

Cheat Sheet: Part IV Official Languages Obligations and the Use of Web Communications and Social Media



The **Official Languages Act (OLA)** sets out the obligations of institutions with regard to Official Languages (OL), it provides that any member of the public in Canada has the right to receive services from or communicate with a federal institution in the OL of their choice. The OLA reaffirms the equality of status of English and French as the OL of Canada and establishes equal rights and privileges as to their use in institutions. Web content for which the institution is accountable must reflect the equality of status of English and French, be of equal quality and be available simultaneously in order to respect the GC linguistic obligations with regards to communications with and services to the public.



1 Web Addresses

- Primary domain names provide equal treatment to both OL and accurately represent the Website's primary purpose in both official languages. For example:
www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage.html and www.canada.ca/fr/patrimoine-canadien.html

2 Interfaces and hyperlinks

Concept of the active offer

- Provide users with the possibility to select either OL for Web pages;
- Provide appropriate link to encourage users to select the OL of their choice.

3 Web Content

- Ensure Web content in both OL is always available simultaneously and is of equal quality.
- Ensure edits made in one OL version are simultaneously reflected in the other OL version.

4 Videos, multimedia production and video links (Including captions and or voice overs)

- Make video files available in both OL simultaneously;
- Produce an equal quantity of videos in both official languages, with contents of equal quality in both OL to avoid creating situations where one language is always the language of translation;
- When changes are made in one OL version, simultaneously reflect them in the other OL version;
- Produce integral products of equal quality in both OL (English videos include English captions/voice overs, and French videos include French captions/voice overs) when captions and/or voice overs are required. The viewing, listening and/or reading experience of the citizen must reflect his or her OL choice.

5 When interacting with the public on the Web

Social Media

- Encourage users to participate in the OL of their choice;
- Provide a link to the equivalent official social media account in the other OL;
- Provide regular summaries of posted comments in both OL;
- Provide users of both OL versions with the same experience. When receiving more questions and comments from the public in one language (which require general public response), provide the same information to the public in both OL;
- Respond using the OL in which contact was initiated, unless it is a question of general public interest that requires a response in both OL.

6 Link to an external Website

Subject to the OLA: (acting on behalf of an institution)

- Agreements / contracts include applicable OL clauses that clearly identify OL requirements with which the third party must comply;
- Any confirmation of the third party's delivery performance includes compliance with OL obligations.

Not subject to the OLA:

- Third-party information liability disclaimer is included to each Web page to inform users that links to Websites not under the control of the institution are provided solely for their convenience and that the content may not be subject to the OLA.

Did you know...

According to Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, the most common types of OL complaints related to the Web pertain to:

- Linguistic quality of French;
- Third parties sites funded in part by the federal government are unilingual.

Don't forget to...

Plan ahead for translation to ensure equality of services and quality in both OL.
Post content simultaneously in both OL (text, audio, video)

Make sure to...

Establish processes to ensure Web pages and Web content satisfy OL obligations for communications with and services to the public.