



# Description of Canadian Rich Content Storefront Application Process

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### Document Version History

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1.0	25/05/06	Document release.	CWTA
1.1	10/12/07	Updated: Free Content and/or Discounted Promotional Content – Carriers allowing Top-40 / Non-branded content to be given away or distributed at a discount price.	CWTA
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## **Introduction**

### **Background**

This document details the steps a content provider and their aggregator must follow in order to request permission and appropriate technical connectivity to enable the delivery of rich content by 3<sup>rd</sup> party storefronts through to Canadian wireless subscribers. The carriers recognize, based upon the experience with Common Short Codes in Canada, that in most instances brands and content providers want to be able to deliver content to mobile subscribers regardless of the subscriber's carrier. Accordingly, the carriers have requested that the Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Association (CWTA) develop a means by which brands and content providers can work with existing messaging aggregators to request cross-carrier delivery of rich content. Each carrier individually determines whether it will opt-in to a proposed rich content program. The CWTA, through its Common Short Code Council administers the application process.

### **Outline**

This document describes the guidelines that have been established in order to enable and authorize the cross-carrier delivery of ringtones, images, and carrier-certified games to Canadian mobile phones from 3<sup>rd</sup> party storefronts. Carrier-certified games are considered those games which are fully tested and already available on Canadian carrier WAP decks. Rich content may be purchased by a user through (i) Short Code discovery, (ii) a phone's WAP browser, (iii) directly from a Web storefront or (iv) any combination of the above. Please note: any applicant wishing to achieve WAP deck placement with any or all carriers must contact the individual carrier(s) separately and the initiative outlined here in no way suggests that the wireless carriers will agree to WAP deck placement based on approval of your storefront application. Regardless of the selected model chosen to permit ordering, a Short Code is required to allow for a traceable path to track the delivery of the WAP Push (or equivalent) message to the handset.

The CWTA requires that a non-refundable deposit fee be received prior to the processing of any new rich content storefront application. If the new rich content application is approved, the deposit will apply to the first three months of lease fees effective the first day of launch on the first carrier network to go live with the service. Please note that the non-refundable deposit is due at the beginning of the application process. Applicants should refer to the document entitled Canadian Common Short Code Application Guidelines found at [www.txt.ca](http://www.txt.ca) for standard Short Code lease rates.

Currently, a limited number of messaging aggregators have the appropriate connectivity with the Canadian carriers to deliver rich content. The CWTA will make available to applicants a list of existing aggregators - those companies with relationships established comprised of a messaging aggregator, a WAP Push provider (as required), and a billing integration provider (as required). This list will be made available at [www.txt.ca](http://www.txt.ca). Please be aware that new rich content delivery connections are only assigned at the discretion of the individual carriers as they deem appropriate. New applicants will not typically be provided a direct connection while launching their first storefront and no commitments will be made by the carriers or the CWTA for future endeavors. The Canadian carriers expect that in most cases the messaging aggregator will be responsible for establishing/maintaining storefront contracts with the carriers and/or related designates.

The CWTA will maintain and make available the guidelines associated with cross-carrier delivery of rich content. The CWTA will receive applications that detail the content to be offered and that explain the scope and nature of the program offering that is proposed by the applicant. The CWTA will maintain a database of these authorizations and provide routine reports to the carriers.

## **General Process**

### **1. Application for Rich Content Cross-carrier Delivery**

Rich content applications may be filed by a brand, content provider or messaging aggregator on behalf of a client. The general Common Short Code application form is to be used and can be retrieved at [www.txt.ca](http://www.txt.ca). Your application is expected to identify all of the key components of the program, including the source, nature and form of the content to be delivered, pricing of the content, marketing and anticipated volumes.

It should be emphasized that a detailed marketing plan will be expected in addition to the information requested in the application (Note a). Additionally, the carriers will require that the applicant provide attestation that all required content rights are held prior to distribution (Note b). Applicants should be aware that subscription-only model pricing proposals may be permitted at the carriers discretion under certain conditions (Note c), white-label rich content storefront applications will not be approved (Note d), and the offering of any complimentary promotional content will require specific and separate approval by the carriers (Note e).

Adult content at this time is determined and labelled as such by each carrier using their own ranking criteria. There is no inferred permission to allow any form of adult content without specific permission from each carrier. If permission is granted to allow certain categories of mature content, this content must at all times follow all industry guidelines and it is the responsibility of the content provider to assure that this content is not delivered to minors. The CWTA Mobile Content Committee (MCC) is currently undertaking efforts to create an industry-wide approach to the treatment of adult content.

Completed applications and all supporting documents should be submitted via email to [shortcodes@cwta.ca](mailto:shortcodes@cwta.ca). Applicants must pay their deposit when beginning the application process at [www.txt.ca](http://www.txt.ca). Once the deposit has been processed and your application received, the review process will begin.

**Note a:** Program marketing details provided should, at a minimum, include (i) a list of all launch content and providers involved, (ii) the content pricing, (iii) any anticipated advertising - spend, types of media to be used, samples, (iv) summary of purchase flow/user interface including screen captures/mockups - from web, from WAP, from SMS, etc., (v) the plan for customer support - e-mail addresses, phone numbers - including the availability of a live person to take these requests with expected turnaround times.

**Note b:** Supporting documents provided by the applicant should include a letter, on official letterhead from each proposed content partner, specifically including the label(s) or brand(s) involved that clearly demonstrates the label(s) or brand(s) level of commitment to the proposed rich content storefront. Additionally, the carriers require the applicant to provide a written attestation that all applicable rights holders, publishers or collective societies [SOCAN, CSI (CMRRA/SODRAC Inc.), NRCC, etc.] have cleared the proposed content for distribution. It is expected that carriers will design individual contract terms to require that any content updated post-launch will only be done so with the required distribution rights in place and that carriers may reserve the right to audit those details at their discretion.

**Note c:** Subscription-only pricing models may be reviewed and considered by the Canadian carriers. The request to offer a subscription-only model must be stated in the Rich Content Short Code application and approved by the individual carriers. Under certain circumstances, the individual carriers may require the additional presence of a single purchase pay-per-use model to ensure a good user experience.

**Note d:** Each storefront application requires its own Short Code for carrier tracking purposes. Any approved storefront application must always be marketed under a single brand name such that the name of the company responsible for the service can easily be understood by a subscriber regardless of where it is advertised. For this reason, general use (also known as generic or white-label) rich content storefront applications will not be permitted at this time. See the section titled *General Use Rich Content Storefront Applications*.

**Note e:** Any applicant wishing to provide discounted or complimentary promotional content, whether branded or generic should refer to the section titled *Complimentary Content and/or Discounted Promotional Content* for specific details.

## **2. Review and Conditional Acceptance Stage**

The CWTA will process all new rich content applications and provide a means by which each carrier can separately review and decide whether they wish to participate in the proposed program. It is expected that the review period will extend no less than 2-3 weeks assuming the highest level of detail is provided in the submitted application. No guarantee of an expected maximum length of time for processing will be committed to and there is no implied guarantee of approval even where all requirements appear to have been met. Carriers individually determine whether they will opt-in to a proposed Common Short Code program.

The CWTA will subsequently provide a letter to inform the applicant that their application has been given a 'conditional acceptance' and will list each carrier that has granted such conditional acceptance. A letter of conditional acceptance can only be issued once two (2) or more competing carriers have provided such conditional acceptance. Under circumstances where only one (1) carrier provides a conditional acceptance, the applicant may request to have the program considered as a private carrier program however, it should be noted that a Common Short Code will not be available through the CWTA and the sole participating carrier will assign a Short Code from their limited private pool of codes thus eliminating many vanity Short Code number sets.

If an application is not granted conditional acceptance, the carriers, at their own discretion, will instruct the CWTA to either provide feedback that requests additional information or to provide the applicant with a letter of denial. Please recall that the Common Short Code application deposit fee is non-refundable.

## **3. Contract Agreement Stage**

Once the letter of conditional acceptance is issued to the applicant, it is incumbent upon the applicant to ensure that it either directly or through its messaging aggregator finalizes all required business terms separately with each carrier. A list of carrier contracting representatives and/or related designates can be requested only at this stage in the process by emailing your request to [shortcodes@cwta.ca](mailto:shortcodes@cwta.ca).

Where there are no pre-existing contracts and where an applicant agrees to the standard carrier contract, the applicant should expect that a minimum of 60-90 days will be required to complete this stage. If the required carrier agreements already exist, there may be an opportunity to shorten this stage of the process slightly where only minor amendments will sufficiently update the existing business terms.

It is anticipated that each carrier will require that the applicant establish relationships with carrier technology partner(s) in order to achieve network and/or billing connections. This may be achieved through the messaging aggregator or may necessitate that the applicant also arrange separate business terms with these partners.

Applicants can expect that carrier business terms will provide that any revenue settlement between the applicant and the carrier will be based upon routable and billable messages and payable upon collection from the subscriber. It is expected that customers should only be billed for successful downloads (regardless of whether the transaction occurs on a website or on a mobile handset). The carriers will expect messaging aggregators to take all necessary steps to prevent the fraudulent download of content. This may necessitate that an applicant integrate with a carrier's billing system (through one of their established billing partners) in order to determine whether pre-paid accounts have sufficient funds remaining to pay for the download.

Applicants should anticipate that any individual carrier may require monthly volume minimums to be included in their contract. The carriers will also require Intellectual Property (IP) indemnification for the nature of the content delivered. Applicants are also advised that each carrier will provide business terms dictating specific handsets that are to be supported at launch and expectations for the ongoing support of new handsets. Applicants should expect that no less than the top 15 handsets are expected to be supported as determined by each carrier separately and with the recognition that not all carriers offer the same handsets. Additionally, the type, quality and volume of available content must be consistent across all participating carriers and is the responsibility of the messaging aggregator regardless of the type of carrier network.

As part of the Contract Agreement Stage, carriers may request additional details with respect to the rights held by the applicant that permit the distribution of the content. These details will be handled by each carrier separately during this stage.

#### **4. Integration and Testing Stage**

After carrier agreements are in place, further time will be required in order to technically gain the ability to deliver rich content. It is anticipated that the Integration and Testing Stage for a completely new rich content delivery connection will take approximately 60-120 days from the date on which business terms are finalized until commercial launch.

The integration aspect of this stage will contain carrier/carrier designate milestones that must be met by the applicant to avoid delays. This is an estimated timeline that makes it incumbent upon the applicant to coordinate a testing schedule with each carrier and their billing integration partner. Quality Assurance (QA) issues will also be addressed – the applicant will be required to ensure that all content is tested to ensure it can be made available on each handset as required by the carriers and preclude the availability of content where mandatory quality levels cannot be met.

For applicants where integration has already been completed during a previous rich content application, there may be an opportunity to reduce the length of time this stage entails however, the carriers cannot make any guarantees to that affect.

## 5. Assignment of Provisioning Date for Short Code Activation

It is important to note that applicants who receive a letter of conditional acceptance are not officially permitted to launch their program until they request and receive an official CWTA Common Short Code letter of approval. The following steps must be completed to receive this letter.

It is incumbent on the messaging aggregator to contact the CWTA in writing (email to [shortcodes@cwta.ca](mailto:shortcodes@cwta.ca)) to provide a launch announcement a minimum of 14 days in advance of the targeted launch on the first carrier's network. The rich content applicant should identify in their email (a) the carrier(s) with whom they are prepared to launch and (b) the specific launch date that is targeted for launch on the first carrier network (minimum 14 days notice). Subsequent carriers may be activated following the official assignment of the Short Code lease as they are readied.

The CWTA will verify at its next earliest opportunity that the noted carriers are prepared to enter the final stage of the process. Upon confirmation, the CWTA will issue an official Common Short Code letter of approval for the rich content program giving final authorization for the lease and confirming the targeted activation date.

The targeted activation date registered in the letter of approval is the date on which the CWTA will apply the retained deposit to the first three (3) months of commercial activation. An applicant's full deposit will apply as of this registered date, regardless of further delay and it is incumbent on the applicant to continue to meet all carrier commercial/technical milestones leading up to the launch to avoid delay.

## 6. Commercial Availability

Common Short Codes are expected to be one of the key methods by which rich content is ordered, however, direct WAP content ordering (WAP deck excluded) and Web ordering may also be permitted under this model. All Short Codes assigned for rich content programs will be available at \$0 price point for content discovery and content tracking. All premium billing associated with the purchase of rich content will take place, at the carriers discretion, using either PSMS or another carrier specific method involving billing integration.

*Please note: The document entitled Canadian Common Short Code Application Guidelines found at [www.txt.ca](http://www.txt.ca) describes the customer-facing price points available to Common Short Code programs.*

Applicants are reminded that program authorizations are limited to the content identified in the application (while allowing for content updates of the same type). If the applicant wishes to modify or add to the types or categories of content to be delivered, a new application must be submitted and a new authorization received prior to commencing delivery of the modified or additional content. All authorizations granted by the CWTA will be for a fixed period of time (12 month maximum). Prior to the end of an applicant's lease, they may request through the CWTA that their application be considered for an extension. No guarantee of an extension past the 12 month maximum will be offered in advance. Lease extension is purely based on the program's performance as determined by the individual participating carriers. If a lease extension is granted, the CWTA will issue an official notification stating the new lease terms to the applicant.

## **Pricing Information**

### **Pay-per-use Model Pricing**

The CWTA Short Code Council will consider rich content storefront applications that propose a pay-per-use pricing model, described as a service that offers a single piece of content that is purchased for a single fee. Upon successful completion of the transaction, the service does not communicate subsequently with the purchaser.

### **Subscription Model Pricing**

The CWTA considers a rich content subscription to be any rich content program where the user, upon opt-in, incurs a recurring premium charge over time for rich content delivery or credits for future purchases.

Canadian carriers require that the applicant must follow a double opt-in procedure before finalizing a new subscription. It is mandatory that the double opt-in message content: (i) explicitly state that the service is a "subscription", (ii) identify the monthly cost and number of units to be received, (iii) include contact details for the program operator – either a toll-free number, or Website address and (iv) opt-out details including the mandatory keyword <STOP>.

Subscription periods are permitted to be one month in duration but can be recurring in nature provided the subscription service and costs are fully disclosed in all advertising and that the monthly reminder (anniversary) message detailed below is delivered. Daily subscription models will not be considered at this time.

Any subscriber who texts the mandatory supported keyword <STOP> to the rich content Short Code (or who requests termination via email, Web, or 1-800 number) must be immediately terminated from the subscription. No minimum subscription periods are permitted for any program. This means that the minimum charge at most is equal to the current billing period however pro-ration of incurred charges is not required. For example, applicants are not permitted to offer a monthly subscription service where a multi-month minimum is enforced upon subscribers. Additionally, it should be specifically noted that Canadian carriers expect that a monthly subscription service will be valid 30 days from the first billing event and that renewals will only be triggered on the anniversary date specific to each subscriber. For example, if a subscriber joins a rich content subscription service on the 15<sup>th</sup> of a month, their next renewal billing event would be triggered on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the following month assuming they did not provide notice of opt-out at anytime.

Applicants wishing to propose subscription model pricing should be aware that this type of pricing model is only permitted at the discretion of the Canadian carriers. Differentiation between the subscription and pay-per-use models can occur with the use of different keywords.

Applicants should also note that rich content subscription services are specifically denied any permission to offer free content of any form which precludes any opportunity to offer promotions such as offering the first piece of content free to mobile phone subscribers who join a rich content subscription service without specific prior authorization from the participating carriers

If a recurring billing event cannot be successfully completed within a maximum of 60 days following the anniversary date on which the first unsuccessful billing event occurred, the Canadian carriers expect that an applicant will, by default, automatically cancel the user's subscription no later than this time. This standard guideline may vary by carrier.

Applicants should recognize that the CWTA Code of Conduct for Common Short Codes must be adhered and that all other CWTA mandatory keywords must still be supported as per the

Canadian Common Short Code Application Guidelines. It is mandatory that each and every time the Short Code is promoted it is obvious and explicitly stated in the call to action that the service is a subscription service and the cost associated with the service.

## **Other Program Information**

### **General Use Rich Content Storefront Applications**

Rich content storefront applications that are requested for use with various brands are considered general use (also generic or white-label) and will not be considered for approval at this time. Only applications that are specifically associated with a single core brand will be reviewed at the discretion of the carriers.

### **Complimentary Content and/or Discounted Promotional Content**

The CWTA often receives inquiries regarding the opportunity for brands and or messaging aggregators to operate promotions whereby complimentary rich content is offered to End Users. The Canadian carriers may permit branded content to be distributed under the same storefront model detailed in this application. For further information about offering Complimentary Promotional Content please contact [shortcodes@cwta.ca](mailto:shortcodes@cwta.ca) or phone 613-233-4888 and ask to speak with a member of CWTA's Common Short Code team.

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for more information on cross-carrier rich content delivery, please visit [www.txt.ca](http://www.txt.ca) or refer to the FAQ section that follows. You may also contact the CWTA Short Code department at [shortcodes@cwta.ca](mailto:shortcodes@cwta.ca) or at (613) 233-4888.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. Why would I use a Short Code in conjunction with a rich content storefront?**

Short Codes can be used in the discovery phase of your sale. By advertising the Short Code number with the content that is available (with clearly displayed cost information) in various media, you allow your user to directly order the content from their handset without requiring them to navigate their WAP browser. Short Code discovery allows your purchaser to carry out the call to action wherever they are. Calls to action are often placed in TV or radio advertisements, in magazines, online, etc.

Example: The host of a weekly television program on a dedicated music channel with an existing storefront is interviewing a musical guest and offers viewers an opportunity to text the band's name to the music channel's Short Code to order the band's newest single for the cost of \$3.50 CAD plus applicable carrier download fees.

### **2. Does this work on all mobile phone carriers?**

Currently Common Short Codes can be activated on all mobile phone networks however rich content delivery is also available on all mobile phone networks.

### **3. What Common Short Codes are available?**

An applicant may select their Common Short Code preference from a pool of numbers that are 5- and 6-digits in length. Please note that 4-digit codes and all codes beginning with a leading '4' or '0' are not permitted at this time. Short Codes are leased on a first-come, first-serve basis and Short Codes cannot be reserved in advance. Upon receipt by CWTA of a completed application accompanied by a valid deposit, the CWTA will tentatively assign your application your first available requested Short Code number.

### **4. How much do Common Short Codes cost to lease?**

A non-refundable deposit equal to the first three months of service following activation on the first carrier network to go live with the service is to be submitted when beginning the application process. New applications cannot be considered until the deposit is paid in full. Each consecutively leased month following the deposit period will be invoiced by the CWTA under separate cover on a monthly basis. For current Short Code lease fees, please refer to document entitled Canadian Common Short Code Application Guidelines found at [www.txt.ca](http://www.txt.ca).

### **5. Can a Common Long Code be utilized instead of a Short Code?**

In certain situations there may be an opportunity for an applicant to utilize a Common Long Code in lieu of a Common Short Code. Long Codes may be permitted under circumstances where a new rich content application does not require the code be used for content discovery. Long Codes are assigned to applicants in consecutive order from a specific pool and there is no possibility to request a specific Long Code number. Long Codes will be used by carriers to track content that is being sold either through a user's WAP browser or online. For more information on Common Long Codes and pricing, please refer to the Canadian Common Short Code Application Guidelines document found at [www.txt.ca](http://www.txt.ca).

## **6. How is premium billing for content sold using this process handled?**

All Short Codes assigned for rich content programs will be set at a \$0 price point for content discovery. These Short Codes are utilized by the applicant to enable content discovery and by the carriers for content tracking. All premium billing associated with the purchase of rich content will take place using carrier specific methods; PSMS, direct billing integration, or other. Proposed consumer pricing for content to be offered must be disclosed at the time of application. Revenue-sharing arrangements will be set out in the business terms that the applicant must negotiate separately with each carrier or may be dictated by the applicant's messaging aggregator's existing carrier agreements. Settlement typically occurs once revenues have been collected by a carrier. The CWTA cannot provide any information about these arrangements.

## **7. Do the Canadian carriers permit subscription-based premium pricing models?**

Yes. Under certain circumstances, the Canadian carriers may approve an application that proposes a subscription model pricing format. For complete details, applicants should refer to the section titled *Subscription Model Pricing* in the Description of Canadian Rich Content Storefront Application Process document available at [www.txt.ca](http://www.txt.ca).

## **8. How long can a text message be?**

The maximum length of a cross-carrier text message in Canada, including spaces, is limited to 136 characters.

## **9. Can I charge any price I see fit for the content I am selling?**

Yes. You must set the selling price for the content that you wish to offer. Applicants should note that separate commercial agreements which include terms of pricing are required with each participating carrier. Additionally, individual carriers may not be able to support particular price points for technical reasons.

## **10. What are the requirements to obtain rich content delivery capability?**

I) Short Codes will only be assigned to specific program offerings so you must provide detailed information on the program that you wish to offer to mobile phone customers, the specific number of Short Code(s) required for the program, the desired pricing of the application, a full marketing plan, etc. Please see refer to the Description of Canadian Rich Content Storefront Application Process document available at [www.txt.ca](http://www.txt.ca) for more detailed information. The Canadian carriers retain the right to not participate in any program.

II) Your program will require SMPP (Short Message Peer-to-Peer Protocol) connectivity with the carriers either directly or indirectly. Your program will require WAP Push delivery capability or equivalent delivery mechanism. Your program will require integration with a billing partner specific to each carrier. The CWTA has a list of companies that can assist you in forming these connections posted on [www.txt.ca](http://www.txt.ca).

III) You must gain acceptance by two or more competing Canadian carriers that agree to participate in your program offering.

IV) For the Short Code to be provisioned and permission for rich content to be delivered to a wireless network, you must conclude a satisfactory bilateral commercial agreement with each wireless carrier and/or related designates as required or utilize your messaging aggregator's existing agreements.

V) A non-refundable deposit equal to the first three months of lease fees is required at the beginning of the application process.

VI) You must adhere to the industry's code of conduct and any other industry guidelines that set out common industry norms relating to the delivery and/or sale of rich content and the use of Common Short Codes.

### **11. What are the standard lead times for the launching of new programs?**

It is recommended that completely new applications involving messaging aggregators that do not have connectivity to the carriers, expect no less than 6 months from the time the application is approved until launch of the program. Please be aware that Canadian carriers will not commit to a specific launch date at anytime during the application process. The activation of a rich content program has many variables that make it impossible to commit to a particular activation date.

Applications involving messaging aggregators that already have existing connectivity and agreements with carriers are advised that the time required to launch a new rich content program may be shortened however the carriers cannot commit to any specific activation date.

### **12. If I am approved for rich content delivery, whether using a common Short Code for discovery or not - are there rules I must follow?**

Yes. You must to provide information about the content you wish to offer customers in the application that is reviewed by carriers. You must follow the industry's code of conduct relating to Common Short Codes as well as all industry guidelines either currently in place or developed in future that set out acceptable industry norms for the treatment of rich content and how it is distributed. All Canadian laws and regulations are to be followed and are the responsibility of the applicant at all times.

### **13. How long do I have the Short Code?**

The Short Code will be assigned for a fixed period of time. The maximum length of time a Short Code associated with a new rich content application will be assigned for is 12 months. Prior to the expiration of the 12 month term, the original applicant may re-apply to have the same code and rich content program approval extended. Extensions will be granted at the discretion of the carriers and will typically be based on the performance of the program during its first 12 months of activity.

### **14. How do I obtain a more information about launching a rich content offering in Canada?**

Contact the Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Association (CWTA). The CWTA has been chosen to make Common Short Codes available for use in conjunction with rich content programs on behalf of the Canadian carriers. The CWTA also maintains a current inventory of Short Codes in-use and is the principal point of contact to parties interested in obtaining information about

launching a rich content delivery offering.

For more information please send an email to [shortcodes@cwta.ca](mailto:shortcodes@cwta.ca) or phone 613-233-4888 and ask to speak with the Common Short Code department.