
Abstracts

tion throughout the world, and the principles governing these, are reviewed and the situation in Australia examined in greater depth. The author concludes that despite some considerable efforts, there is still some way to go before Australia can boast success in developing and unifying its data protection laws.

Expert System meets Hypertext: The European Conflicts Guide

Robin Widdison, Francis Pritchard and William Robinson

This article describes an attempt to integrate an expert system with a hypertext database of relevant primary and secondary text materials. The domain of law represented is that of the Brussels Convention 1968. Three dimensions of system development are addressed. With regard to the legal dimension, the choice of domain and the representation of both knowledge and data are considered. On the technological dimension, the selection of software development tools and problems associated with keeping knowledge and databases up-to-date are discussed. Finally, particular attention is paid to the 'Cinderella'

dimension of legal expert system development: the user interface.

Rationales for the Continued Development of Legal Expert Systems

John Zeleznikow & Daniel Hunter

This article looks at the development and enormous potential of legal expert systems and the problems which often arise due to a suspicious and ill-informed legal fraternity. Most lawyers find themselves uncomfortable with machines generally, and computers specifically. They are used to writing, reading and analysing human problems and

have little contact with technology, except where it affects a client or can be used to improve the efficiency of their practices. It is not hard to see that in more advanced uses of computer technology lawyers still struggle to understand fundamental concepts. Such an example is Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Expert Systems (ES). This article seeks to address some of the misconceptions which the legal profession apparently has about AI and its application to the Law. The area of AI and Law has not been sufficiently explained to legal practitioners and academics, a situation which this article hopes to address, along with providing a useful overview of the field.

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Draft Transcript Standard Release

A draft Standard for computerised transcripts is now being distributed nationally for comment by interested persons. The draft has been produced by a working group sponsored by the Queensland Society for Computers and the Law. Represented on the working group were Auscript, the State Reporting Bureau, the Association of Litigation Support Managers and the Society.

It was presented to the National Conference of Reporting Service in Hobart by Mayee Warren of the

New South Wales Branch of the ALSM in April and has now been circulated to members of the judiciary, professional bodies and other interested persons.

As anyone who has tried to use text retrieval software knows, the variety of transcript formats has been a serious inhibition on the use of computerised transcripts. It has been necessary to reconfigure software each time there is a change in layout or format. This process is time con-

suming and costly, but must be undertaken to maintain consistency with the printed page.

The adoption of a national standard will, it is hoped, overcome these problems.

Any readers who would like a copy of the draft and/or to forward their views should contact Liz Broderick, at Blake Dawson Waldron, on (02) 258 6410.