

# Ritesh Kotak

**Digital/Cyber Strategist, Tech Entrepreneur, Small Business Evangelist**



Ritesh was born in Toronto, Canada to parents who emigrated from East Africa and India. His parents built a successful community grocery store and food manufacturing company. Ritesh has experienced the struggles and successes of entrepreneurship, particularly small businesses. From having his crib in the store to present day working numerous roles in the business, Ritesh has developed a true and deep understanding of the role that technology, financing and professional services have in successful business ventures. His passion for tech started when his father bought a Pentium 486 computer running Windows 3.1. He took it apart and couldn't put it back together. Instead of getting upset, his parents encouraged him, leading to a lifelong passion.

Upon graduating with his BBA from the University of Toronto, Ritesh knew he wanted to serve his community and leverage his lived experience to promote inclusion through technology. He started an eight-year career in policing, working with two police agencies in Canada and several international assignments. He co-led the creation of the Cyber-Crimes unit and the Research and Innovation portfolio focusing on digital transformation and emerging technology. Ritesh then transitioned to the Private sector, where he worked with different Fortune 500 Tech companies on global projects related to Digital Transformation, Cyber Security and Emerging Tech.

After working with Big Tech, Ritesh learned that there was a gap between tech and the law. With the frequency of breaches, emphasis on privacy and the high costs to access resources, he decided to pursue his law degree at the University of Ottawa.

While attending Law School (graduating June 2022), he interned at the Samuelson-Glushko Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic and participated in several hackathons. Ritesh and three colleagues entered an international tech law competition and developed an automated workflow to generate refund claims to airlines for COVID-related cancellations. This project placed second place in the world. The following year, Ritesh and two of his colleagues entered a Pan-Canadian Hackathon where they developed a free automated privacy breach reporting tool for small businesses. The toolkit placed first in the competition after which the team decided to pursue their project and launch jusTech to assist the small business community. The project has now received funding, featured in the media and is expanding to include additional features to further assist businesses.

Ritesh has had the privilege of working and presenting around the world including the World Internet Conference in China, the training academy for the Jamaican Constabulary Force, Intersec in Dubai, the Major City Chiefs/FBI National Executive Institute Conference, NATO sponsored Cyber-Security Conference in North Macedonia and several other events in the Middle East, North America and Europe. Ritesh has appeared as a witness in the House of Commons- Industry, Science, Technology Committee addressing competitiveness in Canada.

Ritesh has written articles for the Financial Times, the Economist and several other publications. He frequently appears in mainstream media as a subject matter expert on tech and cyber-related stories. In addition, in 2018, Ritesh was selected by Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government for the Emerging Leaders Executive Program. In 2017, he completed an MBA with distinction from the University of Edinburgh with an exchange at Peking University in Beijing, China.