

April 27, 1992

Ms. Ann Brownell Sloane  
National Center for Automated Information Retrieval  
Suite 1B  
165 East 72nd Street  
New York, NY 10021

Dear Ms. Sloane:

Our letter to Ron Staudt dated April 7 sets forth a proposal for a set of projects to distribute law materials already assembled in support of law teaching and practice at Cornell Law School in new and experimental ways and to undertake the creation of additional materials for such electronic publication. Ron's reply of April 16 suggested that until the NCAIR board had a chance to frame a new set of grant policies my proposal was on too grand a scale. He suggested a more modest grant proposal at this time, with the "institute proposal" being held until after the October Trustees' Meeting.

This proposal responds to that suggestion. It focuses on the importance of placing materials of the sort that are now effectively being distributed on our law school's local area network and similarly within a few other law schools and law firms or distributed on disk by commercial publishers on the Internet -- an electronic network that is accessible to both academics and practitioners.

With an NCAIR grant of \$27,000 we propose to place a powerful legal information resource on the Internet where it will be accessible to legal academics not only throughout the U.S. but around the globe. Since the Internet is easily accessible from the large commercial e-mail networks, including both AT&TMail, as of April 1 the home of ABANet, and Compuserve used by many lawyers, messaging and document transfer to and from practicing lawyers is a related and immediate goal.

This proposal contemplates that Cornell Law School will purchase the hardware and software for the Internet server and that Martin's time on these projects will also be funded by Cornell. The NCAIR grant of \$27,000 will cover: (1) three law students working full-time through the summer of 1992 preparing legal material important to law courses and practice ranging from Intellectual Property and Social Security to Legal Research for rich hypertext access using FOLIO Views software for distribution through the Internet (\$12,000), (2) a programmer doing the work necessary to allow full-featured hypertext of the sort currently possible through a local area network with FOLIO Views to be distributed through the Internet (\$5,000), and (3) one month of the time of the Law School's Director of Educational Technologies released from day-to-day responsibilities,

for purposes of systems programming and software adaptation needed to establish the Cornell Law School Internet server (\$10,000).

The technological challenge this project addresses is bringing the level of hypertext and full text search functionality to which law students, legal academics, and lawyers are accustomed to the Internet with its compelling broad accessibility and capacity for distributed systems. Software presently available for Internet servers offers a reduced set of features.

As my earlier letter to Ron Staudt noted, this effort to establish a non-commercial legal information resource on the Internet and companion means of exchange of information and expertise between academics and those in law practice will, in the end, involve more than simply creating useful materials and placing a server on the Internet. A principal focus of this proposal is on effective strategies for overcoming or outflanking current barriers.

Developing the Internet (as well as parallel dial up server access) as an effective distribution path for materials of the sort we are creating at Cornell requires more than placing valuable material wrapped in capable software on the Internet. Those elements are critical; there must be strong incentive for access. But equally critical at present is good information or documentation immediately available to those who would/should be attracted by materials there.

Currently, the principal source of documentation on use of the Internet is the Internet itself where it lies inaccessible to those for whom it is most important. This observation leads us to see a documentation or marketing function as integral to our exploration of the Internet as an important distribution path.

As that earlier letter also noted, the activities funding by the proposed grant would not be in competition with CALI but involve close cooperation.

Sincerely,

Peter W. Martin  
Jane M.G. Foster  
Professor of Law

Thomas R. Bruce  
Director  
Educational Technologies

cc: R. Osgood