box). Businesses support the move to on-line service delivery because it will provide faster access to information and reduce the cost of complying with government regulations, thus increasing their productivity and competitiveness.

Canadians want on-line delivery

- 77% of Canadians think that the Internet will improve how they receive services from the Government of Canada
- 73% believe that putting services and information on-line is a good use of tax dollars
- 78% believe that GOL makes the government more innovative
- 77% believe that GOL will improve how Canadians interact with Government

[Listening to Canadians 2001](#)

The Canadian government has responded

The Government of Canada has responded to these expectations, committing to improve service delivery by putting the most frequently used government services on-line. On-line services will be available when Canadians want, where they want – from home, office, school, or in transit.

The GOL plan – [Budget 2001](#)

“The [2000 budget](#) provided initial two-year funding for a new Government On-Line strategy. In this budget the Government is providing \$600 million over the next four years to implement the Government On-Line strategy by 2005.”

Initial funding for GOL was provided in the 2000 Budget, and funding to implement the initiative was announced in the December 2001 Budget (see *box*).

Putting government services on-line is part of a comprehensive strategy to make Canada the most connected country in the world – “[Connecting Canadians](#)”. This strategy includes providing public access to the Internet, promoting the development of Canadian content, and encouraging the adoption and use of electronic commerce.

Realizing economic and social benefits

On-line service delivery has wide-ranging benefits, from improving service to Canadians, to encouraging Canadians to use the Internet and establishing Canada’s reputation as a leading knowledge-based economy and society.

Better service: On-line services will be faster and more convenient for Canadians. The government is committed to re-thinking services (rather than simply automate existing programs), to eliminating unnecessary red tape and to taking advantage of the speed and real-time interactivity of the Internet. The goal is to provide Canadians with a choice of service delivery options, better service quality and more efficient service delivery.

How can GOL benefit Canadians?

Better service – through more convenient, faster access to information and services

Reduced costs for individuals and businesses – less search time, less time in filling out forms, faster decisions

Reduced costs for government – reduced data entry costs, lower error rates

Encouraging Internet use: Internet adoption and use drives economic and productivity growth, as documented by the Canadian E-Business Opportunities Roundtable and the U.S. Department of Commerce. The more that individual Canadians and businesses can be encouraged to use the Internet, the greater the potential for productivity gains. GOL can help accelerate Internet take-up by individuals and businesses by providing information and services Canadians want, and by demonstrating that on-line services can be delivered safely and securely.

Creating products and services: Canada is well positioned to benefit from the development of innovative Internet products and services.

Canada's highly competitive information and telecommunications sector provides a full range of advanced networking and applications technology, products and services. GOL can play an important role by encouraging the development of electronic commerce and security applications – new products and services that can be sold around the world. Already Canada is benefiting from global leadership in photonics and fibre optics, wireless technologies, and the development of educational courseware.

GOL and economic growth

"We need to stimulate economic growth by investing more in moving government on-line, for everything from paying taxes to finalizing government purchases. Not only would this be a more effective use of taxpayers' money, the work of designing those systems would fall to Canadian e-business."

David Pecaut, E-Business Opportunities Roundtable, December 7, 2001

Creating knowledge: Putting government information on-line increases the resources and knowledge available to Canadians at work, at home and at school. Departments are able to provide on-line access to information, research findings and analyses that were previously only available on request or used only within government. Access to these rich resources contributes to Canada becoming a knowledge-based society.

Becoming a location of choice: Developing innovative applications and best practices in e-government will help position Canada as a leading innovative economy. In doing so, GOL can contribute to Canada becoming a location of choice to conduct business, to live and to travel, resulting in the creation of jobs and economic growth. Canada has already established a reputation as an early e-government leader.

THREE: Results to Date

Government On-Line means more than simply creating websites and digitizing information. The government has taken a more fundamental approach of re-thinking service delivery and how the smart use of the Internet and information technologies can benefit the Canadian economy and society.

The Internet provides unprecedented opportunities to realize a citizen-centred vision of government service delivery. Programs offered by individual departments can be “joined up” electronically – clustered on a single website or integrated into a single service that better responds to client needs.

Canadians are looking for seamless service from government. They do not want to have to know which department or level of government offers which service. They want a single place to find all government services that are relevant to them in one place, at one time - a “single window” into government. Working with provincial, territorial and municipal governments to realize this vision will take time, but this “citizen first” view of service delivery is at the heart of what we are trying to accomplish with GOL.

Below are some highlights and examples of what has been achieved to date – more detail is available from the [departmental GOL reports](#).

◆ More accessible government

The Government of Canada delivers a wide range of information and services to individual Canadians, Canadian business, and international clients. We are making information and services **easier to find and use** by:

- organizing services in a way that makes sense to Canadians;
- putting information on key government services and the most commonly used forms on-line; and
- ensuring that government websites are easy to identify and navigate.

Our priorities in the initial stages of GOL have been to:

- ✓ organize information and services **by client needs**, rather than by government structures;
- ✓ put **information** on government programs and services, as well as key forms on-line – this was successfully accomplished by December 2000; and
- ✓ rethinking how to provide **transactional services**, supported by the development of secure networks, so as to better respond to citizen and business needs.

Organizing services in a way that makes sense to Canadians

The launch of the re-designed main Government of Canada website in early 2001 is one of the more obvious demonstrations of a citizen-centred approach to on-line service delivery.

Traditionally, information on government services was organized alphabetically by department. But many Canadians are uncertain about which department offers which service. The re-designed Canada Site addresses this problem by offering new points of entry which bring together information and services for individual Canadians, businesses and international (non-Canadian) clients (*see box*).

Information for Canadians includes information and services by topic (e.g., learning about health care, filing income tax returns or finding a job) and client group (e.g., youth or seniors). The Canadian Business section provides easy access to information and services that a business might require over its life cycle from initial start-up to hiring employees and exporting. The non-Canadians section (Canada International) provides information to foreign citizens who are interested in visiting, studying or doing business with Canada, or who are interested in our country, our values and our involvement in international affairs.

This client-centred approach removes the onus on Canadians to find and assemble related products

The Canada Site

<http://www.canada.gc.ca>

The Canada Site presents a single point of entry for information about government programs and services, for:

- [Canadians](#)
- [Canadian Business](#)
- [Non-Canadians](#)

This ensures easy access to information and services that are available by topic, client or event rather than according to department or agency responsibility.

Client-centred service – some examples:

◆ **[Youth Cluster](#)**: young Canadians have been directly involved in the design and development of all aspects of the website, which will contain integrated information on youth-related programs and services provided by all levels of government as well as non-governmental organizations.

◆ **[Canada Benefits](#)**: provides individuals with a single source of practical information and services about government financial assistance and entitlements: e.g., maternity benefits, pensions and student loans.

◆ **[Travel at Home and Abroad](#)**: single window access to travel related programs and services for Canadians such as tourism links, official travel reports by country, and information for Canadians travelling outside Canada who need assistance.

◆ **[Aboriginal Canada Portal](#)**: developed in partnership with some of Canada's largest Aboriginal organizations, the portal makes available relevant information and services from all levels of government, Aboriginal, academic and other organizations.

◆ **[Persons with Disabilities](#)**: provides integrated access to information, programs and services for persons with disabilities, their families, caregivers and service providers (*fully available in March 2002*).

from different government organizations, providing access in one place to all information and services offered by the Government of Canada. In April 2001, Accenture, an independent global consultancy with an e-government practice, awarded Canada the number one position in the world for progress in moving on-line, largely based on this “whole of government approach”:

“Canada has secured the number one position in eGovernment Leadership for 2001. . . This can be attributed to the commitment from the Canadian government to break open the traditional departmental approach to on-line service delivery and instead place the needs of citizens and businesses at the core. Canada has begun to turn rhetoric into reality.” (Accenture, [eGovernment Leadership: Rhetoric v.s. Reality – Closing the Gap](#))

Putting information and forms on-line

Information about government programs and services, the most commonly used forms, and federal policies, laws and regulations are available on-line, accessible through the Canada Site as well as departmental websites. On-line information offers many benefits. It is accessible at any time to clients, and can be updated instantly in response to changing circumstances. Amid the many choices available on the Internet, Government of Canada websites offer a trusted source of information (see *box*).

Benefits of GOL information

Convenient - access information when you want it.

Up to date - information can be instantly updated in response to the latest developments and news.

Trusted - amid the many choices on the Internet, information on Government of Canada websites can be relied on to be accurate and secure.

The benefits of up-to-date and trusted information are particularly evident in a time of crisis. These benefits were put into practice following the tragic events of September 11th. The Canada Site, with the help of many departments, quickly provided Canadians with a central point of access to timely and accurate information related to the attacks, such as air travel, wait times at the border and assistance to victims. In the week after the attacks, over 30,000 page requests were made to the “U.S. Crisis Page” of the Canada Site. The “Border Wait Times” page received 90,000 hits in the three days following September 11th.

Making government websites easy to navigate

By the end of 2002, all government websites must use common navigational tools and formats and conform to a “[Common Look and Feel](#).” The intent is to make it easier for citizens and businesses to recognize, navigate and use federal websites and services. Common Look and Feel also includes accessibility requirements, which ensure that federal websites will meet international accessibility requirements, and requirements for the use of notices regarding privacy and official languages.

◆ **Better and more responsive service**

Canadians want more than just information about government programs and services – they are looking for the ability to interact with the government electronically, both to receive services and to express views. We are responding to this need by putting the most frequently used services on-line and enabling on-line discussion and consultation.

Convenient services

On-line service delivery is, for many, more convenient than in-person delivery, and faster than paper-based processes. Canadians want to obtain specific information tailored to their needs, such as job opportunities; to apply for benefits, such as pensions and Employment Insurance; to apply for passports; and to order government publications on-line.

On-line service delivery parallels the use of e-business or e-commerce in the private sector (see *box*). As private sector experience has shown, application of e-business means not just introducing

e-government and e-commerce: **What is the difference?**

Electronic Commerce is the use of the Internet for:

- information and marketing through websites;
- selling to customers on-line; and
- supply chain management – integrating internal corporate functions and systems with suppliers.

Electronic Government, or GOL, applies these concepts to government operations, through:

- information and communication on websites;
- providing services to clients on-line; and
- integrating internal functions, and collaborating with partners on-line.

new software, but fundamentally looking at how business processes are organized and implemented throughout an organization.

The Government of Canada has started this re-thinking process as part of its commitment to improved service quality. We have made good progress. Here are some examples of services available on-line, for individuals and businesses.

Services for individuals:

Canadians can find a host of information services available on-line, including health, environmental, employment and financial planning information (see *boxes*). As an example of tailored information available through GOL, [Community Profiles](#) allows Canadians to learn more about the communities in which they live. Simply entering the name of a place provides access to a wealth of information and maps. Data on population, education, income and work, families, dwelling characteristics, and births and deaths are available for 6,000 Canadian communities.

Transactional services are also beginning to appear. Filing personal income tax and benefits returns is a good example. [NetFile](#) provides Canadians with the option of filing their income taxes and benefits returns securely over the Internet. This service was first offered in 2001, and was used by over 1.4 million taxpayers – this number is expected to grow. Canadians can also make on-line requests for changes or reviews related to their personal income tax, and will

Tailored to your needs

- ◆ Reliable on-line health information is conveniently available through the [Canadian Health Network \(CHN\)](#). The CHN seeks to establish itself as Canadians' premier source of "health information you can trust" with links to more than 10,000 Internet-based resources.
- ◆ [The National Pollutant Release Inventory website](#) allows you to research facilities emitting federally regulated pollutants in your community. The site is also a wealth of information and links to other environmental on-line resources.
- ◆ Looking for work is never easy but with the help of the [Job Bank](#), Canadians can browse through more than 46,000 job postings with up to 2,000 new postings appearing every day. The Job Bank is open to both job seekers and employers looking to fill positions.
- ◆ You don't have to be an accountant to calculate the benefits of federal tax cuts with the help of the [Tax Savings Calculator](#). This interactive tool helps Canadians see what the federal government's tax cuts mean for them personally. Future plans include having the calculator speak aloud, making it accessible to the blind.
- ◆ [T.I.P.S.](#) is a secure, interactive on-line service providing personalized tax information about current year tax refund, Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB), GST/HST credit, or RRSP deduction limits.
- ◆ Canadians are becoming more informed consumers, as they are able to get the information they need on-line. [Consumer Complaints](#) enables consumers to register their complaints on-line. Centralized access to complaints registration reduces the time required for consumers to research topics, allows Canadians to make their concerns known, and can help in dispute resolution.

shortly be able to request address changes on-line.

The Government of Canada is also investing in putting major benefits programs on-line, such as the Canadian Pension Plan, Old Age Security and Employment Insurance. Initial investments have been made in re-thinking these services and in piloting new ways of service delivery. More details are provided in Section **FOUR**.

Services for businesses: A wide range of services is available to Canadian businesses on-line. Businesses can search for corporate names, register on-line for Canada Customs and Revenue business programs, incorporate federally, and seek patent protection. Businesses can also take advantage of a range of interactive tools and obtain on-line

On-line services for business

◆ **[Canadian Intellectual Property Organization \(CIPO\)](#)**: Canadians have the ability to receive intellectual property services and information on-line. Patent, Trademark, Copyright and Industrial Design applications can be filed on the Internet; related legislation and services are also available on-line.

◆ **[Radiofrequency Spectrum](#)**: Canadians and businesses now have the opportunity to acquire and renew over 200,000 airwave licenses through the Internet. Radio Frequency Spectrum Licensing and Certification's on-line system ensures Canadians have access to the radio spectrum, and manages and authorizes its use.

◆ **[The Business Start-up Assistant](#)** (BSA) a one-stop site that consolidates essential information required to start a successful business. Organized by topics such as market research, financing, business planning and taxation, the site provides reliable information from the federal and provincial governments, as well as from non-government sources. The BSA includes an Interactive Business Planner to guide the preparation of business plans required by banks and other financial institutions.

◆ **[Sources of Financing](#)** is an on-line resource which provides single-window easy access to information on traditional and alternative sources of small business financing. This website is equipped with a comprehensive, searchable database of Canadian public and private sector sources of financing and tips to help entrepreneurs and small businesses improve their access to financing options.

On-line services for business

◆ **[Business Registration On-line](#)**: this groundbreaking service allows businesses to conveniently register for Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) accounts on-line, in one session. In addition, joint registration with Nova Scotia and Ontario government programs is also available, offering true "one-stop" business service for businesses in these two provinces. CCRA is currently working with New Brunswick, Manitoba and British Columbia to add their programs to this multi-jurisdictional service. This service will be expanded to include other provincial programs over time. This process is also integrated with that of registering a corporation federally.

◆ **[T4 Internet filing](#)**: this service will enable businesses to file their employees' T4 slips on-line, starting with employers who file less than 70 slips. In future years, all Canadian businesses regardless of their size will be able to file their T4 slips on-line.

◆ **[Electronic Customs](#)**: importers and brokers can access reports, file forms, transmit customs data and report goods via the Internet through the Customs Automated Export Declaration (CAED), the Accelerated Commercial Release Operations Support System (ACROSS) and the Customs Internet Gateway. In the future, new secure applications will ease Customs compliance for small business.

information on government regulations. Suppliers wishing to sell goods and services to the government can participate in an on-line registry. (see *boxes*)

More responsive government

So far, Canadians are reacting with enthusiasm to on-line services. The utilization of the electronic channel to access government services has been steadily rising, both in terms of overall volume and frequency of use. Electronic delivery provides new ways for clients to express their views on the quality of service delivery, through features such as “contact us” buttons, and on-line surveys.

The government is seeking citizen views on its approach to on-line service – an innovative on-line citizens’ panel will examine issues such as navigation, security, and e-consultation (see *box*).

The Internet provides a tool not only to measure service delivery, but also to actively engage Canadians in discussions of emerging policy issues and to seek their views and observations. Many departments are incorporating on-line consultation in their daily work. Citizens or clients can provide feedback on website design, assist data collection (see *box*), and contribute to the policy-making process. For example, the [Rural On-Line Dialogue](#) provides a forum for people in rural areas to share information, lessons learned, and discuss common issues and solutions.

In September 2001, the President of the Treasury Board of Canada, the Honorable Lucienne Robillard, announced the formation of the Government On-Line Advisory Panel (http://www.gol-ged.gc.ca/pnl-grp/index_e.asp). The Panel is comprised of representatives from all facets of Canadian life, including the general public, the business and the high technology sectors, the academic and educational sector, and the voluntary sector. The Panel is responsible for providing advice and guidance to ensure that Canadians are provided with improved access to innovative on-line services from the Government of Canada.

Seeking citizen views on on-line services

The Government of Canada is launching an innovative on-line citizens panel to help understand current perceptions of and future expectations for GOL. GOL users will be recruited to participate in on-line surveys and focus groups to examine issues such as navigation, privacy, security, e-consultations, content management, customization, and language quality.

Promoting citizen involvement

The environmental “Watch” service, the [Ecological Monitoring and Assessment Network](#), invites Canadians to get involved in collecting environmental information on plants and animals to assist government scientists in quickly identifying ecological changes in our country. Working together, we can better understand how and why our environment is changing. The information collected will be used to make recommendations to government.

◆ Building trust and confidence in on-line delivery

Canadians will not engage in electronic transactions unless they trust that transactions are secure and private. In a survey conducted early in 2001, only 15% of Internet users said they would be willing to provide their credit card number over the Internet, and only 12% say they would transmit their bank account number.

(Communication Canada – Winter 2001 Survey). This may explain why more than a third of regular Internet users say they would still prefer traditional service delivery channels instead of the Internet for government services that involve divulging personal information.

As the government makes more transactional services available on-line, such as applying for benefits, it will be critical to assure Canadians that the privacy and security of their personal information will continue to be protected with the same degree of care as with today's service delivery methods.

Secure transactions

A “next generation” secure infrastructure is being built to provide the enhanced security required to support a broad range of increasingly interactive services. The secure infrastructure will also allow services to be integrated in a way that meets client needs. A centerpiece of this common infrastructure is the Secure Channel – the backbone of hardware and software that will soon be available to all departments and agencies to securely receive, store and exchange electronic information, and to identify the clients they are dealing with electronically. The Secure Channel is vital to the implementation of Government On-Line, as it will:

- protect government networks from new and potentially more sophisticated “cyber attacks” by hackers and others, ensuring that Government of Canada sites can continue to be trusted;

Security and privacy

What's the difference?

While these two terms are often used interchangeably, security refers to the protection of information from being accessed without permission, or being tampered with. Privacy refers to the right of individuals to control information about themselves.

A world leading security solution

The Secure Channel

A consortium of private sector companies has been engaged and a competitive contract was awarded to Bell Nexxia Inc. for the design and establishment of the Secure Channel by Spring 2002. The Secure Channel is an electronic platform that provides a range of security solutions, including strong access controls, firewalls and encryption.

- allow the government, when completing an on-line transaction, to have confidence that it knows who is “at the other end of the line;” and
- make it possible for departments and agencies to cluster their programs and services electronically around common clients.

Enhanced Authentication services, making available the personal or business “credentials” needed to complete many on-line transactions, will rely on the innovative use of [Public Key Infrastructure \(PKI\)](#). Canadians have been pioneers in the development of this leading-edge technology, which many governments globally are using or plan to use to protect the privacy, security and integrity of on-line transactions and records.

Authentication services make it possible for all parties to a transaction – with a high degree of confidence – to identify the other party or parties, to transmit or receive sensitive information, to verify that information has not been altered during or after transmission, and to have a reliable record of transactions.

Protecting personal privacy

Canadians who use federal electronic-based services can be assured that their privacy and personal information is respected and protected. Government services must conform to the *Code of Fair Information Practices* contained in the federal *Privacy Act* (see box). On-line services are also subject to these privacy rules. Departments and agencies will need to conduct assessments of privacy impacts when programs are being designed or transformed for electronic service delivery. This will ensure that only the minimum personal information is collected, that departments have the legal authority to collect this information, that personal information is not used or disclosed for unrelated purposes, and that personal information is securely protected.

Respecting privacy

The Code of Fair Information Practices

In designing electronic services, the Government of Canada follows the “Code of Fair Information Practices” in the [Privacy Act](#) and the ten privacy principles attached to the [Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act](#). These practices and principles reflect the fundamental premise that individuals have the right to control the collection, use and disclosure of their personal information.

In addition, privacy policy guidelines and standards are being reviewed to ensure that they are adequate to the electronic service delivery world. The [Common Look and Feel Standards and Guidelines](#) require that government websites use privacy notices to ensure that citizens and

clients will know what personal information may be collected and how it will be used.

◆ Service for all Canadians

On-line service provides Canadians with an additional choice of service delivery options, complementing existing service channels – mail, fax, telephone and in-person. It will not result in reduced levels of service for those Canadians who prefer other forms of delivery, or who do not have Internet access.

Choice of channel

The Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that citizens have a choice of service channels. Citizens who prefer mail, fax, telephone or in-person services will continue to have these options.

Some Canadians cannot afford computers or Internet access. The Government of Canada supports free or low cost public Internet access terminals, which can be found in [Community Access Program \(CAP\)](#) sites in urban, rural and remote communities, including libraries. CAP not only provides Internet connectivity to those without a computer at home, but also helps people learn more about the Internet and develop on-line skills.

Choice of language

In accordance with the *Official Languages Act*, most Government of Canada websites allow users to access services in the language of their choice, providing a rich source of both English and French language Internet content.

Choice of format

Accessibility is more than ensuring that Canadians are connected. It also means addressing the communication barriers that persons with physical, visual or hearing disabilities may encounter in navigating the Internet to interact with government. Based on international [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) developed by a consortium of industry, academic, government and non-government representatives from around the world, [Common Look and Feel Standards and Guidelines](#) are designed to ensure consistent presentation of information through sight, sound and touch, with the objective of being accessible to all. Common Look and Feel will be fully implemented on government websites by the end of 2002.

FOUR: What's next

A lot has been accomplished. The plan for GOL has been solidly scoped. Initial investments have been made in all of the elements required for success.

Over the next four years we will focus on:

- continuing to make government information and services more accessible, organized by client need;
- putting the most frequently used services on-line;
- building the secure infrastructure, and ensuring transactions are secure and private; and
- seeking feedback from Canadians on how we are doing.

Here are some highlights of what can be expected.

◆ **More accessible government**

Developing citizen-centred services will continue to be a priority. This has been the hallmark of Canada's success to date, and will drive future service improvement and efficiency gains. Success will rely heavily on clustering related information and integrating services around client needs. Departments and agencies will need to work closely together. A focal point of these efforts will be the Canada Site, and integrated subject or audience-based sites.

What's next

Link to departmental plans

Federal departments have posted [GOL reports](#) outlining their plans and strategies for on-line service delivery. These reports can be accessed on the [Government On-Line website](#).

Services for individuals

Canada Pension Plan and Old Age Security (CPP/OAS)

Seniors are among the fastest growing group of Internet users. The Government of Canada is responding to their needs by providing Canada Pension Plan / Old Age Security On-Line Services. In the future clients will be able to access personal data, calculate benefits and obtain Statement of Contributions electronically. Process for applying for CPP and OAS benefits will be simplified.

Employment Insurance Benefits

Soon, Canadians will be able to apply for Employment Insurance on-line, and employers will be able to complete Record of Employment on-line.

◆ Better, more responsive service

Convenient services

Priorities will be to put the most frequently used services on-line, and to simplify program offerings by developing integrated services that combine many separate program elements, such as Government of Canada publications (see box).

Services for individuals: In addition to the many information services available, over the next few years Canadians will see major benefit programs moving on-line, such as the Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security, and Employment Insurance (see box). We are also working on developing a range of integrated services for individuals, which bring together many program elements. For example, **Assistance to Canadians Abroad** will post up-to-the minute reports on critical situations around the world that may affect Canadians and their families. **Farm Safety Nets** will provide farmers with a single window to program information, enabling them to file a single application once a year, covering a number of different farm safety net programs.

Services for businesses: In addition to the many services already available, new services coming on-line will focus on providing customized information to businesses, on key transactional services, and on simplifying service delivery. A good example of customized information is the **Virtual Trade Commissioner**, which will provide customized Web pages for Canadian exporters and foreign contacts, and will allow businesses to link to services of Canada's trade commissioners. A new feature of the **Doing Business with Canada** cluster will allow foreign businesses to access information on GoC on-line programs and services tailored by location and sector.

Single site for government publications on-line

Government of Canada Publications

You may be surprised by some of the publications available from the Government of Canada. Coming in March 2002, the Government of Canada Publications website will create a single place for Canadians to order both free and priced publications produced by the Government of Canada. A variety of formats will be provided such as large print, audiocassette, CD-ROM, Braille, print, diskette, electronic copy, microfiche and video.

Single site for government suppliers

Electronic Supply Chain

The Government of Canada is one of the country's largest purchasers of goods and services. The E-Supply Chain will provide an effective and efficient framework for the end-to-end electronic procurement, payment and purchasing of goods and services for the Government of Canada. It will enable government employees to submit requisitions for goods and services, and place orders electronically. Suppliers will benefit from the ability to electronically submit bids and invoices to government, and receive orders and payments.

Key transactional services for businesses moving on-line include the **Record of Employment**. Integrated sites are being developed to simplify service delivery for **government suppliers** and for those seeking **grants and contributions** (see *boxes*)

Single site for common grants and contributions

Federal departments and agencies are working together to establish a single window into the entire range of grants and contributions available through public sector granting institutions.

More details on these services and others can be found on departmental websites.

More responsive government

We will continue to consult with Canadians to obtain their views of on-line service priorities. Looking ahead, the government will use the Internet in innovative and interactive ways to engage Canadians in discussion of issues and policies, for example, through **Trade Talks with Canadians** (see *box*).

Responsive government

Trade Talks with Canadians is a proposed initiative to engage Canadian citizens in an on-line dialogue on Canada's international trade policy agenda, to better reflect Canadian values, priorities and interests.

FIVE: Measuring Progress – Reporting to Canadians

GOL Commitments

Government On-Line is a major commitment that will take several years to accomplish. We will report periodically on progress achieved. Key federal departments and agencies have reported on their progress and plans, which can be viewed on-line. The GOL website will be updated with news releases and announcements of service improvements as available.

Our commitment is to improve service to Canadians – to provide Canadians with fast and easy access to government, in the official language of their choice, whenever they want and wherever they live. We will continue to deliver on this commitment.