

# Editorial

As discussions over the price increases levied by LexisNexis (formerly Butterworths – I suppose we will eventually get used to the new branding and stop pining for our old friend!) on certain of their electronic products continues, it is perhaps fitting that our leading article in this issue is a comparison of the online services offered by LexisNexis and Westlaw UK. Paul Norman is particularly well-suited to writing it, as he has many years experience of using and teaching both services within the academic environment, from which perspective his article is written. He has comprehensively covered all aspects of the services from coverage, through searching and documentation, to customer support. His article also ties in nicely with the imminent launch of the Online Register of Electronic Resources by the Association.

To return to those increases, it seems that the medium-sized and small firms have been particularly hard hit with some firms seeing their overall bill rising by thousands of pounds a year for the Butterworths Direct Services. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some reps are saying that the customer base “is welcoming the new pricing with open arms”. It would appear that there is room for negotiation but any ideas of “transparency” of pricing would seem to be absent. We will await the “Fair Business Practices for Legal Publishers” Session of the Edinburgh Conference with interest.

We have a very interesting article by Sally Booth on the results of her dissertation research on how lawyers in a medium-sized law firm use the internet for research. It is good to have some hard facts on exactly what is going on as much of the commentary to date appears to have been based on anecdotal evidence.

David Ogden and Rebecca Cooper from the Immigration Appellate Authorities Information Service have produced a very useful immigration resources guide to the various sites available at a time when it doesn't seem possible to pick up a newspaper without the subject being in the headlines. They have covered both UK and internationally based services.

I was very pleased to be able to persuade Susan E. Fox, the Executive Director of AALL to write about the job of administering the running of a large membership organisation – there is even a professional association for such executives – the American Society of Association Executives. I am sure that Susan's experiences will be

very helpful to our Council as we continue through our Strategic Review.

We have two themes to this issue as well as the current topics, the first of which is Knowledge Management. There are two courses currently available offering qualifications in KM (that I know about – maybe there are more) and Jela Webb, who was one of the attendees on the first ever course run at London Metropolitan University, tells us about its content and how it has helped her in her subsequent career as a KM consultant. Karen Battersby is Course Director of the Diploma Course at Nottingham Law School, which is specifically designed for those working within KM in the legal sector. It is even newer than the LMU course as it is only now nearing the end of its first year.

Leonard Will has written on a subject close to my heart (unfortunately!) and has attempted to clear a path through some of the semantic fog which surrounds the subject of taxonomies. He explains the basic rules for their construction and suggests that they bear a very strong resemblance to classification schemes, which those of us who were brought up in the days of cat and class at library school had always had a strong suspicion was the case.

Our second theme continues from Vol.4(1) with further articles on legal education and the provision of library and information services. Beginning with Eleanor Brooke's description of the challenges facing the Court Service as they try to deliver library and information services to the judiciary across the country.

Jane Macoustra has written an article on Information Literacy with particular emphasis on how the law firm information services staff can become more information literate themselves and encourage such skills in their users.

Anna Venturas of the British Library brings us up to date with the latest developments of interest to law librarians.

Jo Tomlinson and Lindsey Caffin have contributed their second IT Column and Gillian Sands and Sam Weston-Smith have produced their usual immaculate Current Awareness Column. Sam is about to go on maternity leave but hopes to continue to contribute to the column which is very good of her (until the sleepless nights begin to kick in!) and well beyond the call of duty.

Christine Miskin