

MEETING NOTES

NSWSCL Meeting – 13 May 1988

Recent Developments In U.S. Computer Law – The Apple Case

On 17 March, Apple Computer issued proceedings against Microsoft and Hewlett-Packard claiming copyright infringement, unfair competition and unfair business practice. Apple alleged that Microsoft windows 2.03 combined with Hewlett-Packard's New Wave Interface reproduced the "look and feel" of the Apple Macintosh Interface. In the initiating proceedings, Apple stated that Hewlett-Packard had sought a

licence from them for the Macintosh Audio Visual Works however they had declined to grant it.

The defendants argue that the use of icons, words, pictures and the like is in the public domain either because "they are naturally part of the way people relate to computers" or because many developers have been using similar approaches to graphically based interfaces for such a long time that no single entity can claim ownership of the idea.

Microsoft has counter-sued, alleging that Apple's law suit is designed to choke all future

development of software that competes with Apple by using the graphical interface. Some observers feel that Apple's action is primarily an attempt to block the development of the OS/2 Presentation Manager which is the new graphical user interface for IBM Personal Computers.

Whatever the outcome, there is certain to emerge some useful dicta on the "look and feel" debate.

NSWSCL Meeting – 1 June 1988

CD ROMS AND WORMS

1. Don Vagelaar and John Sullivan of LIST Pty Limited spoke about optical document filing systems involving the new WORMS (write once read many systems). Don Vagelaar gave an overview of his company, its goals and objectives and John Sullivan gave a detailed explanation of the practical technology involved in WORMS.
2. Don Vagelaar introduced WORMS saying that firstly, it was a new technology that would inevitably become part of society's general technology. Secondly, he warned that optical filing systems were not substitutes for the existing magnetic systems and had to be considered as a technological

supplement. Thirdly, he warned that the introduction of his new technology must be approached with caution and its adoption done in a measured fashion. This would avoid the problems experienced when word processing was first introduced in the 1970's and many systems were purchased that had no practical application to the specific office environment.

3. Vagelaar said that on a practical level, optical filing systems could be used both on discs (similar to compact discs) and on cards (similar to credit cards). He demonstrated two optical laser cards, one which held 800 pages and the other being a "smart card". Vagelaar indicated that an optical laser card was about to be licensed which would hold 200 megabytes.

4. The real attraction for the use of optical document filing systems was to be found in those areas where a permanent and stable record was required to be kept of vast amounts of information. Ideally, these could be used by our government publishers to store legislation, by hospitals to store medical records, by the armed forces for personnel and medical details and other government departments such as social security.

5. A major benefit of this new technology lay in its ability to securely store information on a permanent basis. That is, the concept of an optical disc is that the image is "burned" once and for all onto the disc. Any amendments are by way of additions to the discs rather than erasures of previous information. A "data base"

then controls the sequence of access to the disc so that if the most recent version of certain information is required then only those amended "additions" are brought up. One of the benefits of optical discs is that it can provide an "audit trail" of the information originally stored as well as any amendments. As a further security measure the optical disc also records the identity or pass word of the user entering information.

6. Finally, Vagelaar indicated that the optical disc technology was in the near future to be expanded to include not only

the recording of written material but of films, videos and microfish.

7. John Sullivan then gave a detailed explanation of the technology and physical use of the optical document filing system indicating the hardware required and the software applications.

CD - ROM

8. Representatives from Butterworths then spoke about the CD-ROM. A monstration was given by Lindell Coote of the data base "books in print" stored on a CD-ROM for

retrieving information. The benefit of such a retrieval system was that titles, authors, portions of titles or portions of authors or other key words could be used to locate books, articles and other information. Further, benefits were in the nature of a permanent store of records rather than an on-line system. The capacity of one of these laser discs was in the vicinity of 10,000 pages of information. At present, the most common usage of the technology as far as Butterworths was concerned was by librarians.

NEWS FROM BUTTERWORTH TELEPUBLISHING

LEXIS/NEXIS UPDATE

UK LAW JOURNALS LIBRARY

Butterworth Telepublishing has launched a major new Law Journals Library on LEXIS. The Library appears on the LEXIS Libraries menu as UKJNL.

UKJNL contains the full text of articles from The Law Society's Gazette, the official journal of the Law Society of England and Wales, its monthly sister publication The Guardian Gazette, plus Butterworths own New Law Journal.

The journals are very practical in emphasis, covering recent developments in the law, the administration of practices, professional news, and so on.

Coverage commences in 1986, and the journals are updated weekly.

EUROPEAN LIBRARY

European law can be found on LEXIS in the European Communities Library (EURCOM).

A recent addition to EURCOM is a series of reports called European Commercial Cases.

These reports contain judgments from courts in Western Europe on such areas as international litigation procedure, information exchange, data privacy, copyright, agency and distributorship, products liability, consumer credit and restrictive practices.

IRISH LAW

The Republic of Ireland is the most recent Common Law jurisdiction added to the LEXIS

database.

The Irish Law Library (IRELND) contains the full text of reported cases in Ireland, dating from 1950.

COMPUTERS AND COMMUNICATIONS - The NEXIS service

The computers and communications library (CMPCOM) has added five group files so you can search by subject. The new group files gather related full-text and selected full-text publications.

COMM	The communications group file
CMPTRS	The computers group file
ELTRNC	The electronics group file
TECHNY	The technology group file
OMNI	All group files