

Four Practical Tips to Succeed in the Cybersecurity & Privacy Law Market

By Alysa Pfeiffer-Austin

As October marks National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, the [ABA Section of Science & Technology Law \(SciTech\)](#) hosted its second-annual *Legal Careers in Cybersecurity, Privacy & Information Law* event on Wednesday, October 14th, at Crowell & Moring LLP. All Washington, D.C. area ABA members were invited to attend for no charge.

Angela Styles, Chair of the firm's Executive Committee, and moderator David Bodenheimer, Partner at Crowell & Moring, SciTech Vice Chair and Division Co-Chair for Security, Privacy, and Information Law, kicked off the event acknowledging the valuable contributions of the ABA and lawyer attendees from a variety of firms and corporations.

Distinguished speakers included the following practitioners. They shared their practical tips.

- **Cheryl Falvey**—Partner, Crowell & Moring LLP; former General Counsel, Consumer Product Safety Commission and SciTech Internet of Things Committee Vice Chair;
- **Jon Gannon**—General Attorney, AT&T; former Deputy Unit Chief, Office of Intelligence, National Security Division, DOJ and SciTech Homeland Security Committee Vice Chair;
- **Lucy Thomson**—Founder &

Alysa Pfeiffer-Austin recently earned her LL.M. from Georgetown Law with a Cyber and National Security Law concentration. She interned for the US Department of Homeland Security and the United Nations. She volunteered with human trafficking safe houses in South Africa. Alysa is an ABA Section of Science & Technology Law Homeland Security Committee Editor. Her law practice focuses on cross-border transactions.



Angela Styles, Chair of Crowell & Moring's Executive Committee, and David Bodenheimer, Crowell & Moring, partner and SciTech Vice Chair and Division Co-Chair for Security, Privacy, and Information Law

- Principal, Livingston PLLC and ABA SciTech Past Chair and Division Co-Chair for Security, Privacy and Information Law;
- **Jeff Greene**—Senior Policy Counsel, Cybersecurity, Symantec Corporation; former Senior Counsel, Senate Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs Committee and SciTech Homeland Security Committee Co-Chair;
- **Arash Heidarian**—Corporate Counsel, Amazon Web Services and SciTech Cloud Computing Committee Vice Chair; and
- **Maureen Kelly**—Assistant General Counsel & Corporate Director, Northrop Grumman and ABA Public Contract Law Section Cybersecurity Committee Co-Chair.

With more data breaches and cyber threats uncovered daily, emerging science and technology issues are shaping

the practice of law, raising unique challenges for law students, young lawyers and practitioners who enter this ever-accelerating practice. These four promising tips should be helpful regardless of the stage of your career.

1. Make an effort to understand emerging technologies.

Though a technology or computer background is not a prerequisite, those considering a career in cybersecurity or privacy will need to spend time developing some level of technical expertise. Lucy Thomson, ABA SciTech Security, Privacy and Information Law Division Co-Chair, advised attendees to educate themselves by taking network security courses at a local community college or accruing IT security certifications. Alternatively, Cheryl Falvey, Vice Chair of the SciTech Internet of Things Committee, described how she developed her expertise by creating technology exhibits for litigation as a consumer product liability attorney. Whether

you choose to develop your expertise through traditional courses or opt for a more hands-on experience, it is best to utilize your strengths when transitioning into this technical field.

2. Be flexible and creative with your career path.

There is no isolated “right” way to develop a career in this area. Jon Gannon, Vice Chair of the SciTech Homeland Security Committee, encouraged attendees to think outside the box when developing their individual career path. Consider working with tech companies, think tanks or local non-profits, any of which will develop pertinent skills that translate well into future practice.

3. Utilize available resources.

A general consensus was to utilize all available opportunities and resources. Becoming a member of the SciTech Section will help you stay up to date with emerging science and technology developments, career guidance, premier networking events and contribution opportunities to begin building your career. Section membership is free for ABA law students and includes a subscription to the acclaimed magazine *The SciTech Lawyer*.

4. Opportunities look a lot like people.

Going back to the basics, Jeff Greene, Co-Chair of the SciTech Homeland Security Committee, reminded attendees that the first step may be as simple as just “being nice” to people with whom you interact. As Jeff shared how helping a potential adversary changed the trajectory of his legal career, he emphasized the importance of making contacts and investing in people. Begin developing these relationships early in your legal career by joining professional networks and getting to know experts in your desired specialty. One way to reach out to possible contacts is by joining one of the Section’s 24 [free committees](#), offering members the opportunity to connect with practitioners in innovative areas such as Cloud Computing, Internet of Things, Information Security, Big Data, or E-Privacy. Carving



Lucy Thomson, Founder & Principal, Livingston PLLC and ABA Section of Science & Technology Law Past Chair and Division Co-Chair for Security, Privacy and Information Law with DC area students and young lawyers



Leigh Colihan of American University Washington College of Law and Kate Growley, Crowell & Moring, associate and SciTech Homeland Security Vice Chair

out time to have coffee may be the distinguishing factor that gives you an edge in the job market.

With an impressive turnout from the legal community and valuable insight from leading experts, this event is a must for anyone interested in building a career in this dynamic area.

* *The event would not have been possible without the following ABA co-sponsors:*

the ABA Cybersecurity Legal Task Force; the Science & Technology Law (SciTech) Section’s Homeland Security Committee, E-Privacy Committee, Privacy and Computer Crime Committee, Information Security Committee, Cloud Computing Committee, and Internet of Things Committee; Young Lawyers Division; and the Public Contract Law (PCL) Section’s Cybersecurity, Privacy and Data Protection Committee and Young Lawyers Committee. ♦