

Editorial

The ongoing saga of the Lawtel takeover by Sweet & Maxwell was somewhat overtaken by the news at the end of January that Wendy Beecham, Managing Director of Sweet & Maxwell was leaving with immediate effect to go to a position as Senior Vice President at LexisNexis working with librarian customers and based in Bethesda, Washington. As Wendy hot footed it to the opposition, Sweet & Maxwell moved quickly to announce that Peter Lake would be taking over as MD. Peter has been involved with the Thomson organisation for some years, most recently as MD of Gee and then as Project Director for the Westlaw UK project and is well known to many of us. I'm sure Sweet & Maxwell will be in a safe pair of hands and we will wait to see what effect his appointment has on the company and its products. Hopefully there will be more interaction and consultation with customers as, judging from Lis-Law over the past few months, neither Sweets nor Butterworths seem to be doing too well on that front at present.

It seems that many of Lawtel's employees have left the company and that it is now being run largely from Yorkshire. We hope to carry in a future issue a full review and comparison of the various current awareness services available for lawyers and, as a taster, we carry in this issue an interesting article from Victoria Jannetta entitled "What's new in legal information" which is based on the talk she gave at the Online Conference in December last year. It is good to see BIALL members being involved in such high profile events and at the same conference Susan Doe gave a stimulating paper on the changing role of the legal information professional entitled "Legal information provision in the age of the laptop" which is printed here – and Susan is keen for feedback on some of her more controversial statements!

The main theme of this issue is copyright as we eagerly, or not so eagerly possibly, await the implementation of the Directive on copyright. At the time of writing (end of March) publication of the draft SI was still scheduled to take place within the next few days, but this is looking increasingly unlikely. Graham Coult, who in his day job is Editor of *Managing Information*, has contributed an article on the background to the Directive, the work undertaken by many people within the information profession to raise awareness of the most controversial issues involved, the various meetings and consultations that took place and the procedures involved in implementing European legislation in this country. He will contribute another article in a future

issue once implementation has taken place. For space reasons, I have had to edit Graham's article fairly heavily, but if anyone would like to receive the full text please do not hesitate to contact me. Sandy Norman, who until the end of February was the copyright adviser to CILIP, has also contributed an article explaining some of the more technical provisions of the Directive. To round up this theme, Claire Groom shares with us her experiences of completing the copyright audit form and Mandy Webster has compiled another of her useful series of articles on copyright resources available on the internet.

Our second theme is a continuation of the questions of ethics started in the last issue, with another contribution by Jonathan Gordon-Till, Chair of the Editorial Board, proposing a code of ethics for BIALL. Laurence Bebbington has contributed an article on information ethics as they affect legal information professionals. He reviews international legal instruments dealing with privacy, freedom of expression and intellectual property rights which are relevant to our day to day work. He considers professional codes of conduct and then provides a couple of case studies involving the use of legal materials and the giving of legal advice within the library setting, and the issues which might face an academic law librarian where one of his students is accused of plagiarism. To round up this section Jennifer Gunning has written an article on the new Centre for Ethics, Law and Society at Cardiff Law School.

Our third theme is library management systems but we have been dogged by bad luck in obtaining articles on this subject, so will continue this as a theme in future issues. If any of you would be prepared to write a critique of the software which you use, the Editorial Board would be delighted to hear from you. In this issue we carry an article by Mandy Webster at Browne Jacobson on why she chose PenLib and how she has implemented it in her library and information service.

Fiona Durrant has contributed a very practical article on negotiating online contracts which in these days of budgetary restraint should provide some useful tips for those of you who are involved in such discussions.

Last but not least, once again my thanks to Gillian Sands and Lesley Young for another immaculate current awareness column, and to Cathie Jackson for supplying too many book and product reviews to publish in this issue.

Christine Miskin