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The Electronic Searching of Law

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The Electronic Searching of Law

Although the use of electronic computers in legal research has not yet been perfected, Professor Dickerson believes that computers may be at least a partial answer to the problem created by the ever-increasing mass of statutory material and judicial decisions that must be consulted to determine the law on a given point. He explains just how the computers are used in legal research and points out their limitations as well as their advantages. [For a general discussion of this subject, the reader is referred to the article, “Prepare Now for Machine-Assisted Legal Research”, by Roy N. Freed, 47 A.B.A.J. 764 (August, 1961).]

by F. Reed Dickerson • Professor of Law at Indiana University

It is possible that the 83d Annual Meeting of the American Bar Association, held last year in Washington, D.C., will be remembered best for a series of demonstrations held under the joint sponsorship of the Association's Electronic Data Retrieval Committee. The Health Law Center of the University of Pittsburgh, The International Business Machines Corporation and the United States Patent Office, These widely differing organizations joined forces to put on one of the most unusual legal exercises of recent years. This was the first public demonstration of the use of modern electronic computers to search both statutes and case law.

Why was this so important for lawyers generally?

Two hundred years ago, it has been said, a lawyer could carry in a wheelbarrow almost all the law books he needed to consult in his daily practice. Today the same wheelbarrow would hardly hold all he needs to consult with respect to just one law, the Internal Revenue Code. A fund of case law estimated at 2,200,000 reported opinions (increasing at 25,000 a year), 77,000 key numbers to reckon with, and 2,000,000 entries in descriptive-word indices, all testify that the flood is already here. The rising tide of statutes and case law is forcing today's lawyer to ask, almost anxiously, what can be done to cope with it.

Unfortunately, traditional methods of search are breaking down, not only because they are inordinately time-consuming in many cases but because they are increasingly inadequate to uncover the relevant materials the lawyer is looking for. This in turn undesirably increases the element of chance in the trial of cases and the planning of business affairs.

The solution would seem to be to make more accessible and manageable the multitude of statutes and case materials that cannot be eliminated by persuading the legislatures and courts to remove needless complexities or by publishing a smaller proportion of the total number of judicial opinions.

The general problem is, of course, not peculiar to the law. The burden of storing and finding information appears to be a chronic problem in our culture for which there is no single or simple solution. What follows is a description not of final solutions but a progress report on several specific approaches that have been successfully tested and that, for some kinds of legal problems, promise to be economically feasible. They are described not only because they work, but because they offer advantages not previously offered by most comparable attempts in non-legal fields. Some of these advantages are discussed below. Because of the pitfalls and unsolved problems still remaining, any claim that the vast materials of the law are at last at the lawyer's finger tips would be highly premature.

The following method of searching statutes was developed for the most part at the University of Pittsburgh as an outgrowth of the recent project of its Health Law Center to develop a comprehensive compilation and analysis of state laws affecting the operation of hospitals. Dissatisfaction with traditional methods of searching statutes led the Director of the Center, to explore the possibility of adapting existing methods of electronic storage and retrieval to the searching of statutes. The result was a system that will now be described in terms of a legal problem in the field of health law.

Suppose you are a lawyer for a hospital association. Suppose your association wants to develop a kind of metropolitan hospital the first floor of which can be used for drug stores, beauty shops, and other small retail enterprises. A legal problem arises because the association does not want the hospital to lose its entire tax exemption (it hopes that its tax will apply only to the first floor). Unfortunately, the local state statute does not permit split listing of this kind, and the association, which is considering proposing a bill to the legislature, wants to know

1. Under the chairmanship of Reed C. Lawlor, of Los Angeles.
what other states’ statutes have to say on the subject.

To solve such a problem by traditional methods, you would have to go to a library having the statutes of all fifty states and manually search them. This would probably take many hours and, in view of the limitations of indices and legislatures’ tendency to tuck particular provisions into unlikely nooks and crannies, you would not be sure even then that you had found all the relevant provisions. You would spend a lot of time looking in some states for statutes that weren’t there.

Contrast with this the method of statute searching demonstrated at the American Bar Association meeting. But to understand how the material is found electronically, it is necessary first to understand how it is stored.

**Output of a Machine Depends Upon the Programming**

The first principle of machine retrieval is that, while it may be an overstatement to say that nothing can be obtained from a machine that has not been put into it, it remains true that the output of a machine depends on its programming and its input. In this case the machine was a general purpose IBM 650 magnetic tape system and stored on one of its tape reels was the text of all the state statutes affecting hospitals. (Ideally, the machine should have contained the state statutes on all subjects, but lack of funds limited the demonstrations to a particular class.)

The statutes were put into the machine in this way: First the citation and entire text of each statute were key punched on punched cards. It took many cards to carry each statute. Each time the key punch operator typed a letter or figure at the top of the card, the machine punched two rectangular holes below the letter or figure in an arrangement that represented that character. When the stacked cards were fed into the machine, the holes triggered the electronic impulses that translated the individual characters of the text into magnetized spots on a revolving reel of magnetic tape. The completion of this operation produced the “text tape”.

By an electronic sorting process that few lawyers will understand (or need to understand beyond its specific capabilities and limitations), the machine next produced a “vocabulary tape”. This is a comprehensive word concordance, an alphabetical index of the words actually used in all the statutes on the text tape. For instance, all uses of the word “partnership” were collected and each use was identified by a number representing the particular section of the statute in which it appeared. The entries for “partnership” and its immediate neighbors appear like this on the print-out:

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PARTIES 66 122 399
PARTLY 368 356 391 412 426
PARTNERSHIP 170 270
PARTNERSHIPS 66 77
PARTS 128 362
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Thus, the word “partnership” appears in two different sections identified by the numbers “170” and “270”. While such a vocabulary list appears to be an exhaustive and therefore a wholly unselective index of every word used in the statutes, it omits a number of common words that have little or no search value. These are words such as “a”, “an”, “between”, “by”, “even”, “every” and “from”. Otherwise, every word is catalogued alphabetically.

Unlike most storage-and-retrieval systems, this system uses no coding and no selective system of classification. There is no table of contents, no selective index, and no keyed classification system interposed between the searcher and the raw materials stored on the text tape. This means that the use of the system, unlike several to be described later in this article, need not await the development of an acceptable standard vocabulary or selective classification system. It means also that, wanting the advantages (and limitations) of an indexer or classifier, it is incumbent on the searcher to ask the right questions and couch them in the right way.

Despite their thoroughness and agility, these machines are, as IBM adviser H. Peter Luhn has put it, “incredibly stupid”. For one thing, being limited to the manipulation of symbols, they are wholly incapable, without specific instructions, of dealing with language difficulties such as those posed by ambiguities or synonyms, or even such minor word variations as misspellings. Accordingly, the searcher must be careful to envisage every possible word variation in which his problem may be couched in the statutes. This is not an unsuperable burden if the searcher works, as he must, from the printed vocabulary list and if the relevant vocabulary is not so heterogeneous that it is inordinately long. The only barriers between him and his materials are the limitations of his own imagination and ingenuity, limitations that are equally significant in traditional search methods.

The printing of this vocabulary list completes the storage phase of the storage-and-retrieval process. Of the two principal phases it is by far the more expensive and time-consuming. In terms of traditional search methods, this phase is to be compared with the writing, editing, printing and publication of a state code of statutes. Even here, the comparison is favorable to machine methods. Apart from the initial cost of the machines themselves, the big cost lies in the labor involved in transferring the text of the statutes to punched cards, a cost that can be drastically lowered by using punched tape that is automatically produced when the statutes are initially printed and ultimately by using some kind of electronic scanner capable of transferring printed words directly to tape.

We are now in a position to ask for the answer to our split-listing problem.

**The Crucial Step Is Preparing the Inquiry**

The crucial step in machine retrieval is to prepare an adequate inquiry. For this purpose the machine itself is of no help. Moreover, the split-listing problem cannot be adequately searched in terms of “split listing” because that phrase is a colloquialism seldom used in statutes. Instead, we must use for our main search a more conventional legal terminology. This, of course, must be drawn solely from the vocabulary list.

The legal problem involves three basic concepts. The first is that of “tax”. The second is that of “exemption”. The third is that of “partly commercial”. The technical problem is
to retrieve each state statute that deals with all three concepts.

Here we meet the problem of synonyms, synonymous expressions, and alternative methods of description not involving the use of synonyms. Because not every statute deals with the tax concept in the same way, our inquiry must reflect every possible way in which that idea has been expressed. Working from the printed vocabulary rather than the statutes, we select the following key words (technically known as "descriptors"):

Taxation Tax Taxed Taxable

Similarly for the second concept:

Exemption Exempt Exempting Exemptions

And for the third:

Portion Partly Commercial

Now we ask the machine to list all the state statutes that use any word from the first bundle of descriptors, any word from the second, and any word from the third. Mechanically, this is done by putting the question on punched cards and placing them in the machine, in the same manner as the original text.

The machine can answer three kinds of questions. First, it can tell us how many provisions meet the requirements of the question. This may be important, because a very large number may show that the question has been formulated too broadly. Second, the machine can give us the citations of all the statutes covered by the question. Third, it can print the text of those statutes. Whether we ask for complete text depends on the reasonable availability and usability of the text in other forms.

Figure 1 shows the results of asking for the citations and text of the statutes relating to the split-listing problem. After a restatement of the initial inquiry in code form, it shows all the citations and the first part of the text. The machine can answer three kinds of questions. First, it can tell us how many provisions meet the requirements of the question. This may be important, because a very large number may show that the question has been formulated too broadly. Second, the machine can give us the citations of all the statutes covered by the question. Third, it can print the text of those statutes. Whether we ask for complete text depends on the reasonable availability and usability of the text in other forms.

The time taken to insert the inquiry cards, process the question, and print the answer requires twenty-six minutes in this instance, as compared with the many hours of research that a manual state-by-state search would involve. More advanced machines could do the same job much more quickly.

Figure 1 shows that the inquiry has also produced the case of State Tax Commission v. Commercial Realty Co. The reason is that the text tape also includes the relevant case law and this particular case happens to meet the requirements of the inquiry ("tax" appears in the name of the plaintiff, "commercial" in the name of the defendant, and "exempt" in the case abstract). Rather than indicate a flaw in the system, it points up the fact that the machine is not intended to make the final selection but only to produce a manageable fund of promising materials (all that are responsive to the specific question), from which the searcher makes the final selection. Of the nineteen statutes cited by the machine some may turn out, on inspection, to be of little significance to the split-listing problem. This is as it should be, because the machine is designed not to replace legal judgments, but to reduce the kind of mechanical drudgery that lawyers need to avoid if they are to serve their clients adequately. Rather than eliminating the necessity of thinking through the basic legal problem, it highlights the need for careful analysis, not only in framing the inquiry but in evaluating the results.

The great advantage of the machine is not alone in the time it saves but in its ability to do a more thorough and exhaustive research job than is otherwise possible. This ability is not subject to the limitations imposed by inadequate indexing or bait booby traps of inept arrangement.

There is little question that from a technological standpoint the system works. If the source materials are on the text tape and if the searcher does a resourceful job of framing his inquiry on the basis of the words appearing in the vocabulary print-out, the machine will produce the results.

3. Although "partly" and "commercial" are plainly not synonymous, a spot check of the hospital statutes showed that in this particular context these are alternative methods of description.
an enormously larger body of irrele-
searcher is potentially confronted with
Even under conventional methods the
ventional research. He may need less.
legal sophistication necessary for con-
viously difficult, there is no indication
of the machine, which are not extraor-
mastered the technical idiosyncracies
"cascade of irrelevant materials". This
use of inapt or too few descriptors in
machine answers as the trial and error
vocabulary list. Familiarity with at
beyond a mere acquaintance with the
inquiries without some legal knowledge
framed spontaneously by attending in-
Incidentally, some of these
dramatically illustrated the points
made in the preceding paragraphs.
Doubts such as these lead to the
more basic question of how the dem-
strators could have known how to
select the relevant descriptors without
first reading all the statutes. Could
they have worked merely from the
vocabulary print-out? Naturally, it
would have been difficult and perhaps
impossible to frame significant in-
quiries without some legal knowledge
beyond a mere acquaintance with the
vocabulary list. Familiarity with at
least some of the hospital laws would
be a normal prerequisite. However,
this is no more than a searcher using
conventional methods would have to
bring to the problem, or soon acquire,
before he could bypass the "cascade
of irrelevant materials" and find what
he is ultimately looking for. More-
over, being conversant with typical
hospital laws is a far cry from having
to read them all. Some conventional
research is undoubtedly necessary to
reaching significant results under any
method, machine or otherwise.
Who can own such a machine? The
machine demonstrated costs about
$600,000 to buy or about $12,000 a
month to rent. Very few law firms or
clients can afford this kind of invest-
ment. On the other hand, what law
firm or client can afford to underwrite
the costs of writing, editing, printing,
and publishing a work such as Mc-
The Problems
Searching Case Law
For many lawyers the problems of
research are even more serious for
case law than they are for statutes.
What about the feasibility of searching
case law electronically?
Technologically, cases could be handled in the same way: Put the text of
the opinions on a series of text tapes,
built a comprehensive vocabulary list,
and then search the materials in the
way already described. The difficulty
here is that the aggregate text of the
reported cases is vastly more volumi-
nous and heterogeneous in language
than that of the corresponding statutory materials. In fact, the time and
expense of preparing punched cards
made it impractical to attempt to re-
cord, for use in the American Bar
Association’s recent demonstrations,
the original text of even a sample of
court opinions. Moreover, even if

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ciate member of the American Bar
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author of Products Liability and the
Food Consumer, published in 1951,
and Legislative Drafting, published
in 1954.

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punched tapes or electronic scanners were practically available for the purpose, it is not as yet certain that it would be desirable to attempt to store on tape the text of the vast body of case law. For one thing, the great diversity of subject matter and the even greater variations in language would, in view of the extent of the materials, mean that the working vocabulary list would approach the dimensions of a comprehensive general dictionary. Whether the average lawyer would be better off with such a system or with one such as will now be described is difficult to determine.

It has been suggested that the same objections apply also to the statutory output of Congress and the several state legislatures. This is not so. When the vast amount of editorial material is subtracted from a state’s legislative code or compilation, the amount of statutory text remaining is small when compared to the amount of judicial text in the same jurisdiction.

Unlike the statutory search, therefore, the systems of searching case law demonstrated in Washington involved a classification or selective indexing system requiring the mediation of a case digester. This not only greatly reduced the bulk of materials recorded on the text tape but gave the searcher the help of a professional classifier or indexer. On the other hand, the search could be correspondingly inhibited by any inadequacies in the work of the digester. In this instance, the advantages were believed to outweigh the disadvantages.

Digested materials were supplied in the form of case headnotes (Lawyers’ Co-operative Publishing Company), general case abstracts (patent design law materials from the Bureau of National Affairs and oil and gas materials from the Southwestern Legal Foundation) or case abstracts couched in a specially tailored and standardized vocabulary (my own case materials on food products liability). Except for the patent cases, these case abstracts were handled by the techniques already outlined for the statutory search. The key difference lay in the preparation of the headnotes and abstracts before committing them to punched cards. Because I am more familiar with my own materials, I shall discuss the search in terms of the cases on food products liability. Somewhat similar demonstrations were conducted with oil and gas cases by a representative of the Southwestern Legal Foundation.4

Figure 2 shows the form that each of the 260 sample products liability cases took before it was transferred to punched cards. Each case was thus abstracted on a separate sheet containing a special seventy-four-word vocabulary. Such a system provides a fund of case abstracts couched in terms relevant for searching purposes and sufficiently standardized to eliminate the synonym problem.

In each case the only inserted material was the name of the case, the citation and the name of the product. The rest was handled simply by checking the applicable words in the vocabulary. The result was a sheaf of cases that, if not too bulky, could be quickly searched even manually. Thus, one interested in locating all the contributory negligence cases could locate them simply by fixing his eye on the tenth item from the end and flipping the pages.

From here on, the system was the same as that already outlined. The key punch operator typed across the top of a series of cards the name of the case,

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4. Robert A. Wilson, Director of Research.
its citation, the name of the product, and each word that the digester had checked. For example, the following appears on the punched cards cut for the case illustrated in Figure 2: "Yo-chem v. Gloria, Inc. 134 Ohio St. 427 17 N.E. 2nd 731 (1930) Water Food Consumer Restaurateur Sale Unwholesomeness Latent-defect Negligence Breach-of-statute Warranty-contract 15(1) Judgment-D Reversed." The cards were then inserted and the material was recorded verbatim on the text tape.

Again, the searcher prepared his inquiries using only words appearing in the vocabulary print-out. In the present instance it was discovered that several of the punched card abstracts contained misspellings of the word "restaurateur", a fact revealed by the vocabulary print-out. Because the machine treated each word variant as a separate word, the searcher interested in restaurant cases had to couch his inquiries also in terms of each misspelling.

The advantage of the system is that, except for the basic seventy-four-word vocabulary, it uses no coding and no classification system in the sense of a hierarchy of classes and sub-classes. It is also open-ended in that the digester is not restricted to the basic vocabulary to describe a case if he finds that additional descriptors are necessary. Moreover, the cards do not have to be prepared to take account of any item in the vocabulary that is not checked for the particular case being handled, as had to be done under some earlier coded systems.

The presence in the vocabulary of unusual expressions such as "Priv-not-fatal" seems to deny the assertion, just made, that no coding was used. However, their presence was required only by the fact that as programmed for this particular demonstration the machine did not recognize word order. Consequently, word order was preserved in particular phrases by hyphenating them into a single word. Because the machine could not deal with words longer than twenty letters, some hyphenations also had to be abbreviated. On the other hand, machines can be programmed to recognize not only word order but the distance between words in terms of how many other words separate them.

With more sophisticated programming, it would thus be possible to dispense not only with coding as such but with all unnatural hyphenation and abbreviation.

The Limitations of the Machines

Some of the early test inquiries came to grief because they were framed without careful regard to the words appearing in the vocabulary print-out. Others came to grief because spelling variants were caught, like other word descriptors, in the conjunctive, when they should have been caught in the disjunctive. In such cases, the machine answered, honestly and accurately, "No listing". Inquiries that were phrased too narrowly produced few or no citations. Those that were phrased too broadly produced more than a searcher could cope with, and thus suggested the desirability of rephrasing the question. All these occurrences underlined this fact: These machines cannot transcend the materials that are stored in them and they can answer only the specific inquiries (however inapt) that are presented to them. Every significant legal judgment must still be made by a live lawyer. These legal judgments appear to be substantially the same as those involved in conventional research.

Despite the initial human failures and toe stubbing, the machine began to produce impressive results. In five minutes we were able to produce all the Massachusetts restaurant cases in which the transaction was held to constitute a sale. Similarly, for the recent foreign object cases based on res ipsa loquitur.

The search of patent cases was conducted separately under the guidance of the Director of the Office of Research and Development of the Patent Office. It used a RAMAC 305 and a somewhat different method of digesting and classifying the source materials.

The sample used consisted of abstracts for about 222 decisions on design patent law published in the United States Patent Quarterly during the past twenty years. These abstracts were developed in the following way. Legal digesters working from case headnotes first extracted what they considered the key words. These together with the names of the judge and the tribunal constituted the search words. Each headnote and each key word was assigned a five-digit code number. These in turn were grouped in a 485-word vocabulary according to key word, similar to the vocabulary described earlier except that it was produced manually and not by machine. Each case was then abstracted by reference to this vocabulary, which made it possible to describe the case by an average of only six key words. Next, a punched card was prepared to show the code number of each headnote in which the key word appeared. These cards were then fed into the machine for storage and later retrieval.

The RAMAC machine has fifty rotating discs as its "memory" instead of the plastic tape used by the 650. Of these only one and a half were used in this search. As the Director has explained:

Information is recorded on these discs in the form of extremely small differently magnetized spots. A series of six of these spots, each of which can be magnetized in either of two polarities, arranged in a circular path, will define a distinctive code pattern which represents a numeral or a letter of the alphabet. A reading head which can respond to the magnetized spots moves mechanically to a selected disc in response to an instruction fed into the machine from a punched card. The machine is able to intercompare two or more lists and to generate a resultant list of five-digit numbers in response to a question to the file.

The specific differences between this and the other systems are significant here mainly because they illustrate the wide range of alternatives now available. Again, the significant differences lie not so much in the operations of the machines themselves as in the preparation of the legal materials. As the Director has conceded, case abstracts based on original text are likely to be better articulated to the substantive materials than those based only on headnotes already prepared without this kind of searching in mind. Furthermore, a system that uses no coding, such as that used for the food products

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liability cases, would seem to be simpler to set up and operate than one that does. A system based on a simple open-end vocabulary would seem to be easier to develop and, in some areas of the law, easier to use than one using a classification system built around a complicated hierarchy of categories.

The system used for searching the health statutes outlined above avoids these difficulties but, so long as it depends on punched cards, storage of the materials requires a lot of time and expense. It may also turn out to place too heavy a burden on the imagination of the seeker. On the other hand, use of a professional digester or indexer requires, as a bare minimum, the development of a satisfactory vocabulary. It is one thing to develop a vocabulary for a limited field such as food products liability or oil and gas. It is quite another to develop one for each field and then blend them into a reasonably consistent whole, which ultimately is the only satisfactory solution. Unfortunately, the existing systems appear either to be unnecessarily heterogeneous or to have been developed under conditions that require their developers to spread themselves too thinly across the face of the law and thus into areas where they were not always sufficiently sophisticated. For the time being, the best approach appears to be to experiment further in limited areas. If an adequate job can be done on these, there is at least no technological reason why it cannot be done ultimately for the law as a whole.

All these experiments point up the necessity of a common language for identification and comparison. However much the use of synonyms and other variants may enrich the color and beauty of language generally, they are only impediments in the scientific development of this phase of the law; once an adequate expression has emerged.

The Potentialities of Electronic Searching

The potentialities of electronic searching are almost staggering. Use of these techniques in the searching of patent claims in the field of steroids during the past three years, entailing an average of five minutes a search, has shown that machine searching can be accomplished at lower cost and with much greater accuracy than traditional methods. A machine search of the existing 2,400 patents in this limited field now produces about twice as many pertinent materials as a manual search. In other words, even expert human examiners, working without machines, overlook on the average almost half of what is looked for.

We are also on the threshold of even more startling developments outside the area of mere storage and retrieval. Electronic devices are now available for analyzing the logical structure of statutes and, if a consistent legislative vocabulary can ever be developed, it will be possible to determine electronically, for example, what specific provisions of a complicated legislative structure such as the Internal Revenue Code need to be changed to effectuate a specific substantive proposal. But this is another story. Closer to our immediate concern is the possibility of abstracting case law by machines capable of identifying significant word affinities by the frequency with which particular words appear in proximity to each other.

Many of those who saw or participated in the demonstrations in Washington were overawed if not overwhelmed by a mass of technical data, economic considerations and speculations on their ultimate impact. In fact, it would be easy to conclude that the whole thing is too complicated, too frightening and premature for adoption. Some may even think that this kind of systematization is alien to the creative spirit of the common law.

Fortunately, we do not have to choose between committing ourselves to the wholesale adoption of electronic machine methods or rejecting altogether the idea of mechanized search. Many aspects of the techniques discussed in this article are already in use. They work. They are practical. They are economically feasible. And there is a lot to choose from. There are full-blown systems such as those demonstrated in Washington. There are less complicated systems. There are some very elementary systems like the kindergarten one I have been using for many years in the field of food products liability. And so we can be highly selective. We can be cautious.

Many of these systems, although still in the developmental stage, have matured sufficiently that we can feel safe in testing them to see to what extent we can use them in searching particular kinds of legal materials. Ultimately the question is no different from that of deciding whether it is desirable to invest in office dictating equipment.

From these tests, I believe we shall discover that, while most specific legal problems will continue to call for more or less traditional methods of manual research, there will be many that are of sufficient difficulty, legal significance and financial impact to warrant the use of mechanical or electronic devices. Fortunately, the lawyer will not have to own or rent a machine to use it.

Another lesson drawn from the Washington demonstrations is that these machines dispense with neither the lawyer nor the application of any kind of essential legal analysis that a lawyer now uses. Nor, on the other hand, do they appear to increase the burden of legal analysis. Properly used, they may enable lawyers to shed much of the deadening drudgery that most of them would prefer to avoid and that in many cases impairs their capacity to concentrate on the more crucial aspects of legal analysis that they ought to be preoccupied with.

Finally, it seems clear that these devices offer no single, simple solution to today’s legal searching problems. We have much to learn about them. We must “make haste slowly”. It would be high folly if at any stage lawyers or law publishers were to rush to store electronically a lot of inadequately prepared legal materials and then search them with inadequately prepared inquiries. Nothing could more quickly discredit the fine advances that have already been made.

We owe it to ourselves as lawyers and to the public to investigate and selectively evaluate the rich ore that is being mined here. We should do this boldly, carefully and with the conviction that if we do this job well we shall not only make the practice of law more satisfying professionally but help to assure to the legal profession the full public confidence that it deserves to enjoy.