

Information Technologies

**to click
in French**

It is your right to use French

in retail stores, at work, with the public administration.

It is your duty to use French

as a designer or manufacturer, as a distributor, as a retailer, as an employer, as a Web site owner.

Information technologies are covered by three sections of the Charter of the French language

Sections 52.1 and 205.1 were adopted to protect consumers' rights, by requiring business firms to make the French version of software available where such version exists. Section 141 (subparagraph 9) protects the rights of workers, by requiring business firms which employ 50 or more people in Québec to generalize the use of French in information technologies.

What is the scope of the term "information technologies"?

The term "information technologies" applies to all hardware, software and services used to gather, process and transmit information.

Hardware includes keyboards, printers, fax machines and other data-input and output peripherals.

Software includes software applications (for word processing, etc.), operating systems, software packages, network management systems, development tools, courseware and peripheral drivers.

The main information technology services are those available via the information highway (Web sites, etc.) in order to access databases, carry out financial transactions, exchange documents of all types, obtain technical support, etc. These services may use technology such as voice recognition, video animation or tactile screens. In many cases, they are the computerized version of services formerly provided on a more personalized basis.

What does "generalize the use of French in information technologies" mean?

For hardware, this obligation means that keyboard keys and command buttons must be in French. Where applicable, these interfaces must provide access to French-language electronic displays and generate the full range of French diacritical marks (accents, cedillas, diaereses).

Software must include a French-language user interface, i.e., menus, commands, dialogue boxes, help and messages in French.

As for services, users must have access to French-language interfaces, including voice messages and voice response options, enabling them to use these services in French.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW :

a) Consumers' rights:

All computer software distributed, sold or rented, offered for retail sale, for rent or otherwise in Québec must be available in French unless no French version exists. Software can also be available in languages other than French, providing that the French version can be obtained on terms that are at least as favourable.

Sections 51, 52, 55 and 57 of the Charter of the French language stipulate that all inscriptions on the following product components and related documents must be in French: **wrapping, labels, directions and warranties; catalogues, brochures, folders and similar publications; order forms, invoices and receipts.** The same obligation applies to all product **signs, posters and displays.**

Designers, manufacturers, distributors and merchants are thus required to offer the public software in French if such version exists. Even if there is no French-language version of the software, the packaging and documents that accompany the software must be in French or in French and another language.

b) Workers' rights:

The right to work in French in Québec is protected by the provisions of the Charter of the French language focusing on the language of work and francization of business firms. The chapter on the francization of enterprises obliges all businesses which employ 50 or more people in Québec to **generalize the**

use of French, including in the area of information technologies (section 141, subparagraph 9).

This means that employers must install a French-language version of all hardware and software at their employees' workstations, for normal access. A similar obligation applies to documents and databases available via intranet sites. It is therefore to business firms to adopt a policy of procuring and developing information technologies in French, with clear language specifications for suppliers.

c) Language of Web sites in Québec business firms:

Firms which employ 50 or more people in Québec must use French in communications (including electronic communications) with the civil administration, clients, suppliers, the public and shareholders (section 141, subparagraph 5).

In addition, the Office québécois de la langue française (OQLF) considers that all businesses with an address in Québec are covered by section 52 of the Charter of the French language, which sets forth the obligation to provide all commercial documents (catalogues, brochures, folders, etc.) in French. A French version of commercial advertising on their Web pages must then be provided, except in cases covered by a regulatory exemption. English-language media Web sites, for instance, can use English only. Educational and cultural products may also be advertised exclusively in the language of the product, with no French version. (See The Charter of the French language and Web sites in the English section of our Web site).



SERVICES PROVIDED

BY THE OFFICE QUÉBÉCOIS DE LA LANGUE FRANÇAISE

The Office québécois de la langue française offers designers, manufacturers, distributors, dealers, employers, Web site owners, together with users of information technologies, various services and publications designed to make the use of French easier:

- The assistance of francization advisers;
- Specialized consultations on the francization of information technologies;
- Articles, columns presenting solutions to francization problems;
- Lexicons and vocabularies, posters and terminological implementation tools related to information technologies;
- Support with respect to the adoption of a policy on the purchase and development of information technologies in French;
- A Web site providing information on the Charter of the French language and on French in information technologies.

In Québec, the language of everyday communications is French. It is only normal that this be carried over to information technologies.

Tools adapted to the worker's need and French consumer services ensure better communications and understanding.



**For further information,
please contact:**

Office québécois de la langue française
Service de la francisation des entreprises
et des technologies de l'information
125, rue Sherbrooke Ouest
Montréal (Québec) H2X 1X4
Telephone: (514) 873-8268
Fax: (514) 864-3948

www.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca

Office québécois
de la langue
française

Québec 

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Information Technologies



**What you should know
about information
technologies in french
(material, software, websites)**

Québec 