

20

YEARS


Silicon Flatirons 20th Anniversary

Celebrating two decades in law,
technology, and entrepreneurship at
the University of Colorado Boulder



Silicon Flatirons

KNOW WHAT'S NEXT.



“ Silicon Flatirons is a place where law, policy, and entrepreneurship come together to discuss the present and plot the future. That is a unique contribution to our national dialogue. ”

—TOM WHEELER

former Chairman, Federal
Communications Commission



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20 Years Leading the Conversation

Dear Silicon Flatirons Friends and Supporters,

This year, Silicon Flatirons celebrates its 20th anniversary. We are officially leaving our teenage years behind with the start of a new decade, celebrating a long list of significant achievements, the evolution of the Center's activities, and the promise of many successes to come.

The transformation over the last two decades of the context in which the Center operates is nothing short of remarkable. Twenty years ago, the internet was still deciding what it would become. We feared and then triumphed over the Y2K bug. The PS2 was the pinnacle of gaming, Windows XP would soon dominate the OS market, and the internet service on mobile phones was introduced. The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) went into effect. Smart homes and driverless cars were still purely fiction, and smartphones started appearing.



Although our world and technologies look radically different in 2020, Silicon Flatirons' purpose remains the same: to convene multi-stakeholder discussions, support innovation, and develop the next generation of tech lawyers, policy experts, and entrepreneurs. At Colorado Law, Silicon Flatirons has built a home to support a robust community of local, national, and international stakeholders tackling complex and rapidly developing issues at the confluence of law, technology, and entrepreneurship.

Silicon Flatirons is proud of our history of convening influential people from across sectors to debate urgent issues and seed the solutions. Our inaugural advisory board included forward-thinking leaders from tech and telecommunications companies, law firms, nonprofits, and academia. Our first symposium—Telecommunications Law for the 21st Century, February 2000—paved the way for our annual flagship conference. This year our conference focuses on Technology Optimism and Pessimism, convening government, corporate, academic, and civil society representatives to examine the past and present of the sector and how to build a stronger technology future. This academic year, we are adding a new initiative in artificial intelligence, joining privacy, content, entrepreneurship, and spectrum to form a basis for our convenings and substantive investments.

Since the Center's inception, we have held a deep commitment to providing resources to and promoting the work of local entrepreneurs. Startup Colorado and the Blackstone Entrepreneurs Network (BEN) have successfully created communities and, most importantly, actively support systems for entrepreneurs across Colorado. In fact, BEN has been so successful that it will roll out as an independent entity this year and through other endeavors, from the Governmental Entrepreneurial Leadership Accelerator (GELA) to Startup Summer, we continue to believe that an entrepreneurial approach can help drive solutions across sectors and industries.

Students are the soul of Silicon Flatirons, and our offerings to them will deepen and expand. Popular summer programs place students at some of the most innovative organizations across the country, where they receive first-rate experience working with people at the top of their fields. We also partner with and support the Silicon Flatirons Student Group that runs primers on topics pertinent to our conferences, as well as the Colorado Technology Law Journal that publishes expert perspectives from our conferences. Students thrive on the direct experience available through our competitions, most notably the Interdisciplinary Ethics Tech Competition, and research opportunities led by esteemed faculty and non-faculty initiative directors.

For 20 years, Silicon Flatirons has been a force that drives the narrative and inspires people to get involved. We are just getting started. As the rate of technological advancement increases every year, the ensuing changes make our mission and community as vital as ever. In 2020 and beyond, we will be considering fresh ways to support our community, including additional opportunities for people to learn about, discuss, and tackle issues across tech law, policy, and entrepreneurship. As we do so, we are placing meaningful focus on inclusion and diversity, a renewed commitment to interdisciplinary programs, and a recognition of the international nature of everything we do.

We are grateful to Phil Weiser and Anna Noschese for their vision and leadership in establishing Silicon Flatirons as a revolutionary home for innovation, and we are excited to work with our staff, initiative directors, faculty, advisors, and fellows during Silicon Flatirons' next chapter. It promises to be a vibrant one. As we chart our path ahead, I hope that you will reach out to me (amie.stepanovich@colorado.edu) or our new Operations Director, Nate Mariotti (nate.mariotti@colorado.edu), with questions, comments, and suggestions. We are looking forward to working with you, accomplishing our mission well into the future.

Cheers,



Amie Stepanovich
Executive Director, Silicon Flatirons



OUR MISSION & VISION

Silicon Flatirons is a Center for innovation at the University of Colorado Boulder serving students, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and professionals at the intersection of law, policy, and technology. Our core mission is threefold: to elevate the debate of technology policy issues; support and enable entrepreneurship in technology; and inspire, prepare, and place students in these important areas. We work across sectors to spark dialog and inspire tomorrow's innovations through intellectually honest programming and community engagement. Through our conferences and events, our support of key academic initiatives, and engagement with our community, the Center propels the future of technology policy, drives innovation, and develops professionals ready to lead "What's Next."



Student Programs: Cultivating the Next Generation of Experts

Since our inception, thousands of students have benefited from Silicon Flatirons' programming. Many have developed thriving careers spurred by these opportunities. Working in partnership with Colorado Law and faculty, Silicon Flatirons has helped develop creative problem-solving professionals ready to engage across disciplines with entrepreneurial skills. Students receive invaluable immersions in technology policy and innovation.

SUMMER SCHOLARS

For over a decade, our summer programs—which include the DC Summer Program and Hatfield Scholars Program—have given students real-world experience in private and public organizations and government agencies, such as the Federal Communications Commission, Federal Trade Commission, Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, Public Knowledge, Common Cause, Verizon, AT&T, and Disney.

LAW CLINICS

Clinics are where law school theory meets practice. Students gain valuable experience handling actual clients and legal matters while embodying Silicon Flatirons' values of civic engagement and social responsibility. In collaboration with Colorado Law, Silicon Flatirons supports two clinics: the Samuelson-Glushko Technology Law & Policy Clinic and the Entrepreneurial Law Clinic.

TECH LAW JOURNAL

The Colorado Technology Law Journal (CTLJ), formerly the Journal on Telecommunications and High Technology Law (JHTL), is a student-operated and edited telecommunications and technology law journal supported by Silicon Flatirons and Colorado Law. Since its founding in 2001, the journal has established a position among the elite national technology and telecommunications law journals.

COMPETITIONS

Experiential learning solidifies often abstract scholastic concepts into well-understood, concrete examples and outcomes. Silicon Flatirons supports and promotes two competitions: the Interdisciplinary Ethics Tech Competition and a Silicon Flatirons Writing Competition.

"As a student interested in working in the tech sector, Silicon Flatirons gave me the connections that I needed to land two summer internships at major Silicon Valley tech companies."

—GREG MAX
Colorado Law Student

"Silicon Flatirons plugs students into some of the region's most prominent industries and sectors. It is both an effective networking channel and a forward-thinking resource on the latest legal trends. Through training, research, and cross-collaborative dialogue, Silicon Flatirons empowers students by providing a world-class education for an evolving economy."

—SIERRA MOLLER
Colorado Law Graduate

“ Students from Silicon Flatirons come with an impressive curiosity and future-looking perspective that allows them to creatively engage in the most challenging law and technology questions. ”

–**MICHELLE RICHARDSON**
Center for Democracy & Technology

WHY SILICON FLATIRONS' INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH MATTERS

In technology law and policy, an interdisciplinary approach means generating statutes, regulations, policies, and judicial decisions that are informed by a fundamental understanding of how technology works. Today, such laws and policies must serve an increasingly complex digital world. For example, the Fourth Amendment's protections against unreasonable searches and seizures by law enforcement were developed for an offline, analog society. It is only by taking an interdisciplinary approach that we can apply centuries-old constitutional law, balancing civil liberties with public safety, to a context that now includes cutting-edge technologies, advancements that the Constitution's framers never could have foreseen.

–**BLAKE REID,**
Associate Clinical Professor





“ I value the skills I learned in GELA, including lean startup methodology, an iterative approach to problem solving, team building and communication, and what it means to recommend innovative changes for local government. ”

–KYLIE THOMPSON

Colorado Law Student

“Startup Summer was an undeniably cool insider experience of Colorado startup culture, visiting companies like Sphero, Techstars, and Boomtown Accelerators. The opportunity to speak candidly with leaders about their experiences, failures, and wins was invaluable.”

–ELIZABETH DAMIOLI

Backbone PLM

Entrepreneurship and Innovation: Transforming Our World

Innovation is rapidly evolving our society as it transforms many aspects of our lives. Entrepreneurship is a driving force in those changes. Working across departments, Silicon Flatirons engages a wide entrepreneurial community and supports innovators through programs that have helped make CU Boulder a top-flight university for innovation and entrepreneurship.

STARTUP SUMMER

Launched in 2012, Startup Summer gives interns an exclusive opportunity to meet and learn from Colorado's top entrepreneurs. Students gain experience in the startup ideation and creation process while building their own ventures and competing in an end-of-summer pitch contest with cash prizes.

STARTUP COLORADO

Supporting entrepreneurship across the entire state, this program works directly with local community leaders and entrepreneurs to help boost existing startup activity and spur new endeavors. The focus is on providing access to key resources: mentorship, event support, capital resources, and community leadership. Silicon Flatirons proudly partnered with the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade to launch this effort.

GELA

The Governmental Entrepreneurial Leadership Accelerator (GELA) program, believed to be the first of its kind in the country, launched in 2016 to encourage innovative problem solving to address pressing public policy challenges. Each year, Silicon Flatirons partners with local and state government to bring together Colorado Law students and rising stars in government as fellows for seven weeks. The fellows take part in a cutting-edge entrepreneurial curriculum, learn from mentors, and test and pitch entrepreneurial solutions to identified challenges facing these governments and their citizens.

“It’s going to be emerging industries, developed by many entrepreneurs here, that will be the engines that drive our economy, job growth, and wage growth.”

—MICHAEL BENNET
United States Senator, Colorado



Initiative-Driven Engagement

The reach of our initiatives distinguishes Silicon Flatirons. In all we do, we spark original ideas, experiment with new modes of community engagement, and enable students to succeed. From our legacy in technology and telecommunications policy to our robust array of initiatives today, Silicon Flatirons has been a meeting point for policymakers, legal and business professionals, entrepreneurs, academics, and students to discuss these developments and their effect on policy and regulations, while providing recommendations for advancement.

SPECTRUM

A centerpiece of our work in policy, wireless spectrum policy dictates how, where, and when wireless services can be delivered to devices—technology that has become essential in today’s society. Co-directors of this initiative, Dale Hatfield and Pierre de Vries, are vanguards within spectrum policy. Spectrum policy has deep ramifications for the economy, scientific development, national security, personal enjoyment, and much more.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Our hometown, Boulder, was ranked by Forbes in 2015 as the #1 best city to start a business. Led by Professor Brad Bernthal, this initiative catalyzes connections across the CU Boulder campus and the Front Range startup community, providing opportunities for entrepreneurs, students, and legal and business professionals to convene, exchange ideas, and learn.

CONTENT AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (IP)

The influence of technology on innovation and public policy is fully evident when it comes to intellectual property. Directed by Professor Kristelia García, this initiative makes meaningful contributions to the conversation about how technology and law should work together.

PRIVACY

Information privacy has emerged as one of the most vital, contested, and important areas of debate in technology law and policy. Silicon Flatirons regularly hosts events focused on information privacy and cybersecurity and trains students to become the next generation of lawyers, advisors, and policymakers in the field. Professor Margot Kaminski directs this initiative.

// Through our Initiatives, Silicon Flatirons is able to focus and invest in pressing issues in law, policy, and entrepreneurship. Silicon Flatirons initiatives are leading the way in engaged, cutting-edge scholarship and convening that will continue to set the tone for global discussions and debates. //

—AMIE STEPANOVICH
Executive Director, Silicon Flatirons





NEW IN 2019: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Advances in artificial intelligence have transformed industries and our lives. With these emerging technologies come fresh challenges for law and policymakers. In 2019, Silicon Flatirons launched an initiative focused on artificial intelligence (AI), directed by Professor Harry Surden.

20 Years of Debate: Elevating Issues and Breakthrough Ideas

Silicon Flatirons prides itself on interdisciplinary engagement, intellectually honest discussions, and a rare blend of policy, practice, and academic theory. Silicon Flatirons is where network neutrality—or “net neutrality”—quite literally got its name, was developed as a concept, and adopted by former FCC Chairman Michael Powell as a policy goal. Our conferences, roundtables, and other events are where privacy issues and cutting-edge spectrum policy directions are rigorously explored by public policymakers, leaders of private enterprises, and scholars.

2003

“No rule can perfectly stamp out all undesirable behavior. The point of the network neutrality principle is to make interference with the application markets much harder.”

–TIMOTHY WU
Associate Professor of Law,
University of Virginia



2006

“The emphasis on openness not only facilitates access by end users but also facilitates the interconnection of the private and public networks of which the internet is comprised.”

–DALE HATFIELD
Adjunct Professor, University
of Colorado



2009

“Anybody who has been involved in innovation knows that creating and sustaining innovation is extremely disruptive and painful. When a new innovator displaces an old innovator, the old innovator often struggles or dies, and the change is very disruptive—which can be good to one side and bad to the other side.”

–BRAD FELD
Managing Director, Foundry Group

2010

“When we talk about internet governance, we should really look at the internet as an agglomeration of human actors. It is a large and growing social organization. There are no natural laws to guide it.”

–LARRY STRICKLING
Assistant Secretary for
Communications and Information,
Department of Commerce

2012

"The thing that I've always prized is creative conflict. You want an environment where people can and do express passionately... what they believe and what they think is the right thing to do in any situation."

-BARRY DILLER
Chairman and Senior Executive,
IAC and Expedia, Inc.

2014

"Basic consumer protections can really help promote innovation, and it's important that consumers feel that they have control over their information, and that the agency continues to look at these issues in a very sophisticated way."

-EDITH RAMIREZ
Chairwoman, Federal Trade
Commission

2017

"Effective administration depends on entrepreneurial leadership that spearheads policy experimentation and trial-and-error problem-solving, including the development of regulatory programs that use non-traditional tools."

-PHIL WEISER
Colorado Attorney General and
Silicon Flatirons Founder

2018

"We must all hug an engineer."

-PATTY LIMERICK
Faculty Director and Chair of
the Board of the Center of the
American West at the University
of Colorado Boulder

2019

"The future of Silicon Flatirons will include a meaningful focus on inclusion and diversity, a commitment to interdisciplinary programs, and recognition of the international nature of everything we do."

-AMIE STEPANOVICH
Executive Director, Silicon Flatirons



Conference & Event Highlights


Every year, Silicon Flatirons hosts a flagship annual conference, initiative-focused conferences and roundtables, and student and community learning and networking events such as Entrepreneurs Unplugged and Crash Courses. Each event encourages people of various backgrounds and interests to exchange ideas and find new areas for collaboration. For 20 years these events have increased the profile of issues while sparking cross-sector dialog that has influenced real-world policy and regulations.

SOME THEMES AND TOPICS EXPLORED

Advertising and Privacy	Internet Platforms' Dominance and Governance
An FCC for the Internet Age	Internet Privacy Law
Blockchain and ICOs	Law and Economics of Data
Boulder Federal Labs Startup Story	Lean Canvas
Building an Entrepreneurial Ecosystem	Next Generation Space and Airborne Wireless Systems
California Consumer Privacy Act	Next Generation Spectrum Interference Resolution and Enforcement
Cloud Computing and Accessibility	Patent Reform
Community, Creativity, and #GiveFirst	Privacy Law
Copyright Infringement	Public Safety, New Technologies and Emergency Response
Creation and Distribution of Content	Radio Layer Vulnerabilities in Wireless Systems
Cybersecurity	Regulating Computing and Code
Digital Broadband Migration	Regulatory Law and Economics
Employment Law, Finance and M&A for Startups	Rights of Publicity
Energy Innovation Series	Rise of Broadband Video and Digital Media
Entrepreneurial Nonprofits	Social Impact of Artificial Intelligence
Entrepreneurship in Rural America	Social Implications of Technological Change
Explainable Artificial Intelligence	Software Patents
Future of Cable	Spectrum Policies—the Best and the Worst
Health Care Innovation	State and Local Governments Role in Telecom Regulation
How to Pitch Your Startup	Technology Transfer
Informal Organization of Innovation	Venture Capital
Information Policy for the Next Administration	Virtual and Augmented Reality
Institutionalization of Startup Collaboration	
Intellectual Property	

NET NEUTRALITY: A CONCEPT BORN HERE

The concept of net neutrality was first introduced at a Silicon Flatirons conference in 2003 by Timothy Wu. FCC Chairman Michael Powell specifically cited to Wu as well as to work by Phil Weiser in his “Four Freedoms” speech at the February 2004 Digital Broadband Migration Conference, where he officially placed net neutrality on the FCC’s policy agenda. In February 2015, FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler announced the FCC’s plans to institute new rules at Silicon Flatirons just days before the FCC voted in favor of them. In between those milestones, Silicon Flatirons hosted a number of conversations on the topic.



“ Every conversation, event, and gathering around Silicon Flatirons gives me a broader view, plus hospitable connections with people creating progress. ”

–BOB MCKENZIE
Crown Castle Incorporated

“Hearing perspectives from key players in the industry is hard to beat.”

–2019 CONFERENCE ATTENDEE



Silicon Flatirons

KNOW WHAT'S NEXT.

SILICON FLATIRONS CENTER FOR LAW, TECHNOLOGY, AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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