

Microsoft's Lynch wins IAPP Vanguard Award

🕒 Apr 19, 2017

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The International Association of Privacy Professionals has named Microsoft's Brendon Lynch, CIPP/US, its 2017 winner of the IAPP Vanguard Award. A representative for Lynch will accept the honor on his behalf today at the IAPP's Global Privacy Summit.

The IAPP [Vanguard Award \(https://iapp.org/about/annual-awards/iapp-privacy-vanguard-award/\)](https://iapp.org/about/annual-awards/iapp-privacy-vanguard-award/) recognizes privacy professionals "who show exceptional leadership, knowledge and creativity in the field of privacy and data protection, whether through spearheading projects or programs that positively impact the profession or through achievements over the course of an entire tenure or career."

Lynch, widely regarded as a privacy titan, has had a long and storied career in this burgeoning field. He began his work with PricewaterhouseCoopers in London, just as 1995's Data Protection Directive had gone live in Europe. But the EU wasn't alone in its escalation of privacy issues (and subsequent legal debates). The U.S. was seeing similar action in the way of privacy lawsuits and Federal Trade Commission enforcement. Lynch decided to transfer to PwC's New York office, where he spearheaded the creation of a partnership with a privacy technology provider called "Watchfire."

His privacy career snowballed from there. "I took the leap into the software industry to lead Watchfire's privacy business," he said. "In 2004, I was lucky enough to be offered a role on Microsoft's privacy team and take on the chief privacy officer role in 2010." He's been there ever since.

Of his many accomplishments through his 17 years as a privacy professional, Lynch names his work helping the IAPP develop its CIPP certification in 2004 as among his proudest. "At that time, it was clear that privacy was going to develop into a very important professional domain and that a professional certification was essential to its development," he said. "In addition to building one of the modules of the certification, I had the honor of delivering certification training to many hundreds of new privacy professionals."

His work on the certification and subsequent role as a trainer is symbolic of what he loves most about working in privacy: the mix of the subject's increasing "strategic importance" and dynamic collaboration with the "many talented people" at Microsoft, as well as in the field more broadly.

Lynch's affection for the community he leads makes the win more poignant. "I am very honored to receive the IAPP Vanguard Award," Lynch said. "There are so many privacy professionals out there doing amazingly innovative work, and to be recognized by peers in this way is extremely humbling."

IAPP CEO and President Trevor Hughes, CIPP, spoke with The Privacy Advisor on Lynch's win.

this is more than just a job."

Lynch is also a stalwart supporter of the IAPP, having served on its board of directors and later as its chairman. "His support goes way beyond financial support, and his leadership goes way beyond his experience and intelligence," Hughes said. "He is perhaps one of the most trusted voices in the global privacy community.

"Brendon rarely speaks in hyperbole. He speaks not to negotiate answers, but to provide the right answers to the tough questions that face our field," Hughes continued. "He is trusted and admired by the full spectrum of the privacy world, from the most ardent advocates to the most grizzled industry veterans."

Lynch might have technically won the award in 2017, but it's been a long time coming, Hughes added. "My sense is, Brendon could have won this award in any year — it is not that this is 'his year' to receive the Vanguard Award. We just finally caught up to his greatness, and he certainly is great."

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