



Treasury Board of Canada
Secrétariat

Secrétariat du Conseil du Trésor
du Canada

Canada

Digital Principles

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What are digital principles?



Digital Service Standard

- 1 Understand user needs. Research to develop a deep knowledge of who the service users are and what that means for the design of the service.
- 2 Put a plan in place for ongoing user research and usability testing to continuously seek feedback from users to improve the service.
- 3 Put in place a sustainable multidisciplinary team that can design, build and operate the service, led by a suitably skilled and senior service manager with decision-making responsibility.
- 4 Build the service using the agile, iterative and user-centred methods set out in the manual.
- 5 Build a service that can be iterated and improved on a frequent basis and make sure that you have the capacity, resources and technical flexibility to do so.
- 6 Evaluate what tools and systems will be used to build, host, operate and measure the service, and how to procure them.
- 7 Evaluate what user data and information the digital service will be providing or storing, and address the associated risks.
- 10 Be able to test the end-to-end environment identical to that of the production version, including on all common devices, and using dummy accounts and a representative sample of users.
- 11 Make a plan for the event of the service being taken temporarily offline.
- 12 Create a service that is simple enough that users succeed first time.
- 13 Build a service consistent with the experience of the rest of GOV.UK using the design patterns and standards.
- 14 Encourage all users to use the service (with assisted digital support if alongside an appropriate plan to support non-digital channels/services).
- 15 Use tools for analysis that collect performance data. Use this data to analyse the success of the service and to translate this into features and tasks for the next phase of development.
- 16 Identify performance indicators for the service, including the 4 mandatory key performance indicators (KPIs) defined in the manual. Establish a process to monitor and report on these.



Technology Code of Practice

- 1 Define user needs, aims and capabilities
- 2 Make things interoperable
- 3 Make things
- 8 Use common government
- 9 Meet the service for digital
- 10 Complete



THE U.S. DIGITAL SERVICE

Digital Services Playbook

Digital Service Plays

1. Understand what people need
2. Address the whole experience, from start to finish
3. Make it simple and intuitive
4. Build the service using agile and iterative practices
5. Structure budgets and contracts to support delivery
7. Bring in experienced teams
8. Choose a modern technology stack
9. Deploy in a flexible hosting environment
10. Automate testing and deployments
11. Manage security and privacy through reusable processes



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MENU

Digital Service Standard



The Digital Service Standard sets out 14 points to help government build and deliver excellent online services.

All new or redesigned public-facing information and services will eventually be required to follow the standard, before work begins. First, we want to test the standard, gather user feedback and improve it.



Australian Government
Digital Transformation Agency

dta

Digital Service Standard

The Digital Service Standard helps digital teams build government services that are simple, clear and fast.

01

Understand user needs. Research to develop a deep knowledge of the users and their context for using the service.

02

Establish a sustainable multidisciplinary team to design, build, operate and iterate the service, led by an experienced product manager with decision-making responsibility.

Why should Canada have digital principles?



Other countries and regions have made setting best practice principles a first step in digital transformation, for example the US digital playbook, the Australian Service Standard, and the Ontario Service Standard.

How have we developed our draft principles?

Our current draft set of Digital Principles are based on the analysis of the approaches of other governments (most particularly the UK), and external methodologies such as the agile manifesto, as well as our own expertise and aspirations. Additionally, we have collected feedback from the public, departments, provinces, territories, municipalities, and New Zealand to help inform each iteration.

The resulting 'made in Canada' approach improves on the UK approach by creating a common set of principles, which will cover digital, technology and data. Our principles also reflect new priorities (e.g. ethical use of artificial intelligence).

Working in the open

We released the early draft set of principles so that these could be developed in the open with the expertise of others.

Over 3,500 unique visits to the blog, 250 comments or endorsements.

Feedback generally very positive and supportive.

Key areas: access to tools and technology; culture change and people; processes.

Next steps

- Continue developing in the open and publish living principles that will continue to be updated based on user needs
- Working with provinces and other countries to develop guidance and best practice
- At a federal level, the principles will be used to inform the Digital Policy, and introduced at concept stage
- A Digital Playbook will be developed to provide further supporting material and a common space for collaboration

1. Design with users

- Build nothing for the user, without the user being involved
- Empathize with the people using the service and have them engaged at all stages, from planning to ongoing improvements
- Understand the context in which people are interacting and design appropriate solutions that meet their needs
- Clearly articulate and understand the end-to-end problem and use data to demonstrate that it is being solved

2. Build in accessibility from the start

- Build for those with the greatest needs and it will work for everyone else
- Services should meet or exceed accessibility standards, and should not feel burdensome to use
- Co-create with people who have distinct needs, being inclusive from the very beginning
- Take into consideration a user's possible constraints when designing services

3. Collaborate widely

- Empower multidisciplinary teams with diverse perspectives and skills
- Recognize that an organization can't have all the best ideas, create partnerships and collaborate with a diverse range of partners
- Build the capacity to dynamically pull in new partners for co-innovation
- Share and collaborate in the open, link to the work of others, and provide resources that others can reuse

4. Empower staff to deliver better services

- Provide ongoing training and learning opportunities to continually improve the skills of the team and the broader network
- Make sure that staff have access to the tools and technologies they need to be innovative
- Ensure that the right systems and processes are in place so the team can create
- Empower teams to make decisions throughout the design, build, and operation of the service and allow them to learn from their mistakes

5. Work in the open by default

- Make all non-sensitive data and information open to the outside world for sharing and reuse under an open licence
- Be transparent with goals and publish real-time performance data
- Measure and monitor the effectiveness, value, and consequences of your service and report publicly
- Be transparent about how you work and justify the decisions you make

6. Use open standards and solutions

- Leverage open standards and embrace leading practices
- Use and reuse common, proven government solutions, approaches, and platforms
- Design for interoperability, allowing services to be discovered and leveraged by the community
- Open up the data, transactions, and business rules that underpin a service

7. Iterate and improve frequently

- Build in an agile manner and continuously improve in response to user needs
- Accept that change is inevitable and use adaptive strategies and tools for new development
- Embrace and react to changes in the environment and design for sustainability
- Start small and test designs and assumptions continually, using evidence as the basis for iteration

8. Design ethical services

- Be transparent about personal and organizational biases and indicate how they are being addressed
- Assess the full impact on users and communities
- Comply with ethical guidelines in the design of automated systems
- Balance trade-offs between innovation and inclusiveness

9. Address security and privacy risks

- Take a balanced approach to managing risk by implementing appropriate privacy and security measures
- Innovate and improve while meeting the public's expectation that their data privacy will be protected
- Make security seamless and frictionless, balancing security and convenience
- Ensure services comply with all legislated and regulatory requirements

10. Be good data stewards

- Collect data once to avoid duplication
- Make relevant government information and data easily accessible to help support decision making
- Ensure that data is collected in a standard way so that it can easily be integrated and reused by others
- Give due consideration to digital preservation and retention