



→ Liisa M. Thomas

Partner

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Liisa Thomas, a partner based in the Chicago and London offices, is Leader of the firm's Privacy and Cybersecurity Team.

Areas of Practice

Liisa's clients rely on her ability to provide clarity in a sea of confusing legal requirements and describe her as "extremely responsive, while providing thoughtful legal analysis combined with real world practical advice." She is the author of two treatises: *Thomas on Data Breach: A Practical Guide to Handling Worldwide Data Breach Notification*, which has been described as "a no-nonsense roadmap for in-house and external practitioners alike," and *Thomas on Big Data*, praised for being a "comprehensive and detailed analysis of the complex and rapidly changing world of privacy law."

Liisa is known as an industry leader in the privacy and data security space and has been recognized by *Best Lawyers in America*, *Leading Lawyers Network*, *Chambers* and *The Legal 500*, as well as noted by leading publications and organizations for her "broad depth of privacy knowledge." Among other honors, she was named Lawyer of the Year – Privacy and Data Security 2022 by *Best Lawyers*; to *Cybersecurity Docket's* "Incident Response 30," honoring 30 incident response professionals critical to managing data breaches, in both 2016 and 2018; recognized as the 2017 "Data Protection Lawyer of the Year - USA" by *Global 100*; honored as the 2017 "U.S. Data Protection Lawyer of the Year" by *Finance Monthly*; and the recipient of the "Best in Data Security Law Services" at *Corporate LiveWire's* 2017 Global Awards.

Liisa, who was born in Finland and previously lived in France, Egypt and Spain, frequently coordinates global efforts in the privacy area for her clients. Clients value her global insights and familiarity with business systems outside of the U.S. With Liisa's assistance, her clients – which include major consumer brands, advertising agencies and consumer research companies – are able to navigate thorny data breach disclosure issues, use emerging interactive advertising techniques and create compliant security programs, all while effectively managing their legal risks. Clients praise Liisa's ability to add real value to their businesses, and describe her as "keeping [clients] one step ahead of where [they] need to be."

Liisa is an active advocate of women and minorities in the legal industry and was honored for her leadership in the legal field by the Illinois Diversity Council. She is currently an adjunct professor in Northwestern University Law School where she is the recipient of the Edward Avery Harriman Law School Lectureship. She formerly taught privacy courses at several other Chicago-area law schools, including her alma mater, the University of Chicago. Liisa is the Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Chair of the CSO's Negaunee Music Institute Board and plays violin in the Chicago Bar Association Symphony Orchestra, an orchestra made up of lawyers and judges.

Honors

- Lawyer of the Year - Privacy and Data Security, *Best Lawyers*, 2022
- Best Lawyers in America, *Best Lawyers*, 2020-2022
- Named to *Cybersecurity Docket's* "Incident Response 40" (2021) and "Incident Response 30" (2016, 2018), honoring 30 incident response professionals critical to managing data breaches
- Notable Women in Law, *Crain's Chicago Business*, 2020
- Legacy Award, *Illinois Legal Aid Online*, 2020
- The Legal 500 Hall of Fame – Cyber Law, *Legal 500*, 2020-2021
- Notable Minorities in Accounting, Consulting & Law, *Crain's Chicago Business*, 2020
- Thought Leader on Cybersecurity, *National Law Review*, 2019
- Notable Women Lawyers, *Crain's Custom Media*, 2018
- Leading Lawyer, Cyber Law, *Legal 500 USA*, 2016-2021
- Leading Lawyer, *Chambers Global*, Privacy & Data Security, 2015-2021
- Leading Lawyer, *Chambers USA*, Nationwide Privacy & Data Security, 2014-2021
- Leading Lawyer, *Chambers Illinois*, Media & Entertainment: Transactional, 2013-2018
- Illinois Super Lawyer, Intellectual Property, *Super Lawyers*, 2006, 2018-2021
- Leading Lawyer, *Leading Lawyers*, 2016-2021
- Leading Woman Lawyer, *Chicago Lawyer Magazine's Diversity Issue*, 2018
- "Data Protection Lawyer of the Year – USA," *Global 100*, 2017
- "U.S. Data Protection Lawyer of the Year," *Finance Monthly*, 2017
- "Best in Data Security Law Services," *Corporate LiveWire's* Global Awards, 2017
- Recipient, *National Law Journal's* Cybersecurity Trailblazer Award, 2016
- Recipient, Lexology/ILO's Client Choice Award for IT and the Internet, 2016

Experience

Recent Privacy and Data Security Experience:

- Assisting clients with GDPR preparedness projects, including compliance assessments and implementation of remediation plans.
- Assessing the scope of possible breaches of personally identifiable information through use of forensic experts and extensive on-site due diligence.
- Creating data breach assessment and notification programs (both post-breach and pro-active pre-breach plans) for Fortune 100 companies.
- Assisting clients to develop e-mail marketing campaigns, text message campaigns, pre-recorded call campaigns and online information collection programs in compliance with CAN-SPAM and COPPA, among other laws.
- Developing internal policies for safeguarding personally identifiable information gathered online and from employees.

- Developing privacy compliance policies, procedures, monitoring programs and reporting plans.
- Training management on the requirements of the law, including those with respect to the maintenance and retention of employee records.
- Developing cross-border data transfer programs for multiple Fortune 100 and Fortune 500 companies.
- Helping a U.S.-based multinational corporation create binding corporate rules.

Articles

Liisa has published extensively in the area of privacy and data security. She is the author of two treatises: *Thomas on Data Breach: A Practical Guide to Handling Worldwide Data Breach Notification* (Thomson Reuters, 2018), which has been described as "a no-nonsense roadmap for in-house and external practitioners alike," and *Thomas on Big Data* (Thomson Reuters, 2021), praised for being a "comprehensive and detailed analysis of the complex and rapidly changing world of privacy law." Liisa is also the editor of the firm's eyeonprivacy.com blog, a recap of recent developments in the privacy and cyber space. A few of her more recent additional publications include:

- "Identifying and Preparing for Privacy and Cyber Security Risks," *Risk & Compliance Magazine*, July-Sept 2021 issue
- Co-Author, "Playing with Privacy? Privacy and Cybersecurity Considerations in Esports," *esportsinsider*, June 24, 2021
- "Changing the Conversation," *Legal Management Magazine*, June 16, 2021
- "How to Take a Holistic Approach to Privacy Compliance in an Ever-Changing Legal Landscape," *Global Data Review*, January 14, 2021
- "2020 Privacy Law Trends And How They Affect Compliance," *Law360*, December 22, 2020
- "3 Privacy Law Predictions For The New Year," *Law360*, January 1, 2020
- "4 Privacy Law Predictions for 2019," *Law360*, January 23, 2019
- Co-Author with A. Thomson, "From Panic to Pragmatism: De-Escalating and Managing Commercial Data Breaches," *Cyber Security: A Peer Reviewed Journal*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Summer 2018 issue
- "Dealing with US Biometric Laws and Litigation," *Data Protection Leader*, May 2018
- "USA - Behavioural Advertising," *Data Guidance*, May 8, 2017
- "CFPB Provides Guidance on Consumer Data Protection," *Financial Regulation Journal*, November 23, 2017

Books

Thomas on Big Data: A Practical Guide To Global Privacy Law
05.2021

Thomas on Data Breach: A Practical Guide to Handling Worldwide Data Breach Notifications Worldwide
02.2019

Media Mentions

Spotlight on ILAO supporters and leaders: Liisa Thomas
Illinois Legal Aid Online, 10.07.2021

Does the Lindy effect apply to law?
Legal Evolution, 07.11.2021

Black Cyber Lawyers See Racial Diversity as Key to Data Safety
Bloomberg Law, 07.01.2021

Law360's 2020 Cybersecurity & Privacy Editorial Board
Law360, 03.27.2020

Cybersecurity & Privacy Policy To Watch In 2019
Law360, 01.01.2019

Cybersecurity & Privacy Predictions For 2019
Law360, 01.01.2019

Thought Leaders in Privacy: Liisa M. Thomas
Data Guidance, 06.2018

Sheppard Mullin Partner: U.S. Privacy Norms Already Close to Europe's
Bloomberg Law, 05.23.2018

Sheppard Mullin Appoints Privacy Litigator
Commercial Dispute Resolution, 10.11.2017

Sheppard Mullin Adds Practice Leader to Grow Winston Lateral Roster
The American Lawyer, 09.26.2017

Sheppard Mullin Nabs Leading Cybersecurity Partner
Law360, 09.25.2017

FTC Takes First EU-U.S. Privacy Shield Enforcement Actions
Bloomberg Law: Privacy & Data Security, 09.08.2017

Speaking Engagements

- Speaker and faculty, "Technotainment" 2021: Distributing Content Across Multiple Platforms, Practising Law Institute, September 17, 2021

Events

Understanding and Managing Risk in a Risky Technotainment World
"Technotainment" 2021: Distributing Content Across Multiple Platforms
In-person or virtual, 09.17.2021

ABA Internet of Things (IoT) National Institute 2021
Virtual, 6.10.2021-6.11.2021

Compliance Under Biden
Practical Insights for Turbulent Times: WSJ Risk & Compliance Forum
Virtual, 05.05.2021

Inside Scoop video #3: Project Management for Privacy Professionals
ANA Law & Public Policy Conference
In-person or virtual, 04.28.2021

Inaugural Ad Law Symposium
Webinar, 01.27.2021

2020 ANA/BAA Marketing Law Conference: A Virtual Experience
Virtual, 11.10.2020-11.12.2020

Advertising Law Institute 2020
Practising Law Institute Webcast
In-person or virtual, 10.15.2020-10.16.2020

Hot Topics in Privacy and Cyber Security in Uncertain Times: A Virtual Resource for In-House Privacy Teams
Webinar, 07.15.2020

Virtual Chicago KnowledgeNet: May 26, 2020
05.26.2020

Top Privacy and Cyber Questions in Uncertain Times: A Virtual Resource for In-House Privacy Teams
Webinar, 04.07.2020

Cybersecurity and Privacy: Convergence in a World of Increasing Cyber Attacks and Data Breaches
03.05.2020

Advertising Law Institute 2019
Practising Law Institute
October 17-18, 2019

Privacy Bootcamp for Security Professionals
IAPP Privacy. Security. Risk. 2019
09.23.2019

Advertising Law Institute 2019
Practising Law Institute
09.13.2019

To CCPA and Beyond! Creating a Flexible Approach to Privacy Compliance
Association of Corporate Counsel
06.05.2019

2019 INTA Annual Meeting
May 18-22, 2019

Women Leading Privacy at the IAPP Global Privacy Summit 2019
05.02.2019

Global Privacy Summit 2019 Active Learning Day
05.01.2019

Data Breach Simulation
IAPP Data Protection Intensive: UK 2019
03.12.2019

Hot Topics in Privacy Law
Third Thursday Emerging Company Webinar Series
via GlobalMeet, 12.05.2018

Data Breach Workshop
IAPP Europe Data Protection Congress
11.27.2018

Data Breach Bootcamp
IAPP's Privacy, Security, Risk Conference
10.17.2018

Security Ecosystems
SIM Women's Leadership Summit
09.28.2018

Big Data and Online Behavioral Advertising (OBA): An Advertiser's Perspective
PLI's Advertising Law Institute
September 13-24

Limiting Exposure: Exploring Privacy Concerns for 2018 and Avoiding Unnecessary Risk
ACI's Digital Advertising Law and Compliance Conference
New York City, 06.25.2018

Labor & Employment Law Update
New York
06.07.2018

Ready or Not, GDPR is Here
Bloomberg Law Leadership Forum
New York, 05.23.2018

Law in the Information Age Panel
University of Chicago Law School
Chicago Symphony Orchestra Club, 05.17.2018

Data Security and Privacy Roundtable
Interactive Data Breach Simulation
04.25.2018

Data Breach Bootcamp
IAPP Europe Data Protection Intensive 2018
London, 04.17.2018

Analyzing the Growth of Biometric Data Collection and Resolving Related Privacy Breach Concerns
at ACI's Cyber Risk & Data Security Conference
Chicago, April 10-12, 2018

Data Breach Bootcamp
IAPP Global Privacy Summit 2018
Washington, D.C., 03.26.2018

IAPP Europe Data Protection Congress 2017
Data Breach Bootcamp
SQUARE - Brussels Meeting Centre, 11.06.2017

Advertising Law Institute 2017
PLI Practising Law Institute
PLI California Center, 10.17.2017

Privacy. Security. Risk. 2017
Data Breach Bootcamp
Renaissance San Diego, 10.2017

Privacy + Security Forum
Hands-On Data Breach Simulation: Understanding the Roles of Legal, Forensics/IT, and PR
George Washington University The Marvin Center, 10.04.2017

Memberships

- Training Advisory Board, International Association of Privacy Professionals (IAPP)
- Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees, Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO)
- Chair, Negaunee Music Institute Board, CSO
- Subcommittee Chair, INTA Building Bridges Committee, International Trademark Association
- Member, International Association of Privacy Professionals
- Member, Women's Foodservice Forum
- Adjunct Professor, Northwestern University School of Law
- Member, Leading Lawyers Network
- Violinist, Chicago Bar Association Symphony Orchestra

Podcasts & Webinars

Nota Bene Episode 142: Big Data: A Practical Guide to Global Privacy Law with Liisa Thomas
09.08.2021

Inaugural Ad Law Symposium
01.27.2021

Hot Topics in Privacy and Cyber Security in Uncertain Times: A Virtual Resource for In-House Privacy Teams
07.15.2020

Top Privacy and Cyber Questions in Uncertain Times: A Virtual Resource for In-House Privacy Teams
04.07.2020

Nota Bene Episode 25: Keeping Up with Privacy Laws Affecting Your Business with Liisa Thomas
02.27.2019

Hot Topics in Privacy Law
12.05.2018

Practices

Privacy and Cybersecurity

Intellectual Property

IP Licensing, Technology and Commercial Transactions

Trademark Applications and Prosecution

Healthcare

Advertising

Biometric Information Privacy Act (BIPA)

California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA)

Digital Health

Entertainment and Digital Media

France

Trademarks and Trade Dress

Industries

Advertising

Entertainment and Digital Media

Fashion, Apparel and Beauty

Food and Beverage

Hospitality

Retail

Education

J.D., University of Chicago, 1996

B.A., Haverford College, 1993

Admissions

Illinois

District of Columbia

Additional Office

London

Languages

French