



Laws and Legal Documents On the Semantic Web

Who We Are. Legal-RDF (<http://www.legal-rdf.org>) is an organization committed to leveraging the **Semantic Web** for the express benefit of our legal community: courts, firms, law departments, and schools. Our membership includes the National Center for State Courts and software companies such as e-Law. We are now recruiting sponsors from legal firms and large organizations specifically in the State of Washington, to focus foremost on materials relevant to legal transactions and legal affairs within its jurisdiction.

What We Have Done. Legal-RDF has placed the Washington State Constitution and Revised Code of Washington onto the **Semantic Web** – this is the 'next generation' Internet you may have heard about. More than just web-pages, the Semantic Web is a networked database spread over the entire Internet. We are annotating the State Constitution and Statutes with *keywords* which expose these materials to “reasoning software” that will transform the legal and para-legal industries just as surely as HTML transformed the world of commerce.

Why Your Support Is Important. Establishing Legal-RDF.org as a viable non-profit entity ensures that your firm will benefit as quickly and as economically as possible from Semantic Web tools. Three issues are involved. To be useful, these tools need our State's statutes and other references to be first annotated with meaningful keywords; this requires a dedicated organization. Second, the elegant Legal-RDF technical architecture and ontologies (that is, the 'keywords') that are to be applied to the statutes, need to be championed by a broad-based organization. Third, these materials are resources that are best consensually developed by invested stakeholders, rather than the intellectual property of any particular private concern necessarily having its own agenda.

More About The Semantic Web. Legal-RDF's vision includes tools that can validate legal documents against statutory requirements; that can extract key information from suitably annotated legal documents (e.g., parties, contingencies, and schedules); that can insert statutory language and citations into documents; and that can ultimately compare statutes across jurisdictions. Further, there are distinct possibilities that Semantic Web tools will be able to discover information of certain types.

What Our Plans Are. Legal-RDF has developed a work-plan and budget covering the next 12 months. Our goals for this year include initial organization and appointment of our Board of Directors; substantial progress on developing our databases; outreach to standards bodies and sponsors; programming web services; and improving the technical documentation and web-site.

Feel free to contact me for additional information and to visit our web-site!

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