

working title

Joint Statement on Collaborating to
Advance a Trustworthy Digital Economy

The Challenge: Improving Trust Throughout Our Digital Economy

Our digital economy is operating without the level of trust and integrity that Canadians and Canadian Businesses need and expect. People and businesses are being harmed every day by this damaging and costly barrier to the productivity and advancement of our digital economy.

People are choosing the convenience, utility, and immediacy that services from our digital economy provide and as a result they want, and expect, still more. This growing dependence means that the details of how digital services work are now an important matter for everyone.

People, businesses, and the economy itself are materially harmed as digital services are faked, rendered unavailable, broken, hacked, corrupted, or are defrauded. The daily non-stop barrage of these types of problems and experiences erodes confidence and serves as a barrier to progress.

Organizations that are responsible for important and valuable transactions hold back from offering digital services when doing so could risk the integrity of their operations and bring harm to the clients and customers they serve. For those that proceed the cumbersome procedures that digital services must attempt as compensation for today's lack of trust makes services hard to use while still leaving them open to abuse.

In short, our digital economy, while popular and growing, is operating without an adequate level of trust and integrity. This is having serious negative damaging consequences and needs to change.

Empowering Canadians with Convenient Privacy-Respectful Trustworthy Digital Services and Data

Through this joint statement we describe our intention to collaborate to improve services and data throughout our digital economy so they operate with the level of trust and integrity that people and businesses need and expect.

Our collaboration is focussed on three outcomes:

1. **Empowering Canadians and Canadian Businesses** so they can:
 - a. Be in possession of their data, in trustworthy digital form, as it may be issued to them by government services and authorities,
 - b. Be the ones deciding about sharing data that is in their possession, whether at their own initiation and choosing, or as may be requested of them through their chosen interactions across our digital economy.
2. **Ensuring Privacy, Trustworthiness, Utility and Compatibility** so people and businesses can:
 - a. Be confident that they can easily obtain, hold, and share, the data issued to them by government services regardless of the jurisdiction and level of government that may be the issuing authority,

- b. Conveniently use their authentic government-issued data, with confidence, as may be requested of them when interacting with services of our digital economy,
 - c. Be assured of privacy and confidentiality by enabling organizations to generate privacy-respectful data-minimized requests and for people to be able to provide authentic trustworthy and data-minimized responses.
- 3. **Ensuring the Integrity and Safeguard of Digital Services and Data** so people and businesses can:
 - a. Trust and depend on government services that request and make records of personal, financial, health or other information including important registrations, authorizations, designations, licenses and permits,
 - b. Trust and depend on the integrity and authenticity of government-issued digital data that has been issued to people and businesses.

Our Mandate for Collaboration

Through this joint statement we provide the mandate for our respective jurisdictions to collaborate as required to deliver the outcomes that people and businesses need us to generate. We explicitly sponsor the collaboration of our jurisdictions in the following areas:

1. **Modernizing government services to issue trustworthy digital data.**

This will involve upgrading our government programs and services that are responsible for cornerstone registrations and the issuance of certificates, authorizations, permits, licences, designations, and other important documents that our jurisdictions, along with our public bodies and various authorities, issue to people and businesses.

Our collaboration will focus on ensuring compatibility across the array of our jurisdictions, authorities, programs, and services that will need to be involved. We will collaborate so that obtaining, holding, requesting, approving, providing, and validating authentic government-issued data in digital forms is something that works smoothly for everyone across the full scope of our digital economy.

2. **Modernizing government services to request and use trustworthy digital data.**

This will involve upgrading our government programs and services that depend on, and necessarily make use of, data that governments have issued to people and businesses.

Our collaboration will focus on leveraging our own government services to stand as models and exemplars. Our digital services will demonstrate and promote good practices. They will show how to best utilize trustworthy digital data for services that are convenient and easy to use and that operate with trust and integrity. Our services will show improved ways to be privacy-respectful using the advantages that trustworthy digital data has for minimizing the amount of information that must be requested of people while still meeting their needs for service.

3. **Implementing enabling infrastructure for use throughout our digital economy.**

This aspect of our collaboration will reduce the complexities associated with having the right design, features, and technical compatibility so that trustworthy government-issued digital data

works well for everyone.

New capabilities are needed such as privacy-respectful trustworthy digital wallets that people will need so they can securely hold and share their government-issued digital data. There are technical protocols and specifications that need to be used to create compatibility. In addition, to reduce implementation costs, and to accelerate adoption, there are a range of supports such as shared open-source code libraries, shareable quick-start reference implementations, along with documentation, ancillary services and professional expertise that must be provided.

Our collaboration will focus on ensuring that the designs used are aligned with our values, needs, and expectations in areas such as respecting privacy and confidentiality, security, integrity, and compatibility. We will work to ensure ease of use and deployment for the underlying technologies and to openly share and contribute as much as possible with each other to reduce everyone's time and cost for offering digital services that make use of trustworthy government-issued digital data.

4. Promoting and enabling good practice among non-government and business organizations.

This will involve guiding organizations about how to ensure requests made of people for their government-issued digital data are privacy-respectful and are designed to request only the minimum of information that is necessary. It will be important that similar scenarios for services make similar types of requests so people can understand and be confident about providing their information.

Our collaboration will focus on aligning guidance across our respective jurisdictions to bring clarity of expectation for how non-government and business organizations should make use of trustworthy government-issued digital data.

5. Improving safeguards and protections for digital systems and infrastructure.

There is a constant need to improve the ability of our digital services to withstand the onslaught of malicious threat and attack they are subject to every minute of every day.

Our collaboration will bring new advancements through the development of improved communications, alerting, and response mechanisms. Of interest will be an ability to better orchestrate across jurisdictional and organizational boundaries since there is an opportunity to improve how we assist and come to each other's aid for a stronger collective capability.

Collaborating While Maintaining Jurisdiction: In undertaking our collaboration we will each retain the authorities and responsibilities of our respective jurisdictions. This means that, as a consequence of collaborating to achieve the outcomes of this joint declaration, we do not expect, intend, envision or provide any mandate for, displacing or otherwise modifying any of our sovereign jurisdictional authorities and responsibilities.

Guiding Principles

Each of our jurisdictions will continue to be guided by their established digital principles and service standards. These cover essential topics such as privacy, security, usability, inclusivity, diversity, and accessibility.

Our collaboration will also be guided by the following principles that apply more narrowly to aspects of trustworthy government-issued digital data. Aligning towards these principles across our jurisdictions will be important for the smooth operation of our digital economy:

1. **Respect citizen authority and responsibility over their data sharing decisions**
We respect that Canadians and Canadian Businesses continue to have control over any data in their possession including any trustworthy forms of digital data that our government services may issue to them.
2. **Remain open to all lawful purposes**
We intend no restriction in the ability of any person or organization to make a lawful request of a person for trustworthy government-issued digital data, nor any restriction in the ability of a person to provide a response subject to the limits of applicable laws.
3. **Obligation to facilitate responsible use**
Respecting the potential for abuse in an open digital economy, we recognize the need to support people and businesses to make responsible use of trustworthy government-issued digital data. We must do this without infringing on citizen authority over data that is in their possession and the need to remain open without restriction to all lawful purposes.
4. **Optional choice to participate**
Using digital services along with obtaining trustworthy government-issued digital data will remain choices that our jurisdictions make available to Canadians and Canadian Businesses. We recognize that while many people are choosing to engage in digital services, this is not true for all. Therefore, we intend that existing forms of government-issued certificates, licences, permits, designations, authorizations or other important documents and registrations will be retained through the foreseeable future.

Actions

Note to readers: the development of the actions section is expected to occur over the coming months through collaboration among the requisite stakeholders and decision makers.

The concept for this section is to set expectations, bring focus to our collaboration, guide our resources, and become tangible about how jurisdictions will approach this and how results will be generated.

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2. **Ensuring Privacy, Trustworthiness, Utility and Compatibility**
3. **Ensuring the Integrity and Safeguard of Digital Services and Data**

Our Mandate for Collaboration

1. **Modernizing government services to issue trustworthy digital data.**
2. **Modernizing government services to request and use trustworthy digital data.**
3. **Implementing enabling infrastructure for use throughout our digital economy.**
4. **Promoting and enabling good practice among non-government and business organizations.**
5. **Improving safeguards and protections for digital systems and infrastructure.**

Collaborating While Maintaining Jurisdiction

Guiding Principles

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Actions