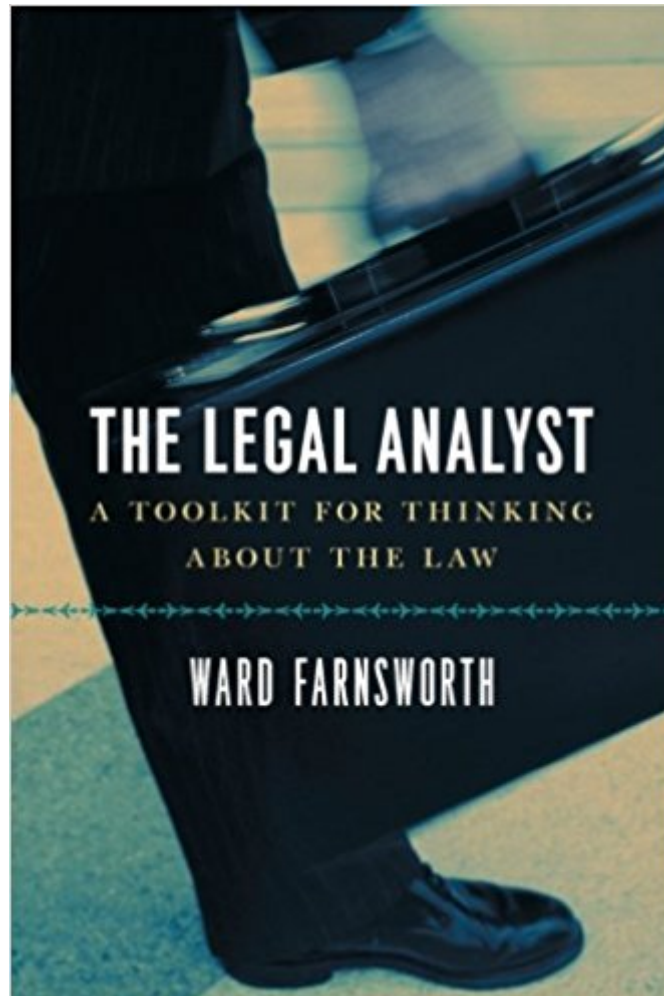




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The Legal Analyst: A Toolkit For Thinking About The Law



Synopsis

There are two kinds of knowledge law school teaches: legal rules on the one hand, and tools for thinking about legal problems on the other. Although the tools are far more interesting and useful than the rules, they tend to be neglected in favor of other aspects of the curriculum. In *The Legal Analyst*, Ward Farnsworth brings together in one place all of the most powerful of those tools for thinking about law. From classic ideas in game theory such as the "Prisoner's Dilemma" and the "Stag Hunt" to psychological principles such as hindsight bias and framing effects, from ideas in jurisprudence such as the slippery slope to more than two dozen other such principles, Farnsworth's guide leads readers through the fascinating world of legal thought. Each chapter introduces a single tool and shows how it can be used to solve different types of problems. The explanations are written in clear, lively language and illustrated with a wide range of examples. *The Legal Analyst* is an indispensable user's manual for law students, experienced practitioners seeking a one-stop guide to legal principles, or anyone else with an interest in the law.

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Customer Reviews

The author says he intends his book to be of interest to "law students, lawyers, scholars, and anyone else with an interest in the legal system". The pity is that most people are unaware of the impact of the legal system and its impact on their daily lives. A book like "The Legal Analyst", unfortunately, is not for the average citizen. It took me months of nibbling, reading a bit at a time, to get through these fascinating, but densely written book. "The Legal Analyst" is excellent: informative, learned and challenging, all at the same time. The alternative title considered was "Thinking Like a Law Professor" and that might have been more appropriate. The value of the book

is that instead of discussing rules as so many law texts do, Professor Farnsworth introduces us here - quite effectively - to tools for thinking about the law. I am not a lawyer, but lawyers are my clientele and I play a role in litigation as an expert witness and consultant. I am also an American who is very concerned about the direction of the nation and the fate of its Constitution, the very document that makes us a nation of laws. Professor Farnsworth is a gentle guide. He avoids footnotes. He doesn't use dry academic language. He is, matter of fact, pretty straightforward. But the subject matter itself, while always challenging, is sometimes dry. There are thirty chapters on the tools of legal thought, prefaced by a introduction that poses an interesting challenge. If a robber enters a bank, takes customer hostage and threatens to kill a hostage if he doesn't get \$5,000, should the bank be held liable when the robber gets no money and kills the hostage? (I'm not going to tell.) On the whole, only the truly committed will make it through this book.

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