



Queensland lawyers embrace Domino for secure e-business

In the practice of law, perhaps more than any other profession, information is synonymous with success. Fast access to reliable sources of information and the ability to share that information securely can make the difference between winning and losing cases.

Nowadays, there's no problem delivering legal information—the Internet and digital information storage have made it possible. But these technologies alone can't ensure secure collaboration between attorneys and guaranteed receipt of documents—critical prerequisites to a successful legal practice.

“Lotus Domino offered a simple development environment enabling us to create THEMIS, even with our limited financial and technical resources.”

—Joanne Sherman, THEMIS Project Manager, Queensland Law Foundation

The Queensland Law Foundation (QLF), Australia, the commercial arm of Queensland Law Society (the State's law association), has addressed these needs by creating an intranet called THEMIS™ (The Electronic Members Information Service). Aptly named—Themis is the greek goddess of justice—this statewide network service has been jointly developed by QLF and IBM.

THEMIS is based on Lotus Domino, which uses Access Control Lists (ACLs) together with authentication, authorization, and encryption features to provide multi-layer security. IBM provides a guarantee of delivery as well as an audit trail that allows users to know when their e-mail is received and opened.

“This intranet has made it possible for Queensland legal practitioners to work securely, collaboratively, and speedily on legal material,” says THEMIS Project Manager Joanne Sherman. So secure is the system that the Queensland Court of Appeal is trying out the electronic filing of legal documents through THEMIS's e-mail system.

But THEMIS is much more than a secure information delivery channel. It also provides immediate access to the latest legal research, the Internet, and is an online resource for

Application	THEMIS,™ legal information and services network
Business Benefits	Reduced cost of legal research; better access for remote practitioners; secure electronic commerce for the legal profession
Software	Lotus® Notes® Lotus Domino™
Hardware	IBM® AS/400®
Services	IBM Global Network™

products and services. “Where once legal information could take days or weeks to be



Joanne Sherman hits the books with Hugh Grant, President, Queensland Law Society (l) and David Usher, State Manager, IBM Queensland.

distributed, lawyers are now able to share information instantly regardless of what IT platform they run," Sherman adds.

THEMIS has already been accepted as a viable medium for electronic commerce, both among legal practitioners and related businesses. One of Queensland's largest general insurance companies now sells insurance to lawyers exclusively via THEMIS. Another company, LBC Information Services, is the primary provider of legal content for THEMIS.

Dramatic reduction in cost of research

Being able to do the bulk of one's legal research over an extranet translates into enormous savings in time and money. According to Sherman, lawyers spend a fortune on legal research. With THEMIS, however, an annual subscription, ranging between \$250 to \$650, will get lawyers unlimited access to a vast database of reference material and legal services.

"This technology means that I can be competitive in my fees to get a share of the market and not have as much of the overhead as I've had to carry," says Peter Carne, a partner at Carne and Herd, a Brisbane, Australia-based company of six lawyers that was involved in the pilot for THEMIS.

Even the cost of developing THEMIS proved to be inexpensive. "Lotus Domino offered a simple development environment enabling us to create THEMIS, even with our limited financial and technical resources," states Sherman.

Bringing remote practitioners online

THEMIS is proving to be a boon to lawyers in remote areas. "Unlike city practitioners, it is very hard for remote practitioners to get the benefit of collaboration with peers and colleagues through seminars or meetings," says Sherman. But, THEMIS now gives them access to information at nominal cost. "With Lotus Notes and Domino, we have a broad and flexible platform allowing us to provide an intranet, as well as some Internet-based services—a private road on a super highway that reaches even remote practitioners."

The network uses Domino's replication technology, which allows a Notes client at a remote site to make a copy of the database from the Domino server and store it on a local server or even a PC. Domino's replication is bi-directional, synchronizing changes made at all locations. Replication is done twice each day, to and from the users. IBM Global Network (IGN), which hosts THEMIS's e-mail, has 1,000 local access points worldwide, more than any other supplier, so subscribers to THEMIS can access their e-mail in most major cities in the world for the cost of a local call.

The THEMIS infrastructure will grow in tandem with the services provided and the number of users. IGN will upgrade the infrastructure automatically. "Our alliance with IBM has been very productive," says Sherman. "We can draw on their expertise at any time."

Lotus Notes also directly links data from the Society's AS/400 servers to THEMIS. Thus, subscribers can access a directory of lawyers, with their mailing and e-mail addresses, and other information, which is updated every night. "Being able to update it frequently is crucial as subscribers depend on THEMIS to provide them with the most current information," Sherman says.

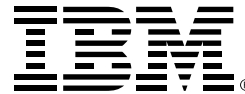
Lawyers flock to THEMIS

What began as a pilot project, with about 40 users from 14 law firms based in Brisbane, is growing much faster than expected. Since April last year, 600 users in 300 organizations, including law firms, government agencies, attorneys, and large corporations have already signed up for the service. The target is to cover over 800 sites by early 1999.

With word of THEMIS's success spreading, other states in Australia and overseas organizations are expressing interest in QLF's service. Sherman has already fielded queries from eight overseas organizations. As Denver Beanland, the Queensland Attorney General comments: "THEMIS is going to be a forerunner to great change for the legal profession."

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