



2023-2024 CRA Be Scam Smart Advertising Campaign Concept Testing

Report

Prepared for the Canada Revenue Agency

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November 2023

This report presents the results for the *2023-2024 CRA Be Scam Smart Advertising Campaign Concept Testing* conducted by Advanis on behalf of the Canada Revenue Agency. The study involved 8 focus groups conducted between September 11, 2023, and September 13, 2023.

Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français sous le titre : *Mise à l'essai des concepts de la campagne publicitaire sur les arnaques menée par l'Agence du revenu du Canada de 2023 à 2024*

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Executive Summary

In November 2020, while working in cooperation with various government departments, the CRA initiated a multi-year, cross-departmental advertising initiative. The main objective of this ad campaign was to increase awareness among Canadians about government-related scams, especially among newcomers to Canada, seniors, and youth.

To ensure the efficacy of the ad campaign, a thorough evaluation, commonly known as a "disaster check," was required. The research objectives were:

- To determine if the ad concept is effective among target audiences
- To determine if the campaign is relevant, eye-catching, etc.
- To evaluate the effectiveness and comprehension of the proposed taglines and messaging

The disaster check served to 1) determine if the content is relevant to each audience, clearly understood, and creatively appealing; 2) elicit suggestions for potential changes to ensure the message(s) and ad(s) resonate with the target audiences; and 3) elicit suggestions for possible modifications to the concept that would increase effectiveness.

The 2023-2024 CRA Be Scam Smart Advertising Campaign Concept Testing was conducted with online focus groups. Participants to the focus groups were asked to give their impressions on a storyboard for a video ad, an audio ad, and taglines.

All participants were recruited on the phone by Advanis using Advanis' General Population Random Sample (GPRS), a proprietary, representative sample source recruited via probability-sampling. After being recruited on the phone, participants received a confirmation email containing the information necessary to participate in the focus group.

A total of 8 groups were conducted with Zoom (4 in English, 4 in French). Moderators were located in Montreal, Quebec. Groups were held from September 11 to September 13, 2023. The research participants included members of the target audience which were individuals new to Canada (less than 10 years in Canada), seniors (60 years old and older), youth (18 to 34 years old) as well as the general population (35 to 59 years old).

The ad concept was effective among the target audiences. Its message was understood and it encouraged people to be vigilant about scams. It is less clear whether the call to action of the ads to visit the website was efficient, as many participants did not feel personally targeted, but believed it could be useful for other people.

Participants agreed on the importance of these ads to raise awareness about scams involving the Government of Canada name. Given that it was common among participants to have been exposed to these types of scams, having ads to help people be cautious was considered a good initiative.

The ads were generally considered attention-grabbing. For the storyboard of the video ad, participants pointed to the importance for the ad to immediately catch the audience's attention. The message conveyed in the taglines was also generally understood and considered clear. The audio ad was believed by some to be attention-grabbing, efficient, and funny, but reactions were mixed about the reference to gift cards. Participants differed on whether they would take action after hearing the audio ad.

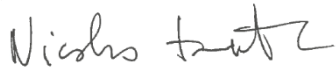
As in all qualitative projects, the results of the research are directional and not statistically projectable to the target population.

Political Neutrality Statement and Contact Information

I hereby certify as a Senior Officer of Advanis that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research.

Specifically, the deliverables do not contain any reference to electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leader.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicolas Toutant". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Nicolas Toutant,
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1. Background and Objectives

1.1 Background

In recent years, there has been an increase in scams using the Government of Canada's name. These scams are a threat to individuals living in Canada, regardless of their age, gender, socio-economic status, or ethnicity. According to Statistics Canada (2021b), the total reported crime in Canada decreased by 17%, while reported fraud cases increased by 46%¹. These scams can manifest through various communication channels, including email, text messages, phone calls, and instant messaging. They often target vulnerable individuals, such as seniors, newcomers to Canada, and young people.

The range of scams is extensive, encompassing false or deceptive service advertisements, fraudulent tax refund or payment notices, and requests for personal and financial information. These scams adapt and evolve over time, as demonstrated by the surge of COVID-related scams that emerged when emergency relief programs were introduced to aid Canadians during the pandemic.

To make sure scam warnings are widely distributed, the Government of Canada works with a variety of partners including the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), the Competition Bureau, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC). The Government of Canada considers it important to continue consistent communication of its core messages to raise awareness about this issue using a variety of communication strategies including advertising and marketing initiatives.

In November 2020, while working in cooperation with various government departments, the CRA initiated a multi-year, cross-departmental advertising initiative. The primary goal was to raise public awareness regarding prevalent scams associated with the Government of Canada's name and direct individuals to the campaign's webpage for additional details. The advertising included television and online videos, web banners, connected television, digital audio, social media, and search engine marketing.

The main objective of this ad campaign was to increase awareness among Canadians about government-related scams, especially among newcomers to Canada, seniors, and youth. More specifically, the objectives were to:

- Increase Canadians' awareness of common scams involving the Government of Canada's name.
- Increase traffic to the [Canada.ca/be-scam-smart](https://www.canada.ca/be-scam-smart) webpage for more information.

To ensure the efficacy of the ad campaign, a thorough evaluation, commonly known as a "disaster check," was required. The disaster check served to 1) determine if the content is relevant to each audience, clearly understood, and creatively appealing; 2) elicit suggestions for potential changes to ensure the message(s) and ad(s) resonate with the target audiences; and 3) elicit suggestions for possible modifications to the concept that would increase effectiveness.

The research objectives were:

- To determine if the ad concept is effective among target audiences
- To determine if the campaign is relevant, eye-catching, etc.
- To evaluate the effectiveness and comprehension of the proposed taglines and messaging

¹ Statistics Canada. (2021b). Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations, Canada, provinces, territories and Census Metropolitan Areas [Table 35-10-0177-01]. <https://doi.org/10.25318/3510017701-eng>

2. Methodology

2.1 Research procedures

The 2023-2024 CRA Be Scam Smart Advertising Campaign Concept Testing was conducted with online focus groups. The research participants included members of the target audience which were individuals new to Canada (less than 10 years in Canada), seniors (60 years old and older), youth (18 to 34 years old) as well as the general population (35 to 59 years old). All research participants described themselves as very or somewhat comfortable with the use of a computer.

A total of 8 groups were conducted with Zoom. Moderators were located in Montreal, Quebec. Groups were held from September 11 to September 13, 2023. The description of each group is presented in the table below.

Table 1 – Groups description

Date	Time (ET)	Language	Population
Monday, Sept 11	6:30 pm	English	General population
Monday, Sept 11	8:15 pm	French	General population
Tuesday, Sept 12	6:30 pm	French	Seniors
Tuesday, Sept 12	8:15 pm	English	Seniors
Tuesday, Sept 12	10:00 pm	English	Newcomers to Canada
Wednesday, Sept 13	6:30 pm	French	Newcomers to Canada
Wednesday, Sept 13	8:15 pm	French	Youth
Wednesday, Sept 13	10:00 pm	English	Youth

All participants were recruited using Advanis' General Population Random Sample (GPRS), a proprietary, representative sample source recruited via probability-sampling.

2.2 Recruitment methods

All participants were recruited by Advanis from September 6 to September 13, 2023, using a telephone script. The recruitment objective was to recruit 10 participants per group, ensuring a minimum of 8 participants would attend each group.

To ensure participation, a direct phone number to a member of the Advanis team was given to every recruit. After being recruited on the phone, all participants received a confirmation email containing the information necessary to participate in the focus group and were asked to confirm their participation. On the day of the focus group, each participant was called, reminding them of their participation and ensuring they received the necessary information to take part in the discussion.

In total, 79 participants were recruited. Of those, 69 took part in the online discussions. The number of participants for each group is presented in the table below.

Table 2 – Number of participants and recruited for each group

Date	Time (ET)	Language	Population	Recruited	Attended
Monday, Sept 11	6:30 pm	English	General population	10	9
Monday, Sept 11	8:15 pm	French	General population	10	8
Tuesday, Sept 12	6:30 pm	French	Seniors	10	10
Tuesday, Sept 12	8:15 pm	English	Seniors	9	8
Tuesday, Sept 12	10:00 pm	English	Newcomers to Canada	10	9
Wednesday, Sept 13	6:30 pm	French	Newcomers to Canada	10	7
Wednesday, Sept 13	8:15 pm	French	Youth	10	10
Wednesday, Sept 13	10:00 pm	English	Youth	10	8

The consent of all participants was obtained and they were reminded that their participation was voluntary. All participants received an incentive of 100\$ for their participation. Focus groups lasted for a maximum of one hour and fifteen minutes.

2.3 Use of the results

As in all qualitative projects, the results of the research are directional and not statistically projectable to the target population.

2.4 Recording of the output of the qualitative session

An audio recording as well as a transcript of each session was created for note taking purposes. The recordings and transcripts were destroyed after the reporting phase of the project.

3. Results

3.1 People's experience with scams related to the Government of Canada.

Across all groups, most people mentioned that they had recent experiences with scams related to the Government of Canada. The scams participants were exposed to scams from various communication channels. These include text messages, emails and phone calls.

Scams frequently mentioned by participants include scams where they were asked to click on a link (via a text message or an email) or share personal information. One of the most common tactics scammers employed was to use the Canada Revenue Agency's (CRA) name or mention taxes in general. This scam is often accompanied by a threat of legal action if the person contacted does not act quickly because of money being due.

Sometimes scams are inviting citizens to claim money from a refund that the Government would owe them or to claim money that would be made available through Government programs. Another common tactic deals with customs-related issues, where a fraudulent Canada Post message mentions a package is being held at the border.

3.2 Storyboard for the video ad

Respondents were shown a storyboard of the potential video ad to gauge their reaction and evaluate their understanding. This storyboard included images and text description of the ad. The moderator narrated the ad for the participants while showing the storyboard on screen. The storyboard shown to participants can be found in appendices C and D.

What people understood from the advertisement:

The advertisement was understood by most to be a warning inviting people to be cautious about scams or to learn about them. It was also considered to be simple and important.

It was mentioned that the lesson to be taken from the ad was to take time to reflect when receiving communications from the Government of Canada and to think twice before acting.

It was also mentioned that it invited people to visit a specific Government of Canada website page to learn more about scams. The objective was then understood to be about giving tools to identify potential scams. Respondents across all groups agreed on the importance of such an ad to prevent Canadians from getting scammed.

Target audience of the ad:

The ad was generally understood to be meant for everybody. However, many respondents did not feel like the message conveyed was personally intended for them, but rather for people they considered more vulnerable.

The situation presented in the ad contributed to the feeling that the ad was meant for everybody. An ad showing a scam being attempted on a cellphone is something that speaks to all types of people, since a large part of the population owns a cellphone and could be exposed to such a scam.

It was also mentioned that the message was simple and therefore accessible for a variety of audiences. That being said, younger individuals or people who consider themselves tech-savvy tend to feel less like the target audience since they believe they would not fall for such a scam. For them, people who are more at risk of getting scammed are the target audience of this ad.

Interestingly, we found that people in every group felt like they were not at risk of getting scammed compared to other groups. For example, some seniors mentioned they were more experienced than younger people at identifying scams and some younger people felt seniors were more at risk. This shows that even if most people personally do not feel at risk of failing to identify a scam, they feel like it would be a relevant ad for others.

Newcomers were the only group where people explicitly expressed they were more vulnerable to these scams. Being new to the country can mean not being necessarily aware of the way the Government of Canada communicates with its citizens. Some newcomers mentioned they would not have known that the Government does not send tax refunds by text messages. In contrast, other groups mentioned it would have been obvious for them to identify this scam.

Does the ad grab attention?

Most respondents mentioned that the ad would grab their attention in its final video format but some thought it could be more attention-grabbing.

Many mentioned that the ad would grab their attention, but it would be conditional to a few characteristics of the ad once produced. These conditions include making sure that the warning symbol is displayed prominently. Not spending too much time on the first frame in order to show the potential scam as early as possible was also mentioned.

After seeing the storyboard, some were concerned that the ad might not have enough “*punch*”. This was more notably mentioned among the senior audience, although we could find participants from all groups with this opinion. To some extent, this is influenced by the fact that the ad is presented in a storyboard and not in its final video format.

Setting of the ad:

The initial setting of the ad of someone eating and receiving a text message, is considered relatable by some participants while others would prefer a different setting.

It was mentioned that most people can recognize themselves in this situation because it shows something people do every day. It is still interesting to highlight that even though the setting is one where people can recognize themselves, a lot of participants did not feel directly targeted by the ad, as mentioned previously.

Some participants highlighted the importance for the ad to immediately catch the audience’s attention. They were worried the initial setting might not successfully reach this objective. For example, it was mentioned that the initial setting of someone eating looked too much like a food commercial. Some also said that the setting was not memorable enough. These opinions were dependent on how much time the actual video ad will spend on the first frame before presenting the scam.

The sign appearing out of the window and backing up towards the protagonist was understood by most to be an invitation to be cautious. While a few people did not like the image of a truck backing up with a warning sign, most liked this idea but stressed the importance of making the yellow sign obvious for the ad to successfully convey its message.

Call to action of the video ad:

At the end of the ad, the audience is invited to visit a webpage on the Government of Canada’s website to learn more about scams. Most people did not think they would visit the website right away, but the ad does bring scam issues to their attention. They would remember to be cautious or would remember that resources are available on the website if needed.

Some would invite people they know who could be more vulnerable to these types of scams to consult the website. This means that even if they feel the website is not necessarily relevant to them, they think it would be relevant for someone more at risk. This shows once again that many did not feel like the ad was addressed to them personally.

Additional suggestions:

Even though the ad's objective is to invite people to be cautious about scams and to provide resources to identify potential scams, some participants mentioned that they would have liked to have tips to identify scams in the ad itself.

Others mentioned they would have appreciated if the ad could indicate how to report potential scams. It was also mentioned that it would be appreciated if the ad mentioned explicitly if the situation presented is a scam or not.

3.3 Symbols

The video ad contains a symbol used to represent a warning towards scams. Participants were shown two different symbols and were asked about their impressions and understanding of each. The symbols shown can be found in appendix E.

Yellow warning sign:

Firstly, participants were shown a yellow triangle sign containing an exclamation point. They generally liked the message it conveyed, and it was considered attention-grabbing by most.

When asked what this sign meant to them, the most common words that came to the participants' minds were *"warning"*, *"caution"*, and *"danger"*.

The sign was considered to be universally relatable, including by newcomers to Canada. Most liked the yellow colour, suggesting it invites people to slow down and be vigilant rather than simply stop. A few people preferred to see the sign in another colour, such as red or orange. In their opinion, these colours would convey more urgency or would feel closer to an alert.

The sign was also generally considered to be attention-grabbing, on the condition that it would be presented in an obvious manner in the final video ad. To make it more obvious, suggestions included having the sign flashing in the ad, while others mentioned that more colours could be added to the sign to make it more eye-catching.

Red sign:

Participants were then shown a red octagon. Opinions were divided on this sign. Some thought it was not appropriate for the video ad, while others believed it conveyed a strong and clear message.

The sign was interpreted as a stop sign and was seen as an invitation to stop before making an action. The red colour was appreciated by some participants as it is associated with potential danger. These participants felt like the red sign was attention-grabbing and appropriate to convey a high level of alert.

Others felt like the sign was less appropriate when taking into consideration the context of the ad. For them, the ad is inviting people to think about the potential scam, not to necessarily stop. A younger participant mentioned it felt patronizing to be told to stop.

To summarize, the yellow sign is understood by the focus groups as a warning inviting people to slow down and think, whereas the red octagon is seen as an urgent request to stop.

3.4 Audio ad

A 15 second audio ad was played to participants to gauge their reaction and evaluate their understanding. A transcript of the ad can be found in appendices F and G.

Initial reactions:

Reactions to the ad were mixed. Those who liked the ad believed it to be attention-grabbing, efficient, and funny. The main issue for those who did not like the audio ad was the nature of the scam presented in the ad (i.e., the Government asking to get paid with gift cards).

Among those who found it attention-grabbing, some identified the sound effect at the beginning of the ad representing a cellphone buzzing as catching their attention. It was also mentioned that the ad efficiently conveyed the message to be cautious about scams. The ad was considered direct, simple, and even funny by some.

The gift card reference surprised a lot of participants. For them, it felt absurd that such a scam would even exist given how obvious it is to them that the Government would not ask someone to pay with gift cards. This feeling of absurdness was shared by many but not all agreed on how it affected the ad.

For some, the gift card reference was simply irrelevant and illogical for this kind of ad since it was not a believable scam. It was also mentioned that it made them stop paying attention to the rest of the ad given the absurdity of the situation presented.

For other participants, the absurdness of the gift card reference was seen positively as the element that grabbed their attention. It was also mentioned that it could help raise awareness of scams otherwise considered as unusual or far-fetched.

The ad was also understood to target everyone who owns a cellphone or pays taxes.

Sound effects:

During the ad, a record scratching sound effect was used. It caught most peoples' attention and was perceived as a way to communicate to the audience that they should stop and think before acting. It was also mentioned that its meaning would be understood by most and that it contributed to the funny aspect of the ad. Some mentioned that this sound effect was overused in general, even if they understood what it attempted to communicate.

Also, the ad begins with a vibrating sound representing a cell phone receiving a text message. Most recognized what the sound was, but some participants mentioned it might be preferable to have a "*Ding!*" sound instead. They thought it would make it more obvious that it is someone receiving a text message.

Call to action of the audio ad:

The audio ad invites people to learn the signs of potential scams on the Government of Canada's website. Participant's opinions differed on whether they would take action after seeing the ad. While some participants would not have visited the website since they could not see the address, others mentioned they might visit it. Similarly to the video ad, most agreed that it does make people more aware of scams and encourages them to be cautious.

It was mentioned earlier that the gift card scam used in the ad grabbed the attention of some people. The same can be said about the call to action. It was mentioned that the unusual nature of the scam presented could encourage people to visit the website to learn more.

Additional suggestion:

During the ad, we hear the protagonist say *“The Government won’t ask me to pay with gift cards”*. A few participants suggested to use *“would not”* or *“wouldn’t”* instead of *“won’t”* as they believed it to be more grammatically correct.

3.5 Taglines

Both the audio and video ads contained taglines that the CRA wished to test among the participants. Participants were told the taglines were interchangeable and were asked to give their impressions regardless of the context of the ads in which they were presented.

Tagline 1:

The first tagline presented was the following (in English and French):

“Some scams are easy to spot. Some are not. Learn the signs. Canada.ca/be-scam-smart can help”.

“Certaines arnaques sont faciles à repérer. D’autres ne le sont pas. Apprenez à reconnaître les signes. Canada.ca/evitez-les-arnaques peut vous aider.”

It caught the attention of most participants. This tagline was understood to be an effort to give tools to people to avoid scams. It was also mentioned that it meant that even if a scam looks easy to spot, they might not all be, providing an incentive to visit the website. The way it is worded was also appreciated, since it gave a clear warning without being patronizing.

Tagline 2:

The second tagline was the following (in English and French):

“Not sure if it’s a scam? Learn the signs. Canada.ca/be-scam-smart can help.”

“Vous n’êtes pas certain s’il s’agit d’une arnaque? Apprenez à reconnaître les signes. Canada.ca/evitez-les-arnaques peut vous aider.”

This tagline was appreciated for being interrogative. It was considered concise, to the point and was understood as a clear call to action to learn the signs on the website.

Comments relevant for both taglines:

Respondents were not asked specifically for their preferred tagline. However, some mentioned they preferred tagline 1.

In both languages, participants were critical of the “*Canada.ca/be-scam-smart can help*” line. Participants mentioned that “*can help*” being shown after the website URL could cause confusion. Especially with audio, people could think “*can help*” is part of the URL. To avoid confusion, it was suggested to put the website at the end of the sentence. That way, it would be clear what is part of the address and what is not. A lot of alternative formulations were provided. “*Visit canada.ca/be-scam-smart*” was one of the suggestions.

In the English youth group, it was mentioned by many that “*Learn the signs*” might be overused. For example, they remembered seeing similar wording in medical awareness ads.

Some participants thought the taglines were not concise enough, especially in French. For tagline 1, this observation was mostly made for the French version of the tagline, but it was also mentioned for the English version.

Tagline 2 was considered too long only in French. Shorter versions of the first sentence were suggested such as, “*Est-ce une arnaque?*” instead of “*Vous n’êtes pas certain s’il s’agit d’une arnaque?*”.

4. Conclusion

The ad concept was effective among the target audiences in the sense that its message was understood and that it encouraged people to be vigilant about scams. The message was partly understood by some participants for the audio ad because of its reference to gift cards.

It is less clear whether the call to action of the ads to visit the website is efficient, as many participants do not feel personally targeted, but believe it could be useful for other people.

Participants agreed on the importance of these ads to raise awareness about scams involving the Government of Canada name. Given that it was common among participants to have been exposed to these types of scams, having ads to help people be cautious is considered a good initiative.

The ads were generally considered attention-grabbing. For the storyboard of the video ad, participants pointed to the importance for the ad to immediately catch the audience's attention. The message conveyed in the taglines was also generally understood and considered clear. The following presents a more detailed assessment for each of the elements that were tested:

Storyboard for the video ad:

The video advertisement presented as a storyboard was understood to be a warning inviting people to be vigilant about scams or to learn about them. While some mentioned the ad could have more "*punch*", the ad was generally considered to be attention-grabbing on the condition that the final video ad presents obvious warning effects and gets straight to the point.

Despite good feedback and mentioning that the ad's message is meant for everybody, a lot of people do not feel like they were the target audience. Most are confident in their capability to catch scams but believe the ad can be relevant to more vulnerable people. Participants do not necessarily agree on who the vulnerable people are. Newcomers were the only group to explicitly mention they were part of a more vulnerable audience.

The initial setting of the ad was considered relatable by some participants while others believed it looked too much like a food commercial or was not memorable enough. A minority would visit the website presented in the ad right away, but some would share the link with people they know.

The ad is considered to bring scam issues to the attention of the audience. Most participants would remember to be cautious or would remember that resources are available on the website if needed.

Symbols:

Participants generally liked the message conveyed by the yellow warning sign and thought it was attention-grabbing and universal. The most common words that came to the participants' minds when describing the meaning of the sign were "*warning*", "*caution*", and "*danger*".

Opinions were more divided on the red octagon. Some mentioned it was not an appropriate sign for the video ad, while others believed it delivered a strong and clear message that people need to stop in these situations before acting.

Audio ad:

Reactions to the audio ad were mixed. It was believed to be attention-grabbing, efficient, funny, and raising awareness on more unusual scams. Others thought the gift card scam presented in the ad was confusing. The record scratching sound effect caught most people's attention. It was perceived to incite the audience to stop and think before acting, but some younger participants found the sound effect overused.

The message conveyed was understood to highlight the need to be cautious about scams. Participants differed on whether or not they would take action after seeing the ad. Most agreed that it makes people more aware of scams, but some mentioned they would visit the website presented, while others would not.

Taglines:

The tagline *"Some scams are easy to spot. Some are not..."* caught the attention of most participants and was understood to be an effort to give tools to people to avoid scams. It gave a clear warning without being patronizing but was considered too long by some participants.

The fact that the tagline *"Not sure if it's a scam?..."* was interrogative was appreciated. It was also generally considered simple and concise.

For both taglines, participants mentioned that the *"can help"* part being after the website is presented might cause confusion. It was suggested to put the website at the end of the sentence to make it clear for the audience where the URL begins and ends. Both taglines were considered too long by some French participants.

Appendix A: Moderation Guide – Taglines 1-2

CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

2023-2024 CRA Scams Advertising Campaign Concept Testing

Moderator's Guide – V1

Introduction

10 minutes

For reference:

Audience	English	French
Newcomers	G5 – Scenario EN, Audio EN, (Tagline EN : 1-2)	G6 – Scenario FR, Audio FR, (Tagline FR: 2-1)
Young People	G8 – Scenario EN, Audio EN, (Tagline EN : 2-1)	G7 – Scenario FR, Audio FR, (Tagline FR: 1-2)
Seniors	G4 – Scenario EN, Audio EN, (Tagline EN : 1-2)	G3 – Scenario FR, Audio FR, (Tagline FR: 2-1)
Gen Pop	G1 – Scenario EN, Audio EN, (Tagline EN: 2-1)	G2 – Scenario FR, Audio FR, (Tagline FR: 1-2)

- **Welcome:** Introduce Advanis as an independent marketing research company; introduce self and function of a moderator
- **Topic & Sponsor:** Today I'd like to explore your thoughts on advertising that is currently being considered by the Government of Canada
- **Length:** Discussion will last about an hour and 15 minutes
- **Explain process:** All opinions are important; no right/wrong answers; need to understand agreement/disagreement; talk one at a time (identify yourself by first name before you speak); provide instructions on how to address technical issues during the session
- **Logistics:** Session audio recording; government employees as observers
- **Confidentiality:** Individual comments are confidential/anonymous; no names in report; voluntary participation; ask participants to keep content of discussion in confidence.
- **Results:** Report will be available to the public through Library and Archives within 6 months
- **Participant Introduction:** In which city or community you live; who lives in your home; and your favourite hobby.

General Discussion

5 minutes

The advertising idea we will look at today is about scams involving the government. Essentially, people or organizations pretending to be the Government of Canada.

- What, if anything, have you heard about these scams recently?

Storyboard

25 minutes

Tonight we are going to look at an idea for an advertising campaign that is being considered by the Government of Canada. We will look at the advertising concept, including a mock-up for a video/tv ad, a radio ad, one or two visual signs as well as some ad taglines. As we look at the campaign, keep in mind this is just an idea at this point; this means the ads you will see are not final. You'll have to use your imagination a little to envision what the ads would be like in their final form. For example, for the video/tv ad, I will show you a storyboard which is a series of still images that will give you an idea of the scenario and help you imagine what the video might look like once produced. The final ad would be a fully-produced commercial with actors like any other you would see on TV or online.

Given that what I'm showing you are in the draft form only, please focus on what the campaign is saying and the manner in which the message is communicated, rather than the quality of the design. For now, I'm mostly interested in your views on the underlying concept.

Please hold your thoughts as I show you the advertisement storyboard that is part of the campaign.

MODERATOR PRESENTS THE CAMPAIGN STORYBOARD (7 slides)

AFTER THE STORYBOARD: Now let's talk about this idea together...

Intent/Message/Credibility:

- Do you think this concept would grab your attention? Why?
- What is this ad trying to communicate?
- Have you learned anything?

Clarity/Appropriateness:

- Is anything unclear, confusing or problematic?
- What do you think of the settings / situations shown?

Relevance/Appeal:

- Who is this campaign speaking to: someone like you or someone different? ***IF THEM:*** Why do you feel like it speaks to you? ***IF NOT THEM:*** Why not you?

Intended Call-to-Action/Memorability:

- What, if anything, would you do after seeing this ad? What is this asking people to do? Would it entice you to visit the website to gain more information?
- Would you remember this ad? If so, what makes it memorable?

Sign visuals

10 minutes

MODERATOR PRESENTS THE WARNING SIGN (Yellow triangle)

This is the sign that is intended to be used for the video advertisement. This big sign will appear out of the window on the back of a truck (show storyboard again if necessary).

- Does the sign catch your attention?
- What does this sign communicate to you?
- What do you think of the use of this symbol in this ad? Do you like how it shows up in the ad (i.e. huge, out of the window,)?

MODERATOR PRESENTS THE STOP SIGN (red octagon)

- Does the sign catch your attention?
- What does this sign communicate to you?

Audio ad

20 minutes

We will now play an audio ad intended for radio. Once again, keep in mind this is just an idea at this point; this means the ad you will hear is not final. Please focus on what the campaign is saying and the manner in which the message is communicated, rather than the quality of the recording.

MODERATOR PRESENTS THE AUDIO AD (15 seconds recording)**Overall Reactions:**

- In a word or two, what are your overall impressions of this ad?
- Do you think such an audio ad would grab your attention? Why?

Intent/Message/Credibility:

- What is this campaign trying to communicate?
- Have you learned anything?

Clarity/Appropriateness:

- Is anything unclear, confusing or problematic?
- Does the interrupting sound catch your attention? Does it seem like a warning?

Relevance/Appeal:

- Who is this campaign speaking to: someone like you or someone different? **IF THEM:** Why do you feel like it speaks to you? **IF NOT THEM:** Why not you?

Intended Call-to-Action/Memorability:

- What, if anything, would you do after seeing this ad? What is this asking people to do? Would it entice you to visit the website to gain more information?
- Would you remember this -ad? If so, what makes it memorable?

Taglines

5 minutes

I'd like to get your thoughts on the call to action and tagline we saw and heard. We will show you different taglines and would like to hear your impressions on each. Any of the taglines could work with the ideas we've seen so don't worry about the context in which they would be used. **SHOW ALL TAGLINES ON THE SCREEN ONE AT A TIME – ROTATE ORDER ACROSS GROUPS FOLLOWING THE CAMPAIGN PRESENTATIONS SCHEDULE ABOVE**

Tagline 1: Some scams are easy to spot. Some are not. Learn the signs. Canada.ca/be-scam-smart can help.

Let's discuss this tagline...

- What does this tagline suggest to you?
- Is it clear and do you understand?
- What action or actions are you being asked to take?

Tagline 2: Not sure if it's a scam? Learn the signs. Canada.ca/be-scam-smart can help.




Let's discuss this tagline...

- What does this tagline suggest to you?
- Is it clear and do you understand?
- What action or actions are you being asked to take?




Those are all my questions; on behalf of the Government of Canada, thank you for taking part in our discussion. We will follow-up with each of you regarding the distribution of your incentive.

Appendix B: Storyboard

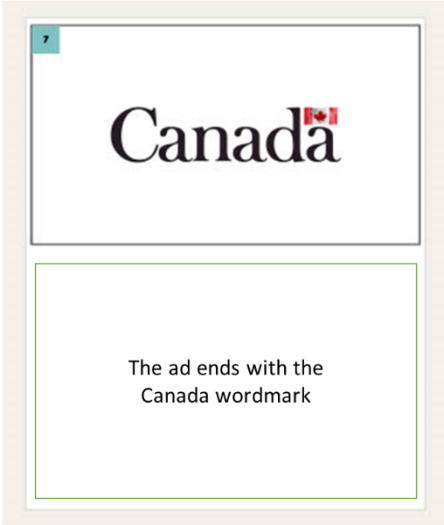
STORYBOARD

		
<p>A person is sitting at a table about to eat.</p> <p>As they are about to take a bite, they get a text on their phone.</p>	<p>They put down their food and check their phone.</p> <p>A text appears on the screen that says: "Canada Revenue Agency has sent your refund, click here to deposit"</p>	<p>The person thinks to themselves and we hear their voice out loud: "Hmm, a tax refund by text?"</p> <p>They look like they are considering clicking it, but just as they are about to click it they get interrupted by a loud noise.</p>

STORYBOARD

		
<p>We hear a loud sound of a truck backing up, BEEP BEEP BEEP... and see the truck backing up towards the window with a HUGE yellow warning sign!</p> <p>The person looks at the huge sign and then back at their phone. The warning sign is obvious.</p>	<p>The person thinks to themselves and say: "Wait, the CRA wouldn't text a tax refund".</p> <p>They confidently delete the text, put their phone face down on the table and continue eating.</p>	<p>The tagline and web address appear on the screen and is read out loud:</p> <p>Some scams are easy to spot, some are not. Learn the signs. Canada.ca/be-scam-smart can help.</p>

STORYBOARD



Appendix C: Warning Signs

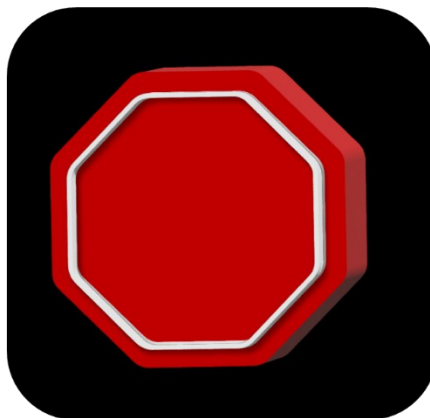
WARNING SIGN DESIGNS

DESIGN 1



WARNING SIGN DESIGNS

DESIGN 2



Appendix D: Audio Ad Transcript

AUDIO AD



Voice-over:

- *The government wants me to pay with gift cards?*
- *Wait, the government won't ask me to pay with gift cards.*

- *Not sure if it's a scam? Learn the signs. Canada.ca/be-scam-smart can help.*

Appendix E: Taglines

TAGLINES

TAGLINE 1

“Not sure if it’s a scam? Learn the signs.

Canada.ca/be-scam-smart can help.”

TAGLINES

TAGLINE 2

“Some scams are easy to spot. Some are not. Learn the signs.

Canada.ca/be-scam-smart can help.”

Appendix F: Recruiting Script

Recruit Focus Groups

Government of Canada

Languages: English, French



Section

Intro1, Intro1CB, Intro1Ref, Intro3, Intro3Ref, recruitTxt, NF1, NonQualifier1, NF2, NonQualifier2, NF3, NonQualifier3, R1, R2, NonQualifier4, R3, NonQualifier5, R4, NonQualifier6, P1, T1, P3, P4, P5, P6, T2, P7, PreferredLanguage, GroupFull1, GroupFull2, GroupFull3, GroupFull4, GroupFull5, GroupFull6, GroupFull7, GroupFull8, I4, I4Ref4

Page

Intro1

Hello, my name is _____ and I am calling on behalf of Advanis, a national market research company. Let me assure you that we are not trying to sell you anything. As part of a research project we are conducting on behalf of the Government of Canada, we are looking for people to take part in a small online group discussion that will last one hour and 15 minutes.

Those who qualify and take part in the group discussion will receive a \$100 incentive. Is this something you might be interested in?

- 1 Yes, continue
- 2 No, call back
- 3 Refused

Intro1CB *Show if Intro1 Callback (Intro1 = 2)*

Set callback appointment.

Status Code: 1001

Intro1Ref *Show if Intro1 Refused (Intro1 = 3)*

Thank you for your time. Have a nice day.

Status Code: 1000

Page

Intro3

The purpose of this group discussion is to hear people's views on an advertising campaign being considered. Participation in this research is voluntary and completely anonymous and confidential. No attempt will be made to sell you anything or change your point of view. The format of the focus group is an informal small online group discussion led by a professional moderator.

May I ask you a few quick questions to see if you are the type of participant we are looking for? This should take about 5 or 6 minutes.

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

Intro3Ref *Show if Intro3 Refused (Intro3 = 2)*

Thank you for your time. Have a nice day.

Status Code: 452

Page**recruitTxt**

The discussion groups for this project will be conducted online and will require the use of a laptop or desktop computer for the duration of the focus group session. Note that you cannot use a computer tablet or smartphone to access the online platform/screen.

NF1

Do you have access to a laptop or desktop computer with high-speed Internet to take part in this focus group?

- 1 Yes
 2 No

NonQualifier1 *Show if No access computer or high speed internet (NF1 = 2)*

Based on your responses, we are unable to invite you to take part in this online focus group, as you do not meet the technical requirements. We thank you for your interest in this research.

Status Code: 501

NF2

How comfortable are you with using a computer on your own? Are you...?

- 1 Very comfortable
 2 Somewhat comfortable
 3 Somewhat uncomfortable
 4 Very uncomfortable

NonQualifier2 *Show if Not comfortable (NF2 = 3,4)*

Based on your responses, we are unable to invite you to take part in this online focus group, as you do not meet the technical requirements. We thank you for your interest in this research.

Status Code: 502

NF3

Once you are online for the session you will be asked to use your computer camera. You will also need to enable your computer audio so you can hear other participants and have a functional microphone so others can hear you.

Will you have access to a computer camera, your computer audio and a functioning microphone?

- ₁ Yes
 ₂ No

NonQualifier3 *Show if No access camera audio microphone (NF3 = 2)*

Based on your responses, we are unable to invite you to take part in this online focus group, as you do not meet the technical requirements. We thank you for your interest in this research.

Status Code: 503

R1

Have you ever attended a group discussion or interview for which you received a sum of money?

- ₁ Yes
 ₂ No

R2 *Show if Took part in focus group (R1 = 1)*

When was the last time you attended a group discussion or interview?

- ₁ Within the last 6 months
 ₂ More than 6 months ago

NonQualifier4 *Show if Took part in group last 6 months (R2 = 1)*

Based on your responses, we are unable to invite you to take part in this online focus group. We thank you for your interest in this research.

Status Code: 504

R3 *Show if Took part in focus group (R1 = 1)*

How many groups or interviews have you attended in the past 5 years?

Minimum: 0, Maximum: 9999999

NonQualifier5 *Show if More than 4 groups in last 5 years (R3 >= 4)*

Based on your responses, we are unable to invite you to take part in this online focus group. We thank you for your interest in this research.

Status Code: 509

R4 *Show if Took part in focus group (R1 = 1)*

What was the subject(s) of the focus group(s) or interview?

(Show if CATI) Select all that apply

(Show if Web) Select all that apply

- ₁ Advertising

2 Other subject (specify) _____

NonQualifier6 *Show if AdvertisingFocusGroup (R4_1 = 1)*

Based on your responses, we are unable to invite you to take part in this online focus group. We thank you for your interest in this research.

Status Code: 505

Page Profiling Questions

P1

To begin, do you or any member of your household work in or has retired from...?

- 1 Marketing/Market Research *
- 2 Public relations *
- 3 Advertising *
- 4 Media (TV, Radio, Newspaper) *
- 5 Graphic Design *
- 6 Provincial government *
- 7 Federal government *
- 8 A tax preparation company *
- 9 Accounting *
- 10 None of the above

*Levels marked with * are randomized*

T1 *Show if Works in related sector (P1 = 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9)*

Based on your responses, we are unable to invite you to take part in this online focus group. We thank you for your interest in this research.

Status Code: 507

P3

Were you born in Canada?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- .9 Don't know / No response

P4 *Show if Not born in Canada (P3 = 2)*

How many years have you been living in Canada?

- 1 Less than 5 years
- 2 5-9 years
- 3 10-19 years
- 4 20-29 years
- 5 30 or more years
- 6 Don't know / No response

P5

In which province do you currently live?

- 1 Newfoundland & Labrador
- 2 Prince Edward Island
- 3 Nova Scotia
- 4 New Brunswick
- 5 Quebec
- 6 Ontario
- 7 Manitoba
- 8 Saskatchewan
- 9 Alberta
- 10 British Columbia
- 11 Territories

P6

Into which age group are you?

- 1 Less than 18
- 2 18-25
- 3 26-35
- 4 36-45
- 5 46-59
- 6 60-65
- 7 More than 65 years old

T2 *Show if Less than 18 (P6 = 1)*

Based on your responses, we are unable to invite you to take part in this online focus group. We thank you for your interest in this research.

Status Code: 508

P7

Are you... ?

- 1 Male
- 2 Female
- 3 Gender diverse

PreferredLanguage

Would you prefer to participate in this focus group in English or French?

- 1 English
- 2 French

GroupFull *Show if block (Group number) Full*

We're sorry but the group for people matching your profile is already full. Thank you for your time.

Status Code: 571

I4

The group discussion will be held in <<PreferredLanguage.text>>. Participants may also be asked to read text, write responses, review images, listen to audio recordings during the session.

Are you able to take part in these activities in <<PreferredLanguage.text>> on your own, without assistance?

- ₁ Yes
 ₂ No
 ₉ Don't know

I4Ref4 *Show if Not able to take part (I4 = 2,Don't know)*

Thank you for your time. Have a nice day.

Status Code: 452

Section Invitations

Invitation, I1, I1Ref1, I2, I2Ref2, I3, I3Ref3, confirmemail, QNum, QName, Incentive, Incentive1, End

Page Focus Invitation

Invitation

(if Group1 English AND GenPop ((PreferredLanguage = 1) AND (P6 = 3,4,5) AND NOT (P4 = 1,2))) Based on your responses so far, we would like to invite you to participate in a small group discussion that will be conducted online at [TIME] on [DATE]. The session will bring together 6 to 8 people and it will last about an hour and 15 minutes.

The discussion will be about an advertising campaign being considered and you will receive \$100 in appreciation for your time. To take part, you would simply log on to a secure website from your computer.

I1

(if Group1 English AND GenPop ((PreferredLanguage = 1) AND (P6 = 3,4,5) AND NOT (P4 = 1,2))) Are you available and interested in taking part in this focus group at [TIME] on [DATE].?

- ₁ Yes
 ₂ No

I1Ref1 *Show if Not available or interested (I1 = 2)*

Thank you for your time. Have a nice day.

Status Code: 452

I2

The discussion in which you will be participating will be audio recorded for research purposes only. Be assured that your comments and responses are strictly confidential and that your name will not be included in the research report.

Are you comfortable with the discussion being audio recorded?

- ₁ Yes
- ₂ No

I2Ref2 *Show if Not comfortable audio (I2 = 2)*

Thank you for your time. Have a nice day.

Status Code: 452

I3

There may also be employees from the organizations who is sponsoring the research, who will be listening in on the discussion. They will not be given the last names of participants.

Are you comfortable with having observers?

- ₁ Yes
- ₂ No

I3Ref3 *Show if Not comfortable observers (I3 = 2)*

Thank you for your time. Have a nice day.

Status Code: 452

confirmemail

Could we please confirm the email address where we can send you the detailed instructions for logging into the group?

QNum

Can you please provide a phone number in case we need to reach you?

- ₈ Prefer not answer

QName

Can I please have your first name?

Incentive

(if Group1 English AND GenPop ((PreferredLanguage = 1) AND (P6 = 3,4,5) AND NOT (P4 = 1,2))) We will send you the instructions by email at least 1 day in advance of the group. The group discussion will begin promptly at **at [TIME] on [DATE]** and will last up to an hour and 15 minutes. Please log in on time to ensure that the session is not delayed. If you arrive late, we will not be able to include you in the discussion, and will not provide you with the incentive.

As mentioned, we will be pleased to provide everyone who participates with \$100, provided by e-Transfer. It takes approximately 3 business days to receive an incentive by e-Transfer.

We will send the amount to <<confirmemail.text>>

Incentive1

As these are very small groups and with even one person missing, the overall success of the group may be affected, I would ask that once you have decided to attend that you make every effort to do so.

If you are unable to take part in the study, please call [name] at [phone number] (collect) as soon as possible so a replacement may be found. Please do not arrange for your own replacement.

End

Thank you again! You will receive the email information shortly.

Have a great day.

Status Code: -1

Help Page

CRIC: Advanis is a registered member of the Canadian Research Insights Council. Advanis upholds their pledge. This can be accessed at: <https://www.canadianresearchinsightscouncil.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CRIC-Pledge-to-Canadians.pdf>

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