



The Canadian
Internet Society

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POLICY FORUM

Solutions for Canadian Digital Policy and Legislation

05 Panel: Foresight in Digital Policy

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November 25, 2024 - Rideau Club, Ottawa

05 Panel of Foresight into Digital Policy

Jesse Hirsh: I'm still shocked that someone would have a moderator who claims to be a punk actually moderate, and I will not be introducing our panel, because like many of you, I am meeting them for the first time today, and who would I be to pretend that I know anything about you other than consulting our local algorithmic authority Google, who I do trust, but nonetheless I would like to hear you guys say What's your name?

What's your organizational affiliation? And on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is dystopia and 10 is utopia, how you feeling about the future?

Anil Arora - World Bank: I am not a punk. Boop! And you'll know very quickly why not. My name is Anil Arora. I just recently retired as the Chief Statistician of Canada. At the end of this last fiscal year in March. And I am currently a professor of digital governance and leadership at Harvard, as well as doing some consulting in the data and digital space worldwide.

In terms of zero to 10, I don't know, I'm feeling kind of optimistic today. I would say we're probably sitting at a seven and a half or so.

Shannon Lundquist - Deloitte: Nice. Hi everyone. My name is Shannon Lundquist. I'm vice chair and I lead our federal practice at Deloitte Canada. I'm a tech optimist as well and a strong believer in AI for good.

Yeah, so that will obviously have a flavor on my comments today. I think I am at a six and a half. Still on the positive side.

Jeanette Patell - Google: Hi everyone, my name is Jeanette Pattell. I lead Google's public policy team here in Canada. I'm also, it won't shock you, a tech optimist. And when I think about, on a scale of zero to 10, where I'm at, when I think about the future, I think in the short term, maybe a seven, and in the longer term, definitely an eight.

Yana Lukasheh - AWS Canada: Good afternoon, everybody. I'm Yana Lukasheh. I'm Senior Principal for Amazon Web Services , for Canada at the federal level and Quebec covering public policy. And Jesse. You know what? You're very dynamic, and I think that's skewing my answer right now. But if I go back to a bit of a reality check for myself, it's going to be a 5.5.

Jesse Hirsh: 5.5, although technically still all above 5. Still on the positive side. You didn't say for you, Jess. For me, I would say right now I'm probably about a 2. But I'm asking the audience, think in your head, what that number would be for you right now, in an hour from now. We'll see if that number has changed.

So that's why I was going to answer maybe at the end. So now I'm a 2, but given that the average clearly is moving up, that may change by the time we're done. Because we do have the very difficult task of not only talking about the future, but almost oxymoronically talking about the government's perception of the future, and its preparedness for the future, which is no small task.

And I will briefly start on a definition level, because I was kind of critical of Mark that he didn't define what he meant by trust, in that I'm a big fan of Marshall McLuhan's idea of the rear view mirror effect. The idea that what we perceive as the future is actually the present, and I think AI is a great example of that, and what we perceive as the present is actually the past.

And we're constantly trying to catch up. So, let's first start with the general question, how could, but I'll even go so far as to say, and should, the government be thinking about the future? Should there be, like the famous book Ministry of the Future ? Should there be more strategic foresight, however you want to define it, in each and every ministry, let alone in the PMO or the PCO, Is the future something the government should be focused on, and how, in a very broad sense, if we can get more into the details as our conversation pulls.

Any courageous individual like to go first?

Shannon Lundquist - Deloitte: I can start. So I believe we need to, and not just government, I think we societally, individually and government, we need to get used to thinking about the future and not in a manifest crappy destiny way, but around how we will fail, and get comfortable with failing, and particularly as it relates to things like technology.

We need to do that in order to create some digital resilience in our systems, in our critical infrastructure, and how we approach planning at all levels of government.

Jesse Hirsh: Right on. I'm a big fan of the idea that the future is fail fast and fail often, because then you will definitely get the future you desire.

Other thoughts?

Yana Lukashev - AWS Canada: Sure, maybe I can jump in here as well. So, for us, we see, I think, it in two ways. There's a role for government to look inwardly. And there's a role for government to exercise its, leadership skills outwardly. I'm going to be a bit gloomy here, so pardon this but we are going into very challenging economic innovation cycles, political cycles, and landscapes that are going to challenge the way we do things, and I think we have to be very mindful of that and very cognizant of that, and build the rules for government, for industry, for civil society, for academia, for regular Canadians.

And so for us, I think that's going to be one, reality check, and two, let's look forward on, on how do we make sure we build that resilience? What does it take to build critical infrastructure? How do we maximize that? How we democratize that? What are the challenges and the opportunities again, within Canada, outside of Canada?

And I think, Governments have very ambitious policies moving forward. We want Canada to succeed. We want it to become competitive, productive. We want equal opportunity for our, for all Canadians. We want them to build skills. We want them to have jobs. So we need to have a conversation about how do we first level set, and then how do we look to the future and then the role of each and every one.

Jesse Hirsh: Jeanette?

Jeanette Patell - Google: Yeah, I think that kind of connects well to the way I'm thinking about this, because Rather than just thinking about the future for future's sake, I think we actually need as as Canada to be thinking about what are our goals, let's have clarity on the end goal in mind, and then let's, work to achieve that goal?

What are the, what needs to change to achieve that goal? What are our risks and our opportunity? When you think about the role of technology in achieving those goals, what is the risk of the status quo? How do we encourage our government and our society to have an opportunity mindset? When we're thinking about this, because I think

we're really in a place where we need to kind of ride the wave instead of getting bowled over by it.

And if we, try and and stop that wave, we will fail. So how do we kind of think about what is the end goal? How do we accomplish that together? And how do we seize the moment?

Jesse Hirsh: Right on, and I'm hearing a kind of through line here of resilience and ambition kind of working together in a way that I think is really quite positive.

Anil Arora - World Bank: Well, you said you were a big believer in definition, so You know, when you say government, government is so massive a term. You've got municipal, you've got regional, you've got indigenous, you've got, federal and on. You've got the politicians, and then you've got the bureaucrats, and then you've got layers and layers and so on.

So, I'm not going to talk about the government in that amorphous blob. I can tell you as an individual, as a very senior, Public servant as a deputy minister. That's all I did was think about where things are today and where is it that the policymaker. Is thinking to go and take Canada and what from a data perspective, from an intelligence perspective, from an information perspective is required in order to shape or at least understand and better be able to contend with the challenges that that we're facing.

And I would say, just have a look at where we are in Canada compared to many other countries. Countries. And I would say we've done a pretty decent job. Now that's not to say that means we relax and do the same things. Because guaranteed that would be a recipe for failure, and especially on the technology side of things.

So, so first of all, like this is not about throughout the, baby with the bath water. It's about contending with where there are opportunities for us to do a much better job. And so that. Give or take three points, or, whatever the average is of all of us, three, three and a half percent or points, I guess, differential.

What are the key areas that we need to focus in on? And so that's where I think there's a lot of possibilities. And so from whether it's. Transparency and trust, whether it's the data and the evidence that we need, whether it's the regulatory and the legal frameworks that we need whether it's the collaboration and working together that we need.

And lastly, it's the leadership that we need to exercise both domestically across levels of government. With our private sector colleagues, civil society and other levels of government, as well as what do we need to do on the global stage.

Jesse Hirsh: Well, and on that point of leadership, let's kind of segue in the strategy, because one of the reasons I'm still kind of at a two is when I look at the general voting public, I see a lot of nostalgia, I see a lot of desire for the past.

And there isn't really much of an appetite for the type of future, I think, that we see, and that we see as an opportunity. And in the last panel, we, near the end, got into new types of consultation, and new types of mobilizing people into the policy process. So, what is the strategy to really follow through on this, both on the leadership angle, but also when talking about the resilience and, from my view, seeing the target, seeing the goal as a motivator.

It's something that really brings people together. So, and here we're, we don't have to delve within government. We can talk private sector, we can talk civil society, but what are the strategies for achieving This kind of foresight. What are the strategies that normalize talking about the future, that normalize talking about AI, biohacking, a lot of the crazy stuff that circulates in futurist circles that doesn't really make it into policy circles, at least not in a substantive way, Jeannette, you seem to be itching to respond. Please.

Jeanette Patell - Google: Well, I'm just going to respond to a little piece of what you said. And that's just, on the public where the public's mind is at. And I think one of the things that we observed, so we released a report in October looking at, the report was on Google's economic impact in Canada, but one of the things that we were testing for was, the public's view of AI.

And what we found, and I don't have the stats in front of me, but I'm happy to share them afterwards. But, unsurprisingly Canadians who dabbled in AI, who had experimented with it, had a much stronger appreciation for it. There was more of a positive view. And so what does that mean? It's that they're seeing how this improves their lives, how it makes the, whatever their daily grind looks like a little bit easier.

And I think that that is so essential, whether we're talking about individual Canadians or businesses, to start to play, start to experiment. They know the problems that they are solving best. They know their problems better than we do. And so, if you can get the tools in their hands, They will be able to exploit them in ways that may not have been thought about.

In ways that are going to drive new outcomes new new innovation themselves. So I think, really have an appreciation for that. There was a comment on the last panel that I thought was so, it was, it's going to stick with me forever, which is that if you ask people what they, if you ask a, He said if you asked someone what they wanted, they could be want a faster horse.

Because they're not necessarily thinking about, well, what's on the horizon, but if you can get it in their hands, all of a sudden the possibilities open up.

Jesse Hirsh: Go ahead.

Yana Lukashev - AWS Canada: Thanks, Jessie. I'll probably answer another portion of the question to complement what Janette had mentioned. Looking at it from the angle of productivity, just at a simplistic most, level.

And how do you work backwards from that in achieving productivity, whether it's for the government or it's for citizens, whether it's for the private sector, then you go back to what are the type of policies that we need to have in place and then we start delving into regulatory reform. And so that is a massive exercise that, just to undertake, it would take years to go down that path.

But for the technology and the productivity outcome that you want, reform is inevitable. And through looking at the policies that need to be changed in Canada we talk about consultations. I'll take it a step further and I'll say, why not look at sandboxes? So actual environments in a cloud setting, and a little caveat that Rarely innovations happens outside of a cloud setting, including AI, generative AI, and the next innovation that's going to come along as well.

And so we have these sandboxes where the participation and controlled and secure environments of government, private sector academics, civil society can have the opportunity to play around with the power of that technology without, and looking at the policies, without actual implementation. Thank you And so there's a wealth of data that can be garnered from that type of exercise that will allow us to look at what different settings we want to achieve in Canada.

So fully on for consultations, but within probably an experimental phase, I would say, in sandboxes.

Jesse Hirsh: Well, and I would point out that the common thread between both of your answers is play. That there is a need to be able to play with these tools, to play with them in environments that allow for.

Mistakes that allow for errors, and that's never really been the mentality of government. And that seems to be one of the issues that get in the way of this. Do you want to respond?

Yana Lukashev - AWS Canada: Well, just to say that, I appreciated what Mark's comments earlier said. There are actual barriers to, for example, allowing departments to be able to share data amongst themselves.

And to think that, the government as a whole can have the opportunity to look at improving its policies, but yet can't share data amongst each other. So there's a governance issue that needs to be tackled. And then I defer to other like barriers as well

in policy, like copyright acts and whatnot, that really are limiting the ability for private sector to support the public sector in achieving its goals.

Shannon Lundquist - Deloitte: I just think, just to add to that, to your sandbox comment, I think there's an opportunity for government to participate in collaborative ecosystems as a main player to get around some of those, like I'll call it fear or orthodoxies that they have about sharing of data. And then that can drive some of the evidence based decision, data informed decision making they need to do around policy making, organizations like MILA and of course AI for good.

Things that they're working on, Vector Institute around economy, like to really have people everyday, citizens, people from government, people from industry obviously, driven by and set up by a number of amazing people in academia to be able to provide that kind of experimentation perspective and opportunity for people, because that's what we need.

We have to make it real for people.

Jesse Hirsh: Again, not to bring it back to leadership and. Feel free to take this in a completely different direction, but it strikes me that what we're describing here is the fertile ground for a new kind of leader. And a new kind of person who's not just seeing consultation or feedback as a problem to be managed, but as a source of power, as a source of intelligence.

Anil Arora - World Bank: Yeah, I'll come at that in the following way. We have 21st century aspirations, as a society. We've got 20th century, if I could be generous, infrastructure, and we still have 19th century thinking. And our systems, our governance, is all, like I said, I'm being very generous with the 19th century thinking, because a lot of our systems predate that in terms of how they're set up.

And so if we ask the same questions from that 19th century perspective, what are we going to get? So the leadership space in a digital world requires us to kind of place ourselves in that digital world and then ask the kinds of things that are relevant for today and tomorrow. I guess I'm in a bit of a privileged position because I get to see what's happening in other parts of the world.

And they're not going to every application, sandbox, pilot, whatever it is, and saying, what do you think? Was that okay? Were you okay with that? Are you all right with that? No, they're going ahead at a very rapid pace. In building the kind of fundamental infrastructures, whether it's, person identifiers, business identifiers, the kinds of registers that are basic infrastructure that is needed, they're piggybacking now services on top of those horizontals, not verticals, horizontals.

They're building in privacy and confidentiality and ethical frameworks, and then they're asking the questions. On the very platforms for citizens to say, how can we make things better for you? And they're saying, yeah, okay, not everybody's going to be able to do that. So what are some of the alternative mechanisms where people can still get the kind of services?

They're not afraid to fail fast. They're not they're not afraid to do agile and, and iterative types of things. And they're building in the kind of transparency and trust, which says it's not going to be perfect. Tell me what is perfect today. Even in the physical world, nothing is perfect.

We've just gotten used to some of the risks and we built in the kind of mitigation strategies. We need to do that now with governments, with private sector, with citizens civil society in, in, in moving forward. But yet when you see the dialogue, it is a very binary. Do you want to go forward? Or do you think we should stay in the old person buggy world?

It's the wrong question to ask.

Yana Lukashev - AWS Canada: Maybe I'll just add to it and challenge that ever so slightly, because there is a tendency that we're seeing that as governments are asking those questions and trying to build in that resiliency, which I think they have a different definition of resiliency and agile than private sector does.

But that aside we want to emphasize the public private partnership, because what we see the tendency right now in Canada is going almost the opposite. is where the government itself is choosing to build its own infrastructure, to build its own mechanisms, to build its own sovereignty, to build its own data centers.

And that would be a concern. So one, it doesn't have the resources to do so. Two, the question begs is do Canadians pay for it? And three is, well, what really is the role of the private sector at that point as a partner, technology partner to governments and public sector? And frankly, not just the public sector and government, but I include public sector more broadly, the provinces, municipalities, health authorities, school boards, etc.

And so there's a democratization that the private sector is available, is able to support more broadly. So, and just to give you a statistic to kind of make that point, the UN e government statistic has just recently come out. In Canada, back in 2010 or 2013, to memory, is losing right now, but we were 43rd in the world out of top 50 countries.

Years later, we're now 47. So again, my 5.5, slightly optimistic, but then yet challenging because, still after so many years, we haven't managed to get over the hurdles just yet.

Shannon Lundquist - Deloitte: And I think, just to add to that too, and I think what your prior role specifically, like in, in 2019, first, Canada, first government wide data strategy, covered everything from, vision, governance, data modeling op model.

And, so five years later and probably hundreds, if not more, current stated. Data strategy assessments, very limited movement outside of StatsCan, right, which was the first mover in the space. So, I mean, to your question on leadership and your points, and I think there's courage, too, like a people, right, it's, and it's hard to take that, what's the first step or the second step, isn't it?

Jesse Hirsh: Well, and I think courage has to be coupled with incentives. Because, people have to be rewarded for being courageous, because right now, the opposite is true. You will be generally punished for being courageous. And there does seem to be an infrastructure that we're glossing over, which is literacy.

And how we develop that literacy. I'll come back to that. But Jeanette, you wanted to jump in.

Jeanette Patell - Google: No, I think it's just, to the points that have been made about the need for courage and leadership here, I also think we need to reframe what is risk, like our conception of risk. Because there's a real cost to not getting, not seizing this moment.

It's not just opportunity cost. We've seen in the EU, the Draghi report came out and really enumerating the economy wide impact of all of this. In that case, an entirely different approach to regulation of the tech sector in particular, but not limited to and so, there are generational impacts to missing this moment.

And I think, when we look at around the world at who should we be emulating, where, how can we kind of, Be more nimble, faster, show more courage. I think part of that is starting with what is the, how do we think about risk? And is there actually more risk to not seizing this moment and leaning into it than in just kind of standing still?

Jesse Hirsh: I absolutely love that. And it kind of reminds me of what Sue mentioned in the earlier panel, which is. There is a lot of talent and intelligence and great perspective in Canada that is not currently part of the policy process. Either because to them it's irrelevant, as to many of the YouTubers, but also because there isn't an easy way to plug in.

There isn't an easy on ramp. And I want to come back to this issue of literacy because My two is already now a four. Because hanging out with you guys, I'm reminded, yeah, there really are smart people who think about these issues, versus I'm busy watching Question Period or looking at MPs and going, we're fucked!

So, how do we foster a sense of literacy, both amongst those who are fortunate enough to be elected, But also, and this goes back to the public private partnership, but also within the civil service. Because yes, there are really smart people within the civil service, but my primary criticism of you, if you're in the room is their view of the world's very narrow.

They're not spending time what used to be 4chan, what would be whatever it is today. They're not seeing the Internet that I see, and they're not creating a legislation or a policy dialogue that actually fits what I think is the real world. So, How do we address that issue of literacy? How do we make sure that the people who do worthy things to input are actually part of the process rather than on the outside throwing tomatoes and wondering what's going wrong?

Yana Lukashev - AWS Canada: Yeah, maybe I can kick us off. So, so absolutely. I think developing talent and skills and having a pipeline to that is going to be super important for the future digital economy. I'll take the first perspective from the public service. Incentivize in, incentivize, workforce from a workforce development planning perspective, your public servants to learn new skills and the new digital skills.

There are modules right now where in six weeks you can become a very, a data analyst as an example, which from a user experience perspective is going to allow you to gain. Time and efficiency into your workday. So within the public service, I think we need to, the government needs to rethink the way it actually looks at recruiting and workforce development planning, and the future of the public service and how it wants to support Canadians more broadly. Outwardly, I think there's a role for private sector as well to democratize learning of digital skills. So whether it's partnering with academic institutions or partnering with, school boards for education curriculums, and not just from your adult kind of, ages, but going down to grade six and looking at, well, what kind of skills can we teach young kids?

AI is already a big part of our everyday world, let's not kind of create this big vision of AI. You use the applications, Airbnb and Uber and you booking your tickets on Air Canada online, that's all AI. So what's kind of the next iteration of innovation of AI that is going to be, coming to the forefront and the one after that?

Jeanette Patell - Google: Yeah, to the point around skilling for the workforce, we've got a couple of different ways that we do that, including like Google has an AI essentials course and, it's a low lift, all of us could go out and do that. And then also AI for educators. So how do you help teachers understand how to deliver this in the classroom?

What kind of tools are there available for them to make their lives easier? So those are, there's like some simple, very tactical ways, but I actually think this is a great project for AI. When you think about, in the public service, there are barriers. I think that there are public, I am, maybe it's because I'm a former public servant, but I think, I think there

would be an audience within the public service for using these tools and getting really dexterous and fluent with the tools.

But there are, we can't ignore the fact that there are barriers, but wouldn't it be great if AI was like, the tool that was used to identify those barriers and then find a way through them? So I think that's a really good question that Mark Schaan should have to answer the next time he's here.

Shannon Lundquist - Deloitte: I think there's also a, like a, organizational digital literacy piece.

And I think Sue touched on it in the last panel too, is there's like, we have a digital equity issue, an access issue in this country right now, which I don't see us making a whole ton of progress on that. And then the second piece I would say, it's not like we need to start this from scratch like other organizations in this country.

Financial institutions, for one, like, are creating are striving to create digital resilience. They're, they are, they have the programs in place. They have, out of necessity, for things like crypto and, cybersecurity, ML, and all of those kind of requirements they're driving some of this.

And I think, to your point previously, it needs to be incentivized, it also needs to be prioritized.

Anil Arora - World Bank: Yeah, well, look as I said, there are lots and lots of opportunities in the public service to do things better and I was one of the co-authors of the original data strategy and then the update that was put out last year. I think it's a very solid frame in terms of where we move forward.

And the first one was kind of conceived and written back in 2017. And in fact, that strategy is now used in many other countries and many other organizations use that frame. Yeah, I mean, there's no question about it. I was definitely on the frontier pushing a lot, Moved the whole organization to a cloud based back in 1999.

We were putting together the first Internet application for the census. And as in this last census, 82 percent of Canadians filled out the the census form online. And then, pushing for the Canada School of Public Service to put out literally thousands and thousands of public servants through, Hundreds of courses on literacy.

There's a data science network and pushing to say, let's adopt machine language and machine learning and AI and so on. And now we have literally tens of thousands of public servants right across this country who actually use. Those tools and hundreds of different projects. So this is an insider's view where things are moving.

So there are, there is momentum and there's lots and lots of work that's happening. As I kept on, as I said in the beginning, we have some 19th century problems to deal with. And they're not technology related, frankly. I mean, tell a province to share their health data with the federal government.

You think that's a technology issue? Yeah, there's some technologies, but there's largely a cultural issues. There's all sorts of, issues that are really go beyond AI. There's, we have data hoarding going on. We have data swamps that are being created. We have data silos.

Because the laws of this country prevent an institution from sharing the data with another institutions of the same level of government. And so, we have lots of challenges, no question. But I will argue, despite those challenges, public servants are, in fact, moving forward. And I gave you a few examples.

I can give you, lots more if you're interested. Well, we're actually leaders and we're moving forward. So, I'm a believer in, let's build on the successes. Let's confront the particular issues. Let's have the right strategies to be able to get and move forward. So, lots and lots of challenges.

But they're not technical, and we have to have a real conversation with civil society. We have to demonstrate that we are users of data, and we are responsible users of their data, and that they have a say, and the diversity of voices. have to be built into where it is that, that we're going.

Jesse Hirsh: So, let me throw a curveball, and before I do, preview the questions coming after, so that everyone's on the same page. I'm going to ask you about the international, and then I'm going to ask you about specific policies that you think the Internet Society of Canada should be focusing on. Before we go there, it strikes me, and this is your point about diverse voices, because I've always felt excluded from pretty much all policy processes here in Ottawa, especially digital ones, because the Metaphors just don't work for me.

And it strikes me that no one ever really gets to question the Metaphors, like data is the new oil, which I always thought was a garbage Metaphor. Or that AI is going to come alive and be this god, which I think is a garbage Metaphor. But there's never room to question these Metaphors. So if we're going to have a government thinking about the future, bringing people together for the future, how do we question those Metaphors?

Who gets to decide those Metaphors? Cause I would tell you right now that the Internet doesn't exist. It's just a Metaphor. People aren't talking about TCP, IP when they talk about the Internet. The WOB, which, yes, that's HTTP. That exists, but the Internet is just a Metaphor. So how do we, within the realm of policy and legislation and, qualitative and quantitative statistics, challenge Metaphors and engage in Metaphors when it comes to policy?

Again, a little digression before we come back to the questions on the agenda. Anyone interested in taking that on?

Yana Lukashev - AWS Canada: I'll probably repeat what was already said earlier. Simplifying the language, I think we throw a lot of, like, Metaphors out there, and even certain terminology is understood differently between private and public sectors, but just leveling it down a bit, making it understandable for everybody and having that common thread that we can all understand.

I think it's the first step. Level zero, let's say, to pursuing conversation, my thought.

Jesse Hirsh: Any other random thoughts on the use of language in a contemporary society where words mean such different things?

Jeanette Patell - Google: Well, a very smart man recently said and I'm just going to steal it because imitation is the highest form of flattery.

If, back in the day AI had, instead of being coined something as scary as artificial intelligence, had been coined computational statistics, we wouldn't be here, we wouldn't be here having the types of inflamed and hyperbolic conversations that we're having.

So language does matter. And that horse left the barn a long time ago for, there's a Metaphor for you.

Jesse Hirsh: But, Hello, as someone who owns horses, they're always trying to get in my bar constantly. But, well, there you go. The Metaphor doesn't work then. And to your point, isn't AI just cloud computing. Why are we not calling it cloud computing?

But again, stories matter. Now on the international front. Because that was a question in the agenda. Are there jurisdictions, are there parts of the world, levels of government that we could be looking to for being forward thinking that they have strategies or successes? A shout out to a new friend I made today who's from the Netherlands Embassy, who's Part of his work is to come to events like this and champion the cyber security and cyber economic issues of the Netherlands.

Are there other jurisdictions that Canada should be looking to when it comes to learning about how to close the loop between legislation, technology, and the future?

Anil Arora - World Bank: Sure maybe I'll start. First of all, any country that says that they figured this out and now we're on easy street or whatever it is and we've got our population behind us and so on is probably fibbing, okay?

Even the most authoritarian countries who don't really care about, privacy or human rights or whatever it is. We're just going to collect all that data or we're going to, or we're going to tease out all the patterns. We're going to tell you what to do and so on. They haven't figured it out yet.

Okay. Even some countries who figured it out and their governments collected all this data. Guess what? They got overturned and overthrown and now we've got other regimes and the public is like, Oh my God, what have we done? Okay. So even those that were looking at the windshield and those that were looking beyond are wondering, okay, what's the right way to go?

Okay. And I would say we're like most other things right in the middle in that continuum. You've got those that say, this is surveillance capitalism. These big companies have stolen our, all our data. How dare you legislate and, make it. Even legal when it's, when it was theft in the first place.

And then you've got others who are saying, well, okay, it is where it is, but we're going to stop and we're going to make sure that it doesn't get worse. GDPR, EU and so on. So. And even those like the United States that kind of went a bit too far now saying, oh, maybe we need to bring it back a bit.

So that means that we are perfectly placed in this continuum. And so the question is, how do we move forward collectively. You go too fast, you're going to find yourself alone and vulnerable. You're going to see all your regulations and laws kind of going, oh my God, okay, where do we go? You go, if you go too slow and then you see, what happens you see the, so I think, there are thoughtful ways in which we need to work together and I'm a big believer in even just, even if you go a little bit slower, but you work in a collaborative way, and I think the language matters.

I think those, there's a lot of these analogies and Metaphors and whatever. That's great. It may sell papers, it may get eyeballs on websites, and so on. I think the proof is in the eating. I think most citizens want to see their governments eat. Be responsible. They want to deliver good services to them.

They want to make sure that their data are protected and that they have a say in where it is that, they want to move forward. So, our aim should be in those applications and working with them to demonstrate true value and demonstrate responsible use of their data. There's work to do.

There's work to do in the private sector. They're struggling. There's only a third of the private sector, as for the latest survey that I'd seen, that are actually using these technologies, that have the capabilities. It's only a third or maybe a little better that even have the cyber security protections that they need in order to actually move forward.

So we can be just as critical, I would say, in other sectors of our society who need that digital Literacy and need to understand the responsible use. So I think we have a lot of work to do on multiple fronts. And, but I think we're, like I said, we're firmly in the middle. I think we're well placed.

We just need to accelerate and we need to start thinking in the digital world rather than applying, the old world views and move forward. In that thoughtful way, I think Canada can actually have an opportunity to do some very responsible things and create a whole line of business and create that expertise and export that expertise because we do have that that infrastructure, that trust.

We even have the energy. This is all about energy resources as well. And I think there's that advantage that we can work together with the private and the public sector to create.

Yana Lukashev - AWS Canada: So, I think my 5.5, I'll kick it up to 6.547 now, because there's one thing that I violently agree with Anil. Canada has the potential to be and do some great things just by looking at what other jurisdictions have gone through, and apply what is appropriate for Canadian context.

So I don't I have a few examples that I just want to give and they're kind of spread out everywhere, but if we're looking at the UK, for example, from the regulatory sandbox perspective they've created an innovation hub that looks at how do you facilitate that testing, how do you facilitate that collaboration between regulators and industry, and that's taken them Fairly a long way, but finally to a point where success and they're able to look at measuring certain of these objectives.

Singapore, from a perspective of digital transformation and being a citizen service-oriented government, I think they've done wonderful things. Of course the cusp of that is cloud adoption. They've accelerated the rate of adoption of cloud in government, but also democratizing that across industries in their economy to be able to level it up.

And I will preface also, the United States national AI strategy, they're looking at it from a research and a resource perspective and how do you inject additional investments to it to foster that kind of development, deployment and responsible adoption of AI. And the one thing that I will say that Canada has, and I'll end with that, has the opportunity right now to look at the AI legislation.

So there's a lot of work that has gone into C27 and AIDA along with the privacy components of the bill. But taking a step back and making sure that it doesn't become a barrier or doesn't stifle innovation, but rather encourages it, I'll probably turn to the Hiroshima AI principles and say that the flexibility of those principles and the way that they are presented is probably something that Canada should look towards.

It is use-cased it is risk-based and it is outcome objective. And so this is probably something that we need to have a dialogue on the next iteration of what an AI regulatory framework could look like for this country and tie it to productivity and tie it to competitiveness as well.

Jeanette Patell - Google: Yeah I would agree with that.

And I think, I started my career in trade policy and I drank the Kool Aid and it lasts to this day, which is, Canada is a trading nation. We always have been, whether that's in physical goods, in our service economy, and now in the digital economy. We cannot go it alone and we shouldn't try.

It's not to our benefit. And so when you think about something as incredibly transformative as AI, which is really a breakthrough and how we make breakthroughs, we'll have impacts and opportunity across so many of our sectors. I think, we have to acknowledge where we, we have this strength in the research side.

If we're really going to benefit, we actually have to move that to the commercialization side and the adoption side so that we can kind of tackle that global stage of getting our companies to be successful in selling to the world. And so when you, in order to achieve that, we have to be very careful that we do not place ourselves on a regulatory island.

And make it more difficult to build and to deploy here in Canada than elsewhere in the world. I think there's like, we have to be very thoughtful about that. And one of the things that I would look at is, how's the elephant doing it? We know we're the mouse, what's the elephant doing?

Well, the U. S. is pursuing this in a really interesting way, including through an executive order, but one that was done in a really intensely collaborative way to land in a place that could be, where there could be alignment between industry and government on how to approach these big issues and then taking it right down to NIST, and have a hub and spoke model that places the conversations, like the technical conversations, closest to the centers of expertise, rather than trying to have like a super agency that's governing all things AI.

And so I think that there are some really helpful approaches there that we should be integrating into. Not necessarily duplicating, and really kind of, seizing, not only the momentum, but just like everything that they've built, so that we can take a continental approach or global approach to AI policy, while we still have the opportunity to do that.

Shannon Lundquist - Deloitte: The last thing I'll add is, and Neil mentioned this as well, you will find a lot of great use cases around the world and the best ones come from, either like single city government or governments that have a bit more autonomy and

do not have to deal with the multiple layers of government or intergovernmental governance that we have in this country.

The second thing I would say is we have an aspiration and an ambition, and I think we just need to get behind that. If you look at Australia's ambition around being a leader in quantum, they said they're going to be a leader in quantum. They've put a ton of budgeted money in the long term against that aspiration, which includes educate, nationwide education of their team, their ability to commercialize the R&D import export regulation.

So, they have enabled. They're aspiration. And what I feel like we are doing, we have an aspiration, and now we're playing a bit of whack a mole to try and line things up behind, the aspiration in the very, kind of, safe way, like the, like the recently announced Security Council.

So I think that we just need to put the aspiration out there and then enable public and private sector to meet the aspiration.

Jesse Hirsh: And I'll actually take that as a moment to give a plug for myself in terms of next week I'm going to Middlesex Centre, which is a rural municipality on the other side of London.

to help them develop an AI strategy, which they are largely focusing on like ChatGPT and Claude, but I want to show them Google Notebook, because what I love about Google Notebook is it really allows you to configure the quote unquote chat bot to communicate around documents and resources that you love, And it's fantastic as a playground, as a sandbox, that you can do a lot in terms of the policy development, in terms of the community relations, the community liaison work.

So again, I think a lot of this does come down to on the ground. Working with these types of municipalities, these types of levels of government, to allow them to understand that. I think that's where we turn the corner, as it were, to be proactive instead of reactive. So, in our last few minutes, especially because we're kind of ending the day before our reception, which we hope all of you stay for, are there particular policy areas that you think the Canadian Internet Society should be focusing on?

And because I'm throwing this on you at the last moment, it wasn't the agenda, I'll go first. I think cyber security is the scandal that we have been neglecting, and paying lip service to To your points about Canada being a world leader, why are we not ranked up there with North Korea and Iran and Russia when it comes to cyber security prowess?

I think that's a missed opportunity. Granted, I'm suggesting we should be white hats. But nonetheless, there is a tremendous amount of capability and expertise within the hacking communities here in Canada. It is not at all are working closely with

government, and I'm saying it should be, because that is a model internationally that we're seeing, and that is a policy area I think we should be prioritizing.

I'm being a little facetious, but obviously not as all. Other areas that you think the Internet Society of Canada should be focusing on when it comes to policy priorities?

Yana Lukashev - AWS Canada: My list, and I'll just kind of briefly go through it. Cyber ditto a million times. Copyright Act. Government did do a consultation on it. It went to a black hole and we never saw the next version of it. AI, what does the AI framework look like under our next government? And energy policy. So I know Anil mentioned it and referenced it, but more specifically, how does that energy policy directly look at the digital infrastructure side of things?

Because I can tell you, from an AWS perspective, who is very present with this infrastructure in Quebec, we are having one challenging time. It's a province that has no energy left for any industry, let alone ours. So how do you better integrate that relationship and making sure that the energy policy of Canada is aligned to the infrastructure side and the demand side and the forecasting and et cetera, et cetera.

And it all goes back to the success of business in Canada and the private public sector as well, which is included.

Jeanette Patell - Google: So maybe, so I agree. I think those are all really important areas to focus on when it comes to policy. But I also think that maybe not everything, not every but instead of, if all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail.

Not everything has to be a policy solution or a policy conversation. So how are we also thinking about public engagement? Because those voices, like, what is their, they have skin in the game, Canadians do, in us getting this right and determining the priorities. So how do we engage Canadians in the conversation of the future of digital adoption in this country?

Jesse Hirsh: Right on.

Shannon Lundquist - Deloitte: I love that. And I'm going to double down on what I mentioned earlier. I think digital equity and access is, can be critical.

Anil Arora - World Bank: So we're going to have to pick winners. Okay. And so if we're going to, have the equivalent of. Energy, which has really been our energy minerals and so on, which is, which has really been our kind of mark on the world.

I think there's a real possibility that data digital can be our next big thing. And so I think we have to focus in the area. I mean, I'm of the world. I know I'm going to make an analogy to the real world to just to kind of show what I'm thinking is that, we didn't build

roads and railroads and said everybody else figure out what the safety looks like and whether they're reliable.

I mean, that's something that should come out of the box. Cybersecurity. should be part of the infrastructure that is provided to businesses and citizens. It should not be left up to everybody to go hunt and look for whatever they need. It is a sad state that, two thirds of businesses, don't have any kind of plan or resources or even a point person.

For cybersecurity, when you see half of them or even more getting hacked and, are subject to ransomware. And so that should be out of the box. It should be something that citizens have. And then we should have those kinds of rules. And then that's subject to change as to, how fast, how, where we go, we should be doubling down on teaching people about data. Data is the actual asset and how do you govern it? How do you have the kind of skills? How do so we should be teaching people, businesses as well. We should be teaching entrepreneurs how it is that they can look at that. That is the actual asset. How do you manage it in this real world, which is global, where those rents come to us rather than to others in the world, if you know what I mean. We should be the ones that have that expertise and we should be exporting that expertise because that is far, far greater in terms of value than just exporting the raw product. So there are many areas that we could focus in on, but we're going to have to be very strategic.

We're the creators, in many of these instances, of that intelligence that originated right here in Canada, and we need to get really good at being excellent at it, not just good or good enough, and then saying, how do we make that our advantage on the global front?

Jesse Hirsh: But what I find absurd and perhaps indicative of the problem of the current policy process is, I assume you've never actually been in a debate where someone Argued, no, data is not valuable.

Data is not...

Anil Arora - World Bank: Well, actually, I've heard people say things like alternate facts, and I've heard all of her songs.

Jesse Hirsh: I'm not arguing conspiracy, and that was a derogatory attack there, sir. But I ask you, audience members, has your number of your view, your confidence of the future, of 0 to 10, has it changed as a result of our discussion?

Is there anyone here who would argue that it has indeed changed, whether raised or lowered? Certainly some of us on the panel have had our views raised. And oh, yes, a hand in the back. Did it go higher or lower? Lower. Anyone else here whose view of the future has increased in optimism or decreased in optimism?

Anyone else want to say that they've changed? Yes, another hand. Higher. Higher, yes! So we reached two people today. Congratulations, I think, certainly, for a policy discussion that is a major milestone. If we could give a warm round of applause to our panel.

Next time I want the measure of success of the panel to be told in advance that this was going to be a popularity contest.