

EDITORIAL

This is the first issue of the Journal to be published from the University of Tasmania, and it marks a new phase in the Journal's development, as well as the commencement of a new volume. I must apologize to all readers for the lengthy delay between Vol. 1 No. 3 and this issue, but hope that the content of the Journal will continue at its previous high standard and that publication from the Journal's new home will be more regular than in the past.

Apart from its move from the New South Wales Institute of Technology to the University of Tasmania, there have been other administrative changes that should enhance production of this publication. The manuscript is now prepared on IBM PC-XT microcomputers using Microsoft-WORD, and is typeset directly from diskette, helping to contain the costs of publication. Printing is now to be done in Australia, with the aim of reducing delays in distribution. In the future, it is planned to eliminate the typesetting stage by producing pages ready for offset printing through the use of a laser printer. Regrettably, rising costs have forced price increases despite these steps, but I believe that, as one of the few non-American English language journals devoted to information technology and law, the Journal will remain a valuable source of learned writing in this rapidly expanding field.

As always, it is the aim of this issue to provide a source of high-quality detailed writings in the law and information technology field. There are three major articles, by Greenleaf/Clarke, Thom/Thorne and Marshall, dealing with different aspects of privacy in Australia. Australian law grants no protection to privacy at present, and the proposed introduction of a national identity card, the so-called "Australia Card", represents the most serious threat to personal privacy that Australia has ever witnessed. Current indications are that, despite the concept's rejection by a Senate Select Committee, the government will press ahead with its aim of producing a national register containing personal data about all residents of Australia. This will be done despite the complete absence of any legal protection for citizens against the misuse of the data stored in that register by government. There remains the hope that the Australian Senate, functioning properly as a house of review, will reject the "Australia Card" legislation.

Also in this issue are three examinations of aspects of the problem of proper legal protection for the intellectual efforts of software authors. Desjeux provides an interesting analysis of the legal position in France, and Crisp examines the state of Australian law in this field. His study is complemented by the casenote on the final decision of the High Court of Australia in *Computer Edge Pty Ltd v. Apple Computer Inc.* (now reported in (1986) 65 ALR 147). It is worth noting that Australia is giving consideration to proposals for an international legal protection scheme to cover semiconductor chips and their design masks, and any legislation that flows from this work will help to complete the statutory framework for protection of intellectual effort in the computer design field.

Another major contribution to the study of legal text retrieval systems is presented by Bug, whose work and recommendations in this field have already had a major impact on the development of such systems throughout the world.

Writing of the quality of the articles contained in this issue is rare, and its value to the growth of a proper understanding of the complex interrelationships between information and the law cannot be overestimated. It is my hope, as editor of the Journal, that we will continue to be able to publish works of such quality and to keep our readers in contact with developments in Australia and the rest of the world.

R.A.B.