

Poster presentation

The Merlin Affair: Addressing students' needs in learning media law through the use of multimedia environments

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Traditional teaching and learning in law follows a standard formula of a program of lectures supported by small group tutorials which examine scenario-type problems. It might be queried how well such an educational approach equates with legal practice in the real world and meets students' real needs. The information required to resolve the problem rarely if ever comes conveniently summarised in a half-page tutorial question but instead has to be actively derived from a variety of sources.

The Merlin Affair is a multi-media program that is an integral component of *Media Law*, a final-year elective in the undergraduate bachelor of laws degree at the QUT Law Faculty. The program comprises a series of modules which address different areas of media law focusing on the central theme of an unfolding news story (the fictional uncovering of a corrupt politician), including confidentiality, privacy, defamation, contempt, and vilification. The modules involve a problem based learning approach which requires students to collect information or resources in a realistic context, distinguish the material from the immaterial, organise and analyse the balance, and communicate a resolution of the problem. In this way *The Merlin Affair* is designed to address students' real needs by presenting a learning environment that more closely simulates legal practice.

Keywords: teaching and learning strategies, content orientated applications, personalised learning, law, media law

Bionotes

Des Butler has published 10 researched books and numerous articles in a variety of areas including media law and has been involved in projects utilising technology to enhance learning since 1990. He has received several awards for research and teaching. In 2005 he received the QUT Vice Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence and in 2006 a University Innovator's Award for the use of technology to enhance learning and teaching. In 2006 he was nominated for a national Carrick Institute Award for Teaching Excellence.

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