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## Computers in Law and Society: Preface

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# WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY LAW QUARTERLY

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SUMMER

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## SYMPOSIUM: COMPUTERS IN LAW AND SOCIETY

*Evolving technology creates crises for human society. The emergence of the computer in the last twenty years has drastically changed the manner in which people relate to each other socially, politically, and economically. Reactions to and perceptions of the effects of such change vary widely. This symposium considers the transforming effect of computers on the legal profession and explores the profession's various attempts to accommodate this change within prevailing legal principles.*

*The purpose of this symposium is to provide the reader with a broad overview of the problems and potentialities created by the computer. To accomplish this goal, the symposium is presented in four parts. Part I, *Computers and Society*, anticipates the role computers may play in the era of information which the world is now entering. If we become informed about computers and exercise control over their development, they will be a liberating force providing us with the capacity to control and direct social change in this new age. Part II, *Computers and the Law*, focuses on specific problems created by the computer and considers whether traditional legal principles are sufficiently flexible to accommodate the new technology. The authors in this section urge lawyers to become acquainted with computers; only then can they recognize when a new law is necessary to resolve a unique computer problem and when analogy to traditional legal concepts will suffice. Part III, *Governmental Regulation of the Computer Industry*, considers the competing interests of business, government, and the consumer as well as the dichotomy between state and federal regulation as they pertain to two industries: computer commu-*