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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
OCTOBER 24, 2022

Benefits of digital ID ecosystem will be realized only with adequate privacy protections, say data protection authorities

WHITEHORSE – Privacy guardians across Canada are calling on their respective governments and relevant stakeholders to ensure the right to privacy and transparency is fully respected throughout the design, operation and ongoing evolution of a digital identity ecosystem.

The digital identity ecosystem that is currently emerging in Canada and around the world is powered by significant advances in information and mobile communications technologies. Its development is part of a global trend intended to enable individuals, businesses and devices to securely connect with one another, confirm identities and carry out transactions online and in person with efficiency and confidence.

In a joint resolution issued today, federal, provincial and territorial privacy regulators note that although a secure digital identity offers many benefits, it must be designed and implemented in a manner that upholds privacy, security, transparency and accountability.

“Privacy guardians across Canada understand that the use of a digital ID ecosystem is a tremendous opportunity,” said Pedlar. “However, we also want to ensure that governments consider and mitigate privacy concerns throughout the development of such an ecosystem, to ensure it is widely trusted by Canadians and others around the world.”

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Initially struck during a meeting in St. John's, Newfoundland in September, which Pedlar attended, the [resolution](#) sets out a list of elements to include, amongst others, in the design and operation of a digital identity ecosystem.

Examples of these elements are:

- the use of a privacy impact assessment throughout the development of a digital identity system;
- the assurance that only necessary personal information should be collected or used, at all stages of the digital identity process;
- the digital identity systems must be capable of being assessed and audited and of being subject to independent oversight;
- individual participation in a digital identity system should be voluntary and optional; and
- governments should be open and transparent about the defined purposes of the digital identity systems, what personal information will be collected and used, how and by whom.

Privacy guardians have also committed to monitor the development of digital identity initiatives, collaborate to strengthen capacity and knowledge in this area, and engage with governments and stakeholders to provide their views and advice.

The Information and Privacy Commissioner is an independent officer of the Yukon Legislative Assembly. For more information, please go to www.yukonombudsman.ca.

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