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The American Lawyer

January, 1996 / February, 1996

SECTION: BAR TALK; Pg. 17

LENGTH: 289 words

HEADLINE: Too Good To Be True

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BODY:

IT SOUNDS LIKE THE ULTIMATE in cutting-edge legal technology: virtual judges meting out perfect justice in cyberspace. The NYULAW Artificial Intelligence Research Group has begun the "Solomon Project" with the goal of replacing judges and juries with computers, according to a letter sent by the group's leader, Joseph Bonuso, Ph.D., to The American Lawyer and deans of several law schools in New York City. Solomon, the letter claims, is an interactive library of all statutory, regulatory, and case law, as well as ethics and equity principles, with "unique capabilities to scan trial transcripts and detect

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obvious miscarriages of justice."

If this project sounds too wacky to be undertaken by New York University School of Law, that's because it is. The project "has no connection with the law school whatsoever," says NYU's vice-dean Oscar Chase, who learned of the ambitious project when colleagues at other law schools called with their own doubts about the legitimacy of Solomon. On November 13 NYU sent a cease and desist letter to Bonuso notifying him that his group's use of "NYULAW" violated trademark and other federal and state laws.

Bonuso, who signs his letter "research fellow and founding director," is not registered as an NYU student, according to Chase, and he did not return four calls to his office answering machine. On December 12 Bonuso wrote to NYULAW and assured the university that the group had no desire to be associated with NYU; had reprinted its letterhead; and will refrain from using any reference to NYULAW in the future.

NYU may have intervened just in time. Bonuso's original letter had promised to use Solomon "to retry the O. J. Simpson case now that the trial is over."

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH