
BUSINESS AS A NOBLE VOCATION AWARD

EDITION 2019





REGIONAL WINNER - EUROPE

ANTON TOMAŽIČ

LITOSTROJ LJUBLJANA, IUS SOFTWARE D.O.O.

Mr. Tomažič, the pioneer of legal information, established IUS-INFO, Legal and Business Information System, in 1989, as the first commercial on-line database in (what was then) Yugoslavia. After adapting to the internet version in 1997, IUS-INFO was a commercial success and is still until present the leading standard of legal information for Slovenia, now run by the international company LEXPERA with over 100 employees.

Anton Tomažič was also very involved in political turnover from communism to free society, first in dissident movement in Yugoslavia and then in the “Slovenian spring” which did not only end the dictatorship, but also succeeded in making Slovenia independent and for the first time in history a complete state of its own.

In his book “Second Place of Birth” he described his own story when he had an accident in 2001 on the Caribbean island of Nevis and had to spend 8 days in the jungle without water and food. One of the readers’ feedback: “I read your amazing story! God sure did take care of you and protect you during that ordeal. In your story you spoke about God and how thankful you were to him for saving your life. I can't help believing that God spared your life for a reason...”



Mr. Laurent Bataille,
president of UNIAPAC
Europe, represented Mr.
Anton Tomažič during the
ceremony



Legal information Pioneer in Yugoslavia

Anton Tomažič was born on the 13th of June 1950 in Yugoslavia, which was back then ruled by communists, officially called the dictatorship of the proletariat, although on the west it was supposed to be softer “society of the socialist self-management”. He had a successful professional career as a lawyer but could only get as far as the post of legal counsellor to the director general of a well-known Slovenian engineering firm called Litostroj. Further success would only have been possible if he had become a member of the communist party – something he never wanted to do.

After his graduation he tried to find a firm where he could work with computers. He got familiar with projects that dealt with legal information systems and soon found out that none of those systems had even the slightest chance of succeeding because they were all planned and managed administratively. His passion for computers had to wait until the late 1980s, when communism began to collapse as a result of its economic inefficiency and private initiative was allowed. During this time, he was a pioneer in the field of the usage of computers in law.

As a volunteer he was training lawyers in computer communication and showing them the advantages of electronic legal information. He organised many seminars and training sessions covering the area of “The Lawyer and the Computer”. He was the founder of the Computer Section of the Business Lawyers Association of Ljubljana, in the year of 1986 and the leader of the Section until 1997, also organizing each year the popular “Computer Workshop” during the main events for the Slovenian legal community in Portorož.

Politician for independent Slovenia

Freedom came to Slovenia in 1990 when the opposition political coalition known as DEMOS won the first democratic election. Anton Tomažič was very involved in political turnover from communism to free society, first in dissident movement in Yugoslavia and then in the “Slovenian spring” which did not only end the dictatorship, but also succeeded in making Slovenia independent and for the first time in history a complete state of its own. He was elected in the (first free) Parliament and got a very important leading role as The President of the Legislation Commission. He was also the vice president of the first free democratic party of National Democrats. Later he published a 500-page book of his memoirs “Embraced by the Slovenian Spring” describing the “golden years” 1988-1992.

Knowledge distribution

Another Tomažič’s business initiative, a little less resource demanding, however is a success story: In 2003 he attracted a group of Slovenian businessmen (and women) to found the company INform, Knowledge Distribution, Ltd, that is still in business today: “Complex legal documents can now be created online, using special smart templates (procedures, questionnaires, instructions, comments, links, legal background etc.). A special web portal for knowledge distribution is the place where authors and users meet in a friendly environment, using all the necessary tools just with their browser. In the future much more elements of AI will be added to the ‘smart forms’ thus upgrading them to the ‘intelligent forms.’”

From SME to international Business

When both his goals were met – Slovenian freedom and independence – Mr. Tomažič turned back to his core business – legal information providers - and to his company IUS SOFTWARE, d.o.o. Ljubljana, Legal and Business Information, where he was Head of Development until July 2003. The company has been expanding ever since and has also attracted foreign investment and has now over 100 employees. International fund Royalton Capital Investors II L.P acquired shares of IUS SOFTWARE from Anton Tomazic, who reduced his shareholding to 10%. As part of the transaction, Royalton funded a capital increase to give the group sufficient capital to make acquisitions in other selected markets, so far in Turkey nad Croatia under the name of LEXPERA. During the first phase of the company Mr. Tomažič conducted the company with the principles of a family business, providing the best conditions possible for the employees and motivating them with intense team-building (such as taking the whole team to different European capitals for a few days, like Paris, London, Amsterdam). Later when the company was growing beyond small, he was motivating the most creative people by giving them considerable shares of the company. This way he was increasing the levels of trust and by working as equal individuals with distinct functions in the company, yet all responsible and proud of their common endeavor.

AI-in-Law

His initiative was received with great interest in the international community and Mr. Tomažič, together with a group of businessmen (from Holland, Italy, Hungry) established the new company in the United states: AI-in-Law Future Technologies LLC. The beginning was very promising and in 2008 when Slovenia was presiding the EU, the idea and the company were presented on the international conference "e-Justice & e-Law 2008" in Portorož. Mr. Tomažič had a lecture titled "E-Justice Based on E-law" in front of most of European justice ministers: "Law, where in principle everything is determined with legal rules and regulations, ranks among the fields of human activity that are most appropriate for introduction of artificial intelligence (AI). Accordingly, it is high time to use new technological achievements in order to make legal texts recognizable to computers - because their individual parts involve MEANING - and upgraded with useful meta data. Such AI modules as applied in law will constitute the bases for subsequent modernisations and informatisation (increased efficiency!) of judicial and administrative systems. It will in turn lead to better quality of all types of legal texts." Unfortunately the general economic crisis began in 2008 and many investors that had already promised to support the (very demanding) project had to drop off. Mr Tomažič who had spent considerable amount of his own money, had to admit that this was at least 10 years too early...

The Second Place of Birth: Nevis Island

Mr. Tomažič's beliefs in ethical principles and moral values profoundly influenced his decisions and actions in every area. In his free time, he is committed photographer, cyclist and after his retirement (2009) also a world traveller. Anton Tomažič has always been very much involved in social networks. He was hosting mail lists for Slovenian lawyers PRAVNIKI since 1989. He is also very active in both legal and political discussions via internet, by his blogs, columns, articles, bike and photo communities etc. Recently he proposed initiative for the national reconciliation in Slovenia, which is very needed because of the ideological split of the nation: <http://svni.blog.siol.net/>

He has also published a few books, the best seller still available on Amazon in English: "Second Place of Birth: Nevis". In this book he described his own story when he had an accident in 2001 on the Caribbean island of Nevis and had to spend 8 days in the jungle without water and food. At that occasion he indeed realised that the good God helped him to save himself for a reason and decided to spend the rest of his life with gratitude and commitment to spread around the glory for God and also contributing a large amount of his wealth for charity.

Gadgets for cyclists and blind

In 2009 Anton Tomazic has also embarked on a new, consumer-based product, innovative and made possible by the latest achievements of modern technology. Miniaturized components have been developed in recent years that finally allow high resolution video definition and identification of objects via sufficient processors and memory capacity that can be accommodated in small "gadget" devices. The idea AlertX originally took shape over the course of several bicycle tours along a treacherous route that offered quite literally no opportunity or room to look back over one's shoulder to become aware of traffic coming from behind. An attentive sense of hearing and a steadfast concentration on the narrow wheel path ahead offers the only margin for protection in continuing safe passage (ie, cycling!) through the winding, uneven terrain and the road's competing commuter and traveller traffic. For youths wearing headphones, such a margin had clearly been even further reduced. Following these simple main ideas, working them out and later documenting them, the conception for a device was realized, upon which no previous product has been based, nor for a patent registered. This product was conceived as "A Multi-View Monitoring and Alerting Device". In specific context, it attaches to a pair of glasses, or is fitted onto a safety helmet; a miniature camera connected to a miniature screen (display), feeds the user a picture (video) of what's happening behind his back, offering security and fortifying forward control, momentum and vision. The embedded processor promptly handles a video signal so as to identify each object (in particular, of course, other persons or vehicles) approaching. The recognized objects are framed by a yellow highlight, which turns to a special flashing red light that warns of a potential danger. For those listening to an audio device such as an mp3 player, a sound or spoken warning will also provide an alert (eg, "Watch the car! in the wearer's preferred language). The warning signal would also be wirelessly transmitted to the rear wheel back lights, flashing an alert for the upcoming vehicle. Patent for the Monitoring and Alerting Device AlertX was filed in November 2009. Mr. Tomažič soon realised that with similar technology another problem could be solved: How to help blind persons to orient better to, and/or navigate through their environments; to read text, and recognize people, objects, and environmental circumstances or conditions. He found the following solution: The BlinX device converts video signal from the prospective viewpoint of the blind user, into a corresponding voice recognition or translation of persons, objects and even text, transmitting it to the user via ear phone. Patent for the Surroundings Recognition & Describing Device for Blind People BlinX was filed in April 2010.