

COVID content guidance

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To help Canadians access the critical services and resources they need urgently in this time of crisis, the Government's COVID-related web content must adhere to proven user-centered design standards.

This means:

- easy to read, easy to navigate content, grouped by themes that are **coordinated and integrated across departments** (without duplicating information)
- applying **user experience (UX) principles** to creating and publishing all related web content

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Crisis communications and accessibility

Design for mobile first - the majority of visits to crisis pages are from people on phones

Accessibility is still the law - regardless of tight deadlines, everyone has a right to access crisis content

Write simple, direct, plain language text - comprehension and reading levels are much lower when people feel stressed

Follow the crisis content design advice:

- [Crisis communications content design checklist \(https://design.canada.ca/crisis/content.html\)](https://design.canada.ca/crisis/content.html)

Use consistent terminology:

- Translation Bureau COVID-19 glossary (<https://www.btb.termiumplus.gc.ca/publications/covid19-eng.html>)

Developing new content related to COVID

Web managers must work with their theme leads to coordinate web content related to COVID. This will avoid duplication and create clear paths for Canadians to follow to get the answers they need.

Primer - web content approach

The Primer for the COVID-19 web content approach details the basic principles that departments should be working from.

Content inventory

Please check the content inventory before creating new content related to COVID:

- COVID-19 Content inventory tool (Instructions and access)

Moving from announcements to web content

There is specific guidance on:

- what content departments should focus on
- how to tie content back to the main COVID response pages
- proposed phases of content development
 - Phase 1: contextual alerts
 - Phase 2: tone review of carousels and features, service disruptions, impacts on employees
 - Phase 3: integrating new content at the program/service level

Please consult:

- **Developing web content as one government** (Google slides) (<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1kpDFOVUAW1YdWMGZdmZaG1ksRXOCS9aHb1mnrviHcrE/edit#slide=id.p>) (PowerPoint)
- **Moving from announcements to web content** (Google slides) (<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1uO3FKJN8YsFI5a3FWA0H1ae8c6BkB0bCj0c3Ble-UJQ/edit#slide=id.p>) (PowerPoint)

Rely on standard templates and content design recommendations from the Canada.ca design system.

These are based on best practices that have been **tested with users**:

- Templates and design patterns (<https://www.canada.ca/en/government/about/design-system/pattern-library.html>)
- Canada.ca style guide (<https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/government-communications/canada-content-style-guide.html>)

Alerts

There is specific guidance for how to use alerts for COVID-related content and for service disruptions.

Too many alerts, and alerts that are not consistent with the government-wide approach create confusion for users.

Please follow the guidance provided:

- **How to use alerts in a crisis** (<https://design.canada.ca/crisis/alerts.html>)
- **Using alerts** (Google slides) (<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1kpDFOVUAW1YdWMGZdmZaG1ksRXOCS9aHb1mnrvIHcrE/edit#slide=id.p>) (PowerPoint)
- **Moving from announcements to web content** (Google slides) (<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1uO3FKJN8YsFI5a3FWA0H1ae8c6BkB0bCj0c3Ble-UJQ/edit#slide=id.p>) (PowerPoint)

Branding

Consistent design builds trust and helps users identify scams.

Departments must not develop individualized COVID branding elements. Use only the official graphic elements when creating content that requires them.

- Graphic elements for COVID-19 (<https://gcconnex.gc.ca/file/group/61785806/all#>) (GCconnex)

If you cannot access the GC network, contact Susan Harper at Health Canada for a link to a google drive.

Metadata and search engine optimization

- COVID-19 Metadata, SEO and social media
- COVID-19 Metadata working group

Performance measurement (UTM guidance)

DRAFT Performance measurement strategy for the digital environment

Guidance and instructions for using UTM codes to help you track traffic are available

- UTM guidance (.pptx)
- UTM generator (.xlsx)

Contacts

There is a working group providing leadership to departments on the all-of-government COVID response. Consult our list of COVID Comms contacts for an outline of who to speak to about questions related to your departmental web presence.

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