

## THE PANDEMIC EDITION

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### Where We've Been and Where We're Headed

What a year! We hope that everyone is healthy and safe in this strange new world.

We've all been through the ringer this year. Law firms and businesses around the country are facing a slew of pandemic-related problems: layoffs and furloughs, pay reductions, newly remote-enabled employees (who may or may not be tech-savvy), closures, and general pandemic fatigue.

Some firms have reopened fully with strict safety measures and procedures in place. Some firms are 100% remote, with essential personnel allowed in the offices on an as-needed basis. And some firms are a mix of the two, embracing the buzziest phrase of 2020: the hybrid model.



Luckily for us, when legal administrators and managers are met with challenges, we shine. 7th Zoom call of the day? You got this. Nancy in accounting is having connectivity issues? No problem. Mike, who supports all the litigation associates, is having a bit of a mental breakdown? It's all good!

Whether we're the catch-all person for the region and need to keep extra keyboards and phone hardware in our cars, or we're strictly Human Resources and can spend our days focusing on our teams, the bottom line is that we do what needs to be done.

With all that said, though, where are we headed from here? What's next?

The truth is, we don't know where we're headed. We don't know what's next. As a former coworker of mine used to say, "Sorry! My crystal ball's in the shop."

If anything, this year has taught us to remain adaptable. It's taught us to be flexible, fluid, and open to change. I'm not saying it's easy, or even all that fun sometimes, but it's our job as leaders to go with the flow, or, in the case of this wacky year, roll with the punches.



In case you missed the emails and social media posts, **THIS FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13th**, the Montgomery County Bar Association and Independence Chapter of the Association of Legal Administrators will be hosting the **LIVE+VIRTUAL DELAWARE VALLEY LEGAL EXPO!**

Click [HERE](#) for more information or go to [www.DVLegalExpo.com](http://www.DVLegalExpo.com)

### ALA MISSION STATEMENT



ALA is the undisputed leader for the business of law, focused on the delivery of cutting-edge management and leadership products and services to the global legal community. We identify and provide solutions to the most strategic and operational challenges our members and customers face today, while we prepare them for the opportunities and challenges of tomorrow.

**We have met the (cyber) enemy and he is us.—Educational Zoom Event, July 2020**  
By Doug Kreitzberg, CEO of Designed Privacy



When we think of cybersecurity, we often think of people in hoodies working in the dark trying to find ways to hack into our systems. And while there are bad guys like this out there, in order to truly mitigate cyber threats, we need to start focusing our attention back on ourselves.

This was the key takeaway of the cybersecurity presentation, “Cybersecurity During and Post Covid,” given by Doug Kreitzberg, CEO of Designed Privacy, to the Independence Chapter of the ALA last July. Designed Privacy is a cybersecurity and data privacy risk management firm that focuses on the human factors surrounding cyber and privacy risk.

In fact, there was a 600% increase in phishing-related cyber attacks on organizations in the first quarter of 2020 alone. These forms of attack rely on social engineering tactics explicitly designed to exploit our natural biases and tendencies in order to gain access to our computer system or facilitate wire fraud.

Key threats to all organizations—law firms in particular—are ransomware and business email compromise attacks.

A ransomware attack is a method by which hackers encrypt your systems and demand a ransom (usually in bitcoin) in exchange for the keys to unlock the system. Both the size and frequency of demands have dramatically increased since the start of the pandemic. Statistics show that the average ransom demand is now over \$150,000—marking a 60% increase since Q1 2020. The frequency of ransomware attack has also risen this year. Third quarter data, has shown a 50% increase in daily ransomware attacks, translating to a new attack every ten seconds.

Business email compromise involves methods by which hackers pose as trusted parties in order to induce electronic or wire fraud. This is a critical in real estate and M&A transactions and increasingly with regards to vendor payables and accounts receivable. Last year, the FBI reported that business email compromise cost organizations over 1.7 billion dollars.

While organizations need to have security hardware and software in place to mitigate these threats, they also need to start placing more emphasis on strengthening the digital security behaviors of their stakeholders (staff, leadership, board, vendors, IT team members). In many cases, *people*—not technology—are the first line of defense against attack and are therefore key points of vulnerability.

In order to enhance the security posture of law firms, Kreitzberg recommends focusing on strengthening the following behaviors:

**Behaviors your IT team should be doing:** 1) Patching operating systems, applications and firmware on a regular basis; 2) Access Control, including the enforcement of strong passwords, multi-factor authentication and proper configuration for remote access; 3) Locking down laptops and remote devices with proper endpoint protection and encryption; 4) Backup data to offline sources and test the back-ups on a regular basis; 5) Conduct regular scans and penetration testing to identify and mitigate vulnerabilities; 6) Set up, review and store system logfiles.

**Behaviors your staff should be doing:** 1) Beware of clicking links or downloading attachments in emails—make sure they are coming from a trusted source; 2) Never enter login info from an email link—go to the site from the internet and log in from there; 3) Never authorize a wire transaction or new bank account information without offline confirmation—call the requestor to verify the transaction; Notify IT if anything looks suspicious.

**Behaviors your executive team should be doing:** 1) Engaging your cybersecurity and IT teams in business strategy discussions to align cybersecurity risk and mitigation tactics with overall business goals and objectives; 2) Develop, review and regularly simulate an incident response plan; 3) Walk the Talk—leadership needs to communicate the importance of cybersecurity and healthy digital behaviors.

With businesses around the globe suddenly operating remotely, Covid has accelerated a dramatic shift towards digitization, creating both opportunities and challenges. Yet, as we become more engaged digitally, we can't forget to focus on improving our behaviors to help protect ourselves and our organization from cyber risk.

For more information or to learn how best to identify and address your firm's cyber vulnerabilities, please contact Doug Kreitzberg of Designed Privacy at [doug.kreitzberg@designedprivacy.com](mailto:doug.kreitzberg@designedprivacy.com).





## UPCOMING EVENTS



Delaware Valley Legal Expo & CLE Symposium

November 13, 2020 – 9:00 AM



Microsoft Excel for Beginners

November 16, 2020 – 8:00 AM



Microsoft Excel - Taking Your Skills to the Next Level

November 16, 2020 – 12:00 PM



Annual Business Partner Event and Chapter Holiday Party

December 3, 2020 – 5:00 PM



Educational Event - HR Turnover

January 12, 2021 – 8:00 AM

Check out our [website](#) for more information and registration!



## THE NEWSLETTER GETS AN UPGRADE

On par with 2020, our newsletter publication hasn't gone exactly to plan. However, when one door closes, another one opens. Our new door has taken the form of the Business Partner News Blast—a new publication that will highlight each of our Diamond Sponsors (for more information please visit our [website](#)). Keep your eyes on your inbox for the first edition featuring [Hilltop Consultants, Inc.](#), coming in December, 2020!

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**Independence Chapter  
Association of Legal Administrators**  
Alissa Hill & Kate MacArdle, co-editors  
aohill@fisherphillips.com  
kmacardle@stradley.com