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## *AustLII Update*

The theme at the second AustLII conference held in August, was overwhelmingly free access to legal information via the Web. In achieving this goal, careful consideration was given to the various technologies and useability in order to adapt to the diverse backgrounds of the "surfer" wanting to gain access to legal information.

In addition, AustLII has developed some new software tools and data collection, the development of which was enabled by some recent research funding. The Wysh Distributed Inferencing Engine has been developed based on artificial intelligence and expert systems, which aids the creation of customised knowledge-bases.

Project DIAL is advancing the collection of legal materials from Asian and developing countries and language barriers are being overcome by translation facilities being offered by World Law. Intellectual Property stored searches are another value-added feature being offered by AustLII.

Most important for Australian legal researchers were the launch of several new AustLII databases, Tasmanian legislation, South Pacific law and some New Zealand case law. The New Zealand Court of Appeal decisions since 1998 appear and it is hoped that this will create a precedent for more New Zealand legal resources becoming accessible online.

The Tasmanian EnAct database was impressive, offering technology which made possible "point in time" searching and browsing of any consolidated Act to February 1997. The original versions of Acts are only available in Consolidated form, however new legislation will be added in sessional version as it receives Royal Assent. Statutory Rules from 1998 onwards are loaded and some previous Rules are being added, depending on the workload of the OPC.

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## *Fast Search*

[www.alltheweb.com/](http://www.alltheweb.com/)

This Norwegian based search engine is one of the newest entrants on the scene. It claims to be the fastest search engine, and as of August, the largest as well. Northern Light appeared to be the accepted holder of the "largest" title, although Alta Vista has also claimed the title and HotBot is not far behind, but on 2 August, Fast Search claimed it had indexed 200 million pages – the largest figure (by 40 million pages) so far in the search engine war.

Fast Search certainly lives up to its promise of fast results. In the test searches conducted, Fast Search was easily three or four times faster than the other large search engines. It consistently returned the greatest number of results, although Northern Light returned the most relevant results highest in the results list.

Fast does not yet appear to support full Boolean searching. However, + – and "" are recognised, and you can choose All the Words, Any Words, or Exact Phrase. Field searching is not supported (for example, you can not specify a page title or a host URL). However this is definitely a search engine worth watching.

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## ***Codes of Practice Online***

**[www.business.gov.au/COPinfo/infopage.html](http://www.business.gov.au/COPinfo/infopage.html)**

This is a potentially useful site which is under development. Federal, State, Territory and local governments in Australia are increasingly using codes of practice in legislation to prescribe Australian standards, technical requirements and other specifications that business must use. This database refers to Codes of Practice in legislation, and will help you obtain information about and contact details for Codes in which you are interested. Access to copies of the codes themselves will be added in later stages. Currently, information is held for Codes of Practice cited in New South Wales, South Australian and Commonwealth legislation, however at the time of writing there was not much content to get excited about.

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## ***ABA – Law Practice Management Section***

**[www.abanet.org/lpm/](http://www.abanet.org/lpm/)**

The Law Practice Management Section of the American Bar Association concentrates on how to build and run a successful law practice. Information is disseminated via a magazine, newsletters and in books as well as via interest groups, a mentor program and seminars. The online services include a monthly email update called E-Turbo with snappy management tips, and LPM Magazine (full text of feature articles and columns are available online). The LPM publishing arm publishes some very interesting practice related titles. Online shopping is available from the Book section of the site. Many of the book titles and articles are of interest to Australian practitioners. This site is worth bookmarking.

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## ***New Zealand Law Commission***

**[www.lawcom.govt.nz/](http://www.lawcom.govt.nz/)**

This is an elegant site, and is most useful for the provision of full text access to Law Commission reports and papers. In addition back issues of the

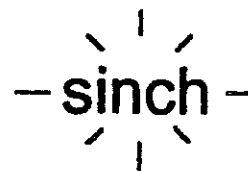
quarterly commission newsletter, the text of speeches given by commissioners and summaries of the commission's project work (both completed and in progress) are available. In the future, discussion groups will be hosted on the site.

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## ***'Tis true: there's magic in the web Tony Morris QC's web site – Essential Web Links for Queensland Lawyers***

**[www.thehub.com.au/~morrisqc/frames/welcome.htm](http://www.thehub.com.au/~morrisqc/frames/welcome.htm)**

A very colourful site, crowded with useful information and links. Tony Morris is fond of colours and animated icons, which should not deter anyone from using his site. There are thousands of links here. The kinds of tools Mr Morris links to include – online measurement conversion calculators, monetary and financial calculators, dictionaries and encyclopaedias of all types, stock watch sites, search engines and lists of email and web links to barristers, solicitors and legal institutions. There are links to a vast array of newspapers, a multitude of legal information sites accessible by topic or jurisdiction, travel related sites (airlines, rental cars, Brisbane taxi services, hotel chains, motel chains, boutique hotels and more), book stores and many other topics. There is a search engine for the site, and music is provided while browsing, if you choose. Mr Morris is fond of Shakespearian quotations, which you will find throughout the site. The only question he leaves unanswered is how he manages to juggle both a successful bar practice and create and maintain this and his other web sites.



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