

# BOOK REVIEWS

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## **Future Libraries: Dreams, Madness and Reality**

by Walt Crawford and Michael Gorman

American Library Association, Chicago 190pp  
\$U25 (\$33 60)



William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, once defended his choice of rousing hymn tunes by saying the Devil shouldn't have all the good music. American librarians Crawford and Gorman's eloquent 190 page work is devoted to the principle that hucksters for the information superhighway (I-way), from Bill Gates on down the line should not have all the good press. In fact, they argue that many of the claims for the newer electronic media are dishonest, misleading and ignorant

Central to Crawford and Gorman's argument is their belief that the human heritage of information is under perhaps its worst threat since the burning of the 600-year-old library at Alexandria more than 16 centuries ago, thanks to the dreams and machinations of hucksters out to make a dollar, frightened librarians trying to hold on to their jobs by complying with unrealistic views of what the new electronic technology can do and library boards unable to see the fallacy and misrepresentations of some I-way salespersons

The authors agree that Internet or CD-ROM distribution is ideal for some purposes, among them information urgently needed before the

slower print process can provide it; statistical compilations; directories, dictionaries, indexes, legislation and the like; and publications such as conference proceedings or little-read serials.

But they take steady aim at suggestions that the I-way has a much larger role than this.

True, vast numbers of books can be produced in simple typing formats on compact discs. But the discs are harder to read. A Super VGA or Macintosh screen has about 75 dots to the inch: a book has 1200 to 2400, making it much easier to read. Most users of video screens bump up the size of the type from the original newspaper or booksize - otherwise they can't read it.

As well, Crawford and Gorman point out that people on the I-way wanting to read long documents usually print them out and read them from the sheets looking like photocopies. They estimate that doing this consumes three times as much paper as did the original work.

But what about that old techno-hype favourite, the electronic newspaper? Switch on in the morning to find only the news you have ordered? Miss the stuff you don't want?

But imagine that you set up such a newspaper three months ago: would it tell you there is a federal election campaign at the moment? As Crawford and Gorman point out, "While most readers will only read 10 to 20 stories [in any one newspaper] from beginning to end, all readers are aware of the other headlines, thus keeping in touch with the complexities of the real world".

The authors don't agree with the claim that electronic information is cheap and their analysis makes entertaining reading. One central argument is that many of the I-way hucksters are people who do not have to pay for its use, such as university academics and graduate students.

In Australian universities academics are free to make prodigal and wasteful use of computerised facilities, on a level unknown in Government and private enterprise

Where all humour falls away is in the authors' attack on suggestions that public libraries should throw away their current reference collections, to rely instead on the electronically supplied information.

In the first instance, they say, most of the world's information is not available in electronic form. If you don't have the book, you can't get the information. Further, no library or group of libraries in the world have the time, money, staff or equipment to scan even new books in electronic form. The US Library of Congress acquires more works each year that it can scan, and so falls further behind each year. It is difficult to believe that any other library is better placed. This creates what Crawford and Gorman see as a technological nightmare: if only some works can be scanned electronically and if libraries come to totally rely on only those works which have been scanned - as is now urged by some Australian management consultants, academics and local government bodies - this will create a global control of information that the authors compare with book-burning.

Particularly telling is their analysis of material available on the Internet. They argue that information should be available, findable, appropriate, authentic, usable, affordable, protecting intellectual property. "Not one of these criteria can be met today," the authors say.

**PAUL LYNCH.** Sydney freelance writer

*[reproduced with kind permission from the author, published in Australian 6 February 1996 p18]*

## **Australian Industrial Law**

by Peter Punch

Sydney, CCH, 1995 \$75



A comprehensive guide for both lawyer and student practising in the dynamic and complex field of industrial relations law

The book begins with a useful overview of industrial and employment law and provides a brief historical framework of each jurisdiction's industrial statutes. It then covers topics including the contract of employment and other individual aspects of the employer/employee relationships, enterprise agreements, termination of employment and industrial actions i.e. torts and secondary boycotts.

Each section contains an overview of the federal legislation and the various state industrial systems. Related topics such as occupational health safety and welfare, workers compensation and equal opportunity law are also discussed in brief in the chapter "Miscellaneous Aspects".

Published in 1995, the book has managed to incorporate commentary on changes to both federal and state industrial laws up until November 1994, as well as including reference to all significant decisions of the various courts and tribunals until mid December 1994. There is therefore a timely discussion of the Full Court of the Industrial Relations Court of Australia's decision in *Liddell v Lembka*. No doubt a second edition will be able to discuss the impact of the Full Court's subsequent decision of *Fryar v Systems Services Pty Ltd*, which said that the South Australian legislation did not offer "adequate or alternative remedy" to a dismissed employee within s.170EB of the *Industrial Relations Act 1988 (Cth)*.

*Australian Industrial Law* has a well set out index, legislative finding lists and cases table and is therefore a user friendly guide to current industrial law issues

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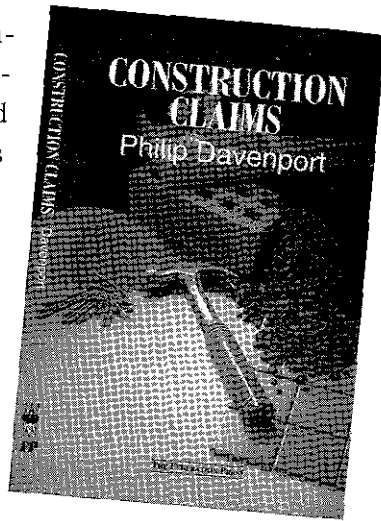
## Construction Claims

by Philip Davenport

Sydney, Federation Press, 1995 \$40.00



This book demonstrates how construction law has changed through the years from the position where the contractor took all the risks to the modern day situation where the risks are generally shared.



Very well researched, covers all the remedies available in this modern age which requires that most perceived wrongs require a remedy.

The author debunks as incorrect or without basis many concepts which the construction industry holds dear. For this reason traditionalists will not readily accept all that is said.

It is a book for lawyers who are or claim to be experienced in construction law. It poses more questions than it answers. It would be a dangerous book in the hands of that new breed "the claims engineer".

A must for every lawyer who considers how to frame a non-traditional claim.

**JOHN WILKINSON**

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