December 13, 1990

S. Michael Brooks, Esq.
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Dear Mr. Brooks:

    I apologize for being so slow in responding to your inquiry
of mid October. I have been completely preoccupied in meeting a
November 17 release date and then tracking bugs in the system upon
release.

    The first piece of what I have been building over the past two
and a half years became available on LEXIS on November 17. It works
most impressively with the new Windows-based session manager but
can be explored with any software you are accustomed to use on LEXIS.
 From the Library menu, choose PUBHW and from the files in that library
choose TABLE. The rest will, I hope, be fairly easy to follow.
More is coming in stages -- my own exposition of the field, references
to other material on and off LEXIS (e.g., rulings and POMS).

    It is the Windows-based communication software that gives the
material a hypertext-like interface. The selection and issue coding
of the cases is a major value added component, new to LEXIS. But
the fundamental uniqueness of this electronic reference lies, I
believe, in the TABLE documents which embody the analytic framework
of my treatise. Topic by topic, this set of documents links judicial
decisions on point to the statute and regulations. A user with a
disability claim involving a widow's benefit can swiftly step through
the TABLE file to the appropriate topic document, a document which
not only furnishes the topic code that will retrieve appropriate
cases (in an executable search the user can modify or focus) but
also provides LEXSTAT references to the statute matched with a
citation search designed to retrieve the relevant paragraphs from
the Code of Federal Regulations. In a printed treatise these would
be footnotes, in this LEXIS file they are references that can be
followed immediately. Indeed, the references have been set up, with
consistent format, to allow "point and click" or "block and transmit"
execution of these "electronic footnotes" exploiting the Windows
Session Manager's hypertext capability as no other on-line material
does.

    I am convinced that this type of information system, distributed
in a variety of ways, is the future. If you have a chance to poke
around in these materials, I'd love getting your reaction. It is

both a blessing and a curse that an electronic work is, for ever, malleable; but for the moment I view it a blessing that I shall be able to respond to helpful criticism. I should be very pleased to receive yours.

Sincerely,

Peter W. Martin
Edward Cornell Professor of Law