

NEWS RELEASE

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## **Parties questioned about Internet Issues**

While health care, the environment, the sponsorship scandal, and fiscal management continue to dominate political debates in the run-up to the January 23<sup>rd</sup> election, many Canadians want to know where the parties stand on other pressing issues. The Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic (CIPPIC), based at the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Law, wants to do something about that. So it is posing a number of questions to the parties on controversial issues involving the Internet. The clinic will then post the parties' responses on its website.

"We're hoping to get a good response, at least from the major parties", said Philippa Lawson, Executive Director and General Counsel for CIPPIC. "These are all important, timely issues that the government will be dealing with one way or another in 2006, so we think it's important that the parties disclose now how they plan to address each issue."

CIPPIC is asking about party positions on copyright law reform, police surveillance powers, telecommunications policy reform, and legislative responses to spam, spyware, ID theft, and other privacy invasions. CIPPIC's questions, along with background information, are posted on its website at [www.cippic.ca](http://www.cippic.ca). Party responses will be posted as they are received.

"Copyright law reform, police surveillance powers, and spam were on the Parliamentary agenda before the election. Private sector privacy legislation is up for Parliamentary review in 2006, and stakeholders have been pushing for reforms in this area as well as to telecom policy. So these aren't new issues", said Lawson. "We want to provide a focal point for Canadians to find out how the different parties would approach each issue, before voting. We also hope that this initiative will cause parties to think more about some of the lower-profile, but still important, issues that will be facing the new government."

CIPPIC is the first and only legal clinic of its kind in Canada, with a mandate of filling voids in public policy debates, bringing balance to policy and law-making processes, and providing legal assistance to under-represented organizations and individuals on matters involving the intersection of law and technology. Law students work with clinic counsel on a variety of current legal issues arising from the use of new technologies.

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