

- focus on what the next steps are.

2. Discussion

2.1. The Concepts of Privacy and Sovereignty

Two dichotomies emerged during the discussion on privacy:

1. Tangible privacy *versus* intangible privacy

A point was made that a distinction should be made between tangible and intangible privacy. While the former refers to the security of a private space (i.e., home), the latter refers to a commodity (i.e., a piece of information which can be sold for entertainment). The attitude of the Canadian public towards privacy was described as schizophrenic because there seems to be a desire for disclosure of intangible privacy, as the number of people watching the Oscars, for instance, indicates. The opposite is true for tangible privacy. *Therefore, it would appear that as a commodity, privacy is not inherently valuable.*

2. Consumer privacy *versus* citizen privacy

Reg Whitaker drew attention to the dichotomy between consumer privacy and citizen privacy. Following up on his presentation, he highlighted the fact that citizens are active participants in public governance (through various organisations or associations, for instance) and help shape the system. He reiterated that the emerging social structure in the West does not facilitate participation, instead the state itself treats citizens as passive consumers who buy into whatever is already cooked-up for them. The system is formidable because instead of simply putting up with it, as before, people actually buy into it. The "sign or die" element of many contracts underlines the point about the lack of choice rather well. There is undoubtedly a "voluntary involuntary transfer of information" to banks, for instance. But the complicity inherent in the new system is deeper. "We are agreeing to work within the system and in extension, to being treated as consumers." The "citizen as a consumer" perspective obfuscates the need for having a public persona, he said. There is a danger that today, people live in anonymity, without a shared history.

Balancing privacy and concerns such as having a "healthy" community is key. Privacy should be redefined and thought about more as a social right that contributes to democratic citizenship. People need private space in which they can develop themselves in relation to the society that in turn impacts on this development.

Two other important observations were made about privacy:

1. Privacy could be defined as "invented" and, therefore, culturally relative. Privacy has evolved to become meaningful.