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SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING RESEARCH COUNCIL  
RUTHERFORD APPLETON LABORATORY

COMPUTING DIVISION

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IKBS  
Meeting with Prof C Campbell 20th July 1983

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Distribution: R W Witty  
W P Sharpe  
D B Thomas  
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Present: Prof C M Campbell, Queen's University Belfast  
D B Thomas  
W P Sharpe

(see next page)

## 1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF MEETING

Professor Campbell is Professor of Jurisprudence at Queen's University Belfast and is also managing director of the National Law Library. In November of last year he wrote to Kenneth Baker with a proposal for a major Alvey investment in the NLL for a programme of research in IKBS and the law. Campbell was advised to approach SERC since his proposals appeared to be in the realm of initial, exploratory research. This meeting was arranged for Campbell to discuss his proposals.

## 2. SUMMARY

The National Law Library was set up following publication of a report (1979) examining user needs and availability of services for the legal services system.

The NLL has three main activities in the area of the application of computers to the law:

- a. Improving awareness of the potential of computers within the legal profession.
- b. Consultancy. Current project on Lawyers and Office technology has backing from DTI and a very wide range of industry (IBM, ICL, DEC, Xerox, Plessey and others).
- c. Research and Development. Current projects include a full text retrieval system for micros which is about to be commercially exploited.

NLL is in an unusual position in that nearly all its numbers are independently supported, and it does some things for profit and some for free.

Campbell clearly wanted to run a major project with Alvey money, but also clearly has not defined any major objectives with any great clarity.

After some discussion it was agreed that the NLL research interests might reasonably be separated into the intelligent database/expert rules and regulations consultant area and the far more uncertain and ill-defined application of AI to the interpretation of case law. It was suggested that NLL might play a role in the intelligent database theme of the IKBS programme but that the legal domain would have to be considered against others if it was decided to mount a major demonstrator project.

## 3. ACTIONS

- a. Campbell will write a short paper on
  - professional and client user needs
  - current state of IT use in law
  - NLL research and development objectives for 2-4 years, distinguishing the areas described above.
- b. WPS will send the report of the Databases for Knowledge Bases workshop and will put Campbell on mailing list for Architecture Study report.
- c. WPS will contact Campbell when a strategy on the Intelligent Database theme has been defined.