

||| PREFACE

This book is intended to convey the basic ideas of what has come to be known as economic analysis of law. The subject areas of concern are central ones for any legal system, namely, the laws governing property, accidents, contracts, and crime, together with the litigation process. As will become evident to the reader, "economic" analysis of law is not restricted to conventionally understood economic factors but also includes all manner of non-economic ones (such as altruistic motivations). Economic analysis of law is, however, characterized by the general social scientific point of view of the discipline of economics, under which actors are regarded as forward looking and rational, and the notions of the social good employed in evaluating policy are explicitly articulated.

Because my object is to present the principles of economic analysis of law in a way that is accessible both to individuals interested in law who do not have a background in the methods of economics and to the community of economists, I have avoided formal economic analysis (except in footnotes) as well as detailed discussion of legal doctrine.

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