



Privacy Impact Assessment for:

Topaz Labs Photo AI

Initiative:	Topaz Labs Photo AI
Department or Service Area Name:	Biology

Part 1 – General Information and Overview 2

Part 2 – Collection, Use, and Disclosure 5

Part 3: Storing Personal Information..... 9

Part 4: Assessment for Disclosures of Sensitive Personal Information 9

Part 5: Security of Personal Information 10

Part 6: Accuracy/Correction/Retention of Personal Information 12

Part 7 – Personal Information Banks..... 13

Part 8 – Further Information 14

Part 9 – Summary and Proponent Responsibility 15

Part 10: Signatures..... 15

Part 1 – General Information and Overview

1.1 What is the Initiative?

Describe your initiative in enough detail that a reader who knows nothing about your work will understand the purpose of your initiative and who your partners and other stakeholders are. Describe what you're doing, how it works, who is involved and when or how long your initiative runs.

I coordinate a native plant restoration effort on the VIU Nanaimo campus (https://www.instagram.com/viu_restoration/). As part of this work, I hold VIURAC funding (ROME0 reference #103531) to study arthropod (primarily insect) diversity in the restored area on campus. To document arthropod diversity, we rely heavily on macrophotography to capture images of key structural features that allow us to assign observations to species or higher taxonomic levels. For species identification, these images are often shared through online biodiversity databases such as BugGuide.net and iNaturalist.org, where experts contribute to identifications. The ability to produce sharp, clear images of diagnostic features (e.g., wing venation, bristles, appendages) is essential for this process. Based on recommendations from an experienced insect photographer advising the project, we hope to use Topaz Labs Photo AI, a user-friendly software tool for photo sharpening and noise reduction, to enhance these images for research purposes.

I'm the coordinator and supervisor on the project. I currently have two VIU Biology students carrying out field work (macrophotography and trapping of arthropods), performing species identification, and sharing their observations on the biodiversity database iNaturalist.org. The overall project has no endpoint, ideally, monitoring of biodiversity in the native plant restoration plot, and an unrestored reference area, will continue indefinitely. However, the VIURAC Inquiry grant that supports the initiative will expire on June 15, 2026 and one of the research students currently involved in the work will wrap up their contribution and present their data (at VIU CREATE, the Biology 491 Symposium, and the Pacific Ecology and Evolution Conference in Bamfield) in the spring of 2026 as part of their BIOL 491 Undergraduate Research Project. Funds to pay for annual updates to the Topaz Labs Photo AI software, approximately \$150CAD/year will come from my VIUFA PD Funded General Research Work Order. I intend to keep using the software for the foreseeable future, should it be approved by IT and the Privacy Office for use on campus.

- Personal information will not be collected, used, or disclosed as part of this project.
- The project lead has provided assurance that the tool will only be used for enhancing images of non-human organisms.

1.2. What is the scope of the PIA?

Your initiative might be part of a larger one or might be rolled out in phases. What part of the initiative is covered by this PIA? What is out of scope of this PIA?

This PIA covers the entire scope of the project.

1.3. Are there any related Privacy Impact Assessments?

Please indicate if this an update on an existing PIA or an additional module that was not covered in the original PIA.

Click or tap here to enter text.

There is no related PIA for this initiative

1.4. What are the data or information elements involved in your initiative?

In the table below, please list all the elements of information or data that you might collect, use, store, disclose or access as part of your initiative. If your initiative involves large quantities of information or datasets, you can list categories or other groupings of personal information in an appendix.

Information Type	Information Collected
Personal Information	From Students: none From Third Parties: none From VIU Employees: none
Contact details	From Students: none From Third Parties: none From VIU Employees: it collects my VIU email address and the billing address for my VIU PCard (i.e., 900 Fifth Street)
Account information: what info is required to set up an account?	Name, VIU email address, and PCard billing address is required to set up an account with Topaz Lab Photo AI. Students will not be providing this information, I am the one purchasing the software license.
Commercial information	

1.4a. Did you list [personal information](#) in question 1.4?

Personal information is any recorded information about an identifiable individual, other than business contact information. Personal information includes information that can be used to identify an individual through association or reference- see the table below for examples of Personal Information.

Business contact information, in turn, is defined as information to enable an individual at a place of business to be contacted and includes the name, position name or title, as well as business telephone number, address, email or fax number of the individual. BC FIPPA does not protect business contact information.

Examples of Personal Information

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name, age, sex, weight, height • Home address, phone number • Race, ethnic origin, sexual orientation • Medical information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marital or family status • Religion • Education • Financial information |
|--|--|

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health history• Number or symbol assigned to the individual• Income, purchases and spending habits• Blood type, DNA code, fingerprints | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Criminal information• Employment information• Personal views or opinions, except if they are about someone else |
|---|---|

- If yes, go to [Part 2](#)
- If no, answer question 1.5 and submit questions 1 to 1.5 to pia@viu.ca. You do not need to complete the rest of the PIA template.

Click or tap here to enter text.

1.5. How will you reduce the risk of unintentionally collecting or disclosing personal information?

Some initiatives that do not require personal information are at risk of collecting, using, or disclosing personal information inadvertently, which could result in an information incident.

Students will not have personal accounts with the software provider. The account is under the instructor's name, and when students are using the software for photo editing they will log in with a common username and password set by the instructor. The software can only be used on two devices. We hope to download the software to a VIU loaner laptop, currently in use by the students, and to the VIU laptop assigned to the instructor.

The objective of our project is to document biodiversity, not people. As such **the software will be strictly used for photos of organisms other than people**, primarily plants, fungi, and arthropods.

Since at least April 2024 Topaz Labs Photo AI do not use images from users and do not request that images be shared with them for development purposes.

(<https://community.topazlabs.com/t/privacy-image-sharing/67886>). There is an option (Preferences > General > Privacy menu) to disable Anonymous Usage Tracking. Topaz Labs use such tracking to help improve the Photo AI software by sending in anonymous usage metrics and crash reports but not images.

Part 9 – Summary and Proponent Responsibility

This section is for Privacy Office recommendations as well as any limitations due to privacy concerns.

- Personal information will not be collected, used, or disclosed as part of this project.
- The project lead has provided assurance that the tool will only be used for enhancing images of non-human organisms.
- Student research assistants will be using the software on a shared, VIU-issued laptop and will sign in to the online platform with generic credentials set by the instructor.
- **Recommendation:** provide signage or Terms of Use form that reminds student researchers not to use the tool for human images, as that would be a disclosure of personal information and such use is not covered by this PIA.

Part 10: Signatures

This PIA accurately documents the data elements and information flow at the time of signing. If there are any changes to the overall initiative, including to the way personal information is collected, used, stored or disclosed, the program area will engage with their Privacy Office and if necessary, complete a PIA update.

Reviewed by	Privacy Officer
Approved by	Biology Dep't
Date:	31-Aug-2025