

Law Library Life: From Filing to Fellowship

Dawn Bohls, Library Manager, Ropes & Gray LLP

Over the past five years, I've been working my way up the law library food chain. I started out as a Library Assistant at what was then Collier Shannon Scott, moved on to become a Research Librarian at Covington & Burling, and am now the Library Manager in the D.C. office of Ropes & Gray. Each position has had its pros and cons, but overall, law librarianship has been an incredibly rewarding and intellectually stimulating profession.

Although I'd worked in the Cataloging Department at Catholic's Mullen Library while I was in library school, for the first couple years after I earned my MSLS from Catholic University, I actually did not even work as a librarian. In my first post-library-degree job, I worked as a self-styled Resource Coordinator at Arthur Andersen. After Andersen (Enron's ill-fated accounting firm) failed, I ended up in a dead-end job at another accounting firm and started thinking to myself that maybe I could actually use that library degree after all. I liked the pace and energy of the top-tier professional services world and thought a law firm library might be a good fit. Not having any law library experience, and not even having had any law library coursework, I decided that it would be a good idea to start at the bottom, as a Library Assistant.

Applying for Library Assistant positions was a little tricky since I already had an MSLS, but Mindy Maddrey, the brand-new Library Director at Collier Shannon Scott, understood my situation perfectly and the firm made me an

offer the same day I interviewed. Despite taking a \$20,000 pay cut, I never regretted the career move. Collier Shannon was a great firm to work for. Mindy was a wonderful mentor, always helping me to understand the "big picture" of how my work fit in with hers and sharing the rewards and frustrations of managing the library, but always with consummate professionalism.

The office space was probably the biggest perk to working at Collier Shannon. Right on the Potomac River, in Georgetown's Washington Harbour complex, the buildings had been constructed to maximize the beautiful views. All the attorneys had window offices, and the library itself was surrounded by windows. I didn't have a window office myself, but from my workroom I could see out Mindy's windows. Admittedly, her view was of the Whitehurst Freeway, but I become ever more envious of that space as my successive libraries have recessed further and further from any source of natural light.

As a Library Assistant, I was really able to learn about law librarianship from the ground up. I filed loose-leaf treatises and learned what the standard titles were in various fields of law, how they were organized, and whether the attorneys actually used them. I opened all the mail, checked in serials, and date-stamped bills. I learned the importance of carefully ordering the recipient routing lists so as not to have the "hoarders" too near the top. I was educated on the high and always drastically increasing cost

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Many Thanks

Shannon O'Connell, Research/Interlibrary Loan Librarian, Williams & Connolly, LLP

The articles in this issue offer a variety of perspectives on law librarianship and the different paths someone in our profession can follow. Some of the authors have found fulfillment on the job; others are still grasping for it. No two paths are exactly the same, although they may take similar turns. What all the authors have in common is their passion for law librarianship. And that's something we can all relate to.

With this issue, an episode in my own professional life cycle closes: my tenure as *Lights* editor ends. It's been educational, challenging and a pleasure. I'm leaving *Lights* in the very capable hands of my assistant editor, Matt Braun. Matt's done an amazing job this past year, coordinating our regular columns. Always professional, always reliable, Matt's been my right hand and I'm extremely grateful for all his help. I know *Lights* will only improve under his leadership.

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Law Library **Lights**

Deadline for Submissions

If you would like to write for *Lights*, please contact **Shannon O'Connell** at **soconnell@wc.com**. For information regarding submission deadlines and issue themes, visit the LLSDC Web site at **www.llsdc.org**.

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I'd also like to thank this year's *Lights* columnists: Susan Chinoransky, Abigail Ross, Karen Silber, Roger Skalbeck and Amy Taylor. They say you can rely on death and taxes; I'd add a third item to the list: *Lights* columnists. I've been able to rely on all of you not just to respond to deadlines but to produce high-quality, engaging articles. A sincere "thank you" to each of you. Amy & Karen, *Lights* will miss you!

Thank you also to everyone who contributed feature articles this year. As I've said before,

Lights can't exist without the contributions of volunteers. Each of our authors devoted their time and skill to share of themselves, their knowledge, and their experience with the LLSDC community. Thank you!

And thanks to you, dear readers. I hope you've enjoyed this year's issues and that you'll come back for more in the fall.

Although I'm leaving the helm, I'm not giving up the ship; starting with this issue, I'll be serving as the Member News columnist. So if you've got something to share, let me know.

Have a great summer! **LLL**

Law Library Life *continued from page 1*

of legal materials. I learned to use a box cutter with precision so as not to slash invoices in half or damage book covers. Since I was a former cataloger, I did all the cataloging and quickly learned that all the MARC fields really do not need to be filled out when you're not an OCLC contributor and just want your attorneys to be able to figure out where to find Chisum on Patents.

As time went on, I took on a few research responsibilities and started to learn a bit about the major electronic resources: Lexis, Westlaw, Courtlink, PACER, and even some DIALOG for trademark searching. I was promoted to Librarian status and enjoyed the very collegial atmosphere at the firm, not to mention the chance to squeeze in a quick lunchtime yoga class a few times a week at the studio just half a block away.

But after a few years, it was time to move on. Too much of my job was devoted to mundane, repetitive tasks and I was having a hard time keeping myself motivated. As always, Mindy was very supportive, although she had hoped that it would take a bit longer for me to find another job so that I could help her through the upcoming remodeling of the library (which, of course, meant downsizing and a period during which the majority of the remaining treatises were put into storage).

In my second law library job, I was lucky enough to become a "Covington Librarian." Covington & Burling is an old, established Washington-based firm with a long tradition of legendary librarians. Although budget cuts and downsizing have affected even Covington's once-magnificent library, the collection is still

an enviable one and I had access to wider array of specialized electronic databases. I spent most of my time at the busy Reference Desk, greeting passers-by and taking research requests in person, by phone, and by e-mail. An incredible degree of focus is needed to complete complex research requests while dealing with constant interruptions and squeezing in quick ready reference questions. My multitasking skills were honed to the nth degree during my time at Covington! For more about life as a Covington Research Librarian, see the article Elizabeth LeDoux and I wrote for the Winter 2007 issue of *Law Library Lights* (http://llsdc.net/lights/pdf/50_2.pdf).

The danger of being a Covington Research Librarian is that the strain of being constantly "on" can eventually cause one to burn out. I loved the job and I loved being good at it, but by Friday afternoon every week I was completely wiped out. So what next? How about managing my own library? Just a small one—maybe a branch office library? Somehow I managed to convince the good people at Ropes & Gray that I should be their next D.C. Library Manager.

At first I thought being in an office all day would be boring after spending so much time on the very public reference desk at Covington. My fears were unfounded. It's actually very nice having a little privacy, even if the nearest window is a good 100 feet away and to see a teensy corner of it I have to go out of my office and turn to the left. (I bought a garden calendar this year so that I can look at it and at least pretend to have a little link with the world outside.) And I'm never bored! There's always something to do. I still have plenty of research
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An incredible degree of focus is needed to complete complex research requests while dealing with constant interruptions and squeezing in quick ready reference skills. My multitasking skills were honed to the nth degree during my time at Covington!

Hello, Summer!

Abigail Ross, Library Manager, Keller and Heckman LLP

Thank you to the entire LLSDC membership for making my year as president fun and exciting. It has been an honor to serve. I hope that my decisions have helped move our organization forward. It is now time for the next step in my life cycle: past-president. I will be helping the new president, Frances Brillantine, with her goals and projects in the coming year and working with various committees to help streamline their processes.

From my current vantage point—as administrator, manager, teacher, soon-to-be-past LLSDC president—let me tell those coming up in the ranks that it only gets better. We belong to one of the most interesting professions in the world (no bias!) and wherever you are now in the process should be fun and interesting. The networks you build through organizations like ours will help you every step of the way in your career—I know they have helped me in my professional journey. The articles in this current issue of Lights will give you a snapshot of the steps others have taken, offering you some insight on the many different paths a law librarian may travel. I hope you are where you want to be in *your* lifecycle—and, if not, be sure to take advantage of the knowledge of your fellow members in order to get there.

A special thanks to:

- The 2007-08 Board members and officers for their hard work and dedication.
- Everyone who helped to make the LLSDC/SEAALL Joint Conference a success: Billie Jo Kaufman, Rhea Ballard-Thrower and Mike Petit of the planning committee; Matt Braun, Ari Grebstein, and Robert Bratton of the hospitality committee; and all of the volunteers and attendees.
- Carolyn McKelvey Dean and Iris Lee of the Education Committee—for organizing such a wonderful Peterson Lecture guest in Jeffrey Rosen, and for working so hard on putting our annual Legal Research Institute together.
- All the committee and SIS chairs and volunteers—all of our members appreciate your time and effort in putting together monthly programs and keeping our organization humming along.

Things to look forward to:

- Frances Brillantine will be the LLSDC president for the 2008-09 administrative year—and I know that I leave you in good hands.
- Membership renewal will be starting shortly—be sure to renew your LLSDC membership and log-on to our **Members Only** section on the website for access to the directory and to other important information.

Have a wonderful summer!



Abigail Ross

Law Library Life *continued from page 3*

responsibilities, plus I have summer associates and fall associates to plan for; National Library Week events to organize; budgets to come up with, then cut, cut again, and then track; (lots of) bills to pay; vendors to deal with; trainings to organize; meetings to attend; and articles to write for *Lights!*

In all three of the law libraries I've worked in, I've been privileged to work with dedicated people who've taught me, inspired me, and whom I've been honored to have as my colleagues. The library staff of Ropes & Gray has been no exception. Lisa Hermes, the D.C. Research Librarian, is a terrific researcher who really knows her stuff and, in large part, taught me how to do my job when I started! And Ren Hayes, the Library Assistant we hired just a couple of months after I started, has turned a very serviceable, neat collection into a highly organized and attractive library

that our attorneys enjoy using. All of us work closely with the library staff in the other Ropes & Gray locations; it's an enjoyable team environment and we're able to rely on one another to create uniform policies, evaluate new tools and products, and share the research load.

I don't know where my career as a law librarian will eventually end up, but the past five years have been a wonderful journey. I have an interesting, challenging career, and I've accumulated an incredible amount of knowledge about legal materials and how to use them, and about the law firm world itself. A special benefit to being part of the law librarianship profession is the element of camaraderie. Thanks to LLSDC and my past law library jobs, I have access to the expertise and fellowship of a whole community of law librarians. I've come a long way from that dead-end job to a world with all kinds of opportunities for advancement and learning. **LLL**

EYE ON SERIALS

Susan Chinoransky, Head of Serials & Processing, The George Washington University, Jacob Burns Law Library

Title Changes

Columbia Journal of East European Law, 2007-
Semiannual, Columbia University School
of Law

Continues: *Journal of East European Law*

*Journal of Art, Technology & Intellectual Property
Law, 2007-*
Semiannual, DePaul University College
of Law

Continues: *Journal of Art & Entertainment Law*

Journal of Law, Information and Science, 2007-
Annual, Faculty of Law, University
of Tasmania

Continues: *Journal of Law and Information
Science*

*Journal of the National Association of Admini-
strative Law Judiciary, 2006-*
Semiannual, National Association of
Administrative Law Judiciary

Continues: *Journal of the National Association
of Administrative Law Judges*

Security and Human Rights, 2008-
Quarterly, Martinus Nijhoff
Continues: *Helsinki Monitor*

*University of Pennsylvania Journal of Business and
Employment Law, 2007-*
Quarterly, University of Pennsylvania
Law School

Continues: *University of Pennsylvania Journal of
Labor and Employment Law*

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Martindale-Hubbell Law Digest

Learning as I Go

Konrad Riecke, Reference Librarian, Latham & Watkins

It's appropriate that I began writing this article on Mother's Day, because it was my mother who first encouraged me to pursue a career in librarianship. I've spoken to many colleagues who have known since they were young that they wanted to be a librarian, but unfortunately I was never that decisive. I bumbled through college and a few years after without any clear idea of what I wanted to do. Throughout this time, my mother, a retired high school English teacher and library school veteran, encouraged me to look into the profession. I hesitated; after all, what better way to discourage a cocky young college graduate away from a career than to have his mother come up with the idea? In time, however, she turned out to be right (as usual).

As I struggled through a series of thankless administrative jobs at non-profits in D.C., I was lucky enough to work alongside librarians, albeit in very different roles. While I bemoaned my lack of direction, I noticed that the librarians actually seemed to enjoy their work, and even derive some satisfaction from it. I started talking to them and realized that it wasn't just an illusion—they truly liked their profession. I remembered my high school librarian, Ms. Treadwell, who had even appeared to enjoy her work in a woefully under-funded Oklahoma public school library. I have always had an academic bent, and I decided that libraries and research were a natural direction for me. And yes, although it's death to say it in a job interview, I did enjoy working with books (I still do, and I'm proud of it). In September 2004, I signed on to student loans and took the plunge into two years of library school at the University of Maryland.

When starting graduate school, I still had only a vague idea of the various paths a career in librarianship could take. I briefly entertained the idea of becoming an archivist before quickly deciding that it was not for me. Unsure of my focus, I decided to take a course in law librarianship in the summer of 2003 that I hoped would be interesting. It turned out to be my favorite course in graduate school, taught by someone who had actually worked in reference at a large D.C. law firm. After taking that class, and a few others in law and government information, I knew that when I finished my degree law was

where I wanted to be. Without any prior work experience in libraries, I was fortunate to find a job as a library assistant at Howrey. Two years later, I moved into my current position as a reference librarian at Latham & Watkins.

New to the Job

Even after two years watching the reference librarians at Howrey, I wasn't sure what to expect at Latham. I had a vague idea that I had a lot to learn, but I don't think I quite understood how little I knew until my first day at the reference desk. I was somewhat overwhelmed by the databases I hadn't used and the print resources I'd only studied but never had access to. Without a law library at Maryland's College Park campus, I'd been at somewhat of a disadvantage in my legal research studies, despite excellent instruction. Additionally, while library school had introduced me to the concept of the reference interview, classroom exercises hadn't prepared me for stressed paralegals facing a deadline, or partners calling from a trial recess to get a document that they need right now. And unlike my graduate school classes, there wasn't always an obvious answer, no matter how hard I looked.

My supervisors at Latham were kind enough not to leave me completely alone at the desk for my first few days on the job, and allowed me to shadow a colleague for the first week. After that, however, it was two unsupervised hours per day at the reference desk. Looking back, it seems as though the first few weeks on the job consisted primarily of taking detailed notes on reference questions and running to a colleague when I had no idea what to do, which was more often than I care to admit. I lived in fear of accidentally running up an exorbitant charge on Lexis or Westlaw, or of giving someone incorrect information, which would undoubtedly destroy their case and bring about the ruin of the firm (and my career).

Learning as I Go

In a relatively short time, I acquired a certain level of confidence with my job. Part of this confidence came from experience, of course, and from the realization that if I didn't know what

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I was doing, I could generally figure it out. If an attorney asked me for a securities filing that I'd never heard of, or used a new term of art in a reference question, I breathed a sigh of relief that I had entered the profession after the advent of the Internet and search engines. I also became good friends with Zimmerman's Research Guide. In time, I gained a stronger understanding of specialized research sources and knew where to start when I had no idea what I was looking for. Luckily, I had supportive and experienced colleagues to turn to when I ran into dead ends. It also helped that I started my job shortly before our first wave of 2006 summer associates arrived. After several weeks of summers and their research projects, I realized that I could actually do this.

Two years later, I still realize that there is much more to learn, but I have much more confidence in my research skills. It's true that there's no substitute for experience, however. I look at colleagues who have been in the profession for ten or twenty years and hope that some day I can be as knowledgeable as they are. Legal research is a huge and complicated field, and I've only begun to get comfortable with it. Fortunately, the questions I can't answer become more and more infrequent (I hope). One of my greatest challenges, one that I haven't fully resolved, is knowing when I can't find an answer. This is the downside of reference work: sometimes, the information simply doesn't exist. No librarian likes to tell a patron that they can't find what they need, but how do you know when you've done everything you can? It's a problem that I still struggle with.

What's in Store?

The future of our profession is discussed almost to distraction in law librarian journals. My prognostication skills aren't strong; I once predicted in an undergraduate paper that the Internet would never be a useful research tool. Still, I wouldn't have chosen this profession, and I wouldn't stay in it, if I didn't think that there was a continuing need for librarians. I'm learning new research skills all the time in response to reference requests, and I take that as a good indication that the field of research is still strong, whether I'm doing legal research for an attorney or business research for our business development department. Certainly, my role as a librarian within a law firm encompasses much more than I originally imagined. While I do a fair

share of pure legal research, I do as much, or perhaps more, business development and competitive intelligence research.

I believe that librarians will continue to play a role in the legal profession, most importantly because I firmly believe that nothing will take the place of a professional who truly knows a broad variety of research tools, both electronic and print. Like many people in our profession, I still remember doing all my research in print. People in my age group (I'm thirty-one) straddle the divide. Until I left college, I did almost all my research in these resources; however, by the time I reached graduate school, electronic resources were well established, and I never learned how to use many print legal materials. The idea of Sheperdizing from a book intimidates me, and I'm sometimes surprised to learn that the electronic resources I frequently use, such as Mergent, are actually the descendants of time-honored print materials. On the opposite side of the divide, many of our new associates avoid print materials or are uncomfortable using them. I make a conscious effort now to guide them to our treatise collection and explain the benefits of browsing an index. Until every law book in existence has been digitized and consumed by Lexis or Westlaw, new associates will still need librarians to point them toward these resources.

My career has been furthered by chance encounters with various people in the profession. My graduate school professor; my first supervisor, who gave a complete novice a chance to work in a large law firm library and acquire desperately needed experience; my current supervisor, who hired me for reasons I still don't understand, but am profoundly grateful for; and many others. It's probably a cliché, but I'll say it again here: I couldn't have asked for a career with a more supportive, community-oriented group of people. Librarians have a group dynamic unlike any I have ever encountered before—they truly believe in helping their patrons and each other. It's a great reason to stay in the profession. Most significantly, however, I enjoy my work, and I think that's one of the most important things you can get out of your job, no matter what profession you enter. There's nothing more rewarding for me than finding an elusive answer, or delving into a huge research project. There are challenging days, certainly, but I look forward to going to work, and I look forward to the next question. **LLL**

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Out of the Frying Pan into the Fire

Malea Young, Law Librarian, U.S. Dept. of Energy

A few years ago, I sat in my Special Libraries Seminar listening to my professor lecture on what it might take to be a special librarian. As a special librarian, she said, you will need to know how to do everything in a library: reference, circulation, technical services. Some special librarians, she pointed out, even run an entire library by themselves. I remember leaning over to my neighbor to say, “I would never do that.” Never say never.

An Offer I Couldn't Refuse

The week I graduated with my Masters in Library Science, I interviewed with a temping agency. The next day they called and asked if I could fill in for a law librarian position that had just opened up. “I know this isn't what you're looking for,” the woman said, “but it will be short term.” She promised to continue trying to find me a job in a big library, with a large team of librarians, as I had asked. The open position was supposed to only be a few weeks and I figured it would be a great opportunity to get some experience in a law library. I could work there until I found a job working as a reference librarian somewhere else. Thus, I began working that week at the Department of Energy, filling in for their law librarian.

I never expected to be offered the job of actually running the Law Library full-time. After a few weeks, however, the head of the DoE libraries offered me the position. I decided to accept. I knew it would be a lot of work, but how could I pass it up? I had worked in various capacities as library assistant, reference assistant, and graduate assistant; the chance to be a full fledged librarian was all I wanted.

What It Takes to Run a One-Man Show

I studied all of my notes from my legal reference and government documents classes the night before starting my new job. Walking into the library for the first time I realized that I was actually pretty well prepared to answer any legal reference question. I was certainly not aware, however, of the numerous other skills I would need to pick up to run a library by myself.

My first newly-acquired role: loose-leaf filer extraordinaire. The law library was back-logged

on almost a year's worth of loose-leaf filing, pocket parting, and shelving. I put in whole days of pocket-parting and shelving, feeling more like I had joined a gym than landed a job. But with a few weeks of hard work and the help of a few temps, the library was almost up to date.

I then started to see the bigger picture: parts of the library were completely out of order. Series that had started in one place had run out of shelf space were continued in various places around the library. A few of our subscriptions had lapsed while I was still trying to figure out what subscriptions we were supposed to have. Some days I was completely inundated with reference questions and everyone wanted everything right then. Together all of these issues could become completely overwhelming. The next skill I learned was how to keep an extremely detailed to-do list as a way to keep everything in order so I could decide what my greatest priorities should be.

Next, I began looking at the administrative details. I learned how to work with vendors to decide what should be added or removed from our contracts. At first, I found the sales pitches to be incredibly intimidating; these people had much more experience working with legal professionals than I did. If they thought that my patrons needed certain resources then they probably did, right? Wrong. Eventually I became aware of how many “new” products were ones I already had access to and how extraneous some were alongside my existing collection. Negotiating became much easier once I got used to refusing what I did not need. I started bargaining for what I did need. One day, as I sat down with a vendor and her colleague to talk about pricing, the vendor turned to her colleague to explain, “Malea is very nice. She always gets what she wants, but she's very nice about it.” I was ordering books, renewing subscriptions, budgeting, scheduling training sessions and meetings, and, before I knew it, I had become a business woman.

This year for National Library Week I decided to test out my marketing skills for the first time. I put together a presentation on HeinOnline, got my Lexis representative to

The best part of working in this library by myself has been that I have learned I can do all of these things. Now, rather than questioning my ability to do something new, my habit is to immediately start learning about it. It can be both frustrating and fulfilling at the same time.

come in for training, and organized everything in the library and made it sparkle. I put up some new signs and made comment cards and a suggestion box. I sent out emails advertising events and offering to give tours of the library. The best-attended event of the week, however, was the Lexis open house that included free food and coffee. All of my hard work for that week could still not match the draw of a good bagel. This experience solidified my suspicion that my best marketing ploy is my well-stocked candy dish.

My Continuing Education

Even after two years of working here, I continue to learn new things every day. Two of my current ongoing projects are selecting new books and cataloging. I have not had much experience with selection, so that is mostly new to me. As far as cataloging goes, I had never planned to do it again after finishing my class on it in school.

Luckily, I kept all of my notes from that class and am now using them as my guide.

In the hopes of making everything in the library come together, my biggest project at the moment is creating a clear, comprehensive manual that lays out all of the policies and practices that I have followed over the past two years. It has been an incredible journey learning about so many new things and I want to make sure that all of my discoveries are put down on paper. So I am learning about things like mission statements and collection development policies.

The best part of working in this library by myself has been that I have learned I can do all of these things. Now, rather than questioning my ability to do something new, my habit is to immediately start learning about it. It can be both frustrating and fulfilling at the same time. What will happen next in this library? I never know, but I cannot imagine a better way to start my career. **LLL**

Learning the Ropes:

A Resident Librarian Reflects on Law Librarianship

Yasmin Morais, Resident Librarian, Edward Bennett Williams Law Library, Georgetown University Law Center

The Library Residency

It's hard to believe that I am almost at the one-year mark of my two-year residency program at the Georgetown University Law Center's Edward Bennett Williams Law Library. The pace has been quite frenetic, and the experience so fulfilling, that the months have sped by.

In June of 2007, armed with an MLIS from the University of Toronto (affectionately called FIS for "Faculty of Information Studies") and a job offer from Georgetown, I courageously moved from Toronto to Washington, D.C., my pre-schooler and kindergarten graduate in tow. And what an experience it has been! I am an eternal optimist, so for me, apart from a few personal hiccups that are to be expected as a part of any relocation experience (I miss being able to drink my large Tim Horton's tea on the Metro), it has meant tremendous professional growth.

The goal of the residency program at Georgetown's Law Center Library is to allow new librarians from under-represented groups to obtain professional experience in a large

law library, with the objective of attracting this group to the profession of law librarianship. The program allows the Resident Librarian to start off with six-month rotations in the Reference and Cataloging Departments, after which the Resident can select rotations in departments in which he or she has an interest. Throughout the two-year residency, the Reference Department remains home base, with the Resident working approximately 10 hours per week at the reference desk.

A Professional Journey

I have had amazing support from my colleagues, not only in my home department of Reference, but also in other departments throughout the library. My first six-months were spent in the Reference Department, where after my initial orientation, I began reference shifts which covered approximately 10 hours per week at both the Edward Bennett Williams and John Wolff International Law Libraries.

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Juggling motherhood and a fledgling career in academic law librarianship has been extremely challenging and interesting. This is one area that I would definitely like to see more emphasis on in workshops, seminars and conferences, as well as in library literature.

Learning the Ropes *continued from page 9*

I must confess that at first it was a bit terrifying having to man the desk on my own, and being faced with a barrage of daunting reference questions from students, faculty and members of the public. Not to mention my first solo chat reference experience!

There have been many challenges as well as rewards for me at the reference desk. On the whole, it has been both a classroom and a course in itself. Each query I have received has been an opportunity for learning and growth. Each quest for answers has resulted in a more competent me and increased my confidence on my next reference shift. The one thing which I truly embraced from my course on reference services in library school is the centrality of the user in the reference transaction. I have therefore tried to see reference as an opportunity to serve the user, and, far as possible, to meet the need of the moment.

During my early days at the desk, I felt awkward having to bug my colleagues so frequently for help in answering a query. My fears were overcome by my colleagues' willingness to help and the importance of providing the information most useful and needed by the patron. Despite the challenges of some of the reference queries (Bluebook questions still remain my worst nightmares), the rewards have been the expressed appreciation of users who have found the exact bit of information or resource they needed, or the gratitude displayed when I have made the extra effort to accompany them to the location of resources they have never used before. This is usually the case when I accompany patrons to our Media Unit to locate microforms and demonstrate usage of the equipment there.

With time, I am beginning to hold my own, and have benefited from a number of informal training sessions as well as exposure to professional workshops which I attended at my first AALL conference in Louisiana last year. I have also gained significant experience in research and writing and benefited from exercises such as revising and creating research guides. I have made progress in this area, to the point of having a first published article, thanks to the coaching, mentoring, feedback and encouragement I have received from my colleagues.

There have also been great opportunities for collaboration on small projects with my colleagues. One of my more memorable projects

has been the creation of a treatise finder which I worked on with two other colleagues. That experience not only helped me to explore the use of new technologies, but also provided me with an enhanced understanding of the library's collection.

Currently, I am on a six-month rotation in the Cataloging Department, where I have had the opportunity to put into practice what I learned in my compulsory cataloging course in library school. And—surprise, surprise!—I am actually enjoying every minute of it, so much so, that I am seeking an extension to the rotation. I am sure my cataloging professor would be pleased to hear this. It is an interesting situation for me, where cataloging is actually competing with my first love, reference (though I still think that my heart belongs to reference). I believe my experience in Cataloging will make me a better Reference Librarian, as I become more knowledgeable about the collection, as well as a better searcher.

Lessons Library School Didn't Cover

While FIS did a great job of providing a solid theoretical grounding on most aspects of librarianship, there are some lessons that I have had to learn either on the job or through the adjustments of living in a new city and country. Each institution is unique, with its own organizational culture and politics. I've learned a lot about navigating a large academic library, which is where my career interest lies.

It has been interesting observing the interpersonal dynamics and politics at work within each unit. This is a useful lesson as it helps me in my understanding of the organization as a whole. Cultivating positive relationships with all members of staff has been an effort of mine, since the inter-related nature of all our services means cooperation is essential to success. Many times at the reference desk, my colleagues in Circulation or Cataloging have been helpful in providing me with answers I needed to satisfy a patron. Along the way, I am learning to hone my skills in diplomacy, public speaking and other attributes necessary for success.

Juggling motherhood and a fledgling career in academic law librarianship has been extremely challenging and interesting. This is one area that I would definitely like to see more emphasis on in workshops, seminars and conferences, as well as in the library literature. Despite the challenges, however, I have found time to explore

Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia with my family and am enjoying all that these places have to offer.

What's Next?

As I move toward the second year of my residency program, my experience has been a positive one. I am looking forward to my rotations in other departments, as well as conducting some interesting research projects. I have benefited immensely from Georgetown Law Center Library's residency program and it is a route I would encourage minority librarians interested in a career in law librarianship to take. I have gained invaluable experience at the reference desk and have developed a keen interest in research.

Academic librarianship remains my preference and, as I am now about to embark once more on job searching, I will be focusing on this aspect of librarianship. Law librarianship is an interesting field because of its breadth and interdisciplinary dimensions. This is also an interesting time to be a law librarian, in light of the tremendous surge in technological developments as well as emerging issues in both domestic and international law. International law remains my main interest and I hope to move on to this area in the future. Wherever I end up after Georgetown, however, I know that this first experience, with all of the collegiality, training and exposure it has offered, will only serve to make me a more rounded and better reference librarian. **LLL**

Becoming a Butterfly: My Life Cycle as a Law Librarian

Beth Conte, Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld



When I was in library school I had to walk to class barefoot, in the snow, uphill both ways... Okay, it wasn't quite that bad (although I did go to school in the snow belt of central New York), but sometimes it seems like it was that long ago. I progressed in a straight line from college to law school to library school (yes, twenty-one straight years of academics. Can you say "massive student loans"?). I got my MLS at the end of 1987, moved to the D.C. area in early 1988, and began my career as a law librarian.

The beginning of my professional career happened to coincide with my entry into the "high-tech" world. Back then "high tech" was still relatively low tech. For example:

- I typed my final paper for library school on my recently-acquired Macintosh 512 (non-upgradeable, non-expandable). I made the classic mistake of not saving often enough, lost the entire project to a power outage while typing the last sentence, and had to pull an all-nighter re-writing;
- While learning to search Dialog in library school, my classmates and I used a keyboard connected directly to a printer, nary the hint of a monitor;

- My first job was at a federal agency library. Our sole search terminal sported an external telephone modem (think Matthew Broderick's home computer system in *War Games*) and ran with the concomitant frequent disconnects;
- There were no flat-rate contracts with on-line vendors, no scanners, no self-serve fax machines, no e-mail, no voicemail and of course, no Internet.

Fast forward to my first law firm position several years later: Wow! I'd reached "mid-level tech" status! We had dedicated Lexis and Westlaw terminals (does anyone remember the little red and black Lexis UBIQs??) My title was Online Services Librarian and, as luck would have it, my desk was an entire foot away from the very large, very loud Lexis track-feed printer (ker-chunk, ker-chunk, ker-chunk...) No wonder I now sport a mild hearing loss! I was a one-person pre-IS department, at least with regard to the library's computer equipment. Our first word processing terminals were Wangs. We then progressed gradually to PC machines (DOS-based), diverged to Macs for a few years, and

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Librarians can have successful careers without being cutthroats. We are nice people! We share with each other! Basically, everything we need to know to be good librarians, we learned in kindergarten (okay, a little in library school too).

Becoming a Butterfly

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finally joined the world of “high tech” when we purchased full-fledged PCs with Windows.

We got access to the World Wide Web in the early nineties (not on our desktops right away, mind you) but it was another eight years before most commercial vendors began converting from software to web-based platforms. When our technical services department went electronic our wooden catalog drawers went the way of...actually, I have no idea what became of them. Meanwhile, the firm invested in its first ersatz knowledge management database.

While my career has moved on a path parallel to developments in the world of technology, there have been other benchmarks as well: for example, experiencing the rich variety to be found in various types and sizes of libraries and library collections. While in law school I worked closely with the Government Documents librarian and learned the fine art of accessing government documents as well as the unexpected wealth of information and resources contained therein. (As a state university, we were the local federal depository). This skill would later dove-tail quite nicely with managing a federal agency law collection.



My next step was entering the world of private law firm libraries with its fast pace, quick turnarounds, summer associates, fall associates. There I confronted the reality of the compensation I had forsaken when I decided against practicing law. (Wait just a doggoned minute—I’m teaching them and they’re getting twice my salary?)

My first firm doubled in size during my nine-year tenure so my next step was definitely a bit of a culture shock. I left to manage the library of a mid-sized firm (35 attorneys versus roughly 350). A staff of thirteen suddenly became a staff of two. The culture and familial atmosphere of a mid-sized firm was welcome, although I did miss a lot of the day-to-day camaraderie of a larger staff of professional librarians.

My career diverged to “mommy-track” when my fourth child was born. I stayed home for a few years and now I’m back in a large law firm environment. Over the years I also did some part-time evening and weekend work as the legal/government specialist in my county public library.

I know I have benefited from working in all the major library “food groups”: academic, government, public, and private. My experiences affirmed my decision to work in law firms and gave me a whole new admiration for the experiences of my colleagues who work in other venues.

Librarians can have successful careers without being cutthroats. We are nice people! We share with each other! Basically, everything we need to know to be good librarians, we learned in kindergarten (okay, a little in library school too). And although the world is getting smaller and more and more are resources available digitally, being in the D.C. area is especially nice for access to great resources and greater people!

Over the past twenty years I have developed and honed my researching, communication, and time-management skills. I have learned to find the answer by telephone, by computer, by book, or by hook or crook. I have learned to find it by yesterday! I have learned that most lawyers are friendly and appreciative, despite the occasional curmudgeon with unrealistic expectations. I have learned to multi-task like nobody’s business. Most of all, I love that I get to wear so many hats on a regular basis: researcher, writer, speaker, trainer, detective, etc.

Of course, professional development is crucial to growth. I have taken LLSDC-sponsored classes and attended AALL conferences. Society memberships (LLSDC, SLA, and AALL in my case) are invaluable for sharing skills and tapping into a wealth of resources. I have also participated in a number of management

courses and in-house training opportunities offered by my firm.

What would I do differently? Thankfully, not much. Although overall I am happy with my decision not to practice law, I might have done it for a few years before becoming a librarian, both to hone my legal knowledge/skills and to pay off some or all of the aforementioned student loans.

Some things never change, no matter what stage of the law librarian life cycle we are in. The constants include providing excellent customer service, marketing our services, and learning, learning, learning.

I like to think of the life cycle of law librarians as being akin to that of a butterfly. In library school we grow from eggs to larvae,

feeding on the knowledge of our professors and colleagues. In our fieldwork, perhaps continuing into our first professional positions, we emerge from our chrysalises where our caterpillar tissues of academic knowledge have developed and the practical knowledge of our adult (professional) structure is forming. Finally, as fully formed adult butterflies, we are free to spread our wings and soar and glide in the shimmering light of....okay, okay, enough of the colorful and flowery prose (pun intended). My hope is that, by continuing along the path I have thus far traveled, I will finish my career not lying useless somewhere, disintegrating, pinned to a piece of cardboard, but as a beautiful and graceful monarch. **lll**

Life Cycle of a Law Librarian: Five Years?

Aviva Adler, MLIS

The Cycle Begins: My First Job...and Budget Cuts

New to the field, with more enthusiasm than expertise, my first job as a law librarian thrilled me! The law firm environment was familiar to me; before jumping into law librarianship, I'd worked as both a legal secretary and IP paralegal, and had done some research in both capacities. Still, I'd never taken a legal bibliography class, and had been out of the field of librarianship for a decade. Joining a large firm with over 360 attorneys and a library staff of ten, I felt confident that I could rely on being a "quick study" and on the promised in-house training.

As my first year drew to a close, I'd become accustomed to the rhythm of a well-staffed law library. Our Director did back-up research to support the Senior Research Librarian and me. The library also had a dedicated docket clerk, an ILL specialist, a legislative history assistant who also did reference work, and technical staff including the Assistant Librarian/Cataloger, the Acquisitions Librarian, and two processing assistants. On two floors, the collection comprised some 40,000 volumes, and a full complement of electronic and online subscription services. I looked forward to a long and happy career in that position.

The situation soon changed. First, the Director and the Senior Research Librarian

left the firm, both without replacement. Next, the Assistant Director took a leave of absence and came back only part-time. Eventually, the Acquisitions Librarian was pressed into service to do back-up reference. An outside consultant came to interview those of us remaining about the nature of our positions. Those of us remaining discussed the direction the library was taking, the downsizing that had already occurred, and rumored additional budget cuts.

The responsibility for providing reference services to 360+ attorneys and their paralegals began to take its toll on those of us who remained. Attorneys were not being well-served and began to express their frustration with the library's understaffed reference department. I felt more than a little stressed out when I had a line of attorneys waiting for assistance outside my office door like customers in a busy bakery. Although I was a good reference librarian and part of a great library team—all of whom were pitching in to help with research and reference—I was still new to the field. Even a seasoned librarian would have been severely taxed to function a "solo" in such a large firm. I had hoped to pursue my career with that firm, and the attorneys I was able to help were happy with my work. But budget cuts and downsizing crippled the library's ability to respond timely to attorney requests, causing me to look for a position in a smaller firm.

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Life Cycle of a Law Librarian

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From Large to Small:

Going "Solo"...and Budget Cuts

My next position was a true solo reference position, with centralized technical services from the firm's national office; or so I was told. Compared to my previous position, providing research and reference for thirty attorneys and lobbyists was much more reasonable for one librarian. I soon felt frustrated, however, at the amount of time I spent setting up a serials check-in system, tracking invoices and getting them paid, working out subscription issues with vendors, and doing collection development. With one experienced and capable assistant, without whom the library would not have functioned at all, the library hobbled along, but there was too little time for the substantive, client-billable research I was hired to do, and almost no time to devote to committee assignments (like reviewing and updating intranet content) or for professional development. I found a special spot on the wall where I sometimes banged my head, wondering aloud, "How did my predecessor handle all of this?" One day, my assistant took pity on me and let me in on the secret: she had not done it alone; I had been hired to replace two librarians, one of whom handled of the branch's technical services and administrative functions while the other handled research. Budget cuts and downsizing had again affected the law firm library in which I found myself. I wanted to do reference work, so I started to monitor job postings for a team research position in a larger firm.

When Solo Isn't Really:

Changing Direction...and Budget Cuts

In my brief tenure at a large branch office of an international firm going through multiple merger mania, the firm had an interim library director, a frequently absent branch manager, one veteran reference assistant, and a retired law librarian who worked reference part-time and did the loose-leaf filing. Other library staff included a cataloger, technical services assistant, and administrative assistant who handled vendor invoices. Shortly after my arrival, it was announced that, due to impending budget cuts, job descriptions for reference librarians firm-wide were to be downgraded and would no longer require the MLIS (expected to reduce

salary requirements). It was also announced that reference librarians would be tasked with expanded duties to include cataloging and processing new materials. The revolving door was not done revolving.

The Perfect Job: A Large Firm,

A Research Team...and Budget Cuts

At last I thought I'd found the Perfect Job: a library staff of 73 (that should have been my first clue), of whom 33 of us were on the Research team, serving 1700 attorneys nationwide. Our virtual team, spread over many branch offices around the country, handled over 1,000 requests monthly using an electronic database that allowed us easily to collaborate, keep research statistics, and use archived requests as a knowledge management system. Training at this firm was exceptional, both among ourselves via biweekly webinars we prepared and presented to our colleagues, and via virtual vendor trainings. I was privileged to work with an excellent team of highly trained librarians, several of whom held both MLIS and JD degrees. Coordinators monitored the workload and recruited assistance, as needed. The "old-timers" who had been on board at least two years were generous in sharing their knowledge of the firm's policies, procedures, and resources.

Again, I thought I had found a long-term career position, and I began looking for a new home closer to work to reduce my daily commute. True, I'd noted that few of the librarians had been with firm more than two years, and that several positions were left permanently unfilled after librarians left for new opportunities, but I didn't appreciate the significance of these facts. I was quite taken by surprise when my position, among others, was eliminated due to Reduction-In-Force budget cuts. I'd just had my first annual review, which was highly positive. My colleagues had raved about my webinar presentation on securities research, which was added to the firm's collection of training materials for all new hires. In a year's time, I had developed a clientele of attorneys who relied on my expertise and timely assistance. My successful marketing efforts during National Library Week motivated many non-users—from the office's managing partner to its business director—to become new users. It was some consolation when the head of the Research Department assured me that I was a great research librarian, and that the elimination of my position was not

performance based but was due solely to the firm's budget cuts. Other librarians then abandoned ship, my former supervisor was transferred to an administrative position in another state, and the director, whose department budget and staff had been cut significantly, summarily quit. Eight of us were hired in 2006; just a year later, over a dozen librarians, plus the firm's library director, were gone.

From Beginning to End: Law Librarianship...and Budget Cuts

So here I am, an early-career law librarian, looking for work again. Conference speakers and the law library literature address the anticipated dearth of trained law librarians entering the field, and the need for recruitment efforts. I'm puzzled by this. Every firm I've worked in has experienced budget cuts which have reduced collection size, facility space, or library staff. And a review of the positions open over the past few months demonstrates that most of them are director or manager-level jobs, presumably to replace retiring baby boomers. Since I can't afford to wait for the law librarians with "5-7 (or 7-10) years of increasingly responsible administrative or management experience" to move up into directorships, causing upward movement among existing staff and making more early-career positions available, I'm now looking outside the field of law librarianship for any research-related position.

Whither the Market for Law Librarians?

Law libraries are seen as cost-centers, not revenue-generators, and a separate article could be written about why that is and how to change it. In the meantime, I asked myself whether the downsizing, budget-cut phenomenon is specific to law libraries in the Washington, D.C. area, or if it is occurring at law firms nationwide?

Reviewing job postings online is my daily task: LLSDC, GPLLA, AALLNET, SLA, PNLA (the Pacific Northwest Library Association), Library Associates, <http://www.usajobs.gov>, listservs, local papers, and placement firms. Beyond the issue of my personal qualifications and employability (although I was recently told I was "overqualified" at an interview with a library that lost half its physical collection in exchange for additional staff), I've noticed a trend which indicates that we might be raising false

expectations in new librarians about available work in this field.

Looking At the Numbers

In the months I've been looking, there have only been a handful of law librarian jobs offered via LLSDC's jobline. As of this writing, SLA's 61 offerings include one D.C.-area law firm position (managerial). <http://www.usajobs.gov> posts multiple agency librarian positions, the majority of which are designated "supervisory," and its most recent law librarian position required special expertise (the ability to translate Arabic-language legal documents). Of the average 50 positions posted monthly on PNLA's job board, only three have been law librarian positions, two of which were part-time; and one-third of its current non-law library postings are director-level or require a subject specialty. Annually, Catholic University graduates about 250 new librarians, the University of Maryland graduates a similar number, and the University of Washington produces some 350 new librarians. AALL's Developing Law Librarians for the Future Special Committee is charged with addressing the recruitment issues it perceives as it anticipates the "mass retirement exodus" of its aging membership,¹ but it does not maintain statistics on the number of law librarians graduating annually, or the number of law librarian positions available nationally. Yet some of these new librarians will want to enter this rewarding, interesting, and exciting field. Given the financial realities of today's law firms, are there truly law librarian jobs available to accommodate them? Do the numbers add up?

My family is here, and I'd like to stay in this area. I hope that by the time this issue is published, I will be employed again locally as a law librarian. But I'm also preparing for the equally likely possibility that, for this still-enthusiastic, early-career, experienced and skilled law librarian, the life cycle of a law librarian, in this climate of budget-cuts and downsizing, might be just 5 years. **LLL**

...I ask myself whether the downsizing, budget-cut phenomenon is specific to law libraries in the Washington, D.C. area, or if it is occurring at law firms nationwide?

¹http://www.aallnet.org/committee/dvlp_future_lib.asp, retrieved May 19, 2008.

Keeping a Foot in the Door

Margaret M. Krause, Temporary Reference Librarian, Georgetown Law Library

Long before the Internet was ubiquitous, and back when a trip to Eagan, MN meant a walk through the West Publishing book distribution center, I began my career in law librarianship. Okay, it really does not seem that long ago, but twenty years has made a startling difference in the field of law librarianship. At this point in my life cycle, I am trying to balance career and family, so I have chosen to pursue my profession on a part-time basis. Over the years, I have learned that the key to maintaining the necessary skills for our profession is to always “keep a foot in the door.”

I love this career and the many opportunities available to law librarians. Call me determined, but I always wanted to be a librarian. I started working in the public library during high school and then my university library during college. After a brief stint in the corporate world, I was able to obtain my library science degree. I started my professional career as a Manager of Information Services for Price Waterhouse’s Law Firm Services Group. I was the lone reference resource, database designer and clipping service (this was before electronic clipping services). Price Waterhouse was a fast paced environment, organized much like a law firm with partners and associates. While I often wasn’t engaged exclusively in legal research, the research I was asked to conduct on law firm management, litigation consulting, marketing and more fascinated me. Additionally, I was given the chance to consult with corporate clients setting up in-house document retrieval and records management systems. I relished the challenge, but I longed for the camaraderie of working with peers and growing professionally. After a couple years at Price Waterhouse, I joined the world of academic law libraries at Georgetown University’s Edward Bennett Williams Law Library.

At Georgetown, I was the Search Services Librarian, charged with training 1Ls on the wonders of electronic legal research. Years ago, Lexis and Westlaw used interfaces that were not nearly as intuitive as they are today. It was a challenge to teach the novice law students all about command searching while at the same time relying on dial-up access. I even had to distribute proprietary software to each student

using Lexis and Westlaw, as the World Wide Web was in its infancy. In my spare time, I staffed the reference desk and consulted with students working on law review notes and seminar papers. In those days, I remember students being intimidated when I told them about an electronic resource because many of the search mechanics for the databases (and CD-ROMs) were inconsistent. There was no question that the librarian was the authoritative researcher, as well as the search guru.

Fast forward fifteen years and it’s apparent that law librarians have had to keep up with an amazing technological revolution while continuing to provide first class research and client service. Not only are the tools more sophisticated, but the library users are often very technologically savvy. For example, every law student brings his or her own laptop to Georgetown and connects to the campus wireless network.

Even though I have not worked full-time since starting my family more than a dozen years ago, I have kept up to date on the dizzying changes in the profession by always keeping a foot in the door. While doing contract work for a Fortune 500 company, I monitored pending legislation and litigation for the General Counsel’s office using Lexis, Westlaw and eventually the “free Web.” I also researched expert witnesses and case law for a litigation consulting firm while researching current and proposed federal regulations for a records management consultant. These projects forced me to keep up with vendor innovations and identify new resources upon their release. As you all know, the process (and many of the sources) of legal research has not changed. It is the retrieval and delivery of research material that has undergone the most radical change.

Most recently, with my return to Georgetown University Law Library as a temporary reference librarian, I’ve seen firsthand how blogs, wikis and other online resources help law librarians feel more a part of a tight-knit community. It is now easier to share news, ideas and even ask for reference assistance from our peers. What a powerful development to transform the world of law librarianship! By posting a request on law-lib or some other professional community resource, a librarian can obtain material that

once took hours—if not days—of phone calls to track down.

Additionally, today's students have the expectation that all material should be online and accessible in seconds or it must not be available. This generation has grown up relying on instant gratification using cell phones and instant messaging. Georgetown has adapted to meet the needs of today's students using "Live Chat" to provide them with virtual access to a librarian during regular reference hours. Initially, I have to admit, I found this form of communication a little intimidating. I longed for the days of the live reference interview. However, my stints at the reference desk are often more "virtual" than face-to-face these days. The students love the service, so it's yet another tool I have embraced as I keep up with my evolving career choice.

Today, even "keeping your foot in the door" can be a virtual undertaking. For those wanting, or needing, to take a sabbatical from the day to day library job, there are numerous Web sites and blogs worth monitoring for current awareness. In December 2007, the *ABA Journal* published a list of the top 100 Law Blawgs¹. This is a great starting point for those wanting to keep an eye on all aspects of the legal profession. A more comprehensive collection of legal blogs can be found at Law Blog Central (<http://lawblogcentral.blogspot.com/>).

Also, legal publishers and vendors have started blogging to demonstrate new features of their products, offer search advice and even advertise what's in the works. For an example, just look at HeinOnline. Their weekly blog describes a number of ways to use their database to retrieve cases and law journal articles and it also points out new product enhancements.

Many academic law libraries, as well as library associations, have started blogs. The University of Wisconsin Law Library has compiled a pretty comprehensive listing of these blogs on their Web site at: <http://library.law.wisc.edu/wisblawg/bloglistpublic.htm>. Bookmark this site and then click away to read about what your colleagues are doing. With more than a hundred blogs on this list alone it can be overwhelming, so I find it useful to keep up with a couple on a daily basis and save the others for an occasional glance. Once you find what blogs cover your specific professional interests you should always remember to "keep your foot in the door." **LLL**

¹ *ABA Journal* Blawg100, 93 A.B.A.J. 30 (2007)

Today, even "keeping your foot in the door" can be a virtual undertaking. For those wanting, or needing, or take a sabbatical from the day to day library job, there are numerous Web sites and blogs worth monitoring for current awareness.

Here are just a few of my favorite blogs:

Law Librarian Blog (http://lawprofessors.typepad.com/law_librarian_blog/)

Monitoring this blog is a must for all law librarians, as it tracks everything from new legal research guides to think tank reports to employment opportunities.

beSpecific (<http://www.bespecific.com/index.html>) I find this to be the best legal research blog for tracking government documents, especially e-government. When monitored in conjunction with LLRX.com, this blog will keep you in the know.

Reference Question of the Week (http://reference_question_of_the_week.classcaster.org/blog/) While this hasn't been updated in a while, I love the collaborative tone of this blog which answers some of the more obscure reference questions encountered at Boston College Law Library.

DueProcess (<http://www.ll.georgetown.edu/blog/>) Georgetown Law Library's blog focuses on legal resources and new developments in legal research, monitors faculty publications and even points out local D.C. news, on occasion.

Karen Silber, *Legal Reference Librarian, Bureau of National Affairs, Inc.*

Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything, by Don Tapscott and Anthony D. Williams; Portfolio, 2008 Expanded edition, 351 pages, \$27.95.

I had thought it would be just a matter of time before wikis and Wikipedia would disappear. I mean, how could something be taken seriously when contributions are accepted from anyone, text can be altered on a whim, and the product edited by volunteers? Who would use such a tool?

Well, we still have Wikipedia and wikis seem to be growing, not disappearing. So, I thought it was time to take a serious look into it. My information need led me to Don Tapscott and Anthony Williams's *Wikinomics: How Mass Collaboration Changes Everything*, first published in 2006 and expanded in April 2008.

In *Wikinomics*, Tapscott and Williams outline new strategies and business models that companies are using to innovate and rewrite rules of competition. *Wikinomics* is based on four powerful new ideas: (1) openness, (2) peering,

(3) sharing, and (4) acting globally. The book is filled with rich examples of how organizations are “harnessing these principles to drive innovation in their workplaces, communities, and industries.”

Tapscott and Williams discuss that with the technology we have access to, billions of “connected individuals can now actively participate in innovation, wealth creation, and social development in ways we once only dreamed of ...when these masses of people collaborate they collectively can advance the arts, culture, science, education, government, and the economy.” *Wikinomics* discusses how organizations have limited time and resources to come up with new ideas and innovations. By

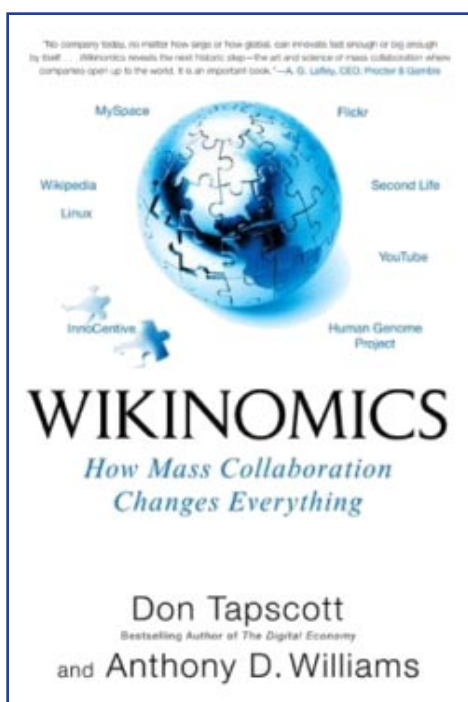
opening and sharing a company's programming interfaces, the company creates an environment for low-risk experimentation in which people contribute their expertise and skills and, in turn, if their contribution is used, receive compensation.

Another payoff for the individual is that he or she gets to share their creativity and engage in a rewarding activity in their spare time (spare time?...who are these mavericks?). Such participants tend to be retired university professors who like to contribute their academic knowledge, the “geeks” who love a challenge, etc. These individuals gain experience, exposure, connections, and perhaps status within the community that could prove valuable to their careers. The company, in turn, has a source of innovation and, possibly, a competitive advantage, with little or no cost involved.

How this is done depends on the company. One of the many examples in the book is Procter & Gamble (P&G). P&G has 7,500 researchers, which apparently is not adequate to sustain its lead in the industry. Rather than hire more researchers, the business unit leaders are instructed to source 50 percent of their new product and service ideas from outside the company. Indeed, one may work for P&G without being on the company's payroll. Register on the InnoCentive network, where you and “ninety thousand other scientist around the world can help solve tough R&D problems for a cash reward.”

When P&G set out to launch a new line of Pringles chips with images on each chip, they needed help. The global network was tapped and the solution was found in a small bakery in Bologna, Italy where a university professor was printing edible images on cakes and cookies. P&G acquired the technology and quickly adapted it to their requirements. P&G was then able to launch Pringles Prints for much less than what it would have otherwise cost. Applying this philosophy “in all its business lines enables P&G to focus on areas where they're going to be world class and to source technology in areas where they don't need to be leading edge.”

The above scenario is a win-win situation, but what happens when a company must deal



with consumers who innovate a company's product on their own? Wikinomics gives examples of this, such as the hacking of electronic games and the "mashup" and bootlegging of music. Mashups are illegal under federal law and many record labels are actively trying to put a stop to them.

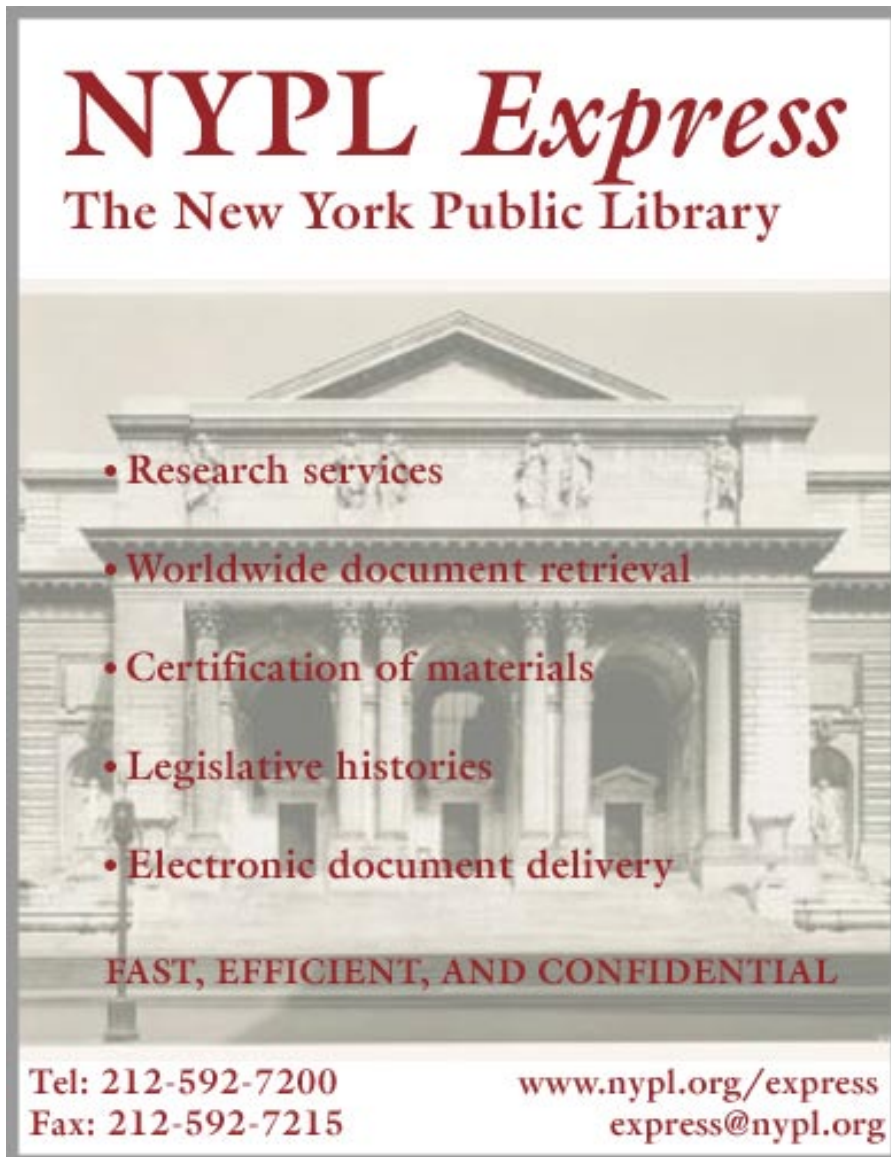
Tapscott and Williams, conversely, argue that mashup artists typically spend an extraordinary amount of time producing creative works (by merely using part of something they did not create themselves) and that mashups actually promote the underlying music. Tapscott and Williams see the end products as innovative and enjoyable, opining that such arrangements are truly symbiotic.

Reading this book was certainly enlightening. Many of the concepts may be applied to businesses around the world, from Boeing

and other aerospace industries to pharmaceutical companies. Not all companies are in a position to "share" resources, and law firms do certainly come to mind. In full, this book taught me a lot about how businesses are operating in today's online world.

On a personal note, with the travel and responsibilities involved with my new job at BNA, I will not be able to continue with my book review column. I would like to thank Marilyn Bromley and the Technical Acquisitions staff at the BNA library for all of the support given to me throughout the past four years that I have been writing this review. I would also like to thank Laura Gordon-Murnane and my husband for their invaluable assistance in editing my columns, and for *Lights* in supporting my column. **LLL**

Not all companies are in a position to "share" resources, and law firms do certainly come to mind. In full, this book taught me a lot about how businesses are operating in today's online world.



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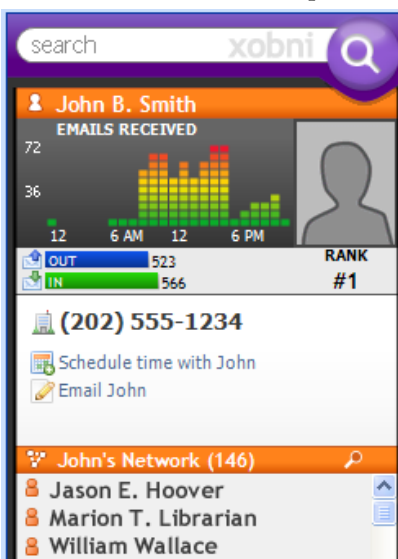
Roger Skalbeck, Associate Law Librarian for Electronic Resources & Services,
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Xobni: Outlook Email Finally Searchable and 'Social'

If you use Outlook email at work, you probably loathe having to search for a message or having to find an attachment in your inbox. The default search options in Outlook are often slow and unhelpful. Advanced search options are okay, but how often do you really need the ability to search across 139 separate fields in your contacts? Now there's a much better way to search email: the Xobni email add-on.

Xobni Requirements and Features

First of all, the name: Xobni (www.xobni.com) is "Inbox" spelled backwards. It is a free software



add-on that integrates with Outlook 2003 or 2007 software installed on your Windows computer. There is no Mac version yet. Once installed, it creates a new index to your email, providing compiled statistics about email usage, together with great improvements for searching and sorting messages.

Within the Outlook software, Xobni's main features appear in a single adjustable column in the

software. When you are reading a message, Xobni shows you the sender's rank in terms of messages sent and received with you. It also creates a bar chart showing when the person typically sends you email. For instance, the fictitious "John B. Smith" is my top-ranked contact. He typically sends the most email around 10 a.m. and again towards 3 p.m. Also, Xobni inserted his phone number automatically from indexing his messages exchanged with me.

If I click a link marked "Schedule time with John," Xobni checks my calendar to see when I am free and drafts a message to John

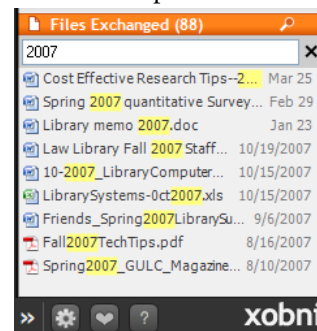
showing the one-hour blocks I am available for the next five business days. There are some options to customize this scheduling feature.

In addition to this, Xobni creates a list of each person's email network, showing all contacts listed in any correspondence that includes the individual (John B. Smith in my example). There is also a list of conversations with each person, as well as a compiled list of attachments exchanged with him or her.

With each grouping, you can search the materials separately. As you type your letters in the search, it automatically filters results for matching items. If you need that document with "2007" somewhere in the title, you can quickly search and discover PDF, Excel, Word or other files any place in your email account.

Email Analytics

In addition to these very useful search and sort function, Xobni also provides customizable analysis of your email traffic. Here you can see how your email traffic compares between messages sent and received. This is called Xobni Analytics; clearly referencing Google Analytics, which are free web analysis tools available to measure website traffic.



Using this tool, I looked at all of my mail from March 2008, and I discovered that I receive the highest volume of messages around 10 a.m. There are often messages around 2 a.m., which are probably automated messages from BNA alerts or my spam notice summaries. Also, I receive more mail than I send, and, thankfully, it looks like I did not send any email between 1:00 and 7:00 in the morning.

There are more than a dozen other analysis filters you can apply based on customized date ranges and recipient names. For instance, you can see how quickly people respond, compare incoming and outgoing messages with a group

of people, and sort by domain type, subject keywords or message type (e.g. forwarded, sent as cc;, etc.).

This analysis could provide interesting insights into your email traffic. At the same time, though, if this tool was deployed across an entire organization, I would hate to see it tied to productivity or performance reviews.

According to Gabor Cselle, Xobni's VP of Engineering, the company first envisioned their product as an email analysis tool, called "Email DM" (for data mining). They were apparently going to offer it to companies as a productivity tool. In the end, analysis is downplayed as a feature.

This background and a full history of the company can be found on Gabor Cselle's blog: <http://www.gaborcselle.com/blog/2008/05/hello-world-meet-xobni.html>. There are also several news items about the company at the TechCrunch website: <http://www.techcrunch.com/tag/xobni/>.

Installing Xobni

First and foremost, remember that Xobni is beta software, which means that it has not been 100% tested for bugs. I have installed it using Outlook 2003 and 2007, and I have had no problems in testing it for around two weeks. In order to install it, you need the Microsoft .Net framework, which is a free download. This process can take a few minutes to install, and it can take several minutes to index your email after you get Xobni set up.

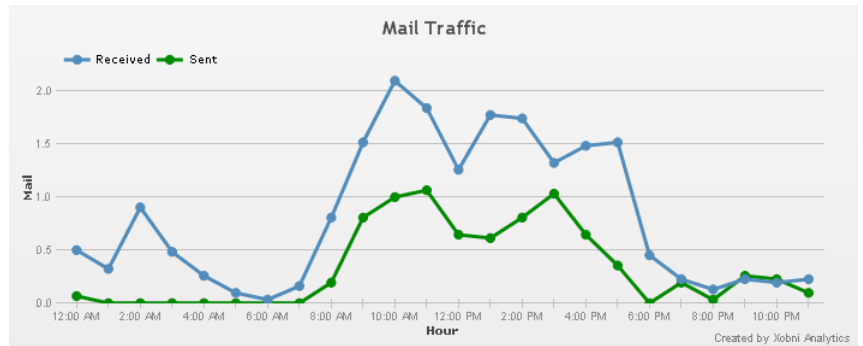
An Alternative: ClearContext Personal

As it turns out, Xobni is not the only option for software to improve your email experience in Outlook. As this column went to print, a company called ClearContext (www.clearcontext.com) released an invitation-only beta program for ClearContext Personal. This free Outlook add-in promises to give you: (1) options for automated message prioritization, (2) one-click attachment filing, and (3) a way to explore threaded conversations.

Beyond that, the company is planning a professional version with even more features for an undisclosed price. It will be interesting to see how ClearContext compares to Xobni once it is available.

Gmail Alternative: Xoopit

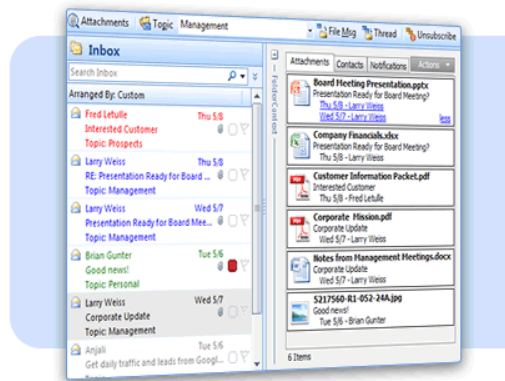
If you do not work at a large company that runs



Microsoft Exchange, then you can choose your own email system. If that choice is Google's Gmail, you might consider a system called Xoopit (www.xoopit.com), which came out in beta at the end of March.

This is a Firefox plugin for your Gmail account that gives you new options for browsing photos and video in your email, organizing attachments, and sharing items with friends or through Facebook. There is also a tool for your iGoogle customized homepage to let you browse photos and videos in your email.

According to the company's website, it hopes to soon add this functionality for other web-based email platforms, such as Yahoo!, Hotmail and .Mac. Over the next year, it will be exciting to see new features and functionality added to the single activity I do more than almost anything else at work: interact with email.



ClearContext Personal beta
a free Outlook add-in to organize your email and make your inbox better

Shannon O'Connell, Reference/Interlibrary Loan Librarian, Williams & Connolly, LLP

Congratulations

Cameron Gowan has been accepted into the George Washington University's Masters in Law Firm Management program.

Adeen Postar received tenure at American University, Washington College of Law, Pence Law Library.

Karen Silber changed jobs within BNA. In March, she left the library and is now in the Training & Product Department located in Rockville, MD. **LLL**

Scholarship and Grant Awards

Joan Sherer, Senior Reference Librarian, U.S. Department of State

The Scholarship and Grants Committee is pleased to announce that **John Cannon, Kurt Carroll, Elizabeth Sutera**, and **Tracy Woodward** have been awarded grants for the spring 2008 cycle.

John Cannon is the Assistant Law Librarian at the Montgomery County Circuit Court Law Library. He was awarded a grant to attend the AALL Joint Study Institute to be held in Washington, D.C. in June.

Kurt Carroll, Elizabeth Sutera, and Tracy Woodward were award grants to attend the AALL Annual Meeting in Portland, Oregon. Mr. Carroll is the Collection Development Specialist at the Law Library of Congress, Ms. Sutera is a Reference Librarian at the law firm Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP, and Ms. Woodward is a Reference Librarian at Howard University Law Library.

Congratulations to all of the recipients. **LLL**



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SPECIAL INTEREST SECTIONS

Academic
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COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Arrangements
Cameron Gowan
202/861-6654
cgowan@groom.com

Bylaws Revisions
William H. Grady
202/551-1258
williamgrady@paulhastings.com

Education
Carolyn McKelvey
202/719-4108
cmckelvey@wrf.com

Elections
Mike Gentile
202/942-5409
michael_gentile@aporter.com

History & Archives
Heather Bourk
202/662-9133
Hcb3@law.georgetown.edu

Joint Spring Workshop
Carla Evans
202/416-6823
cevens@proskauer.com

Law Library Lights
Shannon O'Connell
202/434-5303
soconnell@wc.com

Membership
Mary Elizabeth Woodruff
202/274-2876
maryelizabeth.woodruff@troutmansanders.com

Mentoring
Scott Bailey
202/626-6708
ScottBailey@ssd.com

Nominations
Martha Klein
202/496-7844
mklein@mckennalong.com

Publications
Keith Gabel
202/466-2388
kgabel@stewartlaw.com

Scholarships & Grants

Joan Sherer
202/647-1146
shererjm@state.gov

Karen Silber
703/341-3314
Ksilber@BNA.com

Volunteer
Julia Leggett
202/707-6779
JLEGGETT@crs.loc.gov

Web Site
Paul Weiss
202/434-4277
weiss@khlaw.com
webmaster@llsdc.org

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Editor
Shannon O'Connell
202/434-5303
soconnell@wc.com

Assistant Editor
Matthew Braun
202/994-8545
mbraun@law.gwu.edu

Book Review
Karen Silber
703/341-3314
Ksilber@BNA.com

Eye on Serials
Susan Chinoransky
202/994-8902
schinoransky@law.gwu.edu

Tech Talk
Roger Skalbeck
202/662-9158
rvs5@law.georgetown.edu

Member News
Shannon O'Connell
202/434-5303
soconnell@wc.com

Publisher/Graphic Designer
Cindy Dyer
Dyer Design
703/971-9038
dyerdesign@aol.com