

AI Infrastructure & Governance Policy in Canada

From Principles to Practice: Shaping Canada's Trusted, Sovereign AI

Wednesday, October 22, 2025

2:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET

Rideau Club, 99 Bank St., Ottawa, ON | Main Dining Room

SPEAKER BIOS

KEYNOTE: Alexandra Dostal - Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy Sector, ISED Canada



Prior to joining ISED, Alexandra Dostal worked as Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Programs Sector, at Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Canada. Alexandra joined DFO in 2019 as a Director General in the Aquatic Ecosystem Branch.

In addition to her roles at DFO, she previously worked at Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS), where she held the position of Executive Director, International Affairs Division, after having held several roles at Finance Canada and Global Affairs Canada (GAC).

Before joining the federal public service in 2007, Alexandra worked with the Government of Ontario and as a lawyer in private practice.

Alexandra earned a Bachelor of Arts Honours degree in Political Science from Dalhousie University and a Juris Doctor from the University of Toronto.

Vince Silvestri - Vice-President, Software Systems, Evertz



Vince Silvestri joined Evertz as an intern in 2000 before starting full-time in 2002.

Prior to becoming the Vice-President of Software Systems, Mr. Silvestri acted as the Director of Advanced Software.

Mr. Silvestri received a Bachelor of Computer Science from McMaster University in 2002.

Dr. Emily Laidlaw - Canada Research Chair, Cybersecurity Law | Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Calgary



Dr. Laidlaw researches and advises at the intersection of technology regulation, human rights, and corporate governance, with a special focus on platform regulation. She actively contributes to law reform and other advisory work, with recent projects on online harms, mis- and disinformation, defamation law, and intimate image abuse. She is the author of two books: *Regulating Speech in Cyberspace: Gatekeepers, Human Rights and Corporate Responsibility* (Cambridge University Press, 2015) and co-editor with Florian Martin-Bariteau of the forthcoming book *Security of Self: A Human-Centric Approach to Cybersecurity* (Ottawa

University Press, 2025).

Prior to joining the University of Calgary in 2014, Dr. Laidlaw spent nearly a decade in the United Kingdom, completing her LLM and PhD at the London School of Economics and Political Science and held a lectureship at the University of East Anglia Law School.

Elnaz Kanani Kuchesfehani - Partner, Deloitte, Data Science and Artificial Intelligence



Elnaz Kanani K. is Partner in Omnia – Artificial Intelligence (AI) practice at Deloitte. She is a mathematician at heart with a Doctorate in Management Sciences, Quantitative Methods, from the University of Montreal, for which she was the recipient of the best doctoral thesis of 2015.

She leads advanced analytics and AI initiatives for Government and Public Services and has worked with various government entities on these topics. Her expertise spans data analytics, machine learning, and the implementation of AI (and Generative AI) solutions to drive efficiency and transparency in government operations and processes. She has pioneered numerous proof of concepts, minimum viable products (MVPs), and fully functional AI solutions for the public sector.

She is also an Adjunct Professor at the University of Ottawa's Telfer School of Management, where she teaches multiple courses focused on Business AI, Big Data Analytics, and Digital to MBA and Executive-MBA candidates.

Elnaz was also recognized as a rising business star by the Ottawa Board of Trade in 2021 as part of their annual Forty under 40 awards.

Dr. Wendy Cukier - Founder and Academic Director, Diversity Institute | Academic Research Lead, Future Skills Centre



Dr. Wendy Cukier is one of Canada's leading experts in disruptive technologies, innovation processes, and diversity and inclusion, and coauthor of the bestseller *Innovation Nation: Canadian Leadership From Java to Jurassic Park*.

Her early career included technology market research and forecasting projects with the Institute for the Future in Menlo Park, California, and the International Data Corporation.

Formerly the Vice President of Research and Innovation, she has extensive expertise in developing and implementing supports for incubation and acceleration and has helped create and scale several successful startups and social ventures including Flybits, 7D Surgical, Think2Thing, nPower, Magnet, Growing North (now Green Iglu), the Lifelong Leadership Institute, Magnet, and more, and serves on many boards.

With 80 full-time research staff, 10 hubs across the country, and 300 partners, the Diversity Institute undertakes research to advance growth, sustainability, innovation, and inclusion. Recent research includes examining the AI Paradox, AI adoption in SMEs, and developing an AI competency framework based on the premise that all Canadians now need basic AI literacy.

In addition to serving as the Academic Research Director for the Future Skills Centre, Wendy leads the Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub and the Inclusive Innovation and Entrepreneurship Network and is a co-investigator on a new project, led by the University of Toronto, on responsible AI.

Wendy received many academic, industry, and community awards for her work, including a YWCA Women of Distinction Award, the International Women's Forum Global Women Who Make a Difference Award, the inaugural Mary Kilfoil Award for Entrepreneurship, the Canadian Advanced Technology Alliance Sara Kirke Award, and two Harry Jerome Awards, among others. She was awarded a Meritorious Service Cross, one of Canada's highest civilian honours, and was named among 100 alumni who shaped the century by the University of Toronto.

She has an MA, MBA (Toronto), a PhD in Information Systems (Schulich York), and two honorary doctorates (Concordia, Laval).

Ulrike Bahr-Gedalia - Strategic, Global Technology, Business, and Public Policy Executive



Ulrike Bahr-Gedalia, M.A., B.A., is a multilingual, award-winning innovator, entrepreneur, and technology, business, and public policy executive with over 25 years of experience in the private, public, non-profit, and academic sectors. Originally from Germany, her global career spans six countries and five continents.

For the past five and a half years, Ulrike was the Senior Director, Digital Economy, Technology and Innovation at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, where she led federal policy files on artificial intelligence, cyber security, telecommunications, quantum, online safety, digital transformation, tech adoption, and privacy and data protection, among others. Ulrike inaugurated and led the national Cyber Security Council, Future of Artificial Intelligence Council, and Digital Economy Committee, featuring close to 200 organizations. From 2020-2022, Ulrike incepted and led the national Health Innovation Committee and established the Canadian Chamber's biomanufacturing and life sciences portfolio. From 2023-2024, the Privacy and Digital Trade Council was added to Ulrike's portfolio as well.

Prior to joining the Canadian Chamber, Ulrike was the President and CEO of Digital Nova Scotia for over seven years. Ulrike also worked at the Nova Scotia Provincial Government (economic development, international commerce and trade), including the Crown Corporation Innovacorp (now Invest Nova Scotia), and held a broad array of executive leadership roles at the headquarters of prominent multi-national technology corporations, small and medium-sized enterprises, and start-ups across the globe, including Intel, Compaq/HP, McAfee, Madge Networks, Commtouch/Cyren, Nipendo, CarteNav, Seaside Wireless, and Thorasys.

Ulrike is presently a member of The Canadian Internet Society's Policy Committee, the Council of Canadian Academies (CCA) Expert Panel on the State of Science, Technology and Innovation in Canada, and the Governor General's Innovation Awards (GGIA) Assessment Committee.

An avid advocate for EDI and careers in STEAM and a tireless connector, building bridges between people and jobs, industry and government, and companies and opportunities, Ulrike was recognized with the following features and awards: WXN Top 100 Most Powerful Women in Canada Hall of Fame; Atlantic Business Magazine Top 50 CEO; RBC Top 25 Canadian Immigrant; East Coast Top 25 Immigrant; Halifax Top 5 Immigrant Women Influencers; WCT Top 15 Leadership Excellence in Canada: Innovator; Progress Women of Excellence: Innovator/Entrepreneur; Canada's Top 40 Change-Makers: Canadian Living Magazine; Mannesmann Teaching Award & Fulbright Scholarship while pursuing her M.A. in the United States. In 2017, Ulrike was one of the "Canada 150 Women" in the best-selling publication of the same name.

Ulrike is married with a son and daughter, and moved to Canada from Israel in 2002. Ulrike has called Canada her home ever since, and as a self-described "nature nerd", can be found in the great outdoors pretty much every day. Just recently, Ulrike proudly obtained her Canadian citizenship.

Marc Etienne Ouimette - Founder, Cardinal Policy



Marc Etienne Ouimette is the founder of Cardinal Policy, where he advises firms and governments on the intersection of AI, public policy, and industrial strategy. He is also an affiliate researcher at the University of Cambridge's Bennett School of Public Policy, where he does research on AI sovereignty and industrial policy. As the head of global AI policy at AWS, Marc worked closely with senior leadership to develop strategic policy positioning for the company and led engagements with numerous governments and multilateral bodies. He notably sat on the B7's advisory committee, was a member of the OECD network of experts, and was board chair of the Global Partnership on AI's Centre of Expertise. Prior to AWS, Marc led the global policy team at Element AI from its founding until its acquisition by Service Now, and was a corporate lawyer at one of Canada's major firms. In October 2025, he was named to the Canadian AI taskforce responsible for developing the country's new AI strategy. He lives in Montreal.

Craig McLellan - Founder and CEO, ThinkOn



Craig McLellan is the Founder and CEO of ThinkOn, a Canadian-owned cloud services provider recognized for its leadership in secure data protection and sovereign cloud infrastructure. With over 25 years of experience in technology innovation and data security, Craig is a respected voice in the industry and a leading advocate for data sovereignty in Canada.

Under his leadership, ThinkOn has been recognized by Deloitte's Technology Fast 50™ and The Globe and Mail's Report on Business as one of Canada's fastest-growing companies, and was named Broadcom's Sovereign Cloud Provider for the Americas.

Throughout his career, Craig has served on advisory boards for a number of global technology companies, including VMware, Veeam, and Hitachi. In each case, he provides strategic insight informed by a deep understanding of enterprise and public sector needs.

Sarkis Abrahamian - Director of Business Development, Government & Defense, Evertz



Sarkis Abrahamian is Director of Business Development, Government & Defense at Evertz Microsystems, leading global engagements with government and defense organizations. He drives the adoption of Evertz's sovereign technology solutions that power secure, resilient, and high-performance digital infrastructure.

Sarkis first joined Evertz in 2002, contributing to the development of optical and IP transport technologies that now support mission-critical networks worldwide.

Erin Kelly - President and CEO, Advanced Symbolics Inc. (ASI)



Erin Kelly is President and CEO of Advanced Symbolics Inc. (ASI), creator of the Artificial Intelligence “Polly” that predicts consumer behaviour.

In market for 6 years, Polly has predicted everything from elections and referendums to the spread of contagious diseases, and messaging and brand tracking. Polly is the AI of choice for leading consumer companies, including Disney, Mastercard, and Nissan, as well as government and policymakers. Polly is currently being deployed in over 42 countries worldwide.

Erin is frequently called on by national and international media for her insights into AI and its future impacts on society.

Paul Park - Reporter, The Wire Report



This is Paul Park’s second venture into covering the telecom and broadcasting sectors. He spent five years with our predecessor company, Decima Publishing, concentrating on the telecom sector.

After studying at Carleton University, Paul began a long career in journalism, writing either as a staffer or freelancer for major media outlets in North America, including *Time Inc.*, *The Winnipeg Sun*, the CBC, the *New York Journal of Commerce*, and the *Village Voice*.

This is also his second stint as a member of the Parliamentary Press Gallery, as he was a member in the 1970s and 1980s, meaning he has covered two Prime Minister Trudeaus.

Paul, his partner Debbie, and their cat Mozart live in Nepean.