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Women in Tech: Lisa Zolidis

Interviews and Profiles

Technology, Privacy, and eCommerce



In the September 2017 Technology issue, the Docket spoke to six women who are leading the vanguard in Silicon Valley and beyond. From San Francisco to Austin and Singapore, these women exemplify the mix of fortitude, talent, and foresight necessary to succeed where there is no roadmap

for success. Email editorinchief@acc.com if you know a woman in the legal tech sphere who would like to be featured in the Docket or ACCDocket.com.

Lisa Zolidis, global coordinating privacy counsel at Dell, has a touch of the crusader's streak. Initially intending to become an investigative journalist, she ultimately decided to go to law school with hopes of changing the world. She joined pro bono efforts, leadership initiatives, and ACC's IT, Privacy, and e-Commerce Committee. As in-house counsel, Zolidis continues her commitment to the community — aiming to protect consumer data from the increasing threat of data breaches, and ensuring that Dell remains compliant with rapidly evolving data regulations.

“Any big corporation has a responsibility to look at its effect on the world,” Zolidis says. And with over one billion people actively using the company's cloud system, it's safe to say that Dell's impact is substantial. To provide high-quality data protection, Dell's legal team must work collaboratively to maintain compliance with standards on a local, regional, and global level. Zolidis serves as their liaison — not only managing the Americas sector, but also coordinating with privacy counsel in the Asia Pacific, EMEA, Latin American, and Canadian regions.

“We're constantly having conversations to say, ‘Hey, this is what I've seen in my area. What are you seeing in yours?’” she explains. To Zolidis, implementing precautionary data protection policies is an essential step to ensuring customer trust in the company. In 2015 alone, Dell's data security program blocked 2.17 trillion potential attacks on its Intrusion Prevention System. “This is valuable information,” Zolidis asserts. “It's more important than just protecting against a data breach or violation; we also want to make sure that we've earned the trust of our customers.”

When asked about what current matters are affecting the legal department, Zolidis is quick to mention the General Data Protection Regulation, which is set to harmonize data standards in the European Union. In preparation for the impending legislation, Dell's legal team has implemented an “all-in” approach to increase awareness for data privacy compliance across multiple departments in the company. As always, Zolidis is prepared for the challenge.

“We want to make sure that privacy requirements are everyone's job, not just the job of the privacy office,” she says. Zolidis credits the company's Leading From the Front Program with encouraging non-legal managers to make compliance a part of their everyday business operations. Employees at Dell undergo regular training to learn how to recognize red flags before an avoidable scenario becomes critical.

To Zolidis, having the support of Founder and CEO Michael Dell with regard to privacy compliance has been imperative in making data protection a priority. She feels fortunate to work for a company that instills ethical values from the top down and believes that regular engagement from the executive team has been a key to Dell's success. “The support only adds to the positive environment in our company's culture,” she explains.

Having spent most of her life in Austin, Texas, Zolidis has witnessed the city grow into an international hub for technology and argues that it has become one of the most exciting places for female in-house counsel in the United States. Companies in Austin make diversity initiatives commonplace and actively encourage equality with regard to hiring decisions and promotions. “You always want to give more opportunity to the women coming up,” she states.

Looking to the future, Zolidis is immensely proud of Dell's accomplishments, both as a leader in data privacy and as a leader in philanthropy. The company recently announced plans to reduce oceanic

pollution and is on track to collect more than 16,000 pounds of plastic in 2017. As global coordinating privacy counsel, Zolidis hopes to continue her crusader's streak — one compliance measure at a time — with the ultimate goal of making the world a safer place.

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