



# DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY

## *NEWS RELEASE: 2010 DATA PRIVACY DAY*

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Media Contact: Clarissa Mendez 703-631-0650

### WASHINGTON'S 2010 DATA PRIVACY COLLOQUIUM: DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY REVIEWS COMPUTERS, THE INTERNET, AND THE TENUOUS CURTAIN OF PRIVACY

WASHINGTON, D.C. February 1, 2010 – A capacity audience greeted the 2010 edition of **Dialogue on Diversity's** Internet Data Privacy Colloquium, presented January 27 at the Stewart R. Mott Home on Capitol Hill under the title: *Progress, Privacy, and the Technical Toolbox*. The program marked the Dialogue's second annual participation in the international observance of Data Privacy Day, an established occasion, fixed on January 28, for a flurry of late January programs and events, all designed to cast a strong and penetrating spotlight on the perils to privacy in the swiftly evolving world of computers, the internet, social networking, and contemporary telecommunications.

The multifaceted problem of privacy for users of these forms of storage and communications range across all classes, ethnicities, and occupation groups in a complex society. Its ramifications include the security of sensitive medical and health-care information, the reams of facts on the commercial histories and habits of myriad individuals generated in everyday transactions, the data amassed by government agencies, some of it of a highly sensitive character, some data, again, openly acquired, while still other information, of unknown amounts and kinds, is covertly gathered.

Among participants in the Colloquium were business owners and professionals, academic figures, students and Congressional staff, executives of Civil Society groups, and interested citizens.

"The Colloquium was a clear success," said **Ma. Cristina Caballero**, Dialogue on Diversity's President, "in that, as we had hoped, our lineup of outstanding speakers laid out in succession the latest word on the information technology strategies in commerce, government, medicine, and even the now universal social networking realm, together with the latest privacy safeguards,, technical and legal, that are being designed in the race to keep pace."

The Forum opened with an overview of the 2010 observance of Data Privacy Day by **Ms. Jolynn Dellinger**, an Intel executive deputed to organize the series of programs across the country to mark the special day and, more important, to alert an often little concerned population to the profoundly disturbing perils presented by a galloping technology that can forcibly undermine the elements of privacy that permit a secure existence for the threatened individuals in an already intrusive society.

Other Colloquium highlights – the discussion of the mysterious nexus of the technical complexities and the still-to-be-formed legal framework for the internet and the privacy threats it contains, by an expert on both facets of the problem, **Prof. Catherine Sandoval** of the Law School at Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, California, set in the center of the Silicon Valley matrix of classical high-tech innovation. **Maya Bernstein**, Privacy Advocate at the Department of Health and Human Services, joined **Sheel Pandya** of the Center for Democracy and Technology in reviewing prospects for the broad introduction of computerized data processing for medical practice, and the frantic efforts of agencies and legislatures as they scramble to fashion systems of finely targeted access to the soon to be full and instantaneous medical intelligence on individuals, and to fine-tune these systems for actual operation in the crucible of medical emergency. Cato Institute scholar **Jim Harper** turned a severely analytical eye to the burgeoning governmental intelligence gathering enterprise set in motion as a response to the perceived threats of terrorist initiatives. Much of this activity, Mr. Harper argued, is of minimal utility in uncovering terrorist operations, but, as its chief effect, works to vitiate civil liberties in a targeted population – the terrorist strategies aim, in part, at provoking demoralizing over-reactions to often only limited threats. **Joseph Lazzarotti**, employment law expert from Jackson Lewis LLP at White Plains, New York, dealt with the legal and practical minefields of employee relations in a world of fast transmission and easy analysis of all too readily acquired information. [*For a full Colloquium report see the Dialogue's Web-Site.*]