

## Project overview

### On the Identity Trail: Our Investigation

A central objective of the project is to develop an interdisciplinary dialogue that will generate research results of practical value to policy makers and the broader public. Our project brings together North American and European research talent from varying disciplines and sectors. The twenty-three participants on our team are determined to have a positive influence on policy and technological outcomes. They include a distinguished array of philosophers, ethicists, feminists, cognitive scientists, lawyers, cryptographers, engineers, policy analysts, government policy makers, privacy experts, business leaders, blue chip companies, and successful start-ups. Our research partners include institutions in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors.

Research results will be of special interest to corporations and to domestic as well as international governmental bodies. We aim to have an impact on the public and private sector, the individual as a consumer, and the individual as citizen, affecting the way that we communicate and transact business with one another, our moral discourse, and our approach to law reform and social policy.

The project consists of three streams:

- Stream 1 - nature and value of identity, anonymity and authentication
- Stream 2 - constitutional and legal aspects of anonymity
- Stream 3 - technologies that identify, anonymize and authenticate

### Some of Our Specific Goals

This project has its sights set on a variety of research outcomes across the social sciences and humanities, in the fields of law and policy, and within the technology sector. Here is a brief illustration of some of our specific goals. Internet architectures can be designed to preserve privacy in ways that allow for secure authentication. David Chaum will be continuing his work on secure electronic voting systems, which aims to enable citizens to vote electronically, yet with all of the privacy safeguards required by our democratic institutions. Stefan Brands will also develop cryptographic techniques that preserve privacy, techniques with various applications including electronic health record management. Anonymous voting and privacy sensitive health records are an important aspect of a society that is respectful of its citizens' privacy rights. Exercising privacy rights involves the capacity to control personal information, which often requires citizens to gain access to information about themselves and government. Members of our law and policy track are creating a user guide to help citizens achieve these ends. Another tool that we are developing for people who want to better understand privacy is an Anonopedia, a glossary of concepts and terms related to anonymity, identity and authentication. This glossary, will attempt to bridge the gap between different disciplines by trying to provide general definitions and by clarifying key privacy terms. Ken Anderson, Pippa Lawson, Mary O'Donoghue, Stephanie Perrin and Marc Rotenberg are working together to generate these practical tools for citizens, privacy advocates and government.

Apart from these practical tools, we are in the midst of collecting and analysing empirical data about how people experience anonymity online, what it means to them and the behavioural implications of their perceived anonymity online and off. Jacquelyn Burkell is conducting research on internet users' experience of anonymity online through qualitative interviews and analysis of how mass media influences people's use of the internet. Burkell's work will help philosophers and ethicists understand the concept and value of anonymity. Philosopher Steven Davis, for example, will look at the epistemic effect of anonymous information online and the value attached to anonymous sources, while ethicist Marsha Hanen will survey the tension between anonymity and accountability of public institutions.

The legal protections afforded to privacy often stem from the value we attach to privacy and anonymity. In light of global law reform efforts in response to the threats of cybercrime and terrorism, Daphne Gilbert and Ian Kerr will collaborate in a study on the "reasonable expectation of privacy" standard and its use in constitutional law. Kerr will also examine the privacy implications for law reform in the private sector, focussing on copyright reform and the move towards automated digital rights management.

One researcher plans to mobilize information sharing through a documentary. Steve Mann, is creating a documentary on sousveillance - his own form of "inverse surveillance" - whereby those engaged in surveillance and those around them are captured on his eyetap technology. This research is itself controversial and will be subject to scrutiny by other members of this project, who will examine the legal and ethical implications of sousveillance and its sometimes covert means of recording information about other acts of surveillance.