

Tales from the Cyberhood

It was bound to happen. The introduction of an Internet news page was eventually going to overlap with a thematic issue on the Internet. Well, it didn't take long, thanks to the overwhelming interest in the Internet. However, the overlap is not too great in that the articles featured in this issue are on topics of abiding interest, whereas this page sets out news warranting only current attention.

The Internet continues to move to the centre of the strategic plans of the leading players in the IT and telecommunications industries. No day passes without news of some new alignment (like that between Hewlett Packard and Netscape), product announcement of Internet-enabling features to existing products, or indeed new products tailored to the Internet.

Nowhere is the frenzy better demonstrated than in the Intranet marketplace. Forrester Research in the US predicts that Intranet technology will gradually take over from proprietary network operating systems like NetWare and NT.

Forrester foresees a "full service Intranet" market where TCP/IP enables more than just document-sharing. Others think Lotus Notes and other products answer the drivers behind this trend now, and can do so with very little code.

This highlights the pace of the trend towards what IBM calls 'network-centric' computing. The evolution from the mainframe mentality to the intelligent desktop (distributed technology) era to client/server to the networking model is accelerating faster than most observers would have anticipated. The jury is out on whether the concept of the Network Computer floated by Oracle and Sun will take the industry right back to where it began, with central processing and dumb terminals! The related concept of 'client/internet' goes that way.

The driver is the user base and interactivity of the Internet. Electronic commerce on-line has spurred the elevation of cryptography from an obscure, defence-oriented public sector tool into the corporate

mainstream. Public key digital signatures will soon be surrounded by a legislative framework headed by a company limited by guarantee and under which a peak government-endorsed Certification Authority will issue key pairs. The US state of Utah already has legislation up and running.

Hyper Links

This month we highlight some of the sites useful for legal research.

For Australian and overseas intellectual property resources which load quickly (being maintained in Sydney), see <http://www.magna.com.au/~prfbrown/ip.links.html>. Also impressive is the Intellectual Property Mall run by the Franklin Pearce Law Centre in the US, at <http://www.fplc.edu/ipmall.html>. The course materials from the Cornell University IP subject are at [http://www.law.cornell.edu/topics/topic2.html#intellectual property](http://www.law.cornell.edu/topics/topic2.html#intellectual%20property) and you can also go to Australian law school course materials via Austlii.

For Cyberspace-specific law sites, see:

<http://sunsite.unc.edu/pharmacy/cyberdocs.html>

<http://www.gse.ucla.edu/iclp.bib.html>

<http://seamless.com/rcl/eric.html>

<http://www.gsu.edu/~lawppw/lawand.papers/>

<http://www.mcs.com/~carolwoo/cyberlaw.html>

<http://www.abanet.org/textonly/lpm/magazine/tu952.html#tag2>

<http://www-law.lib.uchicago.edu/forum/cyberspace.html>

<http://www-law.lib.uchicago.edu/amlaw.html#computer>

<http://www.kentlaw.edu/lawlinks/computer.html>

<http://www.law.emory.edu/LAW/refdesk/comp.html>

For sites devoted to the legal and business aspects of the Internet see the Law Journal Extra at

<http://www.ljx.com/forumpages.fmain.html> or

<http://www.usc.edu/dept/law-lib/legallist/journals.html>