

# Digital Dilemmas: Technology, Governance, and Canadian Municipalities

*By: Zachary Spicer*

Municipalities are facing complex new challenges with the advent of new technologies from the platform economy to cybersecurity.

This paper provides direction for municipal leaders hoping to chart a course for their organizations through this uncertain landscape.

Read the full paper: <https://uoft.me/DigitalDilemmas>

# IMFG

Institute on Municipal  
Finance & Governance

## Highlights:

The platform economy is disproportionately a municipal issue, but local governments lack access to data.

Municipalities can do more to force multinational platform firms to share data in order to assess their financial impact and determine negative externalities. Relationships between private and public actors are fluid and require frequent reassessment and patience.

Data governance - who owns and controls the data -- is key, especially with the importance of data to commercial applications stemming from smart cities and the need to satisfy national and international privacy regimes.

Given the public nature of smart-city projects, residents may be confused over whether it is a private or public actor collecting and controlling their data.

Cybersecurity is of utmost concern as local governments accelerate digital transformations to keep pace with changing expectations of citizens.

Yet a lack of coordinated resource-sharing among municipalities, combined with funding shortages, ensures continued vulnerability to cyberattacks.