Get Updates on COVID-19

an email service from the Government of Canada that provides important information about the coronavirus outbreak
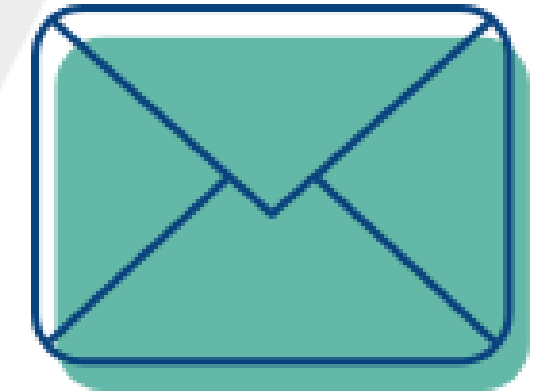
In March, the COVID-19 Canada.ca pages were receiving up to 13 million visits a day.

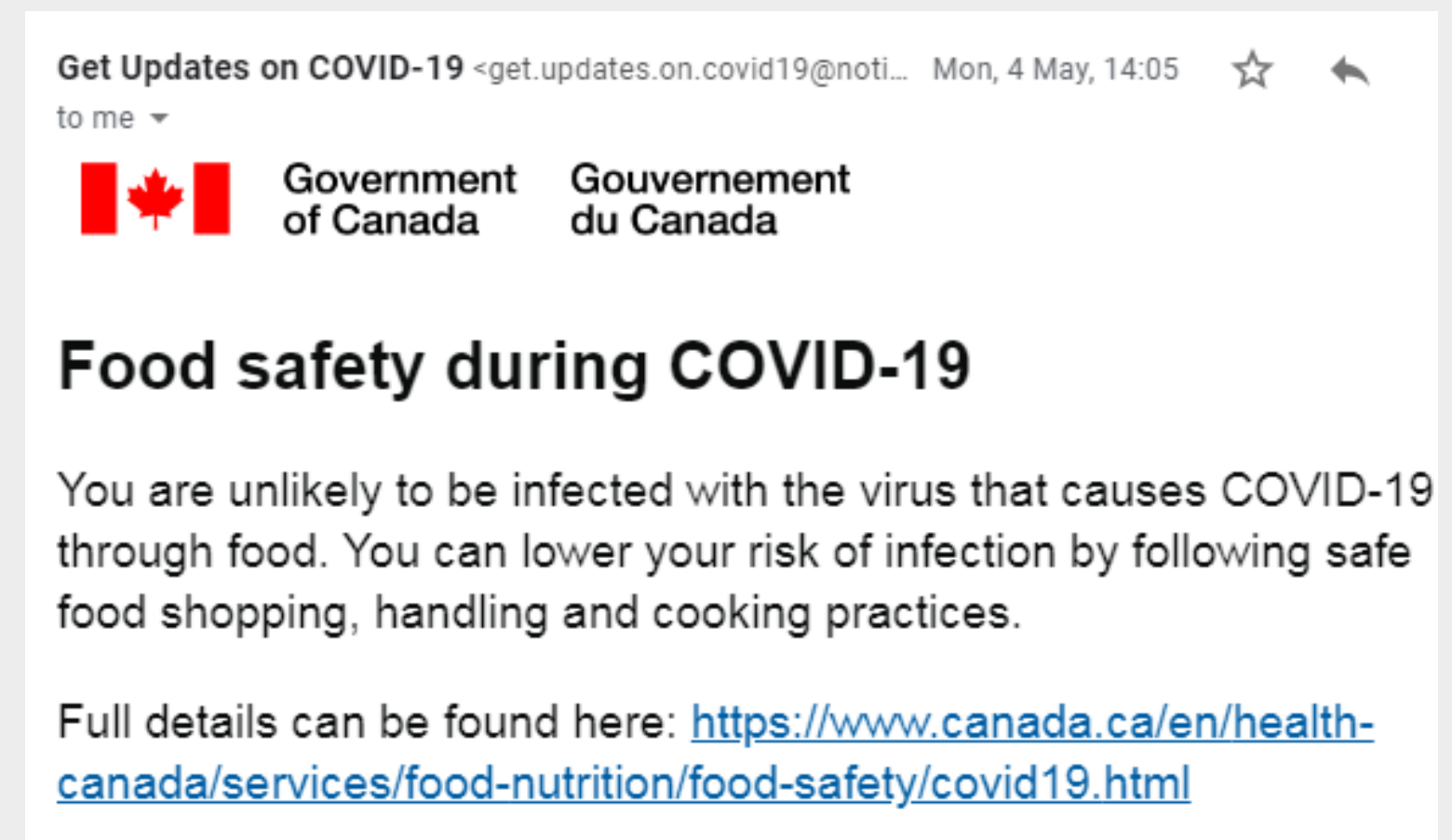With 90% of traffic directed from Google, people were searching for reliable information.

# Created a subscription email notification service

- **"Get Updates on COVID-19"** provides members of the public with up-to-date, trusted and credible information to manage their health-and well-being and combat misinformation.

- Notifications are designed to communicate clearly in a crisis and reflect the Canadian value of equity.

  - Available in both official languages, plain language, and stand alone.

  - Based on publicly available content.

  - Web-based - available anywhere, any time on any device.

Get Updates on COVID-19 <get.updates.on.covid19@noti... Mon, 4 May, 14:05
to me

Government of Canada   Gouvernement du Canada

Food safety during COVID-19

You are unlikely to be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 through food. You can lower your risk of infection by following safe food shopping, handling and cooking practices.

Full details can be found here: https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/food-nutrition/food-safety/covid19.html

Leveraged existing tools to launch the service in two weeks

- **Canadian Digital Service** provided the **Notify** platform based on open source code from GOV.UK.

- **Service Canada** used existing **canada.ca** infrastructure to securely create and manage the subscription-based service.

- **Health Canada** took on the role of service owner and collects subscriber information under its authorities.

- Launched a **minimum viable product** in two weeks, adding new features and refining the service over time.
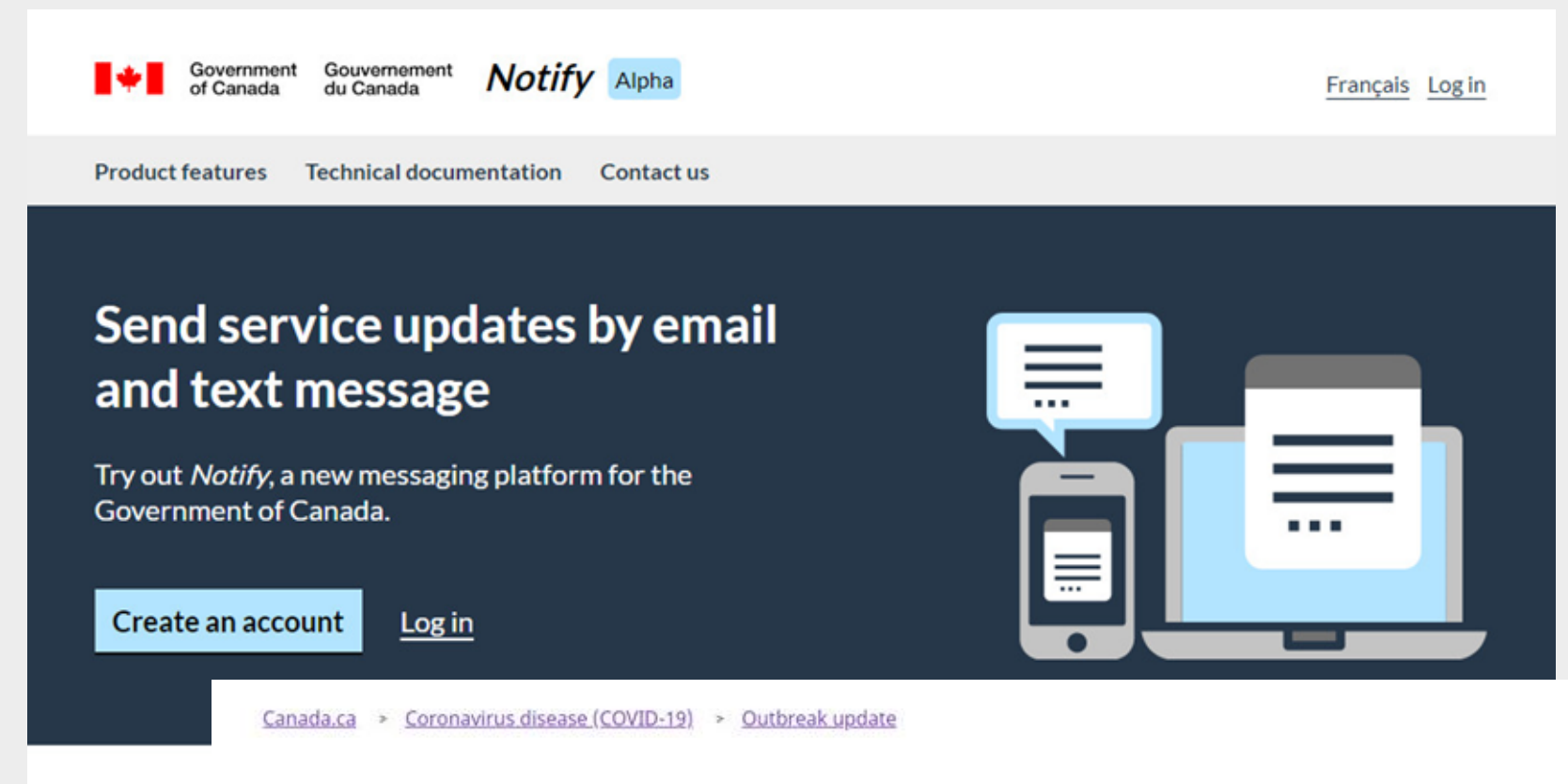
Data driven content focused on user-needs

Reliable & Trustworthy

- Apolitical
- Non-promotional
- Evidence-based

User-Driven

- Based on data analytics
- Agile and responsive
- Add new subjects of interest

Accessible

- Simple language
- Clear message
- Publicly available web content

Click through rates for the service average over 11%, with some notifications up to 30%.

Average government click through rates are just under 4%, with all industries averaging under 3%.*

Growing the service

Partnered with departments to promote the service across canada.ca and social media

- Sign up link posted on high traffic web pages

  ○ 40% of visits come from webpages that aren't Health Canada, highest coming from Canada Revenue Agency.

- Joint official announcement by Ministers of Health and Digital Government.

- Social media amplified by Government of Canada departments.

- Blog posts on Canadian Digital Service blog.
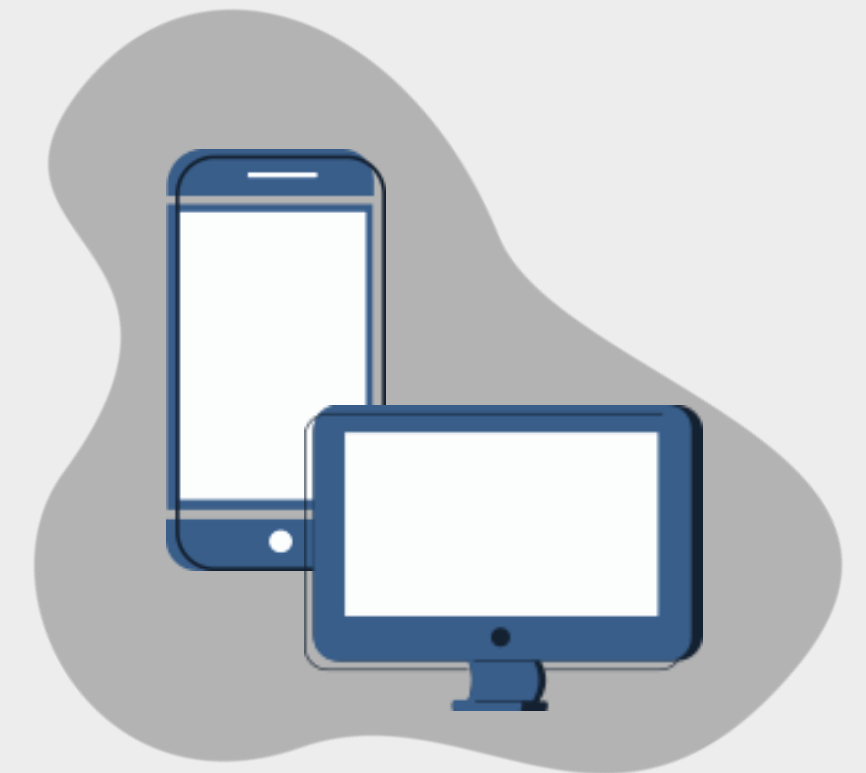
The Timeline

Built in flexibility and pursued incremental change
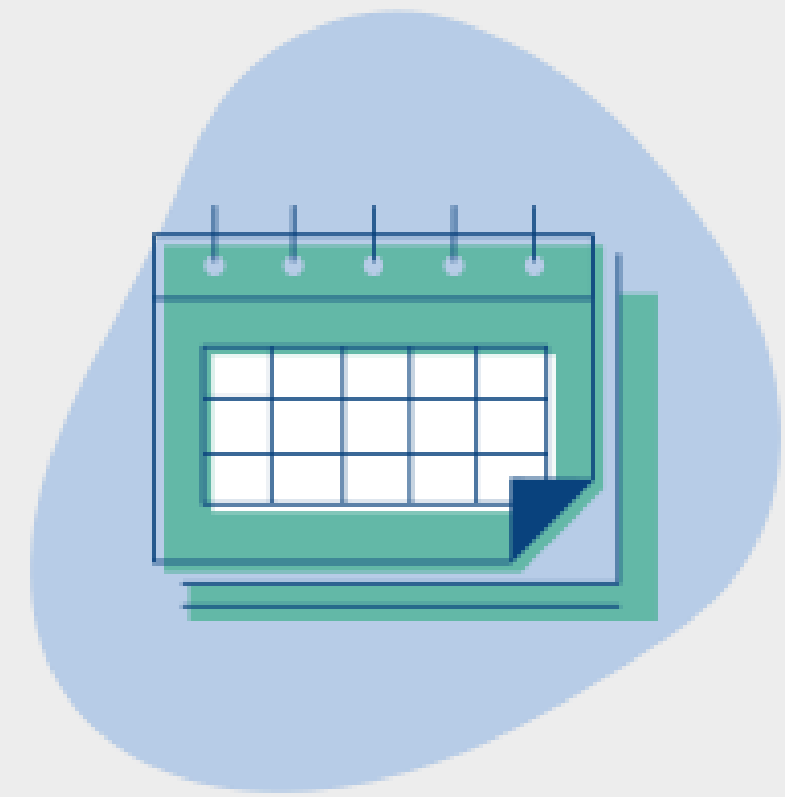
March 18
Digital Surge Team created

March 23
Sign up pages published

April 3
First notification sent

April 29
Ministerial Announcement

May 15
Feedback forms added

Ongoing
Continue to adapt as the pandemic evolves

Within 2 months, over 47,000 subscribers and 500,000 notifications

- The most popular notification themes provide **actionable advice** on how to:
  - Prevent COVID-19
  - Support yourself and others
  - Take care of those who are sick
- Top notification to date is how to safely shop, handle and prepare food with a click through rate of over 30%.
- The unsubscribe rate has decreased over the life of the service to 0.4% in the second half of May.

82% find the service **'informative' to 'very informative**

66% like that the service is a **trusted source of information**

73% signed up specifically to receive information from the **Government of Canada**

Collaboration is the key to success

- "Get Updates on COVID-19" was created based on global best practices and an open source platform.

- The multidisciplinary team included Health Canada, Service Canada, the Canadian Digital Service and Treasury Board Secretariat.

- Focus on people.

- Listen to the data.

- Keep it simple.

- Leverage existing tools and products.

- Bring partners in from the start.

- Empower your team.