

CYBERLEX

Jason Schoolmeester

Does technology feature in your new year resolutions?

The new year is a time for resolutions in life and work. By now I suspect that most of us have probably broken one, two or all of our resolutions. In this column I have a few suggestions that are simple and easy to keep:

- Unsubscribe from mailing lists that you don't read, are unlikely to ever read and are just clogging up your inbox. There are no prizes for the most email.
- Make the effort to manage your email more effectively. Start by filing messages in appropriate folders when you have finished with them. Archive old messages.
- Clean up your bookmarks (also called favourites or links). The internet is a tool that can work much better if you have a good set of bookmarks. Make a special folder to save new bookmarks if you cannot immediately categorise them. Regularly review this folder and file the bookmarks. This can save you a lot of pain when you need to find a site and can't remember the address.
- Learn a new shortcut on whatever operating system you're using or a new tool-bar button in Microsoft Word or Excel or any other program you use regularly. If you can't do this everyday, then try at least once a week. Before you know it you will be using more features in your applications, faster.
- Don't open email attachments unless you know the sender really well — well enough, for example, to lend them money.

New Years resolutions have resulted in an increase in hits on life style sites, especially those dealing with health issues (eg weight loss and quitting smoking). Some popular sites include: Quitnet (www.quitnet.org); Weight Watchers International (www.weightwaters.com); iDietClub (www.idietclub.com.au).

The Australian Open will be in the sporting spotlight from 15 January 2001, so keep up with all the action and more on the Official ATP Tour site (www.atptour.com) and Tennis Australia (www.tennisaustralia.com.au).

ALRC CONSULTATIONS ON JUDICIARY ACT INQUIRY

The Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) is sending a legal team to Darwin in March seeking feedback from the Northern Territory legal profession as part of its review of the Commonwealth Judiciary Act.

ALRC Commissioner Mr Brian Opeskin said the ALRC's inquiry "provides a unique opportunity to review jurisdictional relationships in the Australian federal judicial system, both from the perspective of underlying principle and practical operation".

"The Judiciary Act 1903 is the most significant piece of federal legislation regulating the structure of the Australian judicial system, but nearly a century of piecemeal changes to the Act have created the need for a comprehensive review," he said.

In December last year the ALRC released a discussion paper *The Judicial Power of the Commonwealth: A review of the Judiciary Act 1903 and related legislation* (DP 64, 2000).*

"Our discussion paper raises a large number of issues. Some are highly specific; others invite the broadest inquiry about whether the current jurisdictional arrangements best serve the interest of efficient administration of law and justice in the exercise of federal jurisdiction."

"Of particular interest to the Northern Territory legal profession is the jurisdiction of territorial courts," Mr Opeskin said.

The ALRC's terms of reference require it to consider: (a) the impact of self-government on the exercise of jurisdiction in territory courts under Commonwealth laws; and (b) whether it is appropriate or necessary for provisions of Part IXA of the Judiciary Act relating to the Northern Territory to be extended to the Australian Capital Territory.

The ALRC is also asking whether the provisions of Part IXA of the Judiciary

Act remain appropriate in relation to the Northern Territory, or whether the provisions have placed the Territory in a position more advantageous than the states.

Other issues canvassed in DP 64 include:

- procedural uniformity across courts exercising federal jurisdiction;
- consistency between federal courts in their powers to change venue and transfer cases;
- appeals in federal courts, including whether intermediate appeals should be by leave or by right;
- procedures for determining special leave applications in the High Court;
- crown immunity and claims against the Commonwealth; and
- repealing or relocating significant portions of the Judiciary Act.

The ALRC will be consulting widely with courts, legal professional associations, private practitioners and government lawyers, business groups, government agencies and departments, and academics. The closing date for submissions is 16 March, with a final report due to be delivered to the federal Attorney-General by 30 June, 2000.

The ALRC is conducting consultations in Darwin on Thursday 1 March and Friday 2 March. For information, please contact:

Mr Matt Hall
Legal Officer
Australian Law Reform Commission
GPO Box 3708
SYDNEY NSW 1044
Ph: (02) 9284 6333
Fax: (02) 9284 6363
TTY: (02) 9284 6379
Email: judiciary@alrc.gov.au

*DP 64 is available free of charge from the ALRC, or can be downloaded from www.alrc.gov.au