
ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS IN MARITIME TRADE

Law and Practice

MIRIAM GOLDBY



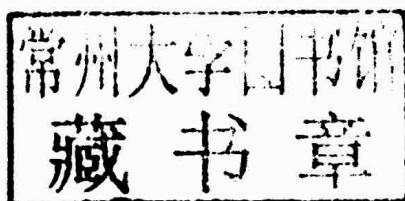
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MIRIAM GOLDBY

*Lecturer in Law, Centre for Commercial Law Studies,
Queen Mary, University of London*



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PREFACE

The term ‘electronic commerce law’ covers a multitude of types of transaction concluded through electronic means, including domestic and cross-border transactions, transactions between businesses, and transactions between business and consumer, the sale of goods and the provision of services and so forth. While much has been written about legal aspects of the use of the electronic medium in the conduct of business, this publication focuses specifically on cross-border business-to-business contracts for the sale of goods carried by sea. This type of transaction is typically highly complex and the performance of the contractual obligations under it usually involves a large number of intermediaries. This complexity means that unique problems will arise when attempting to conclude the transaction using the electronic medium. The peculiar features of such transactions merit examination in a book that focuses specifically on international business-to-business transactions in goods that are to be or are in the process of being carried by sea.

This is what I have attempted to achieve in this book. I have not taken a theoretical approach. Rather I have researched industry practice and sought to establish how the practice would be understood from a legal perspective. I hope that my work will be of use to a wide range of people involved in or in the study of international trade, including legal practitioners, law makers, and academic researchers. The research that ultimately led to the writing of this book developed from my PhD thesis, *The Electronic Replication of the Bill of Lading’s Functions: Past Failures, Current Trends, Future Developments* (University College London 2009). Thus I owe a debt of gratitude to many people who provided assistance in researching that thesis.

First among them is my primary supervisor, Professor Michael Bridge, who provided insight into the workings of international trade and feedback on my written work. Essential feedback was also provided by my secondary supervisor, Professor Philip Rawlings, and by my mentor at the University of Surrey, Professor Indira Carr. I also thank my examiners, Professors Chris Reed and Charles Debattista, for a fruitful discussion.

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I would also like to thank the UCL Graduate School and the Law Department for funding my trip to attend UNCITRAL's thirty-ninth session in New York in June 2006.

Substantial additional research was required to write this book. Indeed, developments in this field are happening so fast that it was, at times, hard to keep up with them. I received invaluable assistance and information from a number of people—in particular, practitioners from the legal, trade, insurance, and financial sectors. I would particularly like to thank the following:

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All errors and omissions are exclusively my own. Developments subsequent to 31 March 2013 are not discussed, as this was the final date for additions and updates. Since then a new edition of *Arnould's Law of Marine Insurance and Average* has been published (18th edition, April 2013), and one of the companies I discuss, TradeCard, has merged with GT Nexus (news announced 25th April 2013), and changed its name accordingly. Information regarding it can now be found at <<http://www.gtnexus.com/> [accessed 29 April 2013]>.

While every effort was made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this book, specific legal advice should always be sought on the application of the law in any particular situation.

I am grateful to Rachel Mullaly, Lucinda Yeates, Faye Judges, David Lewis, and Vanessa Plaister at Oxford University Press for their understanding, patience, and assistance.

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Miriam Goldby
April 2013

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