



Common Look and Feel Standards

1. Accessibility

1.1 All GoC Web sites must comply with W3C Priority 1 and Priority 2 checkpoints to ensure sites can be easily accessed by the widest possible audience.

1.2 HTML or other W3C recommended languages must be the primary format for all documents on GoC Web sites. In cases where the document cannot be represented in HTML, users should be given information on how to obtain alternate versions, e.g., print, Braille, audio, etc. Portable Document Format - PDF minimum Version 2.1 should only be used as an alternate format.

1.3 To ensure universal accessibility, GoC Web pages that offer information in alternate formats must include a text indication of the file type that provides a hyperlink to a site where the necessary software can be obtained.

1.4 All GoC Web sites and their pages must incorporate text equivalents for non-textual elements, such as graphics, images, navigational aids, sound tracks, to ensure universal accessibility goals are achieved.

2. Collaborative Arrangements

2.1 GoC organizations must ensure that Web sites that represent a collaborative arrangement acknowledge their participation by prominently displaying one of the FIP identifiers thereby achieving a visual presence and balance between the government and its partners.

2.2 Because the GoC clearly disallows the creation of unfair competitive advantage in the private sector through the endorsement of private interests, GoC Web sites must not display third-party icons, symbols or logos that represent the products or services of private enterprises or individuals apart from exemptions made within the context of collaborative arrangements and the use of TB approved symbols for government-wide use.

3. Cybersquatting

3.1 In order to maintain the integrity of government information and Web sites, GoC organizations must protect their titles by registering domain names that include their title for the .com domain, as well as the .org and .net domains.

<u>4. E-mail</u>
4.1 All GoC Web sites must provide users with a means of contacting institutions/individuals via electronic mail options.
4.2 All outgoing e-mail messages sent by GoC employees must include the sender's name, institution, telephone and fax numbers with area code and extension numbers, postal and e-mail addresses. Where an e-mail address serves a program or service rather than an individual, contact information must include the institutional name, postal and e-mail address, telephone and fax numbers.
4.3 All outgoing e-mail messages by GoC employees must demonstrate a consistent application of the "Canada" wordmark and institutional signature.
4.4 All GoC Web sites must incorporate an automatic acknowledgement feature to assure users their correspondence has been received.
<u>5. Important Notices</u>
5.1 All GoC Web pages must include direct access to plain language information regarding the rights, responsibilities and legal obligations of the information provider and the end-user, in the format of an Important Notices link.
5.2 The following Copyright/Permission to Reproduce text must be included within the Important Notices link at the bottom of all GoC Web pages.
5.3 All GoC Web sites must include the following Privacy Notice within the Important Notices link at the bottom of all GoC Web pages.
5.4 All GoC Web sites must include a direct hyperlink to the Privacy Notice section of the Important Notices page whenever Web pages provide an opportunity for users to input personal information.
<u>6. Navigation and Format</u>
6.1 All GoC Web pages must include the common menu bar, placed at the top of every Web page, to facilitate navigation through and between GoC sites. The GoC menu options must appear in this order and include: Language (English/French) for bilingual sites only, Contact Us, Help, Search and Canada Site.
6.2 All GoC Web pages must incorporate an institutional menu similar in design and placement to the common menu bar. The number of buttons and choice of terminology should represent plain language descriptors of the organization's program and services.
6.3 All GoC Web sites must adopt the following five metatags as a metadata standard for description of Web resources: Title, Originator,

Language of Resource, Date and Controlled Subject.
6.4 All GoC Web pages must have a date indicator to signal to users that they have reached the end of that page and to signify the currency of the content. All currency indicators must use the ISO standard for all-numeric date display (YYYY MM DD) and use one of the following formats: Date published, Date modified, or Last updated.
6.5 All GoC Web sites must use only standard 216-Web-safe colours for Web site elements, including menu bars and navigation aids, typography and background, and for simple graphic components.
6.6 Frames must only be used on GoC sites as an alternative format.
6.7 Web analyzer tools must be the standard means of collecting site usage data. Counters must not be used to perform this function.
6.8 All GoC institutions must apply HTML validators to existing Web sites to assess accessibility status and HTML validations must be applied to new GoC sites prior to posting.
<u>7. Official languages</u>
7.1 All GoC institutions must register their gc.ca domain names using at least one of the two following domain name conventions. (a) a name that represents the institution's primary purpose in both official languages, e.g. justice.gc.ca (b) 2 acronyms or names- one with the English first, the other giving prominence to the French, e.g. pco-bpc.gc.ca and bpc-pco.gc.ca and space-spatial.gc.ca spatial-space.gc.ca If option (b) is adopted, the names or acronyms will appear on the URL line on the Welcome Page of a site in accordance with the principles set out under section 3 (b) below. Institutions may also register equivalent unilingual English and French versions of a name, or the acronym thereof, if they wish or need to use those on unilingual content pages (i.e., pco.gc.ca on English content pages and bcp.gc.ca on the French content pages) or when publishing information in unilingual media, e.g., in English or French magazines or newspapers.
7.2 All GoC Web sites must incorporate Welcome Pages at the main point of entry to the site. Each Welcome Page must incorporate three key elements: the "Canada" wordmark, the institutional signature and the language choice buttons except on unilingual Web sites where a content button must be provided. (See <i>Policy on using the official languages on electronic networks</i> , which sets out requirements for bilingual sites as well as for unilingual sites, with a special disclaimer and hyperlink requirement for the latter, see 4 below).

If Welcome Pages are used at a sub-site level, they must conform to the above requirements.

All elements of each Welcome Page must be viewable without scrolling in a 640 by 480 pixel screen.

7.3 All Web pages on all GoC Web sites must incorporate the "Canada" wordmark and the institutional signature using high quality reproductions in terms of accuracy, colour and resolution.

(a) The "Canada" wordmark must appear in the lower right display area on Welcome Pages and in the upper right display area on Content Pages.

(b) The institutional signature must appear in the upper left display on both Welcome and Content pages. On the Welcome page of a site, the order of the official languages is dictated by the location of the office providing the service through the site in question, i.e., English on the left for offices located outside of Quebec and French on the left for offices located inside Quebec.

7.4 Unilingual GoC Welcome Pages must include a bilingual message indicating that under the *Official Languages Act*, the office provides services to its clientele in only one official language. This message must also inform users of a hyperlink to a site where users have access to general information in both official languages. The *Policy on using the official languages on electronic networks* contains a model Welcome Page showing the message that must be used. As well, the Policy indicates what disclaimer statements must be used in the case of bilingual sites that post unilingual content that belongs to entities not subject to the *Official Languages Act*.

7.5 All Web pages on all GoC Web sites must incorporate navigational buttons that allow users to proceed through the site in the language of their choice or to access identical information in the alternate official language, except where the office providing the Web site is not designated bilingual.

(a) Language buttons on Welcome pages must be displayed in the manner indicated to ensure visual equality and continuity. On unilingual Web sites a button is provided in the manner indicated to give access to the first page of the content part of the site, instead of the a language option (see the *Policy on using the official languages on electronic networks* for a formal statement of these requirements, along with illustrations).

(b) Language navigation buttons on all Content Pages of bilingual Web sites must be incorporated in the common menu bar. The language button must hyperlink directly to the identical content in the alternate official language. In the case of unilingual Web sites, there will be no alternate language button displayed in the mandatory menu bar.

7.6 All messages generated by GoC Web servers, including instructions, permissions, confirmation and errors, must comply with official language requirements, meaning the content of the message must appear in the language of the Web page in which they are embedded or in a bilingual format giving priority to the language of the page, as technology evolves and permits.

7.7 All text equivalents must be given in the language of the Web page in which they are embedded.
7.8 The mandatory elements that make up the metatag for any given Web page must correspond to the page's official language.
7.9 Federal institutions must ensure that their content posted on a site that represents a collaborative arrangement complies with the official language requirements that would apply if the site were strictly the site of the office in question.
7.10 All GoC electronic mail administrators must provide all public servants with e-mail addresses that demonstrate compliance with official language requirements by applying the e-mail address format that reflects the institution's chosen domain name. See section 1 above for questions regarding the order of the official languages in the domain name.
Common Look and Feel Guidelines
<u>Accessibility</u>
Guideline 1.1 If HTML is used, HTML 4.0 Strict or newer W3C adopted languages should be adopted as the standard for new and revised Web pages.
Guideline 1.2 If a page/site is explicitly designed to provide information to alternate technologies such as hand-held, print, Braille, and audio devices, such delivery should be handled with the "media" element in Cascading Style Sheets.
<u>Important Notices</u>
Guideline 5.1 Where externally sourced information, i.e., third-party information, is hosted on the institutional Web site, a liability disclaimer should be directly attached to the externally sourced information and should describe the type of information to which the disclaimer applies, i.e., databases, documents.
Guideline 5.2 Either of the following formats should be used only in exceptional circumstances in which institutions believe application of the Crown copyright symbol is necessary to protect specific elements of their Web sites: (a) © Government of Canada, date or (b) © Applied title of Institution, date
Guideline 5.3 All GoC Web sites should incorporate Exit Notices in site architecture as a means of informing users that they are about to leave a

gc.ca domain.

Navigation and Format

Guideline 6.1 All GoC Web sites should incorporate Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) or similarly sized tables to achieve consistent presentation of content.

