## *From the Editor*

This is the Noel issue of this Journal and the editors wish you the compliments of the season. It is also the issue that looks ahead at the New Year of 2009, after the disaster of the financial crash in 2008. As the last year of the decade of the noughties, attention is increasingly focused on recovery. This coming year can be regarded as an opportunity to carefully revise and reform; the field of computers and law stands poised to play its role in this advancement.

The first article contains the opening presentation to the 2008 Law and Technology Conference of the Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration, by the NSW Attorney General, the Honourable John Hatzistergos. He explains what the NSW government has done to optimize the use of computer technology in the administration of the judicial system. Similar presentations were made at the Conference for other States. The Journal is grateful for the opportunity to publish this work, which was supported by Professor Greg Reinhardt of Monash University who organised the Conference. Most of the Conference papers were published on the AIJA website, but not this one, which is a most important paper for the field of computers and law. The way forward is indicated in the paper as the determination of standards. The Conference provided an opportunity for the States to see and consider each other's emerging standards. Transference of cases between jurisdictions might be facilitated by common standards. This might be most important in appeals to the High Court from the various State jurisdictions.

The second paper is from a judge in Holland, the country in Europe which leads the field of computers and law, and is likely to develop the next advance of public programs, those with intelligent design. There are five universities in Holland with computers and law research centres, compared to none in Australia. The Leibniz Center for Law at the University of Amsterdam is the largest with about 15 researchers. Dory Reiling's paper is taken from her doctoral thesis at Vrije University in Amsterdam; the paper is a revised version of her AIJA paper. She is Vice-President of the District Court of Amsterdam and researcher in the Netherlands Council for the Judiciary Department of Policy Development. In her paper, Judge Reiling, points out how IT can provide tools to monitor, and thereby remove, corruption in the judicial system. Computerisation in India has already begun to remove opportunities and practices of corruption in government administration. Perhaps the use of International standards and tools explained in Judge Reiling's paper, might be adopted as a standard in the administration of the Australian judicial system.

As in all difficult times, it is appropriate to look back to the achievements of people who have done difficult things despite adversities. In this issue, there is the first in a series of articles that pay tribute to the founders of the Computers and Law field in the 1980s, when PCs were entering the business world with phenomenal potential. Tribute is paid to Professor Graham Greenleaf, a Co-Director of AustLII, who founded the NSW Society for Computers and the Law in 1982 and became its first President. Professor Greenleaf's visionary and moral bravery should not be underestimated in his quest to compel governments to give to the public free access to their black letter law databases; in his early career, he took professional risks to establish that free access and is still called upon too often to sustain the resources he has created.

Finally, there is the article by Brent Salter a researcher at Macquarie University Law School, who has carefully monitored the emergence of wireless licences. This paper indicates the nature of standards and specialisations emerging in the field of computers and law as it matures. As some universities cut costs by cutting from study the field of law and computers, so other Universities may see opportunities for excellence.

The Computers and Law Journal sees its regional role in Australasia, which is covered in Brent Salter's paper, and the opportunities for comparative studies as shown in Dory Reiling's paper. Some areas of computers and law are inherently international, since that is the nature of the technology. The Journal welcomes papers from the field in any country.

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