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A First Look at The Laws of Australia on CD-ROM

I was recently able to preview this new electronic resource in its WINDOWS version. It will shortly also be available in MacIntosh and DOS versions

The Law Book Company has made an interesting and creditable attempt to overcome the difficulties associated with searching electronic full text by providing a variety of means for accessing the encyclopaedia, *The Laws of Australia*, using the Folio VIP search software. Standard topic or phrase searching using normal Boolean techniques, including proximity operators, is available but an alternative approach using a toolbar menu is also offered.

The advantages of the second approach are firstly, that the screens look very similar to the printed text so that inexperienced computer users can find their way around more easily; and secondly, the menu system allows such users to follow a very structured sequence of steps similar to using the print version of the encyclopaedia but with many extra facilities lacking in the print version. A REFERENCE window at the top of the screen is also provided to enable searchers to keep track of where they are in the encyclopaedia.

The toolbar menu is user-definable within the limits set by the size of the screen. Access point buttons which can be included in the toolbar menu include the Table of Contents, Table of Cases and Table of Legislation etc.

Hypertext links are provided in all parts of the system so that it is easy to move between e.g. related sub-titles or between related notes in the same sub-title or between related concepts in the General Index.

Other useful facilities include the QUERY box, which fits up to 1000 characters and thus allows for quite complex search topics, and the CONTENTS button which enables searchers to see the number of occurrences of a search term within each title in the encyclopaedia.

There are various printing and downloading/saving options including the ability in the WINDOWS version to save search results to a clipboard for later editing with a word processor.

For existing hard copy subscribers the cost of the CD-ROM is \$1800 p.a. For new subscribers the cost is \$2950. Updates are intended to be between eight and ten times a year.

Prior familiarity with the WINDOWS operating system is obviously a requirement for using this product successfully. Those who do not like using a mouse will find that many functions can be activated from the keyboard.

Contact your local Law Book Company representative to obtain a demonstration.

Legaltrac CD-ROM

Information Access Company from the United States currently seems to be very interested in increasing its presence in the Australian market. Recently I was present at a demonstration of a number of its electronic information resources such as Business ASAP and Legaltrac CD-ROM. The latter is the CD-ROM equivalent of the printed Legal Resource Index which is also available as a DIALOG file.

Legaltrac has been very popular for a number of years in US libraries but is comparatively new to Australia. The Infotrac/Legaltrac search software was originally rather limited because it lacked Boolean search features.

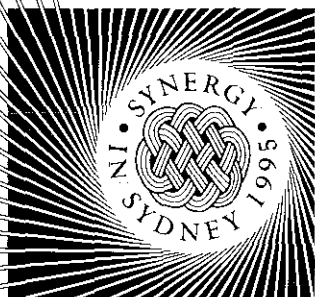
The new version which I saw demonstrated is much improved, allowing for either menu-driven or fully functional command line searching.

Coverage is from 1980 onwards and IAC claims to index comprehensively almost 900 legal publications, including all major law reviews, 7 legal newspapers and many bar association journals.

There is a journal-holdings module and updating is monthly.

Agents in Australia for IAC are DA Electronic Media, 648 Whitehorse Road, Mitcham, Victoria, 3137. Phone (03) 872 3211; Fax (03) 872 4814. DA can supply a list of all the journals indexed in Legaltrac.

CALL for PAPERS



The Sixth Asian Pacific Special, Health and Law Librarians Conference and Exhibition will be held at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbour, Sydney, Australia, from 27th - 30th August, 1995.

It includes presented papers, exhibits, a Multi Media showcase, and pre and post conference events. Synergy in Sydney 95 is a key opportunity for Special, Law and Health librarians throughout Australia, New Zealand and Pacific Rim countries to explore developments and share experiences relating to the modern management of Special, Law and Health libraries in the information age.

Many issues of vital importance to Special, Law and Health librarians in both large libraries and one person libraries, will be addressed at the 1995 conference, including:

- Management, including strategic planning, benchmarking, information auditing, performance measurement, leadership, project proposals and project management, preparing briefs, report writing and presentations, financial control.
- Marketing, including identifying user needs, user surveys, fee for service, outsourcing, delivering value added products, promotion and distribution, including electronic distribution.
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- Networking to achieve results - person to person, library to library, machine to machine.
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- User friendly catalogues and collection organisation.
- Personnel selection, management, evaluation, career planning, and remuneration.
- Developments in Special Law and Health libraries.

Abstracts of 300 words indicating streams of interest and with speakers' brief biographical details, expressions of interest from exhibitors and sponsors, and proposals for pre/post conference events should be addressed to:

Abstracts of papers due: 22nd October, 1994.
Notification of accepted papers: 15th December, 1994.

ACMS, PO Box 468, Paddington, NSW 2021, Australia.
Telephone: (02) 332 4622, Facsimile: (02) 332 4066

With the acceptance letter, "helpful hints" on giving papers will be provided. Speakers will be expected to talk to their papers, and to leave time for questions. Slides, not overheads, will be required.