

Planning a Legal Information Institute in the south of Africa



John Montgomery

**School of Law, University of the Witwatersrand,
Johannesburg, South Africa**

montgomeryj@law.wits.ac.za

Background

- ☐ The Wits Laws School website was started by Professor Iain Currie in the mid-90s.
- ☐ The philosophy behind the website is that primary legal documents such as court judgments should be made freely available to as many as possible.
- ☐ The website has become a recognised South African portal.
- ☐ url: www.law.wits.ac.za

Legal information offered on the site

- ☐ All the judgments of the Constitutional Court since inception.
- ☐ Supporting documents for certain Constitutional Court judgment e.g. affidavits.
- ☐ All the judgments of the Land Claims Court since inception.
- ☐ Supreme Court of Appeal judgments since the mid-90s.
- ☐ South African Law Commission reports, many of which have online questionnaires.

Modus operandi

- ☐ Receive judgment from court via email attachment.
- ☐ Enter details into a database-to-web programme.
- ☐ Create static webpage.
- ☐ FTP judgment (e.g. MSWord doc) to website.
- ☐ Update home page and send out listserv notification.

Future plans

- ☐ Revamp the database using mysql/php/xml with some perl scripting.
- ☐ In this regard Cornell Law School have generously offered their know-how.
- ☐ Link up with Worldlii as an additional way of increasing traffic.
- ☐ Once this is up and running, invite other courts or southern African countries to join.