

# **WEB 2.0 FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: BUILDING CAPACITY FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA**

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*Findings and recommendations presented in this report should not in any way be interpreted as binding or representative of an official position of the Government of Canada or any of its departments or agencies.*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Canada's Open Government Action Plan, support from the Clerk of the Privy Council, and rising public expectations are driving demand for online public engagement in decision-making. In response to this challenge, this research study explores how the Government of Canada (GC) can improve its online engagement efforts with a view to developing options to build the capacity of the federal public service to use Web 2.0 tools for public engagement.

Mixed qualitative methods combine a literature review, environmental analysis and interviews to examine the study's central research question: How can the Government of Canada improve its use of Web 2.0 tools to engage the public in decision-making? Sub-questions explore challenges, obstacles and barriers; critical success factors; the role of organizational culture and bureaucratic structures; and the role of policy instruments.

Scholarly literature recognizes the democratic potential for technology to facilitate engagement, yet notes a number of challenges in its implementation including digital divides, rigid policy requirements, bureaucratic inertia, structures and culture. There is also agreement that while technology can be an important tool to improve engagement, it should not be seen as a simple and straightforward solution to improving civic participation.

Twenty federal public servants were interviewed for this study. Participants felt that leadership and flexible resources were key determinants of success and that there was strong rationale to increase capacity for online engagement. Participants were supportive of increasing collaboration within the public service, noting challenges with entrenched bureaucratic structures and practices as well as complex policy requirements.

An analysis of findings demonstrates a necessity to conduct online engagement, but it must be responsive and relevant to public expectation. Strong leadership and networked, flexible approaches that cross traditional "silos" are effective in supporting the practice of online engagement. A number of requirements emerged, including a need for consistency and coherency; support for collaboration and flexible resources; and the need to demonstrate the value and return on investment to secure buy-in from senior leaders.

Options for consideration centred on two themes: a whole-of-government approach to online engagement, and strengthening online engagement expertise within the public service. The recommended option proposes a Center of Expertise (CoE) for online engagement. This CoE would have dedicated resources and a mandate to lead on networking and advice, with a key priority of developing interpretive guidelines for policy requirements to promote consistency across the GC. In parallel to this, the study recommends that departments build support for engagement and pilot new approaches internally, with a view to identifying successes that can be applied government-wide in the longer term.

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, the Government of Canada (GC) has made significant developments in its online presence for information dissemination and service delivery. From the early Government On-Line initiative in 1999 (Roy, 2006, p. 112) to the current Web Renewal initiative led by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) where the goals are to modernize and simplify the GC's web presence (2012, November 28, p. 4), numerous initiatives have taken place. In contrast, the use of online and interactive Web 2.0 tools for public consultation has grown at a much slower pace. While the GC's use of online engagement tools evolved throughout the 2000s, the use of Web 2.0 tools for broad public consultation remains relatively unchanged over the past number of years, generally limited to online submission forms, discussion forums, questionnaires, and idea voting. Despite the growth in volume of GC online consultations, the GC's practice of online public engagement remains disparate and varied across federal organizations.

This research study explores the Government of Canada's current use of Web 2.0 tools for public engagement to identify opportunities for future growth and development of the practice of online engagement. The study uses mixed qualitative methods to assess challenges and success factors for the practice of online engagement through a literature review, environmental analysis and interviews. In particular, this study examines the role of organizational culture, bureaucratic structures and existing policies and practices on online engagement. Options and recommendations presented in this study identify how the practice can be strengthened from a whole-of-government perspective.

## 1.2 CONTEXT

Recently, there has been growing public expectation to access GC information, data, programs, services and engagement opportunities online (Government of Canada, 2012, para. 1,4). In addition, there is recognition within the public service of the growing need to simplify and improve its web presence for internal efficiencies and improved user experiences (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2012, November 28, p. 4). There is commitment at the political and bureaucratic level for improving the citizen's experience with GC websites. Increasing online engagement opportunities for citizens is a key part of this commitment.

A key development in the growing commitment to engage citizens online is Canada's membership in the Open Government Partnership. In April 2011, Canada's Action Plan on Open Government was released. The Action Plan is part of the federal government's efforts to increase openness and accountability, increase opportunities

for Canadians to be engaged in government, and to drive innovation, while working to create “a more cost efficient and responsive government” (Government of Canada, 2012, para. 1). One component with particular impact on the practice of public engagement is Open Dialogue. The Open Dialogue commitment is “about giving Canadians a stronger say in government policies and priorities, and expanding engagement through Web 2.0 technologies” (TBS, 2013 June 18, para. 31). While federal organizations have long conducted public engagement as part of ongoing business, the Open Government Action Plan brings new attention to the role of technology in broadening access to consultation opportunities.

More recently, the issue of Web 2.0 tools for engagement has drawn attention within the senior ranks of the public service. In 2012, the Deputy Ministers Committee on Social Media and Policy Development (DMSMPD) was established. The creation of this committee at the deputy minister (DM) level formalizes the commitment to strategically capitalize on the potential for online technologies to contribute to the policy development process. The committee sought to “illuminate key debates on public servant use of social media and the benefits, challenges, and barriers to using 2.0 tools in policy development” (DMCPI, 2013 para. 2). In 2013, this committee was renamed as the Deputy Ministers Committee on Policy Innovation (DMCPI). The work of this committee will be further discussed in Chapter 2.

Similarly, in June 2013, the Clerk of the Privy Council announced Blueprint 2020, an initiative that presents “a vision of a revitalized and world-class public service equipped to serve Canada and Canadians” (Clerk of the Privy Council, 2013b, para. 4). To support this objective, Blueprint 2020 also embarks on an extensive engagement process across the entire public service community—both in person and online. Of particular note to the practice of public engagement, is the first guiding principle: “An open and networked environment that engages citizens and partners for the public good” (Clerk of the Privy Council, 2013b, para. 4). In December 2013, an interim report summarizing early wins and next steps was published. The Blueprint 2020 initiative will be explored further in Chapter 2.

While the potential of online engagement is gaining attention from high levels within the GC, federal organizations vary in their experience and state of readiness to use Web 2.0 for public engagement. The practice of public engagement is not homogenous across federal organizations. Some organizations have a legislated obligation to consult directly with Canadians on issues such as regulatory changes or service delivery, while others consult in a more direct manner with experts and stakeholders to inform policy decisions. This variation in engagement may be attributed to many factors, including departmental mandates, previous experience with consultations, availability of resources and staff, and varied expectations and attitudes of management and Ministers.

It follows that adopting Web 2.0 for public engagement into established and routinized business practices may be a challenge (Waksberg-Guerrini, 2008, p. 5; Clarke, 2012, p. 19; Lee and Kwak, 2011, p. 25; Fyfe and Crookall, 2010, p. 3). For example, approval processes currently do not match the pace of electronic communication. Facilitating government interaction with citizens through Web 2.0 may involve transcending hierarchies to support collaboration between bureaucrats, senior officials, elected officials, and subject matter and technical experts.

### **1.3 CLIENT AND RESEARCH REQUIREMENT**

The Government of Canada has a Community of Practice (CoP) for Stakeholder Relations and Public Engagement. As a volunteer community of interested practitioners, the CoP promotes the development and sharing of best practices for consultation activities across federal organizations. The CoP is led by a steering committee with membership from a number of departments and agencies. The mandate of the CoP is to bring together individuals with experience or interest in the practice of public engagement and stakeholder relations to take collective action on issues of interest to the community, foster innovation in engagement practices, and raise the profile of stakeholder and public engagement within the public service.

Expectations to increase the use of online and Web 2.0 technologies for public engagement have been stated through the Open Government Action Plan, the creation of the Deputy Ministers Committee on Policy Innovation, and the Clerk of the Privy Council's Blueprint 2020 initiative. Given this support from senior levels of management, the federal engagement community is strongly interested in and impacted by this increased expectation for the use of Web 2.0 technologies for public engagement.

There is a need for the GC to assess its capacity to meet a rising public expectation for online engagement opportunities. To meet this demand, evolutions to practices, procedures, organizational culture and resources may be required to support authentic and timely online engagement. In addition, governments will need to consider what types of issues are best suited for this instantaneous form of consultation. With federal organizations having varying degrees of expertise and capacity, there is an opportunity for the CoP to examine the challenges and success factors of using Web 2.0 for public engagement from a government-wide perspective to identify how the GC can best build its capacity to conduct online engagement.

## 1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Based on the professional experience of the researcher and a review of scholarly literature, research questions were developed to explore the organizational and cultural barriers to the use of technology for public engagement.

**Central Research Question:** How can the Government of Canada improve its use of Web 2.0 tools to engage the public in decision-making?

*Sub-Question 1:* What are the challenges, obstacles, and barriers with the use of Web 2.0 tools for public engagement?

*Sub-Question 2:* What are the critical success factors for the use of Web 2.0 tools for public engagement?

*Sub-Question 3:* What role do organizational culture and bureaucratic structures play in enabling or hindering the use of Web 2.0 tools for public engagement?

*Sub-Question 4:* What role do existing Government of Canada policy instruments play in enabling or hindering the use of Web 2.0 tools for public engagement?

At the outset of this research study, the interview guide was designed around the first three sub-questions only. Based on the findings of the interviews, a fourth sub-question was added to reflect the volume of information collected around the impact of GC policy instruments in particular.

## 1.4 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Academic studies, grey literature, and a number of GC internal engagement policies describe varied definitions related to the field of online engagement. This section presents operational definitions for the use of these terms in this research study.

### 1.4.1 Engagement

*Engagement* refers to the process of two-way interaction between a decision maker and a participant, public, or citizen. Phillips and Orsini (2002) define citizen engagement as “a particular type of involvement characterized by interactive and iterative processes of deliberation among citizens (and sometimes organizations), and between citizens and government officials” (p. 3). In certain contexts, the term engagement may include one-way communication activities that support or preface a two-way process such as outreach and awareness activities (International Association of Public Participation, 2007, para. 1). For the purpose of this study, engagement is considered to be a *two-way* exchange between governments and citizens with the purpose of involving the public in decision-making. This is distinct from the use of the term engagement to describe *one-way* outreach and communication activities, or interaction between governments and citizens to support programs and service delivery.

### 1.4.2 Online Engagement

The umbrella term *Online Engagement* is used in this research study. Online Engagement refers to a range of activities where technology is used to facilitate a two-way exchange of ideas. Other terms used in this literature include digital engagement, online consultation, e-consultation, Web 2.0 engagement, and social media engagement. Broadly speaking, each of these activities has unique and distinctive characteristics and terms are not necessarily interchangeable. In the context of this study, online engagement is intended to be an overarching term. Specific definitions or tools are referred to and defined as appropriate.

### 1.4.3 Web 2.0

As this study is focused on the context of the Government of Canada's practice of online engagement, the use of the term Web 2.0 throughout this study aligns with the definition established by Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's Guideline for External Use of Web 2.0 as:

Internet-based tools and services that allow for participatory multi-way information sharing, dialogue, and user-generated content. This can include social media, which allow participants with distinct social/user profiles to create, share and interact with user-generated content, including text, images, video, and audio (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Linked-In, blogs) as well as collaborative technologies that allow multiple users to collaboratively create content (e.g. Wikis, Google Docs) (TBS, 2011, November 18, para. 7).

## CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND

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The chapter presents background information on a number of internal and external influences on the GC's practice of online engagement. Formal commitments of support for increasing capacity for online engagement are included in Canada's Open Government Action Plan and the Clerk of the Privy Council's Blueprint 2020 initiative. External to the federal public service, public opinion continues to demonstrate support for increased use of online technology to involve citizens in government decision-making. In addition, there are a number of examples and smart practice from other jurisdictions that the GC could look to in building its capacity for online engagement.

### 2.1 INTERNAL INFLUENCES

#### 2.1.1 *Political Commitment*

In addition to public support for the use of technologies for engagement, the GC has stated its commitment to increase the use of technology for participatory opportunities. The GC has stated its desire to improve in this area through two formal Open Dialogue commitments: developing a Web 2.0 citizen engagement platform and simplifying engagement opportunities on regulation (Government of Canada, 2012, para. 34-35). Implementing these broad commitments at the level of individual federal organizations may necessitate a change in culture and practices to demonstrate the spirit of Open Government.

A key leader spearheading new technology use by the public service is the President of the Treasury Board, Tony Clement. Minister Clement has demonstrated support for the use of technology for engagement on many occasions. In an April 2013 address to public servants, he challenged that social media use "shouldn't be based on the penchant of a particular minister, but based on a system-wide objective" (Canada School of Public Service, 2013, April 29, 37:00). Minister Clement further states that structural and institutional changes will positively impact the public service of the future, supporting more collaboration in the public service as well as facilitating collaboration between public servants and citizens (Canada School of Public Service, 2013, April 29, 31:00).

Similarly, in another address to public servants in 2012, Minister Clement stated that he sees "rethinking government" as founded on two key principles: "Innovation and the adoption of new technologies [and] the ability to embrace that innovation — in other words, the cultural component of an organization that allows it to adapt, change and respond to new challenges" (TBS, 2012, November 27, para. 24).

While technology is recognized as a way to modernize the GC's ability to collaborate internally and with the public, it is also seen as a means to achieve efficiency and cost savings. In a period of fiscal restraint, public servants are being asked to do more with less, looking to technology as a means of cost savings. Economic Action Plan 2013 committed the government to reducing travel costs and use "modern alternatives" such as video conferencing (Department of Finance, 2013, p. 263-264). This reduction in travel restricts the ability of public servants to travel to meet with stakeholders and the public. In response, departments and agencies are turning to technology, particularly video conferencing, to save costs and travel time while fulfilling the government's goal to engage with citizens.

### *2.1.2 Leadership from the Clerk of the Privy Council*

Along with political support, senior public service leaders have indicated their support for using new collaborative technology. In his 2010 report, the Clerk of the Privy Council acknowledged the potential of social media to facilitate citizen engagement. He recognized an opportunity for the public service to engage Canadians through Web 2.0, challenging the public service to use these technologies "to reach out and connect" (2010, p. 9). The report also challenged that new technologies have "opened the door to the rapid exchange of knowledge and ideas on an unprecedented scale, and have broken down walls when it comes to the sharing of information" (Clerk of the Privy Council, p. 9).

Senior public service leaders acknowledge the role that technology will play in modernizing the public service and facilitating a citizen-centered approach to policy making. In his Twentieth Annual Report to the Prime Minister on the Public Service of Canada, the Clerk of the Privy Council recognized a need to adapt to the expectations of "Canada's digital citizenry" and turn to "internal and external networks to co-create policy solutions and deliver citizen-centered service" (Clerk of the Privy Council, 2013a, p. 5-6). Over the past several years there has been ongoing and growing commitment for innovation and the use of technology, both for internal uses and for external uses to engage the public in decision-making.

### 2.1.3 *Blueprint 2020*

In his 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Report to the Prime Minister on the Public Service of Canada, the Clerk signaled his intent to engage broadly on a vision for the future public service. With the announcement of the Blueprint 2020 initiative, the issue of innovation and technology use was brought to the forefront. The Clerk envisioned a future public

#### **FIGURE 1: BLUEPRINT 2020 GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- An open and networked environment that engages citizens and partners for the public good;
- A whole-of-government approach that enhances service delivery and value for money;
- A modern workplace that makes smart use of new technologies to improve networking, access to data and customer service; and,
- A capable, confident and high-performing workforce that embraces new ways of working and mobilizing the diversity of talent to serve the country's evolving needs.

(Clerk of the Privy Council, 2013b, para. 4)

service that will “fully leverage the power of new technologies and seek innovative whole-of-government opportunities for improved efficiency and effectiveness” (Clerk of the Privy Council, 2013a, p. 15). Indeed this sentiment is reflected in the Blueprint 2020 exercise, where public servants have been invited to share their ideas on modernizing their work, including embracing technology for engagement (Clerk of the Privy Council, 2013b, para. 4). The four guiding principles for Blueprint 2020 each have a bearing on the discussion of strengthening the GC's practice of online engagement. Figure 1 lists these four principles.

### 2.1.4 *Deputy Ministers Committee on Policy Innovation*

In 2012, a Deputy Ministers Committee on Social Media and Policy Development (DMSMPD) was formed with a mandate to “Consider the linkages between social media and policy-making, including new models for policy development, public engagement and the role of the public servant in the social media sphere” (Privy Council Office, 2013, p. 8). In 2013, the committee was renamed to the Deputy Ministers Committee on Policy Innovation with a broadened mandate to examine “trends and new technologies with the potential to strengthen or transform policy development and delivery, and test and assess innovative approaches that will enhance policy outcomes” (Privy Council Office, 2013, p. 8). This DM committee also uses a reverse mentor model where Deputies are paired with a working-level mentor from their organizations. This mentor works in partnership with their DM and also attends the committee meetings.

The committee has written discussion papers on topics such as engaging and consulting, scoping policy issues and decision-making (Deputy Ministers Committee on Policy Innovation, n.d.). Discussion papers are posted on GCPedia<sup>1</sup> in advance of the meetings, inviting comment and input from all public servants. Most recently, the committee posted an interim report on its progress for comment on GCPedia. This report reflects on the first year of the committee and its evolution from a focus on social media to the broader topic of policy innovation. Meetings are designed to provide an opportunity for experts, both internal and external to the public service, to showcase their work in using social media and innovative technologies in their work and to facilitate a discussion on how technology can strengthen or transform the policy process (DMCPI, n.d., Discussion topics). Discussion papers have been written and presented on: the state of social media and policy innovation; crowdsourcing; scoping policy issues with the help of social media; engaging and consulting; GCPedia and collaborative policy development; and decision making (DMCPI, n.d., Discussion topics).

FIGURE 2: DMCPI PILOT PROJECTS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Buro: Technology, Market Principles, and Human Resource Allocations within Government</li> <li>2. Tiger Teams as a Means to Public Sector Innovation</li> <li>3. Design Thinking for Policy and Service Innovation</li> <li>4. Playing Games to Choose a Career: Proposal for a Government of Canada 'Serious Game'</li> <li>5. Failure Reports</li> </ol> <p>(DMCPI, Pilot projects)</p>

The DM Committee has also supported the Policy Ignite initiative. Policy Ignite is an information-sharing event organized by public servants, for public servants, established in 2010. Policy Ignite provides a venue for sharing policy ideas on the changing nature of the federal public service (Policy Ignite, 2013, para. 1, 4). The most recent iteration of Policy Ignite is a partnership with the Deputy Ministers Committee on Policy Innovation challenging public servants to propose ideas on using Web 2.0 technologies to innovate and collaborate (Policy Ignite Call for Proposals,

n.d., para. 1-2). In December 2013, twelve proposals were presented to a sold-out event attended by public servants. Attendees voted on the ideas and five proposals were subsequently presented to the full DM committee. Figure 2, lists the five projects that are being explored for pilot implementation.

### 2.1.5 Working-Level Collaboration

In addition to support from senior leadership for innovation, there are a number of functional communities at a working level that serve to strengthen the practice of their respective disciplines, such as communications, evaluation, regulators, financial management, information management/information technology and managers. These communities have dedicated staff and resources to support activities such as professional development, recruitment, and sharing of resources and smart practices

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<sup>1</sup> GCPedia is a collaborative wiki hosted within the GC firewall accessible by all public servants. GCPedia facilitates information sharing and collaboration both within and amongst federal organizations.

(TBS, 2008, para. 3). In addition to these formal functional communities, there are a number of informal networks and centers of excellence for public servants to share information on an informal and ad-hoc basis on issues of common interest. For example, voluntary working groups such as the Emerging Technologies Working Group led by the Communications Community Office, or the User Experience Working Group have come together around issues of common interest.

The issue of creating stronger networks to support collaboration is acknowledged in the Blueprint 2020 vision, which calls for a “modern workplace that makes smart use of new technologies to improve networking” and a workforce that “embraces new ways of working” (Clerk of the Privy Council, 2013b, para. 5). Examples heard through the consultations include embracing collaboration and partnership as key public service competencies, to introducing electronic approval processes, crowdsourcing program design with stakeholders, and increasing risk tolerance along with better mitigation strategies (Clerk of the Privy Council, 2013c, p. A-3).

As a multi-disciplinary practice, engagement is represented across a number of communities including Web 2.0 practitioners, the communications community, as well as through the Stakeholder Relations and Public Engagement Community of Practice. Notably, in 2006 Public Works and Government Services Canada hosted a now defunct Online Consultation Center of Expertise. This CoE provided a similar function to current voluntary communities of practice<sup>2</sup>.

## **2.2 EXTERNAL INFLUENCES: SUPPORTIVE PUBLIC OPINION**

Public opinion research over the past several years illustrates the increasing integration of technology into daily lives of individuals in addition to its growth for facilitating civic participation. Public opinion also shows support for increased efforts to consult Canadians on policy issues, including through online engagement. Despite this expectation, perceptions of existing GC online consultations are mixed and point to a need to improve this practice.

Public opinion research demonstrates evidence of the increasing integration of technology into citizens’ daily lives. A 2012 study by Ipsos found significant growth in mobile Internet access, use of smartphones and tablet computers, and use of the Internet for social networking, news consumption, and banking (p. 2-4). For example, the study found that 31% of Canadians own a smartphone, in comparison to just 19% in 2010, with Canadians spending an average of 2.5 hours per day on their mobile device (Ipsos, p. 3). With Canadians’ increased use of technology in various aspects of

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<sup>2</sup> Despite extensive research with internal and external sources, very minimal information could be found about the mandate and scope of practice of PWGSC’s CoE, hosted under a now defunct url of [www.onlineconsultation.gc.ca](http://www.onlineconsultation.gc.ca). This COE was not mentioned or referenced by any of the twenty individuals interviewed. This may be due to it being very technical in focus and led by PWGSC, vs. led by a central agency such as PCO or TBS.

their lives, it follows that there may also be new opportunities for governments to use technology to facilitate public engagement in policy issues.

A 2007 Ekos study found that 86% of respondents felt they would have increased confidence in government decision-making if it regularly sought input from citizens (Ekos, 2007, p. 4). Despite this overwhelming support for government consultation with its citizens, 77% of respondents had not participated in a consultation in the past 12 months (Ekos, p. 4). Ekos' study also found that fewer than half of respondents agreed that the Internet has an important role in facilitating public engagement on policy issues (2007, p. 5). Along these lines, a 2011 study commissioned by Fleishman-Hillard revealed that 54% of Canadians would be more likely to participate in policy consultations if there were opportunities to do so online (2011, para. 1). Steady public opinion over four years may point to a growing demand and expectation that governments will use technology to facilitate engagement with its citizens on issues that impact their daily lives.

In 2013, an Ipsos study found that the use of technology for social and political participation was growing, with a significant portion of Canada's population "either actively or passively participating in public policy, social and political issues" (p. 12). Despite a demographic skew with social media and online users tending to be younger in age, with respect to engagement in public policy, social and political issues, online discourse is "far from being the exclusive domain of any one demographic group" (Ipsos, p. 12).

Despite the growing use of technology for civic engagement, the report from the 2012 Open Government consultation noted that 37% of respondents found using social media in the context of GC consultations "either difficult or very difficult" (Government of Canada, 2012, March 26, Open Dialogue, para. 9). Participants in this consultation also suggested that the GC needs to more actively promote consultation opportunities and that online consultations should move to a more interactive approach where participants could interact with one another in addition to with government (Government of Canada, 2012, March 26, Open Dialogue section, para. 10). A significant majority (65%) of consultation participants also "found it difficult or very difficult to obtain information about the outcomes" of GC consultations (Government of Canada, 2012, March 26, Open Dialogue, para. 6). These findings suggest that there is room for improvement in the practice of online engagement.

## 2.3 EXTERNAL INFLUENCES: EXAMPLES AND SMART PRACTICES FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS

Other governments have adopted innovative practices in to support a government-wide approach to online public engagement. These approaches range from internal capacity for a whole-of-government approach to online engagement to creating a strong web presence that invites citizens to participate in policy consultations.

### 2.3.1 *United Kingdom*

United Kingdom has established the Government Digital Service within its Cabinet Office with the mandate of “transforming government digital services” (GDS, 2013a, para. 1). The GDS shares information about its work through blogging, while the Cabinet office’s website posts plans of outcomes of its consultations online for the public. The digital engagement team is “responsible for improving the way citizens can interact with government online through collaboration, conversation and consultation” and integrates digital tools “into the day to day working of government” (GDS, 2013b, para. 2.). The UK’s approach to modernizing its operations is an example of a whole-of-government approach towards integrating technology into processes with a view to involving citizens in decision-making.

### 2.3.2 *United States*

Challenge.gov is a website run by the United States government that presents challenge and prize competitions to seek “innovative solutions from the public, bringing the best ideas and talent together to solve mission-centric problems” (2013, para. 1). During the period of September 2010 and September 2013, “58 federal agencies ran 288 challenges” and its use continues to “drive innovation and collaboration with citizens” (para. 9). Current projects hosted on the site include competitions for influenza prediction using government data, mobile application development for health information, and identifying sources of data for climate modeling. These challenges are led by organizations such as the Department of Defense, Health and Human Services, and NASA.

### 2.3.3 *Australia*

In 2009, the Government of Australia commissioned a task force to investigate the role of Web 2.0 in government operations—from facilitating internal collaboration to online citizen engagement. The resulting report *Engage: Getting on with Government 2.0* presents findings and recommendations for the federal government to leverage technology to make government more responsive and transparent to the public, harnessing citizen input into policy making, attracting new talent to the public service, and enabling a more participatory democracy (2010, p. xi-xii). The report presents an overarching strategy to adopt a Government 2.0 approach throughout the entire Australian public service. Since the publishing of this report, Australia has joined the Open Government Partnership in 2013 and currently has its own open data website

along with “govspace”, a central platform that hosts communication and engagement opportunities on behalf of Australian Government agencies (Government of Australia, n.d. para. 2, 4).

#### *2.3.4 France*

In October 2013, the Government of France launched a collaborative platform called “Faire Simple” where citizens were invited to share innovative ideas on how to simplify government operations as well as improve public policy and service delivery (Government of France, 2013, para. 1-2). Individuals can propose ideas, vote on ideas from others that they liked, and participate in conversations with public servants about how to implement solutions. The site also provides feedback to citizens on how proposed ideas were implemented in government, with over 200 ideas adopted to date.

#### *2.3.5 British Columbia*

govTogetherBC is an integrated consultation portal and platform that promotes and hosts online engagement conducted by the province of British Columbia. The website is the “hub for government engagement opportunities that require your participation—to listen, get informed and speak up... Our goal is to let you know what’s being talked about in the province and plug you into ways you can get involved” (Government of British Columbia, 2013, para. 1-2). Recent online consultations were conducted on topics such as the BC Jobs Plan, Healthy Families, disability issues, education, and natural resource projects.

## **2.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter has described a number of internal and external factors that influence the GC’s practice of online engagement. There is clear support from senior leadership for innovation and improvements to many GC practices. This support extends to online engagement. In light of increasing public expectation and drawing from smart practices in other jurisdictions, the GC has an opportunity to identify an approach to improve its capacity to conduct online engagement.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

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This chapter describes the mixed-qualitative methodology used in this research study. A literature review, environmental analysis, and interviews were used to gather data to assist in answering the study's research questions. An overview of each of these methods in addition to scope, limitations, and delimitations are also presented.

### 3.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

The body of literature on online engagement spans a number of disciplines and examines scholarly research on the role of technology in facilitating participation in government decision-making. It also presents challenges and opportunities, including the relationship between technology, bureaucratic structures, and organizational culture. Each topic is situated in the context of the GC. The literature review was conducted using resources through the University of Victoria Library and through publicly available online and in-print sources. The thematic findings of the literature informed the development of this study's sub-research questions and the methodological and analytical frameworks.

### 3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

An environmental analysis was conducted to assess the GC's current state of practice in online engagement. A sample of recent online consultations is presented to illustrate the breadth of methods used for online policy consultations. In addition, a sample of the GC's current uses of social media is presented. The analysis also presents an assessment of the various Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat policy instruments with implications for the practice of online engagement.

The environmental analysis was conducted with resources available to the public, as well as information from internal GC resources. Sources include government documents, public websites and reports, internal intranets, and GC and TBS Policies. As the environmental analysis and interviews were conducted concurrently, a number of themes identified in the interviews were explored in the environmental analysis. Interview methodology is further detailed in section 3.3.

### 3.3 INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 federal public servants to gather a wide range of views and experiences on Web 2.0 and its use for collaboration and engagement. Participants had experience in a variety of roles including consultations, stakeholder relations, program and policy areas, research, Web 2.0 and e-communications, communications, and information management. Individuals held

positions from the analyst/officer level to the Director General level and represented line departments, central agencies, and regional offices.

Participants were recruited by email and provided with questions (see Appendix A) and a consent form (see Appendix B) in advance of the interviews. A non-probability, purposive sampling method was used, where initial expert participants were identified based on the researcher's personal contacts in the public engagement field with known expertise and experience (Trochim and Donnelly, 2008, p. 49). As part of a snowball referral process, participants were asked to refer others to the study or share the invitation with those in their networks.

Interviews were arranged at the participant's convenience and conducted at the participant's workplace, at a public location, or by telephone. Interviews lasted between 30-75 minutes. The researcher personally conducted each of the interviews and transcribed the recordings into text for analysis. Prior to the interviews, consent forms were explained to each participant and a signed copy was obtained. Participants were assured anonymity and results are only shared in aggregate form. The University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board approved the study and research protocol.

The researcher used NVIVO, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, to code and analyze the interview data. A thematic coding approach was used, where the researcher identified and examined themes in the data in relation to the research questions. The researcher manually coded the data and identified recurring themes. To help substantiate the relationships drawn between the codes, the researcher used NVIVO to perform queries on the data such as counting the frequency of concepts and analyzing the associations and co-occurrence of concepts and codes.

### **3.4 SCOPE AND DELIMITATIONS**

The study was conducted to examine the conditions and influencing factors for engagement specific to the Canadian public service. Participants in the study were not selected randomly and findings cannot be assumed to be exhaustive and representative of all experiences within the GC.

The intent of this study is not to create a fully exhaustive and comprehensive assessment of online engagement conducted by the Government of Canada. Rather, it was designed to systematically gather views from a cross-section of individuals from a number of functional areas (e.g. policy, communications, technology) with varied experiences with online engagement.

As the use of social media to facilitate government-citizen interaction is a very broad topic, this study is limited to developing options to use Web 2.0 to facilitate online engagement as part of decision-making. The scope of the options for consideration does not include the use of technology to support outreach, service delivery, and communication activities.

This study was designed and completed by a single researcher, and so measures of intercoder reliability cannot be established. With a snowball selection process, there is also an inherent risk for selection bias. Several individuals contacted for this study were unavailable during the data collection phase of the project or did not respond to a request for an interview, possibly due to timing (June-August 2013). Out of 30 emailed interview requests, twenty participants were interviewed. To mitigate the risk of selection bias, the researcher ensured that participants reflected a diverse range of perspectives and levels of experience in online engagement.

There is a risk of the researcher unconsciously filtering the data when conducting interviews. To mitigate this risk, each participant was asked the same questions and the interviews were recorded and fully transcribed. Moreover, the conclusions drawn from this study were informed by the multiple sources of information and research methods used (literature review, environmental analysis, and interviews).

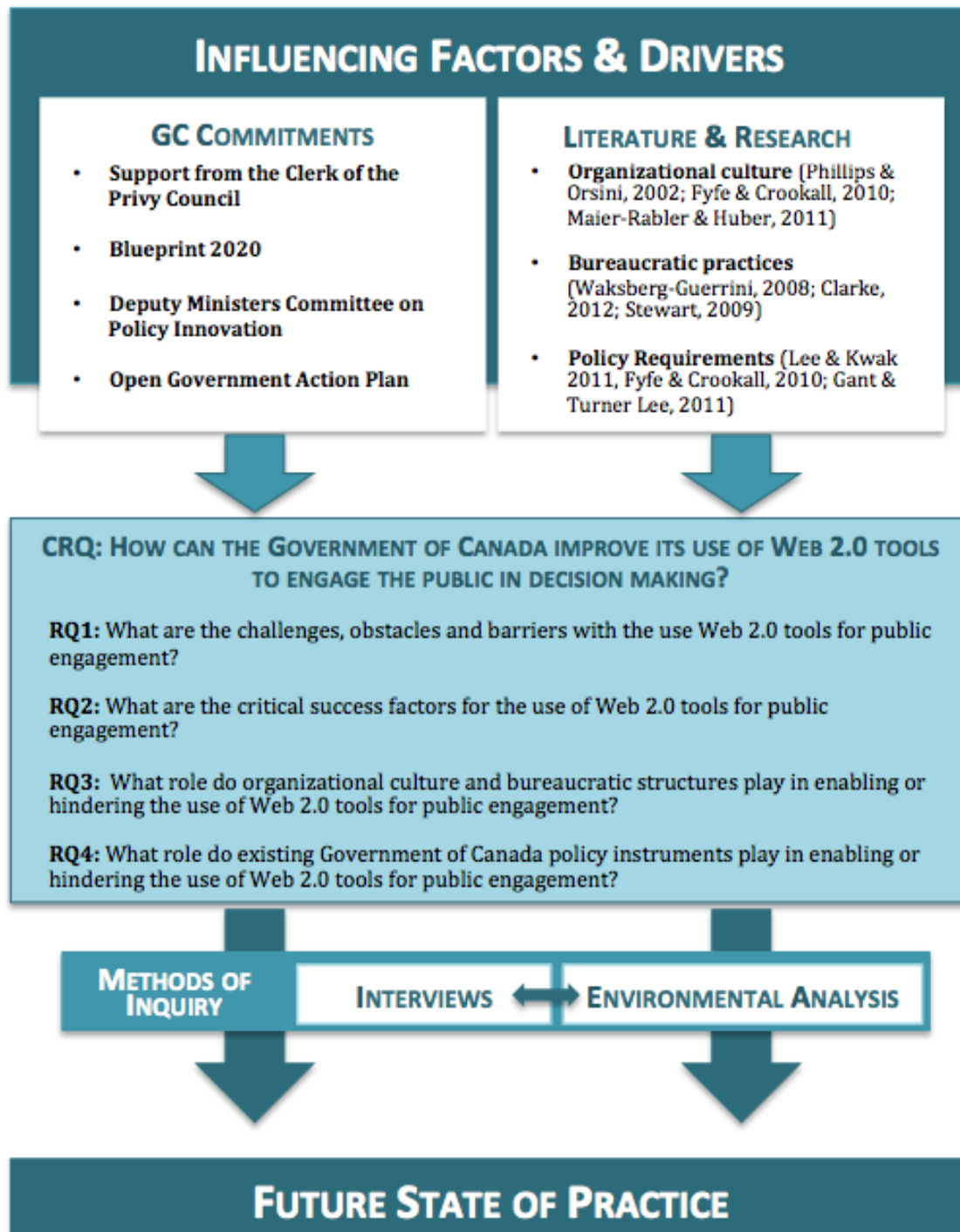
### **3.5 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

A methodological framework illustrates the research design of this project (Figure 3). The GC has made a number of high-level commitments that influence the practice of Web 2.0 engagement, from statements of support from politicians and bureaucratic leadership, including Blueprint 2020 and Canada's Open Government Action Plan.

Literature and scholarly research have also identified several factors and drivers influencing the take-up and practice of online engagement. The role of organizational culture in supporting innovation and change is widely recognized (Phillips & Orsini, 2002; Fyfe & Crookall, 2010; Maier-Rabler & Huber, 2011). Bureaucratic structures and hierarchical organizations and practices are also seen to influence the success of online engagement in public sector organizations (Waksberg-Guerrini, 2008; Clarke, 2012; Stewart, 2009). A number of scholars have also identified the challenges of working within the constraints of existing policies that do not reflect the reality of online engagement (Lee and Kwak, 2011; Fyfe and Crookall, 2010; Gant and Turner-Lee, 2011).

The literature review and background informed the development of the study's primary research question: How can the Government of Canada improve its use of Web 2.0 tools to engage the public in decision-making? Sub-research questions further examine themes identified in the literature including culture, bureaucratic practices and policy instruments. Two methods of inquiry explored these themes: interviews with public servants and an environmental analysis assessing the GC's current state of practice. Interviews and the environmental analysis were conducted concurrently and findings from each influenced the other as interview participants identified issues for exploration.

FIGURE 3: METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK



## CHAPTER 4: LITERATURE REVIEW

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This chapter presents a review of the literature in the field of public and online engagement. The body of literature spans a number of disciplines, including public administration, policy studies, communication, political science, and information technology. As the use of technology to facilitate government–citizen interaction and communication is a relatively recent phenomenon within the last fifteen years, literature in this area is largely quite new in comparison to other fields.

There is general agreement that the practice of public engagement is an important part of government decision making with great potential to increase transparency, accountability, credibility, and, ultimately, citizen satisfaction with outcomes (Lenihan, 2012, p. 35; OECD, 2001, p.2). Similarly, a number of authors further acknowledge the added potential for technology to facilitate public engagement toward these ends (Coleman and Gøtze, 2001, p. 12; Lenihan, 2002, p. 27; Chadwick, 2006, p. 126).

In contrast, some scholars acknowledge that while there is a great deal of democratic *potential*, public engagement, including online engagement, is not without its challenges. Scholars note that challenges include a lack of trust in government, an eroding relationship between governments and citizens, and a tendency to consult with the public out of a legislated obligation rather than a genuine desire to seek public input (Stewart, 2009, p. 4; Woodford and Preston, 2013, p. 350; Graham and Phillips, 1997, p. 159).

Despite the optimism expressed for technology to improve civic engagement, there is agreement in the early literature that technology itself is not inherently democratizing and may not motivate the “chronically disengaged” (Baumgartner and Morris, 2010, p. 24; Clift, 2004, p. 4; Coleman, 2007, p. 373). Technology can be an important enabling *tool* but is not a clear solution to civic disengagement and the challenge of digital divides remains (Clift, 2004, p. 4; Coleman, 2007, p. 373; Leighninger, 2011, p. 24; Bryer, 2011, p. 10; Baumgartner and Morris, 2010, p. 24). Lenihan (2002, p. 35) and Clarke (2012, p. 8) acknowledge the risk of powerful organizations and interest groups monopolizing online engagement and overpowering citizens’ voices.

Several researchers acknowledge the significant challenge of adopting collaborative technologies by traditionally hierarchical and bureaucratic institutions where staff may be constrained by rigid policy requirements and resistance to change and innovation (Fyfe and Crookall, 2010, p. 3; Lee and Kwak, 2011, p. 24; Clarke, 2012, p. 16; Waksberg-Guerrini, 2008, p. 5). Similarly, numerous scholars agree that a key determinant of success is an organizational culture open to structural and cultural change (Maier-Rabler and Huber, 2011, p. 187; Leighninger, 2011, p. 24). Despite this recognition, there is a gap in academic literature that directly examines the role of organizational barriers—both cultural and technological—in online engagement in

the federal public service.

The literature review presents an overview of the role of public engagement in decision-making before turning to the potential role of technology and an assessment of challenges of online engagement. The discussion then turns to an examination of the relationship between technology and bureaucratic structures as it relates to public engagement. Literature also describes influencing factors and challenges to public sector technology use. Each of these areas is situated within the Government of Canada context.

## **4.1 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING**

### *4.1.1 Public Engagement in Policy Development*

Public involvement, consultation, engagement and participation are among a variety of terms used to describe the practice of bringing citizens into decision making. While public engagement is not exclusive to the public sector, citizens in a democracy expect a certain degree of involvement in government decision-making. Lenihan (2012) characterizes policy-making as “essentially a search for the best ideas—even the “right idea”—to solve a problem or achieve a public goal” (Lenihan, 2012, p. 35). Consultation is recognized as a key component of policy making with the potential to add transparency and accountability to government decision-making and improve the quality of policy while responding to citizen expectations (OECD, 2001, p. 2). Engagement improves legitimacy by restructuring channels between citizens and governments with a view to closing the “democratic deficit” (Stewart, 2009, p. 19).

However, Graham and Phillips (1997) identify challenges for citizen engagement such as lack of trust in political institutions and a decline in the credibility of public participation opportunities (p. 259). They recognize that the disconnect between citizen engagement processes and the policymaking process raises questions about the level of real and perceived influence and impact of public input to policy decisions (Graham and Phillips, p. 260-261). Effective engagement is predicated on transparency, openness, and flexibility, with clear information being essential to informed participation (Graham and Phillips, p. 268).

Graham and Phillips (1997) describe the erosion of the relationship between citizens and governments; Lenihan (2012) presents an alternative model to address this divide. While policy models typically characterize policy decisions as balancing the winners and losers of decision-making, Lenihan (2012) argues that the traditional policy model could shift from one of competition to a collaborative one where stakeholders and citizens collectively identify the issues and causes, and design appropriate policy solutions (p. 36-37). While engagement can occur at any stage of the policy cycle, a collaborative model that maximizes the use of public engagement could see citizens participate at any and all stages rather than transactional exchanges with one specific component of a policy issue.

While Lenihan proposes his ideal model, others provide examples from research and practice of more typical use of public engagement in policy development. Drawing from the Australian context, Stewart (2009) acknowledges that public managers are often driven to consult as a response to a legislative obligation to hear from those impacted by policy decisions (p. 4-5). She further asserts that the reality of government consultation in policy making is driven by political or reputation management, related to the need to develop “politically acceptable compromises” to complex challenges (Stewart, p. 18).

Engagement is recognized as an important factor in increasing government transparency and accountability. Further, several authors describe its importance as part of a sound policy development process.

#### *4.1.2 Government of Canada Context*

The Government of Canada has many unique challenges influenced by the country’s diverse population, culture, and geography. Graham and Phillips (1997) assert that multiple engagement mechanisms are required to permit full participation regardless of culture, language, or geography (p. 268). Using the example of the Social Security Review in 1994, Lindquist (2005) notes that consultation initiatives must be matched with “appropriate instruments” in response to the complex multi-dimensional policy issues and varying degrees of bureaucratic capacity at the federal level (p. 354).

Woodford and Preston (2013) acknowledge that while the federal government has used various means and policy instruments for citizen consultation and engagement over several decades, the changes have been mostly incremental (p. 349). They cite six key themes in literature on citizen engagement in Canada as “one-way communication, infrequent feedback, limited involvement, poor representativeness, consultation being government controlled, and consultation having little or no effect on policy decisions” (Woodford and Preston, p. 350). Woodford and Preston illustrate how these themes are manifested in practice and call for an increase in capacity for public servants to overcome the “structural and cultural barriers to genuine participation” (p. 359).

## **4.2 ONLINE TECHNOLOGIES FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

Building on the literature around public involvement and its role in decision-making, there is extensive work on the influence and impact of technology on civic participation and enabling citizens to interact with governments. The literature recognizes the potential of technology to augment democratic participation and broaden access to engagement opportunities. Research has also described the evolution of technology use as part of the relationship between the Government of Canada and the public and has recognized the ubiquitous challenge of “digital divides”.

#### 4.2.1 *Information Communication Technologies for Engagement*

Early research in the area of online engagement recognizes that Information Communication Technologies (ICT) can be a useful tool to expand democratic participation and opportunities for public engagement in policy development. Governments may leverage these capacities to bring citizen input into the policy making process in new ways. Coleman and Gøtze's (2001) pioneering work "Bowling Together: Online Public Engagement in Policy Deliberation" set the groundwork for much of the literature that followed over the course of the 2000s. They challenge that technology may bring about a "less remote system of democratic governance" (p. 12).

Lenihan (2002) argues that ICT may "extend public space" to facilitate conversations between government, stakeholders, and citizens to share ideas and views to solve policy problems (p. 27). Technologies raise both new concerns and new opportunities to discuss democratic participation that can bring about a re-thinking of traditional definitions of relationships between citizens and their governments (Lenihan, p. 28; 33). Chadwick (2003) supports Lenihan's assertion as he argues that technology provides an opportunity to increase civic participation with the end of reshaping the state into an "open, interactive, network form" (p. 447). Chadwick (2006) further asserts that that participation and interaction are regarded as "constitutive of democracy itself" (p. 126). Technology is recognized as one potential tool to improve democratic processes.

From a more practical lens, Bryer (2011) proposes that if designed appropriately, social media may "have the potential to correct for some of the limitations of the participation methods that predominate in the purely face-to-face environment" (p. 3). Similarly, McNutt and Carey (2008) argue "to overlook the need for the development of e-consultation on Government of Canada websites would be detrimental to the advancement of the democratic process in Canada" (p. 10).

#### 4.2.2 *Web 2.0 and Social Media*

A key development in online communication technology has been a shift from one-way information dissemination to a model supporting many-to-many communication and collaborative content creation. Indeed, technology makes it possible for any person with Internet access to publish information and participate in conversations online. Popularized social media platforms permit citizens and special interest groups to easily interact with one another with very limited technical knowledge. This ease of access to tools has the potential to facilitate discussions about policy issues among citizens themselves as easily as governments can use tools to engage in their own discussions. That is, the participatory power of technology is not exclusively limited to government-citizen interaction. While literature presents many definitions and terms such as ICTs, Web 2.0, and social media, a common element in is the capacity to foster collaboration and two-way communication.

Petrik (2010) describes a shift from a “traditional, single-sided one-to-many communication” of Web 1.0 to a collaborative Web 2.0 approach that sees Internet users playing an active role in content creation with the Internet facilitating “a meaningful collaboration of those who are willing to contribute” (p. 19). Ressler and Glazer (2011) define social media as a collection of “internet-based tools that help a user to connect, collaborate and communicate with others in real time” enabling participation in an *active* dialogue in contrast to simply consuming information [emphasis added] (para. 2). James (2010) adds to this in his definition of “new digital media” as the actual devices used to connect individuals, including mobile phones, game consoles, and computers (p. 20). However, while the potential for governments to adopt these technologies for citizen involvement exists, Leighninger (2011) notes that although policy discussions do happen online, they are mainly *about* government, rather than *with* government (p. 24, emphasis added).

Social media present an opportunity to support policy discussions between citizens and government. In the Canadian context, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat’s Guideline for External Use of Web 2.0 acknowledges the role of online tools and services “that allow for participatory multi-way information sharing, dialogue, and user-generated content” (TBS, 2011 November 18, para. 7). Despite this, research suggests that Web 2.0 technologies are not broadly used for citizen participation. Clarke (2012) conducted a content analysis on Government of Canada tweets and found that only 2.8% of tweets in the sample were “participatory” in comparison to 90.8% categorized as “informational” (p. 26). Her findings suggest that Government of Canada social media use is overwhelmingly limited to one-way communication.

Despite Clarke’s findings that the use of social media for communication is far greater than its use for participatory exchanges, the use of technology for information dissemination is a necessary pre-condition for effective public engagement, whether online or offline. Models for engagement acknowledge that information availability is a necessary condition to support more participatory public engagement activities (Rowe and Frewer, 2005, p. 255; IAP2, 2007, p. 1).

### 4.2.3 Digital Divides

There is wide recognition of the challenge of “digital divides” as a barrier to online engagement (Mandarano, Meenar and Steins, 2010, p. 125; Thomas and Streib, 2005, p. 263; Palfrey, 2010, p. 14; Leighninger, 2011, p. 23; Gant and Turner-Lee, 2011, p. 24; Delli Carpini, Cook and Jacobs, 2006, p. 336). Thomas and Streib (2005) define digital divide as the “well-documented tendency” for young people and those with more economic means to have greater access to, and usage of, computers (p. 263). Disparities in access to the Internet can potentially mirror and perpetuate existing inequities between political actors and do little to increase civic participation (Leighninger, 2011, p. 23; Ward and Vedel, 2006, p. 210). Lenihan (2002, p. 35) and Clarke (2012, p. 8) recognize a risk of well-resourced interest groups crowding out

individual citizen voices.

Barriers to participation are not solely technological. There is broad recognition that socio-economic status, gender, race, income, and education influence the decision to participate in civic life, whether online or offline (Delli Carpini, Cook, and Jacobs, 2006, p. 336; Palfrey, 2010, p. 14; Leighninger, 2011, p. 23). Anderson and Rainie (2010) assert that only the “time wealthy” will have the means and ability to engage with institutions and governments on public issues (p. 25). This line of reasoning illustrates the complex relationship between socio-economic factors and political participation. Barriers to online engagement may not be purely access to technology, but the leisure time that permits participation. Ignoring social and economic barriers to civic participation would be an insular and technologically deterministic view.

Online engagement may also raise citizen expectations. Bryer (2011) recognizes the risk of raising expectations with a “failure of process and a lack of continuity” for online engagement (p. 10). Leighninger (2011) further argues that emphasis on short-term strategies without consideration to longer-term involvement may actually be detrimental to relationships between government and citizens (p. 27). He argues that a “durable infrastructure” to support participation in a democracy is necessary with a need for “dexterity of thinking” on the part of public managers (p. 21, 27). This observation is in line with Brainard and McNutt (2010) who argue that interaction between public administrators and citizens should be collaborative, focusing on dialogue and deliberation rather than based solely on authority (p. 841).

Over the 2000s, literature appears to have shifted from democratic optimism to a more critical view in light of the significant growth of communications technology. While Gibson, Lusoli, and Ward (2005, p. 562) propose that the Internet may support access to political engagement for those not inclined to participate with conventional means, Baumgartner and Morris (2010) take an opposing view, arguing that social networking will not mobilize a “chronically disengaged cohort”, as these users are no more likely to engage in political participation than users of other types of media (p. 24).

While ensuring broad access to consultation opportunities is not a new challenge for public administrators, the literature widely recognizes the added challenges of online engagement. Moving consultation opportunities online may broaden access but adds further complexity to the design and promotion of public engagement opportunities.

#### *4.2.4 Government of Canada Technology Adoption*

Wyman, Shulman and Ham (1999) chronicle the lessons learned from Canadian government engagement activities, noting the importance of learning from experience and building capacity within governments to use new engagement mechanisms (p. 75-81). Their work predates the explosion of research into new technologies for engagement in the early 2000s, but Wyman et al acknowledge the potential for new sources of information and means for engagement in building opportunities for citizen

involvement in policy development and call for an institutionalization of the deliberative process in governments (p. 81).

The Canadian government has long recognized the importance of integrating technology into government operations. In 1999, the Speech from the Throne acknowledged the potential for Internet use to transform the relationship between citizens and governments with the announcement of the Government On-Line initiative that committed to connecting citizens to government information and services through the Internet (Roy, 2006, p. 112). Internet use by the Government of Canada has long since evolved past transactional service delivery and information sharing, yet McNutt and Carey (2008) challenge that while there have been significant developments in online service delivery, “limited attention has been paid to strengthening current democratic forums through direct participation in decision-making processes” (p. 12).

The most recent milestone in transforming government operations through technology is Canada’s participation in the Open Government Partnership and its commitments made through its Open Government Action Plan (Government of Canada, 2012, para. 3). Maier-Rabler and Huber (2011) characterize the “Open” in Open Government as “the changing relation between citizens and authorities” (p. 182). Gant and Turner-Lee (2011) argue that open government is premised on the notion that more information available to the public leads to increased government responsibility and accountability (p. 17).

Literature on the Government of Canada’s use of online technologies recognizes an evolution over the past many years from a move to online service delivery to the more recent move toward an “open government” model where citizens may be aware of and participate in government operations through increasing access to open data, information and consultation opportunities.

## **4.3 BUREAUCRACY AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE**

### *4.3.1 Bureaucratic Practices and Online Engagement*

Literature broadly recognizes the incongruence between traditional Weberian bureaucratic hierarchies and the horizontal networked approach facilitated by technology (Fyfe and Crookall, 2010, p. 3; Lee and Kwak, 2011, p. 24; Clarke, 2012, p. 16; Waksberg-Guerrini, 2008, p. 5; Leighninger, 2011, p. 24). Despite recognizing these challenges, comparatively few strategies or solutions to this problem have been proposed in either academic or professional practice literature.

Waksberg-Guerrini (2008) argues that bureaucrats are faced with the challenge of managing large amounts of complex information while operating within a “silo-like, inward-looking culture” where slow decision making processes are a reality of operations (p. 5). Stewart (2009) notes that rigid bureaucratic structures are less

effective when issues are not well-structured and susceptible to rapid change (p. 17). Clarke (2012) supports this view by asserting that conditions necessary for successful digital engagement are contrary to traditional conceptions of a Weberian bureaucracy (p. 19). In dealing with complex challenges of public engagement, Lindquist (2005) recognizes the utility of an “adhocracy” model with diverse skill sets and effective horizontal coordination in managing large-scale consultation activities (p. 358).

While Web 2.0 presents opportunities for horizontal collaboration and conversation on policy issues, real barriers and challenges remain in adapting existing bureaucratic procedures and structures to capitalize on their use. These challenges include accessibility, privacy concerns, restrictions on the use of collection and use of information, inflexible parliamentary budget cycles and the availability of financial and human resources (Gant and Turner-Lee, 2011, p. 19; Lee and Kwak, 2010, p. 24-25). Lee and Kwak (2011) recognize that several policies and procedures are currently “incompatible” with Open Government implementation (p. 25). Fyfe and Crookall (2010) also cite privacy, security, policies and legislative frameworks as impediments to adopting social media into bureaucratic practices but also challenge that it is not the policies themselves that are the “villain”, but the organizational context where they operate (p. 3, 7).

#### *4.3.2 Organizational Culture*

Lee and Kwak (2011) acknowledge the challenge of changing organizational culture in adopting open government initiatives, arguing that a shift toward openness and transparency is required as well as “effective incentives to persuade employees to change their mindset and behaviour” (p. 24). Similarly, Fyfe and Crookall (2010) argue that the “most significant impediment to government use of social media is the ‘clay layer’ in management and the hierarchical public service culture” and note the need to build a culture of collaboration and trust (p. 3; p. 7). Phillips and Orsini (2002) also acknowledge the need for a shift to a “culture that is more appreciative of citizen engagement” (p. 29). These authors illustrate the idea the adopting technology for engagement must be combined with the appropriate practices and environment.

However, at the level of individual public servants, Clarke (2012) acknowledges a pre-occupation with impartiality and professionalism (p. 16). She challenges that in combination with an organizational concern with accountability, these factors limit the potential of social media for an effective tool for engagement (p. 16). Maier-Rabler and Huber (2011) call for an “open, innovation friendly environment” as part of a bureaucratic culture shift to see that innovative public servants are not “punished” for their engagement (p. 187). Leighninger (2011) supports this claim by asserting that the most significant of challenges and impediments in using online tools for engagement “may not be technological but philosophical and structural” (p. 24).

In a more applied context, the 2010 Report of the Government 2.0 Taskforce in Australia echoes other authors’ concerns in recognizing the balance between expectations of accountability and professionalism and using technologies to facilitate

innovation. The report asserts that to capitalize on Government 2.0 “the existing public service culture of hierarchical control and direction must change sufficiently to encourage and reward engagement. Yet it must, at the same time, stay true to enduring public service values of impartiality, propriety and professionalism” (Taskforce report, 2010, p. iii). Further, the report also recognizes the clear role of leadership in supporting a shift in public service culture to make government “more consultative, participatory, and transparent; build a culture of online innovation within government; and promote collaboration across agencies” (Taskforce report, p. x).

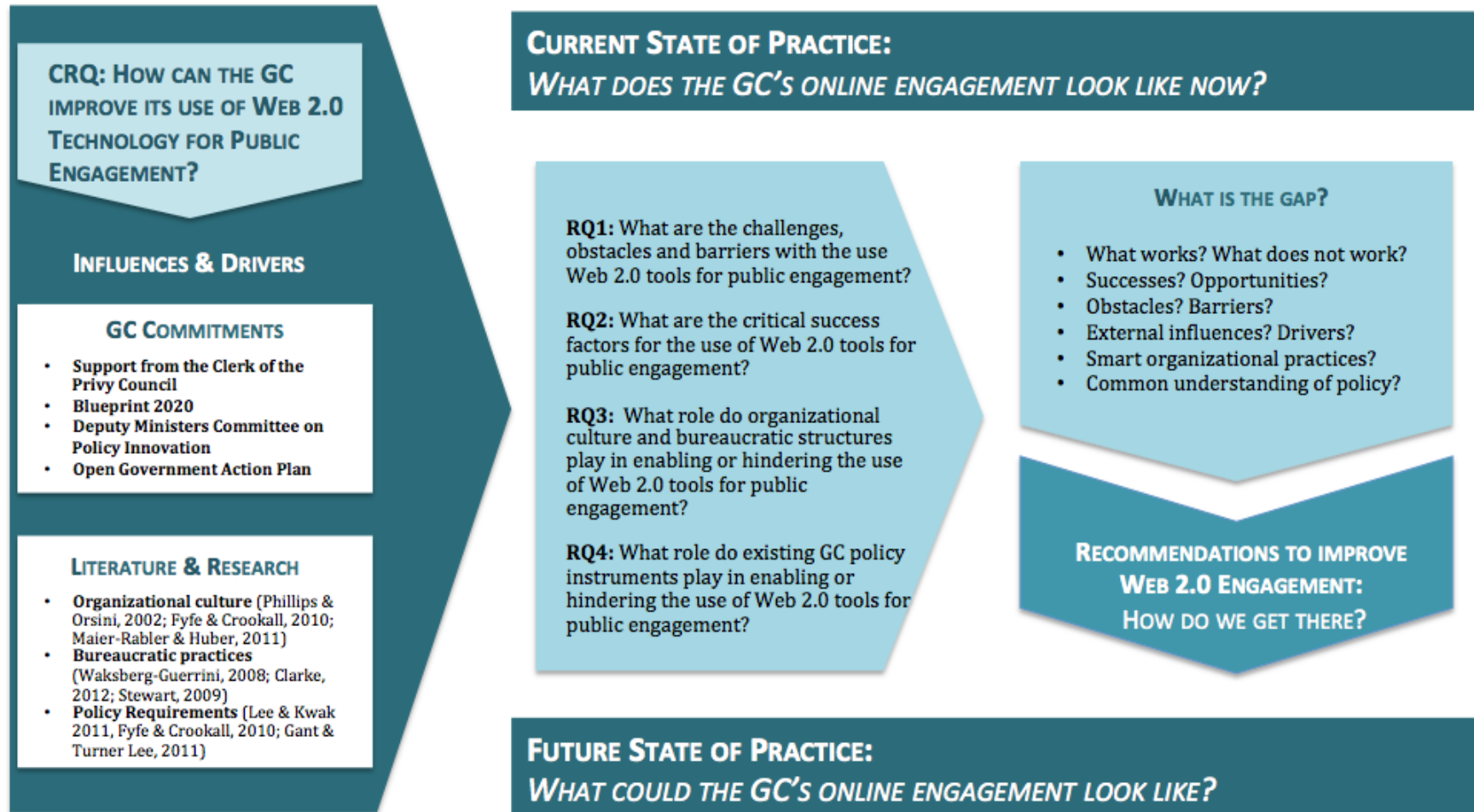
#### 4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Beyond discussing the utility of public participation in policy development, this literature review examines the democratic and participatory potential of online technologies to facilitate engagement (Coleman and Gøtze, 2001, p. 12; Lenihan, 2002, p. 27; Chadwick, 2006, p. 126). Amongst the scholarly community, there is also substantial recognition of the challenges particular to the public sector in adopting technology for public engagement: organizational culture, bureaucratic structures, and complex policy requirements (Fyfe and Crookall, 2010, p. 3; Lee and Kwak, 2011, p. 24; Maier-Rabler and Huber, 2011, p. 187; Leighninger, 2011, p. 24). Despite a wide recognition challenges, there is comparatively little research on identifying tangible solutions .

This study seeks to bridge this gap between academic literature on the challenges and opportunities of online engagement and practical, actionable strategies to improve the Government of Canada’s practice of online engagement. In doing so, this study aims to build on the work of previous authors and examine the challenges, opportunities, and success factors for the use of Web 2.0 tools for engagement in the context of the Government of Canada. In particular, this study aims to add to the work of Fyfe and Crookall (2010), Lee and Kwak (2011), Waksberg-Guerrini (2008), and Maier-Rabler and Huber (2011) to understand the role of organizational culture and bureaucracy in conducting online public engagement in the context of the Government of Canada.

The analytical framework (Figure 4) presents the breadth of factors that influence the GC’s practice of online engagement. In addition to high-level influencing factors and drivers identified in the literature review and through formal GC commitments, there are numerous external influences, challenges and success factors that impact the GC’s current state of practice. The external influences, challenges and success factors are described further in the interview findings in Chapter 6.

FIGURE 4: ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK



## CHAPTER 5: ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

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This chapter presents an analysis of the Government of Canada's current state of practice in online engagement through two sections:

1. A sample of recent GC online engagement activities and social media use
2. An analysis of the various GC policy instruments with impact on online engagement.

### 5.1 GC ONLINE ENGAGEMENT: CURRENT STATE OF PRACTICE

#### 5.1.1 *Sample of GC Online Policy Consultations*

The Government of Canada conducts a wide range of consultation and engagement activities each year on issues related to policy development and program/service delivery. Online consultation has grown to complement in-person consultations over the past number of years. One interview participant recalled discussions on online engagement for their organization as early as 1998. Into the early 2000s, online consultation opportunities grew, consisting largely of documents posted online for feedback to complement in-person consultations. Online questionnaires and electronic workbooks that present participants with contextual information and guided questions have been used for a number of years. With the growth of blogs and social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook in the late 2000s, governments moved to more interactive and participatory forms of consultation such as discussion forums and idea forums allowing citizens to vote on submissions and ideas.

Figure 5 presents an overview of a number of recent GC online public consultations to illustrate the breadth of the current use of online tools for two-way engagement<sup>3</sup>. Online questionnaires continue to be a popular consultation mechanism, combined with other more innovative techniques such as Tweet Chats<sup>4</sup>. Notably, each of these consultations was also complemented by traditional means of consultation such as in-person stakeholder roundtables and offline submissions of policy statements and position papers. Current practice in online engagement at the federal level is to offer an alternative to facilitate participation for individuals who are unable to participate online. Large-scale consultations often consist of multiple channels and consultation methods, including online.

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<sup>3</sup> A distinction is made in this instance between online engagement to inform decision-making versus the use of online tools and social media to support service delivery and outreach to Canadians.

<sup>4</sup> A Tweet Chat is an open, moderated discussion using Twitter, where participants use a common hashtag, or key word, to contribute.

<b>FIGURE 5: GC ONLINE PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS</b>		
<b>Engagement</b>	<b>Organizations</b>	<b>Online Mechanism</b>
<b>Public consultation on Canada's Digital Economy Strategy</b> <i>2010</i>	Industry Canada, Employment and Social Development Canada, Canadian Heritage	Consultation paper posted; Public submissions posted; Idea forum for submitting, sharing and rating ideas
<b>National Dialogue on Healthy Weights</b> <i>2011</i>	Public Health Agency of Canada	Idea forum, submissions, conversation guide, social media promotion
<b>National Call for Concepts on Social Finance</b> <i>2012</i>	Employment and Social Development Canada	Idea submissions, call for papers, social media promotion, consultations paper
<b>Red Tape Reduction</b> <i>2011-2013</i>	Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat/ Red Tape Reduction Commission	Online questionnaire, written submissions, Tweet Chat
<b>Open Government</b> <i>2011-2013</i>	Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat	Online questionnaire, Tweet Chats
<b>First Nations Education Act</b> <i>2013</i>	Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada	Discussion guide, video/teleconference, online questionnaire

### 5.1.2 Consulting with [Canadians.gc.ca](http://Canadians.gc.ca)

Consultingwithcanadians.gc.ca is the GC's consultations portal for announcing and reporting on all GC public consultations, online and in-person. The website lists current and completed public consultations and links to the department websites where individuals can participate or view reports.

The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat's Web Renewal Initiative combined with the Open Government Action Plan are the impetus for developing "a consolidated full citizen engagement platform" to facilitate online engagement and provide an improved web presence for Canadians to access information on planned and completed consultations (Government of Canada, 2013a, sec. 11, para. 4). While a number of interview participants expressed frustration in using the site to promote consultations, there was optimism about the potential improvements brought by the Web Renewal Initiative. There was also hope that a move towards a common consultation platform would help facilitate collaboration among federal organizations to combine efforts on public consultations with similar audiences.

While consultingwithcanadians.gc.ca is the main vehicle to advertise public consultation opportunities—both in person and online—the listing of consultations on the website is not exhaustive. Federal organizations use their own websites, social media, the Canada Gazette, and other means to promote engagement activities. Due to the inconsistency in the use of the site, it is challenging to present an accurate picture of the entire scope of the GC practice of public engagement, including online.

### *5.1.3 Other GC Uses of Social Media and Online Technologies*

Beyond policy consultations, online technologies and social media have been used by a number of federal organizations for outreach and communication. While many organizations use Facebook and Twitter to disseminate news releases and departmental announcements, a number of organizations have also used social media to support service delivery and outreach/awareness activities.

Twitter is used by several organizations to disseminate news releases, share links to departmental content, to rapidly distribute timely information such as border crossing wait times, food safety and product recalls, public health, emergency preparedness. Facebook is used in a variety of ways such as building an online community around commemoration of veterans, responding to questions on issues such as services for youth and sharing information about jobs and careers for Canadians.

Photos and videos shared on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube by Canadian Astronaut Chris Hadfield and the Canadian Space Agency during a recent mission on the International Space Station illustrated the power of social media to show the work of the public service. The viral popularity of these images brought the work of Canada's space program into daily conversation of many Canadians.

Despite the broad adoption of social media across GC organizations, the vast majority has been for one-way, outward communication rather than interactive opportunities for engagement with the public. Figure 6 presents a sample of the various ways that the GC uses social media tools for outreach, communication and service delivery. In assessing the use of Web 2.0 for engagement, it is important to recognize that the GC has made positive steps in improving its use of the tools, but note that they fall short of facilitating two-way consultation.

<b>FIGURE 6: SAMPLE OF GC SOCIAL MEDIA USE</b>	
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Mechanism</b>
<b>Canadian Border Services Agency</b>	CBSA uses Twitter accounts in addition to its website to provide live updates of land border crossing wait times.
<b>Canadian Space Agency</b>	Facebook, YouTube and Twitter used for communication; Photos and videos were shared as part of Commander Chris Hadfield's 2013 mission on the International Space Station. <sup>5</sup>
<b>HealthyCanadians.gc.ca<sup>6</sup></b>	Facebook, Twitter, videos, a GC website, and mobile alerts are used to "share content and give access to reliable and timely health and safety information when and where you need it" such as food/product recalls and healthy living guides (healthycanadians.gc.ca, 2013, para. 1)
<b>Parks Canada</b>	Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are used to share information and photos, as well as interact with individuals about visits to Canada's parks and heritage sites.
<b>Service Canada</b>	Facebook and YouTube are used to interact with Canadians and share instructional videos on resume writing, interview etiquette, applying for Employment Insurance
<b>Veterans Affairs Canada</b>	Facebook, YouTube and Twitter share information on the commemoration of Canada's veterans. The Canada Remembers Facebook page is one of the GC's most popular, with close to 700 000 likes.
<b>WorkinginCanada.gc.ca<sup>7</sup></b>	Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, website for sharing occupation and career information for job seekers and employers.

<sup>5</sup> The social media approach used to support Commander Hadfield's mission was not typical of GC social media use, as public servants did not exclusively control the accounts. Commander Hadfield's son curated the Facebook page using contents from Commander Hadfield's personal Twitter feed.

<sup>6</sup> HealthyCanadians.gc.ca is a joint venture between Health Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, Canadian Food Inspection Agency, and Transport Canada

<sup>7</sup> WorkinginCanada.gc.ca is a joint venture between Employment and Social Development Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Service Canada

## 5.2 GC POLICY ENVIRONMENT

Whether for communication or consultation, a number of Government of Canada policy instruments have particular importance for the use of Web 2.0 tools. For example, the *Guideline for External Use of Web 2.0* lists ten legislative documents and 21 TBS policy instruments with bearing on the use of Web 2.0. Figure 7 provides a list of TBS policy instruments with particular relevance for the use of Web 2.0 for public engagement. The implications of these policy instruments on the practice of online engagement will be expanded on in the following section.

**FIGURE 7: GC POLICY INSTRUMENTS**

1. *Communications Policy of the Government of Canada*
2. *Directive on Official Languages for Communications and Services*
3. *Guideline for External Use of Web 2.0*
4. *Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research*
5. *Policy on Acceptable Network and Device Use*
6. *Standard on Privacy and Web Analytics*
7. *Standard on Social Media Account Management*
8. *Web Standards for the Government of Canada*

### 5.2.1 *Communications Policy of the Government of Canada*

While the Government of Canada currently has no formal consultation or engagement policy, the *Communications Policy of the Government of Canada* requires federal organizations to “foster interactive communications with Canadians and facilitate public consultation in the development and delivery of policies, programs, services and initiatives” (2012, April 1, sec. 17). It also directs federal organizations to announce and report on consultations through the GC’s Consulting with Canadians website (2012, April 1, sec. 9). While the directives in the Communications Policy are applicable to in-person and online consultation, the *Guideline for the External Use of Web 2.0* offers further guidance on using Web 2.0 technologies to support public consultations.

### 5.2.2 *Guideline for External Use of Web 2.0*

Developed in 2011 to complement the *Communications Policy*, the *Guideline for External Use of Web 2.0* provides guidance “on the use of external facing Web 2.0 tools and services” (TBS, 2011, November 18, para. 2). While not a binding and authoritative policy itself, the guideline describes the necessity to comply with a number of TBS policy requirements when using Web 2.0 tools. These include Accessibility, Communications, Federal Identity Program, Information Management, Official Languages, Privacy and Access to information, Procurement and Contracting and Security (TBS, sec. 4.2.2).

The guideline recognizes risks inherent with the use of online technologies such as official languages challenges, protection of content, abiding by terms of service, and the risk of misrepresentation of online commentary as an official GC position (TBS, 2011, November 18, sec 3.3). However, while the guideline provides direction and parameters around the use of Web 2.0 tools, it does not provide advice on effectively using these tools to engage and collaborate with citizens. Furthermore, the guideline recommends that federal organizations develop guidance for its employees to clarify “expected behaviors, benefits, risks and consequences for all potential types of use” (TBS, sec. 5). This guidance includes considerations around values and ethics such as political neutrality and the duty of loyalty to the crown.

Similarly, the newly updated as of October 1, 2013, the *Policy on Acceptable Network and Device Use* formalizes acceptance of using Web 2.0 technologies on Government of Canada electronic networks. The policy states “Open access to the Internet including Government of Canada and external Web 2.0 tools and services will enhance productivity, communication and collaboration, and encourage the sharing of knowledge and expertise to support innovation” (TBS, 2013, October 1, sec. 3.1). This policy change is a positive step in normalizing the use of Web 2.0 within federal organizations. This formal support may support acceptance and reduce barriers to the use of technology for public engagement.

### 5.2.3 Public Opinion Research

According to the *Communications Policy of the Government of Canada*, federal institutions must ensure that online consultations and questionnaires respect the *Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research* (POR). While POR and consultation can be complementary to one another in informing policy development, each activity has distinct parameters. POR is defined as the gathering of “opinions, attitudes, perceptions, judgements, feelings, ideas, reactions or views” with participants being assured anonymity (TBS, 2013, October 7, para. 1; 6). In contrast, consultation is defined as “a two-way process of engagement seeking direct participation from the general public or specific stakeholders on a range of issues and government decisions” (TBS, para. 6). POR also has more rigorous timelines and requirements in making results, findings and associated reports available to the public in comparison to consultation reports (TBS, 2009, June 9, sec. 6.3).

In practice, this distinction between POR and consultation may be challenging to implement. For example, in designing an online consultation, careful attention is required to ensure that questions are fact and behavioural based rather than based on opinions and attitudes to ensure that an online consultation is not considered public opinion research and subsequently subject to the POR policy requirements. Engagement practitioners have identified the practice of interpreting and applying POR policy requirements in the context of online consultation as a significant challenge.

#### 5.2.4 Related Policy Requirements

From 2011-2013, several policies were updated or created to inform the development and use of GC websites. Web Standards for the Government of Canada provide direction on interoperability, usability, accessibility, and optimizing GC sites for mobile devices (TBS, 2012b, para. 1). The *Standard on Social Media Account Management* supports a coherent approach to official GC social media accounts (TBS, 2013, April 1, sec. 5.1). The standard acknowledges opportunities for “collaboration through the use of official social media accounts” (TBS, sec. 5.2.3) and recognizes the link with Open Government commitments to “enable greater information sharing, public dialogue, and collaboration” (TBS, sec 3.4). However, it falls short of directing *how* these official accounts could be used in a collaborative manner.

Further, online engagement may also involve the collection and retention of information such as web analytics or IP addresses. Whether this information is collected on a GC-hosted website or by a third party when using a proprietary engagement platform, federal organizations must ensure that they respect the *Standard on Privacy and Web Analytics* (TBS, 2013, January 31a). This issue will continue to be of interest as the GC develops its own online consultation platforms and works with a variety of innovative proprietary platforms.

The *Directive on Official Languages for Communications and Services* applies to online consultations as a form of communicating with citizens. It applies to all web content “including those that facilitate on-line discussion or collaboration (sec. 6.6.1). This requirement also indicates that all content and user interface components can be accessed in either English or French simultaneously and be of equal quality in both languages (sec 6.6.4.1). For online consultations, this may necessitate additional diligence to ensure individuals participate fully in either, or both, official languages. As recognized in the *Guidelines for the External Use of Web 2.0*, online technologies may have inherent challenges in maintaining the quality of bilingualism. For example, Twitter’s character limit per tweet may hinder the ability to provide a directly equivalent French message to an English tweet (TBS, 2011, November 18, sec. 3.3).

### 5.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has described the state of the GC’s practice of online engagement. A number of GC policy instruments have significant influence on the use of Web 2.0 for public engagement, most notably the Communications Policy, the Guideline for External Use of Web 2.0, and policies related to public opinion research. An assessment of the current state of practice indicates that the GC has used a variety of Web 2.0 tools for communication and public engagement. However, beyond online interaction around service delivery and communication, there has been limited use of technology for interactive consultation with Canadians on policy issues.

## CHAPTER 6: INTERVIEW FINDINGS

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This chapter discusses the findings of the interviews conducted with twenty federal public servants. Interview questions were provided to participants in advance of the interview (Appendix A). Interviews sought to answer this study's central research question: *How can the Government of Canada improve its use of Web 2.0 tools to engage the public in decision-making?* As responses from the interview questions are applicable to multiple research questions, findings are presented thematically.

### 6.1 OVERVIEW

#### 6.1.1 Interview Participants

Twenty individuals were interviewed from eleven federal organizations, including central agencies and regional offices. Participants were from a variety of roles including consultation, stakeholder relations, program administration, policy development, Web 2.0 and e-communications, communications, and information management. Individuals held positions from the analyst/officer level to Director General level. Interviews were conducted from June–August 2013 in the National Headquarters region (Ottawa-Gatineau). Two telephone interviews with public servants working in regional offices were also conducted.

Participants had varied experience in public engagement and the use of online technologies. Some had no direct experience in online engagement while others had extensive experience with a variety of tools and audiences, both internal to government and with the public. Participants have worked with tools such as Twitter, FluidSurveys, wikis, GCTools (i.e. GConnex and GCPedia), forums, YouTube, Facebook, and a number of proprietary and custom-built platforms. Participants had used Web 2.0 tools for communication, outreach, service delivery, contests, Ministerial consultations, internal collaboration, external/stakeholder collaboration, and policy consultations. Participants characterized their experiences as ranging from having limited success to being very successful in achieving their intended outcomes.

### 6.2 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In discussing the challenges and success factors for the practice of online engagement, there were a number of recurring themes. Notably, a number of themes were identified as being *both* a significant challenge and a key success factor, depending on the context. Participants agreed that Web 2.0 engagement activities must match public expectations and be adequately resourced. Participants also identified the key role of management, early adopters of technology, and champions. Participants also named a number of organizational practices and policy instruments that impacted the practice of online engagement. These findings are explored further in section 6.3.

Two research questions examined the challenges and opportunities associated with online engagement:

1. What are the challenges, obstacles, and barriers of Web 2.0 tools for public engagement?
2. What are the critical success factors for Web 2.0 tools for public engagement?

### *6.2.1 Public Expectation*

Participants frequently mentioned a rising public expectation that governments build an interactive web presence. Several participants stated that if governments are not active online they will miss trends and appear obsolete, irrelevant and “out of touch” with citizens. A participant noted that it was “unrealistic in this day and age” to expect policy development processes to completely ignore the reality of social media. A further challenge is the unequal online presences of federal organizations. For example, organizations with public-facing mandates (e.g. Parks Canada and Public Health Agency of Canada) have more robust social media presences and web capacity than organizations with a more inward facing mandate such as central agencies. This disparity can be attributed to the different requirements each agency has to communicate information and deliver services to the public. This variation may create raised expectations among citizens who may expect the same level of responsiveness and online presence from each department.

Participants were near unanimous in agreeing that there is a “risk of inaction” if the GC fails to increase its use of Web 2.0 for citizen engagement. However, several noted the risk of engaging poorly or using an inappropriate medium for the intended audience. An example provided was using a bandwidth-intensive platform to reach a rural audience who does not have universal access to high-speed Internet. Another example was using Twitter to target a certain demographic that is not very active on that platform in comparison to Facebook. Participants felt that a poorly designed online engagement process can have negative effects and damage relationships with stakeholder communities if those communities are not targeted appropriately and if they feel that the GC is not respecting their needs.

Numerous participants felt that successful online engagement needed to be genuine and responsive to participant expectations rather than “a check in the box” for the sake of appearances. In addition, the choice of a Web 2.0 tool for engagement needs to be appropriate and relevant to the target audience and policy issue. Participants felt more emphasis should be put on including online engagement as part of a broader strategy, including getting citizens to participate. One noted that the thinking of “if you build it, they will come” simply does not work. Although social media may not always be appropriate to facilitate the engagement, participants had observed success in using it to increase awareness and uptake. For example, a participant described an online engagement where Twitter was used to drive traffic to the consultation platform. The participant noted that there was a consistent uptake in participation immediately following a promotional tweet. In this case, social media was not used to

facilitate the consultation itself, but was effective in promoting the consultation opportunity through social media networks.

### 6.2.2 Management Support

Participants agreed that management support could either be a significant challenge to implementing online engagement or an influential success factor. Several mentioned the “clay layer” of middle management, noting that while senior managers saw the value of collaborative technology such as wikis, discussion forums, and social media at an abstract level, support for its use was not consistent among middle managers. One participant speculated that the use of technology might become more widely accepted as individuals with experience in using Web 2.0 move into leadership positions over the coming years.

Participants noted that there was a need for managers to support individuals and teams in taking the calculated risks that can come with innovation. A participant provided the example of a deputy minister saying “I’ve got your back” when it comes to using online technologies. The participant felt that this display of support from the DM was very influential in changing the culture of the organization and supporting a cascade of technology adoption at all levels. Multiple participants noted the challenge in making collaborative technology a part of regular business in the absence of support from senior management.

Several participants noted that an “intolerance of failure” and attitudes of risk aversion exist at all levels of the public service, from the working level to senior management. Another participant noted that there needs to be a “shift away from avoiding failure to one of seeking success,” noting that using the *possibility* of failure as an excuse for inaction could mean that an organization misses out on the potential to innovate. One participant noted that online engagement makes successes and failures more visible in the public domain in comparison to in-person engagement, which may make senior management uncomfortable with choosing an online consultation over a traditional in-person consultation.

In cases where a department or agency had limited experience in conducting online engagement, participants felt that disproportionate time was spent explaining, and “selling” the use of Web 2.0 tools, rather than developing a sound engagement strategy that paired the best tool with the intended outcome. Participants identified a lack of understanding of matching a tool with an appropriate issue as a barrier. For example, one participant cited an example where a senior official had requested that a project use a particular platform, despite advice that it was not the best medium for the target audience.

Beyond the support from senior executives, participants noted the role that Ministerial support plays in driving online engagement. Participants had varied experiences with ministerial support for online engagement, with some Minister’s offices explicitly requesting the department to conduct online engagement, and other

offices hesitating to approve online engagement projects. Participants also acknowledged that a Minister's portfolio, personality, and individual style can influence their comfort level with public engagement, both in-person and online.

### *6.2.3 Champions and Early Adopters of Technology*

Participants noted a key role for champions and "early adopters" of interactive technologies. Participants recognized strong advocates for innovation and Web 2.0 for engagement throughout all levels of the public service, not just in the management ranks. At the working level, participants noted that there are many highly engaged individuals enthusiastic about change and innovation. They were seen to be key allies and participants in getting buy-in across organizations. However, a participant noted that sometimes the level of effort required to sell the value of online engagement was so demanding that even enthusiastic advocates "just give up" and propose less innovative approaches with the expectation that they are more "palatable"

Several participants noted that the positive leadership of the Deputy Minister's Committee on Social Media and Policy Development and hoped that this influence would trickle down throughout federal organizations. Participants nearly universally supported the idea of having a Deputy Minister or another senior leader champion the use of technology for internal collaboration and external consultation throughout the public service and within individual organizations.

Participants felt that there was an opportunity for education for their peers and management alike since people can be "intimidated by technology" yet online tools are "no longer the domain of IT branch." A participant suggested that there is a "social learning curve" for adopting new technologies, with some individuals being hesitant to use online tools because they can alter traditional power structures and "People are afraid of change and the unknown!"

### *6.2.4 Project Teams and Skills for Online Engagement*

Several participants remarked that the current human resources system of assigning classifications and levels to each position did not reflect the reality of the skill sets that support online engagement, since the function can span more than one traditional classification or competency. One participant observed that innovative projects need a "Jack of all trades and not a cog in a wheel." Participants noted that depending on the organization, lead responsibility for online engagement may fall to communications, policy, or even an IT branch. This variance can result in challenges in deploying subject matter experts to another department. Individuals who perform similar roles in supporting online engagement may be classified as a communications advisor in one department and a policy analyst in another. While the tasks may be very similar, the current human resources regime does not permit a move from a "communications role" to a "policy role" without a competitive process, even in cases where the core functions, job descriptions, and key responsibilities are nearly identical. This can sometimes result in an inability to quickly match the right skills to a business need.

When asked what types of skills were needed to deliver successful online engagement projects, participants named a number of competencies and traits. Participants identified relationship building, innovation, project management, sound knowledge of public engagement principles, persuasion, problem-solving, strategic thinking, and technical expertise as required competencies for using Web 2.0 for engagement. In addition, they identified a number of useful personal traits such as agility, resilience, courage, and creativity. A number of participants indicated the need for a project manager capable of bridging the gap between technology and engagement principles. Multiple participants noted that even in positions where online technology and social media are included in a job description, individuals might still have limited experience in, and comfort with, using online tools.

Several participants noted a willingness to collaborate across branches and functional areas on projects, and that this “tiger team” or task team approach is very successful for online engagement projects. Policy analysts, IT specialists, communications advisors, social media specialists, accessibility and privacy specialists, legal counsel, and project managers were all identified as key members of online engagement project teams. Participants broadly recognized that online engagement projects required a wide range of skills, expertise, and experience.

#### *6.2.5 Organizational Capacity for Online Engagement*

Beyond the skills of individual public servants, participants noted a number of challenges and opportunities at the organizational level. They indicated that securing adequate and appropriate resources can be a challenge, but this is not seen as an absolute barrier or impediment to Web 2.0 engagement. Indeed, participants described a number of situations where Web 2.0 projects were successfully implemented despite limited financial or human resources.

Participants identified having the “right people in the right roles” as a more acute challenge than working with a small project team with little to no budget. Participants also named a number of examples of innovative and makeshift solutions within the public service to deliver on online engagement projects without any financial resources. However, the challenge of diverting resources from other projects and ongoing business was noted, with a “ripple effect” throughout the organization. Similarly, varying experiences with IT branches were recounted in interviews. In one organization the IT experts were full partners and supportive in developing online engagement projects, whereas in another organization, online engagement was simply one more competing priority for limited resources.

Participants also described an increased expectation within the GC to use online conferencing and video conferencing to replace travel and face-to-face meetings as a means to save on costs. While they recognized that this was appropriate in certain situations, participants felt strongly that online collaboration should not simply replace all face-to-face meetings both within the GC and between the GC and

stakeholders. In addition, there was agreement among participants that the practice of online engagement had not sufficiently advanced to completely replace face-to-face consultation. A majority of participants felt that online engagement is still in the beginning phases for the GC, and that to be fully successful and inclusive these online consultations must still be paired with other traditional means of face-to-face consultation.

Multiple participants felt strongly that the tenets of public participation that apply for in-person engagement are also applicable to online engagement. These include an appropriate choice of mechanism, sound planning, and a direct link between the desired outcomes of an engagement process and the decision making process. Regardless of the type of tool used, online engagement needs to have integrity, credibility and accountability to its participants. One participant noted that it is still challenging to get enough people “believing in the value of public participation” in general, even prior to the introduction of online engagement. A number of participants indicated that sometimes it was still a challenge to gain support for public engagement within their organizations. It was also noted that there is currently no overarching Government of Canada consultation or engagement policy and many departments do not have a departmental policy or guideline.

Participants offered a number of suggestions in building an organization’s capacity for online engagement. A number of participants noted that case studies were very powerful in demonstrating the impacts of effective online engagement, or alternatively, the impacts of engaging poorly or not at all. A number of participants provided examples of effective use of online engagement in other jurisdictions, such as at the municipal level in Canada, or at the national level in other countries. An effective strategy to demonstrate value is clearly articulating the value proposition of using online engagement over another means. The return on investment should be demonstrated, whether that return would be tangible (e.g. financial or efficiency) or intangible (e.g. broadening public support or improved relationships with stakeholders).

A participant noted the difficulty in demonstrating positive outcomes over the long term, as decision-makers prefer “instant gratification”. Another participant also remarked that there has been limited long term tracking of the outcomes of the GC’s online engagement. Participants were of a mixed opinion on whether the Government of Canada should take an incremental approach to adopting online technologies with some preferring to experiment and demonstrate value through internally focused use of Web 2.0 tools, while others felt that this approach would be “missing the boat” and preferred to simultaneously increase the use of Web 2.0 tools for internal collaboration and external communication and consultation.

## 6.3 ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND GC POLICIES

In examining the role of organizational culture, bureaucratic practices and GC policies, participants raised a number of themes. For example, participants noted the mismatch between bureaucratic practices and networked approaches to support online engagement. Participants also raised the issue of risk and visibility of mistakes when working with online technologies and the potential to shift existing power dynamics within organizations. Participants also raised a number of concerns with understanding and applying a number of GC policy instruments to the practice of online engagement.

Two research questions examined the role of organizational practices and GC policies:

3. What role do organizational culture and bureaucratic structures play in enabling or hindering the use of web 2.0 tools for public engagement?
4. What role do GC policies and practices play in enabling or hindering the use of Web 2.0 tools for public engagement?

### 6.3.1 *Bureaucratic Practices*

Bureaucratic practices were seen to influence the practice of online engagement. Participants remarked that the use of innovative technologies as a way of doing business was still not universally accepted and linked into existing practices. The use and comfort level for collaborative technology can vary from among teams within individual departments. Participants cited challenges and structural issues to using social media for public engagement such as lengthy approval processes, Ministers' offices wanting to approve each individual Tweet, a lack of a governance structure, and a failure to delegate the ability to respond to appropriate levels. A participant noted that a medium like Twitter is inherently instantaneous and agile, whereas the bureaucracy currently has a limited ability to be as quick as the medium demands. As one participant put it, "preapproved tweets" are inauthentic and simply "do not work."

Participants noted that entrenched bureaucratic practices needed to evolve to "meet the pace of a Web 2.0 enabled world." as Web 2.0 technologies—especially social media—can "flatten the hierarchy". This networked model was seen as completely contradictory to the traditional hierarchical structures of bureaucracies. Participants recognized that access to social media may change the power dynamic in informal or formal settings. For example, Twitter gives public servants the ability to communicate directly with Ministers or senior officials, bypassing traditional approval chains and procedure. However, participants noted that there was sometimes a fear of the unknown and hesitation to challenge the status quo within departments.

A number of participants noted the tendency of departments to work in isolation of one another on online engagement. One participant noted challenges associated with collaborating on projects with multiple departments where there are disagreements on who will have the ultimate accountability for the project. Another participant noted that while some communities (e.g. communications and regulators) had strong networks and regular conferences, there was no formal equivalent for the policy development community. While there are voluntary efforts to share best practices and resources, there are no dedicated resources and processes to support this. Numerous participants expressed frustration at attempting to collaborate within their organizations in addition to across the GC.

### *6.3.2 Collaboration and Organizational Culture*

Participants felt that some hesitated to use collaborative platforms such as GCPedia as a working tool, as there is a reluctance to share work and iterative drafts until they were complete. One participant stated that sometimes there is no draw or incentive for individuals to tend toward horizontal collaboration, yet there are risks. In addition, it was noted that when collaborative networks are challenging the status quo of organizational culture the “immune system” of formal structures kicks in. At the same time, a number of participants recognized that you cannot deny the reality of bureaucracy and structure, because while many individuals have “good intentions,” sometimes change cannot be seen without support from the top. Regardless of the technologies that facilitate collaboration, unless organizational culture encourages collaboration and information sharing, the impact of technology will be limited.

While a number of participants noted a need for increased support and tools for collaboration within the GC, one participant noted that there is a need to move beyond the early adopters in using collaborative technology such as GC 2.0 tools, and move them into mainstream use within the public service. Blueprint 2020 was provided as an example of a catalyst for integrating collaborative technology into ways of working. Another participant noted that tools such as GCPedia were lacking a critical mass, but were still “better than nothing.” A number of participants felt that more investment should be made into improving tools for internal collaboration, including support from management to accept a temporary drop in productivity as individuals adopt collaborative tools as part of their regular work with a view to improving future productivity and results.

A number of participants named increased opportunities for networking as useful to developing capacity for online engagement. Examples suggested included conferences and events to share information beyond the GC through professional associations such as the International Association for Public Participation or the Institute of Public Administration of Canada. Some participants felt that increased opportunity for networking would help individuals see themselves as part of a broader public service and not just as their role and individual position. One participant noted that there needs to be a change in the perception that the “side of the desk work” is not important as it adds value to the “day job” as well as contributes to developing

expertise for the public service as a whole. There was wide support for increased networking and learning opportunities around online engagement.

### 6.3.3 Policy Interpretation

Participants noted the incongruence between broad statements of support from the Clerk of the Privy Council and through Canada's Open Government Commitments and the rigidity of existing departmental and TBS policy instruments. For example, one participant noted that while the Open Government Action Plan encourages departments to consult with stakeholders and citizens online, the GC's *Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research* and the interpretation of what makes an online consultation engagement rather than POR can be challenging. In addition, a number of participants named various GC policies and practices as challenges, but stressed that they were not an excuse for inaction or a barrier, simply a challenge to be overcome. Policies that were identified as particularly relevant were the *Communications Policy*, *Guideline for External Use of Web 2.0*, the *Directive on Official Languages for Communications and Services*, and *Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research*.

A number of participants suggested that more education and collaboration with policy centers at TBS would support the development of rigorous and relevant definitions and authoritative guidance for departments conducting online engagement. One participant noted that the practice of public engagement is currently "in limbo" without an overarching GC-wide policy to guide engagement, both in person and online. A number of participants noted a need to modernize both GC-wide policies and departmental policies, noting the challenge of "legacy factors" of old policies that do not reflect the realities of working with modern applications of new technologies. For example, the growth of online engagement is raising questions about how to make the distinction between public opinion research and any type of online consultation that asks questions to participants.

Participants from line departments felt that more concrete guidelines from policy centers would help communicate the importance and best use of Web 2.0 tools for engagement to senior managers as part of project approvals. One participant noted that compliance to the *Guideline for External Use of Web 2.0* is voluntary and is subsequently limited in its impact in comparison to a binding policy or directive. Another participant stated that the guideline is a positive step, but it falls short of providing authoritative direction on acceptable use of Web 2.0 for public engagement.

Multiple participants raised the topic of values and ethics as it relates to social media use and online engagement. It was noted that there was limited guidance beyond the *Guidelines for the External Use of Web 2.0* to help public servants understand how their duty to the crown and values and ethics applied in a new reality of instant communication. There was general agreement that the lack of clarity on this subject may also contribute to attitudes of risk aversion towards online engagement.

A number of participants noted that universal access to social media tools and platforms within organizations was still a challenge. Participants stated that access to websites such as Facebook and Twitter or tools such as Google's Chrome browser or TweetDeck were blocked in a number of departments. Participants noted prevalent attitudes that social media use was a "time sink" rather than a productivity tool. However, there was optimism that access to social media tools would be improved by the recently updated *Policy on Acceptable Device and Network Use*.

Participants generally did not feel that technical policies such as the *Standard on Privacy and Web Analytics* and the requirements under the *Web Experience Toolkit* were a barrier to online engagement. Among participants who mentioned technical requirements, there was consensus that sound design and planning was the more crucial element of an online engagement.

However, participants identified procurement policies and procedures as a challenge. For example, when using third party tools (e.g. Twitter and YouTube), there must be a formal agreement between the GC and service provider acknowledging the terms of use, even with no expenditure. Numerous participants noted the challenge in establishing contracts with third parties for proprietary tools, as it is difficult to fully articulate and demonstrate compliance with the GC's rigorous requirements for accessibility and security.

Official languages requirements were identified as a unique challenge when using Web 2.0 tools for engagement. One participant described the challenge of writing a tweet in French in just 140 characters. Another participant noted that although an engagement process may provide the same opportunities to engage in both official languages, the English conversation tends to have greater participation. A skilled moderator can help to "cross-pollinate ideas" between the English and French streams during any interactive, live events such as Tweet Chats. One participant noted that although French was their mother tongue, they had never made a French Facebook or Twitter update as they find social media conversations to be overwhelmingly English.

## 6.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Participants identified a number of factors influencing the practice of online engagement and the use of Web 2.0 tools. Participants felt that support from management, champions, and early adopters were key drivers for successful projects. Participants also spoke to the resources and skills needed to support the use of Web 2.0 for engagement. A number of suggestions to build organizational capacity for online engagement were raised in addition to challenges associated with bureaucratic structures and practices within the GC. Participants were broadly supportive of efforts to increase collaboration within the public service and noted challenges associated with this culture shift. Participants also identified impacts of a number of TBS policy instruments on the practice of online engagement.

## CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

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This chapter presents a synthesis of the literature review, environmental analysis, and interviews. Literature acknowledges the role of engagement as part of robust policy development processes. In recent years, the Government of Canada's use of online technologies and social media for communication has grown significantly. The adoption of online engagement to support decision-making has been more modest, but is drawing significant interest from across all levels of the public service. Interview findings reveal a wide range of perspectives and experiences in using online engagement to support decision-making.

### 7.1 AN EVOLVING PRACTICE

The GC's practice of online engagement is evolving and continues to grow. Literature presents the possibilities of social media as a new way to enable collaborative content creation and new discussions with citizens (Petrik, 2010, p. 19; Ressler and Glazer, 2011, para. 2). While the *Guideline for External Use of Web 2.0* acknowledges the potential for social media tools to facilitate participatory and collaborative exchanges, findings from the interviews and the environmental analysis suggest that the GC is far more advanced in its use of social media for one-way communication than in its experience in using online platforms for policy consultations (Clarke, 2012, p. 26).

Although the GC has not conducted widespread interactive online citizen engagement, the use of Web 2.0 tools to support consultations is evident. Interviews provided examples of how social media are being used to complement engagement activities such as through promoting engagement opportunities on Twitter. Interview respondents were also optimistic about the development of a new common platform for online engagement as part of the Web Renewal Action Plan and Canada's Open Government Action Plan.

A number of TBS policy instruments have been developed to reflect the role of social media for collaboration (e.g. *Guideline for External Use of Web 2.0, Policy on Acceptable Network and Device Use*). The GC is also improving the availability and accessibility of information online (e.g. data.gc.gc), which is a precondition to sound online engagement (Lee and Kwak, 2010, p. 27; Gant and Turner-Lee, 2011, p. 17). In the sample of online policy consultations presented in the environmental analysis, recent online engagement has used relatively simple online technologies either paired in-person consultations or a paper-based submission process. Similar to this, Woodford and Preston (2013) note that the GC's practice of public engagement has historically followed an incremental approach, rather than a series of sweeping changes (p. 349).

## 7.2 RESPONSIVE AND RELEVANT ENGAGEMENT

Literature and public opinion research present critiques of the GC's public consultation process and acknowledge a need to be responsive to public expectations. Public opinion research finds that while there is an appetite in Canada for more opportunities to contribute to policy consultations online (Fleishman Hillard, 2011, para. 1), Canadians still find it challenging to access these consultations due to lack of promotion and awareness or technical barriers (Government of Canada, 2012, March 26, Open Dialogue, para. 2). Similarly, Woodford and Preston (2013) challenge the practice of public engagement in Canada noting a predominance of limited opportunity for involvement, "poor representativeness" and disconnect between the consultation process and the policy decisions (p. 350).

Further, there is recognition that the "digital divide" where Canadians do not have universal access to technology and case socio-economic barriers to participating in online consultation (Government of Canada, 2012, March 26, Inclusiveness and the Digital Divide, para. 1-3; Anderson and Rainie, 2010, p. 25). Similarly, interview participants recognized a need to make investments in improving the practice of online engagement and frequently noted the risk of *not* engaging online or conducting engagement *poorly*. Interview participants felt that the GC must improve its practice of online engagement to remain relevant to Canadians. Otherwise, the bureaucracy may risk being seen as obsolete and "out of touch" with citizens if it fails to keep up with the pace of technological innovation. This finding is similar to Bryer's (2011) recognition that negative outcomes may result from a mismatch between citizen expectations and failed consultation processes (p. 10).

## 7.3 THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP

Support from senior leaders is a determinant of successful online engagement. The literature review and interviews both raised many themes related to the role of organizational culture in the use of technology for engagement. While many formal commitments to using technology to improve the work of the public service, and for online engagement, have been made by ministers and senior bureaucrats, numerous interview participants noted the disconnect and challenges in having this support translate into real change at the working level. Interview participants were encouraged at the significant and growing recognition from senior public service leaders of the potential for technology to bring citizens into the policy development process. Interview participants noted that the Blueprint 2020 initiative, the Deputy Ministers Committee on Policy Innovation, and the Clerk's support were positive influences on the practice of online engagement.

However, interviews also noted the varying degrees of support and predominant attitudes of aversion to risk and failure at various levels of management, or a "clay layer". This finding is congruent with Fyfe and Crookall (2010)'s assertion that the "clay layer" of management and hierarchy in the public sector is the "most significant"

challenge in adopting social media (p. 3). At the same time, interview participants noted that senior leaders can be great champions and advocates for the use of online engagement. Numerous interviewees suggested that a champion for innovation and integrating technologies into the policy development process—including for online public engagement—would be an effective means of changing attitudes within the GC. Interviewees also suggested that building case studies of better practices and successful projects would be helpful in presenting a case to management.

#### 7.4 NETWORKED APPROACHES

A shift from traditional bureaucratic practices to a networked approach may support the growth of Web 2.0 technologies for public engagement. A collaborative and networked approach to the practice of public engagement within individual departments may shift the GC's organizational culture toward adopting new technologies. Interviews noted the challenge of the traditional "siloes" structure in developing and supporting innovative online engagement projects, both in terms of structure and pace of innovation. This finding is consistent with the literature review where a number of authors noted the challenge of adopting new technologies and networked approaches in a slow-moving rigid bureaucratic structure (Stewart, 2009, p. 17; Clarke, 2012, p. 19; Waksberg-Guerrini, 2008, p. 5). Interviews noted hesitation and "fear of the unknown" in adopting networked approaches to working, stating that networks approaches enabled by social media were perhaps incongruent with bureaucratic traditions.

Woodford and Preston note "structural and cultural" barriers encountered by public servants wishing to do online engagement (2013, p. 349). This notion was also stated in interviews where a number of participants acknowledged the role of organizational culture in adopting technology for engagement. Participants noted challenges such as lack of clarity around policy requirements and having the "right people in the right roles". Participants noted that the practice of public engagement often spans across multiple disciplines, including communication, policy development, and service delivery, with an added layer of complexity when engagement is conducted online.

Interviews noted that collaborative and multi-disciplinary teams were a very effective approach to online engagement. However interviews noted that rigid human resources systems and organizational structures sometimes make assembling the right skills and teams challenging. Online engagement is not always well supported by traditional separated functions, but rather by a collaborative approach involving expertise from across various parts of an organization. This finding is consistent with Lindquist's (2005) recognition of the value of an "adhocracy" model where diverse skill sets can be brought together around complex engagement projects (p. 358). Interviews revealed challenges with the current human resources regime that does not permit flexible staffing options (e.g. temporary expertise, deploying someone with the right skill set into a position with a classification different than their own).

## 7.5 COMPLEX POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Understanding the implication of GC policy instruments for online engagement remains a challenge. The literature review, environmental analysis and interview findings each recognize the complexity of understanding GC policy instruments and their application to the practice of online engagement. The environmental analysis identified a number of GC policies that have implications for online engagement, in particular, the *Communications Policy, Guideline for External Use of Web 2.0*, the *Directive on Official Languages for Communications and Services*, and *Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research*. However, the interviews revealed varying degrees of understanding and awareness in their application. This supported the findings of a number of authors who noted the challenge of applying policy requirements for online engagement (Fyfe and Crookall, 2010, p. 3; Lee and Kwak, 2011, p. 25). Both participants with and without direct experience in public engagement described challenges in understanding the wide range of policies that are applicable to online engagement, regardless of their level of direct experience in leading online engagement. This finding suggests that education and awareness of GC policy requirements would be welcomed.

Several interview participants expressed particular concern about the “legacy factors” in applying the *Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research* in the context of online consultations. It was felt that the distinction between POR and consultation posted particular challenges where any method of asking questions online was sometimes “considered POR by default”, requiring consultation leads to spend a great deal of time justifying the use of technology. Participants indicated that interpretation of this policy instrument sometimes varied depending on the subject matter, risk level, and department.

A number of interview participants noted a need for public servants using social media in an official capacity to fully understand how values and ethics, impartiality, and the duty of loyalty to the crown applied to the use of social media. Participants explained that as new forms of online consultation are explored there was potential to blur the lines between professional and personal use. For example, where a public servant participates in a professional capacity on online forums to provide factual information or answer questions about policy issues, a clear understanding of the values and ethics implications is required. A lack of clear understanding may impede an individual’s desire and capacity to use these tools to interact directly with Canadians, potentially missing out on an opportunity to hear from Canadians in a specific way. This is consistent with Clarke’s (2012) findings that at the individual level, public servants are concerned with remaining impartial and professional when using social media (p. 16).

## 7.6 A WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH

The practice of online engagement could be strengthened with a whole-of-government approach. The environmental analysis and interviews support a move to a government-wide approach to public engagement. Indeed, Blueprint 2020 is stimulating conversations within the public service about a whole-of-government approach and an open and networked environment in a variety of fields, including online citizen engagement. The governments of Australia and the United Kingdom have each put in place initiatives to support government-wide adoption and use of new technologies for their operations with the creation of a Government 2.0 Task Force and a Government Digital Service, respectively.

The environmental analysis identified a number of informal and voluntary efforts to promote increased internal collaboration through technology and in-person events. However, these activities are seen to mobilize generally only the early adopters and the highly engaged. An interview participant noted the challenge of the perception that collaborative work in voluntary communities is not adequately recognized as adding value to an individual's capacity to do their "day job" while contributing to the broader expertise of the public service as a whole.

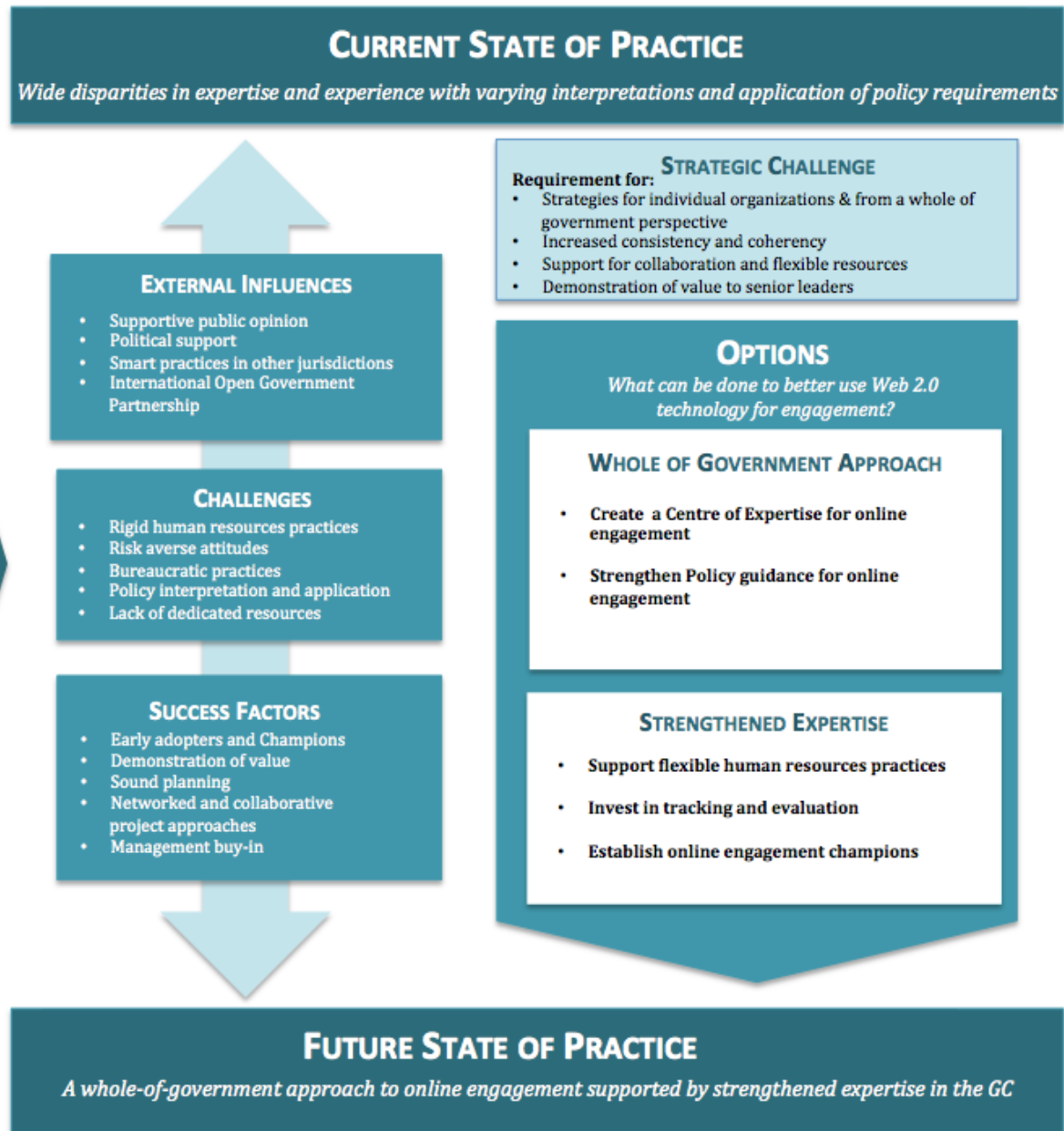
A number of interview participants noted that conducting public engagement was sometimes a challenge, whether in-person or online, as it was often done out of a sense of obligation rather than as a true means to influence policy decisions. This finding supports Stewart's (2009) assertion that the public sector is often driven to consult simply because of legislative requirements (p. 5). A number of participants encountered challenges in securing buy-in for public engagement within their organizations, whether online or in-person and felt that an authoritative GC consultation policy could help give weight to the practice and support online consultations within individual departments.

## 7.7 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK REVISITED

Research identified a number of external influences, challenges and success factors for the GC's practice of online engagement. Internal influences such as bureaucratic structures and organizational culture were acknowledged in literature and in interviews. External influences such as public and political support as well as smart practices from other jurisdictions were mentioned by participants in interviews as well as observed in the environmental analysis. Figure 8 presents a revision of this study's analytical framework, as first presented in Chapter 4. The revised analytical framework presents options for improving the current state of practice for online engagement.

FIGURE 8: ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK REVISITED

**CRQ: HOW CAN THE GC IMPROVE ITS USE OF WEB 2.0 TOOLS TO ENGAGE THE PUBLIC IN DECISION-MAKING?**



## 7.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY AND IDENTIFICATION OF REQUIREMENTS

The discussion of findings has noted that demand for increased online engagement is growing from the public, politicians and senior bureaucrats alike. Notably, research found that management support and appropriate resources were key determinants of success for online engagement. However, bureaucratic practices, attitudes of risk aversion, and rigid human resources practices can be barriers to adopting Web 2.0 technologies for citizen engagement. In addition, challenges exist in understanding and applying a number of GC policy instruments to the practice of online engagement in a consistent and coherent manner across various departments and agencies.

The strategic challenge facing the GC is that the expectation for increased online engagement will not diminish and the public service must evolve in response. The GC must increase its capacity to have a coherent and consistent approach to online engagement, supported by strong expertise, flexible resources and senior leaders. To strengthen the GC's capacity to conduct online engagement, complementary efforts are needed within individual departments and from a whole-of-government perspective. From this analysis, a number of requirements emerge:

### *7.8.1 Requirement 1: Increase consistency and coherency across the GC*

To increase the quality of and capacity for online engagement across the GC, there is a need for consistency and coherence in approaches to online engagement. With an absence of a clear guiding framework or policy, there is great disparity in interpretation and application of GC policy instruments and a wide range of capacity to conduct engagement across departments and agencies. This requirement would also help the GC match its engagement to public expectations.

### *7.8.2 Requirement 2: Support collaboration and flexible resources*

Adequate and flexible resources are a key success factor for online engagement. Multi-disciplinary teams are effective, but there is a need to explore options to make sure the right skills are available at the right time and in the right place. The practice of online engagement is dynamic, spans multiple disciplines, and does not fit neatly into traditional classifications or organizational structures.

### *7.8.3 Requirement 3: Demonstrate value to senior leaders to increase buy-in*

Demonstrating value to senior leaders is crucial to increase capacity for online engagement through collaboration and innovation. While risk aversion, bureaucratic structures, and organizational culture are recognized as playing a role, culture is not something that is simply changed. There is a need to identify strategies to change *behaviors* and ways of working around online engagement projects with a view to influencing organizational culture and ultimately securing management support.

## CHAPTER 8: OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents options for consideration to increase the GC’s capacity for online engagement. Drawing on the findings of the literature review, environmental analysis, and interviews, options support two key themes: a whole-of-government approach to online engagement, and strengthened online engagement expertise within the public service. The chapter concludes with an options analysis and a recommended approach. Figure 9 presents a summary of options.

**FIGURE 9: SUMMARY OF OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

<i>A whole-of-government approach to online engagement</i>	<i>Strengthened online engagement expertise in the GC</i>
<p><b>CREATE A CENTER OF EXPERTISE</b>  <b>Option 1:</b> Dedicated resources  <b>Option 2:</b> Voluntary participation</p> <p><b>STRENGTHEN POLICY GUIDANCE</b>  <b>Option 3:</b> Interpretive guidelines  <b>Option 4:</b> GC Consultation Policy</p>	<p><b>SUPPORT FLEXIBLE HUMAN RESOURCES PRACTICES</b>  <b>INVEST IN TRACKING AND EVALUATION</b>  <b>ESTABLISH ONLINE ENGAGEMENT CHAMPIONS</b>  <b>Option 5:</b> Department-level  <b>Option 6:</b> GC-wide</p>

### 8.1 A WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

Options presented to support a whole-of-government approach address the strategic challenge of lack of consistency and coherency of resources, expertise, and policy interpretation across the GC.

#### 8.1.1 *Create a Center of Expertise for online engagement*

Establish a Center of Expertise for online engagement to perform a coordination and networking function for the public service to increase coherence and consistency in online engagement approaches. A CoE could lead on issues related to GC-wide online engagement such as advice on policy interpretation and application, procurement; support capacity building, training and networking; provision of expertise and advice to departments on online engagement; and collaboration with other informal networks, communities and center of expertise such as communications, information technology, public opinion research, and policy development.

- **Option 1:** Center of Expertise with dedicated resources
- **Option 2:** Center of Expertise with voluntary participation (e.g. working group)

### 8.1.2 Strengthen Policy Guidance for Online Consultation

While policies such as the *Standard on Social Media Account Management*, *Standard on Privacy and Web Analytics*, and the *Policy on Acceptable Device and Network Usage* are beginning to account for technological changes, their applications in a public engagement context should be fully described.

A stand-alone policy instrument for consultations could formalize how various TBS policy instruments apply to the practice of online engagement. For example, it could clearly articulate requirements for bilingualism and accessibility for online consultations. It could complement related TBS policy instruments as detailed in Chapter 5, such as the *Communications Policy*, the *Guidelines on External Use of Web 2.0* and *Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research*.

Particularly, the distinction between online consultation and public opinion research requires clarification. A common understanding of policy requirements or a formal consultation policy could bring rigor to the practice of online engagement and provide authoritative guidance to organizations. This could also support departments in securing buy-in for online engagement with their leadership.

- **Option 3:** Guidelines for interpretation and application of GC policy instruments
- **Option 4:** Create a formal GC Consultation Policy

## 8.2 STRENGTHENED ONLINE ENGAGEMENT EXPERTISE WITHIN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

Strengthening expertise and resources for online engagement addresses the requirement to obtain buy-in from management and meet growing public expectations. Building capacity for online engagement will lead to better outcomes and results. Demonstrating results and a return on investment is key to gaining management support. Most importantly, improving expertise leads to a better engagement experience for individuals and results for Canadians.

### 8.2.1 Support flexible human resources practices for online engagement

Continue the practice of establishing multi-disciplinary teams to support online engagement with members from all relevant areas of an organization including policy development, program/service delivery, communications, and technical experts. Project teams could also involve experts on short-term assignment from within departments, or from other departments or a Center of Expertise.

In addition, online engagement could be reflected as a specialty within existing classifications. Core competencies related to online engagement could be integrated into work descriptions across existing functional areas such as communications and policy. Promoting core competencies may help with transferability of individuals and expertise between classifications.

### 8.2.2 *Invest in tracking and evaluation of online engagement*

Evaluation metrics and performance indicators could be implemented at the departmental level, but also at a government-wide level to gain a full picture of the breadth of online engagement led by the GC. Baseline indicators could be established for various technologies and tools to track the impact and outcomes of online engagement. Demonstrating progress over time and a return on investment would help organizations demonstrate to management the value of using new technology.

### 8.2.3 *Establish Champions for Online Engagement*

Because support from management and senior leaders is recognized as a key success factor for online engagement, Deputy Ministers or Assistant Deputy Ministers could champion online engagement within their organization. This champion would provide leadership for their organization and could be supported by a reverse mentor, similar to the model used by the Deputy Ministers Committee on Policy Innovation. A champion could provide leadership within their organization to build comfort and expertise for both managers and staff, including promoting the use of collaborative technology as part of ongoing business.

- **Option 5:** Department-level tactics (e.g. multi-disciplinary project teams, pilot evaluation approach, departmental ADM/DM champion)
- **Option 6:** Government-wide tactics (e.g. assignments/secondments between organizations, comparative evaluations between departments, GC champion for online engagement)

## 8.3 ASSESSMENT OF OPTIONS

This analysis presents considerations for each of the proposed options. In addition, each option is assessed against factors such as feasibility, complexity, level of impact and timeliness.

### 8.3.1 *Option One: Center of Expertise with dedicated resources*

A CoE with dedicated staff would mitigate the risk of competing priorities when an individual works on a project “on the side of their desk.” Resources could be allocated to the CoE by departments with significant consultation responsibilities, using secondments or assignments. The CoE would require PCO/TBS participation so that its work is linked into existing policy requirements and oversight functions. The CoE could be situated in either of these organizations or by a host department on behalf of the engagement community. A clear mandate, accountability structure, and scope of the CoE would need to be established by the Community of Practice steering committee and PCO/TBS. The CoE could lead implementation of options three and four.

### 8.3.2 *Option Two: Center of Expertise with voluntary participation*

A voluntary Center of Expertise could perform a similar role to the dedicated function proposed in option one, but be resourced through a working-group model with participation from a number of departments and agencies within the engagement community, including TBS and PCO. A working group model would have reduced advisory capacity and would run the risk of being under resourced if participating departments do not allocate dedicated time to the project or if it is seen as simply a “side of the desk” project. Clear accountability may be difficult to establish with voluntary participation.

### 8.3.3 *Option Three: Guidelines for interpretation and application of GC policy instruments*

An inventory of all policy requirements that apply to online consultation could be created. To promote common understanding and application, a CoE could identify relevant policy instruments, explain how they apply to GC consultations, and identify known risks and mitigation strategies. Supporting policy compliance across departments would promote consistency and coherence of engagement activities. A consultative approach involving feedback from all implicated parties (e.g. central agencies, departments, engagement community) would be required.

### 8.3.4 *Option Four: Create a formal GC Consultation Policy*

This option would include the same requirements as option three with the policy interpretation, but would add the additional step to work with TBS to formalize the guidance and interpretations on online consultation into a formal policy instrument, similar to the *Guideline for the External Use of Web 2.0*. This formalized approach would provide more authority to the guidelines and support their adoption across departments.

### 8.3.5 *Option Five: Department-level tactics to build capacity*

Individual departments and agencies may take steps to improve their online engagement capacity such as using multi-disciplinary project teams, supporting short-term assignments, researching and implementing evaluation approaches, and securing an ADM/DM champion for online engagement. Changing business practices is influenced by the culture and structure of each individual organization. Successes at a departmental level could also provide a proof of concept to pilot new approaches at a government-wide level. Securing a champion is dependent on personalities and the limited time and resources of senior executives. A champion would need to genuinely support online public engagement and not simply be a figurehead.

### 8.3.6 Option Six: Government-wide tactics to build capacity

To build on department-specific tactics, a government-wide approach could include promoting assignments/secondments between organizations, establishing common performance indicators for online engagement to compare impact and outcomes of engagement between departments. To establish a GC champion for online engagement, the option could be explored to leverage other initiatives or committees such as Blueprint 2020 and the DM committee on Policy Innovation. Certain government-wide approaches require a long-term and complex process, such as assessing how online engagement should fit into the existing human resources classification system.

### 8.3.7 Options Analysis

Each proposed option has been assessed against a set of common criteria, presented in Figure 10:

**FIGURE 10: OPTIONS ANALYSIS**

OPTION	FEASIBILITY	COMPLEXITY	IMPACT	TIMEFRAME
<b>CREATE A CENTER OF EXPERTISE</b>				
<b>Option 1:</b> Dedicated resources	Medium	High	High	Launch: <4 months <i>Ongoing implementation</i>
<b>Option 2:</b> Voluntary participation	High	High	Medium	Launch: <2 months <i>Ongoing implementation</i>
<b>STRENGTHEN POLICY GUIDANCE</b>				
<b>Option 3:</b> Interpretive guidelines	High	High	Medium	9-12 months to complete and implement
<b>Option 4:</b> GC Consultation Policy	Low	Low	High	12-24 months to complete and implement
<b>STRENGTHEN EXPERTISE WITHIN THE PUBLIC SERVICE</b>				
<b>Option 5:</b> Department-level tactics	High	Low	Low	Launch: <3 months <i>Ongoing implementation</i>
<b>Option 6:</b> GC-wide tactics	Medium	Medium	High	Launch: +12 months <i>Ongoing implementation</i>
<b>ASSESSMENT CRITERIA</b>				
<b>Feasibility:</b> How realistic is it? How likely is it to gain support from department and agencies?		<b>Impact:</b> Would it impact multiple departments? Would it impact many aspects of engagement?		
<b>Complexity:</b> Would multiple players be impacted? Require consensus from multiple organizations?		<b>Timeframe:</b> How quickly could it be implemented? How long will it take?		

## 8.4 RECOMMENDED APPROACH

Based on considerations and an analysis of each option against a set of common criteria, the recommended approach is as follows:

### 8.4.1 *Whole-of-government approach*

Option one should be adopted to provide dedicated resources to support the implementation of Option three. A resourced Center of Expertise would provide the capacity necessary to build a common understanding of policy requirements specific to online engagement. Capacity of the CoE would be dependent on resources: Two FTEs for a two-year period is recommended. In the short term, interpretive guidelines are a more feasible and pragmatic option than creating a new TBS policy instrument.

### 8.4.2 *Department level expertise*

In the short-term, the CoP should focus its efforts on strengthening a whole-of-government approach. For specific tactics to strengthen and build expertise, individual departments should lead on their own internal initiatives. This approach would support the Community of Practice in its mandate to lead on areas of common interest to the entire GC engagement community, while the steering committee could lead efforts within their respective departments.

### 8.4.3 *Short Term Approach (2014-2015)*

1. Establish a Center of Expertise with dedicated resources
2. Establish a common understanding of policy requirements
3. Prioritize capacity building within individual departments

### 8.4.4 *Long Term Approach (2015-2017)*

1. Assess the value and impact of the Center of Expertise to determine if the approach is effective.
2. Assess the impact of interpretive guidelines to determine if a formal GC Consultation Policy is necessary
3. Assess the impact of department-level tactics to determine if successes within individual departments could be applied at a government-wide level

## CHAPTER 9: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

**FIGURE 11: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR RECOMMENDED OPTIONS**

TIMELINE	ACTIVITIES	KEY PARTNERS	ONGOING WORK
<b>SHORT TERM PRIORITIES (2014-2015 FISCAL YEAR)</b>			
<b>Q1 APR-JUN 2014</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish CoE, identify host department establish governance structure</li> <li>2. Formalize mandate/scope for CoE and develop work plan</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CoP Steering Committee</li> <li>• Engagement community</li> <li>• All departments &amp; agencies</li> <li>• Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat</li> <li>• Privy Council Office</li> <li>• Other communities (e.g. federal regulators, communications)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with CoP Steering Committee and central agencies on policy interpretation</li> <li>• Information sharing across the GC</li> <li>• Support training, learning and networking events</li> <li>• Advice to departments on engagement</li> <li>• Research on new mechanisms</li> <li>• Collaboration with other communities on shared topics of interest</li> </ul>
<b>Q2 JUL-SEP 2014</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct exhaustive environmental scan identifying all TBS policy instruments with implication for online engagement</li> <li>2. Write guidelines for common interpretation and understanding across departments</li> </ol>		
<b>Q3 OCT-DEC 2014</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stakeholder consultation on guidelines (central agencies, departments, community of practice)</li> </ol>		
<b>Q4 JAN-MAR 2015</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Finalize guidelines and share across the GC</li> </ol>		
<b>LONG TERM PRIORITIES (2015-2017 FISCAL YEARS)</b>			
<b>2015-2016 FISCAL YEAR</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess the impact of department-level tactics to determine what could be applied at a government-wide level (e.g. evaluation, best practices)</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CoP Steering Committee</li> <li>• Engagement community</li> <li>• All departments &amp; agencies</li> <li>• Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat</li> <li>• Privy Council Office</li> <li>• Other communities (e.g. federal regulators, communications)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue work from 2014-2015</li> <li>• Evaluate impact of CoE</li> <li>• Determine need for Consultations policy</li> <li>• Pilot GC-wide evaluation and performance indicators</li> </ul>
<b>2016-2017 FISCAL YEAR</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess the value and impact of the Center of Expertise to determine if the approach is effective</li> <li>2. Assess the impact of interpretive guidelines to determine if a formal GC Consultation Policy is necessary</li> </ol>		

## CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSION

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This study sought to assess factors that impact the GC's capacity to conduct online engagement to involve Canadians in decision-making. In particular, it looked at challenges, opportunities, and success factors that influence the use of Web 2.0 technologies for public engagement, with a particular emphasis on the role of policy requirements and bureaucratic practices. Public opinion and statements of support from senior leadership are driving demand for improvements to the GC's online engagement. Options presented in this study align with other current approaches to rethink the future of Canada's public service, most notably Blueprint 2020 and the Open Dialogue stream of Canada's Open Government Action Plan. Moving towards a whole-of-government approach to online engagement, supported by the development of strong expertise in this area, would enhance the capacity of the public service to use innovative ways to involve Canadians in decision-making.

The Clerk of the Privy Council released the Blueprint 2020 Interim Report in late 2013, presenting initial findings from the public-service wide engagement activities. While this research study was completed independently of formal Blueprint 2020 engagement exercises, it draws similar findings. For example, the Blueprint 2020 report acknowledges the importance of collaboration and partnership in bringing together resources around large initiatives, noting that the public service may function most optimally "in an open and horizontally networked environment where best practices are broadly shared" (2013, p. A-3, A-7). The Blueprint 2020 interim report calls for increased collaboration between departments and more opportunities to "draw talent from across government to tackle special projects and provide short-term development opportunities" (p. A-9). These proposed ideas would be supported by the implementation of a Center of Expertise for Online Engagement, the central recommendation proposed in this study. As the public service evolves over the coming years, the practice of online engagement must continue to evolve as part of this transformation toward the ultimate end of service excellence for Canadians.

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## APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

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1. Can you tell me about your background? What led you to your work and interest in the field of engagement and/or Web 2.0?
2. Do you have experience in using Web 2.0 for public or internal engagement? If yes, what types of projects have you worked on?
3. Can you tell me about a project using social media or online engagement that was very successful? This can be either one that you've worked on, or one that you are interested in or familiar with.
  - a. What factors do you feel contributed to the success?
  - b. Were there any challenges or barriers during the project? If so, how did you address them, or how could they have been overcome?
4. Can you tell me about a project that was not very successful?
  - a. What aspects did you feel needed improvement?
  - b. Any specific barriers or challenges?
5. What would you consider to be risks that come with using Web 2.0 for citizen engagement? What about risks of not using Web 2.0?
6. Are there any Government of Canada policies, guidelines, directives, frameworks, standards, or practices within your organization that pose particular challenges or barriers to the use of Web 2.0 for engagement? What could be done to overcome these?
7. What influencing factors do you feel contribute to the success or failure of the use of Web 2.0 for public engagement? What types of practices work well or don't work well?
8. What can be done to demonstrate the value of Web 2.0 for public engagement to decision makers/management to gain support and buy-in?
9. What skills do people leading Web 2.0 engagement projects need to have? What resources, tools and supports are needed?
10. What do you think can be done to build a culture of collaboration and horizontality to support the use of Web 2.0 for engagement by the Government of Canada?
11. Are there any examples of what is currently working well in supporting collaboration using Web 2.0? How could these successes be used for public engagement?
12. What advice or recommendations would you give to someone planning to use Web 2.0 for public engagement?

## APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM

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### University of Victoria School of Public Administration

*Participant Consent form*

### **Web 2.0 for Public Engagement: Building organizational capacity for the Government of Canada**

You are invited to participate in a study entitled Web 2.0 for Public Engagement: Building organizational capacity for the Government of Canada. The principal researcher is Katherine Babiarz. The client for this study is Marie-Claude Pelletier, Chair of the Government of Canada's Stakeholder Relations and Public Engagement Community of Practice.

Katherine Babiarz is a Senior Policy Analyst with Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and a graduate student in the School of Public Administration at the University of Victoria. You may contact her if you have further questions <contact information removed>. This research is part of the requirements for a Master's degree in Public Administration. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Kimberly Speers, School of Public Administration, University of Victoria.

### **Purpose and Objectives**

The Government of Canada has a Community of Practice (CoP) on Stakeholder Relations and Public Engagement. The CoP promotes the development and sharing of best practices for engagement activities agencies and collective action on issues that impact the federal engagement community as a whole.

This project will support the CoP in its mandate of fostering innovation and coordinating action on issues of interest to the engagement community. This project will produce a number of options for consideration to enable successful use of Web 2.0 for public engagement in federal organizations.

### **Importance of this Research**

As part of the Government of Canada's Open Government Action Plan, commitments have been made to expand engagement through Web 2.0 technologies. In addition, the Clerk of the Privy Council's Blueprint 2020 initiative calls for ideas to modernize the public service including smart use of technologies, an open and networked environment to support citizen engagement, and a workforce that embraces new ways of working. As a result, there is a need to explore how to best use Web 2.0 technologies for public engagement.

### **Participant Selection**

This study is recruiting participants from the federal public service. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are recognized as having expertise or experience in fields including Web 2.0 engagement, collaboration, communication, and innovation in the public service.

## **What is involved?**

If you voluntarily agree to participate in this research, your participation will involve a 45-60 minute interview conducted at your office or by phone during regular business hours. An audio recording and/or written notes will be taken. A transcription may be made.

## **Inconvenience**

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including requiring approximately 60-90 minutes of your time for the interview and related logistical arrangements.

## **Risks**

If you report to the project's client, Marie-Claude Pelletier, note that participation in this study is voluntary. You may participate without risk to your employment and without risk of professional penalty. You will not be identified to the client as having been invited to participate, nor will your acceptance or refusal to participate be disclosed.

## **Benefits**

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include having your organization's experiences reflected in this study; having a copy of the results to use for your own organizational purposes; and contributing to the Community of Practice for Stakeholder Relations and Public Engagement to benefit the Government of Canada as a whole with an aim of improving its online engagement activities.

## **Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you have a prior relationship with the researcher, this should not influence your decision to participate. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will be used if you provide permission to do so, or will be destroyed at your request. If you have participated in a group interview, your data will be used in a summarized form with no identifying information. Please contact the researcher should you wish to withdraw your participation and/or consent to use findings from your interview.

## **Anonymity**

All information included in the final report will be non-attributed. Participant responses will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms will be used if required. Your participation is anonymous and you will not be identified.

However, there are limits to this confidentiality: (1) If you participate in an interview with another individual your anonymity to the other participants in the interview is not guaranteed; (2) Due to the limited number of practitioners in this field, it may be possible for your identity to be inferred by a reader; (3) If you were referred to participate in this study by another individual, your anonymity to this individual is not guaranteed.

## **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality of the data will be protected by the following measures: Only the researcher and the academic supervisor will have access to files containing raw data and transcripts from

interviews. They will be kept in a password-protected file on the researcher's personal computer or in a locked filing cabinet if they are in hard copy.

### **Dissemination of Results**

As a participant, you will be provided with a copy of the final report. The final report will also be shared throughout the Community of Practice and made available to the federal engagement community.

### **Disposal of Data**

Data from this study will be disposed within one year of completion of the study, pending distribution of final products. Electronic data will be encrypted and erased while paper copies will be shredded.

### **Contacts**

If you have any questions about this study, you can contact: the researcher, Katherine Babiarz at <contact information removed>; the Academic Supervisor, Dr. Kimberly Speers, at <contact information removed>; or the client, Marie-Claude Pelletier at <contact information removed>.

You may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting UVic's Human Research Ethics Office at 250-472-4545 or [ethics@uvic.ca](mailto:ethics@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you agree to participate in this research project.

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*Name of Participant*

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*Signature*

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*Date*

***A copy of this consent will be left with you, and the researcher will take a copy.***