

ISSUE 10

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A View from the Bridge

The Newsletter from
The Conway Accident Law Practice



CONWAY

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Tales from the Lockdown

Battle Royal - Tiger King v Janet King

As with most of my friends and colleagues, the enforced lockdown has given me the perfect opportunity to catch up on all those famous works of literature I always promised myself I would read before I die.



I'm talking about the great Russian monoliths of the 19th century. Tolstoy with "War and Peace" and "Anna Karenina", Dostoevsky "The Idiot", and "The Brothers Karamazov" and of course the short stories of Turgenev.

I do have all of these books on my bookshelf, (I always make a point of having them prominently displayed whenever I'm doing a Zoom.)

At last I can get round to them.

But as is well known to all Harry Potter fans, and as is put by Hamlet to Horatio, there are strange powers at loose in the world, and more things between heaven and earth than is dreamt of in your philosophy, Horatio old pal.

So try as I might, every time I take down "War and Peace" I find myself assailed and surrounded by dark swirling forces, rendering me helpless and compelling me to close the Tolstoy and

instead carry on box set binging on the Australian legal soap "Janet King".

In my view "Janet King" is the great undiscovered treasure of the legal world. It currently resides on the STV Player under Genres/Drama. It is there that you will find three full-length storylines of eight episodes each.

Janet herself is the glamorous ice queen prosecutor and head of the DPP in New South Wales.

She is a fearless warrior for justice, turning accused to quivering wrecks during cross examination, at the same time as managing vibrant same-sex relationships.

She is knowledgeable about the M'Naghten rules on insanity, the "but for" test on causation, and her juniors swoon over her use of paralipsis in argument.

Yes, that's right "paralipsis" is what she said. I too had to look it up. It means

where you pile on the evidence, whilst pretending not to. As in

"And never mind that the accused's fingerprints were found on the knife."

Janet can be quite a dangerous person to have as a friend or even acquaintance, as (spoiler alert) her house is blown up, she is the victim of a drive-by shooting where her partner is killed, and her trapped children seem certain to be crushed in a lift shaft by a descending lift.

Dangerous people these Australian crims (same as it ever was), but Janet bests them all, well almost all. You'll have to watch the series.

And in all of this there is a first-class script full of great lines. When Janet and DPP friend Tony successfully bring down a particularly vicious criminal they are moved to a celebratory plastic cup whisky in the office at 10:30 AM.

As Tony memorably observes, "Well, the sun is over the yardarm... somewhere".

Welcome to the tenth newsletter of The Conway Accident Law Practice.

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And as well as being literate, it has easily the most accurate legal background, with grumpy appellate judges, insufferable advocates and counsel, and useless associates (yes that's my world as well) and all dealing with some sophistication with the kind of legal arguments very familiar to you and me.

A very good friend of mine tells me that "Tiger King" is unmissable. But I have just discovered that Janet appears in the prequel series about state junior prosecutors called "Crownies", and I have another 16 episodes to go.

So Janet, for now, is the only king for me. Give it a try. You will love it.

An Idiot's Guide to Working Remotely

As we all know, the software developers are constantly telling us that we only use 5% of the functionality of each system.

As a curious but generally hopeless, tech person my response is that I don't want or need the other 95%, I just want the 5% to work properly.

The following is a list of the idiot proof and inexpensive software which we use in this practice.

1 FileCenter

This is the practice management software which we use. As a low-cost and efficient program it is hard to beat. It's meant generally for solo and small firm practices. It probably wouldn't work for firms with more than 700 or so client matters.

First of all you should be aware of what it won't do. It won't do time recording, it won't tie in with accounting programs, it won't automate workflow and it won't work on Macs.

If you don't need these, or can get other software to perform those functions cheaply, you should look at FileCenter. The great utility of the programme is that it sits on top of your existing Windows files, and doesn't need a separate database.

If at any time you want to see the underlying Windows configuration, you can simply toggle onto File Explorer. What FileCenter does is set everything out in an intuitive and easily manageable structure. You start

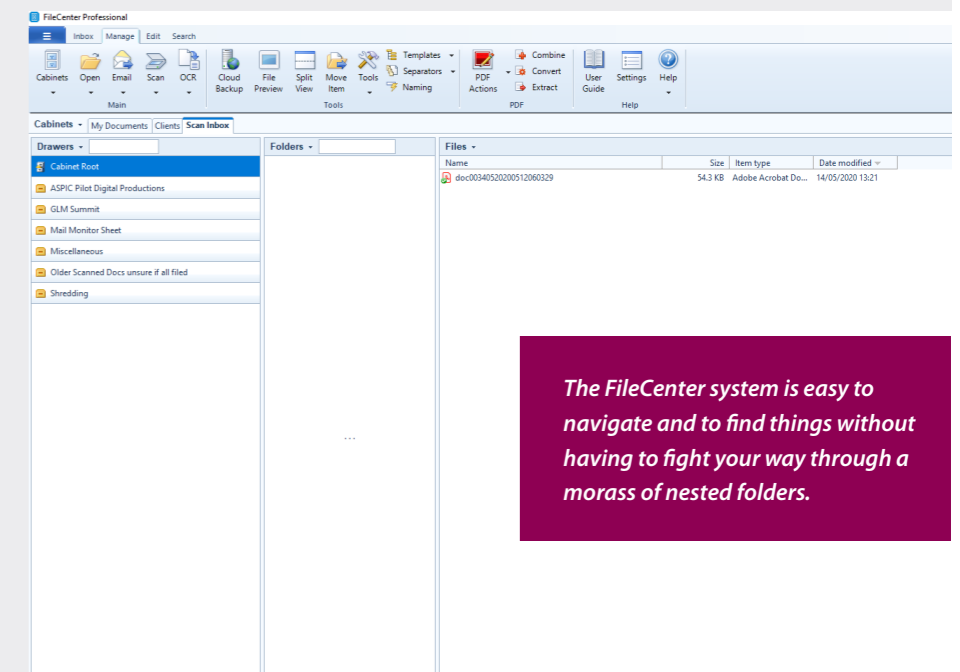
off with a Drawer, which is typically the name of the client e.g. "Doe, John," FileCenter then sets up Folders (preset and named by you) into which Files can be saved.

And the other huge advantage of the program is its Outlook synchronicity. As you send or receive any email you are prompted in Outlook to save to a specific folder in FileCenter without ever having to open the program or to leave Outlook.

In combination with a high speed scanner, this software is the perfect entry to the paperless office.

2 Dropbox

If you're working remotely you will need a cloud-based storage system. I know that there are others out there such as Microsoft Sharefile, but for us Dropbox seems to be the easiest to use. You will need the Dropbox Premium version.



It can also manipulate documents by converting to PDF or to Word, and has a useful search engine.

You will need to buy the FileCenter Professional version which is currently available for around £170, and that version will need to be installed on every user's computer.

3 ActiveWords

If you have ever watched with envy as a 10 fingered typist flies over the keyboard, meanwhile you laboriously hunt and peck for every word, this is the program for you. It's similar to Word's predictive text, and allows Word text to be reproduced from

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An Idiot's Guide to Working Remotely *(continued)*

a short abbreviation. So where you find yourself using the same phrases over and over again you can use an ActiveWord shortcut. So if you're filing "email to client with progress of case" you can shorten this to "emc" to take a

single example. You can also use it to reproduce swathes of text and boiler plate, so the ActiveWord abbreviation "spec" in this practice will bring up the whole approved standard specification of documents. It will also allow you to navigate to particular websites or programs using abbreviations e.g. LS for Law Society or FC for FileCenter. And yes, I know that Word already has this kind

of macro facility, but with nothing like the same ease of use interface. It can be put on multiple devices and has a ton of other stuff I don't have space for. The current cost is around £35 per single user. It has fantastic personal support from its US inventor Buzz Bruggeman (Orlando trial lawyer) and his team, who know what lawyers need and is clearly tickled that someone in Scotland loves his product.

4 Evernote Premium

This is easily the best notepad and notetaking App. The standard version is free but can only go on one device. The great advantage of the program is that you can put down every idle thought which comes to you at any time of the day into a To Do Notebook. You can use the standard version

for free, but it cannot be synced to any other device and the whole point of the software is lost. The Premium version costs around £40 per annum. Use it and you will never forget anything ever again.

5 Zoom

We have been using Zoom from before the lockdown for video consultations. Once again for us it has the great advantage of being idiot proof. The premium version has no time or numbers restriction on meetings. It costs around £15 per month.

6 Dragon NaturallySpeaking 15 Professional

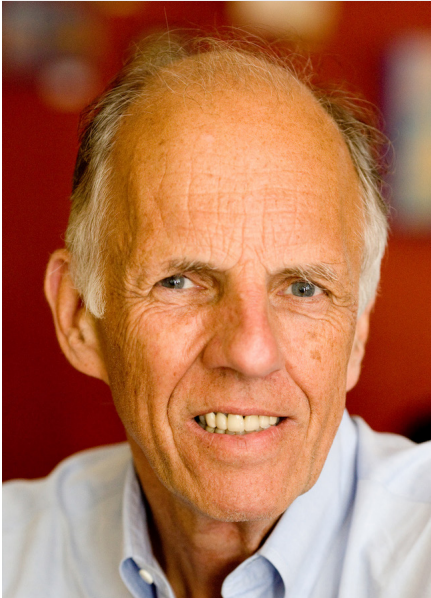
I expect that most of us have tried voice recognition software at some time, and have given up wrestling with a system which is strewn with errors and is not really worth the trouble. The news is that Dragon NaturallySpeaking 15 Professional finally does (more or less) what it says on the tin.

Don't believe the advertising puff which tells you that it is 98% accurate it's not, but you will be genuinely astonished at how close it gets. You need to throw away the microphone that comes in the box and buy a new one from Plantronics or Klim. (Around £35 each) The training is now minimal, and you should be prepared to use the program with the keyboard as your editor. You will definitely need to proof read. (In the accompanying Newsletter article Dragon described Janet King as an "ice cream prosecutor")

The Professional version is not cheap at around £400.

I would not use Dragon for detailed contracts or pleadings, but for statements or every day email use in combination with Active Words it is invaluable.

You will have noticed that the common denominator in the above list is ease of use as opposed to multiple functionality. I'm sure people out there have other and better ideas. We would love to hear from you. ■



Buzz Bruggeman, founder of ActiveWords