



WOMEN'S  
LEADERSHIP  
CIRCLE®



## Board announces return of B.C. Economic Forum

Join industry leaders and elected officials Oct. 23 for a working forum on diversity in business

B.C.'s economy needs more women leaders — in business, on boards and in growing industries.

Last October, our inaugural B.C. Economic Forum highlighted opportunities to support women in business and to advance the conversation into action strategies for economic growth. Most importantly, it resulted in feedback that led to *Women as a*

*Catalyst for Growth: A B.C. Action Plan*, which outlines practical recommendations for government, business and individuals — to shape policy and ultimately create change.

In order to increase the economic growth and impact of women in B.C. and Canada, the key recommendations in this action plan include promoting

and advocating for diversity, championing women, fostering positive and self-affirming mindsets, incorporating a diversity focus in early education, and involving men in the conversation.

To ensure the successful implementation of this action plan, we need organizations and individuals to take action now. The result will be greater economic

growth through the promotion of gender diversity in leadership and throughout our workforce in B.C. and in Canada.

On Oct. 23, join us for our second annual B.C. Economic Forum in partnership with the **WEB Alliance of BC**. This year's forum, presented by **Deloitte**, will give you an opportunity to discuss your plan of action while

seated at industry specific tables.

Help us grow the economic impact and outcomes for women in B.C. and contribute to the growth of our provincial economy and beyond. Join the leaders — men and women in your community — in a powerful and engaging working forum.

Registration is now open at [boardoftrade.com/events](http://boardoftrade.com/events).

## Privacy is dead — long live privacy

BY SANDY GAROSSINO

*"If you have something that you don't want anyone to know, maybe you shouldn't be doing it in the first place."*  
- Eric Schmidt, CEO, Google (2009)

*"None of us should accept that the government or a company or anybody should have access to all of our private information. This is a basic human right. We all have a right to privacy. We shouldn't give in to scare-mongering or to people who fundamentally don't understand the details."*  
- Tim Cook, CEO, Apple (2015)



Sandy Garossino

These two flatly contradictory statements by tech titans spanning a five-year gap illustrate the volatility of public expectations in the technology space — expectations that form the foundations of tech corporate social responsibility (CSR).

Few sectors have experienced such a chaotic pinball path in CSR as the tech world, particularly since the advent of social media. This should come as no surprise — human

history has no precedent for the profoundly radical global phenomenon of the Internet.

We are all feeling our way — but at warp speed.

Through the web's infancy, public perception of technology was marked by near euphoric Utopianism. Public trust in the goodwill and technological mastery of the young tech whizzes behind such companies **Google**, **Apple** and **Facebook** was virtually unparalleled.

Criticisms were muted for

three main reasons: nobody understood the commercial model underlying the tech sector, nobody had a clue about data collection and risk, and technology just seemed irrepressibly fun. Doubters could be, and were, easily dismissed as out-of-touch Luddites.

It was possible in those days for an **Eric Schmidt** to lecture the world on a new paradigm of privacy as a disappearing vestige of an antiquated idea.

That all changed with **Edward Snowden**. By ripping the veil off the sweeping scope of the global data collected by the National Security Administration in the U.S., the former systems administrator threw the world into a kind of data shock.

Suddenly the public learned that its communications, entertainment, location, web browser behaviour, location and preferences are routinely tracked and sold in a hyper-lucrative data bloom.

Companies like **Epsilon**, **BlueKai**, **Spokeo**, **Datalogix**, and others drive a \$156 billion (USD) data broker industry that

mines data from ISPs, credit card issuers, mobile providers, casinos, dating services, medical sites and online games such as **Angry Birds** and **Candy Crush**. According to **McAfee**, 82 per cent of Android apps track users' online activities and location.

Smartphones are notoriously leaky data fountains, especially via location based services such as **Yelp**, **Tinder** and **Grindr**. Aggregated locational profiles are rich sources of information to advertisers and marketers.

Until recently, most of this activity was unknown, as the public enjoyed what it thought was a hey-day of free computing resources. Incomprehensible online terms of service agreements went unread by the vast majority of users.

And the tech industry is vigorously defending its revenue stream. As recently as a 2013 court filing, Google shielded its profitable secondary data market by claiming that Gmail users have no legitimate expectation of privacy over email content. The company has even

admitted in litigation that its Street View cars not only photographed neighbourhoods for its mapping function, but gathered data including passwords and emails from computers in homes and offices they passed.

Post-Snowden, the blind trust that consumers granted the technology sector crumbled. A new concept—privacy as a human right—is rapidly gaining currency, especially in Europe. Led by privacy advocates as well as feminists and minorities concerned over issues of online harassment, the idea found a stalwart champion in the CEO of the world's largest corporation, Apple's **Tim Cook**.

The diametrically opposed world-views of Schmidt and Cook will dominate the tech CSR debate for the foreseeable future, as the Internet grows up.

Meanwhile, if you do one thing today — turn off location tracking on your phone.

*Sandy Garossino is a former lawyer, business owner, and member of the Women's Leadership Circle Advisory Committee.*