



# ARCHIVES

Français

Home

Contact Us

Help

Search

canada.gc.ca

ARCHIVED - The Government of Canada and French on the Internet

**Warning** The [Standard on Web Usability](#) replaces this content. This content is archived because Common Look and Feel 2.0 Standards have been rescinded.

## Archived Content

Information identified as archived is provided for reference, research or recordkeeping purposes. It is not subject to the Government of Canada Web Standards and has not been altered or updated since it was archived. Please contact us to request a format other than those available.

Page 1 of 10

**August 1999**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Introduction](#)

[Methodology](#)

[Issues](#)

- [Importance of the Internet and the Role of the Government of Canada](#)
- [Use of French on the Internet: Some Indicators](#)

[Canadian Initiatives](#)

[Observations and Recommendations](#)

- [Policies](#)
  - [Policy Framework](#)
  - [Implementation of a Policy Framework](#)
  - [Building a Trend Toward International Co-operation](#)
- [Investment](#)
  - [Translation](#)
  - [Digitization](#)
  - [Access to Contents](#)
  - [Access to Resources](#)
  - [Linguistic Tools](#)

- [Second-language Learning](#)
- [Support for Content Creators](#)
- [Portal of the Francophonie](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[List of Recommendations](#)

[Bibliography](#)

[Appendix - Institutions Consulted](#)

---

Date modified: 2012-03-06

  
Top of page

[Important Notices](#)



# ARCHIVES

Français

Home

Contact Us

Help

Search

canada.gc.ca

## ARCHIVED - Introduction

**Warning** The [Standard on Web Usability](#) replaces this content. This content is archived because Common Look and Feel 2.0 Standards have been rescinded.

### Archived Content

Information identified as archived is provided for reference, research or recordkeeping purposes. It is not subject to the Government of Canada Web Standards and has not been altered or updated since it was archived. Please contact us to request a format other than those available.

Page 2 of 10

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* establishes the equality of status of the two official languages and Part VII of the *Official Languages Act* confirms the responsibility of all federal departments and agencies to enhance the vitality of the official language communities.

Under the *Official Languages Act*, the Commissioner of Official Languages is committed to promoting the use of English and French in Canadian society. Such support must, nowadays, involve the use of various communications technologies, ranging from print to television and including radio and film. The Internet, the latest technology available to the general public, is a central element of the developing knowledge society. The Internet therefore will have an increasing impact on the development of the official languages of Canada. In particular, the Internet can have a profound influence on the organization of the Government of Canada and how it provides services to and communicates with Canadians. The English language predominates on all electronic networks, including the Internet. It is therefore vital that the Commissioner ensure that French has its equitable place in exchanges that use this new method of communication and publication.

First of all, the equality of status of English and French in Canada assumes the active involvement of the federal government in promoting an ever-expanding array of content and services in French on the Internet: "The place held by content in various languages on the information highway is an indication of the linguistic, cultural, economic and political vitality of the users"<sup>1</sup> (our translation). The government must ensure that users are able to fully express the various aspects of this vitality and that Canada can demonstrate benefits from the economic advantages of our linguistic duality, especially as it relates to the development of the language industry. This report, as well as the follow-up study: *Use of the Internet by Federal Institutions*, are intended to be useful tools in this regard. They propose to the federal government various ways of promoting the vitality, in Canada as well as in the rest of the Francophonie, of the French language on the Internet, under responsibilities arising from Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*.

### Notes

1. Canada, *Les inforoutes et la Francophonie. Les inforoutes au service du développement*, Réflexion canadienne, Conférence des ministres responsables de l'autoroute de l'information, Prepared by Jacques Lyrette for the Canadian Delegation, Montréal, March 1997, p. 6.



## ARCHIVED - Methodology

**Warning** The [Standard on Web Usability](#) replaces this content. This content is archived because Common Look and Feel 2.0 Standards have been rescinded.

### Archived Content

Information identified as archived is provided for reference, research or recordkeeping purposes. It is not subject to the Government of Canada Web Standards and has not been altered or updated since it was archived. Please contact us to request a format other than those available.

Page 3 of 10

In order to identify the areas in which the federal government should apply its efforts to improve French content and services on the Internet, we reviewed current activities and practices. In particular, we met with officials responsible for Internet publication programs in a number of departments that play an important role in this regard, including the Department of Canadian Heritage, Industry Canada, the National Research Council, Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Treasury Board Secretariat. We also contacted the Department of Public Works and Government Services, the Translation Bureau, the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the National Library of Canada and the National Archives of Canada.

To broaden the base of our analysis and more clearly define the factors that could slow the pace of dissemination of federal information on the Internet, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages convened six focus groups in Ottawa, Montreal and Moncton with users, Web masters, analysts and managers of various federal departments and agencies. The following departments and agencies sent representatives to these meetings: the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the Canadian Space Agency, Agriculture Canada, the Office of the Access to Information Commissioner, Canadian National, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Department of National Defence, Atomic Energy Canada, Environment Canada, Finance Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Department of Canadian Heritage, Canada Post Corporation, Natural Resources Canada, Revenue Canada, Health Canada, the Treasury Board Secretariat, Statistics Canada, Transport Canada and VIA Rail Canada. In addition to the documentary analysis of various reports and studies cited in the Bibliography which concentrate on the state of studies of the French government and institutions in the Francophonie on this question, our review also involved meetings with various Internet specialists.

[Previous Page](#) | [Table of Contents](#) | [Next Page](#)



# ARCHIVES

Français

Home

Contact Us

Help

Search

canada.gc.ca

## ARCHIVED - Issues

**Warning** The [Standard on Web Usability](#) replaces this content. This content is archived because Common Look and Feel 2.0 Standards have been rescinded.

### Archived Content

Information identified as archived is provided for reference, research or recordkeeping purposes. It is not subject to the Government of Canada Web Standards and has not been altered or updated since it was archived. Please contact us to request a format other than those available.

Page 4 of 10

#### A. Importance of the Internet and the Role of the Government of Canada

Canada and the other industrialized countries have embarked on a new knowledge-based economy, i.e., one based on the creation, storage, circulation, sharing and sale of information and knowledge. Canada can, in this context, benefit from the advantage of its linguistic duality in the areas of language industry and knowledge based economy. Increasingly, this knowledge is closely linked to the use of information technologies and, once again, the Internet is the central element of the "universal knowledge highway" (our translation), to use the expression of Alain Guillerrou, founding president of the Biennales de la langue française.

The progress of information technologies and communications, which lead to the emergence of information highways, is changing our way of life: our way of working and doing business, our way of educating, our way of informing ourselves, of doing research and training ourselves, and our way of entertaining ourselves.<sup>2</sup>

The Internet is also transforming relations between the state and citizens. The creation of a public space for information exchange and of a low-cost service site results in a virtual marketplace that encourages more participation by citizens, thereby transforming the conditions of state governance. Access to information through the Internet helps to strengthen the participation of citizens in democratic life, makes the right to information more effective, even essential, to equal access by all citizens and makes it possible to imagine more transparent government.

"Control of development and the quality of content are the foundations of the knowledge society. This society will also exist in French if a sufficient critical mass of products and French content is quickly achieved"<sup>3</sup> (our translation).

What is meant by French content? This expression corresponds to a generic concept that includes all information and documents conveyed in the French language, regardless of the form they take. In short, any page posted in French on the Internet helps to increase the French content available not only to Canadians but also to Net surfers in the Francophonie and worldwide.

The Government of Canada therefore has a special responsibility to promote the creation and distribution of a critical mass of French content on the Internet, not only because of its obligations under the Charter, the *Official Languages*

Act, and its commitment to participation in the international Francophonie, but also because of the economic, social, political and cultural importance of equitable participation in the emerging knowledge society by English-speaking Canadians and French-speaking Canadians.

## B. Use of French on the Internet: Some Indicators

Much remains to be done to create a dynamic more favourable to the use and promotion of French content on the Internet. A Statistics Canada survey shows that the percentage of Quebec residents who communicate by computer in a typical month is only 26.2%, the lowest level in Canada. By comparison, the figure in Alberta is 45.1%.<sup>4</sup> Many factors no doubt contribute to this backwardness. The lack of information and services in French is certainly one of the most important reasons for it. This difference in users seems difficult to reconcile with Canada's commitment to linguistic duality and the equality of status of English and French.

A recently published report shows that 31.2% of Quebec Net surfers said that "speaking only French is an obstacle to use of the Internet"<sup>5</sup> (our translation). The pollsters also asked respondents to specify how many hours they devote to navigating the Web in French, in English or in some other language. A large majority (66.9%, or two thirds) of heavy Internet users consult mainly English sites. What are the repercussions of the lack of visibility of French on the Internet? The following is one answer:

... that is where the real danger lies: simply by its presence, the Internet forces cultures to digitize themselves and position themselves effectively on networks. Cultures that do not have the economic resources to make this transition will find themselves heavily penalized.<sup>6</sup> (our translation).

## Notes

2. *Idem*, p. 6.

3. François-Pierre Le Scouarnec, *Information et démocratie: enjeux pour les gouvernements et la langue française*, XVI<sup>e</sup> Biennale de la langue française, Bucharest, 1995.

4. Canada, Statistics Canada, *Household Facilities and Equipment*, Ottawa, 1998, Catalogue No. 64-202.

5. *Internet : Accès et utilisation au Québec. Rapport d'enquête*, BSQ, CEFRIO, RISQ, Collection Infomètre, November, 1998, p. 87.

6. Bruno Oudet and Jean-Claude Guédon, "Vers une écologie des langues?" in *Les Cahiers de Médiologie*, No. 3, Gallimard, Paris, 1999, p. 20.

[Previous Page](#) | [Table of Contents](#) | [Next Page](#)



## ARCHIVED - Canadian Initiatives

**Warning** The [Standard on Web Usability](#) replaces this content. This content is archived because Common Look and Feel 2.0 Standards have been rescinded.

### Archived Content

Information identified as archived is provided for reference, research or recordkeeping purposes. It is not subject to the Government of Canada Web Standards and has not been altered or updated since it was archived. Please contact us to request a format other than those available.

Page 5 of 10

In 1994 the Government of Canada announced in the Speech from the Throne its intention to develop a Canadian strategy for the information highway. Shortly afterwards, specifically in March of the same year, Industry Canada created the Information Highway Advisory Council (IHAC) to advise the government on a series of questions of public interest, including Canada's cultural identity and its transition to an information- and knowledge-based society. The work of this Council and its working groups, particularly that on Canadian content and culture, was based on four guiding principles: universal access at reasonable and equitable cost; consumer choice and diversity of information; competence and participation by Canadians; and openness and interactivity of networks. This exercise led to the publication, in September 1995, of a report entitled *Connection, Community, Content: the Challenge of the Information highway*, with over 300 recommendations on a broad range of issues and concerns.

In this report, the Council recommended that the French language should have an important place on the Information Highway. Products and services in French should be essential components of Canadian content.

Government policies should stimulate, through incentives, the creation and production of new content adapted to the Information Highway, with special consideration for the unique needs of the French-language market.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, although the Council refers to linguistic duality, its report is deficient in this regard. It neglects to deal with the specific problems related to access to the Internet in French. The Commissioner of Official Languages had pointed out these shortcomings to the Prime Minister of Canada, arguing that linguistic duality should be one of the guiding principles of the IHAC.

In 1996 the federal government acted upon the Council's recommendations and set out the principles of the government's program and initiatives in a document entitled *Building the Information Society: Moving Canada into the 21st Century*. This document sets out the measures taken throughout the federal administration to assist Canada in assuming its rightful place in a world economy increasingly based on information and knowledge.

Among other commitments, the federal government agreed to develop a coherent and comprehensive strategy on Canadian content that would consist in "employing a range of measures to support the production, distribution and promotion at home and abroad of Canadian cultural content that reflects our linguistic duality and cultural diversity."<sup>8</sup> This commitment, while desirable, was however limited solely to the cultural dimension of linguistic duality.

The final report on the second phase of the IHAC's mandate, published in September 1997, and titled *Preparing Canada for a Digital World*, gives a larger place to the French language than the final report on the previous phase.

Federal, provincial and territorial governments should work closely with industry and in cooperation with francophone communities across Canada to develop a critical mass of French-language content and services for the Internet.<sup>9</sup>

Following this report, the departments of Industry and Canadian Heritage set up a number of task forces including, in April 1997, the Task Force on Digitization, to identify the principal issues and propose methods of making access to Canadian content available electronically. In its report, tabled in December 1997, this task force recommended, among other things, "French-language digital content available on-line and off-line should be increased. Currently, there is insufficient availability of French digital content, even though federal institutions, fulfilling their obligations under the *Official Languages Act*, provide information and services to the public in English and French."<sup>10</sup>

Regrettably, however, the Government of Canada did not implement this recommendation. The present study is intended to emphasize to the Government of Canada the importance of taking action in this regard.

For its part, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) undertook a broad consultation in July 1998 to examine the possibility of regulating the Internet. In May 1999, the CRTC concluded that such regulation was needless, but deplored the lack of French-language Canadian content on the Internet:

Funding initiatives may be particularly necessary for the French-language new media market, which is significantly smaller than the English-language market.... Not surprisingly, the level of French-language content on the Internet is quite low when compared with English-language content.<sup>11</sup>

The Canadian government did take other initiatives, however. The Treasury Board Secretariat's *Internet Guide* states that documents posted on the Internet are considered publications. Accordingly, the *Official Languages Act* applies and documents on Internet sites of federal departments and agencies must be posted simultaneously in English and French and be of equivalent quality. The follow-up on the Internet study conducted by the Commissioner of Official Languages entitled *Use of the Internet by Federal Institutions*, deals with this issue.

The Treasury Board Secretariat estimates the number of federal sites on the Internet at over 5,000. This represents an enormous mass of documentation. For example, the Strategis site of Industry Canada, which is the largest business site in Canada in both official languages on the Internet, has over 70 information collections, or 750,000 pages of text that are updated regularly. Since its launch in March 1996, this site has had nearly two million visitors.

In fact, the Government of Canada has devoted considerable effort to stimulating demand. Implementation of the National Strategy for Connectivity is another illustration of this: Industry Canada's SchoolNet achieved its objective, in March 1999, of connecting all the schools and public libraries in Canada. This remarkable achievement makes Canada, in this regard, the leader among the G8 countries.

Certain measures to stimulate the availability of content have also been taken. These include the Multimedia Fund, created in July 1998, with funding over five years of \$30 million. Its objective is to support the development, production and marketing of Canadian multimedia works in both official languages. These works are in large part accessible on the Internet, and the program guidelines stipulate that one third of the funds be allocated to French language projects.

Also worth mentioning are the Musée virtuel de la Nouvelle-France, which is being developed in partnership with the Ministry of Culture and Communications of France; the National Library of Canada's Access AMICUS service, which makes it possible to do research in both official languages in millions of bibliographical records; the Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN), which provides a bilingual reference and description service on the Internet for a multitude of objects in the national inventory of collections of Canadian museums; the Digital Collections Program, responsible for the Canadian content of documents published on the Internet in both official languages, which has digitized about ten per cent of the French language content (the establishment of guidelines would guarantee a more acceptable proportion of French language content); the Francommunautés virtuelles program, designed to expand the range of content and services in French on the Internet; and, finally, the financial assistance provided by the federal government for creation of the Centre international pour le développement de l'infrastructure en français (CIDIF).

In addition to these domestic initiatives, there are others related to the special position Canada holds among the



countries of the Francophonie. An active participant in the Francophone Summits, Canada has created Internet sites in French in 25 countries of the Francophonie. The Internet sites of the Agence de la Francophonie and of the Banque internationale d'information sur les États francophones (BIEF) were set up thanks to a Canadian initiative which, by so doing, permitted the first linkage of the Francophone multilateral network. The Canadian government also contributes to l'Institut francophone des nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la formation (INTIF). The VIII Francophone Summit, to be held in Moncton in September 1999, will be the ideal opportunity to promote the Internet within this body.

Canada must now look more toward initiatives designed to stimulate availability. The recommendations in this report have to do mainly with this dimension. It should be borne in mind that the presence on the Internet of documents in other languages, specifically in English, in no way reduces the possibility of circulating documents in French. The capacity of the Internet is practically unlimited, and storage and access possibilities are constantly increasing. The continuing growth in the volume of documents in English in no way prevents other languages, such as French, from having a presence on the Internet. Any new page in French on the Internet increases availability for all citizens of the Francophonie and the world. From this point of view, it is a question of increasing the range of content and services in French to encourage Net surfers to do more and more searches on the Internet. It is also necessary to improve the accessibility of this content and prevent its marginalization through the use of adequate research and navigation technologies.

## Notes

7. Canada, Industry Canada, *Connection, Community, Content: The Challenge of the Information Highway*, Final Report (Phase I) of the Information Highway Advisory Council, Ottawa, September 1995, Recommendation 7.3, p. 123.
8. Canada, Industry Canada, *Building the Information Society: Moving Canada into the 21st Century*, Ottawa, 1996, p. 12.
9. Canada, Industry Canada, *Preparing Canada for a Digital World*, Final Report (Phase II) of the IHAC, Ottawa, 1997, Recommendation 4.19, p. 54.
10. Canada, Industry Canada, *Towards a Learning Nation*, Recommendation 2.1 (b) ii, p. 22.
11. Canada, Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission, Public Broadcasting Notice CRTC 1999-84, Ottawa, May 17, 1999, paragraph 79.

[Previous Page](#) | [Table of Contents](#) | [Next Page](#)



## ARCHIVED - Observations and Recommendations

**Warning** The [Standard on Web Usability](#) replaces this content. This content is archived because Common Look and Feel 2.0 Standards have been rescinded.

### Archived Content

Information identified as archived is provided for reference, research or recordkeeping purposes. It is not subject to the Government of Canada Web Standards and has not been altered or updated since it was archived. Please contact us to request a format other than those available.

Page 6 of 10

#### A. Policies

##### ***Policy Framework***

The importance of increasing the availability in Canada of French content and services on the Internet must be seen in the context of the equality of English and French, as set out in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Official Languages Act*. This linguistic duality assumes the commitment of the Government of Canada to advancing the use of English and French in Canadian society and enhancing the vitality of the official language minority communities.

The Canadian government therefore has the special responsibility to develop a critical mass of French content and services, that is, a sufficient volume of pertinent and accessible information to promote the creation of a dynamic leading to fruitful exchanges in French on the Internet. Canada plays a key role in building this critical mass. The IHAC moreover states: "Every aspect of federal policy related to the Information Highway should aim at ensuring an effective presence for French-language content."<sup>12</sup>

##### **The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that the Government of Canada:**

###### **Recommendation 1**

Ensure that any federal government policy framework or initiative pertaining to the Internet affirms linguistic duality as one of its guiding principles and includes the obligation to create a volume of information of sufficient quality and pertinence to ensure fruitful exchanges in French.

##### ***Implementation of a Policy Framework***

The importance, complexity and speed of development of the Internet, together with the need for the Government of Canada to have an overview of federal initiatives, require the consolidation of existing and future efforts in this area.

The Government of Canada ... should develop ... a stronger, broader and more integrated strategy to ensure that a wider range of high-quality Canadian content is available, reflecting Canada's distinctive cultural realities and linguistic duality.<sup>13</sup>

To date, the federal government has not developed a specific strategy in this regard. It has not clearly designated a department to direct policies on the development of French-language content on the Internet. To be sure, the Department of Canadian Heritage already has major responsibilities with regard to the presence of Canadian content in the media, and responsibility for French language content on the Internet may be seen as a logical extension of its mandate. However, its role should be strengthened in this regard, particularly with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of its initiatives in this area.

The consolidation of efforts and the introduction of an integrated government strategy require, in particular, an improvement in the quality of communication among the principal departmental players. The speed of technological change and, hence, the changing needs of federal departments and agencies with regard to use, promotion and the software needed to navigate the Internet must be the subject of discussions, joint reflection and concerted decision making. To this end, the government might establish a standing interdepartmental forum on best practices related to the Internet. It might also consider, so as to be able to meet the many challenges that implementation of a coherent policy presents, calling upon a group of experts capable of providing it with advice of a forward-looking nature on the impact of the Internet on the ecology of the official languages in Canadian society.

**The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that the Government of Canada:**

**Recommendation 2**

By July 1, 2000, develop an integrated strategy with regard to the presence and quality of French-language content and services on the Internet and control procedures to ensure its effective implementation.

***Building a Trend Towards International Co-operation***

In addition to the specific projects launched by the Government of Canada - such as the establishment of an Internet site in 25 countries of the Francophonie - our consultations indicate that it would be useful to strengthen Canada's co-operation with the member countries of the Francophonie to ensure the coherence and permanence of Canada's contribution internationally. This co-operation cannot, naturally, ignore the place that should be given to French content and services on the Internet. The issue of the growth of French on the Internet necessarily has an international dimension. It received attention on several occasions: at the Francophone Summit in Cotonou in December 1995, at the conference of the G7 on the information society in Brussels in February 1995, at the conference of planning ministers in Addis Ababa in May 1995, at the XVI Biennale de la langue française in Bucharest in August 1995 and at the Conference of ministers responsible for the Information Highway in Montreal in May 1997. These meetings emphasized, in various ways, the importance of strengthening co-operation among countries of the Francophonie with respect to information technologies.

The Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable Jean Chrétien, mentioned on March 20, 1996, on the occasion of the International Francophonie Day:

The French language is, in effect, a medium through which many peoples have traced the path of their history. In this era of globalization, that path has become a highway: the information highway. The Cotonou Summit responded to that challenge and has resolutely steered the global Francophone community onto the information highway.

Through that action, the Francophonie is increasing its potential for interaction with the rest of the world, by gaining better access to what others have to offer and offering, in return, the very best of ourselves. Our language will thus be able to assume its rightful place.

For his part, the French Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, stated in his speech at Hourtin in 1997, that France must enter wholeheartedly into the information society and that "for the Francophonie, the Internet represents a space to conquer and a formidable development tool." (Our translation)

**The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that the Government of Canada:**

**Recommendation 3**

Open a window on Canada's linguistic duality to the rest of the world and to this end strengthen the trend of co-operation with the institutions, states and member governments of the Francophonie for the sharing of knowledge

and the complementarity of projects so that French may to an even greater extent be an international language of access to culture and technology.

## **B. Investment**

After looking at considerations of a structural nature, our recommendations now concern themselves with various investments that could increase French content and services on the Internet.

### ***Translation***

Our findings show that, at present, a large volume of documents that should be posted on the Internet are awaiting circulation because of the lack of resources allocated to translation. It is imperative, under the *Official Languages Act*, that the documents of federal institutions be posted on the Internet in both official languages.

However, the budgets allocated to translation by federal departments and agencies are inadequate. We even found that the lack of resources required for the translation of documents to be posted on the Internet is a systematic obstacle in this regard. Larger budgets are required if the volume of documents in French and English on the Internet is to be increased.

**The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that the Government of Canada:**

#### **Recommendation 4**

Significantly increase resources in order to provide, by the year 2002, the expertise necessary to deal with the volume and enhance the quality of translation of documents of federal departments and agencies to be posted on the Internet.

### ***Digitization***

Various federal departments have introduced digitization programs. These include the CBC, the National Film Board, the National Gallery of Canada, the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the National Museum of Science and Technology, the Canadian Museum of Nature, the National Library of Canada and the National Archives of Canada. The documents involved in these programs usually come from holdings and collections of heritage value, and our consultations indicate that additional resources are required to accelerate the digitization process which is under way. It is therefore vital that the government increase the resources assigned to the digitization of documents in both official languages in order to favour the creation of the critical mass essential to the knowledge economy.

**The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that the Government of Canada:**

#### **Recommendation 5**

Provide additional resources so as to significantly increase, by the year 2002, the quality and the volume of digitized documents of federal departments and agencies in French to be posted on the Internet.

### ***Access to Contents***

While it must earmark more resources to increase Canadians' access to its various areas of competence, the Government of Canada must, by the same token, create federal portals on the Internet.

A portal is "more than simply a technical connection. It means the home page that users see on their screens when they connect to the Internet. It offers a range of services and content, a kind of epicentre of user activities."<sup>14</sup> (Our translation)

The existence of such portals, also known as springboards, makes it possible to improve access to, and organization of, many federal sites related to the arts and culture, science and technology or finance and economics. Their existence would accordingly increase the use of federal sites in French.

Such portals are particularly valuable in the case of scientific and financial information. The lack of portals in these areas accentuates problems of access arising from the small number of documents in French. On the other hand, in the arts

and culture sector, problems of access are related to the absence of links between a large number of sites and information.

The creation of federal portals could promote access by Canadians to a whole range of information held by non-profit agencies working in these fields. A good portal must absolutely have a search engine. Moreover this search engine should have research capabilities that are linguistically advanced, such as the capacity to locate the documents being sought regardless of the grammatical form of the key words of the request (find horses when searching with the word horse) or the presence or absence of accents, either in the request or the documents indexed. Ideally, the search engines of portals should be multilingual and be able to find documents in English and French when a search is made in either of these languages.

**The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that the Government of Canada:**

#### **Recommendation 6**

Create a portal introducing and describing all of the artistic and cultural, economic and financial and scientific and technical sites of the Government of Canada and promote the development of many electronic links with non-profit agencies.

#### ***Access to Resources***

Federal sites sometimes present documents that do not originate from the Government of Canada in one language only. There is a feature of the HTTP protocol underlying the Web language negotiation whose introduction on the servers of government sites would permit the version selected by the server for each request to reflect the language preferences expressed by the visitor.

**The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that the Government of Canada:**

#### **Recommendation 7**

Improve the Web servers of federal government sites so as to take into account the language negotiation feature and facilitate searches in both official languages.

#### ***Linguistic Tools***

Various federal departments and agencies have developed a set of linguistic tools and resources that would promote the vitality of French on the Internet. These resources and tools, however, are not made available to the entire federal administration since the government is required to sell them.

For example, tools such as terminology banks, bilingual search modules, specialized software, such as that of the Translation Bureau, and various publications, are not available free of charge on the Internet.

And yet, despite the multilingual development of the Internet and the exponential growth of documents in English, it is vital to be able to interrogate English and multilingual sites on the Internet in French if it is true that the information society is "a society of words, terms, thesauri and indexes which must be kept up to date, questioned, connected and interconnected."<sup>15</sup> (Our translation)

The Government of Canada must therefore examine some of its financial management policies, particularly the cost recovery policies imposed on departments and agencies, when they come in conflict with the federal administration's responsibility to advance the use of the official languages. It is important in this regard to bear in mind that the *Official Languages Act*, by the will of the legislator, takes precedence over other federal laws.

Access to the Internet in French includes the obligation to increase research and development to perfect better international linguistic transfer tools for assistance in translation, machine translation and bilingual searches. In this regard, the National Research Council should act as a leader and take advantage of the necessary government funds to develop a critical mass of competence in these areas, together with the other departments and agencies of the federal government, the private sector and the universities. These funds would allow for the economic advantages of the Canadian linguistic duality and would allow for the further development of the language industry.

**The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that the Government of Canada:**

**Recommendation 8**

Promote research and development of linguistic tools in both official languages in order to further develop the language industry in Canada.

**Recommendation 9**

Make available without charge on the Internet, the terminology banks, bilingual and specialized search modules and linguistic transfer tools that are the property of the Government of Canada.

***Second-language Learning***

Canada has outstanding resources and expertise in distance education and second-language learning. It would be very useful, for increasing the presence of French on the Internet, to make all the pertinent information on the existing educational tools in these areas available to users. The IHAC recommends in this regard that: "The Minister of Canadian Heritage should work with ministers of education to explore ways and means of increasing the quantity and quality of original and adapted French-language educational materials for use on the Information Highway."<sup>16</sup>

**The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that the Government of Canada:**

**Recommendation 10**

In co-operation with all the departments and agencies concerned, develop a bank of resources on the Internet for learning English and French as second languages.

***Support for Content Creators***

As the CRTC stated in its notice of May 1999: "Francophone new media developers are faced with higher production costs than English-language producers because they often have to create a product in both languages and develop more costly marketing and distribution strategies to expand their market. Export options are also more limited in the francophone market."<sup>17</sup>

The Canadian government could invest more to promote the growth of industries and community sites related to the production of content and services in French by the best methods available: advertising, technical proposals, electronic links between government sites. To this end, the Government of Canada must develop a communication strategy based on the Internet.

**The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that the Government of Canada:**

**Recommendation 11**

Develop and implement an investment strategy to promote the expansion of private sector and non-profit agencies working in the areas of French-language content and services.

***Portal of the Francophonie***

Much still remains to be done to promote mutual knowledge among the member countries of the Francophonie. First of all, the many geo-documentary profiles of the countries of the Francophonie must be made more accessible on the Internet in co-operation with the Banque internationale d'information sur les États francophones (BIEF) and the Centre international francophone de documentation et d'information (CIFDI).

**The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that the Government of Canada:**

**Recommendation 12**

Develop or promote the development of a portal on the Internet to make information on the member states of the

## Notes

12. Canada, Industry Canada, *Preparing Canada for a Digital World*, p. 76.
13. Canada, Industry Canada, *Preparing Canada for a Digital World*, Recommendation 5.1, p. 60.
14. Michel Cartier, *Les véritables enjeux derrière l'émergence des portails. Les nouvelles clientèles et les nouveaux marchés de l'économie du savoir*, March 1999, p. 4.
15. Patrick Bloche, *Le désir de France. La présence internationale de la France et la francophonie dans la société de l'information*, Report to the Prime Minister, Paris, Service d'information du gouvernement, December 1998, p. 103.
16. Canada, Industry Canada, *Preparing Canada for a Digital World*, p. 78.
17. Canada, Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission, Broadcasting Public Notice CRTC 1999-84, paragraph 79.

[Previous Page](#) | [Table of Contents](#) | [Next Page](#)



## ARCHIVED - Conclusion

**Warning** The [Standard on Web Usability](#) replaces this content. This content is archived because Common Look and Feel 2.0 Standards have been rescinded.

## Archived Content

Information identified as archived is provided for reference, research or recordkeeping purposes. It is not subject to the Government of Canada Web Standards and has not been altered or updated since it was archived. Please contact us to request a format other than those available.

Page 7 of 10

The Internet, which is linking more and more Canadians to one another, is rapidly transforming Canadian society and the Government of Canada. It is vital that these changes reflect the equality of status of English and French as set out in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the vitality of the official language minority communities as intended by Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*. Francophones in Quebec, in Acadia, in all the provinces of Canada and in the international Francophonie must make the powerful tool for communications and cultural and economic development known as the Internet their own.

The Government of Canada has devoted unflagging efforts, under the National Strategy for Connectivity, to making the Internet available to the largest possible number of Canadians. Policies and investments are now required of the Government of Canada to increase its contribution to French content and services on the Internet. The Commissioner of Official Languages invites the Government of Canada, in this special study, to develop and implement a strategy to promote the creation of a dynamic for use of the Internet in French.

[Previous Page](#) | [Table of Contents](#) | [Next Page](#)





## ARCHIVED - List of Recommendations

**Warning** The [Standard on Web Usability](#) replaces this content. This content is archived because Common Look and Feel 2.0 Standards have been rescinded.

### Archived Content

Information identified as archived is provided for reference, research or recordkeeping purposes. It is not subject to the Government of Canada Web Standards and has not been altered or updated since it was archived. Please contact us to request a format other than those available.

Page 8 of 10

#### The Commissioner of Official Languages recommends that the Government of Canada:

##### Recommendation 1

Ensure that any federal government policy framework or initiative pertaining to the Internet affirms linguistic duality as one of its guiding principles and includes the obligation to create a volume of information of sufficient quality and pertinence to ensure fruitful exchanges in French.

##### Recommendation 2

By July 1, 2000, develop an integrated strategy with regard to the presence and quality of French-language content and services on the Internet and control procedures to ensure its effective implementation.

##### Recommendation 3

Open a window on Canada's linguistic duality to the rest of the world and to this end strengthen the trend of co-operation with the institutions, states and member governments of the Francophonie for the sharing of knowledge and the complementarity of projects so that French may to an even greater extent be an international language of access to culture and technology.

##### Recommendation 4

Significantly increase resources in order to provide, by the year 2002, the expertise necessary to deal with the volume and enhance the quality of translation of documents of federal departments and agencies to be posted on the Internet.

**Recommendation 5**

Provide additional resources so as to significantly increase, by the year 2002, the quality and the volume of digitized documents of federal departments and agencies in French to be posted on the Internet.

**Recommendation 6**

Create a portal introducing and describing all of the artistic and cultural, economic and financial and scientific and technical sites of the Government of Canada and promote the development of many electronic links with non-profit agencies.

**Recommendation 7**

Improve the Web servers of federal government sites so as to take into account the language negotiation feature and facilitate searches in both official languages.

**Recommendation 8**

Promote research and development of linguistic tools in both official languages in order to further develop the language industry in Canada.

**Recommendation 9**

Make available without charge on the Internet, the terminology banks, bilingual and specialized search modules and linguistic transfer tools that are the property of the Government of Canada.

**Recommendation 10**

In co-operation with all the departments and agencies concerned, develop a bank of resources on the Internet for learning English and French as second languages.

**Recommendation 11**

Develop and implement an investment strategy to promote the expansion of private sector and non-profit agencies working in the areas of French-language content and services.

**Recommendation 12**

Develop or promote the development of a portal on the Internet to make information on the member states of the Francophonie more easily accessible.

[Previous Page](#) | [Table of Contents](#) | [Next Page](#)





# ARCHIVES

Français

Home

Contact Us

Help

Search

canada.gc.ca

## ARCHIVED - Bibliography

**Warning** The [Standard on Web Usability](#) replaces this content. This content is archived because Common Look and Feel 2.0 Standards have been rescinded.

### Archived Content

Information identified as archived is provided for reference, research or recordkeeping purposes. It is not subject to the Government of Canada Web Standards and has not been altered or updated since it was archived. Please contact us to request a format other than those available.

Page 9 of 10

Andries, Patrick and Yergeau, François, *Augmenter la présence du français sur l'Internet. Quarante pistes*, Alis Technologies, Montreal, March 1995, 14 p.

Bloche, Patrick, *Le désir de France. La présence internationale de la France et la francophonie dans la société de l'information*, Report to the Prime Minister, Paris, Service d'information du gouvernement, December 1998, 231 p.  
<http://lesrapports.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/BRP/994000906/0000.htm> (in French only)

Cartier, Michel, *Les véritables enjeux derrière l'émergence des portails. Les nouvelles clientèles et les nouveaux marchés de l'économie du savoir*, March 1999, 20 p. <http://www.mmedium.com/cgi-bin/nouvelles.cgi?Id=2307/>

Canada, Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission, Broadcasting Public Notice CRTC 1999-84, Ottawa, May 17, 1999, paragraph 79. <http://www.crtc.gc.ca/ENG/NEWS/RELEASES/1999/R990517ef.htm>

Canada, Industry Canada. *Connection, Community, Content: The Challenge of the Information Highway*, Final Report (Phase I) of the Information Highway Advisory Council, Ottawa, September 1995, 227 p.  
<http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/SSG/ih01070e.html>

- *Building the Information Society: Moving Canada into the 21st Century*, Ottawa, 1996, 31 p.  
<http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/SSG/ih01103e.html>

- *Preparing Canada for a Digital World*, Final Report (Phase II) of the Information Highway Advisory Council, Ottawa, 1997, 202 p. <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/SSG/ih01650e.html>

- *Towards a Learning Nation: The Digital Contribution*, Task Force on Digitization, 1997, 100 p. <http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/8/3/>

Canada, Canadian Institute for Scientific and Technical Information, *A Business Plan for the Scientific Knowledge Network (SKN): To Harness, Accelerate and Grow Canadian Innovation*, February 1998, 32 p. [http://www.cnrc.ca/cisti/cisti\\_e.shtml](http://www.cnrc.ca/cisti/cisti_e.shtml)

Canada, *Les inforoutes et la Francophonie. Les inforoutes au service du développement*. Réflexion canadienne, Conférence des ministres responsables de l'autoroute de l'information, Prepared by Jacques Lyrette for the Canadian Delegation, Montreal, March 1997, 12 p.

Canada, Statistics Canada, *Facilities and Equipment*, Ottawa, 1998, Catalogue No. 64-202.

Danzin, André, *Pour une politique de promotion des « industries de la langue » et des « industries de l'information » basées sur l'informatisation du français*, Report submitted to the Prime Minister by the Conseil supérieur de la langue française, Working Group "Développement et valorisation du français. Traitement automatique et industries de la langue," Paris, 1992. <http://www.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca/>

*Internet : Accès et utilisation au Québec. Rapport d'enquête*, Bureau de la statistique du Québec (BSQ), Centre francophone d'informatisation des organisations, (CEFRIO). Réseau interordinateurs scientifique québécois (RISQ). Collection Infomètre, November 1998, 195 p. <http://www.cefrio.qc.ca/>

*La place des langues et cultures latines sur l'Internet*, Agence de la Francophonie. - Union latine. - FUNREDES, 1998.

Lebert, Marie-France, *Le multilinguisme sur le Web*, Université de la Sorbonne, Paris. February 1999  
<http://www.cefrio.qc.ca/ceveil.htm>

Le Scouarnec, François-Pierre, *Information et démocratie : enjeux pour les gouvernements et la langue française*, XVI<sup>e</sup> Biennale de la langue française, Bucharest, 1995.

- *Stratégie et plan d'action pour le développement de contenus d'expression française sur les autoroutes de l'*, document for review, December 1996, Scientech, 39 p.

Oudet, Bruno and Guédon, Jean-Claude, "Vers une nouvelle écologie des langues?" in *Les Cahiers de Médiologie*, n<sup>o</sup> 3, Gallimard, Paris, February 1999.

Québec, Conseil de la langue française, *Avis sur les industries de la langue dans la société de l'information*, December 1994.

Québec, Roy, Réjean (with the co-operation of Pierre Georgeault), *L'inforoute en français : un portrait québécois*, Conseil de la langue française, Québec, 1998, 134 p.

Savoie, Donald, *Collectivités minoritaires de langues officielles : Promouvoir un objectif gouvernemental*, October 1998, pp. 11-15.

[Previous Page](#) | [Table of Contents](#) | [Next Page](#)



# ARCHIVES

Français

Home

Contact Us

Help

Search

canada.gc.ca

## ARCHIVED - Appendix - Institutions Consulted

**Warning** The [Standard on Web Usability](#) replaces this content. This content is archived because Common Look and Feel 2.0 Standards have been rescinded.

### Archived Content

Information identified as archived is provided for reference, research or recordkeeping purposes. It is not subject to the Government of Canada Web Standards and has not been altered or updated since it was archived. Please contact us to request a format other than those available.

Page 10 of 10

Access to Information Commissioner  
Agence universitaire de la francophonie  
Agence de la francophonie  
Agriculture Canada  
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency  
Atomic Energy of Canada  
Banque internationale d'information sur les États francophones  
Canada Council for the Arts  
Canada Post Corporation  
Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information  
Canadian National  
Canadian Heritage  
Canadian Food Inspection Agency  
Canadian Space Agency  
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation  
Canadian Museum of Civilization  
Canadian War Museum  
Centre international pour le développement de l'inforoute en français  
Citizenship and Immigration  
Environment Canada  
Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada  
Finance Canada  
Fisheries and Oceans Canada  
Foreign Affairs and International Trade  
Health Canada  
Human Resources Development Canada  
Industry Canada  
Musée virtuel de la Nouvelle-France  
National Research Council Canada

National Defence  
National Library of Canada  
National Archives of Canada  
Natural Resources Canada  
Public Works and Government Services Canada  
Revenue Canada  
Statistics Canada  
Translation Bureau Canada  
Transport Canada  
Treasury Board Secretariat  
VIA Rail Canada

© Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada 1999  
Catalogue No.: SF31-39/1999  
ISBN : 0-662-64323-2

[Previous Page](#) | [Table of Contents](#)

Date modified: 2012-03-06

  
Top of page

[Important Notices](#)