



Government of Canada

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canada@150: Looking Back, Forging Ahead

The much anticipated fourth and final *canada@150* conference was held from June 1 to 3, 2009 in the National Capital Region. The final conference was an opportunity for participants to reflect on the work they accomplished in the past year (June 2008 to 2009), where they identified and examined the key policy challenges the country is likely to face in 2017 (Canada's 150th birthday). The *canada@150* project brought together 150 early-career public servants from across the country, from every department, and with a range of educational and professional backgrounds. The final conference was also a chance for participants to look ahead to the future and consider how they can continue to be public service entrepreneurs and leaders after the conclusion of the formal *canada@150* initiative.

Summary of Phase III (February-May): Considering the Implications for the Public Service

Following the conference in Québec City, participants began the third and last phase of the *canada@150* project, which focussed on analyzing the impacts of their policy challenges for the Public Service of Canada. A new policy challenge group was formed to undertake an in-depth, horizontal review of public service renewal. The group started by looking at five main questions, with the objective of identifying cross-cutting issues the Public Service will face in 2017.

In the meantime, the 14 other policy challenge groups continued to analyze their policy options, and also looked at the impact those challenges would have on the Public Service of 2017. The input of all the groups helped inform the work of the new group looking exclusively at public service renewal.

In addition, Anthony D. Williams, co-author of Wikinomics, held a workshop with *canada@150* participants and enablers to review the web 2.0 experience in *canada@150* and to draw out lessons learned for the Public Service. The result is a report on best practices and insights on the use of web 2.0 tools in the public sector, featuring *canada@150* as a case study.



5 questions:

- What kinds of people and skills will we need in the Public Service?
- How will we manage our talent?
- How will we do our work?
- What tools will the government use?
- Who else will we work with, and in what ways?

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Fourth Conference – June 1 to June 3, 2009, Ottawa

The fourth and final conference of the *canada@150* project opened with welcoming remarks from Jean-François Tremblay, Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet, Priorities and Planning, in the Privy Council Office, and Thomas Townsend, Executive Head of the Policy Research Initiative. The facilitator, Alain Rabeau of Intersol, announced the conference objectives, which were to:

- Expand participant networks within *canada@150* and in the Public Service in general;
- Disseminate *canada@150* findings and rally project participants, senior management and interested communities;
- Discuss potential options for continuing the *canada@150* brand and future networks;
- Facilitate group reflection and discussion on lessons learned from *canada@150*;
- Seek participant endorsement of the proposed final *canada@150* product (prior to publication); and
- Prepare participants to be policy entrepreneurs within the Public Service context.

Deputy Ministers' Committee on Public Service Renewal (PSR)

Participants quickly got down to work starting with the very first session of the conference. In their policy challenge groups, they met with senior leaders from the Deputy Minister Committee on Public Service Renewal to discuss their findings and exchange views. This gave participants the opportunity to present their findings and their vision for PSR, which Deputy Ministers responded to through constructive feedback, allowing for a free flowing conversation with participants and the opportunity to learn across generations.

Senior Leaders in attendance:

- Margaret Biggs, Bill Pentney, Janice Charette, William Baker, Liseanne Forand, Michelle d'Auray, Alfred MacLeod

The group then got back together in plenary, allowing the Deputy Ministers to share information and their analysis of the vision expressed by the participants, followed by a question and answer period. The Deputy Ministers were enthusiastic about what they had gotten out of the previous small-group discussion. They were especially impressed by the ideas on collaboration using innovative technology tools, like the Web 2.0 online collaboration site used for the *canada@150* project, which would help ensure better collaboration with regional offices and among departments. The Deputy Ministers left participants with two key messages:



- Participants should think of themselves as agents of change within the Public Service and an integral part of the ongoing transformation of the Public Service; and

-To be effective agents of change, it is important, first and foremost, to apply oneself to one's key responsibilities, so as to gain credibility and the foundation needed to be able to act for change.

Entrepreneurship in the Public Service (Part 1): Understanding Policy, Politics and the Public Interest

canada@150 participants were pleased to hear from the Honourable John Manley, former Minister of Industry and Deputy Prime Minister and Margaret Bloodworth, former Associate Secretary to Cabinet and National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister, on the relationship and interconnection between policy and politics.

The Honourable John Manley's main theme was trust, from the perspective of a former elected official. He stressed that trust, within an environment of mutual respect, is necessary for the system to work properly. Ministers need to look for fearless advice, not just loyal implementation, soliciting diverse opinions from public servants in order to understand how policy advice arose and identifying experts on key issues to speak to directly. He noted that good public policy is good politics and that teamwork is key to accomplishing what you want to get done.

Ms. Bloodworth identified three key elements that define the relationship between the Public Service and elected officials: democracy; professionalism; and humility. Politicians are, after all, democratically elected, and through the electoral process they acquire a different understanding of the public interest than that held by public servants. Accordingly, the policy options developed by public servants need to be based on thorough factual analysis and present a variety of real options. In that context, one must accept that one will sometimes be wrong (e.g. on the timing of a new policy) and acknowledge that elected officials try to make the best decision based on their understanding of the public interest. Ms. Bloodworth emphasized that public servants need to differentiate between their role as a citizen and as a public servant, recognizing the additional responsibilities that come with executing their jobs. She also noted that the relationship between public servants and politicians is a productive one and contributes to the betterment of our country.

Describing the Public Service of 2017

Based on the work accomplished in the final phase of the project and the meeting in the morning with members of the Deputy Ministers' Committee on Public Service Renewal (PSR), participants undertook a creative exercise to develop vignettes and illustrate their vision of life in the Public Service in 2017. Participants designed a variety of products to communicate their vision, using different creative formats, including: comic strips, résumés, office calendars, newspaper articles, games, and more. Some examples will be included in the final report.



Lessons Learned from canada@150

To obtain feedback from all participants and produce a synthesis of the lessons learned during the project, the participants used peer journalism to interview one another and then met in theme groups to synthesize their key findings.

This work will feed into a chapter in the *canada@150* final report on lessons learned, covering such themes as:

- Policy analysis and development;
- Networking and working horizontally;
- Technology and Web 2.0;
- Foresight methods and thinking about the future; and
- Teamwork, collaboration and self-organization.

As a pilot project, the primary value of the *canada@150* initiative is how it can be used to inform future initiatives. The lessons learned from the project will be shared broadly across the public service so that others can benefit from this experiment.

Entrepreneurship in the Public Service (Part 2): Learning from Others

In an effort to equip participants with additional tools for life after *canada@150*, a session was held with entrepreneurs who are making a real difference in the Public Service. Participants learned about specific examples where good ideas were advanced and heard about the lessons learned for being innovative in a public service context.

Participants heard about how:

- Natural Resources Canada launched the first major departmental wiki in the Public Service.
- The Federal Family on Community Collaboration, an interdepartmental community of practice for learning, data sharing, and policy development related to place-based approaches and federal roles and interests in (local) communities, came to exist and what its members do.
- The Department of Citizenship and Immigration's Youth Network took an idea from germination to pilot program in an excellent example of bottom-up innovation.
- The Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada undertook innovative outreach efforts.
- Bob Chartier built a "corner of the desk" entrepreneurial practice in learning and development and about his experience publishing his book "Bureaucratically incorrect: letters to a young public servant"
- A cross-departmental team is working informally to create a



professional networking application for public servants, how GCPEDIA was created, and about the campaign for ideas to improve IT programs and services in the Public Service.

Reception with the Clerk of the Privy Council

The second day of the conference wrapped up with a reception attended by the Honourable Kevin Lynch, Clerk of the Privy Council and Secretary to the Cabinet; Marie-Lucie Morin, National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister and Associate Secretary to the Cabinet; and Simon Kennedy, Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet (Plans and Consultations), Privy Council Office. Participants had the chance to engage with the most senior leaders in the federal government and had the opportunity to convey their appreciation for being part of *canada@150*.

Ms. Morin noted the strong commitment that Deputy Ministers have to public service renewal, which is critical to Canada's ability to tackle the policy challenges of today and tomorrow.

Mr. Lynch reaffirmed the importance of the *canada@150* initiative for public service renewal. He shared his thoughts on how vital it is to have a strong, vibrant public service, especially in periods of rapid change and economic unpredictability.

Participants appreciated Mr. Lynch sharing extensive time for an open question and answer period, in which he responded directly to questions on a variety of issues, including science and technology investments and the ethical dimension of the role of public servants.

Engaging the Broader Community: Ideas Fair

The third day of the conference was devoted to outreach and sharing ideas with the broader public service. The participants presented the results of *canada@150* to their senior managers, work colleagues, and others interested in the project. They hosted information tables on each of the policy challenges and on the policy options developed over the course of the project, allowing visitors to circulate, ask questions and engage in discussion. Those attending the Ideas Fair were impressed by the participants' work and were enthusiastic about following up on the ideas presented.

A closing ceremony ended the day, providing time to appreciate the contribution of everyone involved in making the project a success: the participants, facilitators, members of the Secretariat, Assistant Deputy Minister mentors and the Co-Champions of the project.

Not the Beginning of the end, Merely the end of the Beginning!

Although this fourth conference marked the end of the official *canada@150* initiative, the spirit of *canada@150*, the experience, the work and the networks developed throughout the year are still alive and well. The *canada@150* final report will be a record of the experiences and work of the initiative; however, as noted by Privy Council Office policy advisor Jennifer Warrington in her presentation on the final product and living the *canada@150* brand, new initiatives have yet to be explored by the *canada@150* participants and many new experiences are still to come.





For example: the Assistant Deputy Minister mentors will put the participants in touch with public servants who work every day on questions related to the policy challenges identified by the participants; participants will be able to collaborate with Anthony Williams on a new chapter of the book *Wikinomics* focussing on the application of Web 2.0 in the Public Service; and they will be invited to participate in a whole-of-government scanning initiative being led by the Policy Research Initiative (PRI). A growing interest has developed over the summer for presentations in departments on various aspects of *canada@150*. In addition, the release of the final report scheduled for 2010 is eagerly awaited.

Towards the end of the conference the participants took time to look back on their involvement in the *canada@150* project. Each one wrote a few lines describing their involvement and the following points were identified as priorities: maintain *canada@150* networks; share the *canada@150* experience with colleagues in their departments; promote the type of policy analysis (prospective analysis, visualisation, etc.) and collaboration (Web 2.0) techniques and tools used throughout the *canada@150* project.

[Quotes from participants: "To have the freedom to explore so many areas, I would say that personally and professionally, I learned so much ;" "The new work environment, where we were essentially working as a horizontal team, using the Web 2.0 format : that's a new set of skills that I did not have before;" "My biggest take-away is that I was able to see what is possible in the Public Service, that working together with people from different departments helped me to know that the PS of 2017 can actually have all these great things that we had, and now we'll have more time to develop that."

And so, the official end of this pilot project marks the beginning of new initiatives inspired by *canada@150*.

