



Information and Privacy  
Commissioner/Ontario

Commissaire à l'information  
et à la protection de la vie privée/Ontario

News Release

September 20, 2012

## Open Data, Big Data, Yes ... Personal Data, No!

### Commissioner Cavoukian urges public institutions to join global Open Data movement

**TORONTO, September 20, 2012** – Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner, Dr. Ann Cavoukian, is calling on public institutions to take advantage of emerging technologies to make data available to the public, academics, researchers, and industry, for use in new and unanticipated ways. As long as personally identifiable information is protected from such disclosure, the open data movement bodes very well for introducing greater transparency to government institutions.

The global movement towards Open Data makes vast amounts of machine-readable data freely available by way of portals, metadata, and search tools. It is one of the truest embodiments of Commissioner Cavoukian's concept of [Access by Design](#), by which public institutions proactively release information as part of an automatic process, fostering more transparency and accountability in government.

The Commissioner is hosting an information session on Open Data today with the Toronto Board of Trade to mark [Right to Know Week 2012](#), celebrated by freedom of information organizations in over 40 nations worldwide.

"Unless there is sufficient reason to the contrary, government-held data (not personally identifiable) should be free and easily accessible – by default," said Commissioner Cavoukian. "Without access to information held by government institutions, citizens cannot participate meaningfully in the democratic process and hold politicians and bureaucrats accountable to the people they serve."

Advances in IT have driven an explosive growth in the number of databases holding massive amounts of information. But all that is needed is a clear demarcation of personally identifiable records from general records containing no personal information.

"The goals of openness and privacy may both be achieved. Open Data is already being used effectively by municipalities in Ontario to improve service delivery, increase transparency, and raise levels of accountability and citizen trust in government, while strongly protecting privacy. The [City of Toronto portal](#) is an excellent example," added the Commissioner.

In her annual report, Commissioner Cavoukian noted that Ontario still lacks a centralized data portal, and she called on the province to establish its own Open Data portal to "continue to demonstrate that we are a world leader in access to information."



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**Event Details:**

**Date & Time:** Thursday, September 20, 2012, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

**Location:** One King Street West Hotel  
Grand Banking Hall  
1 King Street West  
Toronto, Ontario

*Please note the event is not being held at the Toronto Board of Trade Ballroom.*

**Presenters include:**

- **Dr. Ann Cavoukian**, Information and Privacy Commissioner, Ontario, Canada
- **Brian Beamish**, Assistant Commissioner, Access
- **Dave Wallace**, Chief Information Officer, University of Waterloo
- **Jury Konga**, Principal, eGovFutures Group
- **Daphne Gaby Donaldson**, Executive Director, Corporate Information Management Services, City of Toronto
- **Samantha Liscio**, Corporate Chief Strategist, Ontario Public Service

Members of the public wishing to attend can register at [www.bot.com/events](http://www.bot.com/events).

Media planning to attend, please register with the contact below.

**About the IPC**

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. The Commissioner's mandate also includes helping to educate the public about access and privacy issues.

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