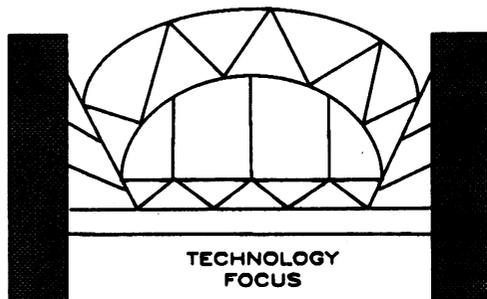




26th Australian Legal Convention



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Technology Focus

The 26th Australian Legal Convention, held in Sydney from 13–18 August 1989, with the theme of 'Building Bridges', included a 'technology stream' of papers, and several papers with a technology focus in other parts of the programme.

The number and quality of papers given reflects the growing awareness and involvement of the legal profession in technology issues. Bridges are being built to a better understanding and use of technology by lawyers.

For those of our readers who were unable to attend the Convention, or attend all sessions, a profile of several technology papers follow.

THE COMPUTER AS A LITIGATOR

• *by Julian Burnside*

This presentation consisted of a brief paper and a demonstration of a litigation support system on a PC using the software Notebook II and Sidekick.

At a certain point, the management of evidence by human memory becomes impossible. Most of us still run into difficulty trying to remember one reference out of several thousand.

At this point the litigator requires assistance. The most obvious is some form of manual index or catalogue system. However, such a system allows us to organise information in one dimension only. For example, the documents may be listed alphabetically or chronologically but to retrieve the documents by a characteristic other than the index characteristic is very

difficult. It is here that computerised litigation support systems can be useful.

The author examines the case for and against a full text data base. The advantages include the fact that you can obtain transcript on disk or optically scan in pages of text. The disadvantages include the proportion of irrelevant text present in