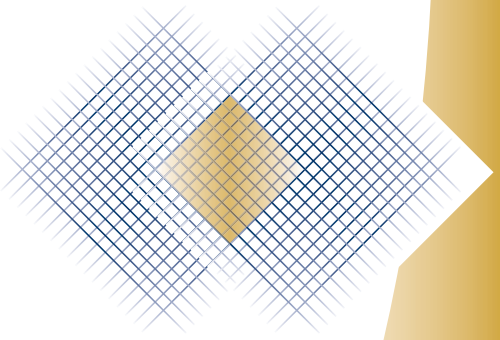
Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages
Commissariat aux langues officielles

Bridging the Digital Divide:

Official Languages on the Internet



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SUMMARY

In 2002, the Commissioner of Official Languages published two studies on the presence of French on the Internet and on official language issues on government electronic sites. The two studies, which were updates of two previous studies on the same subject published in 1999, focussed on the growing digital divide between French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians and on the challenge of maintaining the equality of the two official languages in Government On-Line.

In the two studies, the Commissioner made 28 recommendations, the aims of which were to reduce the digital divide between the two linguistic groups, and to ensure that the language rights of Web site users are fully respected and that Canadians can obtain information that is of equal value and quality in the two languages from government electronic sites. In this study, the Commissioner's recommendations are organized according to three main strategic targets.

- **Strategic Target 1:** To promote the provision of French Internet tools and content.
- **Strategic Target 2:** To ensure that Government On-Line officials have the knowledge and resources necessary to produce and post high-quality Internet content and provide high-quality Internet services in French.
- **Strategic Target 3:** To ensure the implementation of a robust governance framework regarding the Internet and official languages.

In May 2004, Canadian Heritage responded to the Commissioner's recommendations on behalf of the Government of Canada in a report entitled *French on the Internet: Promotion Through Innovation*. Since then, however, it has become apparent that the various challenges that were described in the Commissioner's studies still exist and that it is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the measures taken by the government to respond to the recommendations. Four questions needed to be asked:

1. What is the status of the progress made with respect to the various measures taken by the government?
2. Since May 2004, has the government adopted other measures to promote the use of the official languages on the Internet and in Government On-Line?
3. Do the measures implemented by the government respond, as suitably as possible, to the various recommendations made by the Commissioner, as well as to the needs of Canadians?
4. What new measures should the government take to promote the use of French on the Internet and of the official languages in Government On-Line?

This study was conducted by means of a series of interviews with the persons responsible for these issues in the concerned departments. The representative of the Office of the Commissioner also met with some outside experts in the field of technolinguistic tools.

Our study reveals that significant progress has been made in several areas, but much needs to be accomplished if satisfactory results are to be obtained. Of the 28 recommendations contained in the two 2002 reports, 13 have been implemented or are about to be implemented, 5 have been partially implemented, and 10 received no follow-up at all. Of these 10 recommendations, 4 have been withdrawn by the Commissioner, based on the information provided by the departments and in the light of recent changes in the Internet world. As a result, the Commissioner considers that 6 recommendations still require implementation. As the Internet is a domain that evolves very rapidly, new challenges are now present; in order to address these, the Commissionner has added 7 new recommendations. Follow-up to these recommendations will enhance the pursuit of the original goals.

In 2004, the administrative structure of the federal Public Service underwent a number of changes. Specifically, the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada (PSHRMAC) was created; this Agency handles human resources management and official languages issues. With respect to official languages, PSHRMAC has assumed the responsibilities that were formerly assigned to the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS). This change will be reflected in some of the recommendations that will now be made to the Agency rather than to TBS.

Moreover, the Privy Council Office is now responsible for the co-ordination and implementation of the *Action Plan for Official Languages*, giving it additional responsibilities in comparison with the Commissioner's last reports. Finally, the operational responsibility for Government On-Line has been transferred from TBS to Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC).

Here is a brief description of some of the achievements, as well as the remaining challenges, according to the three strategic targets described above.

Strategic Target 1

To promote the provision of French Internet tools and content.

Significant progress was made under this target:

- Canadian Heritage considerably increased its budget allocation for the digitization of Canadian cultural content in French; it set linguistic criteria for the allocation of funds, and created and launched a bilingual cultural directory, *Culture.ca*. One half of the funding has been used to create new French content.

- Industry Canada launched the Language Industry Initiative. The purpose of the Initiative is to help the Canadian language industry obtain a better position on the international market and attract new recruits to reduce the significant shortage of translators, a major obstacle in the translation and digitization of French content.
- The Language Technologies Research Centre (LTRC) was established. The Centre will conduct research to foster the development of tools and applications that will eventually facilitate the translation and review of content to be digitized.
- The Translation Bureau led three initiatives that will facilitate the work of translators and writers: the creation of the *Language Toolbox*, the distribution of TERMIUM® across the Government of Canada, and the implementation of technolinguistic services to help the management of communications projects in a multimedia environment. Canadian Heritage's *Words Wizard* (the *Canadian On-Line Language Toolkit*) completes this array of instruments.
- The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade[1] was successful in persuading some embassies (including the United States and China), foreign missions and international organizations to make their electronic sites bilingual.
- The Canadian International Development Agency increased its funding to encourage the participation of some Francophone African countries in the information highway.

Nevertheless, several challenges remain. The most important of these are listed below.

- It is important to continue investing in the digitization of French content, as the digital gap between Francophones and Anglophones is still wide; it has also become urgent to start a worldwide project to digitize cultural heritage in the French language.
- Research and development activities aimed at designing technolinguistic tools need to be accelerated, as these tools will contribute to increasing the productivity of those working in the language industry and allow all Canadians to fully profit from the resources found on the Web.
- Ongoing efforts are needed to ensure that foreign embassies in Ottawa provide bilingual sites.
- A Pan-American network needs to be created to enhance the Internet presence of the Romance languages spoken in the Americas.

1 In December 2003, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade was separated into two departments: Foreign Affairs Canada and International Trade Canada.

Strategic Target 2

To ensure that Government On-Line officials have the knowledge and resources necessary to produce and post high-quality Internet content and provide high-quality Internet services in French.

Achievements under Target 2 are significant, even though the transfer of the Treasury Board Secretariat's responsibilities to PSHRMAC slowed down activities in some areas. Based on the current assignment of responsibilities, eight recommendations were made to PSHRMAC; seven of these were either fully or partially implemented, or are currently being implemented. Among the six recommendations made to the Treasury Board Secretariat, two have received follow-up and two were withdrawn by the Commissioner. As for PWGSC, it had not provided any follow-up to the two recommendations that were under its responsibility but has recently decided to ensure follow-up.

As a result, a number of challenges remain untouched. Here are a few examples.

- It is essential to offer training to Webmasters and network managers on issues related to official languages, as well as on best practices in Web site management, in order to create sites in which the content is of equal quality in French and in English.
- Considering the growing need to digitize technical and scientific documents, it is imperative that directives and best practices be identified in this domain.
- It is essential to ensure that all Government of Canada employees are able to obtain bilingual keyboards and software in their preferred language.
- The government must ascertain the usefulness of current technolinguistic tools and start making greater use of them to increase the productivity of translators and content creators and also to maximize the efficiency of content management.

Strategic Target 3

To ensure the implementation of a robust governance framework regarding the Internet and official languages.

Efforts have been made to implement the governance needed to address official languages in Government On-Line; unfortunately, however, the issue of French on the Internet has been neglected. In particular, the Canadian Advisory Committee for French on the Internet has not been created and, as a result, this issue finds itself without a strategic plan or vision for the future.

A number of mechanisms have been implemented to create an accountability framework specific to the issue of official languages in Government On-Line. However, there are no specific performance measures and no systematic gathering of data; thus it will be very difficult to implement new measures or even to follow the evolution of the various challenges.

The Internet and the technology that supports it are evolving very rapidly; therefore, it should come as no surprise that new challenges have emerged since the publication of the Commissioner's two studies in 2002. The Commissioner has therefore added seven new recommendations to address these new challenges. Two of these recommendations aim to increase the Government of Canada's use of technolinguistic tools that will allow automatic or assisted translation and multilingual research on the Web. Two other recommendations are made to accelerate efforts to ensure the digitization of Canadian cultural content, of Canadian library collections and of the Francophone cultural heritage worldwide. Finally, one recommendation asks Canadian Heritage and Statistics Canada to start gathering data on the presence of French on the Internet and on trends regarding the utilization of the Internet by French- and English-speaking Canadians.

The Commissioner therefore expects that, in the next few years, the government will make significant efforts to ensure that this issue, which is so important for linguistic duality in Canada, will benefit from a co-ordinated and strategic approach. Unless a stable and accountable governance structure is established, it will be very difficult for the government to give proper attention to the other challenges described in this document.

PURPOSE

In 2002, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (OCOL) carried out two special studies on the presence of French on the Internet and official languages on government Web sites: *French on the Internet: Key to the Canadian Identity and the Knowledge Economy*[2] (hereinafter *French on the Internet*) and *Official Languages Requirements and Government On-Line*[3] (hereinafter *OL Requirements and GOL*).

The Canadian Heritage report *French on the Internet: Promotion Through Innovation*[4] (hereinafter, *Promotion Through Innovation*), published in May 2004, describes the various actions taken by the Government of Canada in response to the recommendations made in OCOL's 2002 studies.

Four questions emerged with respect to government action:

1. What is the status of the progress made with respect to the various measures taken by the government?
2. Since May 2004, has the government adopted other measures to promote the use of the official languages on the Internet and in Government On-Line?
3. Do the measures implemented by the government respond, as suitably as possible, to the various recommendations made by the Commissioner, as well as to the needs of Canadians?
4. What new measures should the government take to promote the use of French on the Internet and of the official languages in Government On-Line?

The purpose of this OCOL study is to answer these four questions. In the first chapter, we describe the objectives set out by the Commissioner in the two studies published in 2002. In the second part, we follow up on all of the actions that the government has taken in response to the Commissioner's recommendations, regardless of whether these actions were described in *Promotion Through Innovation*. In the third chapter, we present the findings of this examination and make some recommendations to enhance the presence of French on the Internet and of the official languages in Government On-Line.

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2 Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (2002), *French on the Internet: Key to the Canadian Identity and the Knowledge Economy*, Ottawa, **http://www.ocol-clo.gc.ca/archives/sst_es/2002/Internet_id_can/fr_Internet_id_can-2002_e.pdf**, consulted on February 28, 2005.

3 Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (2002), *Official Languages Requirements and Government On-Line*, Ottawa, **http://www.ocol-clo.gc.ca/archives/sst_es/2002/gol_ged/gol_ged_2002_e.htm,** consulted on February 28, 2005.

4 Canadian Heritage (2004), *French on the Internet: Promotion Through Innovation*, Gatineau, **http://www.pch.gc.ca/pc-ch/pubs/fr_Internet/fr-Internet_e.pdf**, consulted on February 24, 2005.

METHODOLOGY

The information presented in this study is gleaned from various sources. In addition to consulting the government documents relating to French on the Internet and examining some government Web sites, the OCOL representative interviewed representatives from various departments and agencies affected by the recommendations contained in *French on the Internet* and in *OL Requirements and GOL*, as well as various language industry experts.

The meetings with departmental representatives and experts were held through interviews or telephone conversations. These discussions took place from November 2004 to February 2005. The questions asked of each departmental representative were determined on the basis of his or her responsibilities regarding official languages and the extent of his or her organization's involvement. The questions asked of the experts aimed to provide a better understanding of the potential of technolinguistic tools.

A preliminary version of this report was sent to the institutions affected by the recommendations. They were able to provide their comments, which OCOL took into account when preparing the final report.

CONTEXT OF THE OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER'S INTERVENTION

OBJECTIVES

The mission of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages is to ensure that federal institutions comply with the *Official Languages Act*, to confirm that the language rights of Canadians are being observed, and to promote linguistic duality and bilingualism. Thus, it is not unusual that, since 1999, the Commissioner has been paying close attention to the impact of the Internet on the lives of Canadians and has made a series of recommendations with respect to the policy framework, strategy, and investments necessary to expand the use of French on the Internet. These recommendations are set out in two studies: *The Government of Canada and French on the Internet*[5] and *Use of French on the Internet by Federal Institutions.*[6]

Two additional studies complement the aforementioned reports. In March 2002, *French on the Internet* examined the current state of affairs with respect to the French language and the Internet. *Official Language Requirements and Government On-Line*, published in June 2002, focussed on the linguistic impact of the Government of Canada's decision to "be the most electronically connected government in the world by 2005."

The Commissioner expected the Government of Canada to react to the emergence and rise of the Internet by working toward meeting two broad objectives:

- **Objective 1**: Bridge the digital divide that exists between English- and French-speaking Canadians, a gap that could have major socio-cultural and economic consequences.
- **Objective 2**: Ensure that Government On-Line observes the language rights of Canadians and employees of the Government of Canada.

5 Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (1999), *The Government of Canada and French on the Internet*, Ottawa, **http://collection.nlc-bnc.ca/100/200/301/ocol-clo/special_study-ef/govt_canada/fr_internet_1999_e.htm**, consulted on February 24, 2005.

6 Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (1999), *Use of French on the Internet by Federal Institutions*, Ottawa, **http://www.ocol-clo.gc.ca/archives/sst_es/1999/internet/internet_1999_e.htm**, consulted on February 24, 2005.

Objective 1 was based on the wide gap noted between the offer of French content and tools[7] on the Internet and the expectations and needs of Canadian Francophones. For example, in 2000, virtually all young Anglophones who used the Internet believed that there was enough English, whereas only 59% of Francophone users felt there was enough French.[8] From the Commissioner's perspective, this situation provided a partial explanation for the fact that Quebec residents use the Internet less frequently than do other Canadians and that Quebec Francophones turn to the Internet less often than do non-Francophone Quebec residents. It became important to correct this situation to prevent the "creat[ion of] new inequalities in Canada."

The results of a more recent study[9] show that the gap has closed somewhat. In 2001, 37% of Quebec Internet users were visiting English Web sites first but in 2005, only 25% started with English sites. According to the Centre francophone d'informatisation des organisations (CEFRIO), which conducted the study, the decrease in the gap is attributable to increased French content and the fact that an increasing number of users with lower levels of education (who are often unilingual Francophones) are now connected. Moreover, although the presence of French on the Internet has significantly increased in the last few years, it is not as large as one might expect in terms of the demographic weight of Francophones around the world. French is in third position in terms of Internet presence after English and German, even though French-speakers outnumber German-speakers.

The major importance that the Government of Canada has placed on implementing Government On-Line explains the Commissioner's specific attention to the impact of the Internet on the language rights of the Canadian public and federal government employees (**Objective 2**). In 2002, the Commissioner had no doubt that widespread and regular use of the Internet would alter the structure of the Government of Canada, the methods of work, the flow of information, the language of service, and the language of work. Consequently, the Commissioner suggested to the Government On-Line officials that they adopt the measures necessary to comply with the provisions of the *Official Languages Act*, as related to communications with the public, language of work, and the promotion of French and English.

7 Content includes written, audio, visual, and multimedia documents found on the Internet. "Tools" are software applications, such as search engines and messaging applications, used to process electronic content.

8 Rotherman, Michelle, "Wired Young Canadians," Statistics Canada, *Canadian Social Trends*. Winter 2001.

9 CEFRIO, NetTendances (2005). *Sondage sur l'utilisation des TI par la population adulte du Québec*, Québec. [NetTrends: survey on the use of IT by Quebec's adult population].

RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION

To meet these two objectives, the Commissioner put forward a series of 28 recommendations presented in the two 2002 studies. These recommendations, addressed to the government, are grouped into three main strategic targets:

STRATEGIC TARGET 1

In support of Objective 1, some recommendations aim **to promote the provision of French Internet tools and content** by Canadian businesses, non-profit organizations and public agencies, and by other countries.

STRATEGIC TARGET 2

In support of Objective 2, some recommendations aim **to ensure that Government On-Line officials have the knowledge and resources necessary to produce and post high-quality Internet content and provide high-quality Internet services in French.**

STRATEGIC TARGET 3

In support of objectives 1 and 2, some recommendations relate to **the implementation of a robust governance framework regarding the Internet and official languages.**

FOLLOW-UP ON THE COMMISSIONER'S RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents each recommendation or group of recommendations followed by the actions taken by the government to address each according to the three main strategic targets presented at the end of Chapter 2. In order to facilitate reading, the recommendations from the 2002 studies have been renumbered and reclassified according to the three strategic targets. The original numbers of the recommendations are provided in **Appendix A**.

STRATEGIC TARGET 1

To promote the provision of French Internet tools and content.

Ten of the 19 recommendations made in French on the Internet were intended to promote increased provision of French content and tools on the Internet and to minimize the extent of the digital divide between Francophones and Anglophones. These 10 recommendations can be grouped into five types of measures:

1.1 Support the creation of digital content in French directly.

1.2 Support the creation of digital content in French indirectly.

1.3 Promote the establishment of a technical environment that will foster the creation of digital content in French.

1.4 Support the creation and distribution of technolinguistic tools.

1.5 Support the creation of digital content in French by foreign countries.

1.1 SUPPORT THE CREATION OF DIGITAL CONTENT IN FRENCH DIRECTLY

In *French on the Internet*, the Commissioner stated that, in her view, "the federal government must support the creation of original content in French for the Internet the same way it has done for television productions." This led to the following recommendations.

Recommendation 1.1.1

*That **Canadian Heritage** ensure that all assistance forthcoming from programs to fund the production of Canadian digital content include guidelines and criteria that take into account the principle of Canada's linguistic duality.*

Recommendation 1.1.2

*That **Canadian Heritage** step up the pace of investment in order to encourage the digitization of Canadian cultural content in both official languages on the Internet.*

Actions taken by the government

In 2002, the government took three measures in response to these recommendations:

- it increased the budget of Canadian Heritage for the Canadian Culture On-Line (CCO) Program from $35 million per year to $70 million per year;[10]
- it expanded the CCO Program by adding new program components and enhanced it by adding specific language criteria;
- it launched a bilingual Internet directory, known as *Culture.ca*.

Nearly $57 million was paid to Canadian businesses and agencies in 2002-2003 through the Canadian Culture On-Line strategy, which includes four main components: the digitization of Canadian cultural content, a gateway to Canadian cultural content on-line, tools to assist in the creation and use of Internet content, and incentives for the creation of new media. The strategy includes a series of programs that involve a number of elements with respect to the growing cultural content on the Internet, including support for the production of French and English language Canadian digital content. In comparison, a total of $46 million had been distributed in 2000-2001 and 2001-2002. The amount allocated to the digitization of cultural content has therefore nearly doubled since 2002.

French language content

A review of the CCO site shows that 50% of the Canadian Culture On-Line funds are dedicated to the development of French language content on the Internet. However, the 50% mark was not included in each individual component of the CCO Program. The CCO policies and programs for French language content stipulate that flexibility is needed in the allocation of funds for the development of on-line French language content between the various elements over a three-year period. Thus, the CCO strategy does not aim to set targets for each specific program, but rather to openly promote the development of French language content and allocate the funds with a view to reaching an overall threshold of 50%. The program's guidelines have been developed in accordance with this principle. The assistance provided by Canadian Heritage enabled the completion, between 2000 and 2002, of 928 projects; of these projects, 55% (510) involved digitizing existing French or bilingual content or creating original French or bilingual digital content.

10 "Approved program funding for the 2002-2003 fiscal year amounted to $72 million including funding for grants and contributions, transfers to other agencies, contracts, and operating and maintenance. Actual expenditures excluding Government On-Line support, the Senior Advisor's Office (ADM equivalent), and other Corporate Pressures amounted to approximately $61.6 million. Planned expenditures were $62 million for the 2003-04 fiscal year." See Corporate Review Branch (2004), *The Audit of the Canadian Culture On-Line Program*, (CCOP), Gatineau, Canadian Heritage, **http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/em-cr/verif/2004/2004_13/index_e.cfm?nav=0**, consulted on February 12, 2005.

According to the expenditures study, 49.4%[11] of the amounts paid between 2000 and 2002 were used to digitize French language content; we can, therefore, consider that the 50% objective was met in 2002. Moreover, only 17% of all of the sites produced with the support of CCO between 2000 and 2002 are in English exclusively, that is, 83% of the content is either entirely in French, or bilingual, or in English but with a French interface (for example, a French welcome page or pull-down menu to access the content). However, the proportion of French language content in bilingual sites is unknown.

Culture.ca, launched in 2003, has made it easier to locate French Canadian cultural content on the Internet. This cultural directory receives more than 200,000 hits each month. Internet users can access more than 12,000 high-quality Canadian cultural sites. Of these, 30% currently link to cultural content in French. According to CCO, this proportion is attributable to the predominance of English-language Canadian cultural sites.[12] Consequently, CCO does not expect to require that 50% of the hyperlinks lead to French sites; however, *Culture.ca* officials will strive to maximize the number of hyperlinks of this type. Moreover, the content of *Culture.ca* overall is produced in both official languages.

Linguistic quality of content

At present, the quality of the language used in the French digital content produced with the support of CCO has not been specifically and scientifically assessed by Canadian Heritage. However, the Department notes that a cursory comparison of the French content produced before and after 2002 appears to indicate that the quality of the language has improved. In addition, Canadian Heritage notes that CCO intends to design an on-line survey to measure the satisfaction of Internet users with the quality of the language used in the content produced with government support.

Observations and conclusions

The analysis reveals that the government has increased its investment in digitization to the benefit of Canadian producers of digital content. It also shows that Canadian Heritage has implemented some language criteria to govern the CCO Program and its various components and that CCO has complied with the directive whereby 50% of the funds available are allocated to the production of French content.

11 This percentage was established by adding the proportion of the amounts allocated to digitizing unilingual French (26.1%) and half of the proportion of the amounts allocated to digitizing bilingual content (0.5 x 46.6%=23.3%).

12 A brief search using Google revealed that 5.4 million Web pages meet the following search criteria: "culture," "site:.ca," and "Search pages in English." In comparison, 2.6 million pages meet the following search criteria: "culture," "site:.ca," and "Search pages in French." Approximately one third of the Canadian Web pages containing the word "culture" are in French.

However, the Commissioner notes that the language quality and the actual volume of the content produced with the support of CCO should be subjected to a stringent assessment. The Commissioner also notes that the implementation of a global threshold of 50% French language content is not always an appropriate response to the gap between French and English content in some of the specific Web niches covered by the CCO components.

The Commissioner is pleased to note that CCO intends to carry out a survey to measure the satisfaction of Francophone and Anglophone Internet users with the quality of its cultural sites. The Commissioner feels that Canadian Heritage should also systematically assess the actual proportion of French language content and the linguistic quality of the content found at *Culture.ca* and ensure a fair representation of the Francophone community in the sites overall.

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 1.1.1: IMPLEMENTED
STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 1.1.2: IMPLEMENTED

1.2 SUPPORT THE CREATION OF DIGITAL CONTENT IN FRENCH INDIRECTLY

In 2002, the Commissioner was deeply concerned that the Government of Canada did not make much use of French and English language Canadian portals for the placement of ads—a particularly significant shortcoming with respect to the Francophone portals. Consequently, the Commissioner recommended:

Recommendation 1.2.1

That ***Communication Canada*** *develop by 2003 a federal investment strategy aimed at fostering the development of private-sector and non-profit organizations working in the area of French language content.*

Actions taken by the government

The Commissioner considers that this recommendation is no longer relevant, given the fact that the new policies on Government of Canada communications prohibit any type of *ad hoc* or local advertising that is not part of a Canada-wide campaign.

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 1.2.1: NOT IMPLEMENTED—WITHDRAWN

1.3 PROMOTE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TECHNICAL ENVIRONMENT THAT IS CONDUCIVE TO THE CREATION OF DIGITAL CONTENT IN FRENCH

Conditions are still not conducive to using languages other than English in the information technology sector. For example, both computers and the information highway were developed using the American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII), a character coding system that does not allow Francophones to use accents or Spanish-speaking people to type the letter *ñ*. Aware of the importance of ensuring that the standards under development at the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF), the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) or other international authorities (for example, RDF or VoiceXML) take into account the current and future needs of Francophones, the Commissioner recommended:

Recommendation 1.3.1

That the ***Treasury Board Secretariat*** *participate actively in and support the work of international organizations working to establish standards to enhance linguistic diversity on the Internet.*

Actions taken by the government

The government responded to this recommendation by emphasizing that it is represented in the Joint Technical Committee 1 (JTC1) of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO)—JTC1 is responsible for the various standards relating to information technology, such as standards on character encoding—and that it is presently working on a project to translate one of the information technology ISO standards into French.

The Treasury Board Secretariat is also working in co-operation with the Translation Bureau to persuade the ISO to use TERMIUM® as the tool for updating and distributing the information technology vocabulary. The funds required to launch the project have been approved through the Innovation Funds provided for in the *Action Plan for Official Languages*. TBS has also made an offer to W3C to have its validation tools translated, and this work is currently under way.

The issue of accents in French has been resolved within the federal administration. The purpose of the Coded Character Set for Information Interchange standard is to provide a complete set of characters needed for the current and future exchange of information in French and English. Moreover, under the *Common Look and Feel for the Internet* (CLFI), all of the Government of Canada's Web sites must use an accessible file format that allows for the fulfilment of official languages obligations. Finally, technology continues to evolve and is increasingly turning toward XML format, which includes the de facto Unicode standard that allows for posting in any language of the world.

According to the Commissioner, these two measures are a satisfactory response to Recommendation1.3.1. However, a number of standards and norms favourable to the use of French in computer science and essential to increasing the productivity of creators, managers, and translators of digital content are produced independently of JTC1 and ISO. The above-mentioned translation of ISO standards on information technology will promote their dissemination in the Francophonie, but it will contribute marginally to improving the environment in which French is used in the information technology sector and on the Internet.

Consequently, the Commissioner expects the Treasury Board Secretariat to continue participating in international tables that deal with the definition of rules on the effective use of French and English on the Internet, namely IETF and W3C, and to support the dissemination of the results achieved by these tables which are often not well-known by the producers of Canadian content and technolinguistic tools.

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 1.3.1: IMPLEMENTED

1.4 SUPPORT THE CREATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF TECHNOLINGUISTIC TOOLS

It would be impossible for Internet users to find the information they need on the Web without powerful search engines like Google. Without electronic bilingual glossaries, professional translators would be far less productive than they are. Aware of the current and future impact of tools—such as automated dictation software applications, automated summarizers, and automated document generators—on Canadian society as a whole, the Commissioner recommended in *French on the Internet*:

Recommendation 1.4.1

*That **Industry Canada** work in close co-operation with key players and federal departments with economic responsibilities to ensure that the Canadian language industries become a driving force of the knowledge economy.*

Recommendation 1.4.2

*That **National Research Council Canada (NRC)** establish a Centre of Excellence to promote the development of technolinguistic tools by 2003.*

The Commissioner stated in *French on the Internet* that it is necessary to promote language fluidity on the Internet, that is, to provide Canadian Internet users with electronic dictionaries, writing aids, translation aids, and other tools that might help them easily create and translate high-quality electronic content in their language. The Commissioner noted in particular that the government should make available to researchers and industries the linguistic resources that it owns to help them create new technolinguistic tools. To fulfil this objective, the Commissioner recommended:

Recommendation 1.4.3

That, by 2003, ***Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC)*** *make available free of charge on the Internet a complete suite of technolinguistic tools, including writing and translating aids, terminology banks like* Termium*, and specialized bilingual research modules in order to facilitate access to information in both official languages for all Canadians.*

Actions taken by the government

The Language Industry Initiative

In response to recommendation 1.4.1, Industry Canada implemented the Language Industry Initiative in 2003. The language industry support program has a budget of $10 million for a maximum of five years. Created pursuant to the *Action Plan for Official Languages*,[13] the purpose of this program is to build and lead a network—the Language Industry Association, or AILIA—to bring together all of the sector stakeholders, increase the visibility of the Canadian language industry in Canada and abroad, and create a technology roadmap (in other words, carry out a visionary study to identify the technologies, technolinguistic applications, and markets that will be the most promising in the next few years). The Canadian Language Technology Roadmap Committee and its four subcommittees (translation, content management, speech, and training) completed the second phase of its activities in March 2005 and will report the industry's needs to the Language Technologies Research Centre for monitoring purposes. One half of the language industry's budget will be earmarked for networking and co-ordination activities, and the other half will be allocated to marketing and branding activities.

Industry Canada is also providing ongoing support through the Language Industry Program (LIP), which is available to provide funding for eligible costs relating to the translation of Web sites and pamphlets, thus helping to increase the volume of French language digital content.

13 Government of Canada, *Action Plan for Official Languages*, Ottawa, **http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/olo/default.asp?Language=E&Page=Action&doc=cover_e.htm**, consulted on February 24, 2005.

The Language Technologies Research Centre

The *Action Plan for Official Languages* has also provided for a cash injection of $10 million over five years (2003-2008) for the NRC to establish the Language Technologies Research Centre (LTRC).[14] Established in partnership with the Université du Québec en Outaouais, the Translation Bureau, the City of Gatineau's economic development corporation, Industry Canada, AILIA, and the NRC, the Centre currently employs two dozen research associates. Its mission is to carry out and promote research and development in the area of language technologies, to contribute to the advancement of knowledge, and to benefit the Canadian language industry.[15] The construction of a building to house the LTRC and its associates is currently under way and should be completed in early 2006.

Three strategic directions will guide the work of the LTRC: develop tools to increase the productivity of translators, creators of localized content, and language trainers; develop content management and semantic search tools for processing multiple languages; and become the world leader with respect to standards in terminology and language databases.

Since AILIA's creation, its membership has grown to approximately 160 members. Regarding co-operation with the LTRC, a team of researchers has been formed, and translation and terminology projects are in progress.

It is too early to assess the effects of the creation of AILIA and the establishment of the LTRC. However, the Commissioner hopes that their work will foster the development and distribution of solutions that will enhance the presence of French on the Internet. However, the LTRC indicates that the lack of a stable and guaranteed source of funding for the LTRC could reduce its effectiveness and its ability to meet expectations.

Technolinguistic tools

In *Promotion Through Innovation*, the government states that three of the Translation Bureau's initiatives provide a response to Recommendation 1.4.3: the creation of the *Language Toolbox*, the distribution of TERMIUM® across the Government of Canada, and the implementation of technolinguistic services, namely, a communications project management service in a multimedia environment. Finally, according to the government, the creation of Canadian Heritage's *Words Wizard* (the *Canadian On-Line Language Toolkit*)

14 The funding allotted to the NRC to create the LTRC amounts to $10 million over five years, but it should be noted that this funding was allotted on the basis of $2 million per year, with no time limit (A-base).

15 View the Centre's presentation at **http://www.crtl-ltrc.ca/en/bref.htm**, consulted on February 24, 2005.

also addresses this recommendation. The Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada has already made TERMIUM® available to the academic community for use in projects approved by the LTRC.

Observations and conclusions

The Commissioner considers that Recommendations 1.4.1 and 1.4.2 have been implemented, yet the measures taken respond only partially to the spirit of Recommendation 1.4.3. First, *Words Wizard*—a directory of approximately 90 commercial and public technolinguistic tools—contains little value-added information for the average Internet user and for Canadian producers of technolinguistic tools.[16] This directory gives access to a certain number of technolinguistic tools, but it will have little impact on the productivity of language workers or on the volume of French language content. Second, free access to TERMIUM® for federal employees (and for researchers involved in some projects) and the development of technolinguistic services, even though they affect the federal institutions' ability to ensure that Government On-Line complies with official languages requirements contribute very indirectly to the objective of bridging the digital divide between Francophones and Anglophones. Finally, the free glossaries in the *Language Toolbox* are useful mostly to specialized writers and translators.

The scarcity of high-quality language-related materials continues to be a major obstacle to Canadian researchers and industries in the development of the technolinguistic tools needed to help Francophones and Anglophones locate digital content easily; as a result, the Commissioner feels that it is important to rephrase Recommendation 1.4.3. The Commissioner recommends:

Recommendation 1.4.3 (reworded)

That ***PWGSC*** *provide the Canadian industrial and academic communities with access to, not TERMIUM® per se, but to all of the language databases that it owns, including the databases and the corpus that support the operation of TERMIUM®.*

By giving the Canadian language industry a competitive edge, this measure would fit in well with the purposes set out in the Action Plan with respect to language industries.

16 Among others, *Words Wizard* does not contain information that would help Internet users to make a choice among the tools offered and help them to use these tools. We note that only 15,000 single visitors accessed *Words Wizard* between April and November 2004 (an average of less than 2,000 single visitors monthly).

The federal language databases should play an exceptional role in the development of the Canadian language industry and the expansion in Canada of a dynamic and integrative information society. TERMIUM® and other available language materials could be made available to Canadian researchers and industries as open source software, ensuring that the improvements made to it benefit all Canadians.

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 1.4.1: IMPLEMENTED
STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 1.4.2: IMPLEMENTED
STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 1.4.3: PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED—REWORDED

1.5 SUPPORT THE CREATION OF DIGITAL CONTENT IN FRENCH BY EXTERNAL SOURCES

Aware of the universal reach of the Internet, the Commissioner recommended in *French on the Internet* that the government support not only the domestic production of content and tools in French, but also the production of content and tools in French by other governments or by non-governmental bodies. Thus, noting that a number of international organizations with headquarters in Canada and a number of embassies and consulates in Canada did not provide a French version of their Web sites, the Commissioner recommended:

Recommendation 1.5.1

*That the **Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)** immediately take appropriate action to ensure that foreign embassies in Canada, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations in which Canada is a full participant include information in both English and French on their Internet sites.*

To ensure that the Francophone countries of the southern hemisphere enhance their presence on the Web and participate in the Internet dialogue between Francophones, the Commissioner also recommended in *French on the Internet*:

Recommendation 1.5.2

*That, in its programs, the **Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)** do more to encourage the use of the Internet by developing countries of the Francophonie.*

Finally, to ensure the vitality of all languages in both Americas, on the Internet and elsewhere, the Commissioner recommended:

Recommendation 1.5.3

That the ***Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)*** *take the steps necessary to further the creation by 2003 of an inter-American network to promote English, Spanish, French and Portuguese in an integrated America.*

Actions taken by the government

Embassy sites

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) acted on the recommendation by sending a letter, on April 26, 2002, to the ambassadors and high commissioners posted in Canada encouraging them to make their sites bilingual. The Government of Canada also agreed to provide $500,000 to help raise the status of French as a language of communication in governmental and non-governmental international bodies.

In January 2005, the Commissioner carried out a follow-up to the 2002 study of official languages on the Web sites of foreign embassies in Canada. The situation has improved compared with the situation described in 2002. From a sample of 40 embassies, French now has an equal status on the sites of eight embassies: China, Belgium, Finland, Colombia, the United States, Norway, Spain and France. French language content is available on 13 additional sites, although not in equal proportions. Moreover, the Web sites of 10 out of 26 international bodies (6 more than in 2002) are now fully bilingual.

This is good progress, given the significance of the embassies involved, particularly, the U.S. and Chinese embassies. However, French and English still hold an unequal status on the sites of most of the 137 foreign missions in Canada. Furthermore, 8 of the 26 sites of the international bodies examined in 2004 still do not have a French welcome page—only one fewer than in 2002.

According to DFAIT, it should be noted that the direct influence of the Government of Canada on the language behaviour of sovereign states or international bodies is limited. The Commissioner feels that the Department has obtained some success by using its influence and should pursue its efforts in the same direction. The Department could encourage Canadian ambassadors abroad to initiate dialogue on language issues with their counterparts in other Francophone countries and to intervene in such a way that French is used in communications with and on the Web sites of international organizations.

The Department of Foreign Affairs has responded positively to the recommendation made in the January 2005 follow-up study to continue its efforts in this direction, and the Commissioner is confident that the Department will pursue this goal with the necessary dedication.

The participation of French Africa in the information highway

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) responded to Recommendation 1.5.2. with a number of measures. It:

- continued with the FrancoNet project ($4.5 million budget for 1999–2004);
- contributed $4 million to completing the second phase of The African Virtual University, a distance education program that has led to the development of a virtual library containing 1,000 journals;
- set in motion the Cyber Space for Francophone Africa project ($2 million budget for 2002-2004), which has enabled distance training in information technology for young Africans;
- started up the project to support the acquisition of skills in information technology ($3 million budget for 2002-2006), the purpose of which is to develop an information technology workforce in Cameroon;
- renewed its support of Fonds francophone des inforoutes [Francophone Information Highway Fund] ($500,000 injection per year), which enables the creation of original African digital content.

The Commissioner is satisfied with the increased CIDA assistance in countries of the Francophonie and hopes that this Canadian support will continue in the years to come.

Promotion of other languages in the Americas

Finally, DFAIT emphasizes that the activities carried out by the Translation Bureau's Terminology and Standardization Branch to add Portuguese and Spanish content to TERMIUM®, and the translation into Spanish or Portuguese of DFAIT's mission Web sites in South America, respond to the Commissioner's Recommendation 1.5.3., namely, to take the steps necessary to further the creation by 2003 of an inter-American network to promote English, Spanish, French, and Portuguese in the integrated Americas.

According to the Commissioner, these measures do not really respond to the recommendation that she had formulated. The Commissioner remains convinced that in future years, the increasing integration of the Americas will have major consequences for language and culture, and Canada is still ill prepared to deal with these consequences.

The Government of Canada can offset this shortcoming by ensuring that the federal departments and agencies involved participate in the work of organizations in the Americas concerned with linguistic diversity on the Internet and elsewhere, and by ensuring that the Government of Canada and other potential partners, such as the Government of Quebec, create a genuine inter-American network dedicated to promoting languages in the Americas. Canada has already established its standing at the forefront of the defence of cultural and linguistic diversity, which is threatened by globalization and by the growing influence of the predominant language of trade and business on the regional languages and cultures. Canada is already a leader in cultural diversity, and it should use this status to enhance the presence of French and other Romance languages on the Internet, thus enhancing the presence of these languages in the western hemisphere.

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 1.5.1: PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED
STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 1.5.2: IMPLEMENTED
STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 1.5.3: NOT IMPLEMENTED

STRATEGIC TARGET 2

To ensure that Government On-Line officials have the knowledge and resources necessary to produce and post high-quality Internet content and provide high-quality Internet services in French.

The purpose of some of the recommendations made in our two 2002 studies was to ensure that Government On-Line officials have the necessary skills and resources to produce and distribute high-quality Internet content and services in French and English. These recommendations can be further divided into nine general measures:

2.1 Intensify efforts to create government content in French.

2.2 Increase the resources dedicated to translating government content.

2.3 Improve the performance of the resources dedicated to managing government content.

2.4 Ensure the continuity of both official languages from one delivery method to another.

2.5 Ensure the quality of the language used in French and English government content.

2.6 Ensure that Government On-Line officials have the information and skills necessary to meet official languages requirements.

2.7 Ensure that the government procures bilingual information technology products and services.

2.8 Provide Government On-Line users with better information about their language rights.

2.9 Ensure that partnership situations comply with official languages requirements.

2.1 INTENSIFY EFFORTS TO CREATE GOVERNMENT CONTENT IN FRENCH

In *French on the Internet*, the Commissioner criticized the fact that the Government On-Line in departments and agencies have done little to encourage the use of French not only as a language of translation, but also as the language of design of content. She also noted that the Government On-Line architects underestimated the potential of technolinguistic tools as a means of promoting the production of and increasing access to government content in French. To rectify this issue, the Commissioner recommended:

Recommendation 2.1.1

That ***Treasury Board Secretariat*** *ensure, as part of the implementation of Government On-Line (GOL), that an equitable share of content is produced originally in French.*

(This responsibility now belongs to PSHRMAC.)

Actions taken by the government

Language of content creation

Treasury Board Secretariat offered a twofold response to this recommendation. Departmental representatives pointed out that it was difficult to determine whether the proportion of government content produced originally in French was equitable, in other words, in line with the proportion of Francophones in the Government of Canada. In fact, the government does not have any data on the language in which federal institutions create content or on the number of Francophone employees responsible for producing documents.

Design and availability of technolinguistic tools

The government contends that it took various actions to facilitate the creation of and access to government content in French: it created the *Language Toolbox* and *Words Wizard*, disseminated the results of its research on the obstacles to using the two official languages in Government On-Line,[17] revised its policies, standards and guidelines on official languages, and created a Technolinguistic Working Group, responsible for studying the possibility of creating a virtual laboratory to test and disseminate technolinguistic tools that could be useful to the federal departments and agencies.

17 Jacques Itié Consulting (2003), *Enquête sur les langues officielles et l'Initiative Gouvernement en direct/Amélioration des services*, s.l. [Enquiry on official languages and the Government On-Line initiative/Improving services, n.p.]

Observations and conclusions

The measures set out above contribute only indirectly to the objective of the recommendation. The activities of the Technolinguistic Working Group were interrupted before it was able to define the concept of the virtual laboratory, decide on its content, and determine how to set it up. It can be assumed that the task of setting up the virtual laboratory will be assigned to the LTRC, but this laboratory will not likely be ready for a number of years.

In light of this response, the Commissioner concluded that the issue did not so much lie in determining whether the proportion of digital content produced in French originally corresponds with the number of Francophone employees in the government, but rather in enabling the creation of this content by Francophone and Anglophone employees and making it more accessible.

The Commissioner believes that the use of French as the language of work and as the language for the creation of content remains a problem, as indicated by the most recent study carried out by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.[18] Recommendations have been made to address this and the Agency will need to follow up. Therefore, the Commissioner is withdrawing Recommendation 2.1.1, but is asking PSHRMAC to promote the creation of French content in its efforts to increase the use of French as the language of work.

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 2.1.1: NOT IMPLEMENTED—WITHDRAWN

2.2 INCREASE RESOURCES DEDICATED TO TRANSLATING GOVERNMENT CONTENT

In *French on the Internet*, the Commissioner noted that the financial resources set aside for translating content are insufficient with respect to Government On-Line. The advent of the Web and the creation of Government On-Line have, among other factors, given rise to a 15% increase in the volume of content to be translated since 1996.[19] Consequently, the Commissioner recommended:

Recommendation 2.2.1

*That **Treasury Board Secretariat** commit the budgetary resources necessary to allow federal departments and agencies to meet the increasing need for translation in response to the publication of content in both official languages on the Internet.*

18 Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (2004), *Walking the Talk: Language of Work in the Federal Public Service.* http://www.ocol-clo.gc.ca/archives/sst_es/2004/work_travail/work_travail_2004_e.pdf.

19 Figure provided by the Translation Bureau.

Actions taken by the government

In *Promotion Through Innovation*, Treasury Board Secretariat responded to this recommendation, stressing that the government's current budgetary process requires that the departments and agencies foresee all of the costs related to translation. The Office of the Commissioner recognizes that TBS is not responsible for dictating to the departments the proportion of their budget that must be earmarked for the cost of translation services. However, the Commissioner believes that the Secretariat must remain aware of the departments' challenges created by increasing translation requirements brought on by the advent of GOL. Failure to recognize this factor could lead to a decrease in the volume of content posted on the Web, a reduction in the quality of translation, or increasing difficulties experienced by the departments in trying to fulfil their obligations under the *Official Languages Act*. Moreover, new expectations have been created recently, further to the introduction of transparency measures that require departments to post certain information that would not have been provided in the past. Consequently, the Commissioner rephrased her recommendation as follows:

Recommendation 2.2.1 (reworded)

That, in its review of departmental budgetary requirements, ***Treasury Board Secretariat*** *take into account the fact that the departments and agencies must assume increasing costs for translation services.*

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 2.2.1: NOT IMPLEMENTED—REWORDED

2.3 IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE RESOURCES DEDICATED TO MANAGING GOVERNMENT CONTENT

In *OL Requirements and GOL*, the Commissioner emphasized that, to better manage the funds available for translating government content, it is important that the departments and agencies avoid "emptying the drawers" by publishing documents on-line that are of little interest or relevance and that must then be translated. Consequently, the Commissioner recommended:

Recommendation 2.3.1

That ***Treasury Board Secretariat*** *caution federal institutions against the consequences of indiscriminate digitization of information from an official language perspective in order to enhance the quality of federal government Web sites in both languages.*

Actions taken by the government

By December 2004, Treasury Board Secretariat had not yet issued any such advice. TBS explains the lack of follow-up to Recommendation 2.3.1 by alleging that, because the concept of abusive digitization is subjective, federal institutions are in the best position to define their public's content requirements and that they understand the importance of carefully managing the translation resources they have. According to TBS, the departments and agencies now observe the digitization policy more wisely, whereas instances of abusive digitization may have occurred in the early years of Government On-Line.

Nonetheless, the Commissioner maintains her belief that, frequently, federal institutions do not know what actions to take with respect to digitizing and disseminating content. A case in point: during a workshop organized by PWGSC on February 17, 2004, to prepare the Department's response to Recommendation 2.6.1., the Webmasters and network and content managers invited to the workshop claimed that "the documents posted on-line on a daily basis in the large departments are too numerous, too diversified, and too specialized, and the approval processes were too decentralized and scattered to hope that the Webmasters and their teams could determine whether it was relevant to post a particular document, or assess the quality of the language used in documents proposed for posting, where their primary concern is the upgrading and technical maintenance of the Web sites."[20] This outcome of the workshop organized by PWGSC confirms the need for training and guidelines with respect to managing content and Web sites.

PSHRMAC indicated that it was planning to issue a reminder in this respect to its networks of champions and its advisory committees. The Commissioner applauds this initiative, yet she also expects TBS to encourage the departments to develop guidelines and control mechanisms to enable them to determine the point at which a new Web site should be created, identify the information and documents to be published, and define the responsibilities of each party with respect to digitizing and publishing information. Consequently, she has rephrased Recommendation 2.3.1 as follows.

Recommendation 2.3.1 (reworded)

*That the **Treasury Board Secretariat**, through the **Information Management Committee**, encourage federal institutions to implement guidelines and control mechanisms to prevent the abusive digitization of information.*

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 2.3.1: NOT IMPLEMENTED—REWORDED

20 Public Works and Government Services Canada (2004), *French on the Internet*. Recommendation 6. Workshop of February 17, 2004. *Final Report*, Gatineau, Word document submitted by Robert Vézina, Manager, Knowledge Transfer Services, PWGSC.

2.4 ENSURE THAT BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES CAN BE USED FROM ONE DELIVERY METHOD TO ANOTHER

Individuals and businesses are increasingly turning to the Internet to do business with the government. Moreover, they often use two or more delivery channels to obtain the service or information they need.[21] For example, an individual who uses the Internet to access an on-line form may have to send an e-mail message or make a telephone call for assistance in completing the form. To ensure that the transfer from one method to another meets the language expectations of users, the Commissioner recommended in *OL Requirements and GOL*:

Recommendation 2.4.1

That ***Treasury Board Secretariat*** *inform federal institutions of their obligation to ensure continuity among service delivery channels, in terms of both quality of language and level of subject matter expertise.*

(This responsibility now belongs to PSHRMAC.)

Actions taken by the government

This responsibility now belongs to PSHRMAC and the Agency emphasizes that the departments and agencies are obligated to comply with the *Official Languages Act*, regardless of the service delivery channel used. However, in the second phase of the policy review currently under way, the Agency has included two directives that deal with the issue of communicating with the public and delivering services electronically; namely, one that addresses the use of official languages on Web sites and another on electronic communications. These new policies, which came into effect July 15, 2005, will help clarify the language obligations of the departments and agencies. Consequently, the Commissioner considers that Recommendation 2.4.1 is implemented.

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 2.4.1: IMPLEMENTED

Nonetheless, the Commissioner feels that the progressive migration of Canadians to the Internet and their increasing use of more than one service delivery method to obtain service or information from the government presents significant linguistic challenges. Specifically, these trends make it increasingly important for employees who deal with the public on-line to have the skills required to communicate rapidly and effectively in writing.

21 The Erin Research study (2003), *Citizens First 3*, Toronto, Institute for Citizen-Centred Service, and the Institute of Public Administration of Canada, confirmed this information.

Consequently, the Commissioner recommends that the Agency see to the review, and potentially the advancement of employees' writing skills, where these employees communicate electronically with Canadians.

2.5 ENSURE THE QUALITY OF THE LANGUAGE IN GOVERNMENT CONTENT IN FRENCH AND ENGLISH

In *French on the Internet*, the Commissioner noted that the linguistic quality of French content on government sites is uneven from one organization to another. Consequently, the Commissioner recommended:

Recommendation 2.5.1

That the ***Treasury Board Secretariat*** *take the appropriate steps to ensure that the content in both official languages on federal Internet sites is of high quality and to propose corrective measures to institutions as needed.*

(This responsibility now belongs to PSHRMAC.)

Actions taken by the government

Evaluation guide to assess the linguistic quality of Web sites

In reaction to this recommendation, PSHRMAC conducted a non-systematic verification of the linguistic quality of the French content of five Government of Canada sites. The results of this verification are not available but, according to Agency officials, they were positive overall. Even so, the Agency decided to provide the departments and agencies with a self-assessment guide to assess their Web sites. This guide, created with the assistance of the CIDIF[22] (a research and development centre in the "internationalization" and "localization" of software and Internet applications), is currently being tested.

It should be noted that this guide will offer assurance of site compliance with the standards set for governments sites, but not the language quality of the content, if only basic. The verification of language quality always requires the work of a reviser or translator.

22 The mission of CIDIF, established in New Brunswick, is to provide specialized tools and services that will help make software and Internet applications transparent to users of different cultures and languages.

The release of the first edition of the guide is expected early in the 2005–2006 fiscal year. All of the federal institutions will have access to this guide electronically, in a static format (that is, as an HTML or PDF document).[23] The Agency anticipates making the guide simpler and more user-friendly in the months and years to come. PSHRMAC has recently completed an initial trial of this tool, and four departments and agencies will be involved in the next phase of testing in 2005.

Observations and conclusions

There are no mechanisms in place to ensure the linguistic quality of sites, other than those already in place in the departments and agencies. It is apparent that these internal controls are not always sufficient, as eloquently shown by the *Cybertip.ca* site.[24] The Job Bank site is another good example of a government site where the French version leaves something to be desired. Some improvement has occurred, but Human Resources and Skills Development Canada is still not able to offer an acceptable bilingual version of the posted job descriptions. The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages is also aware of examples that demonstrate that linguistic quality is not always a priority; however these shortcomings are not necessarily reported to the Office of the Commissioner in a complaint. Furthermore, there is no system in place to allow the departments and agencies to report the number and nature of complaints they have received about the linguistic quality of the sites. The Commissioner, therefore, considers that Recommendation 2.5.1, as stated, has not been followed, although efforts have been made to ensure that sites comply with the *Official Languages Act*.

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 2.5.1: PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED

The Commissioner reiterates her recommendation. She suggests that the Agency request that the departments and agencies monitor the number of issues involving the linguistic quality of sites and report the results to the Agency. She also recommends that the Agency perform verifications of the linguistic quality of government Web sites more regularly and more systematically and follow up where the quality does not comply with the standards. Moreover, the Office of the Commissioner would like to receive a report on the results of this evaluation.

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23 For example, the tool could help determine whether a Web document contains properly structured sentences in which each sentence contains a verb, a subject, and an object (complement). To assess content on the basis of this criterion, the site officials could be asked to complete the systematic analysis of a representative sample of texts from the Web site to determine whether the sentences are structured properly and the results fully comply with expectations.

24 *Cybertip.ca* is Canada's national tipline for reporting the online sexual exploitation of children. The project leaders were forced to take down the French version of their site temporarily—a version translated automatically—after receiving a number of complaints. [Translation] "Cybertip.ca was forced to temporarily suspend its French language Web site, where questionable translations abound." See Anonymous (2005), [Translation] "Preventing child pornography. Cybertip.ca suspends its French site," *Canadian Press*, January 26.

2.6 ENSURE THAT GOVERNMENT ON-LINE OFFICIALS HAVE THE INFORMATION AND SKILLS NECESSARY TO MEET OFFICIAL LANGUAGES REQUIREMENTS

In 2002, the Commissioner felt that the training of network and content managers of federal institution Web sites was insufficient. According to the Commissioner, it was necessary to ensure that these individuals were more aware of the importance of language issues and the rules for using official languages in Government On-Line and the existence of solutions to the problems encountered. Consequently, the Commissioner recommended:

Recommendation 2.6.1

*That **Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC)** provide ongoing training to network and content managers of federal institution Web sites in order to increase their awareness of official languages issues and of the technolinguistic tools available to promote the production of content that respects the special character of Canada's two official languages.*

Recommendation 2.6.2

*That **Treasury Board Secretariat** create a single document [...] that includes all official language guidelines concerning the provision of on-line services and on-line interaction with the government in the context of Government On-Line, and ensure the dissemination of the guidelines.*

(This responsibility now belongs to PSHRMAC.)

Actions taken by the government

Training for Webmasters and network and content managers

In response to Recommendation 2.6.1, PWGSC intended to take the following measures: offer ongoing training workshops designed to heighten the awareness of Webmasters and network and content managers of language issues; include a component on official languages in its Web page creation training program; and disseminate the information produced for the workshops and the program on PWGSC's Knowledge Exchange Service Web site.

However, PWGSC maintains that a consultation conducted in 2004 revealed that the Webmasters and network and content managers in the Government of Canada were well aware of the ins and outs of the *Official Languages Act*. The language quality issues found on some government Web sites are said to be caused by other factors, including the indifference of senior managers with respect to language issues or their lack of understanding of these issues (which complicates the process of obtaining the resources available to promote respect of linguistic duality), the poor quality of the production and posting process for Web documents,

and the absence of policies regarding the selection of documents to be posted on the Web. Consequently, PWGSC abandoned the use of these ongoing workshops and training programs to respond to the Commissioner's recommendation.

Further to the consultations carried out in the context of this study, PWGSC has decided to implement the training initiatives originally designed to respond to Recommendation 2.6.1. However, PWGSC feels that these efforts should accompany a wide-ranging awareness-raising campaign to reach all of the employees involved directly or indirectly in developing sites.

Official languages in the Government On-Line Web site

Treasury Board Secretariat feels that it responded to Recommendation 2.6.2. by inserting a separate section on language issues (*Official Languages and Government On-Line*) in the Government On-Line Web site[25] and ensuring that this section is highly visible on the site's welcome page (it is the only thematic section of this site that is available by clicking on a button rather than using the search engine), and that the section is known to GOL managers and official languages champions in the departments. The *Official Languages and Government On-Line* section contains a presentation of official languages legislation and regulations and a collection of best practices regarding linguistic duality.

Treasury Board Secretariat self-assessment tool

TBS has developed a self-assessment tool that helps departments and agencies assess periodically the compliance of their Web sites with the 10 Common Look and Feel standards (including Section 7 on official languages). The results of these self-assessments are reported on the Government On-Line Web site (see "Performance Measurement for the Government On-Line Initiative") at **www.gol-ged.gc.ca**.

Observations and conclusions

The Commissioner is pleased that PWGSC has reconsidered the training aspect, and she also feels that it is important to inform employees. Accordingly, she makes the following recommendation.

New recommendation 2.12

That the ***Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada (PSHRMAC)*** *take the measures necessary to ensure that Web site managers and communications officials in the departments and agencies understand the importance of equality in the content and quality of both languages in the government's Web sites.*

25 See http://www.ged-gol.gc.ca/index_e.asp?, consulted on February 28, 2005.

With respect to Recommendation 2.6.2, the Commissioner considers that the inclusion of the *Official Languages and Government On-Line* section of the Government On-Line site is an appropriate response to her recommendation.

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 2.6.1: CURRENTLY BEING IMPLEMENTED
STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 2.6.2: IMPLEMENTED

2.7 ENSURE THAT THE GOVERNMENT PROVIDES BILINGUAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

In *French on the Internet*, the Commissioner noted that government computer workstations are not always equipped to function in French and that bilingual keyboards are not always available. The Commissioner also noted that the government did not specify in its invitations to tender that software, computer equipment, manuals, and computer training services must be bilingual. To rectify these problems, the Commissioner recommended:

Recommendation 2.7.1

*That **Treasury Board Secretariat** require that all workstations in the federal government be ready to operate in both official languages by 2005.*

Recommendation 2.7.2

*That, by 2003, **Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC)** develop a policy that specifies in all calls for tenders issued by the Government of Canada that hardware, software, manuals and training must be provided in both of Canada's official languages.*

(This responsibility now belongs to the Treasury Board Secretariat.)

Actions taken by the government

Electronic equipment and material in both official languages

TBS claims that the objective of the recommendation on workstations was partially achieved. According to TBS, Francophone employees already have access to CAN/CSA-Z243.200-91 keyboards for French and English or to other keyboards that allow for French characters, and the French versions of current computer tools, such as office automation suites.

Additional work is in progress to ensure that, in accordance with OCOL's recommendation, computers are equipped to function in both official languages. TBS will ensure, in its next round of computer upgrades—which should take place in the near future—that each workstation is equipped with an operating system and office automation suite that supports transliteration.[26] TBS feels that the other departments and agencies will follow suit rapidly when they upgrade their own computer equipment. While the departments and agencies are implementing these applications that support transliteration, they should also take the opportunity provided by the computer equipment upgrade to ensure that Canadian multilingual keyboards (CAN/ CSA-Z243.200-92) are installed in all federal institutions and public points of service.

Although the government appears to be on the right track, the Commissioner notes that the Secretariat does not have reliable statistics on the ability of federal employees to access products and information technology services in their language. TBS does not have a follow-up mechanism to determine the proportion of the workstations that are equipped to function in French or English. The Commissioner also notes that no timeline exists at present to determine when the upgrade of computer equipment at TBS and other federal institutions will be completed. According to TBS, the availability of software applications that support transliteration depends on suppliers, and a lead time of at least one year can be expected before they are installed across the Public Service.

Purchasing policies for electronic equipment

It should be noted that this recommendation now falls under the responsibility of the Treasury Board Secretariat, because the recommendation involves a policy change. However, TBS decided against implementing this recommendation. According to TBS, three factors support this decision: the *Official Languages Act* already protects the rights of Francophone employees to have access to information technology tools in their language (a right that is, according to TBS, already well-respected); numerous unilingual government establishments have no need for bilingual information technology products and services; and the implementation of more stringent requirements at the time of government procurement of information technology products and services could have adverse effects (for instance, a useful unilingual English software application with no French equivalent may not be procured).

26 A software application with a transliteration function allows the user to move from a French interface to an English interface and vice versa.

By supporting the development of the language industry, the government considers that it will support the offer of electronic equipment in French, which is one of the objectives of Recommendation 2.7.2.

Observations and conclusions

According to the Commissioner, the approach taken by TBS is an inadequate response to the issues Recommendation 2.7.2 aims to rectify. It is not the objective of the language industry support initiative to promote the offer of bilingual information technology products and services by Canadian producers and distributors, but rather to produce and market technolinguistic tools and language services, such as language courses, in Canada and abroad. It cannot, therefore, respond adequately to our objective to ensure that Francophones in Canada—specifically, federal employees—have improved access to information technology equipment, software, manuals, and training services in their language.

TBS also maintains that offices that function in only one language do not need bilingual information technology tools. However, any employee, whose office may or may not be designated as bilingual, may need a bilingual keyboard to communicate in French, for example, when he or she writes an e-mail message to a Francophone or bilingual colleague or client anywhere in Canada. It would, therefore, be simpler to generalize the use of bilingual keyboards and software in all federal offices.

Because of Treasury Board's lack of adequate follow-up in obtaining data, it is not possible to conclude that Francophone employees no longer have difficulties accessing French language information technology products and services. As a result, the Commissioner feels that it is useful and possible to apply Recommendation 2.7.2 on calls for tenders and that, in particular circumstances, it is possible to take into consideration the fact that some leading-edge information technology products and services are not available in French and will not be made available in French in the short term. Consequently, the Commissioner reiterates Recommendations 2.7.1 and 2.7.2.

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 2.7.1: PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED
STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 2.7.2: NOT IMPLEMENTED

2.8 PROVIDE GOVERNMENT ON-LINE USERS WITH BETTER INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR LANGUAGE RIGHTS

In one of our studies, the Commissioner was concerned that Canadians were not sufficiently informed of their language rights as users of the Government of Canada's Web sites and services. Consequently, the Commissioner recommended:

Recommendation 2.8.1

That ***Treasury Board Secretariat*** *find innovative and appropriate ways (slogan, icon, etc.) for federal institutions to inform members of the public, on the home page of their Web site, of their right to receive information and to interact with the federal government in the official language of their choice.*

(This responsibility now belongs to PSHRMAC.)

This recommendation was followed. Under Standard 7.2 of the Chief Information Officer Branch's *Common Look and Feel for the Internet* site, each department or agency must incorporate language choice buttons on its Web site's welcome page. Moreover, Standard 7.5 stipulates that "all Web pages [...] 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." Moreover, Standard 5.1 provides for the inclusion, on each welcome page, of an *Important Notices* link that must lead to an *Official Languages Notice*. Departments are invited to use the following wording for this notice: "(Insert department/agency name) respects the *Official Languages Act* and the relevant Treasury Board policies, and is committed to ensuring all information and services on this site is available in both English and French (or in one language only if a unilingual office). However, users should be aware that some information from external sources that are not subject to the *Official Languages Act* is only provided as a convenience and is available only in the language in which it was provided."

A summary examination of Government of Canada Web sites shows that federal organizations comply with these standards very well. Consequently, the Commissioner considers that the government has implemented Recommendation 2.8.1.

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 2.8.1: IMPLEMENTED

2.9 ENSURE THAT PARTNERSHIPS COMPLY WITH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES REQUIREMENTS

The Commissioner also pointed out that the Government of Canada must, occasionally, co-operate with other governments and with the private sector to provide some of the electronic content and services that Canadians need. Early in the revision of the *Policy on Using the Official Languages on Electronic Networks*, the Commissioner felt that it was important that Web sites or portals created in public-public and public-private partnerships comply with the provisions of Part IV of the *Official Languages Act* (specifically, section 25).[27] The Commissioner feels that the issue of compliance with official languages in Web sites and portals built in partnership with the Government of Canada remains important, given that the occurrence of such partnerships will increase in years to come. Consequently, the Commissioner recommended:

Recommendation 2.9.1

That ***Treasury Board Secretariat*** *remind federal institutions of their obligation to ensure that official language clauses in contractual agreements include the requirement to respect the provisions of Part IV of the* Official Languages Act *in any on-line communications with the public involving the delivery of services that are the subject of agreements.*

(This responsibility now belongs to PSHRMAC.)

Actions taken by the government

PSHRMAC has not reminded the federal institutions of this obligation, because it feels that they are aware that they must comply with all of the sections of the *Official Languages Act*, including section 25. However, the Agency has decided to clarify this aspect in its new policy on the use of official languages to communicate with the public and deliver services, and in two related directives in the second phase of the policy review process. The new policy came into effect July 15, 2005. Consequently, the Commissioner expects that the new policies and directives will, in fact, be able to prevent the problems that arise in partnerships. The Agency will need to monitor the application of these policies and directives and record those cases that are not covered by legislation.

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 2.9.1: IMPLEMENTED

27 Section 25 of the Act sets out the duty of federal institutions to ensure that, where services are provided or made available by another person or organization on its behalf, any member of the public in Canada or elsewhere can communicate with and obtain those services from that person or organization in either official language (see the wording of policy statements in Part 1 of this manual).

STRATEGIC TARGET 3

To ensure the implementation of a robust governance framework regarding the Internet and official languages.

Seven of the Commissioner's 28 recommendations from the two previous studies deal with the importance to the Government of Canada of implementing a practical language governance framework with respect to the presence of French on the Internet and of the official languages in Government On-Line. The framework must be able to guide federal activities, co-ordinate the departments' and agencies' related activities, define the responsibilities of all of the government players, and ensure a follow-up of their activities. According to the two studies, the government was to:

3.1 Create a coherent, ongoing, and integrated language governance framework.

3.2 Ensure that it is well-advised in matters involving the language aspects of the Internet and Government On-Line.

3.3 Review its language policies and adapt them to Government On-Line.

3.4 Implement a mechanism to respond to questions raised by the departments and agencies as they relate to Government On-Line language considerations.

3.1 CREATE A COHERENT, ONGOING, AND INTEGRATED LANGUAGE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

The Commissioner criticized the fact that, at the time of drafting the *French on the Internet* report, the government had not yet sent a clear and convincing message stating that linguistic duality was the guiding principle in federal Internet initiatives. She also noted that an integrated strategy with regard to the presence and quality of French language content and services on the Internet had not yet been developed. Admittedly, various initiatives had been started, but it was difficult to capture an overall view. Consequently, the Commissioner recommended:

Recommendation 3.1.1

*That the **Treasury Board Secretariat** put in place a coherent, ongoing and integrated governance framework that includes permanent accountability and follow-up mechanisms in order to ensure compliance with the principle of linguistic duality on the Internet, in particular with respect to Government On-Line (GOL).*

Actions taken by the government

The Committee of Deputy Ministers on Official Languages

The government feels that it has responded to this recommendation by strengthening the role and mandate of the Committee of Deputy Ministers on Official Languages (CDMOL) and by making it responsible for all of the issues relating to the application of the *Official Languages Act*. The CDMOL, which, since 2000, has made French on the information highway one of its four priorities, specifically studied the content of OCOL's reports, assigned to Canadian Heritage the mandate to prepare the government's response to OCOL's studies, and reviewed the responses contained in *Promotion Through Innovation.*

Official Languages Accountability and Co-ordination Framework

The government also maintains that it has responded to Recommendation 3.1.1 by adopting the *Action Plan for Official Languages*, which sets out the government's new Official Languages Accountability and Co-ordination Framework. This Framework defines the responsibilities of each federal institution with respect to official languages and provides for the implementation of mechanisms to assess the overall impact of the Action Plan.

The Horizontal Results-Based Management and Accountability Framework

According to the Official Languages Accountability and Co-ordination Framework, the Privy Council Office's Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat is responsible for supporting the Minister responsible for Official Languages and the CDMOL. The Official Languages Branch (OLB) of the Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat is currently developing another framework, the Horizontal Results-Based Management and Accountability Framework (HRMAF). Designed to provide a concrete and operational format for the Accountability and Co-ordination Framework, the HRMAF should present specific mechanisms to ensure the strengthening of linguistic duality on the Internet and in Government On-Line and the success of all the supporting activities set in motion by the government in these matters. The HRMAF should be tabled officially in the months to come.

Other bodies responsible for official languages in Government On-Line

The operational responsibility for GOL belongs to PWGSC, but PSHRMAC's Official Languages Branch continues to assume responsibility for the aspects relating to the implementation of the *Official Languages Act* in electronic service delivery. The Information Management and Policies Committee (formerly responsible for official languages in GOL) and the Information Management Champions Committee were merged into one interdepartmental committee, the Information Management Committee. This committee, chaired by the Chief Information Officer, has a mandate to study the official languages issues that affect the federal administration's Web sites. The Committee will report to the new Service Management Board (SMB).

Observations and conclusions

The Commissioner acknowledges that a number of mechanisms exist to ensure compliance with official languages requirements in GOL and to monitor the issues relating to official languages. The Commissioner notes that the CDMOL has played a major role in preparing the government's response to the OCOL studies and that the issue of official languages on the Internet is an ongoing concern for its members.

The Accountability Framework should also provide the follow-up necessary to ensure compliance with Government On-Line official languages requirements. The Privy Council Office is currently developing performance measures to evaluate the impact of various programs meant to ensure respect for official languages and to implement the Action Plan. However, when the Office of the Commissioner was consulted on the Accountability Framework in May 2005, it noted that the framework contained only a small number of measures with respect to the delivery of government services in both official languages. To measure these aspects, the PCO plans to conduct a survey to determine the public's level of satisfaction with the services received in the language of their choice. The delivery of services in both official languages involves multiple aspects, and it is uncertain whether the issue of respect for official languages and the quality of French in Government On-Line, which are not specifically measured, will be overshadowed by the other issues relating to service delivery.

The Commissioner feels that several governmental bodies are handling the issue of official languages in GOL, but it is unclear which organization is responsible for ensuring co-ordination. As a result, concerted action is not guaranteed.

The situation involving the presence of French on the Internet is different, because no authority is currently examining this issue. The Commissioner notes that the priority given by the CDMOL to enhancing the presence of French on the Internet has not been made operational; the CDMOL has not identified any related targets, discussed resources to be allocated, or defined criteria for assessing the results of government action. Furthermore, in their response to the preliminary version of this report, PSHRMAC and TBS stated that the responsibility in this domain belonged to the Privy Council Office and Industry Canada.

According to the Privy Council Office's Official Languages Branch, the new Horizontal Results-Based Management and Accountability Framework should implement some mechanisms to improve linguistic duality on the Internet. However, the Action Plan, which is the basis for the Horizontal Framework, contains no measures specifically to enhance the presence of French on the Internet. At the time this report was drafted, the mechanisms set out in the HRMAF remained mostly inactive with respect to the presence of French on the Internet, and no performance measurements had been provided to account for the status of French on the Internet.

Consequently, the Commissioner expects that the Privy Council Office will ensure, in the months to come, that the CDMOL will act on the priority given to the issue of linguistic duality on the Internet by devising concrete targets, measures, and indicators. It is also expected that the HRMAF, which is currently being developed, will contain specific and detailed clauses with respect to official languages on the Internet and in Government On-Line. Recommendation 3.1.1 has consequently been rephrased as follows:

Recommendation 3.1.1. (reworded)

That the ***Privy Council Office*** *determine the most appropriate governance structure as well as specific performance measures to address the issue of linguistic duality on the Internet.*

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 3.1.1: NOT IMPLEMENTED—REWORDED

3.2 ENSURE THAT IT IS WELL-ADVISED IN MATTERS INVOLVING THE LANGUAGE ASPECTS OF THE INTERNET AND GOVERNMENT ON-LINE

In 2002, the Commissioner noted that the government and its departments and agencies needed a comprehensive view of the issues relating to linguistic duality on the Internet. This view would be used to guide the future activities of the players involved in the governance framework implemented to enhance the presence of French on the Internet. The Commissioner also noted that the government did not have strategic orientations at the administrative level that apply to the full range of Government of Canada initiatives relative to official languages on the Internet. This led to the Commissioner's recommendations:

Recommendation 3.2.1

That ***Industry Canada*** *create a Canadian Advisory Committee on Official Languages on the Internet, with a two-year mandate, to recommend to the Government of Canada effective measures to ensure the growth of the knowledge economy by promoting English and French on the Internet.*

Recommendation 3.2.2

That the ***Interdepartmental Consultative Committee on Language Industries (ICCLI)*** *of the* ***Treasury Board Secretariat*** *become the* Strategic Committee for French on the Internet (SCFI)*, with an expanded mandate to develop an integrated strategy.*

Actions taken by the government

Canadian Advisory Committee for French on the Internet

In *Promotion Through Innovation*, the government noted that the Canadian Advisory Committee for French on the Internet (CACFOI) would be struck and operational by late 2004. Unfortunately, this committee has yet to be formed. Industry Canada claims that it does not currently have the funds necessary to create and lead the CACFOI and will not have the funds in the short or medium term. Industry Canada also claims that the presence of French on the Internet is not one of the priorities identified by the minority communities in consultations conducted by the department in 2004. The OLB maintains that the concept of creating the CACFOI or a similar committee is being studied, but nothing at this time indicates whether this committee will be created.

Interdepartmental Consultative Committee on Language Industries

The Interdepartmental Consultative Committee on Language Industries (ICCLI) has vanished in the wake of the Language Industry Initiative. The ICCLI was replaced by the Language Industry Steering Committee. The Steering Committee, which is responsible for the smooth implementation of the Initiative, proposes strategic directions to Industry Canada, recommends avenues for research to the Initiative's Secretariat[28] to improve knowledge of the issues to resolve, reviews the annual reports drafted by the secretariat, makes recommendations, suggests potential solutions to challenges, and reacts to initiative assessment outcomes. The Committee comprises members from the public sector (Translation Bureau, Foreign Affairs Canada, Canadian Heritage, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada) and from the community and the private sector. The Committee has already met twice; the last meeting took place in April 2005.

Nonetheless, the Language Industry Steering Committee does not, in any way, play the expanded role that the Commissioner hoped the ICCLI would play. In fact, the purpose of the Language Industry Initiative is not to enhance the presence of French on the Internet, but rather to create and market Canadian language products and services. According to the OLB, the work undertaken further to the tabling of the *Action Plan for Official Languages* could potentially lead to the creation of the Strategic Committee for French on the Internet (SCFI), or an equivalent, but there is no assurance of this.

28 A small group of Industry Canada employees.

Observations and conclusions

The absence of a follow-up on the recommendations on governance is a significant shortcoming, and it is important to rectify this situation as quickly as possible. Given the rapid pace at which information technology is developed, it is important for the government to call on top-notch experts and players to advise the government on the strategies to be adopted to make the Internet a great cultural, social, and economic lever for both Francophones and Anglophones. According to the Commissioner, the presence of French on the Internet is of crucial importance, and it has an impact on numerous aspects of daily living and economic development. Concretely, the Commissioner expects that the Privy Council Office will determine the best way to enable the Government of Canada and private and community stakeholders to combine their efforts to deal with this issue. Given the crucial importance of this matter and the fact that it involves the responsibilities of a number of departments and agencies, the creation and co-ordination of this committee should be based on the resources of a number of partner departments, rather than counting on the participation of Industry Canada alone. Consequently, the Commissioner withdraws these two recommendations, and replaces them with Recommendation 3.1.1, which has been rephrased and is now the responsibility of the Privy Council Office.

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 3.2.1: NOT IMPLEMENTED—WITHDRAWN
STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 3.2.2: NOT IMPLEMENTED—WITHDRAWN

3.3 REVIEW ITS LANGUAGE POLICIES AND ADAPT THEM TO GOVERNMENT ON-LINE IMPLEMENTATION

In *OL Requirements and GOL*, the Commissioner noted that the emergence of the Internet has changed the playing field in terms of service to the public. For example, any government document may be accessed by all Canadians as soon as it is placed on the Web, and this phenomenon increases the need for guidelines on the language of content produced by unilingual federal offices. Furthermore, by facilitating the dissemination of all scientific, technical and historical content produced by the government, the information highway has created a linguistic dilemma that must be confronted: according to the rules in effect, federal departments and agencies must either translate all federal documents designed to be published on the Web, even when those documents concern only a small group of people, or abandon the idea of making those documents available on the Web. In the study, the Commissioner also found that it was necessary to ensure that Government On-Line truly reflects Canada's linguistic duality by going beyond simply translating government documents to seek a balance between publishing original English content and original French content on government

sites. According to the Commissioner, a sufficient percentage of the content produced inside and outside the government administration and posted on the federal sites must be original French content. To correct and prevent these problems, the Commissioner recommended:

Recommendation 3.3.1

That ***Treasury Board Secretariat*** *pursue the review of its* Policy on the Use of Official Languages on Electronic Networks *in consultation with federal institutions and the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.*

(This responsibility now belongs to PSHRMAC.)

Recommendation 3.3.2

That ***Treasury Board Secretariat*** *establish a policy regarding the on-line publication of scientific or historical information in both official languages in consultation with federal institutions, the Translation Bureau and the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.*

(This responsibility now belongs to PSHRMAC.)

Recommendation 3.3.3

That ***Treasury Board Secretariat*** *issue guidelines to federal institutions on the need to ensure content balance in selecting materials for on-line publication that draw from both official language communities.*

(This responsibility now belongs to PSHRMAC.)

Actions taken by the government

Consolidation of policies and directives on official languages in computer network, communications with the public and service delivery

PSHRMAC's Official Languages Branch sought to identify the best way to respond to these recommendations by instituting a series of consultations with 22 departments and agencies. Following those consultations, the Official Languages Branch undertook to combine the *Policy on Using the Official Languages on Electronic Networks* and some other policies and language directives into one single policy, the *Policy on the Use of Official Languages for Communications with and Services to the Public,* and two directives, the *Directive on the use of Official Languages on Web Sites* and the *Directive on the Use of Official Languages in Electronic Communications.* The approval process for these three documents was under way in January 2005, and the new policy was implemented on July 15, 2005.

Scientific and technical content

PSHRMAC acknowledges the situation specific to the scientific or technical departments and agencies regarding scentific and technical documents and it continues to work closely with them to find a solution. The Official Languages Branch and half a dozen departments that publish a large amount of specialized information on their Web sites (for example, Environment Canada and Natural Resources Canada) held some discussions to assess the validity of reviewing the relevant provisions and discuss new approaches likely to facilitate the on-line dissemination of scientific or technical documents digitized in compliance with the current policies. However, structural changes at Environment Canada (a key actor in this issue) had the effect of slowing down progress in this matter. It is understood that PSHRMAC does not wish to establish a policy that would release these organizations from their linguistic obligations. As a result, the Commissionner expects the Agency to continue its discussions with the concerned departments to establish concrete solutions and best practices in compliance with the *Official Languages Act*.

Balance of content provided by Francophone and Anglophone communities

According to PSHRMAC, this recommendation cannot be implemented, because it is impossible to control the language of origin and the cultural origin of documents posted on the Web. Employees cannot be asked specifically to create content in one language or the other, as this would go against the spirit of Part V of the Act.

Observations and conclusions

The Commissioner recognizes that the *Policy on Using the Official Languages on Electronic Networks* has been reviewed and that the rules in the process of being adopted by TBS will be able to guide federal organizations with regard to linguistic duality. PSHRMAC has undertaken discussions with the scientific and technical departments. Recommendation 3.3.1 is, therefore, implemented and recommendation 3.3.2 is currently being implemented.

In light of the information provided by PSHRMAC regarding the linguistic origin of Web content, the Commissioner acknowledges that Recommendation 3.3.3 cannot be applied as presently formulated. However, she feels that the situation at the core of this recommendation still exists, that is, the French language is often the language of translation, not of creation. However, this matter goes beyond the issue of language of work. It is not certain that the two linguistic communities are equally represented in texts from outside the government that are

selected for posting on the government's Web sites, and no mechanisms exist to ensure an equitable representation. As a result, the Commissioner rephrases Recommendation 3.3.3. as follows:

Recommendation 3.3.3 (reworded)

That ***Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada (PSHRMAC)*** *remind federal institutions of the importance of ensuring proper balance when posting content on Web sites by selecting texts that originate from both linguistic communities.*

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 3.3.1: IMPLEMENTED
STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 3.3.2: CURRENTLY BEING IMPLEMENTED
STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 3.3.3: NOT IMPLEMENTED—REWORDED

3.4 IMPLEMENT A MECHANISM TO RESPOND TO QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES AS THEY RELATE TO GOVERNMENT ON-LINE LANGUAGE CONSIDERATIONS

In *OL Requirements and GOL*, the Commissioner was disappointed that Government On-Line did not have a central mechanism for addressing official language issues on the government's information highway and for informing federal departments and agencies of their language obligations and the means of respecting those obligations. The Commissioner was also dissatisfied because the language considerations of Government On-Line are not processed proactively by Treasury Board Secretariat and are addressed in a fragmented manner by various committees. Therefore, the Commissioner recommended:

Recommendation 3.4.1

That ***Treasury Board Secretariat*** *institute within the* ***Treasury Board Secretariat*** *a mechanism aimed specifically at responding to questions raised by federal institutions dealing with official language considerations as they relate to Government On-Line (GOL).*

Actions taken by the government

Information Management Committee

TBS feels that this recommendation has been implemented and that the Information Management Committee (IMC) is the mechanism through which issues relating to official languages in GOL will be addressed appropriately. As noted earlier, the IMC is mandated to examine issues related to official languages on the government's Web sites.

Survey on official languages in Government On-Line

In October 2003, the IMPC (now the Information Management Committee (IMC)) carried out a survey[29] among the departments participating in the Government On-Line initiative. The object of the survey was to identify the challenges departments and agencies face in order to continue to comply with the *Official Languages Act* in the Government On-Line context. The report on the survey, entitled "Enquête sur les langues officielles et l'Initiative du Gouvernement en direct/Amélioration des services" [Investigation into official languages and the Government On-Line/Service Improvement Initiative] listed several challenges, yet did not provide any practical solutions. Among the most prevalent problems were the lack of translation resources (financial resources as well as the lack of translators specialized in scientific and technical fields), the need for central guidance concerning content management (particularly for scientific and technical documents, or even the use of external sites to publish untranslated reports), and the need for unilingual offices to respond to electronic requests from other regions or in the other official language. The report lists certain common practices but does not explore the applicability of these practices in the various departments or their compliance with the *Official Languages Act.*

The results of the report were submitted to the departments, and the IMC asked them to share all of the best practices that could potentially be applied. These best practices have been posted on the Official Languages Branch Web site. According to TBS, these measures are an appropriate response to the questions asked of it by the departments and agencies during the 2003 consultation. TBS claims that the IMC is able to respond to questions on the language issues involved in Government On-Line and that the persons responsible for Web content in their departments or agencies are aware of the availability of that resource.

Observations and conclusions

The Commissioner acknowledges that the IMC has the responsibility for answering questions from the departments and agencies about the language aspects of Government On-Line. She would have preferred the creation of a committee dedicated solely to this issue, but she assumes that the IMC could perform this duty, on condition that it addresses the issues in a proactive manner and reports on the measures taken to deal with these issues.

29 Jacques Itié Consulting (2003), "Enquête sur les langues officielles et l'Initiative Gouvernement en direct/Amélioration des services," np.

Moreover, the Commissioner believes that the *Official Languages and GOL* section of the Government On-Line Web site addresses certain major needs, but it provides only a partial response to some of the language issues confronted by the persons responsible for federal content. For example, the section does not promote active, sustained sharing of knowledge among departments and agencies on the complex issues raised by the emergence of technolinguistic tools likely to further better management of Government On-Line's content.

Therefore, the Commissioner reiterates her expectation that the IMC will establish a mechanism aimed specifically at helping the persons responsible for content in the federal departments and agencies to acquire and share the technical and organizational knowledge they need in order to face all of the challenges related to compliance with linguistic duality, particularly the knowledge needed to use technolinguistic tools productively.

STATUS OF RECOMMENDATION 3.4.1: PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND NEW RECOMMENDATIONS

It cannot be denied that the situation of French on the Internet and of linguistic duality in Government On-Line has made progress since the early stages of the Internet and the Government of Canada's implementation of the electronic government. It has also made progress since the tabling of OCOL's first two studies in 1999 and the two subsequent studies in 2002.

This improvement is due in part to the government's earnestness in tackling some of the problems encountered by French-speaking Internet users and identified by the Commissioner. Indeed, as Appendix A shows, out of the 28 recommendations contained in the 2002 studies, 11 have so far been implemented by the government. Two more of the recommendations are currently being implemented, and 5 have been subjected to a partial follow-up. Ten recommendations have received no follow-up, and 4 of them have been withdrawn by the Commissioner in light of the information provided by the departments involved and in response to the evolution of certain issues. Among the most important and promising measures is the launch of the Language Industry Initiative and the considerable efforts by Canadian Heritage to boost the proportion of French cultural content on the Internet.

Unfortunately, appropriate solutions have still not been found for a number of the problems the Commissioner identified in her reports, particularly with respect to the presence of French on the Internet. Having said that, this investigation convinced the Commissioner that, even if the government carried out the recommendations contained in the 2002 studies, it would not be sufficient to prevent the digital divide between Anglophone and Francophone Canadians from widening and to ensure that Government On-Line is used in compliance with the language rights of all Canadians and all federal employees.

In the next few years, the Government of Canada will need to adopt new measures to support the creation of content in French and technolinguistic tools that would help not only those who work in the language industry but also any Canadian citizen who writes in English or in French. It will also need to multiply its efforts to maximize the impact of the resources it devotes to producing, managing, and translating government content.

The following sections summarize the main remaining challenges and present some new challenges, using the three intervention targets as in the previous sections.

STRATEGIC TARGET 1

To promote the provision of French Internet tools and content.

Support the creation of French language content

In 2002, the Commissioner noted that Quebec was trailing behind most Canadian provinces in terms of connection to the Internet. Indeed, a preliminary study conducted by Media Metrix Canada (2004:1) at Industry Canada's request revealed that "in categories where unique French content has been developed [over the past few years], there has been substantial growth in the usage [of the Internet] by French-speaking households."[30]

There is still work to be done to bridge the digital divide that separates French-speaking Internet users from their English-speaking compatriots. Thus, according to Statistics Canada's latest data (2003), Quebec (45%) is still behind all of the provinces in Canada (55%) except New Brunswick (43%) and Newfoundland (44%) in terms of household Internet connections. Furthermore, the latest statistics obtained by the Centre francophone sur l'informatisation des organisations [Francophone centre on the computerization of organizations] (CEFRIO) reveal that there is still a major gap in the level of Internet use between Francophones and non-Francophones in Quebec. In 2000, this meant a difference of 11percentage points: 38% of Francophones used the Internet, as opposed to 49% of non-Francophones; in 2004, there was a gap of 10 percentage points separating Francophones (57%) from non-Francophones (67%).[31]

According to Media Metrix Canada, the government's assistance to Canadian organizations in "[b]reaking down language barriers by allowing for more of the English content sites to be translated or the development of original French content" will contribute to further reducing the gap separating Francophones from Anglophones in Internet usage.

The government's ongoing support for the creation of digital French language content is all the more important given the relatively small size of the Canadian French language Internet market; the commercial viability of numerous commercial Web initiatives will always be uncertain. Furthermore, in a number of fields, the volume of foreign French language content will never meet all of the needs of Canada's Francophone Internet users.

Even more important, Canada and the other Francophone countries will need to double their efforts to prevent the increasing transformation of the Internet into a veritable virtual

30 Taken from the draft of a Media Metrix Canada study submitted to Industry Canada.

31 CEFRIO (2005), *NetTendances—Sondage sur l'utilisation des TI par la population adulte au Québec* [Net trends – survey on the use of IT by Quebec's adult population], Quebec.

library for the sole benefit of Anglophones, particularly U.S. Anglophones. Indeed, a number of projects are currently aimed at digitizing millions of books contained in U.S. libraries. For example, the goal of the Million Book Project, which is supported by the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF), is to create a bank of one million works.[32] Google recently signed agreements with Harvard, Oxford, and Stanford universities, the University of Michigan, and the New York Public Library to digitize, over the course of six years, some 15 million works.[33] In comparison, the Bibliothèque nationale de France has 76,000, the Library of Canada has approximately 11,000, and the Bibliothèque nationale du Québec currently has 1,500 digitized books.[34]

However, culture is not the only field in which requirements exist. In fact, French content is rare in a number of industry sectors (specifically, the information technology sector). Moreover, a number of national associations, professional associations, or community organizations post content in English only, despite the fact that the topics dealt with on their Web sites are of interest to all Canadians. This situation creates a genuine disadvantage for Francophones in carrying out research, acquiring skills, or participating in the job market. Unfortunately, few studies exist on the proportion of French language content in various industry sectors. One of our recommendations deals specifically with rectifying this shortcoming.

The support provided by the Government of Canada should continue in the form of grants to create new digitized content or digitize existing content. In particular, the government should intensify its support for the digitization of the English and French language collections in Canadian libraries. In co-operation with other governments, the Government of Canada should also ensure the launch of an international digitization project to transform the Internet into a veritable multilingual and multicultural library. The government could also support the creation of original content through Canadian and French language Internet projects based primarily on public participation (for instance, a project to create a popular dictionary of Canada's towns and villages), according to the shared model developed by players such as Wikipedia.[35]

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32 The books are shipped from the United States to India by boat. When they arrive, they are digitized. The digitized versions of the works are then revised and placed on the Web, and the originals are returned to their owners.

33 Quint, Barbara (2004), "Google and Research Libraries Launch Massive Digitization Project," *Infotoday*, December 20. Consulted on February 19, 2005, at **www.infotoday.com/newsbreaks/nb041220-2.shtml**. Amazon also continues to enrich its bank of digitized works as part of its *Search Inside the Book program*. In 2004, it contained 125,000 titles.

34 Rioux, Christian (2005), "La bibliothèque virtuelle sera-t-elle en anglais?" [Will the virtual library be in English ?], *Le Devoir*, February 23, pp. A1 and A8.

35 See **www.wikipedia.org**, consulted on February 22, 2005. Wikipedia is a free U.S. encyclopedia whose multilingual content is generated on free software by thousands of volunteers. For years, Jean-Claude Guédon, a professor of literature at the University of Montréal, has been calling for the production of popular works in shared mode. He says that this encyclopedia would be produced through the Internet by the people who live in our towns, villages, and neighborhoods. In the end, this collective shared work would provide insight into what Canada is and what it has the potential to be. Lecture delivered at the *Vitrine-forum sur l'informatisation des langues* [Showcase-forum on the computerization of languages] held in Montréal on June 13, 2003.

However, there are some new ways in which government support could also be extended. For example, the Government of Canada and the Government of Quebec could support the creation, at an international level, of a cultural-linguistic quality record similar to the records created by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) in different fields. This quality record, which each organization would obtain at its own cost, would convey the message that the organization is using exemplary cultural and linguistic practices, particularly in terms of its use on the Internet of the language of its clients and partners. In some cases, this certification could be a prerequisite for obtaining major private or government contracts. AILIA may be a suitable organization to assume this responsibility, which could prove to be a valuable source of income for the association.

Support the creation of technolinguistic tools

The Government of Canada needs to support the creation of French language content, but one fact remains: the proportion of French language content on the Internet, regardless of its origin, will always be relatively small. In August 2004, French language content represented only 5% of all content available on the Web, as opposed to 58% for English language content.[36] In the same vein, according to GlobalReach, in September 2004, only 4% of all Internet users in the world—meaning 4% of the world's potential writers of e-mails, blogs, and personal sites—were French-speaking.[37]

In this context, it is important for the Government of Canada to continue to support the development of technolinguistic tools facilitating Canadians' access to Web content produced in their second official language or even content created in languages other than English or French. These links could contribute to increasing Canadians' knowledge and understanding of the culture of the other official language community. In the end, the development of these types of software will not only help Canadians from each language community to consult the content generated by their fellow countrymen or by producers from other countries; it may also increase international demand for Canadian content.

36 See Aguillo, Isidro, et al. (2004), *Regional and Linguistic Patterns in Positioning*, Madrid, Centro de Información y Documentatión Científica. Consulted on February 6, 2005, at **www.csi.ensmp.fr/csi/4S/download_paper/download_paper.php?paper=aguillo_garcia_arroyo.pdf**. According to the estimates of Aguillo et al. made using Yahoo! and Google, German is used slightly more often than French on the Web, with 7% of the total Web content. Japanese is tied with French at 5%. Spanish (3%), Chinese (3%), Russian (3%), Italian (3%), Dutch (2%), Portuguese (2%), and Korean (2%) are next. If these data are compared with the data gathered by Alis after INET 1996, the use of French on the Internet has more than tripled from 1997 until now, climbing from 1.5% to 5%, while English has dropped from 82% to 58%.

37 See **www.global-reach.biz**, consulted on February 1, 2005.

Different technolinguistic tools may enable the building of a better bridge between Canada's different language communities. For example, translingual search engines may allow Francophones with a passive knowledge of English to type a query in French to access content prepared or indexed in English (for example, newspaper articles or photographs); controlled writing tools may enable Anglophones to generate digitized texts that are clearer and easier for non-Anglophones to read; and in some fields, English-speaking readers may use automatic translators to obtain a general idea of content produced in French and decide whether it is worthwhile to have it translated by a professional.

The Language Industry Initiative holds much promise as a way for the government to support the creation of these types of technolinguistic tools. Also, the dissemination of linguistic databases owned by the Government of Canada (Recommendation 1.4.3. reworded), including those that support the operation of TERMIUM®, would further the production of technolinguistic tools by the academic and industrial communities. However, other measures may also enable this objective to be met.

In the wake of the creation of the LTRC, the government should ensure that major research grants pay the necessary attention to the production of quality technolinguistic tools. Researchers currently complain that language industry research often gets caught between two sides: for institutions like the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), computational linguistics work falls under the responsibility of funding agencies for the pure science field, such as the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC); whereas for NSERC, they often fall under the authority of funding agencies for the social sciences. Centralizing the LTRC's research and making it a funding agency would greatly enhance the production of high-quality technolinguistic tools.

A number of members of the industrial sector bemoan the fact that the Government of Canada, which is one of Canada's main producers and disseminators of content, is not a major user of technolinguistic tools. We will return to this issue shortly, but there is no doubt that increasing government funds for the purchase of technolinguistic tools and simplifying the processes for purchasing these types of products and services would give the language industry a powerful boost and increase the supply of certain types of software Canadians need to more readily access the content of other language environments.

Recommendations

Given that, three years after *French on the Internet* was released, work is still needed to bridge the language gap separating Anglophones and Francophones on the Internet, the Commissioner recommends:

New recommendation 1.6

That ***Canadian Heritage*** *step up the pace of investment to support the creation of digitized content, particularly the digitization of Canadian French language works and journals contained in Canadian libraries.*

New recommendation 1.7

That the department of ***Foreign Affairs Canada*** *initiate discussions on launching a large-scale international digitization project in the context of its efforts to promote cultural diversity and to ensure the transformation of the Internet into an actual multilingual and multicultural library.*

New recommendation 1.8

That ***Canadian Heritage*** *look into the possibility of supporting the creation of a quality record on linguistic and cultural diversity on the Internet.*

STRATEGIC TARGET 2

To ensure that Government On-Line officials have the knowledge and resources necessary to produce and post high-quality Internet content and provide high-quality Internet services in French.

Like all governments, the Government of Canada devotes a large part of its resources to producing, distributing, and managing written documents. Thousands of federal employees spend each day drafting or reading notes, reports, studies, and memoranda; collecting and analyzing scientific and technical data and knowledge produced within the government or private sector; editing and translating public documents for publication; and so on. In fact, the Government of Canada is one of the largest producers of written language in Canada and in the world (Table 1).

TABLE 1 - THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA AND WEB CONTENT PRODUCTION

Organization	Domain	Number of Web pages
Amazon	amazon.com	52,500,000
Yahoo!	yahoo.com	40,700,000
Google	google.com	40,310,000
Government of Canada	gc.ca	14,300,000
Government of the U.K.	gov.uk	9,410,000
The New York Times	nytimes.com	7,700,000
IBM	ibm.com	3,270,000
Government of France	gouv.fr	2,340,000
Government of Ontario	gov.on.ca	1,870,000
Dell	dell.com	1,750,000
Government of Quebec	gouv.qc.ca	887,000
Government of British Columbia	gov.bc.ca	731,000
Government of Alberta	gov.ab.ca	724,000
Le Devoir	ledevoir.com	386,000
The Globe and Mail	globeandmail.com	51,200

Source: *Google*, search by domain performed by OCOL representative, February 11, 2005; data revised on May 20, 2005.

In recent years, federal production has increased even more. Indeed, a decade after the Internet first made its way into the lives of Canadians, the government must respond adequately and quickly[38] to the thousands of e-mails sent each day by citizens and businesses, inform Canadians through the use of paper documents and millions of Web pages, and ensure effective management of written information circulating electronically among federal employees.

All of these activities must be carried out in accordance with the rules of linguistic duality, and such compliance has only become more costly over the years. By facilitating the national distribution of content produced or managed by the departments and agencies,[39] the use of the Web has meant an increase in the demand for translation, as a document may be posted on their Web sites only if it is available in both official languages.

38 The standard is to respond to e-mails within one business day or less. For more information, see the Canada Site, **http://www.canada.gc.ca/comments/form_e.html#ema**, consulted on February 11, 2005.

39 The Government of Canada occasionally posts public information that has been produced outside the government on its sites. For example, job offers in the Job Bank, maintained by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, are produced by Canadian employers. However, they must be translated in English or French to be posted on the Internet.

Carrying out these various activities is expensive: funding and staff are needed to create quality reports, to respond adequately to the increasing influx of e-mails received by government institutions, to file and identify internal information produced by the organization, to post and update information on Government On-Line sites, to translate that information, and so on.

At the same time, substantial savings are being realized as a result of the increasing use of the Internet for communications within the government and for the exchange of information between the government and Canadian citizens. Nevertheless, there is not an endless supply of financial and human resources at the disposal of departments and agencies to perform these various tasks. As a result, they are often faced with difficult choices. Certain federal institutions have currently given up on posting some scientific, technical or historical material on their Web sites because that information is available in one language only (usually English) and because it would be too expensive to have it translated professionally. For some, the problem goes beyond mere economics—it is difficult to obtain an adequate translation for a technical document that uses terminology that very few translators know.

In this context, there is no doubt that the increase in federal effectiveness and efficiency[40] in creating, managing, and translating documents should be a priority. To achieve this objective, the government should continue to ensure that government network and content managers acquire the legal and linguistic knowledge they need to ensure respect for English and French in Government On-Line.

Furthermore, the federal institutions will have to establish linguistic guidelines and policies well-suited to the advent of Government On-Line and to the increasing complexity of meeting the expectations of Canadians.

However, the government should also explore new avenues to increase its effectiveness and efficiency in creating, managing, and translating documents. Specifically, it should substantially step up its use of technolinguistic tools and adapt its organizational policies and practices to maximize the impact of its software.

Increased use of technolinguistic tools

Canadian and international experience in recent years has clearly demonstrated that it is possible for organizations to use information technology to increase the productivity of their content creators, managers, and translators.

40 Efficiency is the relationship that exists between the results obtained by an organization and the resources used to achieve those results.

For example, a number of businesses are using technolinguistic tools to better manage the external e-mails they receive each day: the simplest, often repeated questions receive an automatic response from the organization's computers, whereas more complicated questions are forwarded to a client service officer who may use one of the responses or part of a response suggested by the software or produce a new response altogether. Using this type of system can help increase staff efficiency considerably. In 2003, a major Canadian organization claimed to have reduced by nearly half (from 12.0 minutes to 6.5 minutes) the average time needed to respond to an e-mail.[41]

Another example: since 1985, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) has been using automatic translation software called ENGSPAN to translate most of its documents from English into Spanish. While fully aware that this technology cannot produce perfect results on its own, PAHO management has put in place a process whereby ENGSPAN supports the work of translators rather than eliminates it: the document to be translated is first subject to an automatic correction and/or human revision; it is then translated automatically by the automatic translation software before finally being revised by a professional translator. The results of this approach are conclusive: PAHO has been able to reduce its translation costs per word by 31%;[42] most translations are delivered within specified deadlines; and most readers find the quality acceptable.[43]

Certain recent actions by the Government of Canada demonstrate its awareness of the potential of information technologies as tools to increase the efficiency of federal institutions in terms of language. For example, the creation of the Language Technologies Research Centre (LTRC) as part of the Language Industry Initiative should foster, in the coming years, the development of technolinguistic tools that are useful to the creators, managers, and translators of content produced by federal institutions and all Canadian organizations. Moreover, the distribution of TERMIUM® throughout the public service and implementation of a repertoire of specialized lexicons (the *Language Toolbox*) are already enhancing the productivity of federal public servants in terms of language.

41 Judd, Elizabeth (2003), "Automatic Response," *The Banking Strategies*, September-October, volume LXXIX, no. V.

42 The translators involved in post-revision agree to receive reduced fees per word because they consider the work required of them to take less time.

43 Silva, Gustavo (2000), *The Use of ENGSPAN at the Pan American Health Organization: A Reviser's Perspective*, document available during the MT in Practice: The User Experience workshop during the conference held by the Association for Machine Translation in the Americas (AMTA).

However, the Commissioner's review clearly shows that, the government is underutilizing the potential of technolinguistic tools. The self-assessment guide for federal Web sites is a good example of this. It would have been valuable for TBS to have, from the outset, considered developing an interactive language quality self-assessment grid. When integrated into the work processes of content creators or managers, this technolinguistic tool, similar to a sophisticated spell and grammar check, could have assisted and guided them in their work, in addition to carrying out certain relatively simple tasks for them (for instance, calculating sentence legibility).

The underutilization of technolinguistic tools in the Government of Canada is due to a number of factors. First of all, central agencies and departments are not always aware of the existence of these tools and generally do not have the knowledge and resources needed to develop and deploy them. Thus, as we have already pointed out, there is currently no training or knowledge dissemination program available to allow communications managers to familiarize themselves with the technolinguistic tools available on the market and the issues involved in their use. Furthermore, most senior executives and official language champions in the government know little about the existence and potential of these tools, which can make it difficult to obtain the resources needed to acquire and use these tools.

The creation of the LTRC should help to narrow this gap, at least in part. However, it is worrying to note that the Government of Canada supported the creation of LTRC without granting the Translation Bureau or other federal bodies potentially interested in acquiring technolinguistic tools the financial resources needed to actively take part in the work of the LTRC. This situation poses a problem in that certain departments and agencies with a strong interest in working closely with the LTRC to improve their efficiency and effectiveness in terms of language (for example, the persons responsible for the Job Bank) may have to give up on the idea. Moreover, an operating budget has not been allocated to the LTRC; this could impact its efficiency.

Second, some of the processes currently in place within the Government of Canada do not promote the effective and efficient use of technolinguistic tools. For example, senior management at the Translation Bureau has rightly stated that it would be unreasonable, at this time, to use technolinguistic tools to translate the content of several government Web sites automatically,

because any drop in translation costs would inevitably come at the cost of a dramatic drop in quality.[44] However, the Translation Bureau believes that automatic translation could at some point yield good results for a number of institutions if it were possible to convince government content creators to draft their texts using directed or controlled English or French.[45] Eliminating most of the ambiguities and turns of phrase that cause problems for automatic translators could mean that, in some cases, it is in fact cost-effective to use this technology and give translation professionals a different task: revising the translated texts.

The Commissioner believes that all of the government linguistic procedures and practices should be reviewed in light of the emergence of technolinguistic tools and the greater need for the Government of Canada to increase its linguistic efficiency.

Recommendations

The Commissioner believes that increasing federal efficiency in creating, managing, and translating content should be a priority for the Government of Canada, particularly given that the needs of Canadians for quality government information are on the rise, despite the fact that the resources at the government's disposal to meet those needs remain unchanged.

Thus, the Commissioner reiterates that she expects the government, in the wake of this recommendation, to "provide ongoing training to network and content managers of federal institution Web sites in order to increase their awareness of official languages issues and of the technolinguistic tools available." That being said, the Commissioner also expects the government to ensure proper follow-up of two new recommendations.

New recommendation 2.10

That the ***Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada (PSHRMAC)*** *inform senior government officials and official language champions of the existence of new tools and approaches that may potentially increase the productivity of English- and French-language content creators, managers, and translators.*

44 Cybertip.ca is a good example of this.

45 In directed or controlled English or French, a word has only one meaning (e.g., "right" [in English] means only "droite" [in French], never "exact" [in French]), and the use of passive forms is prohibited or discouraged. This greatly simplifies the job of automatic translation software and helps to decrease the number of errors made. Several organizations operating in technical fields, such as aeronautics or automobiles, have begun preparing documents using directed or controlled language.

New recommendation 2.11

*That **PSHRMAC**, in co-operation with the **Translation Bureau,** review the government language policies and, if necessary, amend them so as to promote the implementation of language processes based on a more intensive use of technolinguistic tools to meet the expectations of Canadians.*

In its response to the preliminary version of this report, PSHRMAC has agreed to implement Recommendation 2.10. As for Recommendation 2.11, the Agency feels that the responsibility belongs to Privy Council Office and Industry Canada. However, the Commissionner believes the issue is a PSHRMAC responsibility as it touches on language policies and she therefore maintains her position to address the recommendation to PSHRMAC.

STRATEGIC TARGET 3

To ensure the implementation of a robust governance framework regarding the Internet and official languages.

Since 1999, the Commissioner has emphasized the need for the government to set up a robust governance framework for official languages issues on the Internet. Indeed, such a framework is required to ensure that the government makes the best decisions possible to increase the presence of French on the Internet and to ensure respect for official languages in Government On-Line, that each government player knows its role and specific responsibilities in this regard, and that each relevant program or project meets the expected objectives.

Unfortunately, many of the framework components intended to promote the growth of linguistic duality on the Internet are still missing, three years after OCOL's special studies were tabled. Although the issue of official languages in Government On-Line has been addressed, an authority to handle the issue of French on the Internet still does not exist.

Some of the weaknesses identified in that study should be resolved by the work currently being carried out by the Official Languages branches of PCO and PSHRMAC. The Horizontal Results-Based Management and Accountability Framework (HRMAF) currently developed by PCO should present mechanisms to ensure the strengthening of linguistic duality on the Internet and in Government On-Line. The Commissioner will follow the development of the HRMAF with great interest, along with efforts to bolster the governance framework for linguistic duality on the Internet and in Government On-Line, as this is an important issue in the context of the Internet.

That being said, the government should also ensure that it makes available to the governance decision makers the quantitative and qualitative data they need to advise the government and prioritize or assess its actions in terms of language and the Internet. At this time, this information is often missing, incomplete, or difficult to obtain.

For example, it is striking to note that there are very few recent statistics to compare the presence of English and French on the Internet and in the e-business environment. Moreover, there is no Canadian equivalent of the ambitious Pew Internet & American Life Project, which promises to explore the impact of the Internet on all spheres of the lives of Americans.[46]

Recommendations

The Internet and Government On-Line are increasingly present in the lives of Canadian citizens. It is therefore crucial that the government set up a governance framework conducive to promoting the presence of Canada's official languages on the Internet and in Government On-Line. The Commissioner expects the government to ensure appropriate follow-up of the recommendations which have yet to be implemented, in whole or in part.

Furthermore, as those responsible for ensuring the governance will need up-to-date and precise information on the presence of the Internet in the lives of Canadians in order to make sound decisions, the Commissioner recommends:

New recommendation 3.5

*That **Canadian Heritage** and **Statistics Canada** initiate an ongoing research project to collect data on Internet use by Canadians and to make these data available to decision-makers so they can prioritize and assess government action to promote linguistic duality on the Internet and in Government On-Line.*

46 See **http://www.pewInternet.org/**.

CONCLUSION

Since 1999, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages has insisted that the Government of Canada work to bridge the digital divide separating English-speaking Canadians from French-speaking Canadians on-line. For more than five years, the Commissioner has also emphasized that the deployment of Government On-Line must respect the language rights of Canadian citizens and employees of the Government of Canada.

This study has revealed that there has been interesting progress in many sectors, but some of the measures proposed by the Commissioner in her 2002 special studies have not received sufficient follow-up, particularly those that involve the presence of French on the Internet. This performance does not meet expectations, and the Commissioner calls on the government to complete the follow-up on the recommendations in *French on the Internet* and *OL Requirements and GOL.*

This last study of French on the Internet and official languages in Government On-Line has also led the Commissioner to propose that the government implement seven new recommendations that will increase the availability of bilingual content and technolinguistic tools, increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the federal public service in creating, managing and translating content, and strengthen the governance framework with regard to the presence of French on the Internet.

The Internet has the potential to become a powerful cultural, social, and economic tool for Canada, provided that all of its citizens have access to quality sites and that both English- and French-speaking Canadians can easily access Web content produced in their language, in the other official language, or in languages other than English or French.

Government On-Line has undoubtedly been a remarkable success, and the Government of Canada has received numerous international awards that bear witness to this success. However, it is necessary to take measures to ensure that this outstanding tool will continue to be of excellent quality in French as well as in English, on a permanent and systematic basis.

Against this backdrop, the Government of Canada's implementation of the recommendations presented in this document is far from being a luxury. Rather, it is one of the key conditions for the successful transition of Canadians and federal institutions into the knowledge-based society.

APPENDIX A
SUMMARY OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND THEIR STATUS

Number	Original source	Description of the Recommendation	Status
FOI: *French on the Internet* OLR: *Official Languages Requirements and Government On-Line*			
STRATEGIC TARGET 1 ***To promote the provision of French Internet tools and content.***			
1.1.1	FOI-4	That **Canadian Heritage** ensure that all assistance forthcoming from programs to fund the production of Canadian digital content include guidelines and criteria that take into account the principle of Canada's linguistic duality.	**IMPLEMENTED**
1.1.2	FOI-9	That **Canadian Heritage** step up the pace of investment in order to encourage the digitization of Canadian cultural content in both official languages on the Internet.	**IMPLEMENTED**
1.2.1	FOI-10	That **Communication Canada** develop by 2003 a federal investment strategy aimed at fostering the development of private-sector and non-profit organizations working in the area of French language content.	**NOT IMPLEMENTED WITHDRAWN**
1.3.1	FOI-12	That the **Treasury Board Secretariat** participate actively in and support the work of international organizations working to establish standards to enhance linguistic diversity on the Internet.	**IMPLEMENTED**
1.4.1	FOI-13	That **Industry Canada** work in close co-operation with key players and federal departments with economic responsibilities to ensure that the Canadian language industries become a driving force of the knowledge economy.	**IMPLEMENTED**
1.4.2	FOI-14	That the **National Research Council (NRC)** establish a Centre of Excellence to promote the development of technolinguistic tools by 2003.	**IMPLEMENTED**
1.4.3	FOI-16	That, by 2003, **Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC)** make available free of charge on the Internet a complete suite of technolinguistic tools, including writing and translating aids, terminology banks like *Termium*, and specialized bilingual research modules in order to facilitate access to information in both official languages for all Canadians. That **PWGSC** provide the Canadian industrial and academic communities with access to, not TERMIUM® per se, but to all of the language databases that it owns, including the databases and the corpus that support the operation of TERMIUM®.	**PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED** **REWORDED**
1.5.1	FOI-17	That **Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)** immediately take appropriate action to ensure that foreign embassies in Canada, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations in which Canada is a full participant include information in both English and French on their Internet sites.	**PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED**
1.5.2	FOI-18	That, in its programs, the **Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)** do more to encourage the use of the Internet by the developing countries of the Francophonie.	**IMPLEMENTED**
1.5.3	FOI-19	That the **Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)** take the steps necessary to further the creation by 2003 of an inter-American network to promote English, Spanish, French and Portuguese in an integrated America.	**NOT IMPLEMENTED**

Number	Original source	Description of the Recommendation	Status
FOI: *French on the Internet* OLR: *Official Languages Requirements and Government On-Line*			
STRATEGIC TARGET 2 ***To ensure that Government On-Line officials have the knowledge and resources necessary to produce and post high-quality Internet content and provide high-quality Internet services in French.***			
2.1.1	FOI-5	That **Treasury Board Secretariat** ensure, as part of the implementation of Government On-Line (GOL), that an equitable share of content is produced originally in French. (This responsability now belongs to PSHRMAC.)	**NOT IMPLEMENTED** **WITHDRAWN**
2.2.1	FOI-7	That **Treasury Board Secretariat** commit the budgetary resources necessary to allow federal departments and agencies to meet the increasing need for translation in response to the publication of content in both official languages on the Internet. That, in its review of departmental budgetary requirements, **Treasury Board Secretariat** take into account the fact that the departments and agencies must assume increasing costs for translation services.	**NOT IMPLEMENTED** **REWORDED**
2.3.1	OLR-1	That **Treasury Board Secretariat** caution federal institutions against the consequences of indiscriminate digitization of information from an official language perspective in order to enhance the quality of federal government Web sites in both languages. That the **Treasury Board Secretariat**, through the **Information Management Committee**, encourage federal institutions to establish guidelines and control mechanisms to prevent the abusive digitization of information.	**NOT IMPLEMENTED** **REWORDED**
2.4.1	OLR-3	That **Treasury Board Secretariat** inform federal institutions of their obligation to ensure continuity among service delivery channels, in terms of both quality of language and level of subject-matter expertise. (This responsability now belongs to PSHRMAC.)	**IMPLEMENTED**
2.5.1	FOI-8	That **Treasury Board Secretariat** take the appropriate steps to ensure that the content in both official languages on federal Internet sites is of high quality and to propose corrective measures to institutions as needed. (This responsibility now belongs to PSHRMAC.)	**PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED**
2.6.1	FOI-6	That **Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC)** provide ongoing training to network and content managers of federal institution Web sites in order to increase their awareness of official languages issues and of the technolinguistic tools available to promote the production of content that respects the special character of Canada's two official languages.	**CURRENTLY BEING IMPLEMENTED**
2.6.2	ORL-8	That **Treasury Board Secretariat** create a single document […] that includes all official language guidelines concerning the provision of on-line services and on-line interaction with the government in the context of Government On-Line, and ensure the dissemination of the guidelines. (This responsability now belongs to PSHRMAC.)	**IMPLEMENTED**

2.7.1	FOI-11	That **Treasury Board Secretariat** require that all workstations in the federal government be ready to operate in both official languages by 2005.	**PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED**
2.7.2	FOI-15	That, by 2003, the **Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC)** develop a policy that specifies in all calls for tenders issued by the Government of Canada that hardware, software, manuals and training must be provided in both of Canada's official languages. (This responsibility now belongs to the Treasury Board Secretariat.)	**NOT IMPLEMENTED**
2.8.1	OLR-5	That **Treasury Board Secretariat** find innovative and appropriate ways (slogan, icon, etc.) for federal institutions to inform members of the public, on the home page of their Web site, of their right to receive information and to interact with the federal government in the official language of their choice. (This responsability now belongs to PSHRMAC.)	**IMPLEMENTED**
2.9.1	OLR-4	That **Treasury Board Secretariat** remind federal institutions of their obligation to ensure that official language clauses in contractual agreements include the requirement to respect the provisions of Part IV of the *Official Languages Act* in any on-line communications with the public involving the delivery of services that are the subject of agreements. (This responsability now belongs to PSHRMAC.)	**IMPLEMENTED**

Number	Original source	Description of the Recommendation	Status
FOI: *French on the Internet* OLR: *Official Languages Requirements and Government On-Line*			
STRATEGIC TARGET 3 ***To ensure the implementation of a robust governance framework regarding the Internet and official languages.***			
3.1.1	FOI-2	That the **Treasury Board Secretariat** put in place a coherent, ongoing and integrated governance framework that includes permanent accountability and follow-up mechanisms in order to ensure compliance with the principle of linguistic duality on the Internet, in particular with respect to Government On-Line (GOL). That the **Privy Council Office** determine the most appropriate governance structure as well as specific performance measures to address the issue of linguistic duality on the Internet.	**NOT IMPLEMENTED** **REWORDED**
3.2.1	FOI-1	That **Industry Canada** create a Canadian Advisory Committee on Official Languages on the Internet, with a two-year mandate, to recommend to the Government of Canada effective measures to ensure the growth of the knowledge economy by promoting English and French on the Internet.	**NOT IMPLEMENTED WITHDRAWN**
3.2.2	FOI-3	That the **Interdepartmental Consultative Committee on Language Industries (ICCLI)** of **Treasury Board Secretariat** become the *Strategic Committee for French on the Internet (SCFI)*, with an expanded mandate to develop an integrated strategy.	**NOT IMPLEMENTED WITHDRAWN**
3.3.1	OLR-2	That **Treasury Board Secretariat** pursue the review of its Policy on the Use of Official Languages on Electronic Networks in consultation with federal institutions and the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. (This responsibility now belongs to PSHRMAC.)	**IMPLEMENTED**
3.3.2	OLR-6	That **Treasury Board Secretariat** establish a policy regarding the on-line publication of scientific or historical information in both official languages in consultation with federal institutions, the Translation Bureau and the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. (This responsability now belongs to PSHRMAC.)	**CURRENTLY BEING IMPLEMENTED**
3.3.3	OLR-7	That **Treasury Board Secretariat** issue guidelines to federal institutions on the need to ensure content balance in selecting materials for on-line publication that draw from both official language communities. (This responsibility now belongs to PSHRMAC.) That **PSHRMAC** remind federal institutions of the importance of ensuring proper balance when posting content on Web sites by selecting texts that originate from both linguistic communities.	**NOT IMPLEMENTED** **REWORDED**
3.4.1	OLR-9	That **Treasury Board Secretariat** institute within the **Treasury Board Secretariat** a mechanism aimed specifically at responding to questions raised by federal institutions dealing with official language considerations as they relate to Government On-Line (GOL).	**PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED**

APPENDIX B
RECOMMENDATIONS YET TO BE FULLY IMPLEMENTED AND NEW RECOMMENDATIONS

Number	Recommendations (Shaded areas indicate new recommendations)
	STRATEGIC TARGET 1 ***To promote the provision of French Internet tools and content.***
1.4.3	That **PWGSC** provide the Canadian industrial and academic communities with access to, not TERMIUM® per se, but to all of the language databases that it owns, including the databases and the corpus that support the operation of TERMIUM®. (Reworded)
1.5.1	That the **Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)** immediately take appropriate action to ensure that foreign embassies in Canada, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations in which Canada is a full participant include information in both English and French on their Internet sites.
1.5.3	That the **Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)** take the steps necessary to further the creation by 2003 of an inter-American network to promote English, Spanish, French and Portuguese in an integrated America.
1.6	That **Canadian Heritage** step up the pace of investment to support the creation of digitized content, particularly the digitization of Canadian French language works and journals contained in Canadian libraries.
1.7	That the department of **Foreign Affairs Canada** initiate discussions on launching a large-scale international digitization project in the context of its efforts to promote cultural diversity and to ensure the transformation of the Internet into an actual multilingual and multicultural library.
1.8	That **Canadian Heritage** look into the possibility of supporting the creation of a quality record on linguistic and cultural diversity on the Internet.

Number	Recommendations (Shaded areas indicate new recommendations)
STRATEGIC TARGET 2 ***To ensure that Government On-Line officials have the knowledge and resources necessary to produce and post high-quality Internet content and provide high-quality Internet services in French.***	
2.2.1	That the **Treasury Board Secretariat**, in reviewing its programs, take into account the fact that the departments and agencies assume increasing costs for translation services. (Reworded)
2.3.1	That the **Treasury Board Secretariat**, through the **Information Management Committee**, encourage federal institutions to develop guidelines and control mechanisms to prevent the abusive digitization of information. (Reworded)
2.5.1	That **PSHRMAC** take the appropriate steps to ensure that the content in both official languages on federal Internet sites is of high quality and to propose corrective measures to institutions as needed.
2.7.1	That the **Treasury Board Secretariat** require that all workstations in the federal government be ready to operate in both official languages by 2005.
2.7.2	That the **Treasury Board Secretariat** develop a procurement policy that specifies in all calls for tenders issued by the Government of Canada that hardware, software, manuals and training must be provided in both of Canada's official languages. (Reworded)
2.10	That **PSHRMAC** inform senior government officials and official language champions of the existence of new tools and approaches that may potentially increase the productivity of English- and French-language content creators, managers, and translators.
2.11	That **PSHRMAC**, in co-operation with the **Translation Bureau**, review the government language policies and, if necessary, amend them so as to promote the implementation of language processes based on a more intensive use of technolinguistic tools to meet the expectations of Canadians.
2.12	That the **Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada (PSHRMAC)** take the measures necessary to ensure that Web site managers and communications officials in the departments and agencies understand the importance of equality in the content and quality of both languages in the government's Web sites.

Number	Recommendations (Shaded areas indicate new recommendations)
STRATEGIC TARGET 3 ***To ensure the implementation of a robust governance framework regarding the Internet and official languages.***	
3.1.1	That the **Privy Council Office** determine the most appropriate governance structure as well as specific performance measures to address the issue of linguistic duality on the Internet. (Reworded)
3.3.3	That **PSHRMAC** remind federal institutions of the importance of ensuring proper balance when posting content on Web sites by selecting texts that originate from both linguistic communities. (Reworded)
3.4.1	That the **Treasury Board Secretariat** institute within the **Treasury Board Secretariat** a mechanism aimed specifically at responding to questions raised by federal institutions dealing with official language considerations as they relate to Government On-Line.
3.5	That **Canadian Heritage** and **Statistics Canada** initiate an ongoing research project to collect data on Internet use by Canadians and to make these data available to decision makers so they can prioritize and assess government action to promote linguistic duality on the Internet and in Government On-Line.