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PRIVACY COMMISSIONER  
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**News Release**

**NEWS RELEASE**  
**For Immediate Release**

**Sept. 22, 2016**

**Global privacy guardians examine privacy risks of the Internet of Things**

**VICTORIA**—Results of the fourth annual Global Privacy Enforcement Network (GPEN) privacy sweep show that the privacy policies of networked devices fail to fully inform users about what happens to their personal information.

“More of our personal information is collected and shared than ever before. This GPEN study shows that companies need to better inform consumers what personal information is collected by their devices and how it is managed,” Acting B.C. Privacy Commissioner Drew McArthur said today.

Twenty-five privacy regulators took part in the fourth annual GPEN privacy sweep from April 11-15, 2016. Participants selected over 300 Internet of Things (IoT) devices or sectors and evaluated their respective privacy policies based on a common set of indicators including the collection, use, and storage of data, and how easily a user can delete their personal data. Devices analyzed included smart meters, cars, and TVs, fitness wearables, and connected medical devices.

Overall, devices analyzed collect a large amount of personal data, but privacy policies were generally not device-specific. This means that users are often not informed about exactly what personal information is collected by the device. Only a minority of companies examined demonstrated good privacy practices.

“Our daily activities – from what we buy at the grocery store to how many steps we take – could be recorded, analyzed, and shared. The privacy risks increase substantially as more of our personal devices are interconnected. For consumers to make informed decisions, companies need to be transparent about their privacy practices,” said McArthur.

For its part in the GPEN sweep, the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner (OIPC) examined radio frequency identification (RFID) devices used by Translink and the Transportation Investment Corporation (TI Corp) to identify vehicles travelling over the Port Mann and Golden Ears Bridge. The unique identifier collected from these devices is linked to a customer’s account to record trips and assign tolls. So far, approximately 1.4 million devices have been issued and the Province is considering additional tolling options (e.g.: the Massey Bridge).

Using the sweep criteria, the OIPC examined the electronic tolling privacy policies of both Translink and TI Corp. Our analysis indicated some areas where those policies could be improved, but both public bodies met their obligations under FIPPA:

- to notify users about the purpose for collecting their personal information and the authority for collecting it, and
- to provide the contact information of an officer or employee of the public body who can answer questions about that collection.

“Here in B.C. I am encouraged that Translink and TI Corp consulted with our Office regarding the management of personal information collected through their electronic tolling operations. My office will continue to work with both public bodies regarding their privacy policies,” said McArthur.

Founded in 2010, GPEN is an informal network of privacy enforcement authorities from around the world. The members aim to work together to strengthen personal privacy protections in a global context. The network is comprised of 57 privacy enforcement authorities in 43 jurisdictions.

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