

Canada Place Evaluation
February 26, 2000

IMAGE Consulting Group

IMAGE CONSULTING GROUP

123 John St.
Smithville, Ontario
A1B 2C3

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Ms. Anne Scotton
Director General
Corporate Review Branch
Department of Canadian Heritage
15 Eddy Street
Hull, Quebec
K1A 0M5

Dear Ms. Scotton,

It has come to our attention that you are seeking an evaluation framework for your Canada Place Web site, www.canadaplace.gc.ca. As a result, we are writing to you to express the IMAGE Consulting Group's interest in your project.

From your request for an evaluation framework, it is our understanding that this evaluation will be used as a valuable tool in developing a framework for assessing the performance of the site in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. Considering our young, dynamic, and energetic approach, we feel that our evaluation framework will assist you in meeting your objectives in this unique medium.

Outlined in our framework will be our thorough understanding and evaluation of the objectives that need to be achieved. Furthermore, our proposal describes our approach to the project by discussing reasons for evaluating the Canada Place Web site, as well as recommendations for the site. Finally, we have provided a sample questionnaire for your perusal in order to evaluate demographic information on your Web site visitors.

In consideration of the February 26, 2000 deadline for submission, IMAGE Consulting will be forwarding the requested evaluation promptly. We thank you in advance for the time and consideration given to our proposed framework. Merci beaucoup pour nous donnez cette chance à participer dans le concours de simulation d'évaluation. We hope this will provide valuable information to assess the performance of your Web site, while at the same time, strengthening and celebrating Canadians.

Sincerely,

John Smith
President
IMAGE Consulting Group

Background

Canada Place was an initiative of the Department of Canadian Heritage designed to connect Canadian with each other and their federal government. Developed in February 1999, this interactive web site provides visitors the opportunity to tap into a wealth of knowledge. The sites content includes Canadian history, tourism, arts and literature, news, sports, politics and government offices, which appeals to Canada's diverse socio-demographic makeup. Canada Place is operational in cyber space and in permanent physical sites throughout the country.

World Wide Web Evaluation

The web site has ramifications for Canada's image on a national and global scale for the following reasons, it is:

- Accessible to a multitude of persons, businesses and governments on a worldwide scope;
- Serves as the gateway to an understanding of what Canada has to offer in terms of education, economy, health, tourism, and all facets of our culture;
- Provides a vehicle for our citizens to develop and project our perceptions of what it means to be a Canadian and;
- Demonstrates the Canadian federal government's pro-active approach to national unity.

Evaluation Objectives

After evaluating the objectives of Canada Place and the communication team, IMAGE Consulting group narrowed the scope of the project by developing the following key objectives. Canada Place aims to:

- Contribute to federal government presence and **visibility** by helping Canadians do business with their government;
- Offer opportunities to **connect** with fellow citizens, businesses, and governments through on-line dialogue and exchange, web links, and provision of information sources;
- Promote and provide Canadians with **access** to Canadian identity, cultural development and national unity themes and information;
- Engage Canadians, especially youth through an **exciting** method of strengthening and celebrating Canada;

- Present information in an **innovative** manner through the latest technology; therefore, allowing Canadians to have a competitive edge in a knowledge-based society.

Through the evaluation of these objectives the Canada Place web site can be gauged in terms of its viability, and success.

Creative Indicators for New Evaluation Strategy

IMAGE Consulting encourages the Department of Canadian Heritage to bear in mind that web site programs constitute a unique niche in the field of evaluation. For this reason, the indicators used in illustrating the extent to which the key objectives are being achieved may appear unconventional. Moreover, the applications of these indicators encompass developments in new research techniques, which parallel advancements in the medium under scrutiny.

Based on the objectives outlined herein, it may be assumed that the key target variables involved in this evaluation concern the web site's visibility, degree of connection, accessibility, level of excitement and degree of innovation.

Visibility

The visibility of the Canada Place web site can be indicated through public awareness or its lack thereof. Furthermore, one may evaluate the extent to which site visitors recognize that the site is government-affiliated.

Connection

This objective allows us to evaluate the degree of connectivity between the citizens of Canada and their government. The indicator that may be utilized in evaluating the extent to which this is taking place is therefore the extent and frequency of such contact.

Access

When attempting to examine the accessibility of the information provided by the Canada Place web site, it is necessary to consider the number of web site hits, and successful information links obtained by visitors.

Excitement

This objective may appear to be difficult to quantify in an evaluation framework. Through the use of qualitative methods, however, one may delve into perceptions and interests of Canadians when it comes to this government strategy. The indicator for this objective will therefore be the interest level of current and potential site visitors.

Innovation

An indicator of innovation is the level of technical efficiency presented in this site. This includes ease of use for visitors, up to date information, and appropriate links.

Data Collection

This evaluation framework suggests a combination of qualitative and quantitative measures in the examination of the Canada Place web site. The qualitative nature of the evaluation will provide one with information catering to the exploratory nature of this venture. On the other hand, using quantitative methods will enable the Department of Canadian Heritage to quickly and efficiently poll site visitors, thus gaining an understanding of the demographics of current and potential site visitors.

On-line Questionnaires can be used in an attempt to gather information on several variables:

- demographics of site visitors
- awareness of what the site offers
- accessibility to information
- degree of satisfaction with the site
- usefulness of content
- level of interest in content
- frequency of use
- frequency of participation in on-line dialogue and exchange
- degree of connectivity between citizens and government; as well as reasons for such contact

Surveys may be conducted through several vehicles: on-line links, mall intercepts, and mail out initiatives.

These surveys may be customized in order to target specific socio-demographic groups and geographic areas. Language considerations should be accounted for. One must realize that specific groups may be more attracted to the site than others. These dynamics should be explored in relation to how they affect site satisfaction.

“Students also represent a significant internet audience, underscoring the truism that the internet is indeed the communication medium of the future.”

<http://acnielsen.com/products/reports/netwatch/pg3.htm>

Focus groups may be utilized to measure the degree of excitement produced by the web site, not only by site users, but through concept-testing groups as well. This method of qualitative research can also explore the perceptions of site visitors regarding their contact with government agencies and fellow citizens. Focus groups may be conducted through on-line chat rooms with experienced bilingual moderators, or in a traditional focus group setting. Furthermore, the Department of Canadian Heritage may wish to conduct focus groups in which respondents are required to explore the Canada Place web site and report

on difficulties and successes they experienced with its format, creativity, language, relevancy and general layout.

A Canada Place web site guest book may be implemented in an attempt to gauge the perceptions of the immediate site visitors. Archival analysis of such information can be conducted periodically to monitor feedback as the site progresses.

As the Department of Canadian Heritage set out to maintain an innovative initiative in this one-stop cultural information centre, it is necessary to evaluate the technical efficiency of the site. This may be accomplished through the comparison of this site with other similar web sites. A comparison of the techniques used in the Canada Place web site to those involved in the web sites of other developed countries may put the site's perceived technological success in perspective. Evaluation of this aspect of the site, should include a consideration of effectiveness of hyperlinks, re-routing of the visitor, as well as options for quick returns to the home page.

Conclusion

IMAGE Consulting has recognized the unique nature of this evaluation. Through the combination of information technology and our national identity, Canada Place has advanced the initiative of the Department of Canadian Heritage in the development of a forward thinking program for all the world to appreciate.

References

<http://acnielsen.com/products/reports/netwatch.pg3.htm>

<http://www.canadaplace.gc.ca>

APPENDIX



Canada Place Survey 2000

*"Strengthening and
Celebrating Canada"*

The Department of Canadian Heritage would like your help in assessing the performance of the Canada Place Web Site in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. We are looking for your opinions and perceptions surrounding the ease of use, excitement, visibility and accessibility of the Canada Place site located at www.canadaplace.gc.ca

This survey will take approximately 5 minutes and your responses will be kept completely confidential. We appreciate your taking the time to complete this survey.

1. Have you visited Canada Place web site before?

Yes

No

2. Approximately how many times have you visited the Canada Place website?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9 or more

3. How did you hear about Canada Place?

Television

Friends

Surfing the web

Other _____

Radio

Work

Word of mouth

4. Please rate the following characteristics of the web site on a scale of 1 to 4, (1 being very good and 4 being very poor).

1

2

3

4

Accessibility of information

Type of information

Links to other sites

Access to the site

Pleasant design

Secondary Pages

Canadian Forum

Canada Rendez-vous

Youth Connects

Creative Canada

Visit O'Canada
E-News
Service Canada
Canada Place Centres

5. How interesting did you find the Canada Place web site?

Very Interesting
Somewhat Interesting
Neutral
Somewhat uninteresting
Very uninteresting

6. How useful did you find the Canada Place web site?

Very useful
Somewhat useful
Neutral
Not useful
Useless

Demographics

7. What province/territory do you reside in?

British Columbia	Alberta
Manitoba	Saskatchewan
Ontario	Quebec
Newfoundland	New Brunswick
PEI	Nova Scotia
Northwest Territories	Nunavut
Yukon	

8. In which of the following age categories do you belong?

0-9 years	50-59
10-19	60-69
20-29	70-79
30-39	80-89
40-49	90-99

9. Indicate your highest level of education:

Elementary School
High School
College
University
Graduate/Post graduate
Other _____

Note: These are just some examples of questions that can be used. This type of survey can be delivered as a self-administered questionnaire, telephone interview, TELEform or Web

survey. The questionnaire could also be formatted onto the Survey Workbench windows program, where it would be collected using Palm Computing platform technology.