



Office of the
Privacy Commissioner
of Canada

Commissariat
à la protection de
la vie privée du Canada

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News Release

Majority of Canadians demand informed consent on cross-border sharing of their personal information

Ottawa, June 20, 2005 – The level of concern and demand for consent on cross-border sharing of personal information is extremely high amongst Canadians, according to an EKOS Research Associates survey commissioned by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada. Approximately 90 percent of Canadians surveyed wish to not only be informed but insist on governments and the private sector obtaining their permission before sharing their information cross-border.

"There is a growing lack of confidence by Canadians in the protection of their personal information being transferred across borders and support for greater government oversight to better understand the full impact of the issue on their privacy rights. Governments need to be proactive in responding to this concern and at a minimum include consent provisions in any outsourcing or contract arrangements with foreign governments or companies," says Privacy Commissioner of Canada Jennifer Stoddart.

Highlights of survey:

- 70 percent of Canadians surveyed express a high sense of erosion of their privacy and the protection of their personal information, and predict that it is one of the most important issues facing the country.
- Although they are not familiar with privacy laws, about three in four Canadians agree on the need for strong laws to protect their personal information.
- The issue of cross-border transfer of personal information is an example of how privacy laws have not kept pace with how new technologies are impacting on the way in which companies use and transfer Canadians' personal information. In fact, nine in 10 Canadians see a need for ongoing updating of privacy legislation.
- A strong majority of Canadians surveyed indicate low confidence in the area of technology and privacy protection. Although about three in 10 Canadians are willing to allow companies to track how they shop in return for a discount on products and services, Canadians significantly agree they should be notified about the privacy implications of the products and services they buy.

"We are pleased that Canadians have expressed support for strong and responsive public and private sector privacy laws which are crucial to protecting the personal information of

Canadians in today's advanced security and technology environment which is marked by data sharing between public and private organizations." says Privacy Commissioner of Canada Jennifer Stoddart.

The Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada is mandated by Parliament to act as an ombudsman, advocate and guardian of the privacy and protection of personal information rights of Canadians.

For a copy of the EKOS Research Associates survey, please visit : [Canadians, Privacy, and Emerging Issue](#)

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For more information, please contact:

Renée Couturier
Acting Director, Public Education and Communications
Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada
Tel: (613) 995-0103
E-mail: rcouturier@privcom.gc.ca
www.privcom.gc.ca

Date published: 2005-06-20

Date modified: 2005-06-20



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