



Joint Councils Executive Report on Trends this Month

Digital Strategy, Cybersecurity Strategy, and Artificial Intelligence were all key themes this month...

Key Insights – Digital Strategy:

On June 19, the Minister of Innovation, Science, and Economic Development, Navdeep Bains, [announced](#) that the Canadian federal government would be launching a series of consultations regarding a national data strategy. The consultations will take the form of several roundtable discussions that will be held over the summer in cities across Canada, with businesses, educational institutions, and private citizens invited to participate. The federal government is planning on implementing some or all of [the 19 recommendations for improving PIPEDA](#) made by the House and Commons Standing Committee on Access to Information.

Canadians are invited to share their insights [here](#).

Read more about the importance of these consultations in [this article by IT World Canada](#) and [this article by Maclean's](#).

Key Insights – Cybersecurity Strategy:

This month, the Government of Canada unveiled a plan to boost Canada's defenses against online attacks and crime. The new cybersecurity strategy does three things, starting with an increased emphasis on detecting, deterring and prosecuting cybercrime. The strategy is supported by over \$500-million in funding over the next five years. Read Canada's National Cyber Security Strategy [here](#).

Federal governments face an array of cybersecurity threats thanks to growing sophistication of attackers, insider threats and legacy IT systems. The White House released a report this month entitled the [Federal Cybersecurity Risk Determination Report and Action Plan](#). The report recommended specific actions agencies need to take to enhance their IT security posture:

1. Increase cybersecurity threat awareness among agencies by implementing the Director of National Intelligence's Cyber Threat Framework to prioritize efforts and manage cybersecurity risks.
2. Standardize IT and cybersecurity capabilities to control costs and improve asset management.
3. Consolidate agency Security Operations Centers to improve incident detection and response capabilities.
4. Drive accountability across agencies through improved governance processes, recurring risk assessments, and OMB's engagements with agency leadership.

Key Insights – Artificial Intelligence:

The [New South Wales government looks to Microsoft AI to cut \\$10 million](#) in costs by developing a new machine learning tool that will automatically monitor its \$30 billion annual procurement budget, and tell the government when money is being wasted and how to cut the costs.

New Zealand calls for the development of a coordinated national AI strategy to maximise the benefits of AI for its whole population. This is one of many recommendations in a new report entitled [Artificial Intelligence: Shaping a Future New Zealand](#).

Other Noteworthy Articles this month:

[Using open data to redesign public services.](#)

[Five Cs for successful change: McKinsey claims 80% of efforts to transform public services fail.](#)

This Month's Feature: Interview with Alex Roberts from OECD on Innovation in the Canadian Public Sector

This month, Amanda Parriag interviews Alex Roberts about the soon to be released report on Innovation in the Canadian Public Sector. This special feature, available only to the councils, provides a sneak preview of what can be expected in the report. Watch the video [here](#) (Password: innovation) or read the transcript below:

AP: Hello, my name is Amanda Parriag reporting on behalf of Canada's Joint Councils. Engineering innovation in digital service delivery is essential to the Joint Council's vision. With that in mind, I'm speaking with Alex Roberts OECD Innovation Specialist.

AP: Alex is completing a report on Innovation in the Canadian Public Sector. He'll be here giving us a sneak peak of his findings. Let's get started.

AP: Alex, what is your definition of Public Sector Innovation?

Alex: Well, that's a tricky question because the thing with innovation is that it's always contextual. So, what's innovative in one moment isn't always innovative in another. What we try and focus on at the OECD are three aspects though. That question of "Is this truly novel?". "Is it somewhat implemented?" – it's got to be more than just an idea. And then "what impact has it had?" It's got to actually have changed something in the world.

AP: I understand that this report triggered some reflection on the need for a framework to assess public sector innovation. Can you tell us a little bit more about that?

Alex: So, one of the things that we're trying to do with this is... There have been a number of countries looking at the question of public sector innovation and how to promote it and foster it over time. And I think the really exciting thing with the work with Canada has been that they've been asking that big question of "well, how do we do this on a Systematic Basis?"

So, we're trying to look at that question of "well, what is this at a System level?"

So, we take three things:

We think about innovation at the Individual level where you see individual public servants making a difference.

We look at Organizations that are also trying to innovate.

And then that System question.

And the importance of that System question is when you don't have the right elements in place, the

responsibility or the burden of innovation will fall down onto the Organization.

And if the Organization doesn't have the right things in place, it falls down to the individual.

AP: Thank you very much Alex. Can you give me three or four elements from the report and outline what leaders in the public sector across the country can learn from these?

Alex: So, what we've tried to do with this report is develop a grounded theory. So, we've tried to use an inductive process to work out what are the fundamental drivers of innovation performance. And then how do they manifest differently between the individual, the organizational and the System level?

So, when you look at the System level we've identified these four factors as being:

Clarity – is there a consistent signal about the need for innovation and what role people should play?

The second factor we talk about is parity. Is there actually the opportunity for new ideas to come forward? Or is there an implicit bias towards a status quo or business-as-usual options? Is there a fall back to “these are the things we know well so we'll keep doing those” rather than something like “Well, is something different possible now?”

The third one is Suitability. So, is the public sector actually prepared to take advantage of those new opportunities, those new technologies?

And the last one is this question of normality. How do you make innovation feel like something that's not unusual? That public servants in their organizations don't feel that innovation's a bit of a frolic or a thing that's done “over there”? But is actually a part of, a core part of, how they do their jobs.

AP: So, what are the key elements at this level that need to be in place to foster public sector innovation?

Alex: With all of these things it's a question of balance. You don't want to be too prescriptive because as soon as you say “well this and only this is innovation” you're actually stopping innovation.

So, what we're trying to say is “how can Organizations and the System as a whole find that nice balance point between these different factors and these different forces?”

Other things are around the parity of you know “how can bottle necks be circumvented?” In any bureaucracy it's inevitable that you're going to have spots where things get stuck. But now through digital technologies we have the ability to open those up to allow things to find their way around the bottlenecks. So, what might some of those processes look like?

AP: So, Alex I know that the focus of the report was on a framework to create an environment for

public sector innovation in Canada but I'm sure that in the process you came across some really interesting examples of innovation. Can you describe something that really struck you as a strength that others in Canada can learn from?

Alex: So, there were two innovations that I found really exciting. One was one that started between Public Health Canada and a Private Sector group called Carrot Rewards App where they're using mobility data and you know fitness sort of data people to get information about are people, say, taking 10,000 steps. And if those people do take those 10,000 steps the firm offers them some loyalty points whether it be for an airline or a number of other particular providers.

The other example was something called Talent Cloud which is an initiative being run at the moment, well it started in Natural Resources Canada, but has now moved over to the Treasury Board Secretariat, where they're looking at a truly contemporary style of what HR management would look like. So, if you imagine if everyone could register their skills and their experiences and that could be used in real time by the public service if a project came up and you know I need someone with these particular skills and to be able to actually find that in your Public Service. That's really exciting thinking. Uh, so that's another great project.

AP: I understand that the report will be out soon enough. When it does come out, how can people access it?

Alex: Well I would love it if people came and visited our website, the Observatory of Public Sector Innovation. Otherwise we have a Newsletter or people can get directly in contact at opsi@oecd.org or myself at alex.roberts@oecd.org. We're very happy to share what we've learnt and we hope other people are very excited to learn from what we've learned.

AP: Well, this has been really fascinating Alex. I really appreciate you chatting with me today. Thank you so much.

Alex: Thank You.

AP: That was Alex Roberts OECD Innovation Specialist giving us some high-level findings from his soon-to-be-released report on Innovation in the Canadian Public Service. Thanks for watching.

For more information on the report visit: oecd-opsi.org

Or email: alex.roberts@oecd.org

We would love to hear from you!

For this month, we have touched the surface by choosing 5 good reports looking at these topics. Which of these areas is your organization focusing on and where would you like to see us dig deeper to get you answers to your burning questions? Let us know and we can feature it for you. Send your questions to Info@iccs-isac.org.