

News Release

January 28, 2014

Commissioner Cavoukian urges Canadians to follow Edward Snowden's lead by demanding more privacy and less surveillance

Mass surveillance revelations have exposed the risks of unchecked spying powers and demonstrated the need for strong oversight of CSEC

TORONTO, ON (January 28, 2014) – Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner, Dr. Ann Cavoukian, commends the efforts of Edward Snowden to preserve civil liberties and encourages Canadians to follow suit by insisting upon greater transparency and accountability from our federal government and the Communications Security Establishment Canada (CSEC).

“Edward Snowden's brave sacrifices have revealed that we all face significant dangers associated with unchecked state power,” said Dr. Cavoukian. “Our silence is unacceptable as we are now vulnerable to both indiscriminate data collection and warrantless surveillance. The federal government needs to respond by ensuring that CSEC's surveillance powers are transparent and accountable so that our right to privacy remains protected. We can, and indeed, must have both privacy and security!”

This morning, Dr. Cavoukian will lead a symposium discussing the pressing need for more parliamentary and judicial oversight of the CSEC. The event, which marks International Privacy Day, will feature a variety of presentations and two panels of experts reviewing what Canadians already know about mass surveillance programs, what we need to find out, and what we can do to protect our most important rights and freedoms.

The Commissioner will also introduce her concept of Privacy-Protective Surveillance, which she outlined in a recent [white paper](#) co-written by Professor Khaled El Emam. This new system of surveillance enables effective counter-terrorism measures to be pursued – in a privacy-protective manner. It offers a positive-sum, doubly-enabling alternative to the privacy-invasive, zero-sum surveillance systems currently in use by governments around the world.

“The challenge is that when you give governments too much unchecked power, they will eventually use it if they feel threatened,” said William Binney, Mathematician/Analyst, Former Intelligence Official with the NSA. “All democracies need to find ways and means of keeping our surveillance agencies and programs in check to ensure our freedoms.”

Event Information:

Time: 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Location: MaRS Discovery District, 101 College Street, Toronto



Commissioner Cavoukian will lead off the event with a keynote speech and then highly respected thought leaders will share their unique perspectives through various presentations including two panels of experts:

Panel 1:

- **Ron Deibert**, Director, the Citizen Lab, Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto
- **Andrew Clement**, Professor, Faculty of Information, University of Toronto
- **Wesley Wark**, Professor, Faculty of Social Sciences, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa
- **Khaled El Emam**, Associate Professor, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ottawa

Panel 2:

- **Nathalie Des Rosiers**, Dean, Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa
- **David T.S. Fraser**, Partner, McInnes Cooper
- **Micheal Vonn**, Policy Director, British Columbia Civil Liberties Association
- **Rainey Reitman**, Activism Director, Electronic Frontier Foundation
- **Amie Stepanovich**, Director, Domestic Surveillance Project, Electronic Privacy Information Center

The Hon. Wayne Easter, Public Safety Critic, Liberal Party of Canada, will discuss his private member's bill which proposes more oversight for CSEC.

Two special video messages will be presented from:

- **William Binney**, Mathematician/Analyst, Former Intelligence Official with the NSA
- **Dr. Alexander Dix**, Commissioner for Data Protection and Freedom of Information, Berlin, Germany

Media planning to attend the event, please register with the contact below. Media availability with the thought leaders will be available at the event. Post-event interviews are available upon request. The event will also be available via webcast at realprivacy.ca.

About Ontario's 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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