

The Story of BC Sans

In late 2018 it was determined the text and typography on the gov.bc.ca website was in need of improvement. While Adobe Myriad has supported the province's visual brand online for several years, advances in browser and font technology had revealed some inconsistencies.

Gov.bc.ca's new *Digital Service Design System* needed fonts that could be served along with the website files. The fonts also needed to compliment our visual identity typeface, Myriad. An open source, Open Font License typeface would be ideal because the fonts would also need to be provided to government partners and contractors.

At the same time, government was concerned about support for multiple languages on our website, and importantly, Indigenous languages. A high-quality open source typeface which included the required characters for this level of support was sought.

A number of typefaces were examined that matched the criteria and a handful of these were tested. Noto Sans stood out as an option as it already had an extensive set of characters supporting over 800 languages-- including many Indigenous languages of Canada. The typeface was also originally designed for enhanced readability on-screen.

Under an Open font License, Noto Sans presented the opportunity to access the font files and modify and improve its character sets. With expertise from an Indigenous language typographic expert, and from First Voices, additional characters and syllabic glyphs to support Indigenous languages in B.C. were added.

This new typeface was named **BC Sans**.

BC Sans will initially include regular and bold characters with matching italics. It compliments our visual identity and will become synonymous with our digital services.

Initially, BC Sans will appear on the gov.bc.ca website and new digital properties, and as a required update for remaining government digital properties hosted outside of gov. bc.ca. The font files will be available through a free Open Font License for download on the *B.C. Digital Service Design System* and the *BC Visual Identity Program* web pages, as well as other locations.

BC Sans is also for use in digital documents, PDFs and other communications intended to be consumed on-screen. Accessing the full multi-language character sets can be achieved by using certain graphic software, or by the use of installed "keyboards", which will be made available online in the near future. BC Sans will be improved as we receive feedback from users.

We hope BC Sans will play a role in government's accessibility and inclusiveness efforts and help improve our service delivery for British Columbians.

