

# Humble Beginnings

Who would have thought that three women having cups of coffee together at a Washington, D.C., Starbucks would lead to the formation of a highly successful non-profit organization? Lana Schell, Margaret Havinga and I used to meet periodically to discuss technology, new laws and women's issues in general. Eventually, we started discussing the need for a group that focuses on women in technology related to the legal profession. We went on to found Women in eDiscovery, and the organization's first official meeting was held in May 2007. The organization has since grown to include more than 3,500 members.

The mission of Women in eDiscovery is to bring together businesswomen interested in technology related to the legal industry and to provide opportunities for them to help themselves and others grow personally and professionally through leadership, education, networking, support and recognition.

"Our goals for this organization include bridging the knowledge gap for women between old technology, traditional technology and future trends," said co-founder Havinga. "We plan to offer educational and certification opportunities for women who are interested in furthering their education, and we hope to create a strong communication network among women focused in the legal and technology industries."

Membership in Women in eDiscovery is open to all women – no matter what their professional titles are – who want to learn more about technology related to the legal field. The organization's membership comprises women from many walks of life, including general counsel, secretaries, partners, associates, chief operating officers, paralegals, litigation support and e-discovery professionals, legal consultants and vendor representatives.

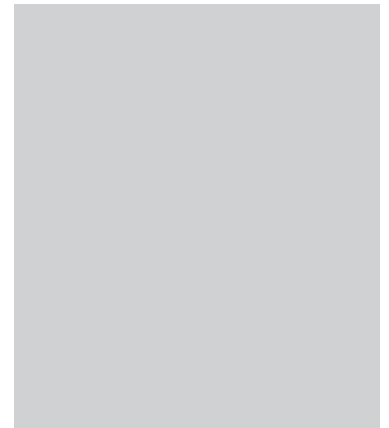
Along with the other founders of Women in eDiscovery, I envisioned an organization with no barriers for any woman to enter, so membership and education is free, and most monthly meetings include a meal at no charge. Chapter meetings are held monthly during the lunch hour or after work in more than 30 cities. Evident during each chapter meeting is the blend of diverse female professionals learning and networking together.

"We are so thankful for the many people who have committed to sharing their time, knowledge and resources with us," co-founder Schell said. "The continued support we are seeing from law firms, corporations and vendors, as well as the creativity and volunteer work from the national and chapter board members, have made us what we are today."

Beyond the legal profession, Women in eDiscovery is committed to creating a better environment for women in all aspects of their lives. Therefore, we chose the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation as the organization's principal beneficiary. In 2008, Women in eDiscovery raised more than \$52,000 for the charity.

Women in eDiscovery has grown rapidly both in the United States and around the globe, proving there is a need for a forum where women can gather, exchange ideas and receive guidance and support. We are working to ensure that the organization will continue to serve as that forum for many years to come.

Intrigued? Learn more about Women in eDiscovery – and join the organization at no cost to you – at [www.womeninediscovery.com](http://www.womeninediscovery.com). ✨



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