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## Introduction Symposium: Current Issues in Electronic Data Interchange

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# **SYMPOSIUM CURRENT ISSUES IN ELECTRONIC DATA INTERCHANGE**

## **Introduction**

The NORTHWESTERN JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL LAW & BUSINESS is very proud to devote its Spring/Summer 1992 Symposium issue to the topic of electronic data interchange and its use in international business.

As the authors in this symposium point out, recent years have witnessed tremendous growth in international business transactions. Electronic data interchange (EDI), which is the computer to computer transmission of information in structured message formats, facilitates this expansion by increasing both the speed and efficiency of international business transactions. In addition, by alternating the traditional paper-based means of business transactions, EDI is also impacting the structure and nature of commercial relationships. The use of electronic data interchange necessarily involves numerous legal issues. This symposium is dedicated to exploring EDI in general and the legal issues and barriers it confronts.

This symposium issue is comprised of articles by leading practitioners and academicians in the field of electronic commerce and will be of interest to businesses and government agencies and organizations involved in international electronic commerce and their attorneys.

“Defining International Electronic Commerce” by Jeffrey B. Ritter is the symposium’s inaugural article and provides the context for the symposium’s discussion of legal issues involving electronic data interchange. Mr. Ritter’s piece analyzes electronic data interchange by

looking at the various components of and participants in this form of business communication, and EDI's current uses and potential applications.

Professor Amelia H. Boss of Temple University School of Law examines the role and function of "interchange agreements" in advancing and facilitating global electronic commerce in her article entitled, "Electronic Data Interchange Agreements: Private Contracting Toward a Global Environment."

"Telecommunications Regulatory Implications for International EDI Transactions" by Aileen A. Pisciotta and James H. Barker analyzes the impact of telecommunications regulations on EDI. The article identifies regulations in both the United States and in international markets which affect electronic data interchange.

The harmonization of international trade laws and its relation to EDI is the focus of two symposium articles. Judith Y. Gliniecki and Ceda G. Ogada survey current international law to isolate potential strategies for the further harmonization of international trade rules for electronic commerce in their article, "The Legal Acceptance of Electronic Documents, Writings, Signatures, and Notices in International Transportation Conventions: A Challenge in the Age of Global Electronic Commerce." Professor George B. Trubow of The John Marshall Law School concludes the symposium by focusing on the potentially negative impacts for US business interests of the European Community's move to harmonize data protection laws in "The European Harmonization of Data Protection Laws Threatens U.S. Participation in Trans Border Data Flow."

Since the articles for this symposium were submitted, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) has decided to begin work on developing possible rules relating to the use of EDI in international trade. Thus, the relevancy of the topic of this symposium has increased. The JOURNAL is confident that this issue will be a valuable resource for its readers and extends its sincere thanks to the symposium's contributors for their scholarship and willingness to share their expertise in this rapidly developing area of international law.

THE EDITORS