

An Artificial Intelligence Approach to Legal Reasoning (Artificial Intelligence and Legal Reasoning)

By Anne von der Lieth Gardner

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Law and legal reasoning are a natural target for artificial intelligence systems. Like medical diagnosis and other tasks for expert systems, legal analysis is a matter of interpreting data in terms of higher-level concepts. But in law the data are more like those for a system aimed at understanding natural language: they tell a story about human events that may lead to a lawsuit. Statements of the law, too, are written in natural language and legal arguments are often arguments about what that language means or ought to mean.

This study is one of the few research efforts in this fertile area. It is unique in developing a computational model for analyzing legal problems in a way that brings these strands of AI research together and makes sense from a jurisprudential perspective as well.

Gardner first analyzes several positions in Anglo-American jurisprudence and their relevance for work in artificial intelligence. She identifies aspects of legal reasoning that any truly expert system in law must make a place for and suggests a way of decomposing the process of legal analysis that takes these aspects into account. She compares the resulting framework with those used by other legal analysis programs. A solid exposition of current AI techniques follows in chapters covering the author's system (written in Maclisp) for offer and acceptance problems, taken from law examinations, involved in contract law.

Anne von der Lieth Gardner has a law degree and a Ph.D. in computer science, both from Stanford University. *An Artificial Intelligence Approach to Legal Reasoning* inaugurates the series Artificial Intelligence and the Law: Processes and Models of Legal Reasoning, edited by L. Thorne McCarty and Edwina L. Rissland. A Bradford Book.

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