



STATEMENT

Jan. 27, 2013

Statement from B.C. Privacy Commissioner on Data Privacy Day

VICTORIA — B.C. Information and Privacy Commissioner Elizabeth Denham made the following statement in celebration of Data Privacy Day:

“Held on January 28 each year, Data Privacy Day is part of a global effort to raise awareness about the importance of valuing and protecting personal information, and to highlight the impact technology is having on individual privacy.

“In Canada, this year’s theme is ‘Take control of your information, don’t let it come back to haunt you’ – a theme that reflects our collective responsibility to understand how changes in technology affect our privacy rights.

“There is no question that technology has revolutionized how we share and exchange data – between people, between citizens and government, or as part of a business transaction. The volume of data created by or about us is now measured in zettabytes, and will only continue to grow.

“While governments, public bodies and private businesses have important legal and ethical responsibilities to protect personal information, citizens are not just passive providers of data. They have the power to make informed, privacy-positive choices about who they give their personal information to and why.

“On Data Privacy Day, I encourage British Columbians to take practical steps to protect their privacy:

- Be your own privacy officer – ask questions about how companies and public bodies use and disclose your personal information.
- Make yourself aware of the privacy controls available on your online accounts and mobile applications.
- Secure your tablet or mobile device with a hard-to-guess password, and avoid using these devices for storing sensitive personal information – they are prone to loss or theft.
- Think before you click – because the Internet never forgets.
- Protect your identity – don’t post or email personal details such as your social insurance number, phone number, home address or birth date.

“In recent weeks, we have seen a number of high-profile privacy breaches affecting hundreds of thousands of British Columbians. The loss of sensitive personal data could expose individuals to significant harms such as identity theft and bank fraud. We must never lose sight of the human impact of such events.

“Today I encourage all British Columbians to take an active role in protecting privacy. Resolve to pay greater attention to the amount of personal information you provide, disclose, share and post. Protect your personal information. Value it.”

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