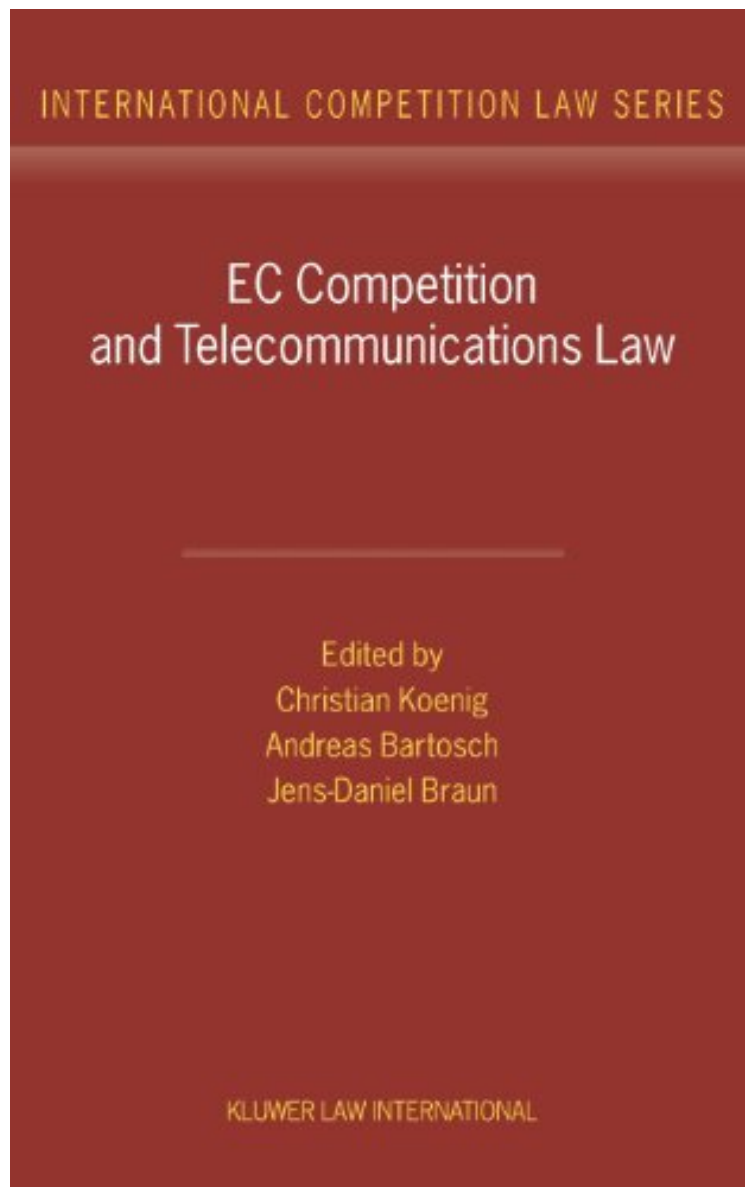


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Luuk Matthijssen

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As information is both the source and the product of all legal work, legal practitioners are crucially dependent on good access to legal information. The legal databases that are currently available to store and retrieve statutes, judicial decisions, and legal literature, however, often pose problems to the users with the effect that they cannot find the information they need. To a large extent, these problems can be attributed to the limitations of the traditional Boolean query mechanism used in text databases which is difficult for users to operate. As a possible solution for these problems, in this book an architecture is proposed for an intelligent interface to legal databases. An intelligent interface uses knowledge of the task domain of legal practitioners to operate as an intelligent intermediary between the user and the database. *Interfacing between Lawyers and Computers* addresses the most pressing issues that need to be resolved to allow for the development of advanced user-friendly legal databases. It involves a study into the nature of legal information-handling and the representation of legal knowledge. In addition to the theoretical study, it is demonstrated, with the development of a prototype, how the architecture can be used for the development of practical legal information retrieval systems. The results of these studies are interpreted to discuss a number of possible applications for the intelligent interface architecture, including the publication of government information and the organisation of legal information on the Internet.