EMCS Podcast Transcript

“Professor Linn Freedman on Cybersecurity Opportunities for Professional Women in Non-Tech Sectors”

INTERVIEWER: Welcome to the Brown Executive Master in Cybersecurity Podcast Series. Linn Freedman is a partner at the law firm Robinson and Cole and chair of the firm's Data Privacy and Security team. She is also a faculty member in the Brown Executive Master in Cybersecurity program. In this brief podcast, she talks about the rich career opportunities for women in cybersecurity who, like her, might lack a technology background. Linn's cybersecurity journey began in 1998 in the Rhode Island Attorney General's office, working on one of the first statewide health information exchanges. They were just beginning to figure out how they could transfer health information across state lines. Listen on as she explains how this work served as a stepping stone to an exciting career in cybersecurity and the industry's need for a broad range of experts across policy, privacy, and technology.

LINN FREEDMAN: So I was on the National Governors Association HISPC project, Health Information Security and Privacy Committee. And all 50 states were involved in that to determine what the laws were about, really starting health information exchanges so that you could exchange data in all 50 states.

It's really kind of crazy when you think about that in 1998 and where we are today. Rhode Island has one of the most robust health information exchanges because of that. We were one of the first five.

But that's really how I got into it. I was at the AG's office figuring that out. And then when I went into private practice, I started doing a lot of HIPAA work and a lot of HIPAA compliance. And I got into the data privacy side of
things and a little bit on the security side because of the security rules under HIPAA.

And then as the internet started to really blossom and digital technology started to blossom, I started looking at data security regulations. Massachusetts was the first to implement data security regulations. And I started learning about that.

And then I started reading all of the state laws. We now have 48 states and DC that have data breach laws. So I started reading that. And then there was an amendment to HIPAA.

So it was really a gradual journey from 1998 in the health care sector, and then really in the last 10 years I started learning more and more about data security through other laws. But I came from the legal side of things.

**INTERVIEWER:** And do you enjoy the sector? What's your experience like as a partner and chair of this division?

**LINN FREEDMAN:** So I love it because it's constantly changing. I spend the first hour to hour and a half every morning looking to see what happened yesterday. It is the most rapidly changing area of the law that you can possibly be in. When I teach, I talk about how we might want to talk about something today, but a huge case came out yesterday so now we're going to just talk about that.

You're not seeing that in other areas of law. And so that's a very, very fun place to be. It's a great place because, really, it's constantly changing. It is not for the weak at heart. You have to be on the ball because it's changing rapidly. And it's going to continue to change as technologies become more robust in our lives and changing constantly.
INTERVIEWER: How can women leverage their current experience and education to become leaders in this growth field?

LINN FREEDMAN: So when I started practicing law, we didn't have the internet. We were still using carbon paper. That's how old I am, I'm sorry to say. But so you don't have to come from a computer science background. I came into the security side of things because I learned it. I had to. Because there was such an intersection between data privacy and security, I needed to know about ISO standards. I needed to know about the NIST framework. You can read those things and they make sense to you. So you don't have to have a computer science background to be able to understand the concepts around data privacy and security and cybersecurity.

It's all about data and it's all about protecting the data. I think having some science and computer science background will help. But it is absolutely not necessary to be successful in this area at all.

INTERVIEWER: And could you even argue that it's important, as we say about our program often, to have people from across the field to come in and bring their perspective to bear on the issue?

LINN FREEDMAN: Because our program is going to talk about the entire scope of cybersecurity in an organization, whatever method you come from, you're going to be part of a program that brings lots of different areas. So we want a diverse student body, with people coming from different parts.

We're going to be talking about policy, we're going to be talking about laws, we're going to be talking about science, we're going to be talking about cryptology. No one is going to know all of that. And that's what is great about our faculty because we each have this expertise to bring to the table.
And I wish I was a student in this program because I want to hear everything that the other professors are going to have to say and to bring to the course.

**INTERVIEWER:** Thank you for listening to this podcast. For more information on future podcasts, program news, and upcoming events, please visit brown.edu/cybersecurity.