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**Research Field**  
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## Cyber Surveillance & Privacy in Canada

The purpose of this study was to provide an informative and current report in the field of public safety and law enforcement, focusing on cyber surveillance and privacy. Cyber surveillance operates on the precedent that the intrusion of privacy is justified by serving to protect national security. However, concerns have been raised surrounding the lack of transparency that this subject affords. This research study sought to answer the question: Does cyber surveillance help or hinder the safety of Canadian citizens?

The methodology used for this study was a mixed methods approach, using both qualitative and quantitative data. Only secondary sources of information were used to ensure timeliness and compliance with outlined ethics standards. Academic literature gathered from JIBC and Camosun online databases was examined against Canadian Public Opinion Surveys from the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada in order to better understand themes and trends surrounding the topic.

The findings indicated academic unease over the dwindling privacy of Canadians and increasing presence of cyber surveillance. However, public opinion polls showed that the citizens themselves did not reveal a high level of concern. In 2016, half of Canadians surveyed felt that law enforcement agencies did not have enough power to collect private information from citizens in support of national security and public safety (OPCC, 2016). This finding was in direct contradiction of the academic literature, as various sources voiced concern that once privacy is relinquished, it is infinitely difficult to regain.

In examination of both literature and data, it is recommended that a strong foundational knowledge be shared with Canadians regarding their online privacy and surveillance practices. This knowledge should be shared especially with young Canadians, whose lives are increasingly lived online. It is also recommended that further research be conducted into the area of governance and accountability of cyber surveillance operations in Canada.

### References

Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc. (2016). *2016 Survey of Canadians on Privacy: Final report*. Privacy Commissioner of Canada.

## Structured Abstract

**Introduction:** The purpose of this study was to provide an informative and current report in the field of public safety and law enforcement, focusing on cyber surveillance and privacy. The study aimed to shed light on both academic and general public opinion about the merits and detriments that cyber surveillance affords. This research study sought to answer the question: Does cyber surveillance help or hinder the safety of Canadian citizens?

**Methods:** The methodology used for this study was a mixed methods approach, using both qualitative and quantitative data. Only secondary sources of information were used to ensure timeliness and compliance with outlined ethics standards. Information was gathered primarily using the Justice Institute of British Columbia online library, Camosun library database, and Google Scholar. This literature was then compared with results from the Public Opinion Survey of Canadians on Privacy years 2014 and 2016, prepared for the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada.

**Results/Findings:** The findings indicated academic unease over the dwindling privacy of Canadians and increasing presence of cyber surveillance. However, public opinion polls showed that the citizens themselves did not reveal a high level of concern. In 2016, half of Canadians surveyed felt that law enforcement agencies did not have enough power to collect private information from citizens in support of national security and public safety (OPCC, 2016). This finding was in direct contradiction of the academic literature, as various sources voiced concern that once privacy is relinquished, it is infinitely difficult to regain.

**Discussion:** This research is important as it highlights a current and pressing issue in law enforcement and public safety. The digital landscape changes rapidly, and the public must be educated and legislation adjusted in appropriate time. Giving governments the authority to conduct warrantless data collection should be informed by research, not by a public operating in fear.

**Practical Applications:** The recommendations gathered from this research are that a strong foundational knowledge should be shared with Canadians regarding their online privacy and the extent of cyber surveillance being conducted. This knowledge is most important to share with young Canadians, whose lives are increasingly lived online.

## References:

Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc. (2016). *2016 Survey of Canadians on Privacy: Final report*. Privacy Commissioner of Canada.