

Around the Coffee Table with Dale Jodoin

Freedoms Are at Stake



By Dale Jodoin
Columnist

I wish this were a conspiracy story. Unfortunately, the laws themselves are real, and your freedoms may be at stake.
Something is happening in Canada, Great Britain and Australia that deserves a serious conversation around the coffee table.
All three governments are bringing in similar rules about the internet. They say these laws are needed to protect children from harmful material online.
Protecting children is important. Nobody is arguing otherwise.
But I believe Canadians deserve to know what else these laws could mean for them.
Australia has already passed laws restricting social media accounts for children under 16.
Britain has its Online Safety Act. Canada has proposed its own Safe Social Media Act.
Three countries moving in much the same direction.
Is that a coincidence? Not entirely. International online safety regulators openly work together and share ideas about how the internet should be controlled.
But here is where I become concerned.
When governments pass laws, they do not always settle every detail in Parliament. Some decisions are left to regulations, government agencies and the courts.
That means the rules people live under can change without Parliament voting on every detail.
Think about your own life.
You wake up, pour your coffee and open your phone. You check the news, read what your friends are saying and perhaps leave a comment about something your government has done.
Nothing unusual. Millions of people do it every morning.
Now imagine being asked to prove your age before entering certain websites. Depending on the system, that could involve identification documents, facial scans or other personal information.
Who collects that information? Where does it go? How long is it kept? And who can demand access to it?
These are not foolish questions.
Canada has also proposed separate legislation dealing with the retention of certain telecommunications information. Britain has its own data retention powers. Australia already requires some telecommunications records to be kept for two years.
The laws differ, but the privacy questions are similar.
And this brings us to something even more troubling.
Information collected for one purpose can become valuable for another.
Imagine a future government wanting to identify people who attend protests, criticize its policies or support an unpopular cause.
Could information gathered through online systems help it do that?
That is a risk worth examining, not proof that these new laws already authorize such political spying.
History teaches us that government powers deserve limits, regardless of which political party holds office.
Then there is the news.
Britain has considered giving recognized news organizations greater visibility online. Supporters call it a way to help people find reliable information.
But who decides what makes a news organization reliable?
What happens to the small newspaper that questions the government? Or the independent journalist who asks uncomfortable questions?
A free press must be able to challenge those in power.
We are also told that freedom of information laws keep governments accountable. Yet anyone trying to obtain public records can face delays, exemptions and pages of missing information.
That hardly builds public trust.
I am not claiming these three governments have secretly agreed to spy on everyone. The evidence does not establish that.
What we do know is that they are creating similar systems with new powers over online services.
And once those powers exist, future governments may seek to expand them.
So before we accept another law in the name of protecting children, we should demand clear answers about adult privacy, independent journalism and government accountability.
Because freedom is not something we should have to prove we deserve.
If these laws are really about protecting children, why shouldn't governments have to prove that our freedoms will be protected too?



Your Job Search Demands Unapologetic Self-Awareness

By Nick Kossovan

Most candidates fail because they don't know who they are professionally. Instead of honestly assessing their capabilities, aptitudes, preferences, triggers, and tolerances, they pitch a fantasy version of what they think employers want to hear, while ignoring what they can consistently deliver.
Instead of addressing this delusional personal-branding trend, self-proclaimed career coaches and resume writers peddle quick fixes. They tell you to tweak your resume margins, spray buzzwords across your LinkedIn profile, and even how to trick automated tracking systems. (You can't.) Most job-search “advice” is pure BS that ignores the root cause of prolonged job searches: a lack of self-awareness.
Your job search isn't dragging on because your resume margins are off by half a centimetre or your LinkedIn profile isn't perfectly optimized. It's dragging on because you're bringing self-delusion to your resume, your LinkedIn profile, and interviews, where your interviewer spots the disconnect.
Nothing undermines your credibility faster than claiming you thrive under pressure while you look nervous, stumble over your words, and respond with rehearsed platitudes. The most effective way to build job-search momentum is to honestly assess your professional strengths, how you handle pressure, difficult coworkers, and change, where you thrive, and what you can consistently deliver.
1. Professional Delusion Will Cost You
Every hiring manager, me included, has made the mistake of hiring someone with an inflated self-image. A candidate promises to be an independent self-starter, yet six weeks into the job, they refuse to make decisions without three confirmation emails, slowing the department's pace and agility. They're not just a poor fit; they're an expensive mistake. Costly hiring blunders like these are why employers, frustrated by job seekers who can't substantiate their claims, are adding interview rounds.
When you apply for roles based on who you wish you were rather than who you are, everyone loses, especially you. Vanity pitching might get you hired, but operational reality catches up quickly. I’ve seen new hires let go more than once for failing to deliver on their promises.
Unapologetic self-awareness isn't a soft skill or a feel-good virtue; it's a pragmatic look in the mirror that gives you a significant competitive advantage, keeping you from
applying for jobs you'll hate or, worse, from landing a role you can't handle and getting fired. When you're genuinely self-aware, you target environments where you fit and are likely to excel, rather than praying that a bad-fit job somehow "works out." At the end of the day, you are who you are, and fighting your own nature never works out in the long term.
2. Four-Point Internal Audit
Cultivating unapologetic self-awareness begins with auditing yourself across four areas:
1. Stress Thresholds: Workplaces are increasingly stressful due to rapid economic shifts and technological change. How do you respond when things go sideways? Do you navigate ambiguity naturally, or do you need structured, explicit parameters? Honestly assess your tolerance for chaos, miscommunication, overtime, and the inevitable operational friction.
2. Work Temperament: Are you genuinely an autonomous self-starter, or do you need clear, established processes? Taking on a hands-off role when you need consistent direction is a recipe for anxiety and frustration.
3. Aptitude Versus Effort: Stop claiming you excel at everything. At best, we excel at a handful of things. What are they for you? You won't regret focusing your job search exclusively on roles where your natural aptitude shines.
4. Value Creation: Self-aware candidates know why an employer should hire them. ("I'm good at what I do" isn't a reason.) Specifically, how do you influence an employer's profitability? If you can't clearly explain how your work saves time, cuts costs, or generates revenue, don't expect an employer to hire you.
3. Evaluate "Will I fit in?"
Self-aware candidates don’t try to please every interviewer. They assess mutual fit, a quality every hiring manager appreciates because it signals you aren’t desperate. When asked about a weakness, they avoid canned answers like “I'm too much of a perfectionist.” Instead, they set clear boundaries: “I excel at turning chaotic projects into structured workflows, but if you need someone to sit in back-to-back brainstorming meetings all day without execution, I’m the wrong person for the job."
Knowing yourself inside and out keeps you from overpromising and underdelivering.
4. Self-Awareness Check
Before you send out another resume, run this internal audit:
1. Audit your wins: Write down your last three major workplace accomplishments. Identify the specific skills that produced those results and set aside any self-assumed skills until you have hard evidence to back them up.
2. Purge the fluff: Remove generic buzzwords such as "detail-oriented," "results-driven," and "team player" from your resume and LinkedIn profile. Replace them with outcomes, increases, decreases, and concrete capabilities.
3. Define your dealbreakers: Know which work environments trigger your burnout and refuse to apply to companies that display those red flags.
As harsh as this may sound, as a job seeker, you're offering yourself as a product. If you don't know your own specifications, you have no business trying to sell yourself to an employer. Being honest with employers about who you are, what you can do, and what you can deliver will make your job search much easier.

