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Ontario Privacy Commissioner hails major advancement
in a privacy-enhancing technology for voice biometrics

TORONTO – Today, the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario, in conjunction with PerSay (Israel, www.persay.com) and Philips priv-ID (Netherlands, www.priv-id.com), is announcing a major advancement forward in developing a privacy-enhancing technology for biometrics – the successful combination of Biometric Encryption (BE) with voice biometrics.

Dr. Ann Cavoukian, Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario, first became aware of Philips' work in biometric encryption in 2006 when she learned of their priv-ID biometric encryption system. Shortly after the release of her paper, *Biometric Encryption: A Positive-Sum Technology that Achieves Strong Authentication, Security AND Privacy,* she was contacted by Bell Canada regarding PerSay's work in voice biometrics. Believing that Philips' and PerSay's respective technologies held high promise for protecting privacy while improving consumer services, she urged the two companies to work together in trying to integrate biometric encryption with voice biometrics. Several months later, the results were highly successful. "I am truly grateful to Bell Canada for bringing my attention to PerSay's work – their initiative helped to make the application of biometric encryption to voice biometrics a reality," says the Commissioner.

"What is newsworthy and particularly gratifying is that the performance results are exceedingly positive. When Philips priv-ID applied their BE technology to PerSay's voice biometrics, the performance of the combined technologies remained at a world class level with respect to accuracy, *plus* invaluable privacy and security benefits," says Commissioner Cavoukian. "As we speak, PerSay is adding a new BE engine to their line of products."

One of the applications being explored for this technology involves remote voice authentication. In standard remote authentication architectures, the customer's voiceprint collected at the remote terminal, is then sent to the processing server. The processing server compares the voiceprint with the stored template/biometric and sends the result back to the terminal. With BE, the process can be turned around where the biometrically encrypted template is sent to the terminal instead of sending the voiceprint to the server. The comparison is then done at the terminal, with no audio being sent over the network. Further, the databases created for different applications cannot be linked together.

Commissioner Cavoukian is especially supportive of such a solution because it allows for enhanced security and privacy. The Commissioner believes, "We are on the cusp of making a truly positive-sum solution a reality through the use of voice biometrics – an approach that enhances both the privacy and security of a biometric, in this case, your voice, which happens to be a unique and unobtrusive form of identification. I am absolutely delighted with this development."

Media Contact: Jason Papadimos - Communications Officer - 416-326-8828 - jason.papadimos@ipc.on.ca