



# Wyrick Robbins Data Protection Team Grows to Meet Client Demand

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Privacy concerns and data security breaches pervade the news. The deluge of [social media scandals](#), [massive data breaches](#), constant [phishing schemes designed to perpetrate fraud](#), and persistent reports of [foreign actors committing cyber attacks](#) are exacerbating anxiety over data misuse and security. These same concerns have inspired a slew of new, complex data protection laws like the EU's General Data Protection Regulation and the more recent, but similarly impactful California Consumer Privacy Act. Legislative proposals for new privacy laws, or amendments to existing laws, [emerge daily](#).

Wyrick Robbins has continued its commitment to meet growing client needs in this area with its latest strategic hire: [Alex Pearce](#), a privacy attorney formerly with SAS Institute. Alex joins Wyrick's [current team](#) of privacy and data security professionals. The team delivers compliance advice, transactional assistance, and data breach preparation and response services to a client base that crosses nearly every industry and spans the globe. Alex's front-line experience managing SAS's privacy compliance program and his more recent experience advising businesses on [data protection matters arising in litigation](#), will complement the team's current work and provide Wyrick's clients with a full complement of privacy law expertise.

Wyrick's privacy practice group leader, [Elizabeth Johnson](#), described the client needs that drive the team's accelerated growth: "Our clients want us to tell them how emerging laws impact their business and help them minimize that impact. They want to know, in practical terms, what is required so they can collect and use personal data. Or, if they are in the midst of a crisis, like a data breach or a government investigation, they need us to lead their response and minimize liability. We have to be practical and we have to be highly available and highly responsive. Hiring talent so we can lean into that demand is critical to our continued ability to serve these clients the way they expect and deserve to be supported."

The EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) sparked an international wave of privacy laws, but more recently movement in state legislatures has

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propelled client demand. Illinois's biometric privacy law (propelled by a [private right of action](#)), constantly changing state data breach notification laws ([including North Carolina's](#)), and [enhanced state data security obligations](#) have driven an increasing number of client requests. But easily the biggest item on the agenda for 2019 is the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA). [Considered a spin off to GDPR](#), the CCPA statute is set to impose burdensome requirements on businesses in a range of different industries—both inside and outside of California. The law gives consumers new privacy rights like access and deletion, a private right of action that will almost certainly lead to a wave of class actions, and as yet unreleased implementing regulations from the California Attorney General's Office.

“We are thrilled with the practice we have been able to develop in this important area,” said Jimmy Yates, Wyrick's Managing Partner. “We already had a strong team, led by Elizabeth and her partners, [Tara Cho](#) and [Lynn Percival](#). Alex's arrival will really anchor the team and allow them to continue their amazing growth.” In addition to Elizabeth, Tara, Lynn, and Alex, the team includes three associates: [Molly Martinson](#), [Dana Messinger](#), and [Sean Fernandes](#).

The crush of intimidating privacy and data security developments in the news and the law is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Businesses that successfully navigate these rapid changes will do so by focusing on identifying threats, strategically managing risk, and focusing on practical implementation solutions. Wyrick's [data protection team](#) continues to grow and provide these skills to clients. If you have questions or needs in this area, please do not hesitate to contact any member of the team.