

June 4, 2004

Ms. Philippa Lawson
Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic (CIPPIC)
University of Ottawa

Dear Ms. Lawson,

Enclosed, please find the Liberal Party's response to your questionnaire.

On behalf of our leader, the Right Honourable Paul Martin, thank you for writing to identify the major concerns of your membership. Your interest in the policies of the Liberal Party as they relate to these issues is appreciated.

Thank you for your recent email concerning issues related to the Internet and new technologies. As you pointed out the expansion of copyright law in the digital domain, sharing of music files, the growth of spam and the impact of new national security measures are all important current issues.

The Liberal Government considers copyright reform to be extremely important, and has been working for at least seven years on copyright changes required to adapt to the current economic, social, technological, and international environment.

The federal government is committed to ensuring that Canada's copyright regime remains among the most modern and progressive in the world. The objectives to be met through the reform process are to:

- create opportunities for Canadians in the new economy;
- stimulate the production of cultural content and diversity of choices for Canadians;
- encourage a strong Canadian presence on the Internet; and,
- enrich learning opportunities for Canadians.

In 1997, the Liberal Government introduced Bill C-32 that introduced a compensation system for private copying, in the form of a levy on blank audio recording media, benefiting eligible composers, lyricists, performers and producers of sound recordings for the making of recordings and a number of new exceptions to non-profit educational institutions, libraries, archives, museums, broadcasters and persons with perceptual disabilities allowing them to reproduce or use copyright material in specific circumstances without paying royalties or obtaining authorization from rights holders. Since then, the levy has been extended to blank CDs and to MP3 players.

An important aspect of the Bill C-32 was section 92, which required a review of the legislation within five years (that is, no later than September 1, 2002). The result of this review was the continuation of the copyright reform agenda, in which the Liberal Government considered various copyright challenges. As it moves forward, the Liberal Government will also continue to bear in mind the

following principles that are designed to meet the economic and cultural policy challenges of Canada:

- ensuring net gains for Canadians;
- maintaining the responsiveness of the Act to technological innovation and new business models;
- clarifying the law where it will reduce the risk of unnecessary litigation; and
- ensuring a direction for reform that takes into account, and helps shape, international trends.

Spam

On May 11, 2004 The Honourable Lucienne Robillard, Minister of Industry launched an action plan and announced the creation of a ministerial task force to combat spam. The plan includes a series of initiatives by government, industry, marketers and consumers focused on identifying measures to reduce and control spam.

In the fall of 2004, the Liberal Government will organize a round table meeting with key stakeholders to review progress on the implementation of its proposed plan to reduce and control spam and in the spring of 2005, the Task Force will present its findings.

National ID cards

The Liberal government is committed to the safety and security of Canada and Canadians and recognizes the importance of related issues such as document integrity, biometrics, public security, privacy and civil liberties.

In October 2003, Citizenship and Immigration Canada hosted a forum on Biometrics in which the issue of National ID Cards was discussed within the context of improving document integrity and public security.

Overall, support for National ID cards has been limited due to concerns about personal privacy, governance, projected costs, and perceived use and the Department has not undertaken any further discussions or policy development on national ID cards. However, we continue to monitor and research national identity documents in other countries.

Sincerely yours,

Michèle Cadario
Executive Director
Liberal Party of Canada