



# Business Methods Customer Partnership Meeting

Featured participants



UNITED STATES  
PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE ®

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## **USPTO Presenters**

### **Vaishali Udupa, Commissioner for Patents**

#### **(Opening Remarks)**

Vaishali Udupa is the Commissioner for Patents of the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). As Commissioner for Patents, Ms. Udupa manages and leads the Patents organization as its chief operating officer. She oversees the agency's 10,000 Patents employees, including more than 9,000 patent examiners responsible for fostering the country's innovation system by providing patent protections to inventors as stated in Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution

Prior to joining the USPTO, Ms. Udupa was already a nationally recognized leader in intellectual property (IP), with over twenty years of experience in strategic IP advisement and complex litigation. She has a wealth of experience in patent prosecution and litigation, global IP policy, and diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. In the private sector, Ms. Udupa secured multiple IP trial wins and managed numerous IP cases to favorable resolutions in the United States and abroad. She assisted in the development of patent and trademark portfolios and counseled internal clients regarding licensing deals, asset acquisitions, and agreements involving IP rights. Her technological experience includes, among others, electronic devices, networking and telecommunication systems, computer software, electronic commerce, consumer products, sporting goods, and medical devices.

### **Nalini Mummalaneni, Senior Legal Advisors**

#### **(Artificial intelligence (AI) guidance updates)**

Nalini Mummalaneni is a Senior Legal Advisor in the Office of Patent Legal Administration (OPLA). OPLA assists in the development and administration of U.S. patent law, advises the USPTO on patent examination policy, and formulates new regulations, policies, and procedures regarding patents. Nalini is involved in the development of patent examination policy in areas like subject matter eligibility under Section 101 and disclosure requirements under Section 112. Nalini is a member of the Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies (AI/ET) working group. She is the lead coordinator for the development and implementation of patent policy related to AI/ET at the Agency.

Nalini graduated from The George Washington University Law School. She holds a master's in computer science from the University of Texas at Dallas and a bachelors of science in electrical engineering from Nagarjuna University, India.

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### **Beth Boswell, Management Quality Assurance Specialist, Technology Center 3600**

#### **(Business methods quality initiatives)**

Beth Boswell is a management quality assurance specialist (MQAS) in Technology Center (TC) 3600. She began her career at the USPTO in 2001 as a patent examiner in the Business Methods art group, specifically in the field of Operations Research. She progressed to primary examiner and became a supervisory patent examiner in Technology Center 3600 in 2008, supervising examiners in Operations Research. She served on a detail to the Office of the Commissioner of Patents in 2012 and also served as an expert advisor in the Office of Under Secretary and Director on matters related to issues of patent law, rulemaking, strategic planning, and policy within the USPTO from 2012 -2013. She became an MQAS in 2018. Beth earned a bachelor's degree in systems engineering from the University of Virginia and has a masters degree in industrial engineering from Virginia Tech.

### **Srilakshmi Kumar, Technology Center Operations Manager, Technology Center 3600**

#### **(Fireside chat with business methods directors)**

Srilakshmi Kumar joined the USPTO as a patent examiner in 1999 examining applications in the telecommunications and selective visual display systems. Currently, she is on detail at the Office of the Under Secretary as a Senior Advisor. Additionally, she serves as the lead of Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technology (AI/ET) Partnership team for the AI/ET Policy Working Group. Previously, she has served as a Technology Center Operations Manager in TC 3600 and TC 2600, and Supervisory Patent Examiner in selective visual display systems and wireless telecommunications, satellite & power control, Bluetooth technology for TC 2600. Prior to joining the USPTO, Sri worked for Booz, Allen & Hamilton in the defense military satellite communications area. Sri earned a bachelor of science in electrical engineering from The Pennsylvania State University.

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### **Tariq Hafiz, Director, Technology Center 3600**

#### **(Fireside chat with business methods directors)**

Tariq Hafiz joined the USPTO in 1992 as a patent examiner and in 2012 became a Group Director for TC 2600 specializing in Communications and in 2016 was assigned to be a Group Director for Business Methods in TC 3600. In Business Methods, Tariq has helped improve the examination process with respect to subject matter eligibility rejections, quality of office actions and communication with stakeholders. Tariq is a lead on interview practice team that provides support and training for internal and external stakeholders on interview practice. He led the efforts to develop automated interview request where stakeholders can schedule interview with examiners online. Tariq is also the executive lead on after final consideration pilot program. Tariq is also on the USPTO national science and technology council subcommittee with subgroup of nanotechnology. Prior to USPTO, he worked in software development at Computer Sciences Corporation for over three years. Tariq earned a bachelor of science degree in physics from the College of William and Mary with graduate work in electrical engineering from Virginia Tech.

### **Deborah Reynolds, Director, Technology Center 3600**

#### **(Fireside chat with business methods directors)**

Deborah Reynolds is currently a technology center director in the business methods area of TC 3600. Ms. Reynolds previously held the position of deputy chief patent academic officer of the office of patent training. As the deputy she was responsible for providing critical training and education to patent examiners, patent managers and other patent employees. She joined the ranks of the senior executive service in 2011. Prior to joining the office of patent training, Ms. Reynolds was both a quality assurance specialist and a supervisory patent examiner for TC 1600. She joined the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office in July 1996 and examined patent applications in the gene therapy and transgenic animal arts in TC 1600. Ms. Reynolds progressed to primary examiner and was promoted to supervisory patent examiner in November of 2000.

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## **External stakeholder presenters**

**Christopher (Chris) Bennett, Founder / Attorney, T-I-L® (Technology-Innovation-Law LLC, and T-I-L-Group Benefit Corporation)**

**(Optimizing America's innovation portfolio)**

As the founder of T-I-L®, Chris Bennett pioneered a social impact law venture, revolutionizing access to intellectual property rights (IPR) for the underrepresented. His design delivers IPR as a digital service and as a digital software product, enhancing accessibility and affordability, crucial for fostering innovation and economic growth. The work builds upon prior experience with startups, private sector entities (like AT&T/BellSouth, Deloitte, Verizon/MCI) and government and incorporates lifelong learning from academic (Georgetown (JD), MSU/JCSU (BA), Penn (MBA)) and professional certificate (George Washington (CPM, Six-Sigma), Johns Hopkins (Data Science), Stanford (Energy Innovation and Emerging Technologies), UC Berkeley (Blockchain)) education. In 2019 T-I-L® launched the IPRights4All Solution, supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, by raising awareness of IPR with audiences in the US and globally. January 2024 the T-I-L-Group was launched as a complementary legal tech startup, one which graduated the University of Maryland Blockchain Accelerator in July of this year, with an AI / Blockchain MVP.

**Daphne Ekpe, Esq., Senior Social Impact Law Leader, Technology -Innovation-Law LLC**

**(Optimizing America's innovation portfolio)**

Daphne Ekpe is a distinguished Intellectual Property lawyer with over five years of experience in IP prosecution. Recognized for her expertise in protecting and enforcing trademarks and copyrights, Ms. Ekpe has successfully represented clients across diverse industries. As a thought leader in IP law, she frequently shares insights on cutting-edge legal issues and innovative strategies in the IP space, making her a sought-after professional. She is a dedicated advocate for IP rights awareness in underrepresented communities.

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## **External stakeholder presenters**

**Andrea H. Evans, Founder, The Law Firm of Andrea Hence Evans, LLC**

**(Optimizing America's innovation portfolio)**

Andrea Hence Evans, Esq. owns The Law Firm of Andrea Hence Evans, LLC, a full-service intellectual property law firm representing clients ranging from individuals to global Fortune 50 corporations. Prior to launching the Firm, she worked as a former Patent Examiner and Trademark Examining Attorney at the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). Attorney Evans earned the juris doctorate from The George Washington University Law School, a bachelors in mathematics from Spelman College, and bachelors of civil and environmental engineering from Georgia Institute of Technology. Ms. Evans is a two-time best-selling author of All About Inventing and All About Trademarks. She is also the founder of KidGINEER, LLC, a STEM enrichment program.

**Ambur C. Smith, Esq., Founder / Managing Attorney, The Law Office of Attorney Ambur C. Smith PLLC**

**(Optimizing America's innovation portfolio)**

Ambur C. Smith, Esq. is the Founder and Managing Attorney of the Law Office of Attorney Ambur C. Smith PLLC; a virtual business and intellectual property law firm solving problems at the intersections of tech-enabled business, law, and politics. Her clients are creatives, startups, and nonprofits across the sports, entertainment, fashion, tech and wellness industries. On any given day, she helps protect their billion-dollar ideas and prepare them for success, while negotiating deals with brands like Google, Spotify, Amazon MGM, Condé Nast, Michael Kors, Gucci and more. Beyond her law practice, Ambur is committed to empowering the next generation of attorneys as a bar exam coach and product developer. Ambur is licensed to practice law in Ohio and the District of Columbia; and a proud graduate of Hampton University and the Georgetown University Law Center.

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### **Michael Boone, Trustworthy AI Product Manager, NVIDIA**

#### **(Optimizing America's innovation portfolio)**

Michael Boone is NVIDIA's Trustworthy AI Product Manager. He is responsible for ensuring NVIDIA's technology is developed according to its guiding principles and driving the strategy. His roadmap includes multi-modal processes, tools, products, and services to enable the company, customers, and the larger ecosystem. Beginning as a licensed professional civil engineer, Michael pivoted from transportation infrastructure project management delivery, operations, and consulting to owning NVIDIA's global core computer vision product marketing strategy portfolio and product feature definition for DRIVE AV. Inventor and car enthusiast, Michael is a highly trusted collaborator, partner, and voice in deploying emerging technology in public and private settings.

### **Sidney Bryson, Ph.D., System Software Development Manager, NVIDIA**

#### **(Optimizing America's innovation portfolio)**

Sidney Bryson is an Nvidia AI (Artificial Intelligence) Workflow System Software Development Manager, "responsible for implementing AI Workflows and Streaming Services at scale using NVIDIA full-stack technology." His experience has been as "one of computer vision's earliest practitioners, having nine patents, many of them in machine communications." He earned the Ph.D. in electrical engineering with North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, a master of electrical engineering (MSEE) from Purdue University, and bachelor of electrical engineering at Tuskegee University. Mr. Bryson has published papers, served as adjunct faculty, and serves on the board at Phoenix Education Institute.

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**Fonda Ingram, Ph.D., VP, Technical Program Management and Chief of Staff, Engineering, Voltron Data**

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Fonda Ingram is currently employed as the Vice President of Technical Program Management at Voltron Data, helping to drive company strategy, align teams, collaborate with cross-functional stakeholders, and deliver on multiple complex projects across the company. In her previous role(s) she worked at: Nvidia as the manager of a team of AI Technical Program Managers; as a Capital One Customer Success Manager for then Machine Learning start-up; at SAS in positions described as Senior Product Marketing Manager, Senior Systems Engineer for Financial Services, and Patent Engineer - supporting all R&D; at IBM Tivoli Software Systems Group as an enterprise architect - receiving the "IBM Master Inventor Award"; and at Bell Labs in the Distributed Software Systems research area. Fonda Ingram received her Ph.D. in computer engineering from North Carolina State University in 1998, and previously earned a master of science degree in computer engineering, and a bachelor of science degree in computer science from the same school (including graduate research in the NASA program at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California). Currently she holds over 20 US patents and is an author of several publications in the object-oriented design and testing area.

**Charles R. Macedo, Partner, Amster, Rothstein & Ebenstein LLP**

**(Strategies for protecting intellectual property generated by AI)**

Charles R. Macedo is a partner at Amster, Rothstein & Ebenstein LLP, where his practice specializes in all facets of intellectual property including patent, trademark and copyright law. He has a special emphasis in computer implemented inventions with extensive experience in blockchain technology.





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