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Attorney Nels Jacobson served as founding director of the SXSW Continuing Legal Education program from 1998 through 2010. Today he co-chairs the program with Ken Abdo of Lommen, Abdo, Cole, King & Stageberg.

Since 1996, Nels has practiced in the areas of trademark, copyright and entertainment law. After graduating Order of the Coif and magna cum laude from the University of Houston Law Center, where he was Administrative Editor of the Houston Law Review, he served as a law clerk to the Honorable Carolyn Dineen King, Circuit Judge with the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Nels has done stints at large and medium-sized firms in San Francisco, Nashville and Detroit, and in 2002 was Assistant Director of the Berkeley Center for Law & Technology at the University of California, Berkeley School of Law. He is licensed to practice in California, Michigan, Tennessee and Texas, and as a patent attorney by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Prior to entering the legal profession, Nels founded Jagmo Design Studios, a graphic design firm specializing in art for the entertainment industry. During the first six years of the SXSW conference, he was SXSW art director. Nels is a founding board member of the American Poster Institute and the South Austin Popular Culture Center, and a board member of The Rock Poster Society. He also served for several years on the packaging GRAMMY committees for both the Texas and San Francisco Chapters of the Recording Academy.