



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

News Release

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Smart Grid must be built with privacy embedded as the default – Make it the first piece: Commissioner Cavoukian

TORONTO – Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners from around the world will be told on Monday that the emerging Smart Grid has created a tipping point – one that will either see privacy enhanced or eroded, in profound and perhaps irreversible ways.

This message will be delivered by Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner, Dr. Ann Cavoukian, who has organized a special "*Power Morning*" seminar, Monday, October 25, in Jerusalem. The seminar – on how best to address the potential privacy implications of the Smart Grid – is being held just prior to the 32nd International Conference of Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners.

"Around the world, governments and electrical companies, using technologies like Smart Meters and smart appliances, are engaging in efforts to modernize the electrical grid in order to become more efficient and meet ever-growing demand," said Commissioner Cavoukian.

"But left unchecked, the Smart Grid has the potential to erode privacy, as new components will be able to collect far more granular data about electricity consumption in the household – from the time you go to bed, to when you shower, to when you eat, to whether you have an electronic security system."

Delegates at the *Power Morning* will hear about Ontario's positive experience, where the Commissioner is working with the major utilities to ensure that user privacy is proactively embedded into Smart Grid technologies and infrastructure right from the outset – a concept she calls "*Privacy by Design*." The benefits of this proactive, collaborative approach will be supported by video messages from Premier Dalton McGuinty and Executives from Hydro One. Commissioner Cavoukian will outline practical steps that international privacy regulators can take in their own jurisdictions, and urge fellow Commissioners to join her in educating and working with utilities to embed the principles of *Privacy by Design* directly into the nascent Smart Grid.

The tipping point is now, stressed Commissioner Cavoukian. "*Now* is the time to engage in this issue, while the Smart Grid is still in its infancy, and while utilities are keen to maintain the existing base of consumer trust that will be essential to the success of the future Smart Grid."

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