



# **Guideline on Making Information Technology Usable by All**

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# Guideline on Making Information Technology Usable by All

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## 1. About this guideline

- 1.1 This guideline supports the Government of Canada's direction to ensure that departments, agencies and organizations consider accessibility in the acquisition or development of information technology (IT) solutions and equipment to make IT usable by all.

## 2. Audience

- 2.1 This guideline is intended for all Government of Canada departments, agencies and organizations that acquire or develop IT solutions and equipment, including web content.

## 3. Context

- 3.1 Proactive consideration of accessibility benefits everyone, especially persons with disabilities. The recommendations in section 4 of this guideline support the following:
  - 3.1.1 the *Accessible Canada Act*, which requires that entities under federal jurisdiction identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers.
  - 3.1.2 the *Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada*, which sets out how the Government of Canada will bolster accessibility for all Canadians through its policies, programs and services.
  - 3.1.3 the *Government of Canada Digital Standards*, which promote building in accessibility from the start.
- 3.2 Several Treasury Board policy instruments set out Government of Canada accessibility requirements for IT (see subsection 5.3) including the *Policy on Service and Digital* (effective April 1, 2020), the *Policy on Management of Information Technology* and the *Standard on Web Accessibility*.
- 3.3 The *Standard on Web Accessibility* applies to public-facing web content only. It does not apply to public-facing IT solutions and equipment or to internal-facing IT solutions, equipment and web content.

## 4. Guidance

- 4.1 Departments, agencies and organizations are strongly encouraged to leverage the Harmonised European Standard, EN 301 549 (2018), when:
- 4.1.1 acquiring or developing internal-facing or public-facing IT solutions and equipment, including web content and all IT tools and equipment used by federal public servants.
  - 4.1.2 considering accessibility in the lifecycle management process for existing IT solutions and equipment, including web content.
- 4.2 In alignment with the Harmonised European Standard, EN 301 549 (2018), departments, agencies and organizations are strongly encouraged to follow the latest version of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA (2018).
- 4.3 Departments, agencies and organizations are strongly encouraged to:
- 4.3.1 ensure that accessibility features are enabled for their IT solutions and equipment.
  - 4.3.2 leverage enterprise tools and capacity to ensure that internal-facing IT solutions and equipment are accessible for public servants.
  - 4.3.3 work with Shared Services Canada (SSC) and its Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT) Program to identify and deploy accessible tools and technology, and to remove remaining accessibility barriers associated with IT.
  - 4.3.4 leverage their existing in-house accessibility programs when meeting Government of Canada accessibility requirements.
  - 4.3.5 work in the open and use open-source software to support others in efforts to develop accessible common IT systems across departments, agencies and organizations.

## 5. References

- 5.1 Related External Standards and Specifications
- Harmonised European Standard EN 301 549: Accessibility requirements for ICT products and services
  - Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
  - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)
- 5.2 Legislation
- Accessible Canada Act
  - Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

- *Canadian Human Rights Act*
- *Financial Administration Act*

### 5.3 Related Policy Instruments

- *Policy on Service and Digital*
- *Policy on Management of Information Technology*
- *Directive on the Management of Information Technology*
- *Standard on Web Accessibility*
- *Policy on the Planning and Management of Investments*
- *Policy on Communications and Federal Identity*
- *Values and Ethics Code for the Public Sector*
- *Contracting Policy*

### 5.4 Government of Canada Direction

- *Nothing Without Us: Accessibility Strategy for the Public Service of Canada*
- *Government of Canada Digital Standards*
- *Digital Operations Strategic Plan: 2018—2022*

## 6. Enquiries

For more information on this guideline, please contact [dppn@tbs-sct.gc.ca](mailto:dppn@tbs-sct.gc.ca).

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