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Book Review of *Computer Crisis 2000* by W. Michael Fletcher

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In fact, Wilson and Taylor concede that their work cannot be a definitive or comprehensive treatment of employment law. What the authors have accomplished is a quick outline of the major legal issues surrounding employment: the hiring phase, the employment relationship, and the termination phase. By focusing on the critical issues within each phase, they attempt to set a roadmap for attorneys who wish to avoid liability for their clients. Utilizing specialized tables the authors manage to summarize the state of employment standards (vacation, benefits, etc.) in the provinces, including a surprisingly complete summary of each jurisdiction's workers' compensation law. By throwing in a few contract forms, the authors have put together a concise and helpful guide.

Its limited shelf life notwithstanding, *The Corporate Counsel Guide to Employment Law* provides a concise and useful guide for in-house counsel and by delivering on promise, constitutes a rare commodity in the world of legal publishing.

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Computer Crisis 2000. W. Michael Fletcher. North Vancouver: International Self-Counsel Press, 1998. xvi, 232 p. Includes appendices, tables, and references for further reading. ISBN 1-55180-138-8 (softcover) \$15.95.

Computer Crisis 2000 is a non-technical, simply written work describing the origins and potential consequences of the year 2000 challenge. Directed at small to medium-sized businesses, its premise is that owners of such businesses generally consider that the difficulties associated with the year 2000 date change pertain only to large enterprises or government institutions. The author's primary point is that "far too many people believe either that the issue does not affect them or that it touches them in so peripheral a way that they have nothing to worry about" (p. 6). His aim is to direct their attention to the issue and to their need to address it. He accomplishes both this and the further task of providing a foundation upon which small or medium-sized businesses can reach their own year 2000 solutions.

It is undoubtedly difficult to keep a book on this issue timely. By the time of reading in early 1999 many of the author's comments sound dated. For example, the author muses in the Preface that he had been "waiting for the media coverage that would awaken people to the issue" and that in late 1997 he was "still waiting for that worldwide alarm" (p.xv). Nevertheless, it is clear that the author was cognizant of the limitations on writing on year 2000 issues.

Whereas accuracy and background information are not compromised, detail has been sacrificed in favour of timeliness.

Despite the swift passage of time, *Computer Crisis 2000* is potentially useful for its intended audience. The detailed Table of Contents outlines the structure of the book in simple language. Part I explains what the year 2000 problem is all about, beginning with a simple historical account of the origins of the issue. The author emphasizes that the problem is neither a "bug" nor an exercise in poor planning or lack of foresight. He outlines potential consequences of the problem, with special attention to his audience. For example, the author notes that the interdependence of small and medium-sized businesses gives rise to year 2000 issues even for businesses that are either prepared or not themselves computer dependent.

In Part II, the author describes what he calls "the big picture," or the implications of the year 2000 challenge for large enterprises, governments, and infrastructure generally. He also describes preparedness efforts and the relative states of readiness of governments and the financial industry. It should be noted that, while this book is written in the North American context, the author is Canadian, so this book is more relevant to Canadian law libraries than similar books on the market.

Part III, "Your Year 2000 Plan," is of the most practical interest. The first of the seven chapters in this part sets forth six rules the author sees as necessary to any year 2000 solution. The second chapter addresses human resources matters, and the third asks the reader to address the hardware, software, systems, and interdependence issues the particular business might face. The next three chapters outline options available for addressing equipment, human resources, inventory, and priority issues. In the final chapter the author explains the necessity of communication, both with members of the business and with those with whom the business interacts.

In Part IV the author suggests opportunities that might arise as an indirect result of year 2000 challenges. For instance, business persons forced to address these issues might seize the occasion as an opportunity to undertake strategic planning initiatives and operational reviews. Also potentially available are opportunities to market one's business as a year 2000 compliant one, taking advantage of competitive position possibilities indirectly created by the year 2000 issue.

Finally, in Part V, the author describes year 2000 solutions, attitudes, and relative states of readiness internationally. He also draws conclusions specific to individuals in various positions in businesses and in society generally.

Included are some useful appendices. The first contains a year 2000 plan checklist, and the second contains a useful bibliography of resources for further reading, both in print and on the Internet. However, this list is now rather dated, and only scratches the surface of currently available resources.

Given the book's intended audience and the level of the

material in the book, it is a worthwhile addition to public library collections, in-house collections of small businesses, or the collections of year 2000 consultants. It also might be of use in the collections of law firms that provide general advice to small or medium-sized businesses.

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Alternative Dispute Resolution for Organizations: How to Design a System for Effective Conflict Resolution. By Allan J. Stitt. Toronto: Wiley, 1998. 228 p. Includes index, appendices, and bibliographic references. ISBN 0-471-64295-9 (hardcover) \$39.95.

*A*lternative Dispute Resolution for Organizations is a book which deals with the development of new methods and means by which to resolve conflict within organizational structures. While the book appears to have been designed for organizations and corporations, it is also relevant to any situation which requires resolution. For example, a disputing family or neighbours could apply many of the basic principles found within this text.

The book begins by explaining that ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution) techniques can be used to help companies with both external and internal conflicts. "Much of this book focuses on questions that need to be asked and issues that need to be considered for the design of an ADR system" (p.xvii). Chapter one is an introduction to ADR and addresses the essential elements such as dealing with conflict, setting up a conflict resolution system and the need to look at existing systems. These issues need to be tackled prior to the development of any new system to deal with conflict resolution. Many organizations do not have a system to deal with conflict resolution and, therefore, the need to create a system requires even more thought.

"ADR is a set of processes that includes negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and a number of other processes, some of which are variations or combinations of negotiation, mediation, and arbitration" (p.14). There are several types of ADR systems; however, the situation of each organization must be considered individually if the appropriate system is to be found for the particular organization. The DIRECT approach is a framework for designing an effective ADR system. It stands for Diagnosis, Interests, Rights, Exits and re-entries, Creativity, and Training and evaluation. The book then goes on to explain each of the elements of the DIRECT approach in detail.

The book is written in a very succinct and easy to follow manner. At the end of each chapter is a summary and relevant case studies. The appendices at the end of the book are helpful and good guides to follow. I suggest that this book is a must for organizations with or without conflict situations. Even if an organization believes that it handles conflict well, both externally and internally, this book is a handy reference for future needs that may arise. Additionally, *Alternative Dispute Resolution for Organizations* can quickly be read and understood by persons from all organizational sectors. I recommend this book be purchased by C.A.L.L. members who deal with business law and arbitration. It is not an essential academic book, but rather one that would aid the academic world, and is a handy additional reading source for those interested in conflict resolution systems.

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Buying and Financing Technology Businesses. Toronto: Emond Montgomery, 1998. 1 v. (loose-leaf) (Osgoode Hall Law School Professional Development Programme Conference Proceedings) Includes forms, index of suggested reading and table of contents. ISBN 1-55239-018-7 \$99.00.

*T*his text is part of a new series of continuing legal education conference proceedings from the Osgoode Hall Law School Professional Development Programme. It discusses the legal ramifications of buying and financing a technology business in plain English.

Initially the text explains equity capital in small technology ventures using legal phrases then referencing sections of the *Securities Act* pertaining to money being given to the entrepreneur. Next it outlines several types of provisions that may be included in a small technology venture's shareholders' agreement. This covers such items as the board of directors' liability, shareholders' specified level of approval and dispute resolution mechanisms.

This is followed by a discussion of the business plan from the perspective of the lawyer taking into consideration the following: how to deal with the nuances in character of the IT professional, how to choose a client that fits your business style, and how to build a business rapport. Chapter 3 reports on the buying and financing of technology businesses in detail, covering transitional financing techniques between start-up and going public. Chapter 4 talks about U.S. securities law considerations when financing Canadian tech-