

Transcript of Nicholas Hopkins' video podcast

What can readers expect to find on the Online Resource Centre (ORC)?

From the start, we were very keen to use the ORC to provide "added value" for the readers. We've written a big book and a comprehensive one, so students needn't worry that they're going to go to the ORC and find a lot of additional material there that they need to know as well. But what they will find is some information to help them take their studies of land law further and to assess how well they have understood the topics covered in each chapter.

How does the ORC enable students to test their understanding?

In a number of different ways. At the end of each chapter in the book, we provide students with a list of questions which they can use to help them assess how well they've understood the material in each chapter. If they go to the ORC, they will find hints and tips on how to answer those questions. So for example, we suggest things that they ought to be thinking about when they approach the questions and we'll refer them to parts of the chapters in the book that we think they will find particularly useful. They'll also find some discussion of materials relevant to the questions. The questions at the end of each chapter are very much of an essay style, so in addition on the ORC, we've included some other questions and answers that students' lecturers will be able to allow their students to access. These take the format of a 'quiz' - multiple choice and other similar types of questions designed to test students' understanding. The big advantage of these is that we can provide students with some immediate feedback on how they've responded to the questions and in turn how well they've understood the materials. When a student answers a question, they're not only seeing whether they've got the answer right, but more importantly, they're seeing why that answer is right or wrong.

How does the ORC help students to further their knowledge of land law?

Beyond the questions, we've compiled a list of websites that students will find particularly useful for their studies in Land law. Some of these are sites the students will already be familiar with, so we have links to the most popular, public, commercial databases and through those databases, students will be able to access the full text of many of the materials that we've extracted in the book. There are also links to websites that are particularly relevant to land law. For example, we have a link to the Land Registry's official site, which students can look at for some up-to-date information on registration of title and in particular on the progress of electronic conveyancing. I think the big advantage for the student is that all of these links are in one place, so when they're visiting the ORC, they won't have to leave the place to find a link somewhere. Instead, it's all there for them.

What about updates and further information?

One of the great advantages of the ORC is that we can update the materials. Our book is static, but as all law students learn very quickly, the law isn't; the law is changing all the time. So even as we went to press, there was a very important case on estoppel being heard in the House of Lords and a Cohabitation Bill has been introduced to Parliament, which aims to implement some law commission recommendations that we discuss in the book. The benefit of the ORC is that we can alert students to these important developments without students having to wait for the new edition of the book.

In the book, the part on co-ownership focuses on the shared home. Why did you choose that approach?

Really for two reasons: understanding how co-ownership works is a very important part of understanding land law; that's because so much land, particularly our homes, is actually co-owned. But the idea of co-ownership is quite typical of the reasons that students sometimes find land law quite difficult. We all have an idea of what it means to own or co-own or to share something. So we're told from an early age, that we have to share our toys and share our sweets. But to understand how land law deals with the notion of co-owning or sharing, we have to understand about legal estates, equitable interests and trusts because a trust is a vehicle we use to facilitate co-ownership. We've covered those topics in some of the earlier chapters. To bring this altogether in the focus of the home enables us to present the material in a context which is practically very significant, but also one that we hope students will be able to relate to. Secondly, there's now a growing body of literature case law in which judges and commentators have started to think about what the home is and whether land that has been used as a home should be treated differently from other land, so land that's been used for investment or commercial purposes and the idea that the home is somehow different provides an essential theme of a recent House of Lords decision (Stack and Dowden) concerning ownership of the home. In developing a focus on the home, we're able to look at this very modern and developing way of thinking.

Does the text, cases, and materials format particularly help this approach?

Yes it does. One of the things the text, cases and materials format enables us to do is to present students with different perspectives on the subjects. It enables us to look at topics in a way students won't find in other textbooks, but which we feel is actually very helpful to their understanding and what we can try and do is to encourage students to see that land law isn't just about the very technical body of rules. For example, when we look at the Home, we're able to present to the student some of the feminist legal literature that's been particularly influential in that area which they can look at alongside some of the classical doctrinal work