

# Digital Access Day

## Access, Autonomy, and the Open Internet

Wednesday, April 15, 2026 — 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

*Networking reception to follow*

Impact Hub | 123 Slater Street - 7th Floor, Ottawa

### SPEAKER BIOS

#### **Mark Schaan - Associate Deputy Minister, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED)**



Mark Schaan is the Associate Deputy Minister at Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada (ISED) confirmed in October 2025, which builds on the direction from the Prime Minister in July 2025 that he would act as the direct Deputy support to the Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation. In these capacities, Mark supports Canada's industrial AI and digital agenda, working to position the country as a global leader in the responsible development and use of these technologies.

Mark's career has been highlighted by this cross-cutting policy and framework effort, including leading major consultations and reforms, including for telecommunications, investment review, intellectual property, bankruptcy and insolvency, privacy, and AI. Mark's public service career has included roles across the policy spectrum, as well as leading on revitalizing the public service through innovative recruitment models.

Mark earned his BA (Honours) from the University of Waterloo, where he studied as a Loran Scholar. Mark earned his MPhil in Comparative Social Policy, conferred in 2004, and his DPhil in Social Policy, conferred in 2010, from the University of Oxford, where he studied as a Rhodes Scholar. Mark is also actively involved in his communities.

## **Karim Bardeesy - Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry**



Elected in April 2025, Karim Bardeesy is the Member of Parliament for Taiaiaiko'n-Parkdale-High Park, representing the Liberal Party. He has also been appointed as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, where he works to advance innovation, economic growth, and opportunity for Canadians.

A lifelong public servant, Karim has dedicated his career to building a more inclusive and prosperous Canada. He co-founded and led the Dais, a national public policy and leadership institute at Toronto Metropolitan University, focused on forward-thinking work in technology, education, and democratic renewal. Previously, Karim served as Deputy Principal Secretary to Premier Kathleen Wynne and Executive Director of Policy under Premiers Wynne and Dalton McGuinty, leading transformative policy initiatives on infrastructure, student support, and pensions. He ran as the Ontario Liberal candidate in Parkdale—High Park in 2022.

Karim began his career in journalism, working as a columnist for The Toronto Star, and as an editorial writer and business reporter at The Globe and Mail and Slate in New York.

He holds a Bachelor of Arts from McGill University and a Master of Public Policy from Harvard University's Kennedy School, and has taught leadership at the University of Toronto's School of Public Policy and Governance.

Karim lives in Roncesvalles Village with his wife and two children. The son of immigrants from Egypt and England, he was raised in Bathurst, New Brunswick

## **Vidya ShankarNarayan - Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, People and Culture Sector, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat**



In June 2024, Vidya ShankarNarayan joined the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer as Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, People and Culture sector. In her role, among other priorities, is advancing Employment Equity policy and practice, modernizing Self Identification, the successful delivery of TBS's expanded role under the Official Languages Act, and working on the Action Plan for Black Public Servants.

Prior to this appointment, Vidya ShankarNarayan was the Assistant Deputy Minister, Information Systems Branch at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. She played an active leadership role in championing innovation within the agriculture sector, the Government of Canada, and with international associations such as the OECD.

Over the past 25+ years, Vidya has held multiple positions in both the private and public sectors, where she encouraged experimentation and horizontal collaboration to identify new and

innovative ideas, and led multiple high-profile transformation initiatives related to service delivery, digital technologies, and modernization. She has also held executive positions at Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Employment and Social Development Canada, and Global Affairs Canada, and in the private sector at Nortel Networks and Tata Consulting Engineers. She holds a master's degree in architecture, specializing in Design and Technology from Carleton University.

She is regularly invited to national and international events to express her fresh and avant-garde perspectives on the Digital, Data and AI, and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as a key enabler of Productivity. In her spare time, Vidya practices yoga and meditation and is a champion for equity in the workplace.

## **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). She 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).

## **Shannon Lundquist - Vice Chair and Federal Account Leader - Deloitte Canada**



With almost 35 years of experience working in public sector transformation, she promotes a culture of pragmatic optimism and well-being within her teams. Shannon has worked with numerous public and private sector organizations to achieve success and deliver value in areas of digital transformation, program management, governance, business and technology sourcing, shared services, operations management, systems implementation, and change leadership.

Shannon is a member of the Canadian Executive Team for Deloitte and previously served as the Chief of Staff for Anthony Viel, CEO. Shannon worked directly with the Executive Leadership Team to effect strategic and cultural change across the organization and led the firm's pandemic crisis response. As Healthcare Consulting Leader for Canada and Chile, Shannon established Deloitte as the premier executive sponsor for the Coordinated Accessible National (CAN) Health Network, bringing innovation to healthcare delivery systems across Canada. Shannon worked with hospitals, home healthcare, and academic organizations to refine and execute on their clinical delivery and innovations strategies, including direct clinical services and capital planning at several of Canada's leading health systems. Shannon spent the first 14 years of her career with the Government of BC and spent her final three years directing a complex \$750m 10-year transformation program, including the design and implementation of an outsourced shared services agreement for revenue and health services.

## **Dr. Emily Laidlaw - Canada Research Chair, Cybersecurity Law & Associate Professor, University of Calgary**



Dr. Emily Laidlaw is a Canada Research Chair in cybersecurity law and Associate Professor in the Faculty of Law at the University of Calgary, a senior fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation, and an Associate Member of the University of Ottawa’s Centre for Law, Technology and Society. Dr. Laidlaw is also a member of the Board of Directors of the National Cybersecurity Consortium.

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 holding a lectureship at the University of East Anglia Law School.

## **Christiana Cavazzoni - Chief Digital Officer, Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada**



Christiana Cavazzoni is the Chief Digital Officer for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, where she leads enterprise data and digital transformation and the delivery of mission-critical programs. With over 20 years of executive experience across federal, provincial, and private sectors—including defense, supply chain, public safety, health, research, culture, and telecommunications—she has driven large-scale modernization spanning data platforms, analytics, cybersecurity, and digital service delivery.

Christiana is recognized for translating data and digital strategy into measurable operational outcomes at scale.

## **Jad Taher - CEO & Cofounder, GoFlek**



Jad has spearheaded large partnership projects internationally, with a proven track record of generating millions of dollars in profits for one of the companies with which he collaborated.

Prior to GoFlek, he has worked with several institutions such as the Government of Canada, Insight Technology (Fortune 500), Air Canada, and Sun Life Financial.

Recently, he has been involved in projects with Ocean Startup Project (part of Canada's Ocean Supercluster).

## **Sarkis Abrahamian - Director of Business Development, Government, Military, and Defense, Evertz Microsystems Ltd.**



Sarkis Abrahamian is Director of Business Development for Government, Military, and Defense at Evertz Microsystems Ltd., a Canadian technology manufacturer headquartered in Burlington, Ontario. He leads engagement with government and defense partners worldwide, focusing on command and control infrastructure, secure video transport, and sensor data integration for mission-critical environments.

Sarkis has more than two decades of experience in broadcast, networking, and optical transport technologies, previously serving in leadership and product management roles in fiber-optic transport systems. His work centers on enabling secure, real-time information flow from sensors, drones, and communications systems into unified operational views that support faster and more informed decision-making.

## **Shelley Robinson - Executive Director, National Capital FreeNet**



Shelley Robinson is Executive Director of National Capital FreeNet, a not-for-profit internet provider committed to advancing digital equity and ensuring people have access to affordable, high-quality internet that they can understand how to use, while feeling safe online. Shelley has worked to ensure community participation in communications throughout her career, including managing a community newspaper on the peaceline in Belfast, working with a women's community radio station in Afghanistan, managing a journalism-training program for Carleton University in Rwanda, and leading Canada's National Campus and Community Radio

Association.

## **Joel Templeman - Executive Director, Internet Society - Manitoba Chapter; Project Manager, North End Connect**



Joel Templeman, CD, MPA, MEd, is an experienced independent consultant specializing in education, leadership, IT / Network security, and IT project management. He currently serves as Executive Director at Internet Society Manitoba Chapter Inc. and is the owner and principal consultant at Leadthrough.ca. His previous roles include Youth Education Consultant at the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology and Education Specialist at Tech Manitoba. Joel served for over 13 years full-time in the Canadian Armed Forces as an IT Project Manager and Technician.

Joel holds a Bachelor of Education from the University of Manitoba, a Master of Public Administration from the Royal Military College of Canada, and a Master of Education from the University of Calgary. He is currently pursuing a Doctor of Education in Learning Sciences with a focus on Heutagogy in Digital Autonomy at the University of Calgary.

## **Dr. Michael Geist - Canada Research Chair in Internet and E-commerce Law, University of Ottawa**



Dr. Michael Geist is a law professor at the University of Ottawa, where he holds the Canada Research Chair in Internet and E-commerce Law and is a member of the Centre for Law, Technology and Society. He has obtained a Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) degree from Osgoode Hall Law School in Toronto, a Master of Laws (LL.M.) degree from Cambridge University in the UK and Columbia Law School in New York, and a Doctorate in Law (J.S.D.) from Columbia Law School.

Dr. Geist serves on many boards, including Internet Archive Canada and the EFF Advisory Board. He was appointed to the Order of Ontario in 2018 and has received numerous awards for his work including the Canadian Journalists for Freedom of Expression Vox Libera Award in 2018, the Kroeger Award for Policy Leadership and the Public Knowledge IP3 Award in 2010, the Les Fowlie Award for Intellectual Freedom from the Ontario Library Association in 2009, the EFF's Pioneer Award in 2008, and Canarie's IWAY Public Leadership Award for his contribution to the development of the Internet in Canada. More information can be obtained at <http://www.michaelgeist.ca>.

## **Charles Noir - VP, Community Investment, Policy & Advocacy, CIRA**



Charles Noir leads CIRA's international and domestic policy and advocacy. He is also responsible for Net Good, a collection of programs focused on closing digital divides and addressing Canada's most pressing internet challenges. Before joining CIRA, Charles spent more than 15 years with the Government of Canada, where he worked on internet, telecommunications, and technology policy and led international negotiations. He holds a PhD in Management (Information Systems) from the University of Cambridge, an MSc from the London School of Economics, and a BA in Communication from Simon Fraser University.

## **Matthew Gamble - AVP, Network and Security Services, Canadian Tire Corporation; Principal, Int13 Consulting Inc.**



Matthew M. Gamble is a seasoned technologist and innovator with over 25 years of experience shaping the future of telecommunications and cloud technologies. A tireless advocate for a free and open internet, he is passionate about leveraging disruptive technologies to drive meaningful change in how people and businesses connect.

As Chief Innovation Officer at Int13 Consulting, a Toronto-based firm, Matthew spearheads the creation of advanced AI, cloud, and voice solutions. His work focuses on bridging complex challenges with practical innovations, enabling enterprise and service provider clients to adapt and excel in dynamic markets.

An NFL owner and respected thought leader, Matthew combines deep technical expertise with a vision for fostering innovation that drives impact. Whether through his advocacy, professional leadership, or industry insights, he remains dedicated to advancing connectivity and technology for the benefit of all.

## **Lena Trudeau - President, The Canadian Internet Society; Owner & CEO, Inclined Analytics**



Lena Trudeau is the Owner and CEO of Inclined, a boutique analytics firm based in Arlington, Virginia. She works with public sector and mission-driven organizations to create lasting progress through advanced analytics, technology modernization, and data-informed strategy.

Lena has held senior leadership roles across government and industry. She was a founding member and Senior Advisor to the Canadian Digital Service, where she helped launch and scale digital delivery capacity across the Government of Canada. At Amazon Web Services, she led public sector operations in Canada and helped expand AWS's global public sector business, supporting government, education, health care, and nonprofit organizations in leveraging cloud technologies to improve service delivery.

In the U.S. federal government, Lena served in the Senior Executive Service as Associate Commissioner for Innovation at the General Services Administration. There, she led efforts to transform operations through technology, including founding the digital services team 18F and overseeing the Presidential Innovation Fellows program.

A recognized voice in public sector technology, Lena speaks and writes frequently on topics including digital modernization, data equity, and inclusive innovation. She is a two-time Federal 100 awardee, honoring her contributions to advancing government IT. She currently serves as President of the Canadian Internet Society and sits on the Board of the Canadian American Business Council, where she co-chairs the Policy Committee.

## **Brent Arnold - Chair, The Canadian Internet Society; Partner, INQ Law**



Brent J. Arnold is a partner at INQ Law and the founder of Capstan Legal, with over 20 years of experience specializing in cybersecurity, privacy, and commercial litigation. He has appeared before all levels of court in Ontario, including the Supreme Court of Canada, and has been recognized in Best Lawyers™ in Canada and the Lexpert Directory. Brent is a respected thought leader and speaker, serving as Chair of the Canadian Internet Society and holding leadership roles in multiple legal and technology organizations. His expertise lies at the intersection of law and technology, where he provides practical guidance on managing complex litigation, cyber risk, and data breach response.

Brent is a sought-after public speaker and has been quoted in leading national newspapers, appeared several times on CBC television and radio, and hosts the Society's Net Positive podcast.

Brent has held leadership positions in the Canadian Bar Association, the Ontario Bar Association, the Advocates' Society, the International Association of Defense Counsel, and the Defense Research Institute. He currently serves as Chair of The Canadian Internet Society.

## **Sami Khoury - Government of Canada Senior Official, Cyber Security**



Sami Khoury serves as the Government of Canada Senior Official for Cyber Security, providing cyber security expert advice and guidance to deputy ministers and senior officials across the Government of Canada (GC). This role, with Sami's extensive experience and knowledge, is critical to safeguarding Canada's digital infrastructure and advancing our national security interests.

Previous to this, Sami was the Head of the Canadian Centre for Cyber Security (the Cyber Centre) from 2021 to 2024. The Cyber Centre is the primary source of expert advice, guidance, services, and support on cyber security for government entities, critical infrastructure owners and operators, the private sector, and the Canadian public. Sami embarked on his career at the Communications Security Establishment (CSE) in 1992, initially as a research engineer specializing in the impact of emerging multimedia communications technologies. Over the years, he has held various operational and leadership roles. More recently, he was CSE's Chief Information Officer (CIO) and led CSE's comprehensive Research program and the 24/7 Operations Centre.

Sami holds a bachelor's degree in Computer Engineering and a Master of Applied Science from Concordia University in Montreal. He also completed a certificate program in Public Sector Leadership at the University of Ottawa.

Sami's contributions have been recognized through various accolades, including the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Medal and the APEX Award of Excellence for Innovation.

## **Josh Tabish - Senior Director for Canada, Chamber of Progress**



Josh Tabish is Senior Director for Canada at Chamber of Progress, based in Ottawa. Before joining Chamber of Progress, he served as Director of Policy and Advocacy at the Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA), where he led the organization's domestic and international policy engagement and managed its relationships with the government.

Prior to his work at CIRA, Josh was a leading digital rights campaigner and held leadership roles at prominent advocacy organizations, including Fight for the Future (U.S.) and OpenMedia (Canada). During this time, he was an innovator in civic engagement, spearheading successful grassroots campaigns to establish strong net neutrality rules, curtail government surveillance, and help ensure broadband internet access was recognized as a basic service in Canada.

Josh holds a B.A. in Communication from Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, British Columbia (B.C.), and has been a frequent media commentator on digital policy and consumer rights issues. Born and raised on the B.C. coast, he's made peace with Ottawa winters—and the ski hills that come with them. When he's not working, he's cycling, chasing after his young children, or trying (and often failing) to watch an F1 race in a single sitting.

## **Bill Abbott - Director, Regulatory Law, TELUS**



Bill Abbott (Director - Regulatory Law at TELUS) is a recognized telecommunications, administrative law and privacy expert with extensive experience in regulatory policy, artificial intelligence and compliance. He is part of the dynamic TELUS Legal and Regulatory Affairs team, working on challenging CRTC proceedings, new federal legislation and policy issues at a time of transformative change for TELUS.

Bill has worked in the regulatory and privacy fields for over 25 years, holding positions in both the public and private sectors. Bill is the past chair of the Canadian Bar Association Privacy and Access Section, currently on the Executive of the Administrative Law Section, a member of the IAPP and is active in a number of industry associations on privacy and data governance issues.

He resides in Ottawa with his family and Juno (the dog), eagerly anticipating the arrival of Spring and canoe camping.

## **Karen Savoie - Founder & President, Savoie Faire Consulting**



Karen Savoie is Founder and President of Savoie Faire Consulting, where she advises organizations on the practical adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI), with a focus on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). She has developed a pragmatic roadmap for AI adoption that supports organizations in moving from strategic visioning and priority setting to action - grounded in real business needs and SME realities of limited resources, competing priorities, and the need to demonstrate clear value.

Karen brings more than 20 years of leadership experience across the Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario, and the private sector. She has held senior executive roles with Public Safety Canada, the Treasury Board Secretariat, Veterans Affairs Canada, the Canadian Coast Guard, and the Ontario Ministry of Housing, and has advised organizations in aerospace, technology, and professional services on strategy, governance, and digital transformation.

She has a BA in Law & Psychology from Carleton University and MBA in Information Technology Management from Athabasca University, holds executive certifications in AI Business Strategy from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and in AI Ethics, Regulation and Compliance from the University of Oxford, and is a Prosci® Certified Change Management Practitioner.

## **Jeff Doctor - Impact Strategist, Animikii Indigenous Technology**



Jeff Doctor is a Cayuga Nation citizen from Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, an Impact Strategist with Animikii Indigenous Technology, and a community organizer with Protect the Tract. He has over a decade of experience supporting Indigenous digital sovereignty initiatives with a focus on technical support, data governance, privacy, and counter-surveillance. He has worked on over 40 custom software Pathfinding projects for Indigenous nations, communities, organizations, and universities; and co-authored two eBooks on asserting and supporting Indigenous data sovereignty as well as understanding and resisting

generative "AI".

Before joining Animikii in 2019, Jeff was the Land and Housing Coordinator for the Songhees Nation, and during 2025 was an Artist-in-Residence with the Akni:ho'gwa:s Artist Collective at the Hart House and Art Museum at the University of Toronto. He has an M.A. in Sociology from the University of Victoria, but prefers to be in the mud working to get land, cash, and data back to Indigenous Peoples around the world.

## **Natalie Campbell - Senior Director, North American Government and Regulatory Affairs, Internet Society**



Natalie Campbell is Senior Director, North American Government and Regulatory Affairs at the Internet Society. She leads policy advocacy and works with communities to improve Internet access and make sure people can have safe, private, and secure experiences online.

Natalie helps policymakers understand how legislative proposals and technology trends will impact the Internet. She helped develop the Internet Impact Assessment Toolkit and her expertise has been featured by publications including Globe and Mail, CBC, Radio-Canada, Hill Times, Wire Report, and CyberScoop. She frequently briefs policymakers around the world on Internet policy issues and speaks at events including State of the Net, the Internet Governance Forum, and the Indigenous Connectivity Summit.

Prior to joining the Internet Society, Natalie was founder of Campbell Communications, where she worked with organizations and Indigenous communities to promote community-led Internet access solutions. She previously worked at the Canadian Internet Registration Authority, where she helped establish the Canadian Internet Forum. Natalie holds a Global Professional Master of Laws with a concentration in innovation, law, and technology from the University of Toronto. She is based near Ottawa, Ontario.

## **Georgia Evans - Consultant, Earnscliffe Strategies**



Georgia Evans is a Government Relations Consultant at Earnscliffe Strategies, where she supports clients across the technology, non-profit, and other sectors. Previously, she worked at the Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA), where she supported public affairs, policy development, and led the Canadian Internet Governance Forum.

She has consulted independently on internet safety policy and completed a student term at the Privy Council Office.

She holds a bachelor's degree in Public Affairs and Policy Management (Strategic Public Opinion) with a minor in economics from Carleton University.

## **Franca Palazzo - Executive Director, The Canadian Internet Society**



Franca serves as Executive Director of The Canadian Internet Society—an organization advocating for an accessible, fair, and open internet. In this role, she leads partnership and sponsorship outreach, event project management, membership cultivation, communications strategy, and develops and implements research and policy programs.

Franca worked as the Partnership and Engagement Lead for CAPAM, identifying funders and partners for both programs and events. She has worked as Program Manager, Research, for the Institute on Governance, where she developed and managed activities supporting the Institute’s research programs. She has also acted as Vice President, Business Relations for an arbitration centre in Toronto.

She has worked as a consultant to the legal and medical industries—building relationships between professionals, associations, educators, and beyond. Franca holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from McMaster University.