

Plenary Session: How Can Technology Enrich the Experience of Law Students Searching Information Globally?

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Globalization and technological advancement have created new opportunities as well as challenges for today's legal researchers. The following is a highlight of the key new technology resources which have a great impact on searching legal information globally.

1. Current awareness technologies/resources

- **RSS feed:** It is "a format for syndicating news and the content of news-like sites, including major news sites, news-oriented community sites, and personal weblogs." <http://www.xml.com/pub/a/2002/12/18/dive-into-xml.html> . Many websites provide email RSS feed subscription. One can also install a feed reader (<http://allrss.com/rssreaders.html>) on one's computer, or uses free web based feed services to feed a list of sources. Some examples:

NewsGator: www.newsgator.com

Bloglines: www.bloglines.com/

- Alert services are provided by many commercial databases, allowing users to be informed with the latest content updates on a regular basis. Some examples are:

LexisNexis: Alert

Westlaw: Westclip;

SmartCILP (<http://depts.washington.edu/scilp>): an electronic weekly current awareness service of the Current Index to Legal Periodicals.

Index to legal periodicals

(<http://www.ovid.com/site/catalog/DataBase/185.jsp>): "Create Alerts"

- Other available awareness services in the legal field:
Washington & Lee Law School Current Law Journal Content (<http://lawlib.wlu.edu/CLJC>): provides table of contents from over 1300 journal titles, delivered through regular email notifications.

Global Legal Monitor (<http://www.loc.gov/law/news/glm.html>), a free electronic publication of the Law Library of Congress, United States, is intended for those who have an interest in legal developments from around the world.

LINEX Legal: <http://www.linexlegal.com/index.php>

"Keep up-to-date with legal updates and reviews published everyday on the internet by over 1,000 leading law firms and government organizations around the world."

2. Weblogs

Weblogs (also shortened as blogs) are increasingly being used for scholarly communications. The content is normally less formal and more flexible than traditional academic publications. Weblogs written by legal professionals on various legal topics are becoming an important information source. Some examples include:

- Law Professor Blogs (www.lawprofessorblogs.com): a network of weblogs designed to assist law professors in their scholarship and teaching.
- Blawg (www.blawg.com): a directory of weblogs by subject.
- Google Blog Search (www.google.com/blogsearch): can be used to search blogs, blog entries, and comments by keywords.

3. Wikis

Wiki technology allows multiple users to contribute to the same content posted on the website and is widely used for collaborating projects.

- Wikipedia (www.wikipedia.org): one of the most visited websites in the world and the most comprehensive encyclopedias today. Wikipedia has created new opportunities as well as new challenges as well for information use.
- JurisPedia (www.jurispedia.org): “is an encyclopedia project of academic initiative devoted to worldwide law, legal and political sciences. Its objective is to create a universal legal encyclopedia.” JurisPedia is currently available in 7 languages.

4. Social Bookmarking

Social bookmarking is a tool for storing, categorizing, searching, and sharing bookmarks of web pages. Bookmarked web pages can be shared among persons with similar interests and can also be searched by keywords, subjects, and popularity. Some examples:

- <http://del.icio.us>: one of the most successful social bookmarking services.
- CiteULike (www.citeulike.com): is a free social bookmarking service to help academics to share, store, and organize the academic papers they are reading.

5. Open Access Legal Scholarship

Open Access is an alternative form of publication in response to the increasing cost of print and electronic scientific publications. Scholarship published through Open Access is publicly accessible on the Internet. Some examples of Open Access sources include:

- Social Science Research Network/Legal Scholarship Network (www.ssrn.com/lsn/index.html)
- Bepress Legal Repository (<http://law.bepress.com/repository/>)

- Directory of Open Access Journals (www.dopj.org)

6. Information Digitization

- Free resources:

Google Books Search (<http://books.google.com>): Still in its beta stage, Google Books Search is one of the best known mass digitization projects today, aiming “to organize the world’s information and make it universally accessible and useful”.

World Digital Library (www.worlddigitallibrary.org): in progress, this initiative aims to promote international and inter-cultural understanding and awareness, to provide resources to educators, expand non-English and non-Western content on the Internet, and to contribute to scholarly research.

- Fee-based resources:

HeinOnline (www.heinonline.org): provides access to scanned images of full-text articles of over 900 law journal, historical law reports, international yearbooks, etc.

LLMC Digital (www.llmc.com): is a non-profit consortium of libraries providing access to a wide range of legal and law-related materials, digitized from their original microfiche format.

The Making of Modern Law (www.gale.com/modernlaw/): digitization of two essential reference collections for historical and more contemporary legal studies-*the Nineteenth-Century Legal Treatises* and *Twentieth-Century Legal Treatises* microfilm collection, with advanced search features.

7. Legal Information Institute: Free access to law movements

- Legal information institutes (LIIs) are initiatives to bring law information free accessible to the public through Internet. The LIIs provides full-text of law, case judgments, and lists of information sources. The current LII family includes the following:

WorldLII (www.worldlii.org): World Legal Information Institute

AsianLII (www.asianlii.org): Asian Legal Information Institute

AustLII (www.austlii.edu.au): Australasian Legal Information Institute

BAILII (www.bailii.org): British and Irish Legal Information Institute

CannLII (www.canlii.org): Canadian Legal Information Institute

CommonLII (www.commonlii.org): Commonwealth Legal Information Institute

CornellLII (www.law.cornell.edu): Cornell Law School Legal Information Institute (the United States)

CYLAW (www.cylaw.org): the Cyprus Source of Legal Information

Droit Francophone (<http://droit.francophone.org>): Legal Information Institute for French speaking countries

HKLII (www.hklii.org): Hong Kong Legal Information Institute

NZLII (www.nzlii.org): New Zealand Legal Information Institute

PacLII (www.paclii.org): Pacific Islands Legal Information Institute

SAFLII (www.saflii.org): Southern African Legal Information Insititute

ZamLII (www.zamlii.ac.zm): Zambia Legal Information Institute

- Global Legal Information Network (GLIN: www.glin.gov/search.action): provided by the Library of Congress of United States, it is a public database of official text of laws, regulations, judicial decisions, and other complementary legal sources contributed by governmental agencies and international organizations.

8. Reference Management Tools:

- Endnotes (www.endnote.com): commercial reference management software developed by Thomson.
- Refwork (<http://www.refworks.com/>): a web-based commercial reference management tool. Users are able to create their own citation format to add in the system. Refwork is connected with library catalogues, some commercial databases, indices, which enables users to export list of records into Refwork and generates bibliographies and citations. However, no standard legal citation style has been added in Refwork and no major commercial legal databases provide Refwork export/import features yet.
- For information on other reference management tools, see *Comparison of reference management software* from Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_reference_management_software

9. Networked Information Systems

- WorldCat (www.worldcat.org): is the largest network of library catalogues worldwide. It enables its users to search over 10,000 library catalogues at one search and each record provides links to participating institutions' individual online catalogue. WorldCat has become a free Internet source recently.
- PowerSearch Plus (<http://gale.cengage.com/powersearch/plus/>): a commercial search engine that searches across Thomson Gale databases, a large suite of databases from other vendors, library catalogues, and some other favorite web sites and web search engines.
- Google Scholar (<http://scholar.google.com>): a free web service, it searches scholarly literature available on the web with free or limited access. It also provides citation statistics for some records.
- Scholars' Portal (www.scholarsportal.info/index.html): a federated search engine developed by Ontario education institutions in Canada. It allows searching a wide range of electronic resources at one interface.

10. Multilingual Information Search

- Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals (<http://www.ovid.com/site/catalog/DataBase/104.jsp?top=2&mid=3&bottom=7&subsection=10>): produced by the American Association of Law Libraries, this index provides access to multilingual legal literature worldwide. The interface is only available in English.

- Worldcat (www.worldcat.org): The interface is currently available in six languages and searches in either one of the six languages can retrieve multi-lingual results.