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the subject of DFAIT and the Internet. This group periodically meets, reports on progress and updates the broad Internet Plan reflected in the Group's name.

The following four key projects make up the **Info-Internet Implementation Plan** and form part of the Department's long-term strategic planning in the information technology field:

1. DFAIT Web Service
2. Internal Web Service
3. SIGNET User Access to the Internet
4. Research Home Page

### 1. DFAIT Web Service

This is our Site on the Internet and is one of the Department's four Internet-related electronic information dissemination services, which also includes FaxLink and the InfoCentre Bulletin Board. The DFAIT Web Service is the most immediate for the Department, as well as the most advanced, high profile and public. What kind of information is on our DFAIT Web Service? The Service offers the Department a means of publishing information on the Internet in three core subject areas of interest to all users: **trade, foreign policy and culture**. To ensure these areas were represented on the Internet Service, a Home Page Advisory Group was established with representation from the International Business Development Branch (TFB), Policy Staff (CPB), the International Cultural Relations Bureau (ACD) and the Communications Bureau (BCD). Input from the Consular Operations and Emergency Services Division (JPO) was also sought to ensure that travel and consular information would be incorporated into the Service.

Via the Site, clients from Canada and around the world have instant access to non-sensitive, current

information on the Department's services and activities. This information is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week in both official languages.



### What are the benefits of the DFAIT Web Service to the Department?

Having a presence on the Internet reduces delays in the delivery of information, it reduces costs (publishing, printing, distribution), and it relieves staff from answering routine requests for information. Simply put, it represents a more **effective and strategic management of information**.

This Service also builds on the InfoCentre's (SKI) role as the public window into the Department and primary disseminator of departmental publications and information. The existing InfoCentre Bulletin Board (IBB) is now integrally linked to the Web Service so that clients accessing the Web Site also have access to the Bulletin Board's non trade-sensitive document bank.

### How do I access the information?

To access the DFAIT Web Service, clients require a computer, a modem, a telephone connection, an Internet account (usually purchased through an Internet service provider), Internet software and an ability to use a mouse. Once connected to the Internet, clients can input the address of our Site (<http://www/dfait-maeci.gc.ca>), and very quickly the DFAIT Web Service's Home Page will appear. This is the entry point into the Site and provides the Internet "surfer" with a choice of working in English or French. Following this, the next level consists of the Main Menu, which categorizes the sets of information that are available.

There are essentially two components to the DFAIT Web Service. The Web section, which includes the Main Menu and all subsequent Web pages, provides a graphically pleasing interface to the most frequently requested information products (contact lists, popular trade documents, etc.). Hypertext links embedded within these pages provide the user with immediate access at the click of a mouse to other elements of the document being browsed, other sections of this Web Site, or other useful Internet sites situated around the world. The Web Site allows the Department to include pictures (graphics), text, sound and video, thereby making the presentation of the information more professional and visually pleasing.

The Gopher\* section is where clients will find the bulk of the trade-related information, as this is the connection to the IBB document base. Clicking on the Gopher icon will produce the Main Menu of the IBB. Information provided for uploading to the InfoCentre, unless trade-sensitive, will automatically be added to the Gopher section of the DFAIT Web Service.

### Missions and the Internet

Several missions have requested guidance on how to proceed with setting up their own sites on the Internet in order to promote their programs and services and to disseminate information to their Canadian and international clients. In fact, five missions in the United States have already established an Internet presence. As can be expected, however, many issues need to be explored and assessed before any given mission can set up a site. These include resource implications, information maintenance and technical support requirements, as well as the federal government's

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