

Canada's information and privacy regulators wrap up meeting that focused on critical access and privacy issues facing Canadians

Topics included cyber security, artificial intelligence and the risks of storing health information outside Canada

BANFF, ALBERTA (October 10, 2025) – Federal, provincial, and territorial information and privacy commissioners and ombuds with responsibilities under access and privacy laws have concluded their annual meeting in Banff, Alberta. The two-day meeting, hosted by the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta, included discussions on a broad range of privacy and access to information issues, with a strong focus on emerging issues related to new technologies, such as the use of artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity risks and the protection of online data.

Online harms and the information ecosystem

Emily Laidlaw, a Canada Research Chair in cybersecurity law and Associate Professor in the Faculty of Law at the University of Calgary, presented on online harms and the information ecosystem, with references to AI, protection of children, mis/disinformation, freedom of expression and human-centric cybersecurity.

Protecting health information: The use of servers outside Canada

Information and privacy regulators in Canada play a role in the protection of health information through ensuring compliance with health information laws and/or private sector laws. An emerging issue is the use of servers outside Canada to store the health data of Canadians. Michael Geist, Canada Research Chair in Internet and E-Commerce Law in the Faculty of Law at the University of Ottawa spoke to the meeting about the need to consider whether data localization should be regulated under privacy or other laws in Canada.

Cyber security challenges and opportunities for cooperative leadership

Cyber security is top of mind for privacy regulators as they continue to deal with massive data breaches caused by cyber security attacks. Daniel Couillard and Richard Larose, both with the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security (Cyber Centre), provided an overview of the roles and mandate of the Cyber Centre, Canada's federal technical authority on cybersecurity. This included insights from their National Cyber Threat Assessment 2025-2026 and a discussion of opportunities for mutual support.

The use of AI by administrative tribunals

Since their origins in the 19th century, the rationale for the use of administrative tribunals has been primarily to achieve more efficient and effective decision-making, which is a benefit that AI may provide. Paul Daly, Chair in Administrative Law and Governance at the University of Ottawa, shared his views on the use of AI by administrative tribunals, describing potential

advantages and disadvantages, and outlining a possible path toward appropriate uses of AI by these tribunals.

AI: A role in the delivery of health care

The use of AI in health care is rapidly advancing across the country and around the world. An emerging application is the use of AI scribes to record and transcribe physician conversations with patients. Ross Mitchell, a Professor in the Department of Medicine and an Adjunct Professor in Computer Science at the University of Alberta, and a Fellow at the Alberta Machine Intelligence Institute, provided an overview to the meeting of deep learning and recent applications to health care, including the use of AI scribes and how to consider privacy rights in this context.

Legislative updates & court decisions

Meeting participants discussed recent developments and expected changes to access and privacy laws across Canada, as well as a number of recent key court decisions with implications for access and privacy. This provided insights and understanding regarding trends and opportunities for legislative modernization in the context of the evolving legal landscape.

“Our offices work collaboratively year-round on issues relating to privacy and access to information,” said Diane McLeod, Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta. “Our annual meeting offers the opportunity to spend time together in person to discuss emerging issues, share insights and experiences, and strengthen our joint commitment to protecting the access and privacy rights of all Canadians. The work of our offices is at the heart of some of the most critical issues facing individuals, communities, governments, organizations, businesses and society at large, many of which relate to the challenges of digital technology. Most of us live much of our lives online, and while this brings benefits, it also presents privacy risks. I am pleased that this year’s meeting provided the opportunity for key discussions that focused on protecting privacy and providing access in the context of our changing world.”

