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Book Review of *Digital Property: Currency of the 21st Century* by Lesley Ellen Harris
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Comparative employment issues. This text will serve as a useful resource in the practitioner's library. The editors have included cases from the U.S. as well as Canada in their table of cases. An entire chapter is devoted to entry and exit under the provisions of NAFTA, e.g. B-1 visas and TN status. However, the text is not limited to use for comparative issues: the chapter on employment issues in Canada stands on its own. The chapters on immigration to Canada and the U.S. would prove useful to immigration practitioners, again standing alone. They detail the procedural steps and outline potential hazards.

The editors also include copies of a series of forms useful in the relocation process: applications for visas, customs declarations and treasury forms, to name a few. The tax section contains the current tax agreements so that practitioners can make useful judgments in rendering advice to their clients. Should this text be updated on a quarterly basis, it would be an invaluable addition to an employer, employee, practitioner or library with interests in the mobility of individuals between Canada and the U.S. The only thing that keeps me from recommending that this text become an addition to any library, is the promise of the editors that it will be updated from “time to time.” The value of such a text is in the commitment of the editors to maintain the quality of the product over time.

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The author describes digital property as “the coming of age of intellectual property” (p.vi). Her thesis is that the popularization of computer networks, particularly the Internet, has made publishing an accessible activity for many more people than in earlier times. Consequently, the protection of intellectual property, or intangible rights and entitlements, is relevant to many more people as well. Harris likens the current state of electronic media and the ease with which electronic publications can be created to the real estate market just prior to a boom. The book is meant to find its audience in creators, publishers, distributors and consumers of digital intellectual property as well as in the entrepreneur seeking to capitalize on opportunities in electronic commerce.

In the first two chapters, Harris sets out to define or establish some terms and concepts that are at the heart of the discussion in the remainder of the book. Readers unfamiliar with exactly what intellectual property is, and how and by whom it can be created, will benefit from this introduction. Although a few of the terms or phrases she uses might strike some readers as faddish or trendy, the purposes of these chapters are to create a simple picture of some abstract concepts and to give the audience a common understanding of a language that might be foreign to some. The chapters serve these purposes well.

Most of the book is dedicated to a discussion of intellectual property principles in the context of digital property and the selling or licensing of it. The discussion is primarily directed toward readers who are interested in publishing content, either for their own purposes or for institutions for which they work. Harris briefly reviews a few examples of model Web sites that either serve as means of conducting such business or have the potential to do so. She also suggests some considerations for valuing property that might be sold or licensed.

What most readers are likely to find of greatest practical interest is Harris’ discussion of copyright law and licensing. Harris explains some fundamental copyright principles, including the extent of copyright protection and measures that can be implemented to maximize protection, the concept of the public domain, violations of copyright, and other potential interferences with legal rights. She also reviews some standard or common licensing agreement clauses and their potential consequences and implications. Harris concludes the book with a brief overview of international treaties that have relevance to digital property and its protection, and the text of two treaties is included in appendices. It should be noted that, although all members of the target audience likely can learn from this discussion, the perspective of the creator is reflected to a greater degree than is that of the consumer.

This interesting and readable book would be a useful reference source for content creators and individuals or institutions distributing or publishing information and works in digital format. Consumers may find useful the summary of the legal issues and principles relevant to digital intellectual property. This summary also might serve as a useful refresher for the advisor, although the book is by no means a substantive law text. Harris makes it clear that the book should not be used to replace legal advice on copyright issues; rather, it is intended to make the reader aware of the issues and factors that must be considered before any venture is begun.

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