

# CYBERLEX

## TOP LEGAL SITES

Ever curious about what sites other people visit? Top100.com.au (in Beta at the time of writing) provides an indication of the relative popularity of websites. When you are on the internet your ISP records the requests you make for web pages. It is these requests or 'hits' that Top100 uses to produce its website rankings across more than 70 categories. You can read more about the methodology used by Top100 on their website (address above), but you should note that there is currently an acknowledge bias toward metropolitan users, in particular capital cities (this is being worked on). Further, Top100 is only based on Australian traffic and does not account for international visitors.

Having said that, it is interesting to note the top 100 legal sites in Australia. I will not list all 100 here, you can look for yourself, but it is no surprise to note that Austlii is at the top. Figure 1 is a list of the top 10 sites (\*as listed on Top100.com.au on 12/3/2000).

- 1 Australian Legal Information Institute [www.austlii.edu.au](http://www.austlii.edu.au)
- 2 Law Society of New South Wales [www.lawsocnsw.asn.au](http://www.lawsocnsw.asn.au)
- 3 Lawlink NSW [www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au)
- 4 Family Court of Australia [www.familycourt.gov.au](http://www.familycourt.gov.au)
- 5 Foundation Law [www.fl.asn.au](http://www.fl.asn.au)
- 6 Legalco [www.legalco.com.au](http://www.legalco.com.au)
- 7 Butterworths Online [www.butterworths.com.au](http://www.butterworths.com.au)
- 8 ScalePlus [Scaleplus.law.gov.au](http://Scaleplus.law.gov.au)
- 9 Law Institute of Victoria [www.liv.asn.au](http://www.liv.asn.au)
- 10 LawNet [www.lawnet.com.au](http://www.lawnet.com.au)

Figure 1 - List compiled from Top100.com.au - Business and Finance - Legal (1-20)

The Law Society of New South Wales made a strategic decision to adopt

online delivery of services to its members and given its place in the rankings it appears to have been the right decision. Of some note is the 4<sup>th</sup> ranking of the Family Court of Australia. While no expert in Family Law or its trends, the ranking of the Court's site seems to match reported increases in the number of cases (the next highest ranked court is the High Court of Australia at 21).

Of interest is that only one law firm makes the top 20 (Mallesons Stephens Jaques Solicitors - [www.msj.com.au](http://www.msj.com.au)). The rest of the top 20 is comprised almost entirely of either free or commercial information providers. The highest rating local firm is Clayton Utz ([www.claytonutz.com.au](http://www.claytonutz.com.au)) at a respectable 33.

Top100 offers yet another way to find useful websites. Rather than searching via your regular search engine(s) you can visit Top100 and use a 'popularity' approach. Of course, I will again reiterate warnings about relying on information from the internet (especially if one criteria is popularity — baaa) and refer you to the Legal Information Standards Council (LISC) website and their recommend guidelines for Australian Legal websites (<http://www.lawfoundation.net.au/lisc/recommend/bpguide.html>) these guidelines provide a good framework to assess the reliability of a website. (In September 99 I wrote about the draft guidelines which have now been endorsed by the LISC and are available at the address above).

\* Source: Top100.com.au - Australia's Most Popular Sites! (c) Sinewave Interactive Pty Ltd.

## GST and the net

By the time you read this GST is only three months and change from implementation. The Australian Taxation Office have released a fact sheet on Legal Charges and Fees (NAT3120). You can download this fact sheet from their tax reform website (address below). Besides getting your



practice ready, you will have clients clamoring for advice. To stay abreast of the most current changes I urge regular visits to the following two (2) sites:

Australian Taxation Office - [www.taxreform.ato.gov.au](http://www.taxreform.ato.gov.au)

Australian Consumer and Competition Commission - [www.accc.gov.au](http://www.accc.gov.au)

I have mentioned these and others over the past several months and I repeat them as I expect them to be a primary source of information for the coming months.

While there is a lot of attention on GST, there are other parts to the tax reform package. What do you know about Pay-As-You-Go (PAYG)? If nothing, a quick visit to the ATO website should convince you that you need to know more - your clients will expect it.

## Austlii continues its commitment to free access to the law!

The Australasian Legal Information Institute (Austlii - [www.austlii.edu.au](http://www.austlii.edu.au)) in cooperation with with steering committees in Britain and Ireland have developed the British and Irish Legal Information Institute Pilot Service. BAILII ([www.bailii.org](http://www.bailii.org)) is the first web site providing free access to case law and legislation from numerous British and Irish courts and legislatures with a single search engine and uniform data formats. BAILII already includes 14 databases from 5 jurisdictions and over 400 megabytes of legal materials. Commitments of over £100,000 to help fund free access to law have already been obtained.

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