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Welcome to another year of the wonderful world of online and related technologies. This column will look at online services, CD-ROMs, LANs, telecommunications and any other goodies that may be of interest.

Telecommunications

Over the past 18 months, affordable high speed modems have become available in Australia. Operating at speeds of 4 to 10 times that of the common 2400bps modems, online connect-time charges could be dramatically reduced. Imagine, you could connect to an unreported judgments file in Info-One, conduct a search and have your results in less time and more importantly, at lower cost. The obstacle to everyday use of these modems is of course, Telecom/OTC's inertia in providing high speed dial-in access to their data networks, and a lack of interest by the online vendors.

Lexis

Much of the US tax material on Lexis is heavily footnoted, with the notes themselves appearing either within the document or at the very end. After capturing to disk, cleaning these documents up to the point where they are presentable to clients involves considerable massaging in the word processor. Converting the note material into actual footnotes and establishing appropriate page breaks for an item with 160 footnotes is a mind-numbing experience. To prevent brain damage, I use the WordPerfect macro facility to automate parts of the clean-up process. If anyone is interested, I would be happy to share my experiences in tidying up cases and articles from Lexis.

CD-ROMS

The Diskrom Federal Case Law disk should be released in the first quarter of 1993. For those not familiar with this product, it will contain the full text of Federal and High Court decisions plus recent decisions from the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, Family Court of Australia and ACT Supreme Court.

The International Bureau of Fiscal Documentation produces a disk containing (in English) virtually all the world's tax treaties. (Did you know that Quebec has its own treaty with France?)

ABN

- Are you plagued by Early English Books?
- Constantly snared by the US Slavery Period?
- Left speechless by foreign language records?

Until the system is redeveloped, ABN SuperSearch provides a way around all the weird and wonderful records in the database. If you are a frequent ABN user and don't have SuperSearch access, you are without a highly useful tool.

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