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## Interview: Bernard Courtois, President and CEO of ITAC (Information Technology Association of Canada)

I recently had a chance to talk with Bernard Courtois, President and CEO of ITAC. Bernard provides excellent insight into the main challenges for business. Have a listen!

Enjoy!  
Stephen Ibaraki, [FCIPS](#), [I.S.P.](#), [MVP](#)

To listen to the interview, click on this [MP3 file link](#)

Interview Time Index (MM:SS) and Topic	
00:46:	Bernard Courtois talks about his experience in the telecommunications sector prior to his current position at ITAC. "...I was chief strategy officer around the time when Bell made a strong push into the internet and convergence which turned out, at that time, to be ahead of its peers globally."
02:15:	Bernard describes the functions of ITAC and talks about the top issues and challenges and what can be done to address them. "Fundamentally demographically, we are a country where demographically growth is slowing, where people are going to be hitting retirement, where the economy is still doing well. All those factors exist in the ICT industry in spades because we are growing faster than the economy and they are rendered worse because for a few years kids have been turned away from technology streams and careers streams and anything to do with technology, math, and science...."
05:35:	Bernard talks about ITAC's long time involvement in studies which show the relationship between productivity and deployment of information and communications technology and the impact and challenges it has on the economy. "In our country our economy is largely composed to small and medium businesses. We are the most SMB-centric economy in the world and our small and medium businesses are not using technology as much as their US counterparts. It has now been identified that the cause of Canada's productivity gap, (which is a prosperity gap as well), is caused by under use of our technologies."
09:37:	Bernard talks about the results of studies which help to explain some of the causes and reasons for the under use of ICT in Canada and some possible solutions. What message needs to get out to small and medium businesses? "Business owners (small and medium) absolutely made the link between productivity and ICT. They know that investing in ICT will generate productivity gains. The vast majority (about 80%) recognize the value in investing in ICT....but they don't make it their top priority for investment."
18:18:	Bernard talks about events which have and are impacting and shaping the ICT industry. "There are waves of technology and it seems in our industry that each wave is having a greater impact on what technology can do in people's lives and businesses. All the technology and marketing experts are saying to me that we are now in a wave that can generate more change in the next ten years than what we've seen in the past ten years. That's really significant because if you told people to think back ten years ago before the internet was that pervasive or when only a small minority of people had cell phones, and then ask them how much their life has changed since then..."
21:49:	Bernard speaks about the unique position of the ICT industry and how it can contribute to public, industrial, and business strategies. "We are in the front lines of the fundamental phenomena that are affecting all developed societies and the shift from the developed to developing societies. We have expertise and we have implications that are unique. Because of that we have a lot to contribute and we have a responsibility to contribute to the public strategies, industry strategies and the strategies of businesses."
24:51:	Bernard shares some of his predictions for the coming year, including public discourse of the skills and labour shortages. "For 2007 I see growth in our industry and growth in the use of people with ICT skills continuing if not accelerating a little bit, although the economic growth might be a little milder than it's been in the past year. I think the ICT industry will continue to do well because of ICT in other sectors and the need for our people is going to keep growing."
27:10:	How should public policies be changed? "Addressing skills shortages and what can we do in our immigration systems, what can we do in our schools' systems, what can we do to foster training. ...."
29:09:	Societal issues that need our attention and focus in 2007 and beyond. "Like everything else with our technology now, the more things it can do the more you have to manage the downside which are security risks, privacy risks, etc. I have to say that our industry is highly sensitive to that."



John Osley Director Community Evangelism  
Microsoft Canada



Profile:



As the president and CEO of ITAC, the Information Technology Association of Canada, Bernard Courtois is an outspoken advocate for the deployment of information and communications technology tools to improve business productivity and to achieve our societal and public policy goals.

Mr. Courtois was named ITAC's leader in January 2004. He is a lawyer with over 30 years experience in the telecommunications sector. He served in a variety of executive roles with Bell Canada from 1991 to 2003, including those of Chief Regulatory Officer and Chief Strategy Officer. Prior to joining Bell Canada, Mr. Courtois practiced law in Montreal and Ottawa serving a wide range of clients in telecommunications and other regulated industries. He was an active participant in the many regulatory, public policy and judicial proceedings which have shaped Canada's competitive communications marketplace. He was Chief Strategy Officer when Bell Canada took its strong turn to the Internet, ahead of most of its peers around the world.

Mr. Courtois is also a dedicated and energetic builder of business communities. He has served on the ITAC Board of Directors since 1999. He has also served on the executive of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce; was president of the International Institute of Communications; and is director and treasurer of the National Gallery of Canada Foundation.

Mr. Courtois is a graduate of l'Université de Montréal. He is a member of the bar in Ontario and Quebec. He lives in Ottawa.

Posted: Thursday, November 30, 2006 8:32 AM by [ednitmgr](#)  
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