

LLSDC Legislative-SIS – 9/17/15 Roundtable Discussion

About twenty colleagues attended a lunchtime discussion about various aspects of legislative tracking -- first during around-the-table introductions, and then during open discussion. This is a top-line summary of things mentioned, plus a quick tally of which products shops are using:

Product Tally: CQ (12), Congress.gov (8), BGov (2), GovTrack (2), Politico Pro (2)

Additional Comments:

- Other tracking tools mentioned: Westlaw for some state tracking, Congressional Record alerts, state tracking in Lexis Advance, Sunlight Foundation's Scout product works well
- Concern raised with tracking products overall is the issues involved with bundling products and growing costs involved
- Some shops are increasingly using BGov, decreasingly using CQ; but others have cancelled BGov; those who like it have found legislative alerts turn-around time to be much faster than with CQ; there is also a lot of other value added content in BGov., plus access to BNA materials and regulatory tracking capabilities
- Several shared that CQ Hot Docs is "not so hot" and not like old Gallery Watch service
- Question about bill alerts when there is no text available – it is a GPO issue with timing; some suggestions of other places to find the bill text: sponsor's website, CQ hot docs, Congressional Record
- One shop recent evaluation of several state tracking tools included CQ State Track, Lexis StateNet and Fiscal Note's Prophecy; Fiscal Note is very new and still developing product but has some appealing attributes – all data available in sleek search format with lots of analytics, but caution raised that Fiscal Note is a tech/IT business with no legislative expertise; CQ State Track has nice reporting options/templates
- CQ bought Federal News Service; all FNS transcripts now say "CQ transcripts" on them
- C-SPAN's video library has transcripts of hearings – closed captioned so not best quality but they can work
- Question was asked about what types of reporting is done – most is ad hoc, some libraries do daily or weekly reporting but it depends on the client/requestor; news aggregators used as well