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Law Library Briefs

Roger Williams University School of Law Library



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Research Tips for Summer

As you start your new summer or full-time positions, here are some pointers!

Researching New Subjects

All too often, you will be called upon to research a particular area of law with which you are unfamiliar. In case you are unable to go to a law library or consult with a reference librarian, do not despair! Freely available on the internet are numerous research guides and pathfinders on a myriad of topics. Authored by librarians, these research guides or pathfinders will frequently include references to both print and electronic sources. To locate a research guide or pathfinder, you can use the Google search engine by entering your topic along with the phrase "research guide" or the word "pathfinder." Here are a few noteworthy websites that have research guides or pathfinders available or provide links to them on the Internet.

The Cornell Legal Information Institute [www.law.cornell.edu] maintains Wex, a collaboratively-edited law dictionary and legal encyclopedia. Wex contains articles on 128 legal topics. There is an overview of each topic along with links to federal and state materials (with an emphasis on New York) on the Internet. Also included for each topic are links to key Internet sources

and a link to a print publication that is a good starting point for research on the topic.

LLRX.com [www.llrx.com] is a webzine maintained by law librarian Sabrina Pacifici. Updated monthly, *LLRX.com* contain articles written by law librarians and attorneys and covers a variety of legal and law-related topics. One can subscribe to receive updates about new information and articles posted to *LLRX.com*.

The Virtual Chase website [thevirtualchase.com] is maintained by law firm librarian Genie Tyburski whose focus is to teach legal researchers how to conduct legal research on various topics. Two of her major content areas are: "How to Research" and "Research Guides." Genie provides advice, guidance, strategies, suggestions, and tips for locating specific or general types of legal and non-legal information. References and links are to print and electronic resources.

Washlaw Web Legal Subject Index [www.washlaw.edu/subject] is maintained by the staff of the Washburn University Law Library. Indexed are approximately 120 subjects for which links to research guides and pathfinders are given where available.

Keep It Simple! (Advice from the Experts on Conducting Legal Research)

When you are given a legal research assignment for which you will be paid, the first thing to do is to take a deep breath and remember to **keep it simple!** Keep in mind that legal research is a skill which improves with practice. The Reference Librarians offer the following survival tips for conducting legal research.

Make sure you allow enough time. Good legal research takes time to thoroughly check all the appropriate sources and to update the citations. When learning a new skill or refreshing an old skill, the process usually takes more time than you expect.

If you are researching an area with which you are unfamiliar, use sources such as hornbooks, nutshells, periodical literature, and treatises to obtain background information. Write out your key concepts and terms before beginning your research. This will save you time when using any resource (print or electronic) by allowing you to easily switch between a variety of terms/searches while avoiding wasting time through repetition. If you are unable to search full-text databases



