



Information and Privacy
Commissioner/Ontario
Commissaire à l'information
et à la protection de la vie privée/Ontario

News release

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Dr. Cavoukian reappointed as Information and Privacy Commissioner for an unprecedented third term: Blazes the trail with new priorities

TORONTO – Dr. Ann Cavoukian was reappointed today by the Ontario Legislature for an unprecedented third term as the province's Information and Privacy Commissioner.

“I would like to sincerely thank members of the Legislature for their strong support,” said the Commissioner. “I feel very honoured to serve as Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner.”

“Five years ago, when I was reappointed to my second term, I said we were in the midst of profound change in the areas of privacy protection and access to government information. But now the pace has grown even faster. Technology – which has resulted in many challenges – can also be tapped for innovative solutions, particularly on the privacy front. I will continue to emphasize the need to embed privacy directly into IT, at the earliest developmental stage. I look forward to the challenge – I have so many new ideas that I wish to pursue.”

The Commissioner will be focusing on *Privacy by Design*, a concept she first developed in the 90s, when she began her campaign to enlist the support of technology to **protect** privacy, rather than encroach upon it.

What does *Privacy by Design* mean? It means being proactive. It means that, ideally, privacy protection comes before consideration of policy or regulatory measures. The latter, by their nature, tend to be reactive, coming after-the-fact, in most cases. “We need to build-in the solutions up front, not after-the-fact, when privacy breaches occur,” said the Commissioner.

The Commissioner has consistently argued that privacy is part of the essential foundation upon which free and democratic societies are built. The right to control the collection, use and disclosure of information about ourselves is the right upon which our other freedoms rest. We must remember the bigger picture involving freedom and liberty. We can never take privacy for granted – *Privacy by Design* will ensure that privacy will not be an after-thought, or something to consider only if convenient.

In addition, said the Commissioner, “I will be working with all stakeholders in the health care field to help bring about effective and privacy-protective electronic health record systems.” Electronic systems of personal health information offer many benefits to both practitioners and patients – including improved clinical decision-making, leading to more effective diagnosis and treatment – but the potential risks to privacy must be minimized during the design and implementation of these systems.



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Promoting transparency and accountability will also form a key part of her new term. “I will be strongly urging both provincial and local governments to be very proactive in developing **automatic disclosure** programs under which general records – ranging from council agendas to expense accounts – are routinely posted to government websites,” said the Commissioner.

The Information and Privacy Commissioner is appointed by and reports to the Ontario Legislative Assembly, and is independent of the government of the day. The Commissioner's mandate includes overseeing the access and privacy provisions of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, as well as the *Personal Health Information Protection Act*, which applies to both public and private sector health information custodians, in addition to educating the public about access and privacy issues.

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