

## New Privacy Enhancing Technology seeks to preserve web anonymity and privacy

Winner of 2013 PET Award recognized for the development of “Anonymouth” software

Toronto, ON (July 11, 2013) – Ontario’s Information and Privacy Commissioner, Dr. Ann Cavoukian, presented the 2013 Award for Outstanding Research in Privacy Enhancing Technologies (PET) Award via video yesterday at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana.

Dr. Cavoukian and Microsoft co-sponsor of the award, which was created in 2003 to encourage the development of technology to protect privacy, rather than to threaten it. The winners are selected by a global panel of leading technology researchers.

The winning paper “[\*Adversarial Stylometry: Circumventing Authorship Recognition to Preserve Privacy and Anonymity\*](#)” is based on research conducted by Sadia Afroz, Michael Brennan, and Rachel Greenstadt. The paper examined methods for defeating stylometry which has recently been revolutionized online with advances in computer algorithms. The privacy concern which arise from stylometry is that it can be used to reliably link anonymous or pseudonymous text to identifiable individuals. In order to lessen these risks, the authors developed software called “Anonymouth” that assists users by suggesting modifications to their text defeat stylometry.

### Quotes:

“It is with great pleasure that I applaud the work of these highly-skilled innovators who have responded to a significant threat to privacy with an amazing solution offering greater online anonymity.”

Dr. Ann Cavoukian  
Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario

“Microsoft is pleased to sponsor the Award for Outstanding Research in Privacy Enhancing Technologies. The privacy community’s ground-breaking research helps build greater trust in technology.”

Brendon Lynch  
Chief Privacy Officer, Microsoft Corporation

For more information about the privacy technology awards, please visit <http://petsymposium.org/award/>.

### About the Information and Privacy 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. A vital component of the Commissioner's mandate is to help educate the public about access and privacy issues.

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