

An Unexpected Lesson

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“Always walk through life as if you have something new to learn and you will.”

—Vernon Howard

Access Services is not the most scintillating of library specialties. The work, although vital to the operation of the library, is cyclical and (dare I say it) mundane. Aspects of any job become repetitive over time, but I would argue that the very nature of Access Services requires that it become routine. In order to be successful in Access Services, you must have various tasks down to a science. While there is some satisfaction to be derived from improving procedures, even this can grow stale over time. It's common to get bored in Access Services and boredom inevitably leads to burnout. Fortunately our director, Steve Margeton, is aware of this problem and provides me with opportunities to participate in substantial projects outside of Access Services on a regular basis. These projects have all required me to move out of my areas of expertise and have helped me to learn and grow as a librarian.

One project taught me much more than I ever anticipated. Unlike other assignments, this one was in my comfort zone, and I didn't feel the usual trepidation when I started working on it. I didn't need to learn a new database or research a subject about which I knew nothing. I merely needed to create a series of displays for the Columbus School of Law atrium. I am a frustrated artist at heart and I like to think I have a good eye for design and layout. I had already created several displays for the library, so I felt like I had some expertise in this area. While

I expected to enjoy working on this project, I underestimated how much I would learn about archives, historical research, image-editing and design methods. I also learned a few things about myself along the way.

The law school's atrium has four display cases that had been largely unused since the new building opened in 1994. No department was assigned responsibility for these cases, so with the exception of some old Moot Court trophies scattered here and there, they remained empty. In 2005, our Associate Dean for Academic Affairs sought to remedy that and asked Professor Margeton if the law library would take over responsibility for the cases. While Professor Margeton was willing, he was also a bit apprehensive. He was worried about the law library taking on such a large project on a permanent basis. He asked if I would be interested in working on the display cases and I immediately said yes. I was sure I could develop some ideas that wouldn't require too much time or maintenance.

My initial plan involved designating two permanent cases for student awards and two temporary cases for rotating displays. The two permanent display cases were fairly easy to create and mount. One case is devoted to current student awards and accomplishments. This type of display is easy to keep current, especially since the Law school's Office of Public Affairs is more than willing to permit me to use recent news stories to supplement the display. The other permanent case is devoted to historical awards and a history of the Law school's Sutherland Cup Moot Court Competition. Initially, I feared I

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FROM THE EDITOR

Happy New Year!

Ripple L. Weistling, Reference & Electronic Services Librarian, American University, Washington College of Law, rweistling@wcl.american.edu

Welcome to the Winter 2011 issue of *Law Library Lights*. The theme of this issue is learning on the job. In it, we try to capture some of the aspects of law librarianship that you can only learn by doing, as well as some of the unexpected skills we develop and surprising things we learn about ourselves along the way.

Frances Brillantine writes about the challenges and rewards of taking on creative projects outside of her usual job responsibilities, and Scott Wales describes his experience setting up and running his firm's New York branch library from his home base in Washington. Christine Dulaney offers a practical approach to technical services for new librarians. Sara Sampson explains what she learned about teaching from answering students' questions. Peggy Lucero recounts teaching herself patent law research when promised on the job training failed to materialize. Felicia Ayanbiola talks about providing

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Deadline for Submissions

If you would like to write for *Lights*, contact **Ripple L. Weistling** at rweistling@wcl.american.edu. For information regarding submission deadlines and issue themes, visit the LLSDC Web site at www.llsdc.org.

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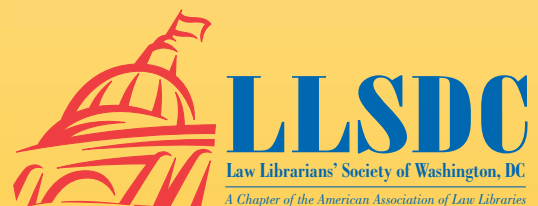
Beginning with Vol. 50, #1 (Fall 2006), *Law Library Lights* is now published in PDF format on the LLSDC Web site: www.llsdc.org. Notification of availability of each new issue will be sent to the LLSDC listserv. If you would like to receive individual e-mail notification when new issues are published, please send an e-mail to **Ripple L. Weistling** at rweistling@wcl.american.edu.

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interlibrary loan on an international scale. And Tim McAllister shares the lessons he has learned from more than twenty years in law libraries.

Dawn Bohls reviews *Practical Lawyering: The Skills You Did Not Learn in Law School*, a book that advises new lawyers about learning on the job and draws on her own early professional

experiences to assess the soundness of that advice. And in Tech Talk, Roger Skalbeck considers legal research applications for mobile devices, answering the emerging question “Do we need an app for that?”

If you would like to be a part of *Lights*, please let me know. The theme of our next issue will be “How Do You Use Technology—or Not?” I look forward to hearing from you. **LLL**

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would have trouble writing this history because of the scant information available on the origin of the Sutherland Cup. I located a few references in old law school newspapers, but nothing substantive. I turned to former Dean Ralph Rohner, a 1963 graduate who has taught at the law school since 1964. In 1990, then-Dean Rohner had the foresight to contact several alumni who were involved in the establishment of the Sutherland Cup Competition and the Catholic University Law Review in 1950. Their recollections provided fascinating reading as well as the details I needed.

With two cases done, I was on a roll. The law school’s clinic, Columbus Community Legal Services, was celebrating thirty-five years, so it made sense to commemorate this occasion with a display on the history of the clinic. Again, I was fortunate to have at my disposal a wealth of information in the form of old law school newspapers, alumni publications, and a first-hand account from Professor Ellen Scully, who had been with the clinic for over thirty years. For the fourth case, I decided to spotlight the law school’s Institutes and Special Programs, each of which has an intricate history. I enlisted one of our library science scholarship students, Christine Stanley King, to work on the fourth display. Christine did an excellent job researching the various institutes, using old course catalogs as well as old law school newspapers. She successfully navigated some sensitive areas as well, such as determining the exact dates that several of our programs were officially established.

Mounting these two displays was a bit tricky because we had little in the way of a budget. We wanted the displays to be informative and eye-catching but were reluctant to exhibit original materials. The display cases are not

archival quality, and we didn’t want to risk damaging any items. Using a desktop scanner and color inkjet printer, we were able to reproduce photos, newspaper articles and ephemera to use in the displays. We mounted everything on archival cardstock to fairly good effect. The response to the displays was positive and very gratifying, to say the least.

Fast-forward two years and the same displays were still in place. Although I managed to keep the awards cases current, I had not found the time to mount new displays in the other cases. My hand was forced when the University Archives created a traveling exhibit commemorating Pope Benedict’s visit to CUA. The exhibit’s first stop was the law school atrium, and our administration wanted me to create a display about Pope Benedict XVI and the law school’s involvement in his visit. Fortunately, this display came together very quickly. I had numerous photos and memorabilia from the visit, including signed Papal cards and rosaries blessed by the Pope. Then-President O’Connell even loaned me bottles of Papst-Bier (Pope’s Beer) and ratZINger California Zinfandel wine (made in honor of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger who, in 2005, was elected Pope Benedict XVI).

As soon as this display was mounted, I started working on a display to replace it. Experience had taught me that creating a display is more time-consuming than I had originally thought. I can’t always devote all of my attention to a display, so I planned to work on this next display intermittently, whenever I had extra time. I also realized that I needed to create something that could be displayed permanently. Although I still liked the idea of rotating displays, I recognized that the types of displays I was creating were too laborious to replace on a frequent basis.

A history of the law school seemed like the best candidate for a permanent display. It was a

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good thing that I allowed myself plenty of time to work on this display, because it took me a year to research and mount it. There is no complete written history of the law school, so my first task was to create an illustrated timeline of significant events. This turned out to be more difficult than I anticipated. The law school has never had an archivist, so our collection of historical law school materials is incomplete. I was also surprised to discover that the first fifty years of the law school's 100-plus years were easier to research than the second fifty. I had expected the opposite to be true. I was aided in my research by a history of Catholic University and by an article covering the first sixty years of the law school's history, both written by C. Joseph Nuesse. Historical newspapers were also useful. The *Washington Post* and the now-defunct *Washington Star* were more locally focused prior to 1950, so they provided a wealth of information about events concerning the law school. For the latter fifty years, I again made use of law school newspapers, old course catalogs and admissions brochures. Professor Rohner again loaned me materials and proofread the timeline for me. Pinpointing some dates proved difficult, so I relied on the excellent memories of several of our long-time faculty members.

Working on this display was fascinating as well as educational. Despite having worked at the law school for twenty years, I was unaware of much of its rich history. It was also extremely rewarding. During the course of my research, a 1966 alumnus, Robert J. Siciliano, contacted the law school concerning an unusual donation. From 1954 until spring 1966, the law school was located in the John Foster Dulles mansion on 18th Street, N.W. The mansion was demolished after the law school moved to CUA's main campus in the summer of 1966. Prior to the demolition, students were invited by then-Dean Vernon Miller to take pieces of the mansion as mementoes. Mr. Siciliano selected the finial from the newel post of the grand staircase. He had it restored and often took it with him to law school reunions. Mr. Siciliano was

¹ For a photo of the finial and an article on the display, please see <http://www.law.edu/fall-2009-web-stories/Law-Schools-History-on-Display-in-Atrium.cfm>

thrilled to hear about the display I was creating and donated the finial as well as some old exams and course catalogs.¹ It was interesting as well as gratifying to work with Mr. Siciliano and to hear stories of life at the law school in the early 1960s.

While producing these displays, I realized several things about myself. I was originally drawn to librarianship because I enjoy historical research, reading, and helping people. My daily duties do not provide me with much opportunity to do any of those things. I had not realized how much I missed not only these things, but also the chance to be creative. Working on these displays helps to fulfill some needs that I didn't even know I had. I also have a new appreciation for the law school and its faculty, students and alumni. Creating displays has become so rewarding to me that I am almost always working on one. In fact, I am currently working on a display of the law school's Law and Public Policy Program, which has an impressive civil rights connection.

In writing this essay, my intent was not to demonstrate how to learn on the job or how to create an effective display. Rather, I hoped to show how important it is to undertake projects that are outside your usual area of expertise. You might learn something that surprises you. **LLL**

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A Tale of Two Cities:^{*} Managing Two Branch Offices

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It can be the best of times and the worst of times to try to manage two branch libraries. This is especially true when one branch is a three hour train ride away. Juggling two offices, one I am almost always in and one which I only visit occasionally, was a new experience for me. Here are some of the things I learned from doing it.

When I started at Sheppard's Washington, D.C. office, it had only been open for a year, and the firm was opening an office in New York, at 30 Rockefeller Plaza no less. While I have never met Tina Fey, it has still been quite an experience.

Originally, the plan seemed to be that I would get the New York library set up, and eventually there would be a librarian on staff to manage day to day operations. I started creating a collection, brushing up on what materials the New York attorneys used. Even though the firm had most of what they needed electronically, they also wanted much of the collection in paper. This was much more complicated than I anticipated, and I spent a lot of time back then going between New York and Washington working on setting up the collection. I also needed to establish relationships with local vendors' representatives and trainers.

We never received the budget for a full-time person for the New York office, so it remains my responsibility. Fortunately, New York has a wonderful membership library open to firms on a per capita attorney fee basis. The New York Law Institute on Broadway also provides excellent service. Since I am not there in person and cannot reciprocate the favors granted me, I do not feel comfortable borrowing from other firms. The New York Law Institute solves that problem by providing access to its great collection of materials. I was also introduced to a terrific loose-leaf filing service that was the most reasonably priced one I have seen. Quill Archivists not only has great filers, they also provide onsite administration. I use them to keep the library running by maintaining the collection and in-

forming me of problems with twice weekly reports. I do all reference inquiries by phone or email. They take care of the physical collection and send the bills to me. I go up to New York to meet and train new attorneys.

While much of the work of the New York office can be done by phone and email, I have found that there is no substitute for being there. Managing a physical collection remotely is difficult to say the least; knowing what print materials are being used and by whom is next to impossible. Email and web-based training are great, and the attorneys are extremely cooperative, which helps make everything work. But this is still no substitute for the personal touch. It is important to visit as often as your budget will allow. Make the face-to-face connections. Train the summer and fall associates in person. Be more than just an email or a disembodied voice. This will improve service and help around budget and review time.

I have also found that it is important to understand and respect the chain of command. Each office is unique. There are office administrators, practice group heads, and managing partners in each location. Get to know them. In a large global firm they will all report to someone else. Ultimately, so do the librarians. Whether it is a national library director, a chief knowledge officer, or a national director, there is a hierarchy that must be considered. I did not realize when I started how much bureaucracy a firm can have. When you come from a purely reference position to managing a branch library, you see more of what it actually takes to provide our services. This is not to make it seem that bureaucracy is necessarily bad. An international firm needs people who take an overall approach to running the firm. From the library's perspective, there are information people who need to work with budget people who need to report to the firm's top echelon.

In dealing with national priorities and budgets there are many factors to consider. You need to support the offices you are responsible for when it comes time to make requests. In a

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^{*} In this case I refer to Washington and New York—but I wish it were London and Paris.

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way you are like a senator trying to get earmarks for your state. Each office by its nature has local priorities and needs; New York is very different from California where the firm is headquartered and where much of its culture developed. I have found that while firms like to recruit new practice groups, they are not always aware of the resources that these new attorneys need. When a firm takes on a new partner, much less an entirely new practice group, it creates a need for resources that the firm does not have. In tight budget times, when overall budgets are being reduced, the librarian faces the difficult task of asking the administration for more funding. This may mean that another practice group already at the firm may lose some of its resources. Everyone cannot have everything they want. While it is the librarian's job to support the attorneys with the information resources they need, you also need to make them aware that the ultimate decisions do not rest with you. In this case, it is a tale of three cities—my two branch offices and the national office on the other coast.

Make sure you keep track of how much time you spend on each office. This is especially important when you are not physically at the office. In my case I have a direct supervisor, who is the head librarian in Los Angeles, and two office administrators, one in Washington and one in New York. I have found that the office administrators are seldom aware of what librarians do, and this can be compounded when librarians are in another city. The administrators of course have many other things to be concerned about, so make reports and let your local people know what it is that you do. Include your office administrator on your emails, even when they do not have a say in the issue. They may not have a role to play in whether or not an addition to the collection is approved, but they will hear the complaints from the local attorneys if it is not. Also, make them aware of things you do remotely, like web training and sending books in the daily pouch. This lets the remote office know that you are still part of the team, even though you are not there physically. Yes, there is a librarian who works for your office. No, he is not there today, he works in Washington. But he works

with your office every single day and is as much a part of it as if he were sitting at his desk enjoying a real New York bagel.

Be a part of the local law library community, even if you can only do so virtually. Sign up for the local library electronic mailing lists. Join the local law library society. Help when you can by phone or email. You will need the help and advice of the local librarians.

Managing a branch office remotely is not easy, but it can be done. And learning on the job is the best way to learn how to do it. There is really no way to anticipate all of the challenges and problems, sometimes quite serious and other times quite silly, that may develop. Probably the most important thing that I have learned is how much changes in personnel have an effect on your operations. Attorneys and managers have come and gone, and many policies have come and gone with them. Since you really cannot "prepare for the unexpected," then you need to learn to be able to move forward. Much of what goes on is out of your hands. The more people you deal with the more that is true.

One last thing I have learned is that every city has a different work culture. New York is not Washington. Neither is Los Angeles. Styles do matter. Try to learn the culture and the pace of each office. I found that there are certain intangibles, feelings and attitudes, that need to be experienced to understand. Anyone who has worked in different cities knows that. For instance, I found that in our New York office, people tend to arrive later in the morning, but work later in the evening. I can arrive in the office early and find no one there, yet things can really pick around 5:30 or 6:00.

In the end, by staying calm and by being willing to change and work with different personalities and different office cultures you will survive. Don't worry, and you won't lose your head. **LLL**

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Technical Services by the Seat of Your Pants: A Brief Outline of Technical Services Responsibilities

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The good news is that you have just been hired by a law firm to manage their law library. The bad news is that you will now be responsible for technical services, and you have no idea what this function entails. Perhaps the last time you cataloged a book was in library school—and maybe not even then.

Most commonly, technical services work involves managing the life cycle of information resources. These resources can be commercially purchased, such as books, journals, reports or documents and available in various formats: print, online, DVD, etc. Increasingly, librarians are also managing internally-created content such as briefs, memos, or other documents. These resources are collected into institutional repositories. Regardless whether you are managing materials purchased from content providers and publishers or materials created internally, the functions are similar. Here is a quick outline defining the life cycle of these various resources, including what you as the librarian may be responsible for handling, what you should inquire about, and what you should implement in order to successfully fulfill this function.

Information Resources Life Cycle

The life cycle of an information resource can be defined by five stages:

1. **Ordering:** the process of ordering new titles, renewing existing subscription or standing orders, or bringing internal documents into an institutional repository;
2. **Receiving:** ensuring that everything you have ordered or requested has been received;
3. **Paying:** maintaining a budget and ensuring that all invoices are paid in a timely manner;
4. **Organizing:** establishing a system of organizing resources so that they are findable; and
5. **Access/Collection Maintenance:** ensuring that your library users have available everything that they need.

Required Infrastructure

Successful Technical Services operations involve accurate recordkeeping and documentation of workflows and expenditures. An online catalog or integrated library system (ILS) is critical for managing the library collection. For internally created documents, vendors offer knowledge management (KM) or content management systems. If your institution has already purchased either of these systems, become familiar with the various modules for tracking orders, receipts, payments, and collection access. Contact the vendor for training or other assistance as quickly as possible.

If your library does not have an ILS or KM system, consider whether the volume of work can be properly tracked with desktop software such as Excel or Access. These packages can handle the recordkeeping for several hundred subscriptions and a couple of dozen databases. If your collection starts growing beyond that number, you may want to investigate purchasing a library system.

You will also need to determine how things have been done in the past. Find the policy and procedures manual. Even if this manual is outdated, it will provide a roadmap that you can adjust as necessary. If no manual or other documentation exists, start putting one together as you develop your procedures. It can be as simple as a collection of emails or short paragraph documents. Written documentation will enable you to be consistent and to explain decisions or justify actions. As you begin your work, identify the decision makers in your organization, determine how much information they like to receive, and communicate your activities to them using the mechanism they prefer.

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¹ I would like to thank Matthew Mahaffie, Librarian, Silverstein and Mullins, for his assistance preparing this article.

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Ordering

The life cycle of a resource begins with the initial order or renewal. For internally created documents, ordering involves clearly defining which documents are to be collected, determining whether incentives are in place for creators to add their documents to an institutional repository, and identifying who is responsible for enforcing collection policies. For commercially published titles, ordering involves determining available funds, identifying exact titles and appropriate formats, anticipating number of users, selecting a vendor, and choosing a delivery method.

Before you order or renew your first commercially published title, learn as much as you can about the budget process in your organization. First, determine the library's collections budget for purchasing resources, and what you will be expected to include in that expenditure. Second, determine the budget cycle or the dates of your fiscal year, any expected expenditure or reporting milestones, when budget decisions are made and the process of closing out the fiscal year as well as establishing the budget for the following fiscal year. Third, determine what types of records you are required to keep and keep a paper trail of all decisions, particularly cancellation decisions. That way, you will always be able to answer the question of why something was cancelled and who authorized the cancellation.

Once you have an understanding of your budget, you need to understand the process to actually expend those funds, either through purchasing new titles or renewing existing ones. First, identify who is authorized to place orders—is it the librarian? a budget administrator? a firm partner? You may want to consider involving the department or practice group head when you decide to purchase a new title. Second, determine the process for placing orders. Will you be able to use a credit card to purchase books online via suppliers such as Amazon.com or Bordersbooks.com? Using a credit card will enable you to make purchases quickly, but there may be limits on what you can put on the credit card, how much you can spend on one purchase, or how much you can spend in one month. You should also keep careful records of all credit card transactions.

Third, be aware of timeliness and how to expedite orders. Books can be ordered and received as quickly as the same day if you order from a local book dealer and pick up via a messenger service. Fourth, know the format of what you are purchasing: is this a one-time purchase, like a book? Or is this a treatise which requires updates or supplementation? Is this a continuation which will require a renewal decision as well as additional funds in order to maintain the currency of its content?

Continuations, titles that are updated or published serially, require additional considerations. Typically, continuations are purchased for a year before they need to be renewed, but confirm the expiration dates of your subscriptions (titles which are paid annually and received as ongoing issues during the renewal period) and standing orders (titles which are billed with each issue, update or edition) when you place the order. Some digital resources are discounted if you purchase on a multi-year basis. Setting up a common expiration date for all your titles is a convenient way to organize the renewal process. Will your institution want to keep the content current? Will issues be routed or emailed to individuals as they are received?

You will also need to be aware of the various formats available for a particular title and determine which is most suitable or cost effective. Is the title available only in print, only online, or in some combination of the two? Does the online version require a print subscription? Does the online version provide additional content or less content? Is the online version available earlier or later than the print version? Are any of these differences significant to your users? And you may also consider using a subscription agent, such as Ebsco, Hein, Swets, or WT Cox. Alternatively, you might use a book jobber, such as YBP. The former provide services such as annual billing for renewal, claim processing, title change notification, and pricing projections or other financial reports for your periodical titles, while the latter can help you manage your standing orders or annual titles.

Databases and online resources present their own challenges. You will need to identify who in your organization is authorized to negotiate and sign license agreements for online resources. These agreements can be complicated legal documents. For quickly assisting your users with usage, content sharing or other potentially restricted activities, you should keep copies of

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any license agreements, even if the official document is kept in another department. These resources also require an awareness of access issues at the time of order. Determine what type of access is required: institutional access for everyone in your organization? Or individual access for a single user or group of users? If you are ordering individual access, determine how access will be restricted. If users will have passwords, devise a mechanism for maintaining the passwords and for making users aware of use or password sharing restrictions. And whenever possible, have online resources delivered to the library, not the individual users. Otherwise, the vendor may become confused about where to send invoices and renewal notices, sending them to users rather than the library.

Receiving

You must account for the receipt of everything that has been ordered or requested, including every book, every journal issue, and every document. Compare the items received with your online records to ensure that both everything you are receiving was requested, and that the vendor sent the correct title. Record the date received in your online system to prevent receipt of duplicate copies. After confirming the accuracy of the receipt, date stamp and property stamp every item as it is received. If an item needs to be returned for any reason, record the date of the return, any correspondence with vendors, and any payment credit issued.

For continuations, particularly journals, record each journal issue and the date received. A tracking system will help you discover what you have not received and will enable you to claim missing issues. If you are missing supplements, pocket parts, or journal issues, you will not be keeping the content of your collection current. You do not want your attorneys using outdated information. As soon as you notice that you are missing an issue or a supplement, contact the vendor. Many vendors will only honor claims that are made within a certain period of time. If you miss the time frame, you will have to purchase what you missed.

Paying

Fund management is the most visible aspect of technical services for managing externally produced resources. You will need to validate or approve for payment every invoice paid and record all collection expenditures, even if your

accounting department actually pays the invoices. You may be required to provide an expenditure report for each invoice, specifying the amount and date paid, and what payment was for. Determine the requirements of your finance office. You may be required to provide an expenditures report on a monthly, annual, or even ad hoc basis. Be aware of your institution's fiscal year since it may differ from the calendar year. You may be required to pay every outstanding invoice before the fiscal year ends. The library may also be responsible for tracking annual budget comparisons, percentage increases, cost per title or usage, or the cost of all resources in a particular subject or practice area. Having an effective payment tracking system in place will greatly simplify that process.

Keeping accurate records is critical for successful fund management. If you are not using an ILS for recording payments, set up an Excel spreadsheet in order to show anticipated expenditures and actual expenditures for all titles in your collection. Vendors will send you invoices, statements, and credit memos. Date stamp all payment documents as you receive them. Invoices will often be sent repeatedly, so be sure to review each invoice to determine whether it is an original or a duplicate. Vendors are not always clear in their description of what you are paying for. On invoices, vendors use their own abbreviations for titles, may group various titles into a single category and may not specify renewal periods. Know what you are paying for and contact your vendors if the invoice is not clear. Some vendors send statements which summarize payment transactions for a specified time period. Review statements to be sure that payment has been credited to the correct title and to request replacement invoices. Credits are frequently issued in lieu of cash. Use your credits quickly, and record the reason for the credit as well as to which title the credit was applied.

Organizing

Your information resources, whether internally or commercially produced, need to be organized so that users can find them. This means that you will probably need to create and maintain some type of catalog. Don't panic: if you have never created a bibliographic record before, you may not need to start now. There are cataloging librarians who have done that work for you.

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Keeping accurate records is critical for successful fund management. If you are not using an ILS for recording payments, set up an Excel spreadsheet in order to show anticipated expenditures and actual expenditures for all titles in your collection. Vendors will send you invoices, statements, and credit memos. Date stamp all payment documents as you receive them.

You can download from a bibliographic database such as OCLC, and the online catalogs of academic libraries are readily available online. You can quickly find good bibliographic records to copy by searching the catalog of a university library.

For purchased resources, create a bibliographic record of every title ordered when you first place your order. Record the requestor, order date, estimated price, format (online, print, CD, etc.), acquisition type (monograph, subscription, standing order) and vendor. This bibliographic information can also be used to record your acquisition as well as circulation data.

For internally-created resources that do not have a catalog record, you will need to create some type of record, but this is still not cause for panic. You will need to define the data fields which will assist with document retrieval. Typically, these include: title (transcribe the title as it is found on the title page), author, publisher, year of publication, subject headings or other topical information, and note field for free-text notes about the particular item in your repository.

As you develop your organizational scheme, keep several principles in mind. First, be sensitive to the needs of attorneys or other library users who may prefer to have certain titles in a particular place. Before organizing or reorganizing the collection, know your users and consult with them. Second, create a policies and procedures manual as you develop your online catalog or repository. When you determine how you will handle certain titles or from which source you will obtain bibliographic records, document all your decisions.

Third, be consistent. If you have documented a decision, you can then apply this policy to other titles in this category. If you handle similar titles in a different manner, you will not be successful in putting together lists or finding particular titles. If you decide to change an earlier decision, you should go back and update the information for all similar titles.

Finally, keep it simple. You do not have to use LC subject headings, AACR2, or RDA. You just have to have a reasonable methodology for recording information. You can even use the name of practice groups as subject headings. Document your decisions and apply those policies consistently.

Access

If you have ordered, received and paid for the appropriate resources, and developed an organizational scheme so that users can find what they need, but then do not maintain access, you may as well not have the resources at all. You need to know where your materials are located. Define your locations. You may have several locations within the library including reference, periodical section, code section, and treatise collection. Some titles might be kept in attorney offices. Be sure to identify these office copies quickly, and make sure that these copies are kept current. Collection maintenance is equally important for online resources as it is for physical items.

Keeping material current is critical. File pocket parts and supplements immediately. If you do not have the personnel to maintain loose leaf filing, consider hiring a company to do this for you. A loose leaf which either does not have the most current update or which has misfiled pages can be misleading or unusable. Check links to online databases and resources regularly. Actually click on the links which reside on your catalog or website, and update broken links before your users discover them.

Just as the collection grows, it also contracts. Weeding is an important part of collection maintenance. But you need to weed with an understanding of your users and what they need. What look like outdated, superseded materials to you may turn out to be a critical archive of irreplaceable documents. Before undertaking a weeding project, be sure to define your parameters and consult with your users.

Version control is critical for internal documents. Be sure that you are collecting the most current version of each document. Record the dates of all documents as you receive them.

Successful technical services work is defined by understanding the life cycle of resources in a library collection or repository. A librarian who is aware of not only which titles need to be ordered or which documents need to be requested, but also how to order new titles and renew existing titles effectively, how to record receipts, how to record payments, how to organize the materials and how to maintain access will be able to ensure that the library's users are getting the materials they need. **LLL**

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On-the-job Training

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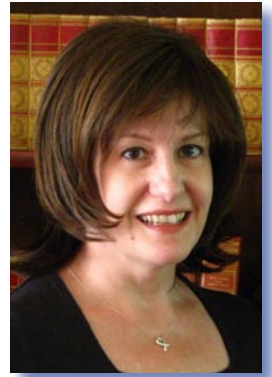
“I see, I forget. I hear, I remember. I do, I understand.”—Chinese Proverb

An LLSDC presidency has a built-in mentoring cycle over a period of three years—one year as president-elect (learning from the current president), one as president, and one as past-president (mentoring the current president). Despite the considerable guidance of my predecessors, nothing really prepared me for leading this organization. Many issues and questions are new to me and the board, and we muddle along, striving to do our best. Truly, the best way to learn something is by doing.

Learning by doing, or on-the-job training, is something we’ve all experienced. Regardless of your role in librarianship, much of what you do is learned on the fly. This is one of the most appealing aspects of my work. Each day brings a new challenge, a new question that I’ve never considered, and an opportunity to learn something new. Librarianship is challenging, but it’s rarely boring. Throughout this issue, you’ll find information to help you cope with your own challenges, and stories from the trenches will ensure that you are not alone.

LLSDC News—The Special Interest Sections and Committees have been busy planning several educational events, including programs on new library trends and techniques, vendor demonstrations, and brainstorming sessions for those with shared interests.

LLSDC has much to offer. I hope that you will take advantage of our many programs and events. As always, I welcome your comments and suggestions. Please contact me at **president.llsdc@gmail.com**. **LLL**



Why Do We Need to Learn This?: Dealing with Questions in the Classroom

Sara Sampson, Head of Reference, Georgetown Law Library, sas235@law.georgetown.edu

One of the most stressful parts of teaching for any teacher is handling student questions. Both experts and novices wonder whether the students will embarrass them by asking a question that they cannot answer. I know I spent a lot of time worrying about it, but over time I have realized that encouraging student questions creates a better learning environment for both the students and the teacher.

Why I Encourage Questions

My opportunity to teach my own class came during my first year of working full-time as a librarian at Ohio State University's law school. The librarians taught a one credit, graded legal research class during the first six weeks of school. Along with the basics of legal research, we taught Bluebook citation format. I went to the first session armed with a great deal of advice from other, more experienced teachers, including tips on how to handle student questions. Of their suggestions, I especially appreciated the idea that I should answer what I could but be honest when I did not know the answer. I decided to answer with "That's a good question. I'll check into it a bit more and get back to you next class."

This approach worked well until our first class that introduced citation format. Right in the middle of my presentation, a student raised his hand and said "why do we need to learn this?" His tone was hard to read, so I was not immediately sure how to respond. I was not sure if he was questioning my decision to include this in our curriculum, questioning the entire subject of legal research, challenging my authority over the classroom, or trying to put the subject of citation format in a larger context. Many possible responses (along with a bit of irritation) flashed in my head before I decided to answer the question by taking it literally, i.e., why should these students in my classroom learn citation format now. So I quickly explained the reason first-year law students need to learn about citation format. I explained that citation format is important so that readers of a written document know which sources were being discussed, the authority of the sources

cited, and how to find them. I also explained that Bluebook citation format is standard in legal practice, citation format was on their final exam, and some employers use the citation format of writing samples as evidence of attention to detail.

After class, the student approached me while the rest of the students were filing out of the room. He apologized for the question and said that he was not trying to be disrespectful. He was genuinely curious about why we were learning about citation format. Fearing that he had sensed my fleeting annoyance at the question, I told him that it was a good question and I was glad that he asked it. And I really was. His question had allowed us to engage in more of a conversation than a lecture and the students were more engaged by my response to his question than by anything else I had done up to that point.

This class was a turning point in my teaching style. Before this incident, I was a bit fearful of engaging students in class, so I presented material rather than engaging the students in a conversation with me or each other. Now when I teach, I start out with the instruction that students should feel free to interrupt me at any time to ask a question, even when I guest lecture in another professor's class.

In addition to livening up the class, I also learn a lot from students' questions. It becomes apparent when I am assuming knowledge or skills they do not yet have, and I see when they have not learned what I thought I had taught them. As I have become more comfortable teaching over the years, I am able to adjust class content in response to these questions.

Dealing with Difficult Questioners

Being open to questions can create other problems, though. A student may actually be trying to undermine your authority or may simply ask so many questions that he or she monopolizes the discussion. It is important to be prepared for these situations. When a student tries to undermine your authority in the classroom, deal with it right away. Act as if the questions

One of the most stressful parts of teaching for any teacher is handling student questions. Both experts and novices wonder whether the students will embarrass them by asking a question that they cannot answer. I know I spent a lot of time worrying about it, but over time I have realized that encouraging student questions creates a better learning environment for both the students and the teacher.

are not a challenge to you. Be calm and stay friendly. Reacting unprofessionally will erode your control of the entire classroom. If the student persists, talk to him or her outside of the classroom. If a student monopolizes your class time, you may say: "That's a great question. Unfortunately we don't have time to deal with that right now. Unless others have the same question, we need to move on. You and I can discuss that after class."

Finally, the more casual environment may encourage students to talk among themselves. When this disrupts the class, proximity or

silence may work. I tend to wander over to the chatting students or simply stop talking until they are finished. It can be amazing what silence can accomplish. If these subtle cues do not work, I will ask them if they have a question or simply ask them to stop chatting.

Everyone is nervous about dealing with difficult questions in the classroom. Questions, though, are an important part of learning. I have found that the added effort of encouraging questions is definitely worth the extra preparation needed and lack of certainty over what may happen in your classroom. **LLL**

Additional Resources

Scenes from the Classroom: Managing Conflict

<http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/tutorials/conflict/index.html>

This online tutorial combines video of conflict in the classroom with advice from teaching consultants on how to handle it.

MICHAEL HUNTER SCHWARTZ, SOPHIE SPARROW, GERALD HESS, *TEACHING LAW BY DESIGN* (2009). This text covers the basics of education and then provides advice for creating and teaching a law school course, including dealing with student questions.

J.T. DILLON, *QUESTIONING AND TEACHING: A MANUAL OF PRACTICE* (1988). This book is all about the use of questions, by teachers and students, in the educational process.

JAMES M. BANNER, JR. AND HAROLD C. CANNON, *THE ELEMENTS OF TEACHING* (1997). This is organized by a series of traits shared by good teachers. The chapter on authority is particularly relevant to dealing with student questions.

Learning on the Job

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Many years ago, back in January 1986, I got a job working for Derwent, Inc. (now Thomson Reuters) at the US Patent & Trademark Office which was then in Crystal City, Virginia. Derwent had just won a government contract to provide online research services to the patrons of the USPTO Public Search Room. This was before the Internet and before the PTO's patent examiner systems, Web-based Examiner Search Tool (WEST) and Examiner Automated Search Tool (EAST) were available.

I worked as both a sales representative and an online researcher. The sales portion of my job was two-fold. First, since the majority of patrons who frequented the PTO Public Search Room to do their patent research were unfamiliar with online research, I had to educate them about what an "online database" was and how it worked. This could get rather involved because people would ask me a lot of questions. But since the ability to deliver results in a timely fashion was paramount to doing my job successfully, I did manage, over time, to boil this piece of my sales pitch down to something succinct.

Once I had explained the basics of an online database, I would explain that I would perform their research online in a database called Derwent's World Patents Index (DWPI) that (today) contains over 18.9 million unique inventions covering more than 41 million patent documents, with coverage from over 41 major patent issuing authorities worldwide. I would say that they were welcome to do their research manually in the drawers of patents in the Public Search Room—all arranged by the US Patent Classification system. Of course, one of my most persuasive sales points was that my research database was not subject to the imperfection of the PTO's manual system, where at any given time a portion of the patents were waiting to be refilled, or in use by another patron, or missing or misfiled. Many of my customers were painfully aware of all of these shortcomings in the manual approach. I would also stress that my search for them could be completed in (usually) far less time than any manual search they were going to need to do.

Then, of course, I had to actually do the research. In those days the DWPI database was

accessed through Dialog, CAS, Questel-Orbit, and perhaps other sources. I also provided research in more than 80 other technical and related databases, including trademark databases. Many customers wanted to search the technical literature as a supplement to the patent results in order to best clarify the patentability of their innovation. I no longer remember my billing rate, but it was based on my time to format and run the searches and the cost at logoff for using the databases.

When I interviewed for this job, I had never seen a patent. I was hired because of my online research experience from a prior job as an engineering librarian at Sundstrand Data Control. In the interview, I was told that I would receive two weeks of training on the World Patents Index database before I was placed at the PTO, so not to worry. Duly reassured, I accepted the job.

Well, that training never happened. My second day on the job, I was placed at the PTO with unlimited free training access to the DWPI and a large bookcase full of user manuals that explained search methods, database features, and WPI codes. My first day had been spent with the CEO, discussing Derwent's operations. While that had been fascinating and valuable, it in no way prepared me for what was awaiting me at the PTO. There, I had customers who had just invented the Best Ever New Lasagna Pan in their garages and wanted to see if it was patentable and senior partners from D.C. law firms needing to locate a patent family, have four inventor searches done, and locate all the European patents in a certain IPC code. When I started the job, the requests I got from intellectual property attorneys might as well have been given to me in Greek, as I had no clear understanding of what many of them were telling me they needed! And, as law librarians might expect, the attorney patrons were especially adamant in wanting theirs done ASAP.

You do not need to know much about patent research to appreciate that these were hardly the ideal circumstances in which to learn to use a substantial and complex new database. I may have been the greenest patent searcher on the

Ultimately, taking a job in an area in which I had no knowledge base was a valuable experience. I turned into a competent patent researcher very quickly, and, after nine months on the job, I was hired by a D.C. intellectual property law firm where I worked for ten years, doing all kinds of intellectual property research.

planet, but I was definitely motivated to learn quickly, and the patron response was overwhelmingly positive. “Yes! When can you do mine?” or “Can you do mine now?” were the two of the most frequently asked questions. I believe a part of it was the novelty of what I was offering at that snapshot in time. I was this new contractor appearing in their sandbox with a brand new research option to offer. Really, who could resist?

Then, to make my life even more interesting, the powers that be in Derwent’s marketing department came up with a catchy flyer that they mailed out nationwide to a long list of practicing patent attorneys, announcing my availability and giving them an 800 number that was answered 24/7 (with an answering machine attached) on my desk at the PTO. It seemed as soon as that flyer went out, I got more requests; lots and lots of requests. And there was never a morning that I did not come in to a stack of requests from people on the west coast wanting a wide range of research.

All of this definitely motivated me to master intellectual property research as quickly as possible. So I hunkered down and buried myself in manuals, supplemented with a few calls

to the Derwent office seeking some assistance. Basically, over the course of about a month or two, I became comfortable and reasonably adept at the basics of searching the DWPI database. At a DIALOG training class years later, the instructor said that DWPI was the most complex database on their service, and I was not surprised to hear that. Looking back today, I hardly can believe I managed it.

Ultimately, taking a job in an area in which I had no knowledge base was a valuable experience. I turned into a competent patent researcher very quickly, and, after nine months on the job, I was hired by a D.C. intellectual property law firm where I worked for ten years, doing all kinds of intellectual property research. And in those nine months, I built a client base for Derwent that needed two full time sales representatives/researchers to carry on the work that I had been doing.

I still love IP law and online research and believe I am very fortunate to have been given that opportunity with Derwent at the PTO. I am sure learning on the job is still happening and will always be a part of any work environment. May all your patent research be fruitful! **LLL**

Interlibrary Loan from Around the World

Felicia Ayanbiola, Interlibrary Loan Librarian, Howard University Law Library,
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MMy career in academic law school libraries began some twenty years ago, when I emigrated from Nigeria to the United States and was hired by the Howard University Law Library. Before moving to the U.S., I had worked as a certified teacher at an elementary school in Igbara-Oke in Ondo State, in Nigeria. Although by the time I began working at Howard I had already given up my teaching career, I quickly realized how much the teaching skills I had honed in Nigeria helped me transition into a career in law librarianship. I continue to utilize those skills today as an interlibrary loan librarian. Indeed, I find being an interlibrary loan librarian often requires the innate diplomacy of an elementary school teacher. For us, the world is our library; law librarians today borrow materials and network at a national and international level. I have often borrowed materials from libraries around the world, and this article reviews some of the interesting requests I have dealt with through the years.

South Africa:

I worked with one Howard Law School professor who was writing an article about comparative and international law, and as a part of his research he sent me interlibrary loan requests almost weekly. He spent a summer teaching in South Africa, but being halfway around the world did not slow down his research. At one point, he needed some materials right away and sent me an urgent interlibrary loan request. It only took two weeks for all the books he requested to reach him, but getting the books back was a completely different story. African mail systems are very slow, so it took three weeks for the books to come back to me, even though the professor sent them two weeks before the due date, and for some for some strange reason the books went back to him in South Africa, rather than to me. But there was a happy ending; I renewed the books and finally got them back in good condition.

Jamaica:

I have also borrowed materials from the Caribbean. At one time, one of our professors was writing a book about immigrant families and

socioeconomic issues in the Caribbean. He was researching his topic here in Washington, D.C., but I found that most of the items that he needed were in Jamaica. We did not own any of the books requested, so I borrowed about four items from libraries in the United States, and the rest came from libraries in the Caribbean. The books from the United States arrived within a week, while the books from the Caribbean arrived within only two weeks. The professor was rather excited when the materials arrived so quickly and he could finish writing his book.

Italy:

At about the same time, another professor had just returned from a lengthy trip to Europe. She was researching food regulations and world food law, and as part of her research she needed to review a thesis from an Italian scholar. She requested it through interlibrary loan, but I could not find it anywhere. I checked the dissertation database, other academic databases and Google but nothing came up. However, when I searched on Google, I did find the author's email address. Then I got a bright idea: maybe I could email the author and request the thesis directly from him. To my surprise, he emailed his entire thesis back to me within a few days. I was grateful that he responded so quickly and all the way from Italy. I forwarded the thesis to our professor, and she was very pleased to be able to use it for her article.

United States:

Interlibrary loan for faculty at Howard University School of Law is always very interesting. The faculty writes a lot about civil rights and social justice issues. As an example, one of our professors wrote a book about black lawyers from the mid-nineteenth century to World War II, and I was able to assist his research through interlibrary loan. While it seemed as though he borrowed more than twenty books a day, he also used a variety of other sources. I helped him locate materials from the Library of Congress and the Moorland-Spangarn Research Center, Howard University's repository of manuscript and archival collections; I borrowed microfiche

and microfilm; we requested documents from various courts and even contacted a local historian in New York to locate some materials in support of the professor's work. This was very challenging because I had to locate and borrow different materials, and materials from different sources, than what I usually obtain through interlibrary loan. Being a part of the professor's extraordinary research project was exhausting but very exciting.

No library has all the books and materials its patrons need, especially when those patrons are doing research on issues around the world, but thanks to interlibrary loan, the world has become a lot smaller. Requesting books from foreign libraries is the same as requesting them from local and national libraries, except for the

time it takes for books to arrive. As interlibrary loan expands, books and materials can be shared by libraries all round the world.

Working as a teacher in Nigeria so many years ago was very fulfilling and presented opportunities to teach and build communities. In the field of law librarianship we do the same thing. Our community starts with our home institutions, but it also includes every library to which we have access through reciprocal borrowing and the global internet. Without this extended community of libraries and their resources our professors and institutions would miss out on very special sources of information. It is important to continue interlibrary loan and national and intentional resource sharing in our global community. **LLL**

Six Essential Things

Tim McAllister, Research Specialist, Kirkland & Ellis LLP, Tim.McAllister@kirkland.com

From day one, my job as a research specialist in a large law firm has been an on-the-job learning experience. In fact, one of the best things about being a research librarian is that I am on a continuous learning curve. Attorneys will always need answers to practical questions, philosophical arguments, and logical conundrums, and they will need to turn to the library staff of trained, experienced, inquisitive professionals. With over two decades of experience, I have learned a few essential things about being a law librarian.

1. Research is a science.

It's not called a Masters in Library Science for nothing! I learned the science of research first in books, as I started working in ye olde, pre-internet days. I was a history major, so naturally books and libraries and research were part of my academic training. Knowing the difference between CCH, BNA, Lexis, and Westlaw, or when to look for a pocket part or advance sheet was crucial to legal research. In addition to a substantial print collection, our Library had microfiche and microfilm, along with the requisite readers and printers that occupied numerous drawers and cabinets in a dedicated work room.

Online research requires both technical skills and an understanding of how databases

are created and indexed. Effective search strategies and well-formed search engine syntax help surface hidden information to the top of results lists. It is almost like knowing a second language when truncation, proximity operators, and stop words come together in a well ordered, logical sentence that the untrained eye sees as gibberish. The alchemy of a well-constructed search can turn a patron's vague request into research gold.

2. Research is an art.

I quickly realized that research is also an art, particularly when attorneys called upon the library to find something when they themselves could not. One afternoon an exasperated associate came to library with a hopeless look on his face. He had already spent hours trying to track down information that the client desperately needed by the end of the day. This information was crucial to salvaging a contract worth tens of thousands of dollars. After his hours of research, he imagined that the information simply did not exist, but needed to exhaust all options and came to us. In the time it took him to leave the library and get back to his office, I found the number he needed, documented from an authoritative source.

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Knowing how to select the right database, construct a creative, superior search strategy, and deliver the precise data are skills that effective law librarians can learn and hone. But more than that, it is an art to be able to take the learned skills, and use them precisely and creatively to produce a brilliant, useful result.

3. Communication is key.

Another library skill I have learned over the years is communication. You can be an outstanding searcher, but without effective communication skills, your research may not be very effective. An answer that can be delivered with a quick phone call or instant message may be more effective and timely than a wordy memo with supporting citations and documentation. On the other hand, sometimes a well-written research report with relevant supporting documents may be exactly the answer an attorney or client needs. It is my job to figure out how to best deliver that information.

For the past seven years, I have researched, written, edited, and delivered the *CI Update*. This weekly competitive intelligence briefing of law firm and legal industry news is distributed to firm management committees, office administrators, and department heads to keep them up to date on market conditions. It needs to be succinct and informative. As you might suspect, this particular audience is bombarded with a great deal of information over the course of a week, yet they all need accurate, actionable, and reliable information to make decisions about the business of the firm. Even if I uncover information that could change the course of a management decision, it is all virtually useless if it is not communicated effectively.

4. You can face your fears (and survive).

I am an introvert, and I suspect many people who become librarians are as well. Being an introvert has distinct advantages for knowledge workers. We like taking time to think about an issue and process questions. We like wandering the stacks and count on the serendipity of flipping through another index. We thrive on a quiet workspace and uninterrupted stretches of time to work on solutions to complex problems.

But there comes a time in every introvert's routine where we need to stand up, face the lights, and shout down those yapping extroverts

with our informed opinions and ideas. I learned early on in my career that there are ample opportunities for facing the fear of public speaking and sharing my insights with my colleagues. At the SLA annual conference in 2009, I was a part of a panel of law librarians discussing competitive intelligence in law firms. I was the first speaker of the morning and spoke about a project I'd been working on for several years—the *CI Update*. (See lesson #3 above).

During National Library Week in April, our office generally marked the occasion with typical fanfare: baked goods, games, library themed brain teasers and a contest to return the most overdue books. I wanted to add an educational element to our celebration of our talents, skills, and expertise. Each day, I did a brown bag lunch demonstration of a particular research technique open to everyone in the office—attorneys, legal assistants, secretaries. I did live searching on Advanced Google, showed off law specific blogs, and demonstrated what a wiki is and how it can be used as a collaboration tool. The last day of the week I provided a list of my favorite websites. Despite my initial fears of public speaking and putting my own ideas up for criticism and review, I came away with a positive sense of achievement and always got good feedback from my audience. You should try it!

5. Let me show you...

As a history major in college, I always assumed that I would one day be a teacher. I was a summer camp counselor in my high school days. I had younger brothers I was sure could benefit from my years of experience (they are one and three years younger than I am!) I've always been an instructor and I enjoy showing people how to do something new, be it a new database or website, or how to properly tie a bowline knot or paddle a canoe. I may not be a teacher in the traditional sense, but how many times have I been asked to show someone the basics of Westlaw, illustrate the advantages of Google Alerts, or do an orientation on the services and expertise of the Library staff? Too many, I tell you! But it is one aspect of my job that I enjoy because it is in the nature of the service professional, the librarian, to share what we know and what we do. How challenging is it for us when the student surpasses the teacher, though, and shows us something new? It certainly keeps me on my toes by encouraging

me to seek new skills and new resources and makes me stay one step ahead.

A great tool came along with the Internet—the blog. I love the idea of a tool that lets me combine all the things I love about being an information professional. I can work creatively, alone or with others in my own space. I learn. I get to test and explore new technology and resources. I can share what I learn and bring new information to people. I put my own fears aside and my own opinions and ideas forward. I receive feedback—positive and negative—for my efforts. Blogging was my effort to teach and share both to my immediate, internal clients of attorneys and legal staff and with the wider information and legal industry cohorts.

6. Technology = Awesome!

Years ago, when I carried around a Palm Pilot, a clunky mp3 player that could hold nearly 30 songs, a 2 megapixel digital camera, and shared a mobile phone with my wife, I lamented that there wasn't one device that combined my address book, music, phone, and camera. Oh, and if I could get the Internet and check my email without having to listen to the screech of a dial-up modem, all the better. I think Steve Jobs heard me. I love my iPhone.

Technology has transformed the role of the law librarian. I don't have to tell you this, you know it already.

When I started working as a Research Assistant, most of my time was spent shelving books or making mad dashes to agencies and courts for paper documents, books, and reports. What percentage of your day today is spent shelf reading call numbers on the spines of books, photocopying journal articles, or filing newsletters in binders? I would guess very little. Does anyone else remember cursing at the dot-matrix printer as paper jammed and a hundred pages were printed on three lines? Technology can be infuriating when emails don't stop, and everyone who calls you thinks you can just “plug his name” in Google to get an expert witness' lifetime body of work in an instant. But there is something thrilling about being the one who knows the secret of accessing Dialog, or The Alacra Store, or Monitor Suite, and the plethora of other specialized databases and information stores that hold the answers to perplexing questions.

My career as a law librarian is a career of learning. I learn about the art and science of research and information management. I learn about myself as a leader, teacher, and a colleague. I learn about the tools and technology of an industry and a profession. Continuing to learn for myself and to serve my patrons keeps me engaged, energized, and at the top of my game. **LLL**

Mobile Legal Research: Do we NEED an app for that?

Roger V. Skalbeck, Associate Law Librarian for Electronic Resources & Services, Georgetown Law Library, rvs5@law.georgetown.edu

At the American Association of Law Libraries conference in July 2010, the Thomson Reuters exhibit booth included a section dedicated to mobile computing. Somewhat surprisingly, they did not feature apps for legal research. Instead the focus was on content designed for flexible display on multiple device types.

In the mobile computing section they had a Kindle, iPad, Blackberry, and iPhone primarily to show Westlaw in a browser (or Kindle's ebook format). In talking to people at the booth, it sounded like device-specific apps were not a market focus (perhaps a form of “*app*voidance”). Yes, Black’s Law Dictionary was out on the iPad, but they did not show off anything more.

A month after the conference, Thomson Reuters launched the WestlawNext iPad app. Current marketing touts mobile access to WestlawNext that is suitable on four major smartphone platforms. At right is a screen shot from the native iPad app as well as WestlawNext in Apple’s Safari browser. The iPad app does not let you send documents to your Kindle, and in fact does not let you download or print items directly, as shown in the highlighted screen element in each.

Using this as a starting point, below I suggest arguments *for* and *against* using apps for mobile legal research. The focus is not on a specific service or provider, but on the question of “app vs. browser.”

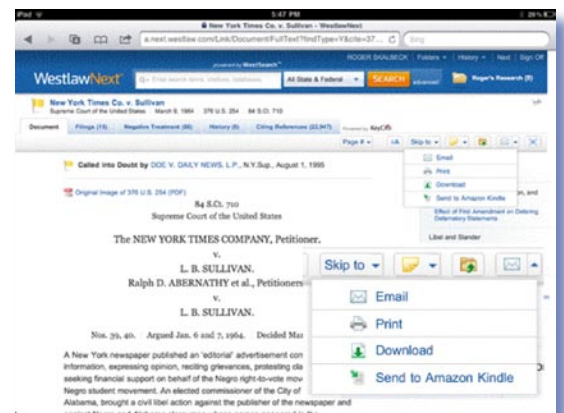
Arguments in Favor of Native Apps

Device-Specific Controls

The Oyez project is a great place to find information about the Supreme Court, including recordings of oral arguments, histories of votes and information on the justices. On the iPhone, the Oyez app “Pocket Justice” packages selected Supreme Court content for quick browsing and interactive analysis. One of the most impressive features of the app is that oral argument transcripts are integrated with many of their corresponding recordings. This would be difficult to replicate on a browser.

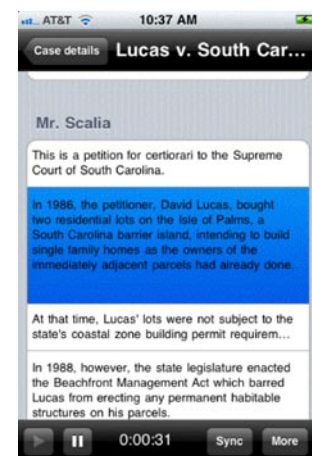


Above: Native iPad app. Below: WestlawNext in Apple’s Safari browser.



The Pocket Justice app also shows that curated content can be a great way to showcase important legal research sources.

Example: Pocket Justice from Oyez



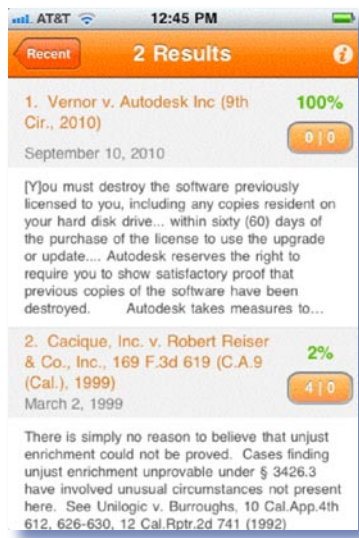
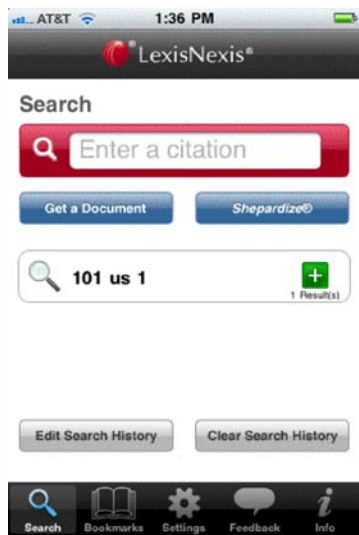
Narrowly-Focused Tasks

Quick information access is the hallmark of most native mobile apps. If you have a narrow information need, it is often simple to answer a ready reference question or verify laws quickly. Also, if these needs are recurring, an app can be very helpful.

Two examples of narrowly-focused legal research apps include LexisNexis Get Cases and the FastCase app for the iPhone and iPad. Each provides quick access to important legal research content.

iPhone Examples:

LexisNexis Get Cases and FastCase



Local File Storage

Storage on most smartphones often exceeds several gigabytes of space. Though media files and photographs could compete for use of this

space, there should be plenty of space left for locally-stored data. Most legal information is textual, so even a few megabytes could easily contain hundreds if not thousands of pages.

Two examples of apps using local storage include Black's Law Dictionary and Law Stack. Law Stack is a platform for accessing legal texts, including those they sell (*e.g.* \$20 for Title 20 of the CFR). Because all data is stored locally, there are no data transmission concerns and you can do anything you might do with an electronic book, including search text and bookmark entries.

Arguments in Favor of Browser-Based Research Tools

Multi-Tasking

Performing legal research is a task frequently done in tandem with multiple sources and tools. Efficient legal researchers need to be able to switch between sources and copy/paste quotes into word processing, email or between electronic texts. With a native app like WestlawNext for the iPad, copying text to paste into a note or email message ends your session, interrupting workflow. Surprisingly, even after multi-tasking was added to the iPad, WestlawNext even stops the audio in native Apple music playback.

Admittedly, multi-tasking is more efficient on almost any laptop than it is on the iPad, so multi-tasking for now is an argument against most complex mobile research tasks.

Uniform Source Interaction

Once you are used to tools available in a web browser, it is difficult to interact with the same content in another platform. Whether using Safari on an iPhone or even Internet Explorer on your desktop, you can quickly get used to the way to interact with content. When common interaction options are missing in an app, this can be frustrating.

A common iPhone interaction is "pinch to zoom" in Safari to read content more closely. Unfortunately, interaction options in mobile apps often differ from those available in a browser on the same platform. For instance, on the iPhone neither the Wikipedia app nor the FastCase app let you zoom in on text or rotate the screen to view in landscape mode.

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Hypertext Links

When legal research tools are viewed in a browser, it means they can exist in a platform where the entire web is available. Certainly Lexis will not link to statutes from Cornell's Legal Information Institute. Nonetheless, legal research tools inevitably link to things on the Internet.

When you experience this content in a browser, there is no need to hand off requests from an app to a browser and back again. Your research can flow as easily from source to source in a mobile web browser as it does on your desktop.

Bookmarks

Bookmarks are a fundamental feature of most browser programs. They give you fast access to sites you find one day and want to access again in the future. Unfortunately it is not possible to synchronize bookmarks between your desktop and mobile phone easily. Nonetheless, it is safe to say that native apps do not support browser bookmarks in any fashion.

Long-term: Plugins and Extensions

Mobile web browsers still lack many features of their desktop companions. They generally do not support tabbed browsing and there are few, if any, plugin applications or extensions. Eventually we may see mobile browsers provide as many functions as you see in Google's Chrome browser or Mozilla's Firefox. When that day comes we may have many more reasons to use legal research tools in the browser.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the question remains whether we NEED native apps for legal research. The perhaps unremarkable answer is both yes and no. We need instant access to focused content and custom interaction that is currently best provided in apps developed for a specific platform. At the same time, efficient researchers need the flexibility and predictability of information available through a web browser, whether mobile or not. **LLL**

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Goldberg, Gerald G. **Practical Lawyering: The Skills You Did Not Learn in Law School.** New York: Kaplan Publishing, 2009.

For this issue of *Law Library Lights*, with its focus on learning on the job, I thought I would review a book that addressed the things our patrons—the lawyers—have to learn on the job. In my first job as a tax accountant with one of the top international accounting firms, I faced many of the same issues that newly-minted lawyers fresh out of law school face: figuring out how to turn my legal research skills into billable written work product, billing time, preparing bills that clients would pay (and collecting on them!), communicating with clients, establishing work-life balance, and dealing with office politics. One major difference I did not have to worry about at the time was the cost of online research tools, since we did not use them in accounting firms back then, but we still had to figure out the best resources to use for any particular project and we had to know how to use them efficiently.

So I figured I would be able to use my own memories of my early professional life to assess the helpfulness of the advice given in the book I opted to read: Gerry Goldberg's *Practical Lawyering: The Skills You Did Not Learn in Law School*. A particular reason I chose this book was its recent publication date; I was hoping it would deal at least in part with the drastic changes in law firm employment over the past few years, from layoffs to rescinded offers to just plain not hiring new associates, or at best, hiring in drastically reduced numbers. Surely this recent development in the employment picture is a major topic about which new law school graduates and those considering entering the legal profession could use some sage advice.

Oddly enough, Goldberg's book does not address the current employment situation at all. It also fails to address the topic so near and dear to our law librarian hearts—new associates' lack of knowledge of the print and online resources available to them and how to use those resources efficiently and cost effectively. Ultimately, I would have to say that this book would not really prove very helpful to new associates

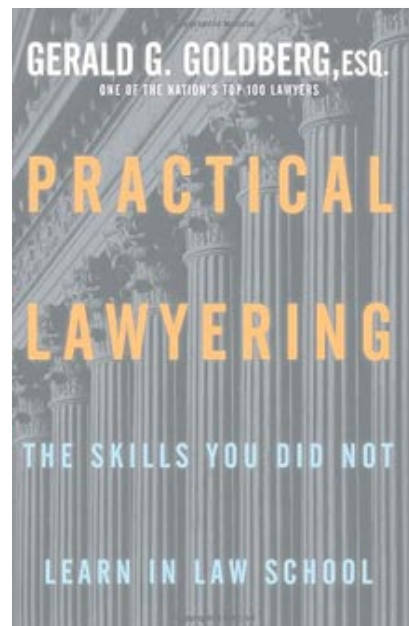
in navigating their first few years in the law firm world. For example, Goldberg recognizes the importance for new lawyers of choosing the right area of specialization:

If you start your career in a specialized area, this is how you are perceived laterally. Therefore, if for some reason you need to reinvent yourself, do it as soon as you can, as time is working against you.

If you are going to a firm directly from law school, be careful to choose or accept an area of concentration that is right for you, because you . . . will be labeled with that choice. . . . If you are a general litigation associate, you have roughly seven years to be admitted to a partnership or equity position. If this doesn't happen, your options are limited. (p. 67)

Having thus driven home how critical it is to pick one's area of specialization judiciously, with consideration for own interests and abilities and with an eye to the future, I would have expected Goldberg to offer at least a bit of advice on what specializations might be best for certain personality types. But having put fear into the hearts of prospective lawyers that they will end up trapped for life in a specialization that does not suit them, Goldberg does nothing of the kind, saying instead that "it is not the purpose of this book to provide guidance as to what practice area you should enter. I am an absolute believer in the principle that each lawyer must find his own niche or practice area, as well as firm size, based on that person's own likes and dislikes" (p. 67). I did not find this attitude helpful at all.

Likewise, while Goldberg recognizes that the legal profession can be very stressful and that the ability to manage stress is crucial, his advice boils down to this: "The key to stress management is discipline—discipline to commit to



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an exercise program, eat properly, avoid illegal activities, develop business involving area of law that we enjoy, and avoid the worship of money” (p. 78). While these certainly are excellent tips, I am not at all certain that the associate working 12+ hour days for weeks and months on end is going to appreciate Goldberg’s blithe words of wisdom. I, for one, was guilty in my tax accountant days of thinking that if I left the office last in the evening, I would get ahead by virtue of my willingness to put in long hours. In reality, I just gained weight and worked much more inefficiently than if I’d aimed to get out earlier. In contrast, one of my co-workers used to leave around 4:00 to go running and do his errands, then would stop back by the office for a few minutes and respond to any messages that had been left for him. While this practice annoyed my fellow associates and me to no end, the partners and managers thought he was great.

Although I did not find Goldberg’s book to be at all what I had expected, I did think that he made some important points in several areas that mainly involve long-term career development and client relationships. First, he has some good tips on creating a network of contacts and colleagues by joining relevant

bar associations and other organizations. By attending events, participating, socializing, and eventually speaking on topics in one’s area of expertise, attorneys can increase their standing and exposure within the legal community which can prove extremely helpful in getting client referrals and possible future employment opportunities.

Goldberg also gives some really good advice on managing client relationships, including tips on interviewing potential clients, the importance of documenting fee and other arrangements, and the value of communication: “Communicate, communicate, communicate, and your bills will be paid” (p. 118). The tone of the book is definitely along the lines of “Father Knows Best.” Goldberg’s law career has spanned over 40 years (so far); he is a top attorney in the field of Illinois administrative health law; and is the senior partner of the Goldberg Law Group, which includes his sons Mike and Jim (whom he proudly mentions numerous times in his book).

Practical Lawyering may not be the ultimate guidebook for the new lawyer, but it is a very interesting trip through the mind of an elder statesman of the law. He does speak from long experience, and most of the advice he has to offer really is not only sound, but also, as the title says, “practical.” **LLL**

Get a Free Year of AALL Membership with Nonmember Annual Meeting Registration

AALL is continuing to offer nonmembers a complimentary one-year membership when they register for the AALL Annual Meeting and Conference, held July 23 – 26 in Philadelphia. The membership includes:

- career resources, such as the online AALL Career Center and continuing education to help you learn new skills to advance in your career;
- access to specialized information created just for law librarians, such as the *AALL Biennial Salary Survey* and the AALL Price Index for Legal Publications;
- subscriptions to the monthly magazine, *AALL Spectrum*, and quarterly journal, *Law Library Journal*, to help you keep up on the latest trends in law librarianship;
- the opportunity to network and connect with other law librarians from across the country who share similar interests and are facing the same challenges; and
- discounted rates on all AALL products and services, such as publications, webinars, and online job postings.

Annual Meeting registration opens in mid-February. Watch the AALL Web site in January for an announcement. Be to take advantage of this special offer for nonmembers.

AALL Awards Committee Seeking Nominations

The AALL Awards Committee is seeking nominations for the many awards that highlight the accomplishments of libraries and individual members. Recipients will be recognized at the AALL Annual Meeting in Philadelphia in July. The deadline for most of the awards is **February 1, 2011**. See the AALL Awards Web site (www.aallnet.org/about/awards.asp) for more information.

The 2011 “Call for Papers” Has Begun!

Have you been thinking of writing an article of interest to law librarians? The AALL/LexisNexis Call for Papers Committee has just the incentive to get started. The Committee is soliciting articles in three categories:

Open Division: for active and retired AALL members and law librarians with five or more years of professional experience;

New Members Division: for recent graduates and AALL members who have been in the profession for less than five years;

Student Division: for students in library, information management or law school. Participants in this division need not be members of AALL. To submit in this category, you must have been enrolled in law school, or in a library school, information management, or an equivalent program, either in the Fall 2010 or Spring 2011 semester.

The winner in each division receives \$750 generously donated by LexisNexis, plus the opportunity to present the winning paper at a program at the 2011 AALL Annual Meeting in Philadelphia. Winning papers are also considered for publication in the Association’s prestigious *Law Library Journal*.

Applications and additional details, including a list of previous winners, can be found at the AALL/LexisNexis Call for Papers Web site <http://works.bepress.com/aallicallforpapers>.

Submissions in the Open and New Members Divisions must be submitted by **March 1, 2011**. Articles in the Student Division must be submitted by **April 15, 2011**. **LLL**



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