



IAPP Canada Symposium 2026

Privacy | AI governance | Cybersecurity law

Conference 4-5 May

Workshops 6 May

Training 6-7 May

TORONTO

#IAPPSymposium26



RETHINKING PRIVACY

Through Indigenous Data
Sovereignty



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WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS



Savion Nakogee
CEO, Wabusk Data Solutions
savion@wabuskdata.ca



Chelsea Nakogee
COO, Wabusk Data Solutions
chelsea@wabuskdata.ca



Jeff Doctor
Impact Strategist, Animikii
jeff.doctor@animikii.com









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AGENDA OUTLINE

-  The concept of sovereignty
-  The concept of data sovereignty
-  How privacy practices contribute to harm or empowerment
-  How technological advancements interplay
-  Indigenous data sovereignty in Action
-  Q & A



“

If you have come here to help me, you are
wasting your time.
But if you have come because your
liberation is bound up with mine, then let us
work together.

”

- Lilla Watson (Indigenous Australian activist & academic)

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01

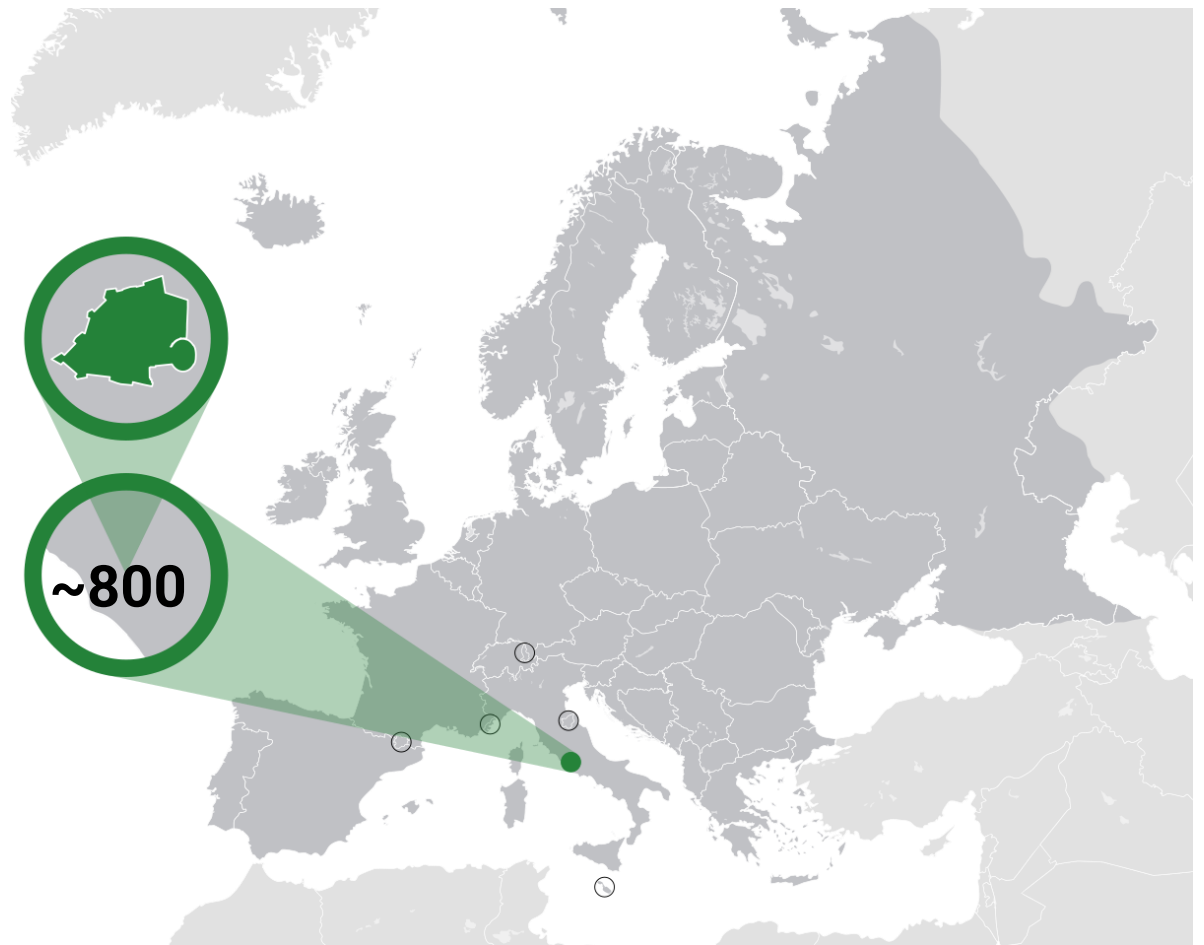


The Concept of Sovereignty

How should we understand and recognize Indigenous sovereignty today?



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Politics

Saab dangles sovereign data centre in Montreal to undercut F-35 fighter contract

Swedish firm pitches centre as means to keep mission-critical data out of U.S. hands



Murray Brewster · CBC News · Posted: Apr 10, 2026 4:00 AM EDT | Last Updated: April 10



Listen to this article ⓘ

Estimated 6 minutes



"What it really gives you is sovereignty — your **indigenous capability** to **take the data** that you collect, and to **own it...** You can take the data that you **collect, analyze it** in your nation **without anyone interfering.**"

sounds familiar...



UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Sovereignty: the **right to maintain, control, protect and develop**

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples


Article 31(1) — **Indigenous peoples** have the **right to maintain, control, protect and develop** their:

- **cultural heritage**
- **traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions**
- **manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures**, including:
 - **human and genetic resources**
 - **seeds, medicines, knowledge** of the properties of **fauna and flora**
 - **oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports, traditional games and visual and performing arts.**



UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

Article 31(1) — They also have the **right** to **maintain, control, protect** and **develop** their **intellectual property** over such **cultural heritage, traditional knowledge**, and **traditional cultural expressions**.



02



The Concept of Data Sovereignty

1. When we talk about privacy in Canada today, whose sovereignty is it actually grounded in?
2. How do Canadian and Indigenous perspectives on digital sovereignty align or differ in practice?
3. When ID Sov is framed as a DEI issue, what gets overlooked?
4. What are the legal, structural, and cultural consequences of not recognizing ID Sov as a core part of privacy practice?

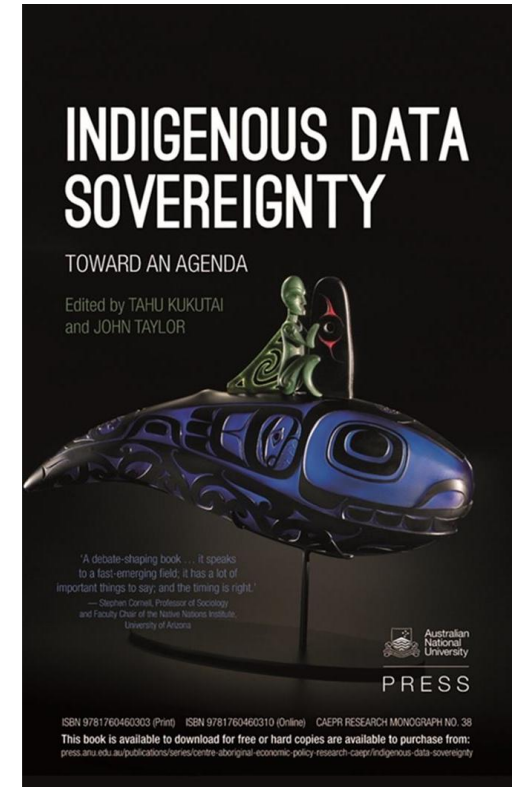


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A rights based issue, not an inclusion gap

Indigenous Data Sovereignty affirms the inherent right of **Indigenous Peoples** to **govern** the **collection, ownership**, and **application** of **data related to them** (includes access, analysis, interpretation, management, dissemination, reuse, etc.)

- derived from *Kukutai and Taylor 2016; Snipp 2016, Indigenous Data Sovereignty: Toward an Agenda (2016) and IEEE Std 2890-2025 Recommended Practice for Provenance of Indigenous Peoples' Data*



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All data has a
PHYSICAL
manifestation



So whose destiny are we manifesting?

Digitization depends on:

Resources

- Minerals, metals, water, oil, electricity, silicon, air, people, animals, etc.

Hard Infrastructure

- Servers, storage devices, network hardware, power supplies, cooling systems, access control systems, buildings, etc.

Soft Infrastructure

- Operating systems, network protocols, DNS, firewalls, cloud management software, middlewares, drivers, services, processes, etc.

Tooling

- Soft tools: Programming languages, debuggers, compilers, editors, version control, code repositories, coding assistants, etc.
- Hard tools: Manufacturing facilities, hand and power tools, instruments, clean rooms, etc.

Data

- Text, numbers, relationships, dates and times, geolocations, transactions, records, time series, documents, graphs, etc.

Applications

- Social connections, communications, productivity, tools, entertainment, commerce, learning, etc.

Devices

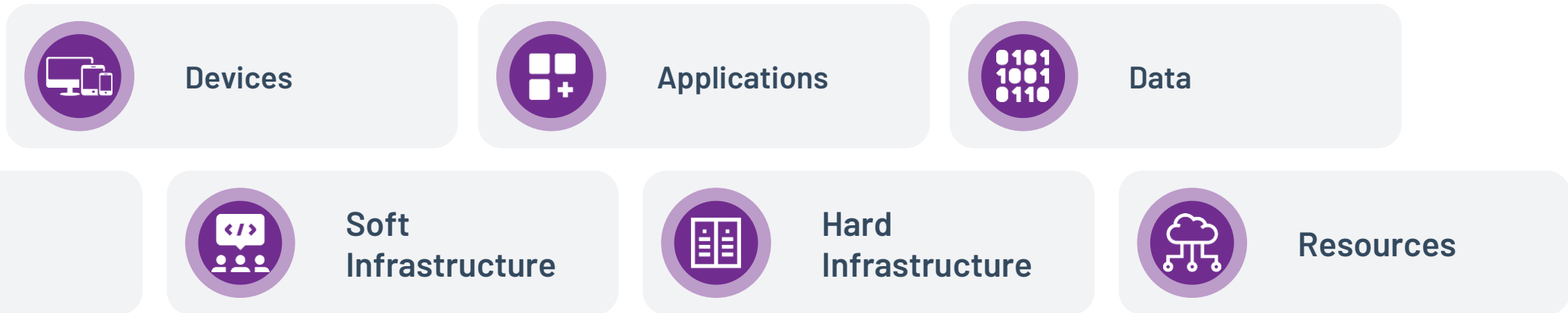
- Phones, tablets, computers, watches, digital signs, car computers, pos terminals, sensors, cameras, IOT, etc.

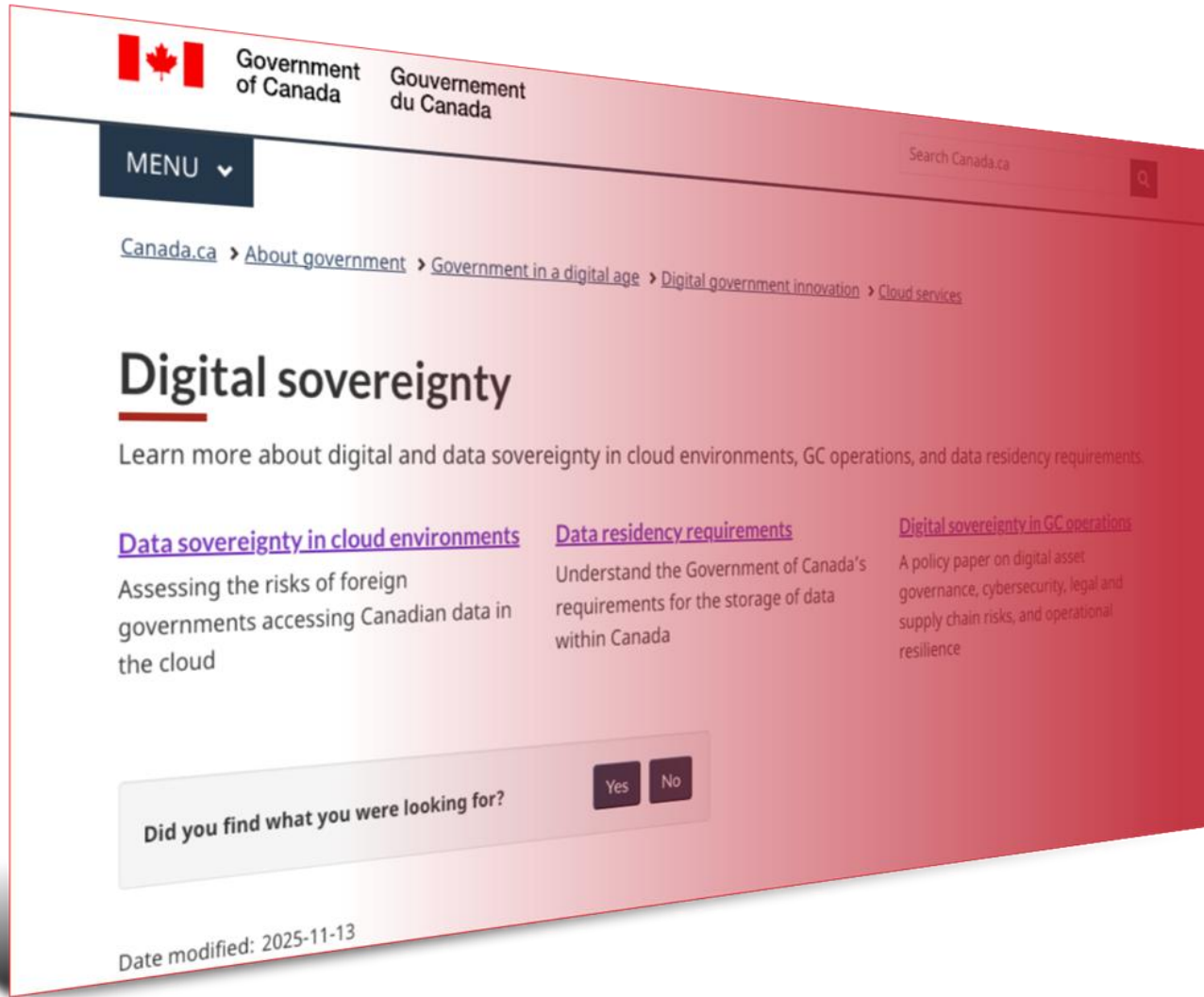


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Who governs what?

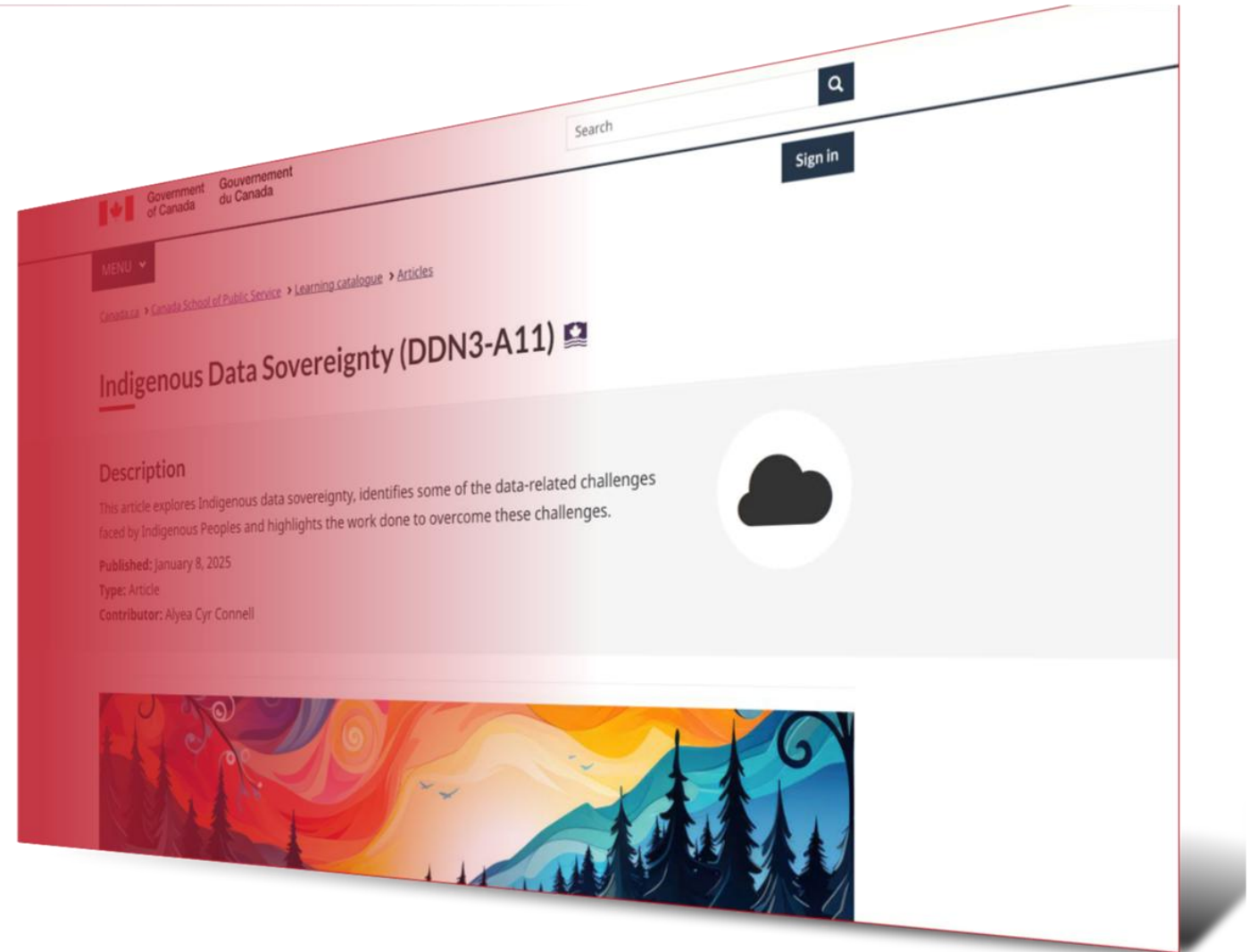
7 Layers of the Digital Stack





“This paper also **does not address Indigenous data sovereignty considerations**, which is distinct from the GC’s institutional approach and led by Indigenous partners through **separate processes.**”

“While **federal departments are working diligently to maintain Canada’s commitment to Indigenous data sovereignty**, Indigenous communities are working on their own data governance strategies.”



Data sovereignty for who?



03



How privacy practices contribute to harm or empowerment

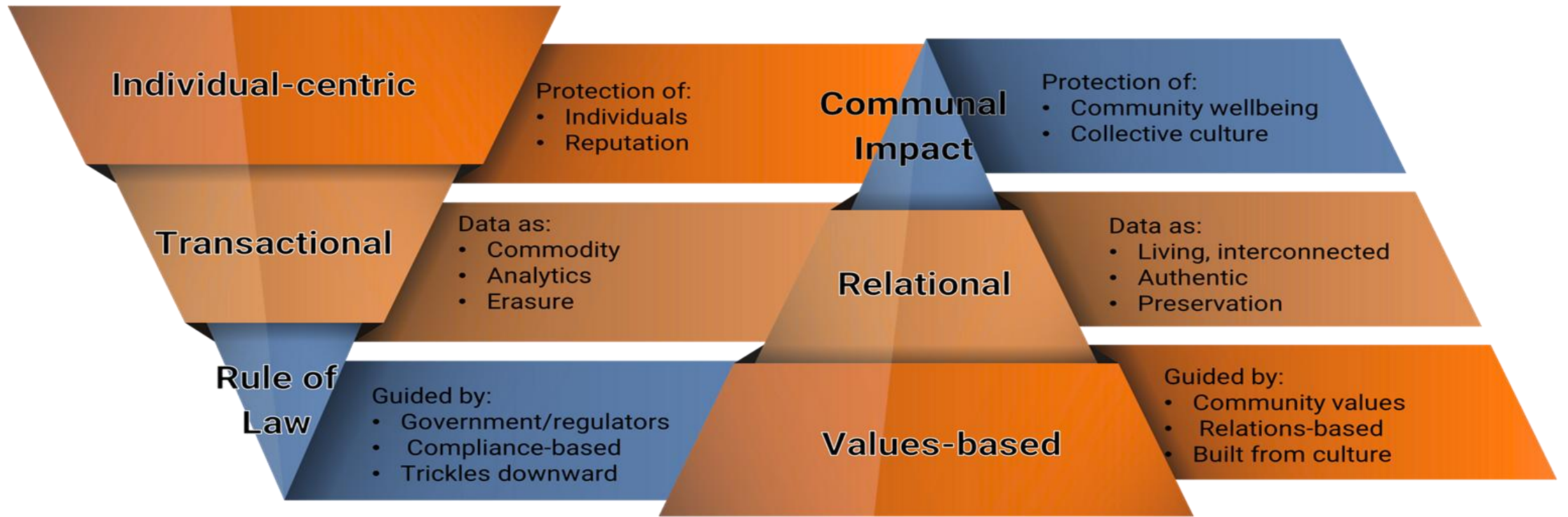
1. How do current privacy frameworks in Canada shape outcomes differently for Indigenous peoples?
2. Where do you see those frameworks falling short when it comes to recognizing Indigenous rights tied to data?
3. What distinguishes Indigenous approaches to privacy and data protection from Western models?
4. Where have you seen privacy practices, laws, or interpretations create real barriers?



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Reframing Privacy

Top heavy



Grounded

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What are Indigenous Peoples' data?

“Indigenous Peoples’ data refers to data, information, and knowledges recorded on any medium and in any format generated by Indigenous Peoples, as well as by governments, the private sector, and other institutions or individuals, on and about Indigenous Peoples, their governments, or their more-than-human relations.

Indigenous Peoples’ data is comprised of, but not limited to, information, specimens, and knowledges about more than humans with which they have relations; information about Indigenous individuals; and information and knowledges about Indigenous Peoples as collectives.”

- IEEE Std 2890-2025

“Nothing About Us, Without Us”

- **Data about us**
 - ◆ Censuses, demographics, health surveys, birth/marriage/death records, maps, “research” in general
- **Data from us**
 - ◆ Histories, stories, songs, arts, dances, regalias, languages, ceremonies, teachings, medicines, DNA
- **Data of our land**
 - ◆ “Environment”, water, plants, animals, sun, moon, sky, wind, names and responsibilities, “all our relations”

Categories of Indigenous Peoples' Data



Demographic

Population, membership, housing, migration



Health & Wellness

Services, outcomes, traditional medicine



Land & Environment

Territory, resources, climate, water



Cultural & Language

Language recordings, teachings, stories, music, art



Service Delivery

Programs, education, child welfare



Economic

Employment, business, revenue, contracts



Governance

Constitution, Minutes, Administrative records, policies, elections data



Research

Collected data, findings, reports



Archival

Library and Archives, Provincial/State and church archives, MMIWG2S+

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Patterns of Data Extraction

“Settler colonizers come to stay: invasion is a structure not an event.” - Patrick Wolfe

Academic: “we’ve been researched to death”

Helicopter research: collect data, publish papers, build careers, and give nothing back. No local development of skills or institutional capacity to govern data. The ubiquitous survey, interview, or “collaboration” request.

Government: tracking (and managing) our “disappearance”

Census undercounts, racialized misclassifications, failure to collect Indigenous identifiers. Forms, countless forms. Disclosure regulations, audits, and third-party management, etc.

Corporate: generating value for shareholders

Data-use agreements with no restrictions on secondary use. Commodification of cultural knowledge. DNA and other medical samples used for pharmaceutical development. Facial recognition, surveillance, and digital colonization.

04



How technological advancements interplay

1. How do current technology models align with or clash against Indigenous approaches to data and accountability?
2. What does it actually mean to talk about 'capacity building' in this space?
3. Where do you see the biggest risks—or gaps—right now when it comes to IDSov in the digital and technological landscape?



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Digital Colonization

- ⚠️ **New technologies carry new versions of old problems. For example, generative “AI”**
 - Indigenous cultural content used as “AI training” data without consent
 - Generative “AI” reproducing or fabricating cultural knowledge
 - Compounding existing harms upon marginalized populations
 - Energy / water / mineral usage — data centre impact on the land and “environment” (includes us)
 - “Data genocide” — when collection and analysis methods systematically harm Indigenous peoples through misrepresentation, erasure, and extraction

[Kukutai, T. & Taylor, J. \(2016\). Indigenous Data Sovereignty. ANU Press.](#)

Who really “owns” digital data?



People

- Skills, knowledge, experience
- Authority, governance, economics



Infrastructure

- Land/water/sky, electricity, Internet
- Jurisdiction, ownership, responsibility



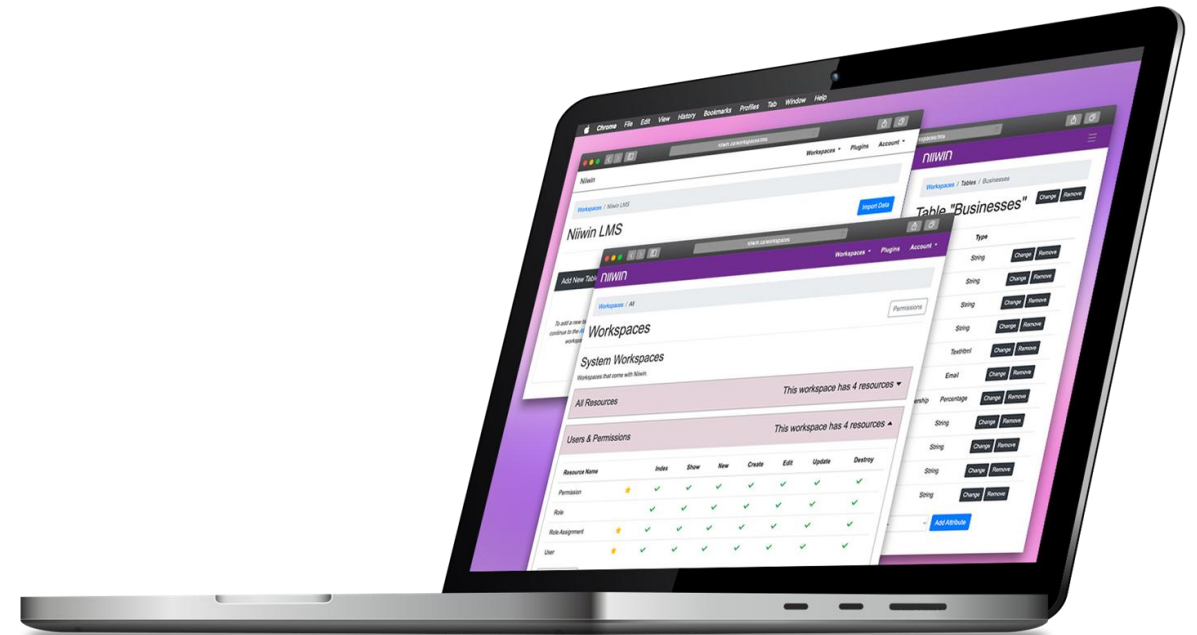
Hardware

- Computers, peripherals, networking
- Manufacturing, trade, maintenance



Software

- Policy, standards, security
- Design, distribution, control



niiwin.app

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Resourcing on the ground data sovereignty

- The Digital Divide
- Local infrastructure
- Local expertise
- Systems built for Indigenous People by Indigenous People



05

IDSov in Action



1. If IDSov is taken seriously as a matter of governance and rights, what changes?
2. Why does this matter more broadly?
3. What are the most important shifts you think need to happen, and what should people in this room be taking away into their own work?



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How do we build our own software?



Animikii's Pathfinding Process

Project Kickoff

- What are we seeking to accomplish?
- Who will do what and when will they do it?

Software Overview

- What are we seeking to build?
- Why are we building it?
- Who will benefit from it?

User Roles

- How do we empathize with the people who will use this software?
- How do we build this to meet their their needs?

Information Architecture

- What could the software look like and what will it do?
- How will users interact with it?

Recommendations and Sign Off

- What challenges could we face when developing this software?
- What do we recommend in order to meet these challenges?
- How much will all this cost?

Creating the Conditions for IDSov

- Not “underdeveloped” → Over-extracted and under-resourced
- Capacity challenges are systemic
- **What Needs to Shift**
 - From capacity-building → capacity-respecting and resourcing
 - From consultation → shared and recognized authority
 - From short-term projects → long-term infrastructure + governance
 - From compliance → relational accountability



Your Responsibility

- Recognize your privilege and your power
- Indigenous authority vs Indigenous considerations/perspectives
- Embedding Indigenous rights into privacy practices
- We limit privacy protections when we're individualistic and compliance-driven

Whose sovereignty are we really talking about?



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05

From Awareness to Action



How can you find support and follow up with us?



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Awareness

Building understanding, confidence, and shared language

- **Indigenous Data Sovereignty topics**
- **Privacy Foundations**
- **Digital Safety & Literacy**
- **AI**

- *Virtual and In-person team training*
- *1:1 training*
- *custom training module development*
- *speaking engagements*



Responsibility

Turning intention into systems change

- **Indigenous Data Governance Frameworks & Protocols**
- **Policies & Procedures**
- **Data Lifecycle & Information Management Design**
- **Governance-Aligned Process & Technology Support**
- **Implementation & Capacity Building**



Accountability

Demonstrating trust through values-aligned practices

- **Audits, Reviews & Readiness Assessments**
- **Custom Assessment & Evaluation Tools**
- **Indigenous Engagement Protocols**
- **Data Sharing & Partnership Agreements**
- **Ongoing Advisory & Accountability Support**

For more info email us at: info@wabuskdata.ca

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Supporting data sovereignty initiatives

Key Niiwin Features

- Customizable user roles and permissions that consider and allow flexibility in Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP®)
- Cloud or self-hosted multi-user database that allows for Real-time Collaboration (RTC)
- Industry-standard and beyond data security practices and features including Off-Site Backups and Disaster Recovery
- Transparent ongoing software development costs and dependencies that include business or economic model considerations
- Involve users and their communities via distinctions-based software design that meets their specific needs

#DataBack
Vol 2:

Truth Before
"Indigenous AI"
Understanding and Resisting Generative AI



A critical look for Indigenous-focused organizations, governments, and anyone who wants to better understand Generative AI while protecting their rights and privacy.



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Nya:wəh!

Jeff Doctor

Impact Strategist



jeff.doctor@animikii.com



bsky.app/profile/jeff.doctor



Scan this QR code with your phone
to chat with me on signal

See our News River for Indigenous-
focused tech articles every week:
animikii.com/newsriver

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How Did Things Go? (We Really Want To Know)

Did you enjoy this session? Is there any way we could make it better? Let us know by filling out a speaker evaluation.

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2. Select **IAPP Symposium 2026**.
3. Tap "Schedule" on the bottom navigation bar.
4. Find this session. Click "Rate this Session" within the description.
5. Once you've answered all three questions, tap "Done".

Thank you!

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