

# Software upgrade at the Courts Library

By Frieda Evans.

In this article I speak of the humble beginnings of one PC in the library with no electronic access, to the present situation where we have access to many commercial databases and all staff have PCs on their desks.

One day in 1988 was an important day in the electronic life of the Courts Library (then the Supreme Court Library). Our first PC arrived and it was for me as the library manager. Despite my flourish of excitement, it was a very basic model with a dot matrix printer and it was made to last for a long time and eventually became a library staff PC. We used software such as Q & A for our databases to record incoming serials and payments; the microfiche library catalogue was generated from our input to ABN (a network provided through the National Library of Australia). In 1991 the library, with the rest of the court, moved into the new building and the old PC came with us.

We waited until 1996 for the next development when a PC was provided for each staff member and we had one for the clients in Darwin. We acquired DB/TEXTWORKS (DBT), database software developed by INMAGIC Corporation in the US. It is software used by many firm and government libraries, particularly in the legal area, even today. At this time we also subscribed to a small number of electronic databases on CDROM. In 2004 we transferred to internet access for the bulk of these databases.

Late in 2005 we increased our subscription to commercial online databases. With LexisNexis it went from 8 titles to 51. We added TimeBase and Austrom Online (the final database to be changed to internet access from the CDROM). These are all available from the desktops of the Judges, Magistrates, and court staff, as well as the public PCs in Darwin and Alice Springs libraries.

Next month we have another huge development – the upgrade from version 2.1 to 8, the acquisition of webenabling software (Webpublisher Pro) and a library management package. The combination of the latest version of DBT and the library management package means the data we put into the various databases will be tagged allowing more detailed reporting as output. The present databases are workable but rudimentary. With the upgrade we finally have a



spell check facility. WebPublisherPro will allow us to put the catalogue and databases on the intranet/internet. No longer will they be available only in the Darwin library. In stage 1 they will be available to Judges and Magistrates and other court staff on their desktop; in stage 2 they will be made available to the Graham Nicholson Memorial Library, the DPP library as well as some non-government organisations on application – law firms, CDU Law Liaison Librarian and legal aid organisations.

Besides the library catalogue, the databases to be made available include indexes to the Northern Territory Government gazettes (2004 to date), articles in the journals held in the library, Justices appeals, commencement dates/second reading speeches for NT legislation and pamphlets held by the library. In 2006 we have developed a work health database for matters heard by the Work Health Court and on appeal by the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal. The library staff also have databases for their use only - for the distribution of legislation within the court, recording the serials received by the library, recording books on order and the payments for both books and current subscriptions to law journals and reports. These databases are being converted to databases within the library management package, enabling more detailed input and reporting.

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