Government of Canada Digital Identity (ID)

Background

The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) is working with other departments and jurisdictions to develop a pan-Canadian approach to digital identity and the acceptance of trusted digital identities across jurisdictions and government. The goal is to allow Canadians and Canadian businesses to log in with their provincial trusted digital identity to access federal government services in a timely and secure way.

Employment and Social Development Canada and the Canada Revenue Agency are enabling the acceptance of provincial digital identities through pilots and projects. TBS, in its role as a central agency, supports GC digital identity activities with other departments.

The first digital ID pilot project launched in summer 2019 in Alberta (MyAlberta Digital ID). A second project launched in February 2020, which saw the BC government and CRA enable access to CRA's My Account with the BC My Services card. In August 2020, ESDC is expected to enable full access to My Service Canada for holders of the BC My Services card. Other projects are also being explored as part of a federated model.

These activities may generate media interest in TBS' role, the government's work on Digital ID in general, and the implications for security and privacy.

Key messages

General

- The Government of Canada (GC) is committed to transition to a more digital government in order to improve citizen service and offering a user-friendly experience while protecting privacy and security.

- Canadians want more seamless, secure, and trusted access to GC services, greater transparency from the GC, and more autonomy and control over their digital information.

- Recent digital ID projects provide provincial digital ID holders in Alberta and British Columbia with streamlined access to federal digital government services.

- Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) recognizes the important role of digital identity (ID) to streamline the way in which residents access government services.

- A trusted digital identity is an electronic equivalent of who you are as a real person, used exclusively by you, to receive services and carry out transactions with confidence.

- Digital identity will account for greater cost-efficiencies and savings for the GC, protect user rights, and improve the overall integrity of government services.

- Collaborative projects like those with Alberta and British Columbia give the government greater insight into how to provide digital services that Canadians want and need.

Pan-Canadian Trust Framework

- These projects are made possible in part through the Pan Canadian Trust Framework (PCTF), which has been developed in collaboration with federal government departments, provinces, territories, municipalities and industry partners.

- The PCTF assesses how trusted digital identities are created, issued, and accepted between jurisdictions and across different sectors within Canada and internationally.

- It is a set of criteria and guidelines to ensure that public and private sectors abide by a common, agreed-upon set of rules to trust and accept each other's digital identities.

- The PCTF initiative is an important step towards achieving simple, fast and secure access to government services for Canadians, anytime, anywhere, on any device.

- Government departments and agencies continue to work together on the PCTF to further develop criteria and set parameters to explore more partnerships with provinces and territories and improve service delivery to Canadians through trusted digital ID.

Policy direction

- To support the evolution of trusted digital identity, the government has updated the [Policy on Government Security,](#) which includes the [Directive on Identity Management.](#)

- These changes set the stage for greater interoperability between departments and other levels of government to enable a more seamless service experience.

- Privacy, security, consent, choice, and trust in government are at the core of a digital identity strategy.

- When using Digital Identity to access government services, only the minimal amount of personal identity data is shared, which remains under the direct control of the individual when they log in and throughout their online session.

- The PCTF works in concert with other processes, such as privacy impact assessments, and security assessments to support end-to-end security and privacy of personal information.

CIO Strategy Council (CIOSC) National Standard on Digital Identity

- The First Edition of CAN/CIOSC 103-1: Digital Trust and Identity, as developed by the CIO Strategy Council (CIOSC) Technical Committee was approved by the Standards

Council of Canada on July 31, 2020 as a national voluntary standard for Canada.

- The CIOSC is a federal non-profit corporation made up of Chief Information Officers who are innovators in their organizations. CIOSC has been accredited by the Standards Council of Canada (SCC) to develop National Standards of Canada.

- Developing standards is part of the Council's mission to support Canada's information and communication technology (ICT) ecosystem to give Canadian organizations a competitive edge.

- TBS is an active participant in the CIOSC Technical Committee on Digital Trust and Identity comprised of CIOSC members who have expertise in the development of digital identity related standards.

- The national standard is aligned with and leverages content from the Treasury Board Directive on Identity Management, the Standard on Identity Credential Assurance, and the Public Sector Profile of the Pan-Canadian Trust Framework.

- The national standard is a major step forward in advancing digital identity programs across Canada, in support of the broader digital transformation efforts to better serve Canadians.

- The standard fulfils the gap for a Canadian 'national authority' (voluntary) for digital identity and trust frameworks and will be instrumental in aligning approaches of the Provinces and Territories to ensure a Pan-Canadian approach to digital identity.

- Once adopted, this standard would:
  - Encourage alignment of digital identity programs and systems between jurisdictions within Canada;
  - Accelerate the adoption of the Pan-Canadian Trust Framework, especially the Public Sector Profile PCTF, to ensure overall integrity of digital identity programs;
  - Set the stage for discussions for mutual recognition of digital identities between countries (which may be proposed as a topic for discussion for the upcoming Digital Nations Summit).

To conclude, this standard and the collaborative efforts to develop it, represent a major step forward in advancing digital identity programs across Canada. This standard, and the resulting digital identity programs will support the broader digital transformation efforts underway to better serve all Canadians.