

## Expanding Our Global Connections: Service at the U.S. Department of State

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The Ralph J. Bunche Library is the hub for information services at the U.S. Department of State. The principal mission of the library is to provide authoritative and timely research services and resources to the more than 34,000 State Department personnel and to the international affairs community.

The seven full-time and two part-time reference librarians at the Bunche Library field a broad range of research requests from civil and foreign service employees posted in the U.S. and around the globe. Our tasks can range from providing a scientist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture with a treaty between the U.S. and Guatemala on fruit fly eradication, to in-depth research on standards for the construction industry.

The library provides State Department employees with access to over fifty online services which include full-text news and journal articles, directories, statistical data, treaties, country information, and declassified government documents.

### Information Resource Centers

These resources are also available to the 182 Information Resource Centers (IRCs) located in U.S. embassies and consulates. The IRCs are the successors to the United States Information Agency libraries, and their primary audience is comprised of local media, universities, non-governmental organizations, government officials from the host country, and embassy personnel.<sup>1</sup> They are primarily staffed by foreign nationals,

for it is advantageous to have librarians who are familiar with the country and the language in which they are serving. Specifically, the IRCs are overseen by Information Resource Officers, who are Foreign Service specialists that serve as regional consultants for advising and providing expertise to the embassies in their designated regions.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the online services available to all State Department personnel, IRC staff members have access to LexisNexis, with a major emphasis on the Nexis portion of the service. Not being experts on legal research, it is common for the IRC librarians to forward legal or legislative requests to the Bunche Library reference staff. An example of such a request is one that we received from the U.S. Consulate in Fukuoka, Japan, where a Japanese labor law professor had requested details on U.S. laws regarding equal pay and equal value. We provided this professor with the text of relevant laws and several pertinent law review articles. This arrangement is typical of the collaborative effort between the IRCs and the Bunche Library.

Inquiries from overseas do not necessarily go through the IRCs. State Department personnel may send requests directly to the Bunche  
*continued on page 3*

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, FOREIGN AFFAIRS MANUAL § 363, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/88258.pdf> (last visited Feb. 2, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, FOREIGN AFFAIRS MANUAL § 362, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/88258.pdf> (last visited Feb. 2, 2009).



## FROM THE EDITOR

# A Few New Stories

*Matthew Braun, Legal Reference Librarian, Law Library of Congress, [mbra@loc.gov](mailto:mbra@loc.gov)*

Please accept a warm welcome to the Winter 2009 issue of *Law Library Lights*, where we, among many other things, explore the global nature of the contemporary law library profession. As legal information needs increasingly implicate multiple countries, and technology allows for more streamlined communication across borders, many law librarians in this country, no doubt, have new stories to tell about their work. This issue of *Lights* presents a few of those stories from members of our own society, whom work in a city and region where foreign and international legal matters are at the forefront of both legal practice and scholarship.

Joan Sherer shares the experiences of librarians at the U.S. Department of State who regularly address research needs from around the globe, while Charlotte Osborn-Bensaada describes what it is like to be in an online

*continued on page 3*



## Deadline for Submissions

If you would like to write for *Lights*, please contact **Matthew Braun** at [mbra@loc.gov](mailto:mbra@loc.gov). For information regarding submission deadlines and issue themes, visit the LLSDC Web site at [www.llsdc.org](http://www.llsdc.org).

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# Table of Contents

## FEATURES

**Expanding Our Global Connections: Service at the U.S. Department of State**  
*Joan Sherer* 1

**Education Without Boundaries**  
*Charlotte Osborn-Bensaada* 7

**A Few December Days in Puerto Rico**  
*Herb Somers* 10

**Strongwater, Silver Lace, and Wanton Dalliance**  
*Robert Bratton* 11

**Making the Catalog a Better Tool**  
*Sima Mirkin & Michael Petit* 13

**Lessons in Scalability**  
*Todd Venie* 17

## COLUMNS

**Editor's Column**  
*Matthew Braun* 2

**President's Column**  
*Frances Brilliantine* 4

**Book Review**  
*Kasia Solon* 15

**Eye on Serials**  
*Susan Chinoransky* 19

**Tech Talk**  
*Roger Skalbeck* 21

**Membership News**  
*Shannon O'Connell* 23



## From the Editor *continued from page 2*

master's program in library science with students from Southeast Asia and the South Pacific. Also, Herb Somers highlights both the legal traditions and challenges of the Caribbean in his review of the International Association of Law Libraries' 27th Annual Course, which took place in always warm San Juan, Puerto Rico this past December (while cold winds battered Washington, D.C.!).

Book reviews abound in this issue as well, with Robert Bratton describing the humorous references found in a nine-volume set of court records from 17th Century Massachusetts, and Todd Venie reviewing a title on a more modern subject...the present success and possible future of Google. Sima Mirkin and Michael Petit also tell us about the future...the future of cataloging,

that is...as they explain how 970 MARC fields may be used for describing certain electronic materials.

Finally, as usual, our Lights columns are likely to pique your interest. Roger Skalbeck's "Tech Talk" just might make you want to go out and buy that new netbook computer, while Kasia Solon's "Book Review" just might make you want to arrange a visit to the Law Library of Congress to view some of the rarest of rare law books.

On a personal note, I am happy to announce that I have recently joined the reference staff at the Law Library of Congress, after three and a half rewarding years at The George Washington University Law School, Jacob Burns Law Library. Thus, when you have article ideas and other thoughts about *Lights*, please do contact me at [mbra@loc.gov](mailto:mbra@loc.gov). Happy reading! **LLL**

## Department of State *cont. from page 1*

Library's "Ask a Librarian" mailbox, which is monitored by the reference staff during the library's official hours. A case in point is an inquiry from the U.S. Mission in Geneva, Switzerland asking for information on the U.S. involvement in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We were able to provide the Mission not only with the specifics of the U.S.'s role in the creation of the document, but also with photographs of the official signing of the document into international law in 1948.

## Legal Research

Legal and legislative requests come to the Bunche Library from various State Department bureaus and offices. Since merging with the State Department Law Library in 2005, the Bunche Library has seen a dramatic increase in such requests. The library currently has two legal specialists, Joan Sherer and Linda Schweizer, to help facilitate these requests; however, each of our reference librarians is capable of fielding legal questions.

The chief legal users of the Bunche Library are staff members of the State Department's Office of the Legal Adviser. This office is responsible for giving advice on domestic and international law and other topics related to foreign relations and diplomacy. Its 175 attorney-advisers concentrate in areas such as consular affairs, diplomatic law, international claims and

investment disputes, human rights, political-military affairs, public diplomacy, treaty affairs, and the United Nations. During their time at the State Department, most of these attorneys will never see the inside of a court room, but some may indeed be fortunate enough to participate in a matter before the International Court of Justice or the Iran-U.S. Claims Tribunal.

## International Law Research

International law is central to the work of the State Department, and a primary source of international law is treaties. The Bunche Library routinely receives requests for the text of a treaty or other agreement to which the U.S. is a party, and for a routine question like this we check our online sources. If we are unable to find the agreement online, we will contact the State Department's Office of the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs (also known as the "treaty office") for its assistance. Other times we may receive an inquiry for materials related to a treaty. An example of this is when one of our patrons had the text of a bilateral investment treaty between the U.S. and the Russian Federation, but needed the annexes, side letters, and related attachments. The treaty had not been ratified, but we were fortunate to find all of these documents in the Senate Executive Report.

We also receive requests for treaties to which the U.S. is not a party. To illustrate, one of our patrons asked us to locate extradition treaties  
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# Globalization: A Force of Nature

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Frances Brilliantine

*Globalization is not something we can hold off or turn off . . . it is the economic equivalent of a force of nature—like wind or water.* — Bill Clinton

One of the great benefits of LLSDC membership is the opportunity to learn from other members, whether by chatting at a social event, attending a program, or reading an article in *Law Library Lights*. This issue of *Lights* is particularly exciting because its theme touches all of us. The study and practice of law is becoming increasingly globalized, creating unique challenges as well as opportunities for law librarians.

Here at Catholic University, the law school jointly sponsors the American Law Program with Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland. This program provides a unique opportunity to our law librarians: the chance to teach legal research to Jagiellonian law students right in the students' home country of Poland. To read more about the challenges of developing an American legal research course for foreign students, please read Steve Young's excellent article, "Teaching Legal Research: Taking the Show on the Road," in the November 2008 issue of *AALL Spectrum*.

## LLSDC News

The LLSDC calendar has been full of events these past few months—a big thank you to all of our Special Interest Sections, committees, and Focus Groups for providing members with such a wide variety of programs. Plans for the spring include the Legal Research Institutes, the Joint Spring Workshop, the LLSDC Town Hall Meeting, and the Sandy Peterson Lecture.

Other not-so-visible committees are also hard at work: the Nominations Committee is busy preparing a slate of candidates for the 2009 election, the Publications Committee is working with SIMA Inc. on a new contract for the General Legal Publications Union List, and the Scholarships and Grants Committee has awarded grants to several deserving members. The Website Committee is improving and updating content as well as designing a template that will incorporate our new logo. The Membership Committee continues to process renewals and assist members with questions. The Mentoring Committee has a new chair, Adeen Postar (American University), who plans to establish a mentoring program in the next few months. And we have a new committee as well: the Government Relations Committee, chaired by Leslie Street and Catherine Dunn (both of Georgetown). Look for more information on this committee in the coming months. Thanks to everyone for your hard work! As always, I welcome your thoughts and suggestions. My contact information is on the LLSDC web page and you may always e-mail me at [president@llsdc.org](mailto:president@llsdc.org). **LLL**

## Department of State *cont. from page 3*

between China, Japan, India, South Africa, Egypt, the Russian Federation, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Mexico, and Brazil. Using publicly accessible resources, we were able to find nearly all of the agreements, with only those concerning China and the Russian Federation proving to be unavailable.

It is also sometimes important to locate the negotiating history, known as a *travaux préparatoire*, for an international convention. The difficulty in compiling a *travaux préparatoire* depends on the date of the convention and the availability of the relevant documents, and older United Nations documents are not readily available online. For instance, when compiling a *travaux préparatoire* for the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, one of our reference librarians spent many hours copying documents from books and from microfiche. She also enlisted the help of the research unit at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in New York City, which provided us with documents available at the U.N. headquarters.

### Foreign Law Research

One gray area for our reference staff involves requests for foreign laws. Because the State Department is in the business of foreign relations and diplomacy, there is often a presumption that the Bunche Library will have direct access to foreign laws. This is not the case. We only have access to the laws available through our LexisNexis and Westlaw contracts and to those laws that may be found on the Internet. Our librarians utilize web sites such as Cornell Law School's Legal Information Institute (LII) world laws page, the Law Library of Congress's Nations of the World, GLIN, Globulex, World Legal Information Institute, and LLRX.com. They also use the print version of *Reynolds and Flores's Foreign Law: Current Sources of Codes and Legislation in Jurisdictions of the World* to locate the best sources for foreign laws.

Librarians at the IRCs can be helpful in tracking down information or resources from their native countries. Although they are not legal specialists, they do have local contacts, are acquainted with the local resources, and are fluent in the primary language.

Language can indeed be a barrier when

searching for foreign laws. While we have staff members who speak Spanish, French, and Ukrainian, researching in other languages can still be challenging. One example of this is when a regional aviation consultant working at the U.S. embassy in Baghdad, Iraq requested laws from the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Jordan, Germany, Croatia, and Poland pertaining to the management and regulation of their airports. Our librarians located the U.K., Canada, Australia, and Jordan laws in English translation online, but finding translated versions of laws for the other jurisdictions proved to be more difficult. One of our librarians posted a query on the INT-LAW listserv seeking the German laws, and a doctoral student at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf School of Law responded with a link to the law in German. Receiving the law in a foreign language, however, did not pose a problem because the State Department has its own translation service. Finally, one of our librarians worked with a foreign law specialist at the Law Library of Congress to locate the relevant laws for Croatia and Poland.

Indeed, foreign law specialists at the Law Library of Congress routinely provide us a lifeline when we are having difficulties with foreign law resources. When we have traveled down all of our own avenues for research and are still struggling for information, we can contact them and feel confident that they will supply us with a correct answer.

We used such a lifeline in 2003, when we received an inquiry from State Department personnel working with the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq. In lieu of an extradition treaty, the Authority wanted to know if Iraq had any laws that cover the procedures it follows for handing over a prisoner to another country. After a fruitless search, this query was submitted to the Law Library of Congress for their assistance. Dr. Issam Saliba, an Islamic Law Specialist, proved to be a vital source of information on Iraqi law and he responded with a detailed explanation of the applicable law.

### Collaborating with Other Librarians

Collaborating with librarians outside of the State Department is often the key to our success. On several occasions, posting a question on the INT-LAW listserv has offered us access to materials that otherwise would have been difficult to find. After one unproductive search for world-

*continued on page 6*

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## Department of State *cont. from page 5*

wide treaty statistics, a simple posting on INT-LAW netted us with several good responses. Our requesting patron was quite amazed at the quality and depth of the information we were able to provide.

The professional relationships that we have forged with colleagues in all types of libraries have enabled us to provide a higher level of service to our patrons, and we are more than willing to reciprocate when librarians near and far ask for our help.

### Requests from the Public

While the Bunche Library's primary focus is on inquiries from State Department employees, we do handle questions from the general public, on the condition that those questions relate to the work of the State Department. Three examples of such a scenario are: (1) a researcher looking for information on the establishment of an internal radio station by the Peking Legation between 1918 and 1922; (2) a professor at The Citadel in South Carolina looking for information on Secretary of State Robert Lansing and Ambassador Henry White, and the seal that they affixed to the Treaty of Versailles; and (3) a producer for a German television production company asking for information on looted art works during the Holocaust.

The library also allows outside researchers to use the collection and services when the State

Department is the sole source for the information. For instance, this past year we hosted two visitors from Brandeis University in Massachusetts who were researching Russell Nathan Boyd, a State Department Library employee under Secretary of State Hamilton Fish in the 1870s. We also assisted a Filipino diplomat who was searching for information in back issues of the *Foreign Service Journal* regarding Philippine trainees after World War II. Visitors are allowed to make photocopies at no charge, but laptops are not permitted.

### Conclusions

It was not that long ago that all foreign and international law research had to be done using only print sources. In the past two years, many of the major international law resources have also become available through online subscription services. With a budget that seems to shrink every year, it has been difficult for us to keep up with the demand for online resources. As funds become available, the Bunche Library is committed to providing services that have the broadest audience.

International cooperation is paramount to our success in the global community of librarians; and the professionals at the Bunche Library are expanding their collective universe in an effort to meet all of the information needs of the U.S. Department of State. **LLL**

# Education Without Boundaries: The Online MLS

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**Note:** The author is currently pursuing her master's degree in library science from San Jose State University, and would like to thank Jennifer Spector for her ideas about online education.

For the past three semesters, I have attended San Jose State University (SJSU) to pursue my Master of Library and Information Science degree. I take classes in a non-traditional setting (everywhere my laptop takes me) and I communicate with colleagues who live as close to me as the Eastern Shore of Maryland and as far away as the South Pacific. In each course, we share insights into librarianship, as well as into current events and our cultures, which collectively shape and affect our professional lives. My most recent classes included students from over 15 states, a student located in Burma, and two students from the Northern Mariana Island of Saipan. My professors themselves are part of the distance makeup, some teaching courses at SJSU while living near the campus in San Jose, California, with others living in places such as San Diego, California and western Washington state.

The Internet, instead of spelling the end of libraries, has instead liberated us librarians from our buildings as the only places to learn and practice our craft. I am what the industry calls a distance learner; all my course work is conducted via online systems provided through SJSU. SJSU is one of many universities harnessing the numerous communications systems now in existence to create higher education that is not bounded by geography, but instead oriented towards a multi-dimensional experience.

Several years ago, I realized that without a master's degree in library science, my career could not progress. As I began to look around at programs in the Mid-Atlantic region, I realized that I would be beholden to the schedules and systems of academic institutions designed best for full-time students and that charge premium tuition. I work full-time, have small children, and need flexibility. Distance education

has provided me the opportunity to develop essential skills as an information professional; opportunities that would not have been available to me otherwise.

## Why Online Education Now?

Pollster John Zogby, in his recent book, *The Way We'll Be*, describes a number of demographic and economic factors that are converging to promote online education. Zogby notes that, in the past, correspondence and online education were largely viewed as second-best academic programs, often stationed in an independent office in a far corner of campus or provided by a trade or for-profit entity. Today, many educational programs are considering how to integrate online components into their formal curriculum. Zogby also notes that the relative infrastructure costs for online programs are much lower per student compared to in-person programs, and, as a consequence, well respected colleges and universities have expanded their distance learning and online programs in a number of fields—especially those in graduate and professional training. As academic institutions have found value in offering online courses, workplace demands for the continual upgrading of skills have, at the same time, required more and more workers to seek affordable educational options.<sup>1</sup>

These trends have deeply benefited librarians. The number of graduate library science programs in the U.S. had been in decline from the late 1970s through the early 1990s, when over a dozen such programs were shuttered.<sup>2</sup>

*continued on page 8*

<sup>1</sup>See John Zogby, *The Way We'll Be: The Zogby Report on the Transformation of the American Dream* (1st ed. 2008) (Publisher: Random House; ISBN: 9781400064502).

<sup>2</sup>For a listing of institutions with graduate library science programs that have been discontinued and/or are no longer accredited by the American Library Association, see Accredited Library and Information Studies Master's Programs from 1925 through Present, <http://www.ala.org/ala/educationcareers/education/accreditedprograms/directory/1925present/index.cfm> (last visited Jan. 28, 2009).

The Internet, instead of spelling the end of libraries, has instead liberated us librarians from our buildings as the only places to learn and practice our craft.

Online education is not for all types of students or all types of programs; it is a markedly different experience from attending class in a physical classroom. However, as technology and economic pressures both grow, it is likely that online and hybrid courses will be a part of most library science programs.

## The Online MLS *continued from page 7*

These closures left large swaths of the country, in particular the Western U.S., with relatively few educational outlets to provide this degree. The Internet and proliferation of communication technologies, instead of replacing libraries, provided a wider range of opportunities for those interested in pursuing a master's degree in library science. Many of the graduate library science programs that survived are now able to use online components to attract a sufficient number of students and, thus, better ensure the program's long-term viability.

### Is Online Education Credible?

In their 2000-01 survey focusing on entry-level job opportunities, Hak Joon Kim and James Michael Kusack found that employers did not differentiate between graduate library science degrees that were earned online versus those that were earned within traditional classrooms.<sup>3</sup> Charity Bracerros and Tina Ching followed this more general survey of libraries with a 2008 survey of the law librarian community—which found widespread acceptance of a degree largely obtained online. Only four percent of law library employers expressed concern about the preparedness of such graduates, and comments provided in the survey indicated that many employers viewed such a degree as actually enhancing the technology skills of a candidate. As with traditional degrees, employers viewed past job experiences in libraries and other information environments as central to their decisions to hire candidates with online degrees.<sup>4</sup>

Online education is not for all types of students or all types of programs; it is a markedly different experience from attending class in a physical classroom. However, as technology and economic pressures both grow, it is likely that online and hybrid online courses will be a part of most graduate library science programs.

<sup>3</sup> See Hak Joon Kim & James Michael Kusack, *Distance Education and the New MLS: The Employer's Perspective*, 46 J. EDUC. FOR LIBR. & INFO. SCI. 36 (2005).

<sup>4</sup> See Charity S. Bracerros & Tina S. Ching, *Hiring (or not) the Distance Grad*, AALL SPECTRUM, Mar. 2008, at 24.

## Factors to Consider When Looking for a Quality Online Program:

- What is the institution's residency requirement? Many of the colleges and universities with graduate library science programs are experimenting with the online components of their programs, and may require you to spend time on campus at some point while you are working on your degree. Some programs will provide you a cohort with which to study, while others will allow you to pursue the degree at your own pace.
- How much experience does the particular program have towards implementing their curriculum in an online environment? Not all classes or projects translate well in an online environment. Will you need particular courses that require a more visual experience?
- How much technology support does the program provide students and faculty? While much of the technology is fairly familiar to most, such as email and discussion boards, there may be some tools now in use in such environments that you may not have encountered. A quality program will require training on these technologies.
- Does the program train its professors about the nuances of the online environment? Discussion boards provide an asynchronous experience without a lot of nuance, and it usually takes time for the class to develop a personality. Professors who know how to advance discussion and like to participate in the dialogue are an important part of the experience. Ask about the training requirements that the program has for professors before they teach a course online. When looking at fellow student comments, look for comments that describe the professor's perceived comfort with the online setup, for not every good professor's style translates well to a virtual environment.
- What is the range of technology implemented for each course? Online education means using more than the Web or discussion boards. A quality online education program will provide a range of services that includes online conferencing, video lectures, and class sharing systems that utilize tools such as discussion boards, chat, blogs, and wikis. Some of the popular online systems currently in use are Blackboard, Angel Course Management System, and WebCT.

- How well does the program provide resources and systems for distance learning students? Does the program have a distance education liaison? If such support is not in place, the program has probably not adequately thought through what is needed to support a quality distance learning program.
- From where does the program draw students? Is the draw mainly regional, or do students come from all across the country and even from around the world? Connecting to the university is a challenge when you do not visit the school, and your fellow students will provide much of your sense of community.

### What to Ask of Yourself:

- How self directed do you want to be? The asynchronous environment requires one to connect to the class more frequently but for shorter periods of time. You must make a schedule for yourself to fully participate in and utilize the particular lecture structure of a professor. It is unlikely that you will ever spend less time on an online course than you will with a classroom course.
- Do you need to feel the camaraderie of the classroom? This may sound odd, until you do not have it. If you are posting to a discussion board at 3:00 a.m., it is definitely a different experience than being in a structured classroom environment. If you participate in an online academic program, it is possible you may never set foot on campus, even to graduate. The lack of interpersonal experience is one of the problems often cited by distance education students. It is worth asking yourself if you are comfortable with possibly being tied to a cohort that connects only remotely in this new Web 2.0 world. If you are unable to develop a class network that satisfies you, participation in professional associations such as the Law Librarians' Society of Washington, D.C. (LLSDC) is an excellent way to connect with those with similar educational experiences.
- How comfortable are you to adapting to new technology? Do you have someone that can help you if you are not? There is no way around it—you have to be able to troubleshoot and not panic. This, again, is a time management issue; while you may not spend time commuting to a class on campus, you will need to spend time learning and

adapting to the applicable systems. There is a great benefit, however, in learning such systems—for you, like me, may work with librarian colleagues all across the country (and even the world) and come to utilize such tools in your professional communication.

I have a while to go in my program, as I am only pursuing it part-time, but thus far I have received a lot of value from the experience. I have had to use a wider range of technology than in my current job, and my writing has improved due to the practice I have had posting to discussion boards, as well as other course assignments. My classmates truly provide a global perspective on library practice, for the vast majority of them have worked in a library setting and share research stories ranging from what it is like to assist patrons in a small town in the U.S. to what it is like to research under conditions of rolling electrical blackouts in Burma. The asynchronous environment makes group projects seem like working for a national or international corporation or entity.

I have missed having the connections that one may build from meeting classmates in person, and Facebook is not a substitute. The online systems are technology driven, and a hiccup in the system, such as a server going down, can be traumatic. However, it is my prediction that when future graduate library school students discuss their academic experiences, they will describe increasingly rich, multi-dimensional programs that combine the camaraderie of the traditional classroom environment with the flexibility and practicality of distance learning.

### For More on Online Programs:

*Comparison Guide to Distance Ed Programs for Getting the MLS:* <http://www.becomealibrarian.org/DistanceEdComparison.htm>

“Life as I Know It” blog: <http://scruffynurf.wordpress.com> (an insightful diary on the ups and downs of an online program) **LLL**

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IAAL's Annual Course on International Law is a bit different from most library conferences in that it provides a unique opportunity to meet and converse with colleagues from all over the world about the common challenges of our profession.

# A Few December Days in Puerto Rico: *A Review of the IALL's 27th Annual Course*

*Herb Somers, Foreign/International Law Librarian, The George Washington University Law School, Jacob Burns Law Library, [hsomers@law.gwu.edu](mailto:hsomers@law.gwu.edu)*

This past December, I had the pleasure of traveling to beautiful and warm San Juan, Puerto Rico to attend the International Association of Law Libraries' (IALL) 27th Annual Course on International Law Librarianship, entitled "Puerto Rico & the Caribbean: Legal Information in Multiple Legal Systems." IALL, founded in 1959, is a worldwide organization of over 600 members from more than 50 countries, and includes librarians from all types of legal collections ranging from academic law libraries, corporate libraries, national and parliamentary libraries, as well as administrative agency and court libraries. IALL also publishes the *International Journal of Legal Information*, which is an indispensable periodical for librarians interested in international legal research.

IAAL's Annual Course on International Law is a bit different from most library conferences in that it provides a unique opportunity to meet and converse with colleagues from all over the world about the common challenges of our profession. In addition, it offers total immersion into the social and legal culture of the host country through the numerous programs and excursions held during the course. By the conference's end, an attendee gets a good sense of the variety, complexity, and history of the local legal environment, as well as the cultural forces that continue to shape its development.

This year's course was no exception, as a diverse program explored the rich legal traditions of Puerto Rico as well as its place in the larger Caribbean region. The opening reception at the Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe featured a wonderful troupe of dancers who introduced participants to the folk dances of the various regions of Puerto Rico. Indeed, it was a very enjoyable beginning to a very successful conference.

The first day of the conference focused on Puerto Rico and featured Professor Emilio Pantojas Garcia, political sociologist and senior researcher at the Centro de Investigaciones Sociales of the University of Puerto Rico. His

lecture explored the heritage of Puerto Rico as a colony of Spain and then subsequently of the United States. He also explained the effect of the "triangular trade" between Europe, the Caribbean, and Africa, which fueled the trafficking of slaves and made the Caribbean colonies extremely important for the economic development of the European powers—which later sparked international conflict as the European powers jockeyed for control over the region and its sugar industry.

Finally, he detailed Puerto Rico's transition from a plantation economy to that of a service-based economy specializing in the tourism, leisure, and entertainment industries. Later sessions on the first day looked at: (1) the development of Caribbean jurisprudence in the area of the death penalty, (2) the unique place of Puerto Rico as a mixed jurisdiction with roots in Spanish and American law, and (3) the provision of legal education in Puerto Rico.

The second day of the conference took a broader look at the larger Caribbean region. Professor Debra Evenson, Visiting Professor at Rutgers University School of Law—Camden, discussed the Cuban legal system, describing its rocky transition from a planned economy dependent on the former Soviet Union to a nation struggling to integrate itself into the global economy. Professor Evenson also speculated on what Cuba might look like in a post-Fidel Castro world, and described the modest reforms that his brother Raúl has already implemented as he took the reins of power in the wake of Fidel's recent illness. Other interesting programs held that day looked at book publishing and the book trade in the Caribbean, and the challenges that exist in acquiring and printing legal materials in these smaller jurisdictions. Following presentations on the sources of Puerto Rican law and on Puerto Rican legal research, the day concluded with visits to the Puerto Rico Legislative Library, the Puerto Rico Supreme Court Library, the University of Puerto Rico

Law Library, and the library at McConnell Valdés LLC.

The final day of the conference explored some of the international organizations of importance to the Caribbean region. Ms. Cheryl Thomson-Barrow, General Counsel to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), spoke of her organization's efforts to harmonize laws among its members in order to promote regional trade and to develop a single market and economy. Madame Justice Desiree Bernard, Judge of the Caribbean Court of Justice, spoke about the establishment of this relatively new international court and its jurisdiction among members of CARICOM. The Court interprets provisions of the Treaty of Chaguaramas, which established the entity that became CARICOM, as well as adjudicates disputes that may arise among member states and/or their nationals.

The final day continued with one session on legal research in the Caribbean region focusing on Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and two sessions exploring the unique legal and political relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States. Professors Efrén Rivera Ramos and José Julián Álvarez González,

both of the University of Puerto Rico Law School, offered a historical review of the development of this relationship and the democratic deficit that is inherent in a system where the inhabitants of Puerto Rico have no vote in U.S. federal elections. They also described the pros and cons of the Puerto Rican independence movement, highlighting the difficult choices that citizens of this island will need to make if they choose the path of independence.

The conference concluded with an optional day in Ponce, Puerto Rico, known as the "Pearl of the South," where participants visited the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico. A program on canon law was held there and the day concluded with a city tour of Ponce and a reception at the Museum Castillo Serrallés.

The Annual Course on International Law Librarianship is a wonderful way to learn international legal research and to meet librarians from throughout the world. For more information about the International Association of Law Libraries and their programs, visit their Web site at: <http://www.iall.org>. The 28th Annual Course will take place October 4-8, 2009, in Istanbul, Turkey. **LLL**

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## Strongwater, Silver Lace, and Wanton Dalliance

Robert Bratton, *Cataloging Librarian, The George Washington University Law School,  
Jacob Burns Law Library, [rbratton@law.gwu.edu](mailto:rbratton@law.gwu.edu)*

A review of *Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County, Massachusetts*; Edited by George Francis Dow; Transcribed and Abstracted from the Original Manuscript by Harriet S. Tapley; Essex Institute, 1911-1975; 9 volumes; Digitized and available online in HTML format.

I recently cataloged an electronic resource that piqued my interest enough to write this brief, informal review of it. The title: *Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County, Massachusetts*. It was originally published as nine volumes between 1911 and 1975 by the Essex Institute of Salem, Massachusetts. The introduction of the first volume states that the authors intended to transcribe in "abstracted

form" the records of the Quarterly Courts of colonial Massachusetts, which existed from 1636 to 1686. These courts, among the very earliest in the colonies, handled a great variety of matters, from certifying births, to probating wills, to granting divorces, to conducting jury trials. The addition of this resource to our catalog further strengthens the Jacob Burns Law Library's strong and growing collection of materials related to early U.S. legal history and witchcraft trials. These courts are not the same court that heard the famous Salem witch trials, but their records contain many accusations of witchcraft, showing that the concept was already a powerful force. In addition to being a valuable artifact for historical legal research, the Records

*continued on page 12*

I recently cataloged an electronic resource that piqued my interest enough to write this brief, informal view of it. The title: *Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County, Massachusetts*.

The most useful and intriguing part of the *Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County* is each volume's extensive index. The indices are very thorough and each entry links directly to the relevant digitized page.

## Wanton Dalliance *continued from page 11*

are a rich source of genealogical information, since virtually everyone who lived in the environs of the courts was probably a matter of record at some point.

This resource is part of the Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive and Transcription Project, which is an electronic repository of digitized primary source materials relating to the Salem witch trials of 1692. The Project was begun and is currently managed by Dr. Benjamin Ray, Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Virginia. To create this resource, the Project utilized the manuscript and rare book collections of a variety of libraries, archives, and historical societies. In addition to court records, such as the ones from Essex County, the Project also includes many historical maps of Salem Village, Salem, and Andover, Massachusetts, as well as related literary works by, among others, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and John Greenleaf Whittier.

The most useful and intriguing part of the *Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County* is each volume's extensive index. The indices are very thorough and each entry links directly to the relevant digitized page. Once in the digital book, one may "flip" the "pages" forward and back by clicking the ">" and "<" symbols. I was astounded at some of the crimes listed in the indices. "Wanton dalliance," "wearing silver lace," "uncleanness," "dressing fashionably," "entertaining Quakers," "selling strongwater to Indians," and "drawing away daughter's affections" were all crimes, punishable by fines. Some of the entries seem so bizarre one cannot resist clicking on the link to be instantly delivered to the relevant page. "Dancing, profane," led to: "Thomas Wheeler fined for profane and foolish dancing, singing, and wanton speeches, probably being drunk." "Stubbornness" led to: "Philip, an Irishman, servant to Mr. Samuel Symons sentenced to the house of correction for stubbornness and other offences." "Suffering tippling in house" led to: "Mr. Ruck presented Mr. Edmund Batter for baking of white bread contrary to order of court and for allowing tippling at his house."

As the crimes get more serious, the punishments get more gruesome. Punishment for sexual offenses usually involved the condemned being whipped a specified number

of times. Under one entry for burglary: "General Court referred the case of Thomas West, concerning burglary and stealing on the Lord's day, to this court, and he was found guilty. It being his first offence, he was ordered to be branded in the forehead with a 'B' and have one of his ears cut off." What makes punishments like this all the more disturbing is that they were meted out following criminal procedures very different from our contemporary ones. Volume II contains an introduction to 17th Century court practices, and includes this passage: "Much of the evidence introduced into trials was in writing, generally it was a mere statement, written by the clerk, seldom signed by the witness . . ."

As I managed to tear myself away from reading this resource, I was confronted with a cataloging conundrum: is this a new resource (catalog as a web page) or is this a reproduction (catalog as a reproduction of a book)? After some head scratching and consultation with my colleague Gordon Van Pelt, I decided that it was a digital version of a multi-volume print work, and therefore cataloged it as a reproduction.

If you would like to view the bibliographic record:  
<http://128.165.132.10/record=b1351951>

If you would like to peruse the resource itself:  
<http://etext.virginia.edu/salem/witchcraft/Essex/> [LLL](#)

# Making the Catalog a Better Tool

## Using 970 Fields for Describing Hierarchical Databases

Sima Mirkin, *Catalog Librarian* and Michael J. Petit, *Head of Cataloging & Bibliographic Access*, American University, Washington College of Law, Pence Law Library, [smirkin@wcl.american.edu](mailto:smirkin@wcl.american.edu) and [mpetit@wcl.american.edu](mailto:mpetit@wcl.american.edu)

At the Washington College of Law, Pence Law Library, we are striving to provide better access to legal materials. One of the aspects of better access is the creation of contextual links that would elevate an online catalog from being merely a sort of warehouse inventory instrument to an educational and discovery tool. The results of the queries would lead researchers to new materials and resources they previously did not know existed. Also, creating intelligent access points keeps the results lists precise, leading to better access to materials in the online environment. This is one of the sizable advantages of doing research in the library's online catalog, as opposed to sifting through thousands of Google results screens.

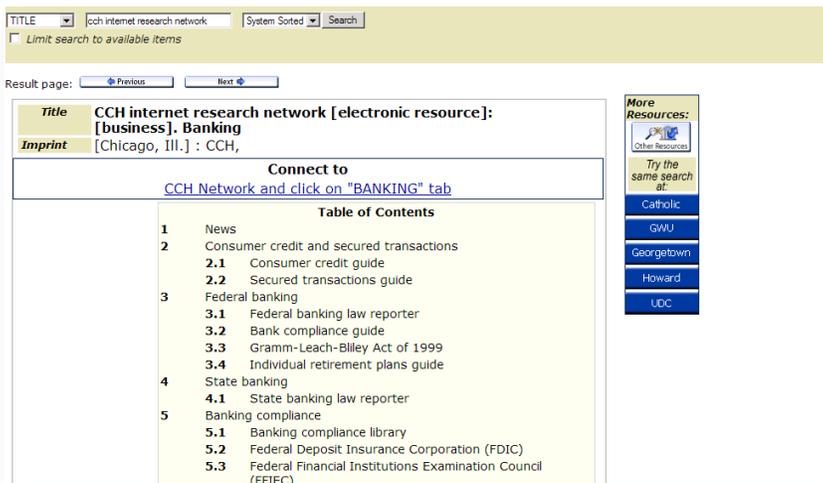
The goal of achieving better access to online information is dependent upon the level of bibliographic description of online materials in the catalog. Description of hierarchical law databases presents special challenges for catalogers because of the multilevel analytics of these resources. For example, how would one create intelligible bibliographic records for databases such as the BNA ALL Databases or the CCH Internet Research Network?

For the past few years, the Pence Law Library has subscribed to monthly enhancement files from Blackwell's Tables of Contents (TOC) Catalog Enrichment Service. Blackwell adds table of contents fields to the bibliographical records, assigning them 970 MARC tags. The 970 field allows indexing of its subfields by author, title, and keyword, providing more comprehensive access to the cataloged item.

Participation in the Blackwell's TOC service gave us an idea regarding a way to create a more detailed bibliographical description of complex databases. We decided to create individual records for each "tab" title within the database, and then utilize the 970 fields for the description of titles and subtitles under each tab. The 970 fields fulfill the purpose in these records since they allow both retrieval and hierarchical description of the contents. By using 970 fields,

we were able to remove the bulky 505 and 740 fields from our records. Also, the presentation of the 970 fields on the OPAC screen creates a much more visible and tidier display. This makes our catalog records easier to read and understand for patrons. Figure 1 shows an OPAC display of the portion of the record for the "Banking" tab of the CCH Internet Research Network, with the Table of Contents fields reflecting titles and subtitles within this tab.

Figure 1



The use of 970 MARC tags allows for a hierarchical display of the TOC data within the database. The first indicator determines the entry's inclusion in the index and may have three values: 0 (not indexed, for example, Preface); 1 (indexed); 2 (citable title). The second indicator determines the number of indents according to the hierarchical level of the entry.

The subfields in the 970 tag further assist in the formatting and indexing of data.

- Subfield l — the section or chapter number
- Subfield t — the name of the subchapter
- Subfields c & d — personal and corporate names
- Subfield f — inverted (indexable) personal name

*continued on page 14*

## A Better Tool *continued from page 13*

Figure 2 shows the MARC display of the same record for the “Banking” tab. The first indicators have a value of 1 for each entry, which means all of them are indexed. The value of the second indicator, for example, for the subchapter Secured Transactions Guide is 2. This means that the system will display this entry with one hierarchical indent (see Figure 1). Only subfields 1 and t are used in this particular example.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 2

TOC	970	1	1	1 tNews
TOC	970	1	1	2 tConsumer credit and secured transactions
TOC	970	1	2	2.1 tConsumer credit guide
TOC	970	1	2	2.2 tSecured transactions guide
TOC	970	1	1	3 tFederal banking
TOC	970	1	2	3.1 tFederal banking law reporter
TOC	970	1	2	3.2 tBank compliance guide
TOC	970	1	2	3.3 tGramm-Leach-Bliley Act of 1999
TOC	970	1	2	3.4 tIndividual retirement plans guide
TOC	970	1	1	4 tState banking
TOC	970	1	2	4.1 tState banking law reporter

The usage of 970 fields for describing complex databases is an alternative to creating individual bibliographical records for each title within databases or to providing links to each individual title via Electronic Resource Management resource records. In addition to being access points, the 970 fields provide:

- clear collocation of tab titles, immediately visible from the search results screen (see Figure 3)
- collocation of titles in the form of Table of Contents within the tab and umbrella titles, available from individual bibliographical records screens
- visibility of the whole database content as the patrons link to a desired title in hierarchical steps

We believe that by describing hierarchical materials as a whole with detailed and searchable content, catalogers can create additional paths for discovery of materials for patrons. This approach adds an educational aspect to an online catalog, making it a better tool for legal research. **LLL**

Figure 3

<sup>1</sup> Further information on these subfields may be found at pages 4-5 of Blackwell’s Book Services, Tables of Contents Enrichment Guide, <http://www.blackwell.com/downloads/TOCEnrichment.pdf> (last visited Jan. 22, 2009).

Kasia Solon, Rare Books Librarian, The George Washington University Law School, Jacob Burns Law Library, [ksolon@law.gwu.edu](mailto:ksolon@law.gwu.edu)

***Conductor Generalis, or, A Guide for Justices of the Peace, and Coroners, Constables, Jury-Men, Over-seers of the Poor, Surveyors of High-Ways, Governors of Fairs, Gaolers, &c.: A Treatise Briefly Shewing the Extent and Latitude of the Several Offices, with the Power of the Officers Therein: To Which Is Added, Copies of Warrants, Mittimus, Recognizances, and Other Necessary Instruments;*** William and Andrew Bradford, 1711, 190 pages; <http://lcn.loc.gov/2007585694>.

As I wrote in the last issue of *Law Library Lights*, I am taking a detour with this year's book review column to survey recent acquisitions of rare or archival material by Washington, D.C. area law libraries. For this issue, I am focusing on the Law Library of Congress and one of their "new" additions, the very first edition of a popular early American title, *Conductor Generalis*, from 1711.

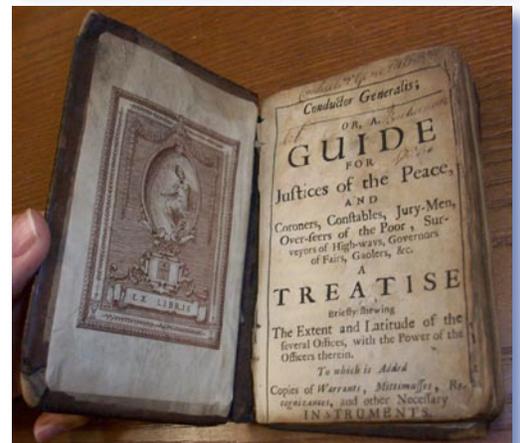
Knowing that I work in the same town as the largest law library in the world, I have been curious to check out what the Law Library of Congress has in the way of rare books. A lot, as you no doubt guessed. Dr. Meredith Shedd-Driskel, Law Curator for the library's Rare Book Collection, kindly arranged for me to visit and take a gander at one of their books. Mark Strattner, Assistant Director of Law Library Services in the Collection Services Division (which includes the law curatorship), graciously played host on the actual day of my visit.

### An Abundance of Riches

Before turning to the books, it is interesting to consider where the law curatorship falls within the Law Library of Congress's structure and its history. The Law Library has two Directorates, the Directorate of Legal Research and the Directorate of Law Library Services. Under the Directorate of Law Library Services, there are two divisions, Public Services and Collection Services. Acquisitions and cataloging are handled by the main Library of Congress. When the previous curator left in 1992, the position fell by the wayside until Congress once again

funded it in 2001. At the time that the Law Library was able to revive the curatorship, discussion arose over whether it should slide under Public or Collection Services. The library ultimately decided to fit the curatorship within Collection Services because so much of the work involves managing the collection itself. Though the Library of Congress now adds all newly acquired rare law books to an online catalog, there is a considerable portion of the collection that is not included in an online or paper catalog. One of the continuing challenges for managing the Law Library's rare books is keeping a handle on what it owns.

This abundance of riches can lead to some funny situations, including one involving an incunable. Incunables are books published between a fifty year period, from the invention of printing around the mid-fifteenth century through 1501. They are highly prized because, beyond their content, the way in which the books were printed provides insight into the birth of printing. Mr. Strattner recounted one time when the Law Library was trying to track down a book published in 1499, which is technically an incunable. Eventually someone found the elusive book, inconspicuously shelved among the Law Library's general collection. When it comes to rare books, the Law Library of Congress has almost too much of a good thing. The location of this incunable was definitely an anomaly, though—the Law Library's incunables have been kept in a vault with an alarm system since at least 1981, when the Law Library moved into its current home, the James Madison Memorial Building.



*continued on page 16*

Based on pre-existing English models, *Conductor Generalis* served as a manual for justices of the peace in the colonies. During this period of early American history with a full-fledged judiciary in the distant future, justices of the peace were more critical to everyday affairs than regular court judges.

## Book Review *continued from page 15*

When I wrote that the Law Library has “a lot” of rare books, I was admittedly being a bit facetious. Yet the reality is that it is unclear just how many rare books the Law Library has. Best estimates are of approximately 50,000 volumes, some of which are intermixed with the regular collection—no surprise given how long the Law Library has been around. This begs the question of how the Law Library defines a rare book and the answer is generally anything produced before 1801. There are some notable exceptions, starting with state materials if they predate 1820 or are from a state’s preceding territorial era. Thus, for instance, the library’s Rare Book Collection encompasses Massachusetts material up to 1820 (though a state well before), housed right next to Michigan materials up till 1837 (the year it became a state). Another exception touches on the Law Library’s vast trials collection, with that portion predating 1861 considered rare. The Law Library has some materials that override chronological cut-offs, such as works relating to the Lincoln assassination, though materials circa 1865 seem downright new in comparison to their other centuries-old holdings. And the Rare Book Collection also includes at least one modern piece, the Vatican’s 2007 *Processus Contra Templarios* reproduction of the 1308 trial against the Knights Templar, which I wrote about in my Fall 2008 book review for *Law Library Lights*.

### An Eighteenth Century How-to Guide for Dummies

As I have noted, the rare book I had a chance to peruse while at the Law Library was *Conductor Generalis*. This work was first published in 1711 in New York by the father and son William and Andrew Bradford. Legal scholars consider this book to be the first general American legal treatise and, as indicated by the multiple editions that ensued, this first effort launched a very popular title.

Based on pre-existing English models, *Conductor Generalis* served as a manual for justices of the peace in the colonies. During this period of early American history with a full-fledged judiciary in the distant future, justices of the peace were more critical to everyday affairs than regular court judges. According to the noted law librarian Morris

L. Cohen, manuals for justices of the peace “have in common the following features: a first section of legal terms and procedures; a second part setting forth the duties and responsibilities of various public officers, primarily justices of the peace and other peace officers; and a selection of forms, excerpts from British legal sources and documents, and occasional American and federal laws.”<sup>1</sup> In a sense, the *Conductor Generalis* title is an eighteenth century equivalent of the Idiot’s Guide to Justices of the Peace.

### A Rare Book Many of Us Own

Given the success of *Conductor Generalis*, one might expect the holdings of our local law libraries today to bear its traces. And in fact, after taking a look at WorldCat and local catalogs, one finds that the rare book *Conductor Generalis* verges on common. About every academic law library in the area holds at least some version of it. Georgetown has five editions in print, and is the only library in the area to have the 1722 second edition. American University has four different print editions while George Washington has two. Besides originals, many of the libraries have the 2002 Lawbook Exchange reprint of that 1722 second edition. Many probably also have at least one edition available electronically or on microfiche. In particular, the Making of Modern Law database and Hein Online’s Legal Classics library contain PDF versions of an 1801 edition. Interestingly, there is a 1749 edition that credits one B. Franklin as publisher, better known to us by his full name, Benjamin Franklin. Of that 1749 edition, the Law Library of Congress is the only library in the area to own a copy.

Despite the lasting presence this title has achieved through its various iterations, the first edition that the Law Library of Congress owns is a rare book among rare books. Harvard Law Library owns the only other copy known to exist. The way in which libraries have a chance to acquire such a rarity depends to a large extent on their relationships with rare book dealers. The Law Library of Congress has ties with various law book dealers, including the vendor who brought the book to their attention, Meyer Boswell Books in San Francisco: <http://www.meyerbos.com>. Because of the first edition’s

<sup>1</sup> MORRIS L. COHEN, 3 BIBLIOGRAPHY OF EARLY AMERICAN LAW 6-10 (1998).

importance to the legal history of the United States, the Law Library was the natural party to purchase and house it.

### The Seditiously Libellous Backstory

Now that I have had a chance to research the publishers a bit, I wish that the book contained some discussion of freedom of the press. Because among the “firsts” associated with this book is that of the publisher William Bradford being arguably the earliest American champion of freedom of the press.<sup>2</sup> *Conductor Generalis* states that William Bradford and his son Andrew printed this book in New York, but they were originally from Pennsylvania. Behind this change of address lies a whole tale in and of itself. William Bradford was the first printer in the Pennsylvania Colony, but was arrested for seditious libel in 1691. He suffered

<sup>2</sup> Jos. R. Long, *The Freedom of the Press*, 5 VA. L. REV. 225, 239 (1918).

a lengthy imprisonment and two Quaker judges tried him in 1692. Apparently he acted as his own counsel and argued that the jury, not the judges, should decide the character of his publication. After some legal wrangling, the governor released him and persuaded him to move to New York—and in this one stroke Bradford became the first printer in that colony. By the time father and son published *Conductor Generalis* in 1711, William Bradford at least would have had first hand experience with the nascent judicial branch of government.

With just this single volume, in both its content and backstory, one can learn so much about the early legal history of the United States. How fortunate we are to have the Law Library of Congress and its Rare Book Collection in our own backyard, so to speak.

Thanks to Meredith Shedd-Driskel and Mark Strattner for making this column possible. And as before, I welcome suggestions on rare or archival items in the vicinity to highlight. You can contact me at [ksolon@law.gwu.edu](mailto:ksolon@law.gwu.edu). **LLL**

## Lessons in Scalability

Todd Venie, Reference Librarian, Georgetown University Law Library, [tmv22@law.georgetown.edu](mailto:tmv22@law.georgetown.edu)

A review of *Planet Google: One Company's Audacious Plan to Organize Everything We Know*, by Randall Stross; ISBN: 9781416546917; Free Press, 2008, 275 pages, \$26 (hardback).

In *Planet Google*, Randall Stross, a columnist for the New York Times and a business professor at San Jose State University, attempts a brief but comprehensive summary of how Google got to where it is today, and where it may be going in the future. In following Google's development from an academic project to the most dominant presence on the Web, Stross focuses on several different Google applications and services, explaining how they work, how they were developed, and how they make money (or why some of them have yet to make any). Most importantly, Stross presents each of Google's products as it relates to the dominant theme of the company's success: scalability.

As Stross explains, when Google began as a graduate school project of its founders, former Stanford Ph.D. students Larry Page

and Sergey Brin, Yahoo was the Web's most popular search engine. Yahoo's decline, and Google's simultaneous rise in popularity, was almost solely the result of Google's ability to grow along with the Web. As more pages were added, Google's search technology automatically indexed them and, more importantly, used the links on those new pages to formulate its search results. Yahoo's model, however, relied on human editors to create an index of reliable and informative pages, organized by category. As the Web grew, Yahoo's human editors simply could not keep up, while Google's automated process could.

In the parlance of software engineering, this ability to quickly and efficiently accommodate new information is termed “scalability.” Google's scalability relies on its human-created algorithm,



*continued on page 18*

**Planet Google is written neither by nor for librarians. This is not a failing of the book, of course, but it does affect the scope of the work.... The end result is an interesting and well-written summation of where Google is and where it may be going. While the book is not aimed at librarians, it will provide them with valuable information about the Web's most widely used information-finding tool.**

## **Lessons in Scalability** *cont. from page 17*

which constantly searches Web pages and adds them to its index. When performing a search for a particular term, Google ranks pages based not on the number of times the term appears in a resulting page, but rather how often other pages link to that page. But the algorithm goes further, also evaluating how many times the referring pages are linked to. The net result is that Google's search results can scale; they are constantly evolving along with the Web, taking into account new pages, new links to pages, and new links to the pages that link to pages.

The nature of the Google algorithm has, of course, been widely discussed as the chief reason for Google's success. Stross, however, also highlights another aspect of Google's scalability which has not been mentioned as frequently. This aspect is its massive hardware infrastructure, which has enabled Google to continually add new pages to its index, as well as to run its complicated algorithm and return results in fractions of a second. Stross details how Google's humble origins, when Larry Page and Sergey Brin had more ideas and time than capital, forced it to make its own servers, from personal computer components. The success of this approach led Google to continue to manufacture its own less expensive servers, even after it had the funds to purchase the same hardware used by other Web companies. This decision in turn enabled the company to add storage and processing power cheaply, again allowing its operations to scale to the always-growing Web.

Within this context, Stross describes and evaluates Google's newer applications. He includes chapters focused on Google Book Search, YouTube, Google Maps, Google Earth, and Google Docs. Most of these are projects that Google has developed internally, with the notable exception of YouTube, which was already operational when Google purchased it. Stross provides background for each of these applications, briefly describing what they do, how they were developed, and their chief competitors, if any.

The book is most interesting when Stross addresses whether these applications are able to scale the way that Google's Web search does, and whether these applications can make Google any money. The automated algorithm has not worked as well with some applications,

like Google News, which does not use any human editors to determine story placement. The result is that while Google has surpassed Yahoo as the top destination for Web search, Yahoo's news portal, which still utilizes human editors, generates three times as much traffic as Google's.

Other applications do seem to scale well but have nevertheless failed to produce significant revenue for Google. Among these applications, YouTube is probably the best example. Stross provides an interesting history of video-sharing on the Web, including the problems presented when trying to search for video. Google initially tried to solve this problem by searching the text of closed-captioning scripts accompanying video files. This effort failed largely because only video files produced by large media companies had closed-caption scripts to search. Yahoo seemed to gain the upper hand in video searching when it addressed this problem by asking Web video hosting sites to provide some descriptive information to their video files. This information—which includes the title, author, and performers—could be successfully recognized by an automated search engine.

But Google ultimately succeeded in the arena of Web video not through its own innovations but by purchasing YouTube in 2006. YouTube not only enables users to provide searchable metadata for their files, it also has a rather casual approach to copyright law. This view allows movie and television clips to be uploaded along with amateur videos, creating a single place for video viewers to find clips. Despite its popularity, however, Google has yet to find a way to make money from YouTube. Most of Google's revenue comes from matching advertisements to the terms used in a Web search, but this model does not seem to transfer well to video searches. Google has tried to add commercials to some videos but has not had much success selling these to advertisers.

Stross also outlines where Google is headed next. The company is devoted to the idea of "cloud computing," which, in short, means that people would rely on Google to provide software and storage for all of their computing applications. Word processing documents, spreadsheets, and slide presentations would all be created using Google's software and stored on Google's servers. Users will have no need to purchase office software from Microsoft, or to use large hard drives on their personal computers. Stross,

for one, is not convinced that this effort will ultimately be successful. There are, among other things, legal and privacy issues which may present significant obstacles. It is clear, however, that Google believes cloud computing is an important part of its future.

Whether these applications can independently produce revenue for Google may ultimately be, as Stross concludes, beside the point. The accumulation of content—video, books, maps, email and other personal documents—all under Google’s roof, may be enough to justify these applications. In the end, Stross speculates, such content will strengthen the Google brand. Users will still turn to Google to search the Web, and will have more and more reasons to remain within Google’s online environment for a host of other activities.

*Planet Google* is written neither by nor for librarians. This is not a failing of the book, of course, but it does affect the scope of the work. For example, Stross does not scrutinize the idea that the Google algorithm identifies the “best” or the “most reliable” information on the Web. He seems to accept the notion that the Web page that is most often linked to by other Web pages is likely to contain the highest quality information. Librarians, of course, take a different view of reliability and authority. The

fact that Google’s Web search so often returns a Wikipedia page as the first result causes librarians to have less faith in its algorithm. Stross also does not address metadata problems with the Google Book Search that often concern librarians. He does discuss some of the copyright and privacy issues raised by Google’s applications, but not extensively.

At a length of 275 pages, including references and index, *Planet Google* is brief and gets to the point quickly. Stross spends little time on the early days of the company and the biographies of its founders. He writes for a general audience, and that is reflected in the book’s content and vocabulary. Stross explains the sophistication of the Google search algorithm without relying on technical language or esoteric terminology, so the reader does not need an information technology or software background to understand how the algorithm works. He also includes sufficient information on the history of the Web and search engines, for those who have not followed these developments over the years. The end result is an interesting and well-written summation of where Google is and where it may be going. While the book is not aimed at librarians, it will provide them with valuable information about the Web’s most widely used information-finding tool. **LLL**

## EYE ON SERIALS

Susan Chinoransky, Head of Serials & Processing, The George Washington University Law School, Jacob Burns Law Library, [schinoransky@law.gwu.edu](mailto:schinoransky@law.gwu.edu)

### New Periodical Titles

*Carbon & Climate Law Review* : CCLR, 2008–  
Four no. a year, Lexxion

*DePaul Journal for Social Justice*, 2007–  
Semiannual, DePaul University College  
of Law

*Duke Journal of Constitutional Law &  
Public Policy*, 2006–  
Annual, Duke University School of Law

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### Title Changes

*Buffalo Journal of Gender, Law &  
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Annual, State University of  
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Continues: *Buffalo Women’s Law Journal*

*continued on page 20*

**Eye on Serials** *continued from page 19*

*European Energy and Environmental Law Review*, 2008–  
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*Journal of Library Metadata*, 2008–  
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Continues: *Computer Law Review and Technology Journal*

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Continues: *Journal of Juvenile Law*

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Continues: *Wisconsin Women's Law Journal* **LLL**

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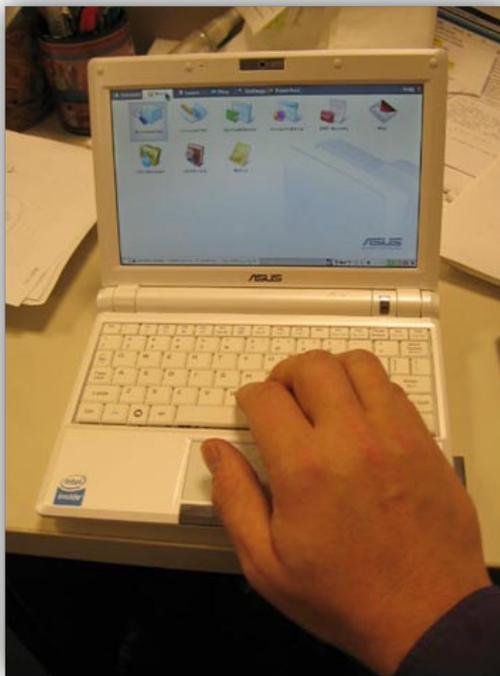
## Netbook PCs: Does Low Cost Mean Poor Performance?

In today's economy, it is not a bad idea to scrutinize technology spending. For instance, consider computers: if \$500 can get you the value you need with a laptop, why spend more? Now is the perfect time to ask this question. The latest trend in computing is to use a type of laptop called a netbook. These are low-cost notebook computers that typically have lower power and fewer features than a traditional laptop. Most of the early models are also really small, often with screens as small as seven inches. The basic concept is that it is good enough to get on the Internet, and maybe write a few documents, but do not expect to use one to edit video. With a netbook, small means low-cost, but does it also mean poor performance? The following brief article looks at this class of portable computers to at least partially answer this question.

### Defining Networks

Currently, there are more than two dozen netbook models from at least ten companies. Asus was the first company to popularize netbooks, with the introduction of the Eee PC in 2007. The earliest systems ran a modified version of the Linux operating system, avoiding licensing fees for Microsoft Windows. They had a 7-inch screen, together with a scaled-down keyboard. Other companies making netbooks include Acer, HP, Dell, newcomer MSI, LG, Lenovo, and Samsung.

The idea of creating a low-cost, light-weight laptop also has its origins in the "one laptop per child" (OLPC) program, which is a grassroots technology program focused on building a so-called \$100 laptop for use in the developing world. Currently, OLPC laptops (the brand sold through this program) cost around \$200. For the second year in a row, there is a program to "give one, get one" where for \$400, you get to own a colorful OLPC system, having the other sent to a country participating in the program.



Browsing the Linux Menus on an Asus Eee PC

Probably few business users want an OLPC system, but it is an attractive computer for kids.

### Will Not Break Your Back or Budget

Starting with the positive attributes of netbooks, they are above all small and inexpensive. At the low end of the spectrum are the Asus Eee PC models, with several options at or below \$400. For a similar price, Acer has a netbook with a 10-inch display, and the competing brands fall at various points between \$350 and \$550.

As a class, netbooks tend to have a screen size between seven and 10 inches, and they typically weigh between two and three pounds. Depending on your bag of choice, they are small enough to fit in a purse or briefcase, allowing you to travel with a laptop without having to strain your shoulders under the weight.

*continued on page 22*

### Potential Compromises in Size, Speed, and Software

If you buy a netbook, you should be prepared to possibly compromise on size, speed, and software. The first size compromise is with the screen. At seven inches, the maximum resolution you typically get is 800 x 480 pixels. Another size issue to consider is with the keyboard, which is often scaled-down. These can be difficult or nearly impossible to type on for touch typists with moderately big hands. A final size issue to consider is with the hard drive. Some systems including a solid state drive have as few as two GB of storage, so read the specifications before buying.

In the area of computer speed, most netbooks use a processor optimized for low-power usage such as the Intel Atom processor. This is good for prolonging battery life, but it will not perform anything like a traditional up-to-date desktop or laptop system in terms of speed.

In considering netbook options, note that the cheapest often run Linux software. Although OpenOffice is a great (and free) office suite, if you require Microsoft Word and Excel, you cannot run these on Linux. Also, remember that netbooks do not come with optical CD/DVD drives, so you will have to get one as an add-on to install software you own on disc.

### Five Outcomes of the Netbook Phenomenon

- 1. Linux at Wal-Mart:** When it was introduced, the Asus Eee PC was sold at Wal-Mart. One way Asus kept the cost of their computers down was to avoid licensing Microsoft Windows, choosing Linux instead. Interestingly, this means that Wal-Mart shoppers could then adopt an open source operating system, perhaps without even knowing it.
- 2. XP life extended:** Because netbooks are not powerful enough to run Windows Vista, Microsoft has extended their sales of and support for the Windows XP operating system. In fact, they offered steep licensing discounts to PC manufacturers for equipment in this class.
- 3. Next Windows will have a lite version:** Microsoft is working on a new operating

### Mini Review of the Dell Mini



*Reading the Washington Post on the Dell Mini Netbook*

At the Georgetown Law Library, we needed to replace an obsolete laptop used for class and conference presentations, but we did not want a bulky or expensive laptop. After considering a few netbook models, we chose the Dell Mini running Windows XP. We have had good experience with Dell technical support, and this seemed like a good match. It is interesting that Dell did not offer a three-year warranty for the Mini.

The Dell Mini 9 is a decent system for running presentations or casual surfing. A touch typist with big hands will never type on it. Also, booting Windows XP takes a few minutes, so it is not a good option if you are in a hurry to power up your laptop and deliver a presentation quickly. Overall though, it is a good replacement for the seven-plus pound system whose days had ended. By all means, the new Dell netbook is light and attractive, but no one I know of has gotten one intending to make it his or her primary system!

system to replace Windows Vista, which they are calling Windows 7. In recognition of the market for netbook systems, Microsoft will release what is essentially a lite version of Windows 7, optimized for lower-power systems.

- 4. Netbook is not just for small screens:** There is no apparent cut-off point for screen size in marketing a netbook system. The Dell Inspiron Mini 12 has a 12.1-inch screen, while the HP dv4-1125nr has a 14-inch

display. Both are considered netbooks and cost less than \$700. Some of the naming is obviously driven by sales, with computer companies looking to sell low-cost systems with any description that works.

**5. Apple is not in the netbook game:** The MacBook Air is a very slim device and is very light, but at \$1,800 it is far too expensive to be considered a true netbook. When Apple upgraded their laptop line in the fall of 2008, they dropped a few prices and enhanced some equipment, but they intentionally did not introduce a low-cost laptop model. Of course, they still have the Mac Mini, but that is a 6.5-inch desktop computer, not a laptop.

### Conclusion

You may have heard the old adage that your options are “cheap, fast, and good,” but you may only pick two. With buying laptops, this might be modified to be: “cheap, fast and light.”

If your primary concerns are fast computing and light weight, you could get the MacBook Air for around \$1,800. If you want cheap and fast, a laptop such as the Toshiba Satellite L305D-S5904 is an option. Priced at around \$600, this system can run Vista, has three GB of memory, a 250 GB drive, and includes an optical DVD drive. The only problem is that it weighs five and a half pounds.

If you are happy with cheap and light, most netbooks on the market look promising. Since by definition netbooks are not meant to replace other PCs for high-powered computing tasks, maybe this is just fine. It is not a lot to spend on a new computer, but try to test one out before you buy. They look great on paper, but some people might find the performance trade-offs too great. For a good comparison of the technical specifications of netbooks, consult the “Comparison of netbooks” page on Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison\\_of\\_netbooks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_netbooks). **LLL**

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

*Shannon O'Connell, Reference/Interlibrary Loan Librarian, Williams & Connolly LLP,  
soconnell@wc.com*

### Congratulations

**Cameron Gowan**, library manager at Groom Law Group, completed a Certificate in Law Firm Management at The George Washington University and Hildebrandt Institute.

**Christine Hall** is in the Leadership Alexandria Class of 2009. Leadership Alexandria's mission is to provide community leaders with a deeper understanding of the critical issues affecting the City of Alexandria in an environment that furthers their leadership skills and encourages graduates to take their knowledge and their experience into the community for the betterment of the city as a whole. Christine, a 2003 LLSDC scholarship recipient and 2004 graduate of The Catholic University of America's School of Library and Information Science, lives in Old Town, where she is director of the Alexandria Law Library.

On August 25, 2008, **Ryan Jacob Mantel** arrived in the world to the great joy of his parents, **Matthew** (Reference/Government Contracts Librarian at The George Washington University Law School, Jacob Burns Law Library) and **Jessica Mantel**. Older brother **Alex** is reserving judgment.

**Kenlee Ray** received the University of Michigan School of Information Alumni Society's Distinguished Alumni Award on October 23, 2008. The award honors alumni who have achieved at least 25 years of professional service and have distinguished themselves in the information professions: <http://www.si.umich.edu/about-SI/news-detail.htm?NewsItemID=669>.

**Heather Rories** started as a Research Librarian at Drinker Biddle on October 1, 2008.

On November 11, 2008, **Joan Sherer**, Senior Reference Librarian, Legal at the U.S. State Department's Ralph J. Bunche Library, conducted a lecture on “Legal Research in the Federal Government” for the Advanced Legal Research class at Yale Law School. **LLL**



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