Towards the better use of the Law of IT and of IT in Law

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This year is emerging as a time of great opportunity and also of great anxiety. There is a growing awareness within the community that there are significant legal risks associated with integrating the internet and other new technologies into our daily lives and especially into our businesses. Early in the internet revolution this anxiety was focused on the negative aspects of the free flow of information and the effect that it would have on the community as a whole. Since that time however internet concerns have matured to a large extent. No longer are we merely worried about our children having access to pornography. Now our concerns are to ensure that the new technology can be effectively harnessed as a new business tool. This covers a much broader spectrum of issues than would otherwise seem to be apparent. In effect, businesses are forced to re-evaluate and re-engineer their existing business processes when adopting the net.

The first of our papers in this edition, addresses a number of these issues, setting out important points that businesses should be aware of. It is timed well to follow the recommendations released by the Commonwealth Government's Electronic Commerce Working Group, detailed in our last edition. Our next paper, by Karen Amos, discusses in depth some of the implications of the recent *Telstra v Apra* case for ISPs and the corresponding copyright owners. Our remaining papers take a more "IT" slant, focusing on the impact that the internet has had on the process of producing judgments within Australian jurisdictions. Sandra Davey expands on the importance of standards to the production of judicial decisions, an area in which action has largely been forced through the advent of the internet. This provides an interesting example of how new technological capabilities can act as a catalyst for the development of non technical innovations such as the proposed medium neutral citation standards and electronic appeal books. This second topic is the focus of the last of the papers of this edition. In it we are given the details of the recommendations of the working group into the production of electronic appeal books. When this capability becomes reality we can expect to see a significant reduction in some of the costs ancillary to the conduct of litigation, such as excessive photocopying expenses to produce multiple copies of documents which, by rights, should be unnecessary.

If you are blissfully unaware of the issues which have been posed for your organisation, not only will this edition give you that awareness, it will also provide you with some of the tools to address the issues facing you.

A WARM WELCOME FROM THE PRESIDENT AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS OF THE NSW SOCIETY FOR COMPUTERS AND THE LAW

Welcome to the NSW Society for Computers and the Law.

New members include:

Ms Johanna Turner of the SFE

Ms Jane Feller of WorldxChange

Mr Jamie Nettleton of Norton Smith & Co.

Mr Peter McNamara of Clarks Business and Property Lawyers