▶ Parliament of Canada Web Site Guidelines

2018 Edition

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DISCLAIMER

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCOPE

This document sets out the principles and guidelines for the design and development of the Parliament of Canada Web site (parl.gc.ca) and the publication/posting of content to this site. It covers such subjects as:

- governance
- principles of the Parliament of Canada
- accessibility
- technology platforms
- general and legal considerations
- user experience

The following subjects are under consideration for inclusion in future updates to this document:

- accountability
- compliance
- Web site design and development for mobile devices
- social media
- content lifecycle management

1.2 AUDIENCES

- This document is intended for anyone who is involved in designing or developing content and application for the Parliament of Canada Web site (parl.gc.ca), and/or who publishes content to it.
- This group includes external contractors who are hired to provide Web consulting services.

1.3 RELATED DOCUMENTS AND WEB SITES

1.3.1 PARLIAMENTARY WEB USER EXPERIENCE COLLABORATION SITE

INET hosts a collaboration site, Parliamentary Web User Experience (PWUX), where the Parliament of Canada Web site guidelines and standards documents are housed. Accessible to the administrations of the parliamentary partners, the site also includes resources and best practices for user experience stakeholders at the Senate, House of Commons, and Library of Parliament, including Web site designers, developers, content developers, and publishers.

1.3.2   WEB SITE STANDARDS

The specific standards for applying these principles and guidelines are set out in a separate document for Web designers, developers, and publishers. It is available on the PWUX site.

1.3.3   WEB APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The Web application development standards are at the planning stage and will be published by the Information Services Application Development (ISAD) group at the House of Commons. The document will include the application development standards followed by ISAD. These standards are for .Net developers and will include input from both the Senate and the Library of Parliament development teams.

1.3.4   PARLIAMENT OF CANADA WEB DESIGN STANDARDS

The Parliamentary INET Committee (PIC) is developing Web Design Standards for the Parliament of Canada Web site (parl.gc.ca), in consultation with the design and development teams from the Senate, House of Commons, and Library of Parliament. The initial version of this document is anticipated in 2014. It will be available on the PWUX site.

1.4   TERMINOLOGY

1.4.1   PRINCIPLES

Principles encompass the values and beliefs that the parliamentary partners (Senate, House of Commons, and Library of Parliament) strive to uphold when evaluating Internet technologies and/or designing systems for content delivery to citizens, and parliamentarians and their staff.

1.4.2   GUIDELINES

Guidelines are statements that define a rule. Guidelines must be aligned with the principles of the Parliament of Canada and be supported by minimum standards for compliance.

1.4.3   STANDARDS

Standards are the minimum requirements that *must* be met in order to comply with a guideline. It is incumbent upon designers and developers contributing to the Parliament of Canada Web site to be familiar with all of the relevant guidelines and comply with the standards.

1.5   DOCUMENT LIFECYCLE

This document will be reviewed and updated by the PIC as required to reflect trends in technology, industry, and business.

Requests for clarification or the review of guidelines should be directed to INet, Multimedia Services at Infohoc@parl.gc.ca.

2   GOVERNANCE OF THE PARLIAMENTARY WEB SITE

2.1   PARLIAMENTARY INFORMATION MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Parliamentary Information Management (PIM) Committee assesses, coordinates, and guides Parliament's efforts to improve the management and delivery of parliamentary information. The PIM Committee also facilitates the sharing of parliamentary information priorities and initiatives among the Senate, the House of Commons, and the Library of Parliament.

The PIM Committee identifies opportunities for collaboration and coordination, and sponsors initiatives that improve the delivery of parliamentary information. The Committee also encourages the alignment of parliamentary information management projects and services in the Senate, the House of Commons, and the Library of Parliament with a common strategic PIM direction.

The PIM Committee approves:

- guidelines, and standards for parliamentary Web sites;
- site designs with regard to the common elements and the overall information architecture of the Parliament of Canada Web site; and
- Web sites and applications jointly developed and implemented by the three organizations.

2.2   PARLIAMENTARY INET COMMITTEE

The Parliamentary INET is a common and integrated Web platform developed by the Senate, the House of Commons, and the Library of Parliament to support the delivery of parliamentary information, products, and services. The Parliamentary INET Committee (PIC) is a tripartite body responsible for identifying, collaborating on, and coordinating Web platform priorities and initiatives. Representatives are expected to consult and inform their organizations about the PIC's Web initiatives and opportunities for collaboration, secure their engagement, and communicate their organization's perspective back to the PIC. They are also expected to share with the PIC information about their organization's Web initiatives affecting the content on the Parliament of Canada Web site.

The PIC is responsible for ensuring that the Parliament of Canada Web site guidelines and standards are:

- appropriate to the parliamentary environment;
- communicated to the parliamentary community; and
- implemented in a fair and comprehensive fashion.

The PIC reports to the Parliamentary Information Management Committee (PIM).

2.3 INET BUSINESS ADVISORS, WEB MASTERS, & BUSINESS APPLICATION LEADS

Eachpartner is responsible for ensuring that Web site designers, developers, and clients are aware of the Parliament of Canada Web site guidelines and standards, and for conducting Quality Assurance reviews.

The table below identifies the responsible groups for each organization.

Partner	Responsible Groups
Senate	▪ Application Development and Systems Integration ▪ Communications Directorate
House of Commons	▪ INET Services ▪ ISAD Customer Relationship Managers and Business Application Leads ▪ Information Services Application Architects ▪ Corporate Communications
Library of Parliament	▪ Integrated Client Outreach and Digital Access ▪ Corporate Communications ▪ Information Technology Directorate

2.4 WEB DESIGNERS, DEVELOPERS, PUBLISHERS, AND CONTENT OWNERS

Many publishers and business owners from the Senate, the House of Commons, and the Library of Parliament provide information to internal and external users via the Parliament of Canada Web site.

Web designers, developers, publishers, and content owners are responsible for adhering to the Parliament of Canada Web site guidelines and standards.

2.5 EXTERNAL CONTRACTORS

External contractors are responsible for adhering to the Parliament of Canada Web site guidelines and standards.

3   PARLIAMENT OF CANADA PRINCIPLES

- The parliamentary partners provide access to parliamentary content.

- International standards set by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) are followed to ensure accessibility to Web content for all Canadians.

- As the Web and its supporting technologies continue to evolve, these guidelines will be updated.

- The Web publishing environment is based on a partnership with the three parliamentary organizations and a decentralized, business-driven approach to developing and maintaining an Internet presence for the Parliament of Canada and an intranet to support the work of parliamentarians.

- This partnership is meant to foster creative and innovative approaches to delivering information to parliamentarians and Canadians.

- The Parliament of Canada Web site provides information that is non-partisan in its content and design.

4 PARLIAMENTARY WEB SITE GUIDELINES

4.1 ACCESSIBILITY

As of September 1, 2013, the Senate, House of Commons, and Library of Parliament are committed to meeting the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA for all new content and applications available on the Parliament of Canada Web site (parl.gc.ca). Legacy content and applications hosted within the Parliament of Canada Web site) will be updated or retired as is possible or appropriate.

4.1.1 ACCESSIBILITY PRINCIPLES

Accessibility guidelines are grouped under four principles:

Principle 1: Information and user interface components must be presentable to users in ways they can perceive.

Principle 2: User interface components and navigation must be operable.

Principle 3: Information and the operation of user interface must be understandable.

Principle 4: Content must be robust enough that it can be interpreted reliably by a wide variety of user agents, including assistive technologies.

Please consult the W3C Web site for detailed information about these guidelines.

Please consult the *Parliamentary Web Site Standards*, which describes the standards that must be met to comply with the Parliamentary Web Site Accessibility Guidelines.

4.2 TECHNOLOGY PLATFORM

The Senate, the House of Commons, and the Library of Parliament operate the Parliament of Canada Web site in a shared technical environment. Any new development projects need to be compatible with and sustainable within our existing technical and operational environment.

Please refer to the *Parliament of Canada Web Site Standards* for a specific list of technologies that may be used.

4.2.1   NEW TECHNOLOGY EVALUATION

New technologies often emerge and are adopted quickly by user groups. Examples of new technologies include applications (such as social media applications), access platforms (e.g., mobile devices), and assistive technologies (e.g. screen readers).

These new technologies can provide opportunities to support the Parliament of Canada's principles but must be evaluated to ensure that they comply with the guidelines in this document and that the resources required to implement and sustain them are available.

To request an evaluation of a new technology, please contact INet Multimedia Services at Infohoc@parl.gc.ca.

4.3   LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Please refer to the Important Notices page on parl.gc.ca for policies and guidelines on:

- privacy
- copyright
- links
- parliamentary privilege

4.3.1   IMAGE AND PHOTO WAIVER

Images or illustrations that depict actual persons or photos of people may be used on the Parliament of Canada Web sites as long as a waiver for their use has been signed by the depicted person or their legal proxy.

This policy does not apply in the case of photographs taken at official parliamentary events where members of the public may be in attendance and inadvertently included in photographs that document the event.

4.4   USER EXPERIENCE

4.4.1   OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

The Parliament of Canada Web site must be available in English and French, and the quality must be equal in both official languages.

4.4.2   COMMON ELEMENTS

The Parliament of Canada Web site contains information from the Senate, the House of Commons, the Library of Parliament, and other sources, and reflects the brands of both Parliament and its institutions. Content owners may design their sub-sites to be "distinct" from the main Web site; however, site users must be able to recognize that the information provided is coming from the Senate, House of Commons, and the Library of Parliament and it must be non-partisan in content and design.

A number of common elements must appear on every page published to the Parliament of Canada Web site (parl.gc.ca), including:

- the site utilities (including Search, Site Map, A to Z, Contact Us, Language Toggle);
- the main header (including main navigation section headings);
- the social media share bar; and
- the footer, including a link to the Home page and Important Notices.

When creating new sub-sites, the template (or code) must be obtained from Infohoc@parl.gc.ca.

4.4.3   INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

The information architecture on the Parliament of Canada Web site should conform to recognized best practices that are user-centric rather than organization-centric.

The overall structure and navigation of the Parliament of Canada Web site, including main menu headings labels, are determined by the PIC.

New sub-sites to be hosted within the Parliament of Canada Web site will be provided with an access point on the main menu under one of the existing headings.

When existing sub-sites are being renewed, care must be taken to maintain or update existing links from other sections of the Web site.

When developing new sections within existing sub-sites, the site owner must inform the PIC and business partners to ensure shared awareness of all content on the site.

The PIC determines the structure and content on the Home and section index pages for the Parliament of Canada Web site. All content changes on the Home and index pages, including text, photos, images and multimedia content must be approved by the PIC.

4.4.4   CONTENT

All content on the Parliament of Canada Web site must be available in both official languages and must comply with Canadian copyright laws.

4.4.5   LINKS

When including links to other sites, these links must be to sites that are reliable, that follow principles similar to those of the Parliament of Canada Web site and, insofar as is possible, offer content in both official languages.

4.4.6   USER SUPPORT

All sub-sites within the Parliament of Canada Web site must provide users with a method to contact site owners, whether to pose a question, identify a content error or technical malfunction, or provide feedback.

All questions, comments, or enquiries must be acknowledged upon receipt, and a response should be provided within three business days.

4.4.7   SUPPORTING MOBILE DEVICES

This version of the *Parliament of Canada Web Site Guidelines* does not address supporting Web visits from mobile devices. It is anticipated that a future update of this document will include guidelines on this subject.

4.4.8   SOCIAL MEDIA

Guidelines about social media applications on the Parliament of Canada Web site are anticipated in the next version of this document. Until such time, please consult the individual guidelines developed by your organization. You may also visit the PWUX site, where resources are available to help you plan your use of social media.