Government Web Strategy

April 2016

Content Criteria Guide V2

Communications Nova Scotia

NOVA SCOTIA

Overview

The Province of Nova Scotia launched its web strategy and beta website in April 2016. This guide is one of seven content-related tools designed to support that strategy:

- **Content Criteria Guide**
- French Translation Guide
- Online Writing Guide
- Visual Aids Guide
- Measurement Scorecard
- Google Analytics
- User testing and feedback tools

Government's new website will focus on three key content areas: convey what the Province of Nova Scotia is doing and why; provide clearer and easier access to government programs and services; and share information that visitors are seeking that can only be provided by our provincial government.

In keeping with the rollout of government's one-brand approach, the new website has moved away from the old department-by-department model.

Development of the new website is supported by a publishing model (roles and workflow), content criteria, content types, content templates, content lifecycles, and metadata (to improve search capabilities). Content, once posted, will be measured and evaluated on an ongoing basis.

Informed by government's web strategy, the new website is designed to work well for the variety of ways visitors want to access the site: by Google search, by department/ office, by topic, by using global navigation, or by conducting an internal search. The new website will only contain relevant and accessible content that is both user-centered and sustainable over time. Lastly, the new website is entirely housed under government's one brand.

Content readiness process

The web strategy outlines a content review process with several preparation checkpoints to assess if content should be developed for novascotia.ca and to help prepare content to meet user needs and provide a consistent user experience on the new website. Deciding if the content meets the web strategy's content criteria is the first step.

Content criteria

All content posted will have a user in mind. The strategy recognizes that some content will attract niche but important users. Additionally, some content will only attract users at certain times of the year. The strategy takes this into account whenever user traffic is analyzed. Regardless of visitation, content must meet **at least one** of the following criteria:

Government service

It is something citizens need to do and can only be done with government, for example

- Renewing a driver's license
- Renewing a vehicle plate
- Reserving a business name
- Applying for a lottery (gaming) permit

Government program

It helps people find and access government support programs, for example

- Property Tax Rebate for Seniors
- First-time Home Buyers Rebate
- Student assistance
- Mi'kmaq Cultural Activities Program

Official information

It provides information only government has or collects, including reports and government-commissioned reports and datasets, for example

- News releases
- Minimum wage
- Official holidays
- Building codes
- Labour standards
- Cyberbullying report
- Film production disbursements
- Collective agreements

Legally required to publish

It is information that government is legally required to provide, for example

- French-language Service Plan
  (French-Language Service Act)
- Accountability Report (Accountability in
  Economic Development Assistance Act)
- Public Reporting on Hand Hygiene
  (Patient Safety Act)

Response to a major event

It shows what government is doing about issues and incidents that have a direct impact
on citizens' lives or is of significant public interest, for example

- Hurricane
- Wildfire
- Flooding
- Gas shortage
- Road closures
- Disease outbreak
- Refugee response
- Labour negotiations

Policies, acts, and regulations

It helps government clearly explain policies and fulfill legal obligations to the public, for example

- Explaining a policy
- Explaining the Residential Tenancies Act
- Explaining a government strategy

Engaging citizens

It helps government be transparent and build engagement by soliciting feedback
from people, businesses, specialists, and partners, for example

- Public surveys
- Pre-budget consultations
- Education system review
- Highway tolling feasibility consultation
- Reviewing Municipal Government Act

Raising awareness

It supports government campaigns that raise awareness about important issues as identified by a department's annual communications plan, for example

• Campaigns for Safe Driving and Youth Work Opportunities

• Small Business Week

• When to Call 911

• Buy Local (Select Nova Scotia)

Helping citizens follow the law

It helps people and businesses meet their obligations to government, for example

• Explaining when you need to pay sales tax on specific types of privately purchased items

• Explaining the Special Places Protection Act

• Nova Scotia Burning Restrictions

Explaining how government works

It explains the purpose of the provincial government, for example

• Department and office profiles

• How budgets are developed

• How bills become legislation

• Management manuals

What does not go on novascotia.ca

The new website will no longer house content that is posted just in case a user might want to read it. This rationale cannot be the sole reason for posting content online. The costs associated with sustaining 1,500,000 pages (2015 page count) are considerable. Analysis indicates that 87% of that content goes unread from year to year.

Government demonstrates transparency in many ways: FOIPOP, STAR/STOR, Public Archives, Routine Access, Legislative Library, access to contact information, and the Open Data Portal/Open Information to name a few. Posting online will no longer be a substitute for these channels.

Additionally, content does not go on novascotia.ca if it is

- copyrighted material that does not permit use on novascotia.ca

- for sites and agencies exempt from transition to novascotia.ca

- legislation, orders in council, and regulations that are on
  Nova Scotia Legislature
  Consolidated Nova Scotia Regulations and
  Orders in Council Database

- intranet information intended exclusively for civil servants,
  such as employee manuals, professional development information,
  human resources information, photographs from staff events,
  and staff engagement information

- advice, information, or services reliably provided by
  non-government organizations, such as

  * How to keep your home safe

  * "Related Links" pages

  * Reports published by others that
    have not been commissioned by the
    Government of Nova Scotia

  * How to get better gas mileage

  * Healthy workplace initiatives

  * Generic calculators (mortgage payments,
    unit conversions)

Options for reworking content

For content that does not meet the criteria, there may be options for the content to still find a home on novascotia.ca, for example

- rework the content to meet a user need
- rework the content as part of a marketing campaign
- collaborate with departments who are already providing the content to which you wish to add your information (but no duplication)
- focus on detailed guidance that only the government can provide
- rework the content to help people understand and find legislation, orders and regulations (this content links to the actual legislation, order or regulations)
- check to see if the content is a candidate for the Open data/ Open Information initiative

For content that does not meet the criteria, there are also options for the content to find a home outside of novascotia.ca, for example

- post content on department intranets (internal-facing sites)
- offer content to partners/agencies with appropriate mandates
- distribute content through social media

Publication cycle for posted documents

Here is the publication cycle for common documents posted as PDFs:

Document type	Publication period
Accountability report	Rolling 5 years that matches appropriate business plan/statement of mandate
Annual corporate report	Most recent report
Budget document and public accounts	Rolling 5 years
Business plan/statement of mandate	Rolling 5 years
Committee minutes	Not posted Committee activities can be shared by posting documents related to Recipients (awards, funding), Annual reports, Accountability reports and Strategic plans
French Language Services plan	Most recent plan
Guides and directories	Most recent report
Newsletter	Not posted Newsletters should be distributed through email or social media as they are almost immediately outdated
Public Sector Compensation Disclosure	Most recent report
Recipients (awards, funding)	Rolling 5 years
Response to Auditor General Report	Not posted; no longer required
Statistical report	Rolling 5 years
Strategic plan	Duration of the plan's start and end date plus one year (unless the plan is further updated)

Authority

Amendments to the Public Service Act were passed in December 2013 that require Communications Nova Scotia (CNS) to provide a centralized delivery of communication services, including strategic internet planning and design, on behalf of the province. The Internet Strategy unit at CNS has been tasked with providing this service, which includes implementation of the Province of Nova Scotia's Web Strategy.