

IX International Conference

Law Via The Internet

Free Access, Quality of Information, Effectiveness of Rights

Florence, 30-31 October 2008

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Legal documents as core public sector information: from professional information to Internet development support

Internet, creating a technological infrastructure common to all citizens, has deeply changed the nature of legal information now part of the more general "public sector information" . Through the Internet, institutions which create and hold legal documents become "visible", the legal profession becomes stakeholder in spreading legal information, legal data enter into the public debate and feed all processes of evaluating public decisions that take place on the network. The "user generated information" related to the use of Internet as platform for e-democracy and public debate, seems to require high quality legal information characterized by full availability, reliability and persistence. These values were reaffirmed in a recent document of the Italian library association referred to "Italian Government information on the net: status and needs" (November 2007). The document shows the library professionals concern for quality and availability of public data and their importance for all activities of information linking and dissemination.