

PROPOSAL:

To create an Internet Zambian law server (hereinafter the "Law Server") accessible through the Zamnet web-site. The Law Server shall contain selected Zambian laws, including court decisions, statutes, court rules and the Zambia Law Journal, as well as relevant international law that is available via other web-sites throughout the Internet system. The Law Server shall be administered and monitored by the Zambian Legal Information Institute (hereinafter the "ZamLII"), which shall be created and operated under the auspices and through the co-ordination of the University of Zambia Law School, its faculty and students.

BACKGROUND:

The idea of creating a Law Server was first proposed by United States Peace Corps Volunteers Jeff Ryen and Steve Ruedisili, who are working as law lecturers at the University of Zambia. Seeking a solution to the apparent scarcity and inaccessibility of legal resources and information at the Law School and in Zambia in general, Mr. Ryen and Mr. Ruedisili, in consultation with Neil Robinson of Zamnet and Professor Peter Martin of the Cornell Law School, realised the possibilities and potential of placing Zambian law on-line through the Internet and thereby providing anyone linked into the Internet system with instant access to current Zambian law. As computers become increasingly prevalent around Zambia, it is the hope of Mr. Ryen and Mr. Ruedisili that such a resource will provide a great benefit and service to the University faculty, its students, the Zambian courts, the Zambian legal community at-large and any other member of the public, either within or outside Zambia, who wish to gain access to current Zambian law and other law or legal information available through the Internet system.

The Law Server became accessible to the public on 12 February 1996 and can be accessed either from the Zamnet home page or at <http://lii.zamnet.zm:8000/>. The Law Server is the first of its kind in the whole of Africa.

CONTENTS OF THE LAW SERVER:

The Law Server is modelled after the law web-site maintained by the Legal Information Institute at Cornell Law School (<http://www.law.cornell.edu/>), which contains, among other things, a database of recent United States Supreme Court decisions and serves as an access point to various other Internet law web-sites. Generally, the Law Server contains two major sources of information: (1) a database of Zambian law; and (2) pointers to laws and legal information relevant to Zambia contained in law web-sites around the world.

A. Zambian Law

The Zambian law that is available through the Law Server includes:

1. Zambian Supreme Court decisions (accessible by year and topic);

2. Selected Zambian High Court decisions (accessible by year and topic);
3. All current Zambian statutes;
4. The Zambian Constitution;
5. Zambian Supreme Court and High Court rules;
6. Articles contained within the Zambia Law Journal;
7. Transcripts of the Law School Lecture Series;
8. Selected Law School fourth-year obligatory essays; and
9. Selected commentaries on various aspects of Zambian law by Law School faculty, judges or legal practitioners.

This information shall be contained in databases maintained, serviced and updated by Zamnet and the ZamLII. Users of this information will be able to conduct "key word" searches within each database.

B. Access to International Law

There are large amounts of legal information and laws available through the Internet. Unfortunately, searching the Internet for law-related information can be quite an overwhelming and frustrating experience for the unaccustomed and unfamiliar user. The Law Server shall provide a menu listing various international and foreign law topics available through the Internet and serve as a pointer to those web-sites containing such information. For example, the Law Server shall provide easy access to, among other things, United States Supreme Court decisions (available through the Cornell web-site), the United States Code, the United States Code of Federal Regulations, various international constitutions, various international trade agreements, the United Nations Charter and the United Nations human rights declaration and conventions.

THE ZAMBIA LEGAL INFORMATION INSTITUTE (ZamLII):

As the staff at Zamnet do not have either the legal expertise or the staff size to administer and service the Law Server, it is proposed that the ZamLII be created to maintain the Law Server. The ZamLII shall be an organisation independent from Zamnet and shall operate within the University of Zambia Law School. The ZamLII shall consist of a director, at least three student assistants and at least one administrative assistant.

The director shall be a member of the Law School Faculty and shall be appointed by the Dean of the Law School on a year to year basis. The director's student assistants shall consist of law students selected on the basis of their application to the ZamLII. There shall also be at least one administrative assistant.

The director's responsibilities shall involve the overall direction, co-ordination and administration of the ZamLII. He or she will hold bi-monthly meetings with the ZamLII staff to review the operation of ZamLII and the Law Server, and determine what updates to the Law Server are required. The director shall also maintain links with the Zambian courts and Legislature and ensure that new legislation and court decisions are expeditiously forwarded to the ZamLII for inclusion on the Law Server.

The student assistants shall be responsible for tracking new legislation, court decisions and other relevant legal information, within and outside of Zambia, which the ZamLII may wish to make available through the Law Server. The student assistants shall also be responsible for inputting, editing and html (hypertext markup language) formatting of new information to be placed on the Law Server.

The administrative assistant shall be responsible for the implementation of all new entries and changes on the Law Server, the day to day maintenance of the Law Server and the general administration of the ZamLII.

The ZamLII shall be situated in an office to be supplied by the Law School. The office will need to contain at least two computers with network links into Zamnet and access into the Law Server. These computers shall be restricted in their use to the ZamLII staff only.

The ZamLII shall be a self-sustaining organisation. It is proposed that funding for the ZamLII be accomplished through advertisement on the Law Server. Advertisement shall be offered to Zambian law firms and other legal associations within Zambia. The names of such businesses or associations shall be displayed on the top of the pages contained within the Law Server and if a Law Server user clicks on such name, a screen will appear providing biographical information about the firm or association. Further funding may be provided through the sale of computer disks or CDs containing data existing on the Law Server and through training sessions conducted by ZamLII staff.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:

Mr. Robinson of Zamnet has agreed to provide all technical assistance necessary for the creation of the Law Server. Moreover, Professor Martin of Cornell Law School and the founder of the Cornell Legal Information Institute will provide technical assistance and advice from Cornell.

The technical recommendations for the Law Server are as follows:

A. The Server

Zamnet has agreed to provide memory space on its server for the first six months of the Law Server's operation. After the expiration of that period, ZamLII will have to provide its own server. The specifications of such server and accessories are as follows: 75 MHZ Pentium Processor, 1 gigabyte hard drive, 16 MB RAM, tape streamer (backup) with 1 gigabyte capacity, plus a reasonable supply of tapes, CD-ROM drive, 3 and one half inch floppy drive, network card, 220-240 volt power supply, uninterruptible power supply. This computer shall reside and be maintained in the Zamnet offices. Estimated cost: (U.S.) \$ 3,500.00.

B. Computers and Printers for Use by ZamLII Staff

At least two personal computers and a printer will be required to enable ZamLII staff to input data into the Law Server and update and maintain the Law Server. Such computers, at a minimum, should meet the following specifications: 486 DX 266, 12MB RAM, 500 MB hard disk, CD-ROM, plus Windows 95 and network cards (Combi). Estimated cost: (U.S.) \$2,000.00 (for one) (not including printer(s)).

C. Computers and Printers for the Law School

It is envisioned that the Law Server will become an invaluable tool for the Law School faculty and the Law School student body. For such a benefit to be realised, however, it is essential that the Law School acquire a number of computers with which to access the Law Server and printers with which to print relevant material contained on the Law Server. Such computers and printers will be housed in the new Law School computer room and will be available for student and faculty use. Such computers should meet the following specifications: 486 DX 266, 12MB RAM, 500 MB hard disk, CD-ROM, plus Windows 95 and network cards (Combi). Estimated cost: (U.S.) \$2,000.00 (for one) (not including printer(s)).

ANTICIPATED DIFFICULTIES:

The success and effectiveness of the Law Server will inevitably rest on three factors.

First, the co-operation of the Zambian courts and the Zambian Legislature in allowing court decisions, court rules and statutes to be published on the Law Server and their expediency in ensuring that new information is made available to the ZamLII for inclusion on the Law Server. Ideally, court decisions, court rules and statutes should be made available to the ZamLII on computer disc and in word-processing format, for easy conversion and transfer into the Law Server databases. It is recognised, however, that at present court decisions and Zambian statutes are not available on computer disc and, therefore, this information will either have to be scanned into the Law Server databases or inputted manually by ZamLII staff.

Second, the continued co-operation and interest of the Law School and its faculty and students. Since the ZamLII shall consist of Law School faculty, students and staff, it is imperative that the Law School is dedicated to the ongoing success of this project and fully committed to its day to day requirements. It is imperative that Law School faculty and staff are trained in all aspects of the operation of the Law Server and can carry on such functions after the departure of Mr. Ryen and Mr. Ruedisili from Zambia.

Third, the co-operation, interest and participation of the Zambian legal community, for whom this service is designed to benefit.

Submitted this _____ day of February, 1996.

Mr. Jeffrey Ryen, Law Lecturer (UNZA)

Date

Mr. Stephen Ruedisili, Law Lecturer (UNZA)

Date

Mr. Neil Robinson, Zamnet

Date

Dr. Ngosa Simbyakula, Dean
UNZA Law School

Date