Legalweek 2019 Kicks Off With Former United States Attorneys General Loretta Lynch and Alberto Gonzalez Focused On Cybersecurity

Nick Inglis

Two former U.S. Attorneys General helped kick off Legalweek 2019 by sharing their thoughts on such pressing issues as cybersecurity, privacy, civil rights, and more.

Former attorneys general Albert Gonzalez and Loretta Lynch spoke frankly in a discussion attended primarily by attorneys and moderated by ALM's Molly Miller. (ARMA International, a track sponsor of Legalweek 2019, was represented in the audience as well.)

Miller, the chief content officer for ALM, asked Gonzalez and Lynch to describe what the U.S. government should be most worried about today. Both former officials responded without hesitation that cybersecurity was the most pressing threat.

Gonzalez had earlier noted that there's a "cyber component" to nearly every case these days: "The computer is often the means of carrying out the crime." he said.

Accordingly, Lynch encouraged attorneys to better acquaint themselves with technology. "You don't have to be the IT guy, but we need to train lawyers to have mental flexibility and become comfortable with technology," she said.

Gonzalez agreed: "You've got to learn technology, folks."

The topic of privacy led to a discussion about the Justice Department's suit against Apple for refusing to help disclose data on the encrypted iPhone that

belonged to the 2015 San Bernardino mass shooter. Lynch said that "Technology companies don't get to decide for all of us how we control and access our data. People have ceded more control of very private data to industry without even thinking about it than I could ever get as part of the government."

Lynch expanded the discussion to civil liberties by discussing the 2015 Freddie Gray case (in which a suspect was found dead after being transported in a Baltimore police department van) and her role in helping to make police departments more responsive to their communities. She furthered that point in discussing the balance of civil liberties in cases involving terrorism: "We never viewed civil liberties as something that couldn't be upheld when fighting terrorism . . . we cannot give in to fear."

Gonzalez served from 2005 to 2007, during the second term of the George W. Bush administration. Lynch served during the final two years of the Obama presidency.

The ARMA International track at Legalweek 2019 was called "Innovative IG," and it consisted of three sessions during the conference.

about the author

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Nick Inglis is Executive Director, Content & Programming at ARMA International (formerly President of the Information Coalition, before the two organizations' merger). Inglis is the author of 'INFORMATION: The Comprehensive Overview of the Information Profession.' Mr. Inglis is a recipient of the Providence Ambassador Award and was named a 2018 Rhode Island "50 on Fire" for his work with both the information profession and his public advocacy. Mr. Inglis' writing has been featured in U.S. News & World Report, The Providence Journal, Yahoo! Finance, CMSWire, and others.