

Kathryn Downing -- Oct. 10, 1990

Kathryn explained that this year her group is investing heavily in preparing the Thomson data for electronic publication

Next year they will add a tiny editorial group that will be devoted largely to keeping the electronic versions of USCS and ALR up-to-date -- so that it can offer complete currency

Key information (confidential) is that in the states for which they are publishers of primary material (which include N.Y., Cal. and Mich. they will be beginning to launch CD ROM products. In the bid for the current N.Y. contract they have included both print and CD-ROM. The intention would be to build a retrospective collection in increments. In N.Y. and these other states they are in a position to offer a complete information package -- decisions, statute, secondary material including forms.

If improving their online materials and launching CD-ROMs represent two initiatives, the third is distributing their forms electronically (disks in the back of books, downloadable from Westlaw and LEXIS).

Thomson's aim is to furnish information in diverse formats. Forms should be available in standard wordprocessing files, primary and secondary data in whatever application environments the user requires. This means that their data needs to be structured for delivery in multiple formats. Thomson does not intend to develop software but to use (license) software developed by others.

Kathryn likes the Matthew Bender CD-ROM platform. I should get a copy of the Bankruptcy disk from Gary Goldstein, 212-216-8740, Dir. of Electronic Publishing, Matthew Bender, NY

Kathryn will license relevant portions of USCS and Autocite to me -- on the spot. Thomson is looking for a head of law school relations -- aim being to reach out as effectively as Westlaw and LEXIS.

She also offered data for my use in teaching PT1.

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Profile of non-LEXIS product

1st iteration

frontend for LEXIS/WESTLAW with very little primary data

next

statute, regulations, plus key decisions, plus a database of all decisions capable of generating a first search set for LEXIS/WESTLAW

Profile of other products

frontends for other fields based on above

NY products include full data in family, property, criminal law, public benefits

To do/explore

Call Guide people

Explore establishment of "Institute" with Russell

Cornell Institute of Legal Information Technologies

Hire a graduate & summer staff

Legal Information Log

December 26, 1990

Ms. Kathryn M. Downing
Vice President/COO
Electronic Publishing Division
Thomson Professional Publishing
700 Canal St.
Stamford, Conn. 06902

Dear Kathryn:

I hope you have had a good holiday and that the fire fight that has broken out in your former territory finds you well out of harm's way. I know nothing of what went down between Eric Brown and others, but shudder at the thought of even greater difficulty in getting attention and decisions out of MDC.

Thank heavens, the intellectual core of Martin on Social Security crossed out of vapor land into LEXIS before Eric left. There are still scattered bugs, but I am quite pleased with what is up right now. Accessed through the Windows based LEXIS 2000 Research Software, the paired files (PUBHW;PMSSCA and PUBHW;TABLE) offer functionality that I don't believe is available in any other specialty library in LEXIS or WESTLAW. Although I have been repeatedly frustrated by the relationship with MDC, I am deeply grateful to you for working out the framework that allowed the project to move down this path when the CD-ROM version got stuck last year.

The selection and issue coding of the cases is a central value added component. But the uniqueness of reference work, lies in the TABLE documents which contain the analytic framework of my treatise. Topic by topic, they link judicial decisions to the statute and regulations. A user with a disability claim involving widow's benefits can step through the TABLE file to the appropriate document, a document which not only furnishes the codes that will retrieve appropriate cases (in a search the user can modify or focus) but also provides LEXSTAT references to the statute and a search that will retrieve the relevant paragraphs from the Code of Federal Regulations. With a printed work these would be footnotes, in LEXIS 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."

The next stage will see my own text and additional references layered on to this framework. There are countless unresolved questions of marketing, training, etc., not to mention the Michie CD-ROM puzzle, but having a robust functioning prototype and the foundation on which to add these additional items has done wonders for my morale.

Having brought that work into daylight, I am eager to begin a second generation project here. I am pursuing the institute notion with my dean and am, at this stage reasonably, optimistic. Sometime in February I should to be in a position to talk with you about data and licensing terms. Until then, I'll be preoccupied with detailed plans for the next phase of the Social Security treatise and getting a new term's courses off the runway.

Sincerely,

Peter W. Martin