



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy New Year!

2018 was an exceptionally busy year, and on behalf of all ITAC staff, I wanted to take a moment to thank you for your continued support of our Association.

Starting off a new year brings with it the excitement of embarking on a whole new year of opportunities. It also provides us a meaningful opportunity to reflect on the past, and to express our gratitude for all that we have accomplished together. So, let me begin by saying thank you. So many of the programs and initiatives we worked on last year – and will be working on this year – includes input from you, our valued members. Our success is your success and we appreciate all that you do to support the ITAC team, and by extension, the information, communications and technology (ICT) sector.

Here are some of our more memorable highlights of 2018, as well as some activities coming your way this year (click here to read the full message, or on the links to learn more about the individual sections).

Advocacy

Working in partnership with governments of all levels allows ITAC to promote public policy solutions that contribute to innovation and Canada's economic prosperity. Bringing key issues and perspectives of the ICT sector to federal, provincial and municipal decision makers is key to change – and we're making significant headway. Many of ITAC's recommendations were directly addressed by the federal government through Budget 2018 – but we still have work to do. ITAC submitted its [Pre-Budget Submission in August](#) with input from many of our members; there are several important areas we hope Budget 2019 will resolve.

This ties into our efforts around promoting the immediate need for a collaborative, modern, national data-driven strategy that will enable Canada to be a global leader. In a [report](#) released this summer, ITAC provided considerations for the Government in developing a national strategy, including: Artificial Intelligence (AI); 5G networks; trans-border data flows; quantum computing; digital identities; data ownership; protectionism; and security and privacy. We received considerable positive feedback which stated a desire to work directly with ITAC and its members as part of the federal government's National Consultation on Digital and Data Transformation.

More recently, through the [Fall Economic Update](#), the government responded to our industry's calls to accelerate capital cost allowances (CCA) to support investments in technology and has also set a course to partner with the ICT industry to ensure that the current regulatory environments do not limit Canadians' capacity to innovate in practical applications of technologies. Through the creation of an External Advisory Committee on Regulatory Competitiveness, and a Centre for Regulatory Innovation to act as a focal point for businesses to engage with Government in in "Regulatory Sandboxes" to support innovation.

ITAC also recognizes the importance of and need for a strong cyber plan and engagement opportunities for Canadian industries and individuals. To bring industry and government leaders together to discuss these challenges, ITAC hosted several cyber events and activities across Canada this year, including the *ITAC Saskatchewan Cyber Security Forum*, our first cyber event in Western Canada, the full day *ITAC Cyber Security Technology Summit* in Ottawa, and a presentation by Statistics Canada which presented its *Canadian Survey of Cyber Security and Cybercrime* – the first of its kind in Canada. ITAC will continue to focus on these – and many more – key federal and provincial issues in the New Year.

Ontario

The Ontario Board of directors, under the leadership of Chair, David Telka, is hard at work, reviewing the activities of its four committees with the Committee Chairs to determine the best course of action in 2019. The Committees include:

- *Digital Committee*, which promotes modernization, innovation and digital transformation for industry and government
- *Ontario Public Sector Business Committees (PSBC)*, which monitors, assesses and advises on public sector business and government procurement policies and practices in Ontario. It regularly hosts members-only Fireside Chat events that provide unique access to government leaders. It also hosts bi-annual events with the Corporate Chief Information Officer of the Ontario Government, and several of his CIOs;
- *Entrepreneurship and Innovation Committee*, which recommends and develops programming to encourage the growth and success of our SME members; and
- *The Ontario Policy and Advocacy Committee*, which is responsible for identifying key policy recommendations and government messaging for influencing government.

It's important to note that after 15 years, the political tide shifted significantly in Ontario in 2018, with Doug Ford, PC, as Ontario's new Premier. ITAC has been making inroads with the government to ensure continuing commitment to develop Ontario's digital economy. This will continue throughout 2019 as we work to find ways to drive our digital agenda forward.

We continued our series of successful interactive Fireside Chat series throughout the year and the next [Ontario Public Sector Business Committee \(PSBC\) and Fireside Chat](#) with Karim Ramji, CIO, Kinark Child and Family Services will be held on Thursday, January 17th. If you're an OPSBC member – be sure to sign up! We are also working on the next Broader Public Sector event in early March. Stay tuned for more details.

We are currently in the process of drafting the ITAC Ontario Budget Submission, which is due on February 8, 2019. We will engage our members by the end of January with a draft Submission that will align with the themes suggested by Ontario Finance and the core commitments of the Ford Government.

ITAC Talent

This year, [ITAC's Talent division](#) continued its focus on developing the next generation of tech talent – helping to facilitate and grow Canada as a tech powerhouse. Our [Career Ready program](#) – which is part of the Government of Canada's Student Work Integrated Program (SWILP) saw almost 550 students placed with small and medium-sized enterprises across the country. Going forward, ITAC will increase its focus on placing cyber and AI students, and will develop a comprehensive integrated national outreach campaign to increase awareness and comprehension of AI learning, career and employment options. We also will be publishing the results of a feasibility study in AI at the undergraduate level in 2019, that will be exploring creative solutions that provide new ways of addressing AI specific labour market shortage.

Most recently, ITAC had the opportunity to partner with Glenforest Secondary School to host the third annual [Xplore STEM Conference](#). The Conference, which was created to promote careers in STEM, brought together over 1,600 high school students and educators from across the Greater Toronto Area, British Columbia, Quebec and Prince Edward Island, in addition to students from two Ontario Indigenous communities to explore STEM programs and careers through 12 guest speakers, hands-on activities, 35 information booths and over 70 one-on-one speed mentoring opportunities.

Watch for an update on our many events and activities for 2019, and be sure to visit www.itactalent.ca often!

ITAC Health

In mid-November, ITAC's Health division published a white paper that highlights barriers to the adoption of the emerging technologies required to accelerate the transformation of Canada's current healthcare system. The Paper, [Accelerating the Adoption of Digital Health Technologies in Canada](#), encourages both the Canadian public and private sectors to be significantly more engaged, collaborative and focused on the common objectives of sustainable

investment, standardized procurement, and scalable innovation nationally, across our provincial boundaries, to create a truly Canadian digital health marketplace. It was developed by the ITAC Health Advocacy Committee and included the broad contribution of many of ITAC's vendor committee members.

Earlier in the year, ITAC Health hosted its annual [HIMSS Canadian Reception](#), which was exceptionally well attended this year. The Reception is part of the larger *HIMSS Global Conference & Exhibition* that brings world-class education, cutting-edge products and solutions, and unique networking opportunities needed to solve some of the biggest health information and technology challenges. The 2019 event will be held in Orlando, FL on February 12, 2019.

Be sure to mark your calendars for the [Canadian Health Informatics Awards](#), which will be held as part of the *e-Health Conference* in Toronto, ON, on May 27, 2019.

[Click here](#) to learn more.

Diversity & Inclusion

In 2018, ITAC and Women in Communications and Technology (WCT) collaborated with CGI and Microsoft to put on a number of events in [Calgary](#) and [Edmonton](#), including: *Women in Leadership* events, a speakers' series open to men and women of all career levels; invitational roundtables to address women's participation and advancement in the digital economy; and Board Discovery Days aimed at increasing the number of women serving on boards of directors. The overall goal was to identify where women are in the Alberta ICT industry and to explore the barriers to retention and advancement that they face. They featured frank discussions that helped to provide advice, counsel and inspiration to women building or considering careers in technology; and were part of an overall initiative undertaken through a partnership with the Province of Alberta, with funding provided by the Government of Canada through the Canada-Alberta Job Fund.

ITAC will explore new opportunities in other parts of the country in 2019. [Click here](#) to follow what ITAC is doing around diversity and inclusion!

Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

As part of our commitment to encouraging the development of international business development strategies, and to the exploration of new markets among ICT companies, ITAC supported two international trade missions this year. The first was a [women-led mission to Dublin, Ireland](#) in June. Participants were able to attend *2018 Inspirefest Dublin*, as part of the mission. The goal was to provide women-led companies with a first-hand introduction to doing business in Europe to expand their international business prospects.

The second mission was to the [2018 Web Summit](#), held at the Altice Arena in Lisbon, Portugal, in November. ITAC invited 10 Canadian companies who had an interest in growing their businesses and gaining access to market, capital and talent. As part of the Summit, Canadian companies joined forces to help put Canada on the map for cutting-edge technology around cyber, AI and web management. A strong contingent of Canadian federal, provincial and municipal leaders was also present, including Mayor John Tory

ITAC received financial support from Global Affairs Canada's Global Opportunities for Associations (GOA) program for both missions. ITAC will continue to review and present opportunities such as these to its members throughout 2019. In addition, ITAC is working with the City of Toronto on its efforts to promote the benefits of doing business in Toronto and to raise awareness that Toronto will host Web Summit's sister conference *Collision* for three years, starting in May.

Events & Engagement

In 2018, ITAC successfully hosted close to 100 events and committee meetings, including the sold [out 25th Anniversary ITAC IT Challenge Golf Tournament](#) and the annual [ITAC Ingenious Awards](#) program, which celebrates excellence in the use of ICT in all levels of business. Watch for more details regarding the upcoming [ITAC Smart Cities Technologies Summit](#) being hosted on February 26, 2019. In addition, we are planning for the return of the *CCIO Breakfast* with the Ontario Government in April.

For a listing of upcoming events, [click here](#).

Boards, Committees and Working Groups

All staff here at ITAC want to express our thanks to our National Board of Directors, the Ontario Board of Directors and the Health Board of Directors, which are led by Chairs Kevin Peesker (National), David Telka (Ontario) and Susanne Flett (Health). Their efforts, along with their fellow co-chairs and directors, contribute to the overall direction, success and growth of our Association and we appreciate their support throughout the year.

We would be remiss if we didn't also thank our many committee chairs and members, working group participants and volunteers for playing such an important role in connecting our members with strategic partner organizations and federal and regional government officials and policy makers.

To those members who are not active on a committee, but would like to be, please let us know. Your involvement is vital to our success.

Changes within ITAC

Finally, we want to express our thanks to Robert Watson, who stepped down as President and CEO of ITAC to pursue other opportunities. We appreciate his many contributions and wish him great success in the future.

The search for Robert's successor is well underway and we look forward to sharing an update with you shortly. In the meantime, Denise Shortt, our Vice President of Industry Development is Acting President and CEO. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out directly at dshortt@itac.ca.

Final Reflections

As we begin a new year, I want to pause for two final reflections: first, to thank ITAC staff for a year filled with growth and accomplishments and for their commitment to advocating for a strong and successful ICT sector; and second, to thank you and all our members and partners who steadfastly support ITAC. ITAC has attained success because of the generosity and commitment of countless individuals who care about our mission, all through the year. That support sustains us in all that we do. We are thankful to those who have come before us, and for the work they've completed in laying the foundation for this remarkable Association – and we look forward to the endless opportunities that lay before us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "D Shortt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Denise Shortt
Acting President and CEO