Butterworths Training Consultancy

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INTRODUCTION

This article gives an overview of the history of the Butterworths Training Consultancy, explains the current role of a trainer within the organization and the types of duties they perform, and then briefly discusses future trends.

HISTORY

Butterworths has been publishing legal reference material in the Australian market for nearly a century. For most of that period the company relied on the printing press, initially publishing report series and textbooks and later moving to the 'easily up dated' looseleaf services. All of the print based resources had one thing in common – the user required no new skills to use them.

In the early 1990s law firms and government departments began introducing computers to their offices and Butterworths began considering publishing products electronically. Butterworths' first foray into electronic publishing was producing a Desk edition of the *Australian Encyclopaedia of Forms and Precedents* on floppy disk. The Desk edition contained a selection of the most commonly used forms.

In June 1995 Butterworths released *Halsbury's Laws of Australia* on compact disk using Folio software. Later that year Butterworths purchased the Info-One database of unreported judgments and began publishing them on a CD-ROM. The initial unreported judgments disk was soon expanded to two and today this single product contains over 60,000 judgments and takes up four compact disks. Following the success of these two publications the company began to convert other works and soon the *Australian Law Reports* and other report series were available on compact disk. Subject specific disks were created, such as the

Australian Corporation Law Library, that brought together all the relevant works on a particular subject and allowed cross-referencing by hypertext links to be introduced. Butterworths currently publish twenty compact disks which contain over 75 publications.

Publishing on CD-ROMs was popular because it meant a decrease in the amount of looseleaf filing; increased access to materials, for example, an unreported judgment from a different jurisdiction; the ability to search for words or terms through the full text of a publication; and hypertext links that made non-linear research easier. However it also meant an increased reliance on information technology specialists, major capital expenditure on computer hardware such as CD-ROM towers or jukeboxes, and, most importantly, it means that the end-user had to acquire new skills in order to retrieve the information.

Butterworths Online, a means of delivering the Butterworths publications via the Internet, was launched in March 1997 and it is expected that by the end of 2001 all of the Butterworths subscription titles will be available online

Butterworths recognised the training needs of users of their electronic products and the Butterworths Training Consultant role was created. The first Butterworths trainer, James Worner, came from a teaching background and had been working at Butterworths in the editorial department for a number of years. He was based in Sydney but was responsible for training clients all around Australia. This soon became an impossible task and James was made Training Manager and a team of Training Consultants was formed. Today the training team comprises:

Name	Title	Coverage	Background
Libby Hodgson	National Electronic Training Co-ordinator	National	Law
Paul Houston	Training Consultant	NSW and ACT	Law
Kieran Egan	Training Consultant	NSW and ACT	Law
Paula Tsigounis	Training Consultant	VIC and TAS	Law
Bruce Shearer	Training Consultant	VIC and TAS	Law
Lisa Sylvester	Training Consultant	Qld	Law
Megan Webster	Training Consultant	SA and NT	Law
Amanda Everett	Training Consultant	WA	Librarianship
Chris Holder		National	Librarianship
Ajita Lewis	Lexis-Nexis Training Consultant	National	Librarianship

CURRENT ROLE

The role of Training Consultant has evolved and now consists of two major areas: training and electronic product development.

Training

The primary responsibility of a Training Consultant continues to be training customers in efficient use of Butterworths electronic products. The aim is to make the customer as comfortable using the product in electronic form as they are using the same product or similar products in paper.

In some instances this is very easy. For example, the advantages of using *CaseBase* online over a paper citator are immediately apparent: daily updating, hypertext links through to the full text of the cases, annotating, catchwording, and so on. The customer is motivated to learn how to use the CD-ROM or the online system because they can see immediate benefits in terms of time and money. However, if the product is something that the customer is very familiar with using in print such as *Civil Procedure Western Australia,* the advantages to using the same product online – no more looseleaf filing, unlimited access to all people within the organization for a single subscription – mean little to the end user, although they might mean a lot to the library staff! The trainer's job then is to demonstrate to the customer the advantage of using the computer on their desktop. It is easier to find the commentary on Order 29A of the *Rules of the Supreme Court 1971* (WA) online than it is to spend half an hour looking for the print copy in their colleagues' offices only to find that all copies have been taken to court, or are out of sight in the senior partner's briefcase.

The Butterworths Trainer assumes the customer has a reasonable level of computer literacy. For CD-ROM training they must have a basic understanding of working in a Windows environment and the use of the mouse and keyboard. For Butterworths Online training they must have basic Internet skills and knowledge of a web browser. A certain level of knowledge of legal research techniques is also assumed.

Most training is actually product training, not software training. The customer is shown how to use a particular product in the electronic environment rather than being taught how to use the software that runs the product delivery. Traditionally the training was on a single product, for example the *Unreported Judgments* or *CaseBase* because the customers tended to purchase products singly. Increasingly, however, customers are purchasing packages that include a number of products, so the training has become more focussed on how to use the Butterworths Online system with specific examples taken from one or two products.

Most training sessions take approximately one hour but this varies depending on the level of knowledge of the trainees and the time available. Some of the most interesting sessions involve an abundance of participation from the trainees. One notable session in the Northern Territory stretched from the anticipated one hour to three whilst the participants expounded on a case about which they were passionate.

Types of Training Sessions

The majority of training sessions are conducted at the customers' premises. This may be a 'show and tell' session where the trainer gives a presentation to a large group of people; hands-on small group session, where the trainer leads the trainees through the system; or a one-on-one session where the trainer can tailor the training to the individual's needs. The most efficient of these methods from the customers' viewpoint is one-on-one personalised training but this is not always possible.

The trainers will usually ask the person organising the training to group trainees according to their experience. A basic online session covers navigation, basic searching techniques, and printing. An intermediate session covers the above and includes more in-depth searching techniques. An advanced session covers hints and tips for better ways to use the system and typically involves a level of problem solving.

In the larger states, Butterworths offers structured training sessions on the Butterworths' premises for those customers that prefer to do their training away from their work environment.

Butterworths has a commitment to their rural clients and the trainers will travel to country areas to conduct training. This is usually done several times a year. If a client requires training and a trainer is not due in their region in the near future telephone training is offered.

In addition, Butterworths has a service called LiveHelp Content Support. This is operated by a qualified Librarian who is available to answer all those 'Where will I find ....' type of questions via an Internet chat room.

What can you expect from your local Butterworths trainer?

Every training need is unique so discuss your situation with your local trainer. The following can be taken as an indication of the sort of training that may be offered:

Sole practitioner, city or regional centre

- One-on-one for the legal practitioner

Small firm, city or regional centre

- Small group training for the legal practitioners

Large Firm

- One-on-one training for library staff

- Advanced sessions for librarians

- Show and tell session for legal practitioners as an introduction

- Small group training for legal practitioners

- Product specific sessions for legal practitioners

Government department

- One-on-one training for library staff

- Advanced sessions for librarians

- Show and tell session for legal practitioners as an introduction

- Small group training for legal practitioners

- Product specific sessions for legal practitioners

University

- Small group training for library staff
- Group training for academics and post-graduate students

Courts

- One-on-one sessions for judges, masters and magistrates

Court libraries

- One-on-one training for librarians

Training Guides

The trainers have a vast amount of user guides for both CD-ROM and online services. There are general user guides to be used as an overview of how to use each system and product-specific guides that give search examples for the product. These guides are available for customers that want to conduct their own training sessions and can be obtained in either print or electronic format.

Electronic Product Development

The second major part of the Training Consultant's role is to be a member of the Electronic Development Team. This is the group of people who arrange for products to be available electronically, perform customisation of the software and perform system up grades. The software running Butterworths Online has recently been up graded from Site-Director to LivePublish. The Trainers have been heavily involved with this process by running initial testing of the new system, providing feedback from customers, running focus groups and writing user guides.

This has been a very interesting process, particularly providing customer feedback when the first customer says that the hitlist should display cases in chronological order, the next customer says they should be in reverse chronological order and the third says they like the relevance ranking!

In-house Training

The Training Consultants are responsible for training Butterworths' staff in the use of the Butterworths' electronic products. When new products are launched or

the software used for delivery of the products is up graded the Trainers ensure that the Account Managers are familiar with the changes.

FUTURE

The Butterworths' Trainers will continue to conduct face-to-face and telephone training and a project is currently under development to offer training via the Internet that would complement the existing services. This service may involve interactive learning and would be suitable for all users.

CONCLUSION

Butterworths maintains a high commitment to ensuring customer satisfaction with its electronic legal reference materials. The Training Consultants play an important role in implementing this commitment by guaranteeing the customers are adequately trained and by acting as members of the Electronic Development Team.