

## CDC Widgets

### Purpose

This document has been designed to provide guidance to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) employees and contractors on the process for creating and updating widgets, requirements for planning and design, and best practices for widget development.

CDC encourages the strategic use of widgets to effectively and inexpensively reach individuals and partners with timely CDC health and safety information.

### Background

A widget is an application that displays featured content directly on a web page. This content can be embedded in personalized home pages, blogs, and other sites. Once the widget is added to a site, no technical maintenance is required. The content is updated automatically on the host site whenever changes are made by the CDC developer, allowing users to have up-to-date CDC health and safety content with minimal effort.

Widgets are different than [buttons or badges](#). Widgets contain dynamic content that is updated regularly. Widgets are usually topic- or campaign-based and are not recommended for short-term communications activities. Buttons and badges are often used to promote campaigns and short health messages to both partner organizations and individuals. A button is a graphic element used to promote campaigns and causes online, and includes static images with a link back to a website. A badge is a graphic that can be posted on an individual's social network profile or personal blog to show support for or affiliation with a cause or issue.

### Widget Types

The Office of the Associate Director for Communication Science, Division of News and Electronic Media, Electronic Media Branch (EMB) has developed a series of widget templates to assist programs in creating widgets at no cost to the program. Widget template descriptions are listed below. More information and examples of the available CDC widget templates can be found at <http://intranet.cdc.gov/cdcweb/widgets.html> (not accessible outside of CDC network).

- **Image with Messages:** This widget type features images with static content that are updated daily or weekly with new images. This widget includes a standard “previous” and “next” button that allows the user to browse through all available images in the feed. The content links to a web page with additional information about the topic.
- **Single RSS:** This type of widget pulls content from a single RSS feed. The content includes the title and a truncated version of the first sentence of each entry with a link to the full content.
- **Double RSS:** This type of widget pulls content from two separate RSS feeds. The content includes the title and a truncated version of the first sentence of each entry with a link to the full content.
- **Triple RSS:** This type of widget pulls content from three separate RSS feeds. The content includes the title and a truncated version of the first sentence of each entry with a link to the full content.

- Image with Messages and Single RSS Feed: This widget type features images with static content messages that are updated daily or weekly with new images, and has a separate tab for content from a RSS feed. The RSS feed content links to a Web page with additional information about the topic.
- Quiz: This type of widget is a short, five to 10 question quiz on a CDC health or safety topic.
- Image with Messages, Single RSS and Quiz: This widget type features images with static content that are updated daily or weekly with new images, a separate tab for content from a RSS feed, and a separate tab for a five to 10 question quiz.
- Video Player: The video player widget allows users to play short captioned videos. Playlist and multi-language support functionality are available.

## Communications Strategy

Widgets and other social media tools are intended to be part of a larger integrated health communications program or project developed under the leadership of the Associate Director of Communication Science (ADCS) in the Health Communication Science Office (HCSO) of CDC's National Centers, Institutes, and Offices.

## Clearance

Widgets must be cleared through the clearance channels determined by your HCSO.

## Consultation

The Electronic Media Branch (EMB) provides consultation on the planning and development of widgets and other social media tools. Please contact [SocialMedia@cdc.gov](mailto:SocialMedia@cdc.gov) for assistance.

## Best Practices

Before developing a widget, programs should consider the following best practices:

1. Clearly Define Objectives: Do you want to highlight content, spark action, or encourage awareness of an issue? Clearly defined objectives for a widget project can help in creating widget text and images. Clearly defined objectives will also help you determine the best type of widget to design to meet your communication goals.
2. Know Your Target Audience(s): As with any communications activity, it is important to define your intended target audience(s) in order to develop and communicate messages and graphics that resonate with your audience and prompt them to take action.
3. Create Widgets with A Longer Shelf Life: It is best to create evergreen widgets so that content remains relevant over time. For example, instead of creating a widget for a specific event, we recommend creating either a topic-based image with messages or a quiz widget. As a rule of thumb, each widget should be designed for a minimum of a 6-12 month time span.
4. Consider Widget Design and Usability: Certain design aspects may be important to include, especially if the widget is part of a series or a component of a larger program that has a

designated graphic identity. To follow HHS and CDC guidelines for good design and usability, please see:

[http://intranet.cdc.gov/cdcweb/reqs\\_bestpractices/guidance\\_standards.htm](http://intranet.cdc.gov/cdcweb/reqs_bestpractices/guidance_standards.htm)

(Link not accessible outside the CDC network).

5. **Links:** All widgets should include a URL to direct the user to content on the CDC.gov website.
6. **Branding:** All widget templates are branded with the CDC and HHS logos. Co-branding and the use of additional logos may also be incorporated. Please refer to the CDC Brand Identity standards for additional information: <http://brandidentitystandards.cdc.gov/>.
7. **Share Button:** All widgets should have a share button with the embed code that includes a fail-safe JPG and a link to alternate widget content on CDC.gov. It is recommended that the share button with the embed code opens within the widget so that users do not have to leave the site on which they view the widget to access the embed code.
8. **Widget Info Tab:**
  - There are three required links on all CDC.gov widgets:
    - [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov),
    - [www.cdc.gov/widgets](http://www.cdc.gov/widgets), and
    - <http://m.cdc.gov>.
  - Additional content includes 1-2 sentences of general information about the topic, a maximum of 60-characters, and one relevant web link for users to click for more information.
9. **Widget Disclaimer Tab:** All content on the disclaimer tab is required and cannot be edited or appended in any manner.
10. **508 Compliance:** The widget templates are compliant with Section 508 guidelines. However, all non-template widgets must pass a 508 compliance test completed by EMB.
11. **Updating Widget Content:** All widgets must be reviewed annually for content accuracy, per HHS content standards. Each program is responsible for updating their own widget content.
12. **Translation:** Widgets can be developed in other languages when links to appropriate CDC.gov content in that language are available. For additional information on content translation, please refer to <http://intranet.cdc.gov/od/oc/subWeb/multiLingual/defaultML.htm>. (Link not accessible outside the CDC network).
13. **Promotion:** Promoting CDC widgets is strongly recommended as a part of your communication activities and planning. Programs have promoted widgets in the following ways:
  - Include the widget in the CDC widget gallery
  - Include the widget on your CDC homepage

- Embed the widget on high-profile topic-specific web pages
- Include a thumbnail and link in campaign materials
- Send content-specific GovDelivery email updates
- Send emails to partners and grantees
- Schedule promotional messages on CDC social media profiles

14. **Evaluation:** Evaluation should be an integral component of all social media activities, including widgets. Evaluation approaches may include reviewing metrics, identifying lessons learned, and determining whether the social media effort successfully met project communication goals.

Omniure SiteCatalyst can be used to determine the number of click-throughs from a widget to CDC.gov. Automated metrics reports can be established for programs that use the CDC widget templates. Please visit the statistics and metrics intranet site (<http://intranet.cdc.gov/cdcweb/statsmetrics.htm>, link not available outside CDC network) for more information.

## How to Create a CDC Widget

1. **Select A Widget:** Review the widget template page found at <http://intranet.cdc.gov/cdcweb/widgets.html> (link not accessible outside the CDC network) and determine the type of widget you would like to create.
2. **Develop and Clear Widget Concept and Content:** Widgets should be cleared through your Center/Institute/Office's communications clearance channels.
3. **Create The Widget:** The widget template page (<http://intranet.cdc.gov/cdcweb/widgets.html>, link not available outside CDC network) provides CDC developers with the necessary information to create custom widgets based on CDC.gov widget framework. A .zip archive for each widget includes all the files required to create a widget. While the widgets are flash-based (.SWF files), no flash programming is required. An XML file controls all customization. For widget template technical questions, please contact [IMTech@cdc.gov](mailto:IMTech@cdc.gov).
4. **Create Widget Images:** [OPTIONAL] If you do not have images already available for the widget, work with the OADC Division of Communication Services (DCS) to complete a Create-It service request form - [http://intra-apps.cdc.gov/createit/createit2/request\\_job\\_start.asp?departmentId=1](http://intra-apps.cdc.gov/createit/createit2/request_job_start.asp?departmentId=1) (link not available outside CDC network). Select "Web Ready Graphics" from the left navigation to request the development of widget images. Images should be 150 pixels x 190 pixels, and 72 dpi in JPG format to correctly display in the widget.
5. **Verify 508 Compliance:** Tests for Section 508 compliance should be completed by the Center/Institute/Office before the widget is live. Please visit <http://intranet.cdc.gov/cdcweb/usability/508/contacts.html> (link not available outside CDC network) to determine the appropriate Section 508 contact.

6. Post the Widget to the CDC.gov Widget Gallery: CDC.gov features all available CDC widgets at <http://www.cdc.gov/widgets/>. All widgets displayed on the CDC.gov widget gallery must meet the best practices set forth in this document and must be cleared through the clearance channels developed by your HCSO. To display your widget in the CDC.gov widget gallery, please complete the CDC Widget Checklist (Appendix A) and send the information to [socialmedia@cdc.gov](mailto:socialmedia@cdc.gov).
7. Track Widget Metrics: Omniture SiteCatalyst can be used to determine the number of click-throughs from a widget to CDC.gov. Automated metrics reports can be established for programs that use the CDC widget templates. Please visit the statistics and metrics intranet site (<http://intranet.cdc.gov/cdcweb/statsmetrics.htm>, link not available outside CDC network) for more information.
8. Establish Process for Updating Widget Content: Reviewing and refreshing content is recommended every 6-12 months, and HHS requires content review on an annual basis. Any changes to your widget should follow the clearance procedures established by your HCSO.

## Appendix A: CDC Widget Checklist

The following information is needed to add your widget to the widget gallery. When completed, please send this information to [socialmedia@cdc.gov](mailto:socialmedia@cdc.gov).

Name:

Phone Number:

Email: CIO:

- Widget Type:
- Widget Title (40 characters max):
- Widget Description (500 characters max);

Please visit the CDC widget gallery at [www.cdc.gov/widgets](http://www.cdc.gov/widgets) for example content.