

## Why was BC Sans introduced?

BC Sans is an open-source “living” typeface developed for government to improve the readability and delivery of digital services. It was designed to support special characters and syllabics found in Indigenous Languages based in B.C. – a typeface that can be distributed freely.

## How many Indigenous languages does this typeface support?

FirstVoices (an initiative of First Peoples’ Cultural Council) has identified that this typeface supports all 34 main BC-based Indigenous Languages ([maps.fpcc.ca](https://maps.fpcc.ca)).

## What are the additional benefits of using BC Sans?

BC Sans is easy to read, with a tall x-height and generous space within and between the letter-forms. Characters for over 800 languages are included with correct accents and special characters. There is no license to pay for the font files and they can be shared or redistributed. Improving the accessibility and inclusiveness of government communications is a benefit for government and the public. On [gov.bc.ca](https://gov.bc.ca), the use of BC Sans allows the font files to be served domestically, with the rest of the website files. BC Sans is compatible with Windows and Mac operating systems and is also encoded in the Unicode standard.

## How was BC Sans developed?

BC Sans is a modified version of Noto Sans, an open-source font developed by Google. An Indigenous linguist and font designer provided expertise in analysis and additional development for the inclusion of Indigenous languages spoken in British Columbia. FirstVoices provided expert advice and direction regarding required edits to specific characters in the typeface.

Below lists the 34 main BC-based Indigenous languages\* that BC Sans 2.0 supports:

- Nłeʔkepmxcín
- Sgüüxs
- Danezāgé’
- Éy7á7juuthem
- diitiidʔaatx
- Gitsenimx
- Státimcets
- Dane-Zaa (Cᵀ b)
- Hul’q’umí’num’ / Halq’eméylem / hə́nq̓əmin̓ə́m̓
- Háitzaqv̓la
- Nisga’a
- Skwxwú7mesh sníchim
- Nsyilxcən
- Dakelh (CBʷ)
- Kwákwala
- Dene K’e
- Anishinaabemowin
- SENĆOŦEN / Malchosen/ Lekwungen / Semiahmoo/ T’Sou-ke
- Nedut’ən / Witsuwit’em
- X̱enaksialaḵala / X̱a’islaaḵala
- Tāhtān
- X̱aad Kil / X̱aayda Kil
- Tsilhqot’in
- Wuiḵala
- She shashishalhem
- Southern Tutchone
- Sm’algyax
- Ktunaxa
- Secwepemctsin
- Lingít
- nuučaañut
- ᵀʰΔʷᵀΔʷ (Nēhiyawēwin)
- Nuxalk
- Tse’khene

\*The above languages are documented in the *First Peoples’ Cultural Council Language Status Report (2022)*. <https://tinyurl.com/e44zjue6>

### **Do I need to do anything if my content lives on gov.bc.ca**

No, content on [gov.bc.ca](https://gov.bc.ca) will automatically be updated with the font. However, heading sizes have also changed to support the new font size. Please check your content to make sure it looks okay.

### **Do crown corporations and other public bodies need to use BC Sans?**

No, crown corporations and public bodies are not required to use BC Sans, but they are free to use the font if they would like to.

### **Can the public use the font?**

Yes, the font is free for anyone to download and distribute as long as they follow the open-font license conditions. It cannot be sold.

### **Should I use BC Sans for print material?**

BC Sans is one of the three BC identity corporate typefaces (along with Adobe Garamond Pro and Myriad Pro). All three of these fonts can be used for print materials (choose the font that best serves the topic and the audience). However, only BC Sans should be used for extended web content such as websites, or other material which is primarily consumed on-screen.

### **Are there reasons to use the font outside of a website?**

You are welcome to use BC Sans for print materials, especially if the print materials contain Indigenous characters. If you are developing digital content and assets that live on the screen and aren't specifically intended for print, you should begin using BC Sans.

### **I want to use the font on my computer, which file should I use?**

To use the font on your computer you can install the .ttf or .otf file.

### **Do I need to update the font I use for my stand-alone site (Wordpress, COTS, etc.)?**

Yes, BC Sans must be used for all digital websites and stand alone sites that are outside of the CMS Lite platform.

### **How soon do I need to update the font?**

Updating your font should be done at a time when you are doing maintenance or updating the application or currently developing the service. Transitioning to this font will be a phased approach.

### **Our service is old and will be transformed in the next year or two, do we need to update our font?**

No, if you have a legacy application you do not need to change the font until you upgrade to a new application.

### **How does BC Sans and Indigenous languages work with screen readers?**

Screen readers are based on the language specified for the web page and aren't dependent on the font that is used. Current support for screen readers with Indigenous languages is limited.

### **I want to use characters from an Indigenous language, how can I access these?**

Characters used in Indigenous languages are accessed differently based on the computer program you are using. They can usually be found in a glyph or character palette. For typing in these languages you must install a keyboard specific to the language.

Keyboards are what allow you to type characters, and fonts give those characters their look and feel. The font will ensure characters are rendered accurately, but in order to type the characters in the first place you need a keyboard. The keyboards that are included on that BC Sans website will tell your computer what characters to type.

## **BC Sans is open-source. What does this mean?**

The authors of open-source software allow use without charge, and permit the software to be freely distributed and modified under a free license. It cannot be sold. BC Sans fonts are made available under an open-font license, free to use so long as it remains under the open-font license and its terms, and there is no charge for its use. The name, BC Sans, and the modified font files are copyright of the Province of B.C.

## **How will BC Sans be rolled out?**

BC Sans is considered a “living” typeface with plans to slowly update it over time due to various needs that may surface—the introduction has been a phased approach.

## **What is the release date history?**

BC Sans 1.0 – Released September 2019.

BC Sans 2.0 – Released June 2023.

## **Can Noto Sans be used instead of BC Sans?**

The Google Font API must not be used for Noto Sans in government digital properties. However, for print materials, Noto Sans is acceptable as it provides advanced typographic features if needed. Currently BC Sans is available in Light, light italic, regular, regular italic, bold, and bold italic. With time, as the BC Sans typeface evolves and improves, there will be less need for Noto Sans.

## **Where can I download the font?**

The print fonts can be downloaded from the BC Visual Identity Program website:  
<https://tinyurl.com/y64eevc4>

The web fonts can be downloaded from the BC Digital Design System:  
<https://developer.gov.bc.ca/Typography>

## **Can you see the file extensions on your computer?**

Please note that by default many B.C. Government PC computers have their file extensions turned off. You will need to turn them on (in your computer file settings) to be able to see the font extensions.

## **Installation Recommendations**

Before installing the updated BC Sans 2.0, we first recommend that all older versions of BC Sans be uninstalled. Then once you have restarted your computer, the newer BC Sans 2.0 can then be installed.

## **Reviewing/Proofreading Recommendations**

We always encourage there be a designed proofreader lined up (with experience in the language being typeset), to review and sign off on the various characters and diacritics being used. This can avoid circumstances where an incorrect character might have been accidentally used.

## **Additional Resources from FirstVoices:**

Brief factsheet about FirstVoices:  
<https://tinyurl.com/mr2acfjn>

Installing fonts and keyboards for Indigenous languages:  
<https://tinyurl.com/mshy447w>

Supporting Indigenous Names and Alphabets with Technology (1hr learning video, time: 1:12:24)  
<https://tinyurl.com/32r7542u>

FirstVoices news release for BC Sans 2.0:  
<https://tinyurl.com/y7k3c6yp>

## **For More Information:**

If you have feedback, questions, or concerns please email: [bcbgovlogos@gov.bc.ca](mailto:bcbgovlogos@gov.bc.ca)