

**For immediate release**

**January 28, 2025**

**BC Information and Privacy Commissioner releases statement for Data Privacy Day 2025**

**VICTORIA** – BC Information and Privacy Commissioner Michael Harvey released the following statement on Data Privacy Day, January 28, 2025:

“We no longer live separate digital and ‘real-world’ lives – it’s all just a part of everyday life. This change has happened over the course of a generation and profoundly affects how we think about our personal information, our privacy, and how we fit into society. There have been tremendous benefits to expanding our digital lives, but at what cost? We are surveilled through online cookies and tracking. We often accept terms of consent that we don’t read or wouldn’t understand if we did. We frequently share our data when we don’t understand why, or even that we’re doing so at all. [Deceptive design patterns](#) developed to manipulate our online behaviour are too often the norm and consent has been co-opted into an exercise in limiting legal liability.

All of this can lead to privacy fatigue – the idea that privacy is dead, so why worry about it?

On Data Privacy Day, we challenge this dangerous myth. Our privacy laws and the principles on which they are founded are more vital than ever because they provide the best defence we have to maintain our dignity and autonomy as we move forward in the digital age. In a digital society, our personal information is no longer just data in a spreadsheet – it is the essence of who we are in the world.

Privacy is not just about playing defence – focusing on a privacy-first approach offers a competitive advantage and builds trust with customers and clients. For organizations, this isn’t a limitation, it’s an invitation to recognize the importance of personal information in the digital age and innovate by putting privacy at the forefront. The winners in the Information Economy will be those who innovate to find ways to maximize people’s control over their personal information, not those who try to manipulate that control away.

We need legislative change to effectively address bad actors who refuse to respect people’s privacy rights. On Data Privacy Day, we call on the government of BC to amend the *Personal Information Protection Act*, our private sector privacy and access law, to provide the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner with the authority to levy administrative monetary penalties. This change is long overdue and would bring us in line with regulators internationally, and with Quebec, which has pioneered the next generation of private sector privacy legislation in Canada. The Special Committee of the Legislature that reviewed PIPA in 2021 also recommended these changes to give our law the strength necessary to enforce compliance in the interests of the people of this province. Modern challenges require modern solutions, and that means modernizing legislation that was put on the books more than two decades ago.

## Statement

Personal information powers the Information Society and we have only just begun understanding how to properly protect and enhance it. In this way, the real work of privacy protection is just starting.”

**Commissioner on Data Privacy Day video:** Commissioner Harvey discusses why privacy rights are more important than ever in the digital age: <https://youtu.be/rukW7Z4LyLE>

### Events this week

#### *Tomorrow 12pm-1pm*

**Data Privacy Day fireside chat with Commissioner Harvey hosted by IAPP KnowledgeNet Victoria and Vancouver Chapters:** The Commissioner joins Marilyn Sing, IAPP Victoria KnowledgeNet chair, for a discussion on pressing privacy issues and the OIPC’s key priorities going into 2025.

To register, visit: <https://iapp.org/connect/communities/knowledgenets/a0ITS000000afe9YAA/>

#### *Friday 9am-10:30am (PST)*

**‘Top of Mind’ – Commissioners Data Privacy Day webinar:** Commissioner Harvey will be among the privacy commissioners participating in the “Top of Mind – Commissioners Data Privacy Day webinar,” hosted by the Information and Privacy Commissioner for Saskatchewan. Commissioner Harvey will join the commissioners of Saskatchewan, Ontario and Alberta, as well as the Privacy Commissioner of Canada to discuss privacy priorities in each jurisdiction.

Register here: <https://oipc.sk.ca/media/webinars/>

### Social media

**Privacy myths:** Join us on our LinkedIn page as we highlight and dispel some of the most common myths in the privacy space.

### Media Contact

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