

The CMHC Brand Evolution 2020

Corporate Identity and
Brand Standards Guide

E-Learning

Our Brand

What is a brand?

A brand is an experience. It's the sum total of every thought, feeling, message, action and interaction associated with an organization, both by internal and external audiences.

A brand is an expression.

It's entrenched into each piece of communication, whether it is promotional or informative in nature, pre-crafted or delivered in real time, online or off.

A brand is an asset.

It's a valuable tool leveraged every day to amplify the credibility, impact and reach of organizational messages – whether we realize it or not.

The 2020 Evolution

Evolved visual direction

With the introduction of CMHC's new Corporate Strategy, we are shifting our branding to be more reflective of the big goals that have been set for the organization. This Brand Evolution Guide compliments and is to be used in conjunction with the existing Corporate Identity and Branding Style Guide. Please refer to it for any additional clarification.

What this doesn't apply to

This evolution in design will be applied to all internal and external communications pieces and products **that are not specific to an independently branded initiative or a specific look and feel** (ex.: NHS, etc.)

The CMHC Brand

Introduction

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) has gained equity and recognition over its more than 70 years as Canada's authority on housing.

Today, CMHC serves a broad range of audiences and communicates in an environment where messages are in constant competition. Within this dynamic environment, it is increasingly important for us to express a single, compelling voice in everything we do.

Consistent application of visuals and messaging will help maintain a clear, unified brand identity.

CMHC's Corporate Identity and Branding Style Guide establishes a framework for a common visual approach and broad messaging recommendations applicable to branded communications produced by all business lines. Within this unified framework is one look and feel — for Indigenous Housing — designed to appeal to the unique sensibilities and perspectives of its audiences.

Please refer to this guide whenever you develop communications on behalf of CMHC. For clarification on any branding related matter, please contact Public Affairs.

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- Communications and Marketing
- SharePoint
- The Studio

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E-Learning

E-learning is a computer-based or web-based training that uses various technological approaches and digital delivery methods. It is a just-in-time approach to learning, where the learner can take the training when and where it is convenient for them. Types of e-learning include, but are not limited to:

text-driven;

microlearning;

game-based;

scenario-based; and

simulations.

E-learning is most effective when:

- Sharing specific knowledge, raising awareness or communicating a new message
- Learners are self-motivated
- Content can be broken down into smaller increments
- Interactive learning is vital to the experience
- Hands-on practice for a computer-based platform is required

The benefits of e-learning are:

- Communicating the message in a consistent way
- Enabling the learner to access updated content
- Allowing the learner to review content multiple times
- Accommodating everyone's needs
- Reaching a broader audience
- Quick and efficient delivery
- Cost effective

Note: In any case e-learning should be short and take less than 20 minutes to complete.



Plain Language Writing

Writing for e-learning differs from traditional writing. In e-learning, wherever possible, incorporate the bulk of the information in the narration and summarize in lists or short paragraphs in the on-screen text.

Formatting

Lists

- Use numbered lists or bullet-pointed lists to help learners scan content faster and find the information more efficiently.
- Keep list items short and limit the use of full sentences.
- Use all sentences or all fragments, not a mixture.
- Use a period after every bullet point that is a sentence or after every bullet point that completes an introductory stem.
- Don't use punctuation after bullets that are not sentences.

Paragraphs

Alternatively, use short paragraphs to facilitate reading. Since reading online is harder, it's best to break the text into small, manageable chunks. In ordinary writing, each paragraph develops one idea and includes many sentences. In e-learning, the style is less formal with a few sentences per paragraph and may be as short as a single sentence. Steer clear from commas in paragraphs to avoid unnecessary breaks.

Sentences

Keep sentences short and crisp. Each sentence should have one simple thought. More than that creates complexity and invites confusion.

Note: Use capitals for proper nouns and at the beginning of sentences, but avoid writing in all caps.

Style

To support clarity, use plain language when writing content. Plain language writing uses:

- clear, short, straightforward sentences;
- the active voice;
- familiar, simple, short words; and
- concise, short paragraphs.

Use clear, short, straightforward sentences

Avoid unnecessary adverbs, adjectives and meaningless words.

THIS

The survey determines the vacancy rate for condominiums offered for rent.

NOT THIS

The overarching purpose of the survey questionnaire was ultimately to determine the general vacancy rate for condominium type apartments that are typically offered for rent.

Write directly to your readers.

THIS

This Guide will help you decide if condominium ownership is for you.

NOT THIS

This Guide contains the basic background information needed to figure out if condominium ownership is really the right decision.

Use a conversational tone rather than a formal, academic approach. This may mean breaking complex thoughts into shorter sentences.

THIS

Due to Regina's favourable resale market, some renters became home owners. This was another factor that increased vacancy.

NOT THIS

In addition, with resale market conditions also favouring buyers in Regina, the increase in the vacancy rate is also attributed to some rental market participants opting towards home ownership.

Use the active voice

If the subject acts, the voice is active. If the subject is acted on, the voice is passive. The active voice is typically shorter, livelier and more direct.

THIS

Your mortgage professional helps determine monthly housing costs you can afford.

NOT THIS

The role of assisting in determining the monthly housing costs you can afford lies with your mortgage professional.

Use common, simple words

Using common, simple words supports understanding because readers are familiar with the words so they won't need to pause to consider their meaning.

Choose the more common, less formal word.

THIS	NOT THIS
Ownership	Tenure
Illness	Morbidity
End	Terminate

Choose the shorter, simpler word.

THIS	NOT THIS
Use	Utilize
Begin	Commence
Say	Express

Choose concrete words over abstract ones.

THIS	NOT THIS
Use	Utilize
Begin	Commence

Use a Benefit-Driven Content Approach

Including benefit-driven content informs the audience on how it benefits them, instead of focusing solely on what CMHC does.

THE BENEFITS

Drawing on more than 70 years of experience, CMHC helps mortgage professionals stay informed and become trusted advisors to their clients. Drawing on more than 70 years of experience, CMHC develops valuable information and resources for mortgage professionals.

WHAT WE DO

CMHC's Market Analysis Centre provides reliable insight and up-to-date housing market information and analysis that supports informed decision-making within the housing sector. CMHC's Market Analysis Centre researches, creates, interprets, and shares market analyses, information and insight with those working in the housing sectors.

Corporate Signature

Like a signature at the bottom of a letter, the term “signature” in visual communications refers to the mark that identifies who we are.



Canada

(Actual minimum size)



Canada

(Actual standard size)

Signature

To maintain consistency in the size of the CMHC logo and Canada wordmark in various applications, two specific sizes have been established.

Minimum Size

CMHC logo = 1.125" wide (2.9 cm)

Canada wordmark = 0.8" wide (2 cm)

- The minimum size restriction ensures that the signature is clearly legible in all applications
- This minimum size was determined by the Federal Identity Program (FIP) guidelines which state that the **Canada wordmark** must be a minimum of 0.8" (2 cm) wide

Standard Size

CMHC logo = 1.25" wide

Canada wordmark = 0.87" wide

- Any format within the sizes of 8" x 10" to 12" x 18"
- Examples: fact sheets, publication covers, newsletters, press releases

Other size requirements

*Banners, signage, kiosks, etc., will require larger applications. Please contact the Studio for more information regarding scaling the signature.

Buffer zone of the CMHC logo

Although the CMHC logo is composed of the roof and the acronym line, they are meant to be viewed as a unit. To this end, a buffer zone, that is, a specified clear area around the CMHC logo has been established. The buffer zone is as follows:

- It is equal to the thickness of the roof
- The X in this diagram indicates the buffer zone area
- This area must remain clear of any graphic element, text

Using the icon only

The chevron may not be used in some instances on its own without the acronym below it. Instances of appropriate use are: as a small design element, in a page footer, in an animation, etc.

- * The icon should **never** be used to replace the logo when it is a stand alone visual, or the only instance of the brand being represented.
- The Studio approval is required when using the icon only on any design product. You can contact studio@cmhc-schl.gc.ca for quick approval on these pieces.

Buffer zone of the Canada wordmark

The Federal Identity Program specifies the following with regards to the buffer zone of the Canada wordmark:

“[It] should be displayed in generous open space; free from close association with any interfering or distracting elements.”

For complete information on the Canada wordmark and the Federal Identity Program (FIP), please consult www.tbs-sct.gc.ca.

The CMHC logo and the Canada wordmark: size relationship

There is a specific relationship between the size of the Canada wordmark and the CMHC logo:

- The Canada wordmark must be the width of the CMHC logo's acronym which is comprised of the letters CMHC SCHL separated by the maple leaf.
- * For signage requirements, the size relationship between the Canada wordmark and the CMHC logo may need to be altered. Permission must be sought from the Treasury Board. Please consult with Public Affairs to facilitate your request.



Indicates size relationship





Corporate signature placement on page

- When placing the logo at opposite ends of the page, there should be equal placement/spacing of the CMHC logo and Canada wordmark from the edge of the page (right or left respectively) and the bottom of the page.
- Placing the logo and wordmark side-by-side is also acceptable, however always include the appropriate buffer zone
- The logos can also be placed at the top and/or bottom of the page, as long as the sizing ratio and buffer zone is respected.

Positioning of the cmhc logo

Relative to the Canada Wordmark

- In the majority of instances, the CMHC logo and Canada wordmark are to appear side by side (on the same line), with the CMHC logo on the right-hand side and the Canada wordmark on the left-hand side
- The baseline (bottom) of “Canada” is to align with the baseline of the acronym
- The minimum amount of space between the two elements is the CMHC logo’s designated buffer zone, that is, space equal to the thickness of the roof (see page 7)
- * For exhibit signage, the CMHC logo and Canada wordmark appear at the top for maximum visibility. Other exceptions are corporate stationery (envelopes, letters, etc.) and new media applications.

- * In some limited instances, where there is not sufficient space for the CMHC logo and Canada wordmark to be side by side due to format restrictions, the Canada wordmark can appear below the CMHC logo.

The guidelines for doing so are as follows:

- The established size relationship must be maintained
- There must be sufficient space between the CMHC logo and Canada wordmark so they do not appear as if they are one entity. Minimum of two times the buffer zone ([see page 11](#)).

Language choice: english-first and french-first logos

The English and French acronyms of our Corporation’s name appear together in the CMHC logo. There are two versions of the CMHC logo:

- English-first acronym
- French-first acronym

The choice of CMHC logo to use depends on the language of the material on which it is to appear:

- In the case of a bilingual application, English-first is used in all provinces and territories except for Quebec, where the French-first logo is used
- In a tumble format, with English on one side and French on the other, use the English-first logo on the English side and the French-first logo on the French side



sufficient contrast & legibility



Insufficient contrast & legibility

Positive and reverse (negative) signature application

Positive Application

- Whenever you can, apply the CMHC logo in its two official colours
- CMHC red (Pantone 485) and black and the Canada wordmark in its two official colours, red (Pantone 485) and black
- If you are limited to one colour, use black, not red for both the CMHC logo and Canada wordmark
- The CMHC logo can be placed on a photograph positive Application, ensure that the contrast is sufficient and the logo is easily readable



Sufficient contrast & legibility

Reverse (negative) Application

- On a red background, reverse the entire signature to white
- When reversing the CMHC logo out of a photograph, ensure that the contrast is sufficient and the logo is easily readable
- When applying the CMHC logo as one colour only (black or white) the Canada Wordmark should also be represented in the same way
- * Branding approval is required for reverse applications with a different brand colour
- When applying the logo on a photo, ensure that it is placed in a negative space in the photo and not on a busy background where the logo is not sufficiently visible



Insufficient contrast & legibility

Improper CMHC Logo Usage

Following is a partial list of what not to do to the CMHC logo:

Do not recreate the CMHC logo; always use original electronic artwork



Do not change the size or relationship of any of the CMHC logo elements



Do not add an element of any sort to the CMHC logo



Do not apply the CMHC logo on an angle



Do not place the CMHC logo on a busy background



Do not apply the CMHC logo in unofficial colours



Do not alter the CMHC logo (e.g. stretch; condense, etc.)



Do not crowd the CMHC logo



Do not use the CMHC logo with a tagline as this is no longer in use



Visual Toolkit

The CMHC Visual Toolkit is a set of unique graphic elements that signal our brand. Used consistently, the toolkit unifies our communications and distinguishes our messages from the landscape. This section outlines the elements that comprise our visual style, including:

- Colour palettes
- Typefaces
- Graphic elements
- Imagery
- Icons

Note:

CMHC's visual style applies to materials intended for all audiences.



Colour Palette

White

Sand

Pantone
4535 C

CMYK
6-8-35-12

RGB
211-200-150

HTML
#D3C896

Tangerine

Pantone
144 C

CMYK
0-51-100-0

RGB
248-145-0

HTML
#F89100

Brick

Pantone
1525 C

CMYK
2-77-100-9

RGB
211-81-0

HTML
#D35100

Red

Pantone
458 C

CMYK
0-95-100-0

RGB
218-41-28

HTML
#DA291C

Teal

Pantone
328 C

CMYK
100-10-61-38

RGB
0-143-128

HTML
#008F80

Sea Blue

Pantone
3025 C

CMYK
100-27-10-56

RGB
0-92-132

HTML
#005C84

Plum

Pantone
2627 C

CMYK
85-100-6-38

RGB
69-18-95

HTML
#45125F

Steel

Pantone
Cool Grey 10

CMYK
40-30-20-66

RGB
99-102-106

HTML
#63666A

Black

Primary Colour Palette, Gradients

These are some examples but not limited

**Sea Blue
and Plum**



**Sea Blue
and Teal**



**Teal and
Plum**



**Sea Blue
and Steel**



**Teal
and Steel**



**Sea Blue and
Tangerine**



**Brick and
Tangerine**



**Tangerine
and Plum**



**Tangerine
and Steel**



Steel



Using colour overlays

These are some examples but not limited



Overlay over a black and white photo with a multiply effect



Shape overlay over a colour photo with a multiply effect



Shape overlay over a colour photo with a transparency effect



Typefaces

Calibri

Calibri Regular

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Calibri Italic

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Calibri Bold

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Calibri Bold italic

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz
ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Note: Because Gill Sans Nova is not available on all staff computers, Calibri is to be used for communication pieces developed by non-design staff, mostly for internal purposes. Templates available for common communication pieces use Calibri.

Calibri is to be used instead of Gill Sans Nova in PowerPoint presentations

Example ▼



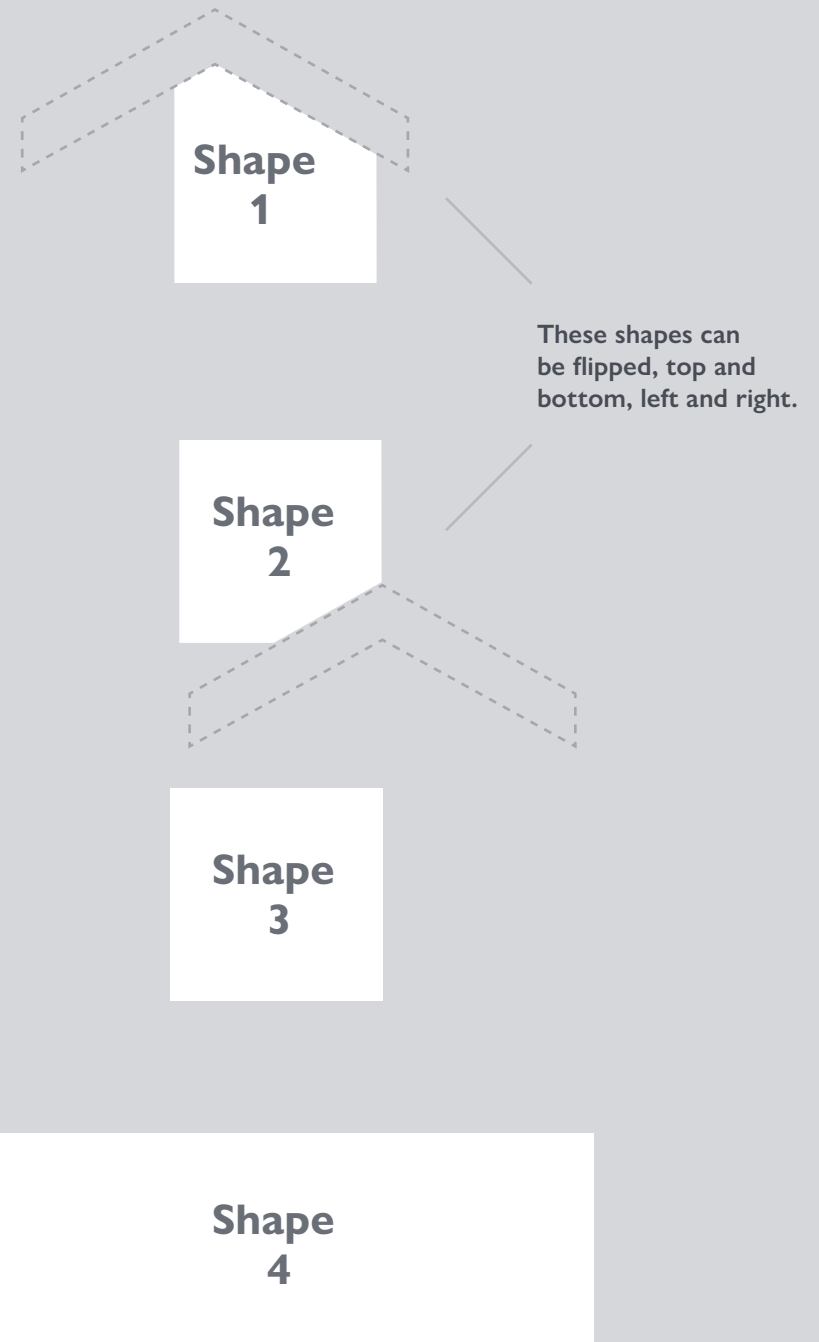
Our Goal

Achieving Affordable Housing for All.

Graphic elements

These shapes have been developed with the CMHC Chevron as the base for the angles.

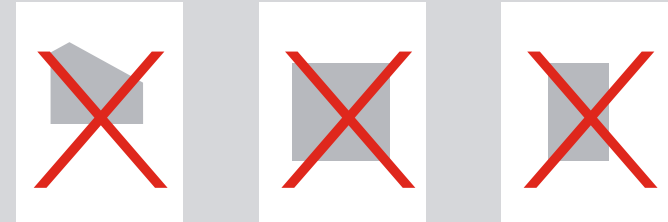
- Use these shapes as containers for text or photos
- The size of the shape can be made smaller or larger as long as the angle is the same as the CMHC chevron (see image below)
- It can be used as negative space (i.e., white space)
- A colour overlay with the chevron shape is also an acceptable way to apply the brand



Examples



Don't's



- The shape should never be displayed as a whole.
- The shape should always bleed off an edge or end in a straight line.



Imagery

Photography

Photography is a prominent visual element of the CMHC brand. It is the most immediate and compelling component to convey the proper tone of the message. Photography also provides context to the story. Be thoughtful when selecting imagery. It's important to choose imagery that is compelling and appropriate. Ensure that imagery is simple and relevant to the subject matter.

Note: Never place text directly over images (see [Designing for Visual Impairment](#)).

Photography Style and Usage

- CMHC's photography style was developed with our brand mission in mind. It portrays diversity and leadership by using an honest and authentic and positive photographic style.
- Photos are a key prominent visual element of the CMHC brand.

Photography VS Illustration

- Photography is used exclusively for the simple reason that our clients like to see themselves reflected in our material.
- Use technical illustrations (architectural, mechanical, electrical, etc.) to add context.
- Drawings can be used to illustrate a process (e.g., how to remove mold).
- You can't use illustrations instead of photography.
- You can use illustrations for animations and internal training videos.

CMHC Photo Bank

We have created a photo bank of pre-selected and edited photos to ensure a consistent look and feel is applied to all photos used for the brand. Please select photos from this bank.

If an appropriate photo is not available, another photo may be selected. Use careful attention when selecting a photo outside of the CMHC photo bank to ensure visual consistency in the tone, subject, colouring and visual style.

The photos in the photo bank are used for the CMHC brand and must not be used for any other sub-brands managed by CMHC (ex.: National Housing Strategy).

Contact us at the Studio for access the photo bank. Email us at studio@cmhc-schl.gc.ca. We update and add to the photo bank regularly, on a bi-monthly basis.

Note for external suppliers:

All layered Photoshop (PSD) files with the adjusted colours must be supplied to CMHC at the completion of the project. If selecting a photo outside of the photo bank, the original, un-edited photo must also be supplied.

Tips on Selecting Photos

- Photos must be authentic; not contrived.
- Photos must be of high resolution for reproduction quality.
- Photos must reflect diversity.
- Photos must reflect sustainable practices.
- Photos must be contemporary and reflect current best practices.
- Photos must reflect the Canadian environment (unless the material is intended for an international audience).
- Photos must exemplify industry best practices.

Tone: Photos should be natural and engaging. They should appear authentic. They should have depth and evoke feeling. Nothing should feel contrived.

Simplicity: A clear, concise message is the general rule for photography as well as for words. The message should be clear to the reader. Avoid photos in which there is too much going on.

Reality: Choose photos that show “real people” interacting naturally. Avoid images where people are looking directly into the camera.

Diversity: The choice of photos must reflect:

- Canada’s cultural diversity
- the diversity of economic circumstances
- diversity in family units
- multi-generational diversity
- diversity of lifestyles
- diversity of abilities
- diversity of housing types

Colour: Photos can be full colour.

Reproduction rights: Before using any photos, make sure that CMHC has reproduction written copyrights.

Credit: Credit must always be given as stipulated in the contract with the photographer. If you have been given written permission to use a photo provided by another organization, find out whether they want to be acknowledged, and how.

Quality: Always begin with a high quality photo to ensure a professional looking final product.

Accuracy: When selecting or creating a photograph with technical content, make sure it is technically accurate, up to date and reflects the best practices of the specific industry. Consult with an expert on the subject to avoid potential errors.

Photography Sources

Royalty-free photos have no usage costs or limitations. Once you purchase a photo, it can be used multiple times for multiple projects. CMHC does not own third party rights and therefore cannot pass on the rights to users outside of CMHC.

Rights-managed Photos

Rights-managed Photos are licensed on a use-by-use basis for a fee. This fee depends on the:

- communication medium (print, billboard, website, advertisement, etc.)
- size at which the photograph is reproduced
- quantities printed
- period of time the photograph will be in use
- distribution (e.g., world rights, North American rights, etc.)
- rights that are purchased – exclusive or non-exclusive

Original Photography

For original photography, a professional photographer should be assigned to ensure the highest quality product. You must make sure all models have signed a release form (available on SharePoint) permitting CMHC to use their photos for stated applications and a specified length of time. Original photos can have usage limitations or fees, so make sure CMHC has been awarded copyright on the contract with the photographer.

Note: Original Photos should be considered for specific campaigns (when budgets allow) to eliminate the risk of other organizations using the same photos in their material.





In order to maintain a consistent brand message, it is important to avoid the following techniques in photography. Make sure you avoid the following:

Avoid using photos that appear staged and inauthentic.



Avoid adding Indigenous specific photography that can be perceived as contrived or culturally inappropriate.



Avoid 3D effects in photos.



Avoid using photos montage that appear staged and inauthentic.



Icon Style and Usage

We developed a modern, friendly and minimalist icon style to add dimension to the brand. Use these icons to help illustrate concepts and ideas.

Adjust the icon colours to work with the colour palette selected for each individual communications piece.

Use these icons for the CMHC brand only. They shouldn't be used for any other sub-brands managed by CMHC (ex.: National Housing Strategy).

Note:

Contact us at studio@cmhc-schl.gc.ca for the icons.





Indigenous Look and Feel

The Indigenous look and feel is an extension of the corporate brand.

The Indigenous look and feel uses the following elements:

- Curved shapes and circles are used instead of the chevron
- The curved shapes should be a segment of a perfect circle, not an oval
- Photos depicting Indigenous people, housing and culture
- The same typeface as the CMHC brand, Gill Sans Nova and Calibri (Calibri is to be used instead of Gill Sans Nova in PowerPoint presentations)

Graphic elements

The Circle

The circle is an important element of the visual look and feel due to its meanings in Indigenous symbolism, including the medicine wheel and the dream catcher. The circle must be incorporated into all material.

Circle Usage

- The circle should be used as a frame for secondary photos
- The circle should have a transparent coloured border using a colour from the Indigenous look and feel colour palette
- The circle can be of any size that is appropriate to how it is being used and where it is being used.
- The circle can be positioned anywhere that suits the design and layout of the material



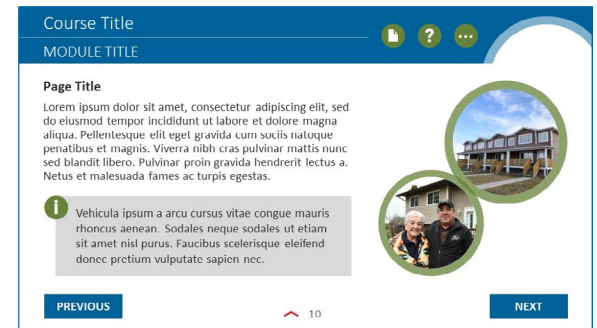
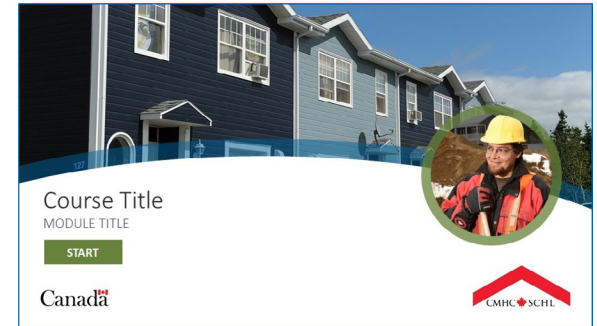
The curve should be a portion of a perfect circle

The Curve

The curve is one of the visual look and feel elements that defines the Indigenous look and feel. The curve must be incorporated into all material.

Curve Usage

- The curve can be used as a frame for secondary photos
- The curve should have a transparent white or coloured border using a colour from the Indigenous look and feel colour palette
- Transparent border should be 50% opacity
- The curve can be used as a text box
- The curve can be used to divide space for text and images
- The curve can be of any width or depth
- The curve should be a segment of a perfect circle, not an oval
- The shape of the curve must be pronounced enough so that it creates a discernible arc
- The curve can be positioned anywhere on the material
- On fact sheet mastheads, the curve is positioned at the top



Indigenous Imagery

- Photos are the predominant elements on materials targeting Indigenous communities.
- Photography should be contemporary and realistic. Images should depict Indigenous people and typical housing situations. They should be of actual Indigenous communities, houses and people.
- The photograph should reflect the topic of the material. Therefore, housing oriented images must be used, depicting actual Indigenous communities, houses or housing repair.
- Photos of people are very important as they help the audience to relate to the material. As noted above, the image of the people should be in keeping with the topic of the material.
- Where possible, photography should be regionally appropriate, reflecting the people, housing and landscapes of the particular region from which it stems.
- Stock photography must not be used, except to illustrate non-Indigenous specific content (e.g., a thermostat).



Indigenous colour palette

Pantone
3015 C

CMYK
100-35-3-21

RGB
0-98-155

HTML
#00629B

Pantone
3155 C

CMYK
100-9-29-47

RGB
0-98-114

HTML
#006272

Pantone
575 C

CMYK
55-9-95-45

RGB
103-130-58

HTML
#67823A

Pantone
7447 C

CMYK
77-85-6-18

RGB
93-71-119

HTML
#5D4777

Pantone
404 C

CMYK
20-25-30-59

RGB
119-110-100

HTML
#776E64

Pantone
109 C

CMYK
0-9-100-/0

RGB
255-209-0

HTML
#FFD100

Pantone
144 C

CMYK
0-51-100-0

RGB
237-139-0

HTML
#ED8B00

Pantone
376 C

CMYK
54-0-100-/0

RGB
132-189-0

HTML
#84BD00

Application

Page Layouts

Page Elements

E-learning pages can contain, but are not limited to, the following elements:

Course Titles

The course title is the name given to a course or series of modules. Course titles should be concise and clear. Position this title at the top of the player, before the module title.

Module Title

The module title is the name of each individual lesson in a course. If there isn't more than one lesson there is usually no module title. This title should be short and straightforward. Position it between the course title and the main content.

Main Content

The main content sometimes includes a page title and usually one or two paragraphs of body text. There shouldn't be too much content on a page. If there are more than two paragraphs, consider adding buttons to the main content and using popups or splitting the content onto multiple pages. The main content should be the primary focus in the content area.

Graphics

Graphics can be photos, illustrations or screen captures. Only select images that are relevant to the content. Graphics should not take up more than half of the content area unless they are screen captures (see Screen Captures). Reduce the size of the image if extra space is necessary for the text.

Navigational Buttons

There can be multiple types of buttons on a page. The most common ones are previous, next and menu buttons. Always place the previous and next buttons on the bottom, either side by side or on either side of the page. It is recommended to place the menu button and other types of buttons, such as the resource and help button, at the top-right. Place popup buttons with the main content.

Page Number

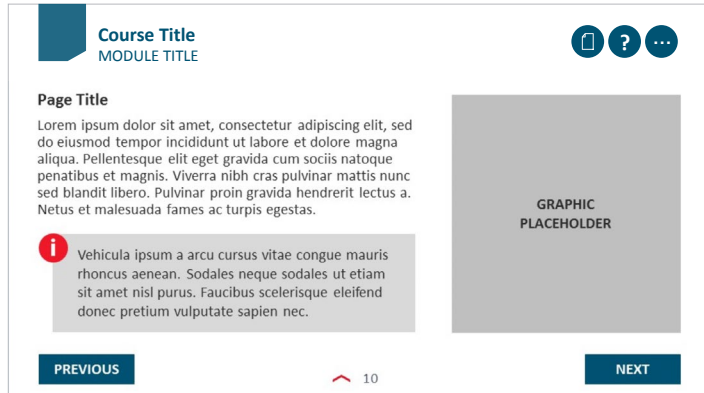
Page numbers aren't mandatory, but are a good reference for reviewers and learners. Position them at the bottom centre or bottom-right.

Size

The content area should be 960 x 540 pixels. However, the player must scale to display at the learner's browser window size. Launch the player in a new browser window, with no browser controls, and allow the learner to resize the window.

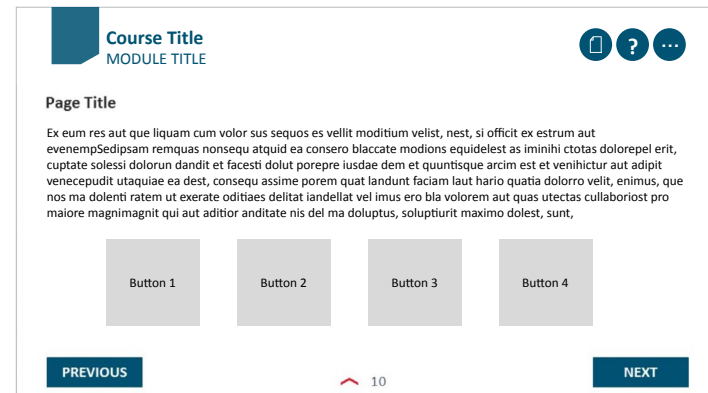
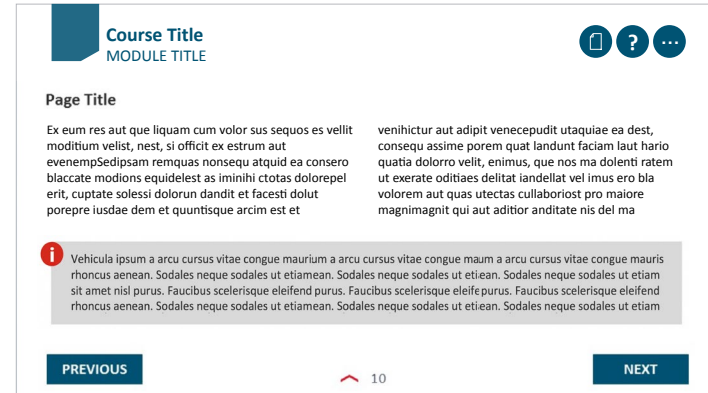
Margins

The example below demonstrates proportions and is not prescriptive. For example, pages with very little content will have larger margins. You can also increase the margins to eliminate orphans, widows and rags.



Alignment

Pages can have different types of layouts based on the content (see examples below). Always align page elements in a consistent position, relative to the layout selected.



Popups And Information Boxes

Popups are a great way to add interactivity to e-learning and display more content on a page. Use information boxes to highlight important information, such as a reference to another module.

Size and Position

Constant popups (e.g. menu, resource, help, etc.) should have a fixed size and position. Determine the size and position of other popups based on the content area and space available, but ensure there is consistency between popups on the same page.

Information boxes should automatically resize to fit the text, so the height adjusts based on the number of lines of text. The position of information boxes should be the same throughout an e-learning.

Margins

The instance below demonstrates minimum proportions and is not prescriptive. For example, popups with fixed sizes and very little content will have larger margins. Furthermore, they can be bigger if the content area allows it. You can also increase margins to eliminate orphans, widows and rags.

Close Button

Always position the close button in the top right corner. Never crowd it and leave sufficient margins as shown below. Contrast between the button and background colour of the popup should be significant to guarantee the button is noticeable (see [Designing for Visual Impairment](#)).



Vehicula ipsum a arcu cursus vitae congue mauris rhoncus aenean. Sodales neque sodales ut etiam sit amet nisl purus. Faucibus scelerisque eleifend donec pretium vulputate sapien nec.



Lorem Ipsum

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Pellentesque elit eget gravida cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis. Viverra nibh cras pulvinar mattis nunc sed blandit libero. Pulvinar proin gravida hendrerit lectus a. Netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas.

Buttons

Types of Buttons

There are several different types of buttons:

Shapes with Text

Shapes with text are usually rectangular and should be a minimum of 40 x 40 pixels. They should have no more than one to three words on them, to indicate the purpose of the button. Contrast between the text, buttons and background colour should be significant to ensure the text on the button is legible and the button is noticeable (see *Designing for Visual Impairment*). Button text should be at least 16 points and should have appropriate margins, as shown below (proportions are for demonstrative purposes and are not prescriptive).



Icons

Icons typically have a simple illustration representing the topic of the button. The style of illustration used for icons must be consistent throughout an e-learning. Icon buttons should also be a minimum of 40 x 40 pixels. Icons should be big enough to see the details of the illustration and never be distorted (e.g. stretched, condensed, etc.).

Hyperlinks

Hyperlinks are generally part of the content and can be multiple words. They should be underlined and must be a different colour from the body text. Hyperlinks can be as long as necessary, but the shorter the better. It is recommended not to use web addresses as a hyperlink, but rather the title of the web page or “Click here”.

Question Buttons

Question buttons can either be custom or built-in. To customize, use shapes and/or increase margins to make questions more visually appealing. For more information on the different types of question buttons, see *Types of Questions*. For question buttons, always ensure alignment and spacing between options are consistent. The position of the Submit button should be the same for every question.

Note: Perpetual buttons (e.g. previous, next, menu, etc.) should have the same position throughout an e-learning. Place other buttons wherever necessary in the content area.

Graphic Elements

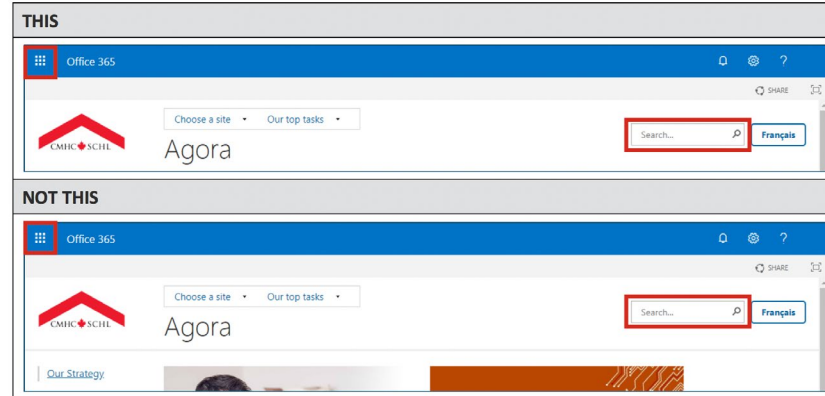
Screen Captures

Use screen captures to demonstrate different aspects of systems and software. When using screen captures in e-learning, they should be a capture of the entire window and should take up as much of the content area as possible. The resolution of the screen captures should be high, so as to not lose any of the details. When cropping out browser or desktop controls, always crop at the same size and in the same position, so screen captures are consistent.

You can place highlights over screen captures, but make sure to align them as precisely as possible with the button or area highlighted. There must be a considerable contrast between the highlight colour and the screen capture. The weight of the stroke for the highlight must be at least 3 pixels (2.25 points).

There may be text over screen captures, but it should be in a caption and should not cover important parts of the screen capture. See Simulations for more information on captions.

It's not recommended to show only certain areas of a screen capture. However you may crop a specific area of the window (e.g. navigation bar) when focusing explicitly on it in the content. If you do so, make sure to crop out any parts of the window that won't be mentioned (see example below). The cropped area must be shown in the context of the entire window at some point in the e-learning. In a video, it is acceptable to zoom in and out of specific areas of the screen capture.



Simulations

Use simulations in e-learning to demonstrate how to operate any given system or software. Simulations allow the learner to explore and learn about different properties within a system or software, without actually using it. Simulations can either be a pre-recorded video or a series of screen captures. In both cases, it's recommended to use audio as the main source of information and highlights to support what's mentioned in the audio. In cases where there is no audio in the e-learning, use captions with text to display the information. The captions and callouts should automatically resize to fit the text, so the height adjusts based on the number of lines of text. You can place captions anywhere as long as they don't cover important content and/or page elements. Simulations should be as short as possible. Avoid showing unnecessary steps and repeating the same steps within an e-learning. If the simulation is long, consider dividing it in multiple shorter steps (e.g. logging in, navigating to the page, filling out the form, etc.).

Types of Simulations

Try-me versus Show-me

- Try-me simulations are an interactive exercise and are used as practice for the learner.
- Show-me simulations are a demonstration and are less interactive.

Try-me Style and Usage

- Usually a series of screen captures with audio, captions and/or callouts describing step by step instructions
 - Learners click on hotspots to continue to the next step
 - Highlights can be used to accentuate what is being demonstrated
 - If highlights aren't used, learners receive hints and feedback before automatically moving on to the next step
 - Used when explaining a process with more than a few steps
- ### Show-me Style and Usage
- Usually a short video with audio, captions and/or callouts describing step-by-step instructions
 - Moves forward to the next step automatically, without any user interaction
 - Highlights are always used to accentuate what is being demonstrated
 - Used when explaining a shorter process with fewer steps

Knowledge Checks

Knowledge checks are meant to test a learner's comprehension of the content at any point in an e-learning. Often times, these exercises aren't graded as they are simply a reference for the learner. They can be reported on (see Reporting), but only as a means to indicate whether the learner understands the content or not. Knowledge checks should be aligned with the learning objectives of the e-learning. Keep questions simple, short and precise. Give learners valuable feedback by including additional information and performance support options, so learners can revisit previous information and master the content.

Types of Questions

There are many options when it comes to types of questions for knowledge checks. Use a variety of types of questions in an e-learning to keep the learner enticed. Note that this list is not exhaustive.

True/False: Requires the learner to select the single correct choice from two choices. It is usually written in the form of a statement that is either true or false.

Multiple Choice: Requires the learner to select the single correct choice from various choices.

Multiple Response: Requires the learner to select all of the correct choices from various choices. Any number of choices can be correct and the learner must select all that apply for the question to be graded as correct.

Fill-in-the-blank: Requires the learner to enter the answer in a blank field. There is only one correct answer to this type of question, although you can enter multiple answers to account for variations in response.

Word Bank: Requires the learner to drag and drop the correct choice into the corresponding empty box.

Matching Drag-and-Drop: Requires the learner to drag and drop items in the second column to match items in the first column. All items in the match column must correctly correspond to all items in the choice column for the question to be graded as correct.

Matching Drop-Down: Requires the learner to select items from drop-down menus in the second column to match items in the first column. All items in the match column must correctly correspond to all items in the column for the question to be graded as correct.

Sequence Drag-and-Drop: Requires the learner to drag and drop items to arrange in sequence. All items must be in the proper sequence for the question to be graded as correct.

Sequence Drop-Down: Requires the learner to select items from drop-down menus to arrange in sequence. All items must be in the proper sequence for the question to be graded as correct.

Numeric: Requires the learner to enter the correct numeric value. The learner is restricted to entering only numbers when answering this question.

Text Entry: Lets the learner type their answer in a text field.

Hotspots: Requires the learner to click on the correct area within an image.

Shortcut Key: Lets the learner answer with a key stroke or key combination. This is ideal for try-me simulations where the learner must press a key to continue (e.g. Enter).

Likert Scale: Allows the learner to choose the response that best represents their opinion relative to a series of statements.

Video

You can add videos in addition to content in an e-learning. You can embed them from a website or insert them from a file. Videos from a file should be in MP4 format. In any case, ensure the audio quality matches the quality of the audio files inserted in the e-learning. For ideal functionality, enable the video controls.

Audio

Save original voice over files in a lossless format, such as WAV or AIFF, to maintain high quality audio. Convert audio to a lossy format before adding it to an e-learning. MP3 or AAC are the most common and well-supported lossy formats for audio. Use a high bitrate (e.g. 320 kbps) to maintain quality. Save audio files as mono for accessibility (see Designing for Auditory Impairment) and to ensure learners with mono speakers still receive the audio as it should be heard.

ACCESSIBILITY

It is best practice to follow the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) when developing e-learning. Otherwise, an alternate accessible version is recommended if conventional e-learning is not the optimal way to deliver the training.

Designing for Auditory Impairment

All e-learning with narration should have closed captioning. Add closed captions to all video and audio clips included in an e-learning. Do not add unnecessary sound effects.

Use mono audio to make sure people who are hard of hearing or deaf in one ear don't miss a word. Typical stereo audio includes distinct left and right channels, so each ear receives different sounds and some audio could be misheard or not heard at all.

Designing for Visual Impairment

Colour should not be the only way to convey information, for example green indicating correct versus red signifying incorrect. Colour-blind learners may not be able to distinguish the different colours and therefore their significance. Do not use colour on its own to convey information, but only in addition to existing information, such as check marks/x marks, correct/incorrect feedback, error messages, etc.

Backgrounds with text should be solid colour and not have any texture. A loss of acuity or blurry vision can make text almost disappear into the background. To select the appropriate colours, follow the WCAG 2.1. They recommend that a contrast ratio of at least 4.5:1 should exist between text and its background. This ratio drops to 3:1 for larger text (18 points+, or 14 points+ if bold).

Add alt text that is descriptive and specific to all images in an e-learning. Consider the image's subject and context rather than keywords. Include information that is representative of the topic and relevant to the learner in complete sentences rather than fragmented sentences. Keep your alt text shorter than 125 characters. Do not start alt text with "Picture of..." or "Image of..." instead jump right into the image's description.

Optionally, e-learning modules can be compatible with screen readers. Optimize this accessibility feature by customizing the tab order of slide objects.

Who must comply

By law, a public sector organization must make new and significantly refreshed public web content accessible. The organization that controls the web content must meet the accessibility requirements.

For more information visit the Government of Ontario website.

Compliance deadline

Beginning January 1, 2014: new public websites, significantly refreshed websites and any web content posted after January 1, 2012 must meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level A.

Beginning January 1, 2021: all public websites and web content posted after January 1, 2012 must meet WCAG 2.0 Level AA other than criteria 1.2.4 (live captions) and 1.2.5 (pre-recorded audio descriptions).

How to comply

Public web content must meet WCAG 2.0, as outlined in the Accessibility Standard for Information and Communications.

Content posted before 2012 does not have to be modified. If asked, an alternate format will need to be made available.

According to Ontario's accessibility laws, new and significantly refreshed web content must meet the following success criteria for each level:

Level A

Guideline 1.1: Provide text alternatives for non-text content

- Success Criterion 1.1.1 Non-text content

Guideline 1.2: Provide alternatives for time-based media

- Success Criterion 1.2.1 Audio-only and video-only (Prerecorded)
- Success Criterion 1.2.2 Captions (Prerecorded)
- Success Criterion 1.2.3 Audio Description or Media Alternative (Prerecorded)

Guideline 1.3: Adaptable content

- Success Criterion 1.3.1 Info and relationships
- Success Criterion 1.3.2 Meaningful sequence
- Success Criterion 1.3.3 Sensory characteristics

Guideline 1.4: Distinguishable content

- Success Criterion 1.4.1 Use of color
- Success Criterion 1.4.2 Audio control

Guideline 2.1: Keyboard accessible

- Success Criterion 2.1.1 Keyboard
- Success Criterion 2.1.2 No keyboard trap

Guideline 2.2: Provide users enough time to read and use content

- Success Criterion 2.2.1 Timing adjustable
- Success Criterion 2.2.2 Pause, stop, hide

Guideline 2.3: Don't design content in a way that is known to cause seizures

- Success Criterion 2.3.1 Three flashes or below threshold

Guideline 2.4: Navigable content

- Success Criterion 2.4.1 Bypass blocks
- Success Criterion 2.4.2 Page titled
- Success Criterion 2.4.3 Focus order
- Success Criterion 2.4.4 Link purpose (in context)

Guideline 3.1: Readable text content

- Success Criterion 3.1.1 Language of page

Guideline 3.2: Predictable web pages

- Success Criterion 3.2.1 On focus
- Success Criterion 3.2.2 On input

Guideline 3.3: Input assistance

- Success Criterion 3.3.1 Error identification
- Success Criterion 3.3.2 Labels or instructions

Guideline 4.1: Compatible

- Success Criterion 4.1.1 Parsing
- Success Criterion 4.1.2 Name, role, value

Level AA

Guideline 1.4: Distinguishable content

- Success Criterion 1.4.3 Contrast (Minimum)
- Success Criterion 1.4.4 Resize text
- Success Criterion 1.4.5 Images of text

Guideline 2.4: Navigable content

- Success Criterion 2.4.6 Headings and labels
- Success Criterion 2.4.7 Focus visible

Guideline 3.1: Readable text content

- Success Criterion 3.1.2 Language of parts

Guideline 3.2: Predictable web pages

- Success Criterion 3.2.4 Consistent identification

Guideline 3.3: Input assistance

- Success Criterion 3.3.3 Error suggestion

PUBLISHING

Settings

Keep file names as short as possible by eliminating unnecessary conjunctions. The published zip file must not contain any spaces, special characters and/or French characters. Instead of spaces use underscores (e.g. Example_Naming_Convention.zip).

Preferably, use the Light coloured Modern Player Style in Storyline. Since Flash isn't supported in all browsers, publish in HTML5. Test the published e-learning and make sure it works properly in Internet Explorer (IE) 11 and Microsoft Edge once uploaded to a Learning Management System (LMS).

Note: Change the default text labels of the player to French (Canada) when publishing a French e-learning.

Tracking

Track an e-learning as complete when the learner has viewed 80% of the content. To do so, change the minimum number of slides viewed to approximately 80% of the total of slides. However, depending on the style of the e-learning you can also track it as complete when the learner has viewed a specific number of slides. To guarantee the e-learning is tracked properly, make sure all timelines are as short as possible before publishing.

Alternatively, you can track learners' responses to the questions, use the Survey Question or Freeform Question and Result slides built-in Storyline. Ensure that the Result Slide Properties includes all the questions. A result slide tracking the results of the questions must be included in the Storyline file. Track the e-learning as complete when the learner reaches the result slide. The "quiz" should not be timed and the passing score should be 0%. The result slide does not require the following:

- User score
- Passing score
- Review button
- Print button
- Retry button

In both cases, match the length of the timeline to the length of the audio. If there is no audio, change the length of the timeline to five seconds or the amount of time necessary for transitions.

Reporting

Use SCORM 1.2 as the LMS output option. The status reported to the LMS should be Completed/Incomplete. If you choose to report learners' responses to questions, for example, whether they selected Option A, B or C. In this case, use SCORM 2004, 4th Edition as the LMS output options. The status reported to the LMS should be Pass/Incomplete. The status reported should never be Passed/Failed or Completed/Failed.

Glossary

AAC

Advanced audio coding (AAC) is an audio file format that is used for compressing digital audio files to a smaller size, but still preserving the original audio quality. It is considered a lossy format for audio.

AIFF

Audio Interchange File Format (AIFF) is an audio file format standard for storing sound data. The format was developed by Apple Inc. and is most commonly used on Apple Macintosh computer systems. It is considered a lossless format for audio.

Alt Text

Also called “alt tags” and “alt descriptions,” alt text is the written copy that appears in place of an image if the image fails to load. This text helps screen-reading tools describe images to visually impaired readers.

Baseline

The imaginary line along which the bottom edge of lowercase and capital letters align.

Bitrate (see also KBPS)

The number of bits per second that can be transmitted from one location to another along a digital network. In other words, it measures how much data is transmitted in a given amount of time. Bitrate is commonly measured in bits per second (bps), kilobits per second (kbps), or megabits per second (mbps).

Bleed

An image that extends beyond the trim marks of a page or other defined area is said to “bleed.”

Browser Controls

A graphical control element, that is part of a browser window, on which buttons, icons, menus, or other elements are placed. Examples include, but are not limited to: title bar, toolbar, tab bar, taskbar and navigation bar.

Browser Window

An area on the screen that displays information for a specific web browser software. A typical window includes browser controls and sometimes a status bar. Most of the window’s remaining area is used to display the content. Usually browser windows can be opened, closed, resized, minimized and moved.

Buffer Zone

The area around an object that is used to ensure separation from any other graphic element, text or pattern.

Built-in

A feature that is an integral part of a software application.

Callout

A special text box with or without a small “tail”, line, arrow, or similar graphic that points to a specific location on a document, image or technical drawing.

Captions

A heading, title, or a short sentence that describes what is being demonstrated.

Closed Captions (CC)

Text displayed on-screen to provide additional or interpretive information. Used as a transcription of the audio portion as it occurs, either verbatim or in edited form, sometimes including descriptions of non-speech elements. Also known as subtitles.

CMYK (see also Process Colour)

CMYK refers to the four ink colours used in printing. C is cyan (blue), M is magenta (pink), Y is yellow and K is black.

Conjunctions

A word used to connect clauses or sentences or to coordinate words in the same clause, such as and, but, if, etc.

Content Area

The dedicated space for page elements and content.

Contrast

The difference between the lightest colour (e.g. the background), and the darkest colour (e.g. the text).

Corporate Signature

The Corporate signature consists of the CMHC logo and the Canada wordmark.

Crop

Following the outline of a shape to isolate a certain section of an image.

E-learning

Learning conducted via electronic media, typically on the Internet.

Embed

Using computer code to place something, such as a video or song, on a website, blog or e-learning. When something is embedded on a web page, the user can watch the video or listen to the song without leaving the page.

Em (—)

In typography, a unit of measurement that is exactly the same width as the point size of the letter “m” in the font.

En (–)

In typography, a unit of measurement that is exactly the same width as the point size of the letter “n” in the font.

Fixed Size

A size that has been determined and no longer varies.

Flash

A container file format used to deliver digital content in web browsers using Adobe Flash Player.

Flush

In typography, the alignment with either margin of successive lines of type. When lines of type are flush with both left and right margins, they are “justified.”

Font

See Typeface.

Hexadecimal Numbers (Hex Colours)

Hexadecimal numbers or hex colours are a base-16 numbering system used to define colours on web pages. The mix of red, green and blue defines the colour. A hex number is written from 0–9 and then A-F.

Hyperlink

A link from a file or document to another file, document, location or web page. Typically activated by clicking on highlighted words on the screen. HTML5 (see also Hypertext Markup Language) HTML5 is the fifth major revision of the Hypertext Markup Language (HTML). One of the major changes in HTML5 is in respect to how HTML addresses web applications. Other new features in HTML5 include specific functions for embedding graphics, audio, video, and interactive documents.

Hypertext Markup Language (HTML)

HTML is a programming language for web pages.

Icon

An image regarded as a representative symbol of something.

KBPS (see also Bitrate)

Kilobits per second is a measurement of how much data is transmitted in a second.

Learning Management System (LMS)

A software application for the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting and delivery of training, learning and development programs.

Lossless (see also Lossy)

Lossless compression describes a file where all original data can be recovered when the file is uncompressed. The quality of these files is higher in comparison to lossy formats, but the file size is larger. Examples of lossless formats include: GIF, PNG, BMP, Raw, ALAC, FLAC, WAV, and AIFF.

Lossy (see also Lossless)

Lossy compression is a class of data encoding methods that eliminate redundant data to reduce the file size. Lossy compression is generally used for video and sound, where a certain amount of information loss will not be detected. Examples of lossy formats include: JPEG, OGG, MP4, MP3 and AAC.

Lowercase

Small letters in typography.

Margin

The edge or border of something.

MP3

MPEG-1 Audio Layer 3 (MP3) is an audio file format that is used for compressing digital audio files to a smaller size, but still preserving the original audio quality. It is considered a lossy format for audio.

MP4

MPEG-4 Part 14 (MP4) is a digital multimedia container format most commonly used to store video and audio, but also to store other data such as subtitles and still images. Like most modern container formats, it allows streaming over the Internet. It is considered a lossy format for video.

Orphan (see also Widows)

A single word that appears at the top of a page. They belong on the previous page, as they look untidy and also break the flow of reading across two pages. Sometimes the term is interchanged with Widows.

Pantone Matching System®

A standardized colour system known around the world as Pantone or PMS.

Pica

The basic typographic unit of measurement; there are six picas in one inch (25.4 mm).

Pixel

The smallest discrete element of an image or picture on a screen (usually a single-coloured dot).

Player

The interface that appears around the perimeter of your slides.

Point

The smallest unit of typographic measurement. Twelve points equal one pica; there are 72 points in one inch (25.4 mm).

Process Colour (see also CMYK)

A method of printing that uses combinations of cyan, magenta, yellow and black to create all other colours.

Rags

In typography, rag refers to the irregular or uneven vertical margin of a block of type. Usually the right margin is ragged because of the right alignment, but either or both margins can be ragged depending on the paragraph alignment.

Resolution

The sharpness and clarity of a graphic, determined by the number of pixels displayed. The greater the number of pixels per inch, the greater the resolution is (the clarity and sharpness of the image).

RGB (Red/Green/Blue)

A colour system that uses combinations of red, green and blue to create all other colours. All applications viewed on-screen should use RGB.

Running Footer/Running Header

A line of small type, usually containing the publication title and page number that appears at the bottom (footer) or top (header) of every page in a document.

Sans Serif (see also Serif)

A typeface without serifs. Gill Sans Nova and Calibri are both sans serif fonts.

SCORM 1.2

Shareable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM) is a collection of standards and specifications for e-learning. It defines communications between client side content and a host system, which is commonly

supported by a learning management system. SCORM 1.2 is the most widely used version and is supported by most LMSs.

Screen

A shade (described as a percentage) of a colour.

Serif (see also Sans Serif)

The short lines that angle from the main stroke of a letter.

Special Characters

Non-alphabetic or non-numeric character, such as @, #, \$, %, &, * and +.

Timeline

A graphic representation of the passage of time that is used to arrange and animate objects, so they appear at the desired moment.

Tracking

Collecting and evaluating the statistics from which one can measure the effectiveness of an online campaign.

Transitions

The process or a period of changing from one state or condition to another. When used strategically, transitions can even convey a sense of movement, pace, and direction.

Typeface

The particular design of a complete set of letters, numbers and punctuation. Also referred to as a font.

Uppercase

Capital letters in typography.

Video Controls

A separate playbar added to videos, so learners can play, pause, rewind, and fast forward it.

Visual Style

The unified approach to CMHC's marketing and communications materials, designed to maximize readability and impact, while supporting our brand character traits. Consistent placement and treatment

of all branding elements throughout all media and formats contribute to the strength of our visual style and aid recognition of CMHC products and services.

WAV

Waveform Audio File Format (WAV) is an audio file format standard for storing sound data. This standard was developed by IBM and Microsoft for storing an audio on PCs. Waveform Audio File Format is also known as WAVE. It is considered a lossless format for audio.

Web Address

The address of a web page on the Internet, it indicates the location as well as the protocol used to access it. Also known as a Universal Resource Locator (URL).

Web Browser

A web browser or browser is a software application that allows a user to locate, access and display web pages identified by a distinct web address or URL.

White Space

The space on a page that does not contain any information yet is crucial to the overall design; can refer to the space around an object or between elements. A good use of white space will prevent a design from looking cluttered or busy.

Widow (see also Orphans)

A lone word or short group of words that appears at the bottom of a paragraph, column or page. They tend to make long sections of text look unbalanced, as well as leaving too much excess white space at the end of a page. Sometimes the term is interchanged with Orphans.

ZIP

An archive file format that supports lossless data compression and whose contents of one or more files are compressed for storage or transmission.