liaise between the computer and the legal text but will that person have the requisite legal knowledge to make the hard legal decisions that must be made? Probably not. You will require a partner to make those decisions and then finally approve the documents.

How to Choose a Document

There are three main factors influencing your decision as to the appropriate document.

• look for documents that your firm has to draft regularly; ones that take a lot of time and thought each time because they are reasonably complex and have many variables;

• look for documents where the text is already settled and easily available;

• look for documents in your area of practice where lawyers are willing and able to devote enough time to the project.

How it Works

Look closely at the text of the document you are starting with. What are the questions a lawyer would ask before deciding whether to include a certain block of text.

Unlike many forms of conventional drafting, to use CAD successfully, you must logically map out your text, perhaps by reworking the text into a flow chart. You then construct a set of questions to connect the text to the flow chart. Every piece of text must be connected to a question, unless it is text that is common to all documents.

Computer assisted drafting starts with an analysis of the transaction rather than starting with the text itself.

The CAD team works out what text goes with what questions. It works out the best order for the questions so the lawyer can understand what is being asked. The questions need to be intelligently grouped in logical order so the user interface is easy and comphrensive.

Most CAD programs allow you to insert reference windows and warnings so that lawyers appreciate the full significance of the questions being asked.

• *Director of Legal Precedents, Mallesons Stephen Jaques*

CONVEYANCING IN A COMPUTERISED WORLD

• *by Jude Wallace*

The failure to centralise information is the single most obvious reason why conveyancing has become paper heavy, and why enquiries have become boring and are often ineffectual, states Jude Wallace of the Victorian Law Reform Commission.

On the other hand the slowness in centralising has allowed the possibility of creating systems that can communicate, and has helped to avoid the creation of inappropriate systems.

South Australia, Queensland and Western Australia have organised a large amount of land information into centrally accessible data bases. Victoria and New South Wales are still working on the possibilities.

The Victorian Law Reform Commission found 153 different Acts affecting land and allowing government and semi-government

agencies to make decisions about land. Conveyancers are relied upon to locate, interpret and organise this information for buyers and sellers of land. If government organised land information and took responsibility for its accuracy, a dramatic change in conveyancing practice would occur.

The author argues for the elimination of paper based enquiries. There should be no need to make separate applications on different forms at different fees for certificates of different quality and legal effect.

The core of a land information system is computer title registration. The author argues that the system should be reworked so that paper is eliminated as far as possible, so that not even duplicate titles are issued. The argument that this may increase the possiblity of fraud is countered.

Further, the author suggests that a land title system need not computerise titles, and that information in the title can be contained as a layer of data about private owners and their interests on a computerised parcel map. This offers an easy way of making land information work at two levels: providing the information about the parcel and about the region in which the parcel is situated.

As this type of title will, it is claimed, greatly decrease the drudgery of conveyancing, the lawyer will be freed up to use more professional skills in advising clients in buying and selling land – such as how the title should be acquired (by company or individual), how to finance the transaction for best taxation advantage, and to adapt the transaction to the needs of the particular client. These are the skills that the buying and selling public need, the author argues.

* *Victorian Law Reform Commission*

THE COMPUTER AS A CONVEYANCER: THE SHADOW BETWEEN THE IDEA & THE REALITY

* *by Murray R McCutcheon*

In his paper on the computer as a conveyancer, Murray McCutcheon briefly examines the possibilities of integrated computer systems for all aspects of legal work.

In the second part of his paper, he examines how computerised conveyancing systems should work. He predicts that in three to five years "paperless" conveyances will be standard.

The required steps involved are:

* *Integrated Software*: The conveyancing software which is currently available is of a stand alone variety. It must be integrated with the firm's accounting, library and data base software and the information kept in the lawyer's internal as well as external data bases. It should also be integrated with telephone and facsimile facilities.

* *On receipt of instructions*: The