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## Press Release

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*gram of reforms to enhance access to justice.'*

In producing the State and Commonwealth Acts and Regulations on CD-Rom Aunty Abha's Electronic Publishing Pty Ltd has taken the first step in responding to this directive.

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## New Products

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### Just-in-time Training or Expert System?

Webster's dictionary indicates that *negotiate* is a term deriving from the Latin *negotiatu*s (to carry on business), with the definition: 'to confer with another so as to arrive at the settlement of some matter'. Clearly then everyone negotiates with some regularity. Those who are involved with the computer industry would be negotiating frequently. Developing negotiating plans and strategies is often the hardest part of a lawyer's job. Yet few would have formal negotiation training.

The solution isn't as simple as attending a negotiation seminar. Seminars don't earn fees and much of the material is soon forgotten. According to an IBM study, we only remember 20% of what we read, 40% of what we hear, but 80% of what we interact with. What is needed is 'just-in-time' training so you receive interactive assistance when you need help most. Practical on-the-job training while doing the work would be ideal.

A tool which does just that is *Negotiator Pro*. With the software, the user learns to be a better negotiator simply by using the program. However, learning appears secondary because the user is engaged in 'preparing for a negotiation' a task that is more traditionally viewed as

'work' rather than "training." Due to the program's seamless integration of training and practice, it is not even perceived as training.

*Negotiator Pro* is particularly interesting as it's initial release over five years ago preceded the current multimedia 'hype'. It has evolved into a mature interactive product.

Dan Burnstein, former Chair of the American Bar Association's Negotiation Special Interest Group and developer of *Negotiator Pro* believes it helps you be productive without being an additional learning burden. It guides you easily through the process of negotiation without the prerequisite of training in the software or the process. According to one review the advantage of *Negotiator Pro* over other training products is the combination of instant utility and education information. Otherwise people are often too busy to avail themselves of training opportunities no matter how useful. (See 'New Interactive Video can enhance continuing legal education plans' V K Trotta; *The National Law Journal*, 25 Oct. 1993; pp34-37)

To make it even more relevant to those interested in Computers and Law, Sinch Software Pty Ltd is supplying *Negotiator Pro* with more than

1,500 pages of CompuLaw Digest on disk and a copy of the Legal Environment of Computing by J FitzSimons and P Knight.

We are likely to see more such "just-in-time" training, initially in showing users how to get the best out of software. For example, Sinch Software has developed the **Learn••Law** series of computer-based tutorials which includes modules such as **Learn••ISYS**. **ISYS for Windows** is almost a standard in text retrieval and very easy to use. However, until someone shows you how to optimise it for searching transcript say, you might not be sure you are using it in the most effective fashion. **Learn••ISYS** steps users through the tasks they may be trying to perform at that moment.

By providing just-in-time training, we are spared the real expense of computing: the time consumed in trying to get the best out of computers. That expense can be many times the cost of the hardware and software. Hopefully, software which gives users immediate benefits rather than challenging features will proliferate.

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