

# Daily Journal

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## TOP CYBER LAWYERS 2020

### Michael A. Gold

**G**old, a veteran counselor and litigator, is a partner and co-chair of the cybersecurity and privacy group at Jeffer Mangels. His practice focuses on privacy law compliance in California, the U.S. and internationally; information security governance; and crisis management and data breach and security incident response and remediation. He is co-author of the Cybersecurity Lawyer Forum blog.

"I've been doing this work since before the word cybersecurity was coined," Gold said. "I'd been doing technology law and representing customers with failed systems and networks. I was asked to work on an early data breach at a managed health care organization in the late 1990s, and because I had a technical background, I felt I had a good footing in the field."

In late October he was dealing with a new threat: a ransomware variant known as Mespinoza Pysa, deployed by a hacking group, that not only encrypts files and systems but also steals them. "Hackers used to lock up data, but they have expanded their horizons and now put a company's data on a dark web dump site before sending a ransom message," Gold said. "The victim isn't only faced with locked data but with the prospect that it will be sold. A significant law firm in New York has been hit in this way. We are in a very threatening environment now."

His clients tend to operate within large and complex data environments, particularly those with international operations and regulatory challenges. They

include The Macerich Co., the Los Angeles Lakers, the Tony Robbins Organization, the Northern Light Group LLC, Topa Equities Ltd., SAI Global, ENCO Utility Services Inc., Ducommun Inc. and Bear.com. Several others remain unnamed, including a national accounting and business management firm, a U.S. fast food restaurant chain, and a prominent charitable organization.

Data breaches lead to a range of fallouts. "There are not only technical issues, but business continuity issues plus an emotional component," Gold said. "Threats and exploits and hacks are existential problems for companies when they lead to lawsuits and regulatory investigations. Nobody takes this lightly, and part of my job is to help clients see a path forward."

As new threats proliferate and hackers become more professional, Gold strives to keep his clients current. "Ransomware can be very scary, and it's getting more complex in our current complex digital environment. Hackers are having a field day, and I believe this is just the tip of the iceberg as businesses adapt new technologies without concurrent information security. There are a lot of shortcomings to be addressed. My clients are getting on board very quickly in terms of cybersecurity. Everybody is at risk, of course, which is why an optimal information security framework is the goal."

— John Roemer



#### **JEFFER MANGELS BUTLER & MITCHELL LLP CENTURY CITY, LOS ANGELES**

Practice: Cybersecurity, privacy, and governance matters  
Specialties: Domestic and international privacy law compliance; information security governance; crisis management; data breach and security incident response and remediation