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12-31-1994

Information Privacy: What is Our Responsibility?

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PANEL 8

INFORMATION PRIVACY: WHAT IS
OUR RESPONSIBILITY?

Panel Chair: **Rebecca Grant**, University of Victoria

Panelists: **David Flaherty**, Information and Privacy Commissioner of British Columbia
                      Michel Globensky, Vice President, Administration and Security, Equifax Canada

This panel will consider the responsibility of IS professionals, educators and practitioners in the realm of information privacy. Should we be establishing and enforcing privacy standards? What should those standards be? Where should we position ourselves on the continuum between totally open access to information and extensive restrictions? Will attempts to regulate or control privacy work in the Information Age? The participants will briefly present their experiences in this area and serve as a springboard to panel and audience debate.

David Flaherty will discuss the philosophy of the British Columbia Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and significant experiences in adjudicating requests for information since the Act went into effect in October 1993. He will take the position that the IS community must be prepared to protect the privacy of individuals without unduly limiting access to information and argue for regulation or government initiative to protect privacy.

Michel Globensky will represent the consumer industries' position that privacy protection should be largely determined via market mechanisms. He will argue for leaving the responsibility in the hands of the companies and organizations that create and use databases of personal information, relying on voluntary compliance to industry standards and consumer pressure to ensure protection of privacy. He will also discuss findings from the most recent Equifax and Equifax Canada reports on "Consumers and Privacy in the Information Age."

PANEL 9

NATIONAL IT POLICIES: EUROPEAN AND UNITED STATES PERSPECTIVES

Panel Chair: **Tawfik Jelassi**, INSEAD

Panelists: **Niels Bjørn-Andersen**, Copenhagen Business School
F. Warren McFarlan, Harvard Business School
Norbert Szyperski, University of Cologne

As we are entering the twenty-first century, an increasing number of governments around the globe are formulating or implementing "national" IT policies. A major drive underlying these efforts is the recognition of the emerging world of the information highway and the networked society and the new business opportunities that lie ahead.

An essential component of these national IT policies is the establishment of a nationwide IT infrastructure, i.e., the integration of hardware, software, and skills that will make it easy and affordable to connect people with each other, with computers, and with a vast array of services and information sources.

This panel will present national IT policies in Europe and the USA and discuss the differences between them. Moreover, it will emphasize what underlies these differences, in particular the different approaches being taken to manage IT at the national policy level. Specific issues that the panel will also address include the following:

1. How does the national IT policy affect businesses, laws and regulations and when will it affect them?

2. What does the national IT policy mean for the average citizen and how soon will it mean it?

3. What are the international issues associated with the national IT policy?

4. What are the differences between the national IT policies in Europe and the United States (i.e., the Information Superhighway initiative)?

The panelists will tackle the above issues based on their country's approach. Their views will cover the national IT policies of Germany, France, some Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Norway and Sweden), and the United States.