



OFFICE OF THE
INFORMATION &
PRIVACY COMMISSIONER
for British Columbia

Protecting privacy. Promoting transparency.

News Release

**For Immediate Release
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**Office of the B.C. Information and Privacy Commissioner to take part in
SSHRC research project on big data surveillance**

VICTORIA—The Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia is proud to be a project partner in a five-year study of big data surveillance, made possible by a \$2.5 million research grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

Led by Dr. David Lyon, Director of the Queens' University Surveillance Studies Centre, the grant will fund academic research that explores the impact of big data surveillance in areas such as law enforcement, political parties, and the broader public sector.

Big data uses complex algorithms to match, sort, analyze, and categorize large volumes of data to identify patterns, predict outcomes, and support decision-making.

“Big data surveillance presents challenges to both privacy and access to information. The opaque nature of data analytics strains the principles of transparency and accountability, and makes it difficult for individuals to ask questions or about how their personal information is being used, combined, or shared,” said B.C.’s Information and Privacy Commissioner Elizabeth Denham.

“Citizens have questions about how big data is being used by police, by political parties, in health care, education, social services, and in other areas that touch their lives. This project will probe big data surveillance and analyze its scope, effectiveness, and implications. The project will identify new policy and legislative approaches to ensure citizens retain their privacy rights in the face of new technologies. And, most importantly, the research results will be made public,” said Denham.

The project benefits from a network of global partners who provide feedback on research direction and help disseminate research findings. British Columbia is well represented in the project through the participation of the BC Civil Liberties Association, Dr. Colin Bennett of the University of Victoria, and the B.C. OIPC.

“We have seen time and time again that data knows no borders. This research grant is an important opportunity to work with project partners across Canada and the world to probe how big data surveillance impacts our daily lives,” said Denham.

For more information about the research grant, visit the [Queen's Surveillance Studies Centre](#).

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