Principles for Digital BC

British Columbia's approach to Digital Government is a work-in-progress, the initial framework for which has been set out at https://digital.gov.bc.ca/. What follows is a draft set of principles - fundamental propositions - intended to serve as the foundation for a system of behaviors to guide the work of the Digital BC community.

These principles have been drafted by a collaborative team in the BC Public Service, borrowing heavily from similar principles produced by other public jurisdictions. The intent of posting them here is to solicit feedback and iteration from the community, and eventually include them on https://digital.gov.bc.ca/.

Digital Principles in Context

These Digital Principles are envisioned to be part of an interconnected set of guidance and standards for all BC Public Service employees engaged in applying the culture, processes, business models and technology of the digital era to meeting the needs and expectations of the people of British Columbia:

- Our British Columbia Public Service Oath of Employment (https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/careers/managers-supervisors/managing-employee-labour-relations/oath_of_employment.pdf) and Standards of Conduct (https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/careers-myhr/about-the-bc-public-service/ethics-standards-of-conduct/standards-of-conduct);
- These (DRAFT) Digital Principles, which explicitly and very intentionally incorporate the Draft Principles that Guide the Province of British Columbia's Relationship with Indigenous Peoples (https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/careers/about-the-bc-public-service/diversity-inclusion-respect/draft_principles.pdf);
- As called for in the Digital Framework, an in-development Service Standard, intended to guide digital era teams to create and run great public services, no matter the channel through which those services are delivered (i.e. whether digital or not); and
- Modeled again after leading jurisdictions, for those using technology to build government products and services, an in-development Technology Code of Practice, a set of criteria to help government design, build and buy technology. This Code of Practice is intended to be used as a cross-government agreed standard for the development of new digital (IMIT) products and services.

Draft Principles

1. Prioritize delivering impact for British Columbians

Government exists to improve peoples' lives. Digital services should support this goal. Focus on citizens' needs; build services for outcomes rather than outputs; deliver sustainable services through judicious use of public resources.

2. Design with people

Deliver simple, effective products and services that improve lives, doing so via human-centered design practices with the people who will actually use the product or service.

3. Embed inclusion

Apply the highest standards of accessibility, inclusion and ethics at every stage of product and service design, development and delivery.

4. Continuously learn & improve

Iterate and improve products and services frequently to support learning and innovation; use modern tools and approaches; be flexible to change, accepting ongoing user feedback; test early and often; start small and scale up.

5. Work in the open

Adopt open standards to facilitate interoperability and scalability; work in the open to collaborate, co-design and co-create with users; release open data and APIs; default towards open licenses, open and interoperable standards, open-source code and open, cross-sector collaboration.

6. Take an ecosystem approach

Design and deliver solutions that are forward-thinking, adaptable and scalable; reuse before re-creating; support common components and interoperability.

7. Act as trusted information stewards

Manage information, including data, as a public asset in accordance with its value; apply rigour around decision-making, using data to take an evidence-based approach.

8. Manage risks appropriately

Respect security, privacy and ethics, balancing them with the imperative for swift action; design risk mitigation strategies to be clear and to support iteration and agile delivery.

9. Commit to building internal capacity

Empower all public servants to deliver excellent digital services; support teams, providing them with technology, tools and training; encourage innovation and controlled experimentation; build an organizational culture that supports constant learning.

10. Express cultural & historical awareness & respect

Acknowledge the historical relationships, inequity, trauma, and discrimination created by government; work in the spirit of reconciliation and B.C.'s Draft Principles guiding our relationship with Indigenous peoples (https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/careers/about-the-bc-public-service/diversity-inclusion-respect/draft_principles.pdf).