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11-2020

Law Library Blog (November 2020): Legal Beagle's Blog Archive

Roger Williams University School of Law

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November 2020 Library Blogs

Legal Beagle's Post

November 6, 2020

Artificial Intelligence & Law

November 6, 2020



A Brookings Institution report, [How Artificial Intelligence Is Transforming the World](#), states the following about artificial intelligence (AI):

Although there is no uniformly agreed upon definition, AI generally is thought to refer to “machines that respond to stimulation consistent with traditional responses from humans, given the human capacity for contemplation, judgment and intention.” According to researchers Shubhendu and Vijay, these software systems “make decisions which normally require [a] human level of expertise” and help people anticipate problems or deal with issues as they come up. As such, they operate in an intentional, intelligent, and adaptive manner.

According to an article in the [ABA’s Law Practice Magazine](#), “[t]he majority of lawyers don’t know a lot about artificial intelligence (AI)... There may really be robot lawyers one day, but not any day soon. Still, we are being shaped by AI in ways we have not yet fully grasped. On Aug. 12, 2019, the ABA House of Delegates passed Resolution 112, which states that the ABA “urges courts and lawyers to address the emerging ethical and legal issues related to the usage of

artificial intelligence (“AI”) in the practice of law including: (1) bias, explainability, and transparency of automated decisions made by AI; (2) ethical and beneficial usage of AI; and (3) controls and oversight of AI and the vendors that provide AI.”

Artificial intelligence is part of legal research resources and databases. One [author describes this](#): “[m]any legal research providers, both old and new, incorporate AI tools into their platforms. Each system purports to use AI in a proprietary manner, and it’s often difficult to determine exactly how AI is used to provide more relevant results. That being said, providers large and small are incorporating AI into their platforms in a variety of interesting ways.” There are definitely pros and cons to the use of AI in legal research, in law, and beyond. For example, it is important to be aware of [bias in algorithms](#).

We created a collection of online resources and books available at the law library related to how AI interfaces with the law. To read more about these issues, [see our guide](#).

November 13, 2020

Learn, Review, Practice: Getting Ready for Finals with Study Aids and eBooks

November 13, 2020



As final exams quickly approach, you are probably getting ready to review what you have learned so far in your classes, and what you have outlined so far in your review. But, what if you have some gaps to fill in or need some more practice? The library can help with our assortment

of study aids, many of which are available as eBooks 24/7/365 online! Here's a quick walkthrough of where our study aids might fit into your studying plan:

Learn

Completing assigned readings, attending class, and taking notes, are the crucial first steps in learning the material; there is no substitute. You have probably already done this part, so you are well on your way! You might have already used a favorite study aid or treatise throughout the semester to reinforce your learning.

Review

If you have started outlining, you are already reviewing! If you haven't yet or need help, reach out to the Academic Success team; but, as you are reviewing your notes and/or outlining, what if you need to fill in some information gaps? Study aids can help here too!

Here are some useful study aids series from each of our collections to help you review for your finals:

- [RWU Digital Library](#): Understanding series, Mastering series
- [West Academic Study Aids](#): Concepts and Insights series, Concise Hornbooks, Hornbooks, Law Stories, Short & Happy Guides, and Sum & Substance Audio
- [Wolters Kluwer Online Study Aids](#): Glannon Guides, Inside series, Jumpstart series

Practice

Once you have filled in the gaps, it is time to practice. You *could* read your notes over and over again, but when you practice applying what you have learned to different scenarios (also known as issue spotting) and review your answers, you test your understanding. This allows you to focus your review on those areas where you have weaknesses.

Our study aids collections also include various series to help you apply and practice what you've learned:

- RWU Digital Library: Questions & Answers series
- West Academic Study Aids: Acing series, Exam Pro series
- Wolters Kluwer Online Study Aids: Examples & Explanations, Friedman's Practice Series

To find out which titles are available for your law school classes and to jump to specific titles, visit our [Study Aids](#) page. If you need help figuring out which study aid might best fit your needs, reach out to your Law Librarians! Good luck on your exams!

November 20, 2020

2020 and Student Wellness

November 20, 2020



This year has been unlike any in your life, not just because you are in law school, but because you are in law school during a pandemic and a contentious presidential election year. It is very important to remember your own wellness right now.

One way to be mindful of your wellness is to set, and stick to, boundaries regarding COVID and safety. If you can't attend a get-together or an event because you don't know who will be there or if they will be wearing a mask, that is a healthy boundary to have and totally reasonable. One [website](#) explains, "People might take it personally, but remember, during COVID-19, boundaries are for your safety as well as others. If you're a people pleaser, you might feel obliged to remedy anger or any guilt you feel. But a boundary is not a negotiation or a quid pro quo situation. You're not doing anything wrong by prioritizing your safety, even if it means choosing to wear a mask, not going to intimate events, or other activities that could compromise your well-being."

Another way to be mindful of your wellness is to take breaks. It is so easy to be working constantly during this time. We are going into finals and we are mostly home all the time anyway. It is critical to take breaks. Mary Helen Immordino-Yang examined neural activity during the brain's state of rest that's usually associated with taking a break called the "default mode." [Edutopia](#) explains, "[f]urther experiments showed that this default mode is crucial for consolidating memories, reflecting on past experiences, and planning for the future—in other words, it helps shape how we make sense of our lives. Breaks keep our brains healthy and play a key role in cognitive abilities such as reading comprehension and divergent thinking (the ability

to generate and make sense of novel ideas). ‘Rest is indeed not idleness, nor is it a wasted opportunity for productivity,’ Immordino-Yang and her colleagues write.”

Finally, don’t forget the resources available on campus. There is a gym for exercising your body and counseling center to exercise your mind. Also, check out the law library’s guide on [Stress Management, Mindfulness and Wellness](#). In particular, check on this website which is linked in that guide called [1000 Awesome Things](#). What is an awesome thing? For example see [#148, the core of a cinnamon bun](#). (“Do you bite off the sticky sweet top, slowly twist apart its fresh-bready innards, or maybe chomp away at that sticky flat bottom?”) Either way, sticky and sweet cinnamon buns are one awesome thing!

November 24, 2020

Thanksgiving & the Law

November 24, 2020



One of the library staff’s favorite holiday pastimes is finding the nexus between law and the holidays. While there are several ways that Thanksgiving is related to law, the one we are choosing to highlight this year is the presidential turkey pardon.

While the presidential turkey pardon has become a yearly tradition, it is a relatively new tradition. The [first turkey spared](#) by a president has been traced to Abraham Lincoln. According to an 1865 dispatch by White House reporter Noah Brooks, Lincoln’s son Tad asked his father to spare the turkey’s life. Tad had adopted the turkey as a pet. Although Lincoln did spare this turkey’s life, the turkey was planned for Christmas dinner not Thanksgiving dinner.

Reports of turkeys sent to the White House as gifts at Thanksgiving can be [traced back to the 1870's](#). Horace Vose, a Rhode Island poultry dealer, began sending turkeys to the White House in the 1870's until 1913. Vose's death in 1914 brought about the opportunity for others to send turkeys to the president for Thanksgiving. Official presentations of live turkeys to the president began in 1947 with the National Turkey Federation presenting a live turkey to President Truman. Because of this [photo op](#), Truman is often accredited with the first turkey pardon, but he did not pardon the turkey.

In 1963, President Kennedy spared a turkey's life at the presentation event when he stated, "[Let's keep him going](#)". In 1973, during the Nixon presidency, the turkey was sent to Oxen Hill Children's Farm. First Lady Rosalynn Carter sent the 1978 turkey to Evans Farm Inn to live in a mini zoo. It became the norm for the [turkeys to be sent](#) to farms during the Reagan administration.

The pardoning became formalized and official in 1989, when President George W.H. Bush pardoned that year's Thanksgiving turkey. "[He's granted a presidential pardon as of right now — and allow him to live out his days on a children's farm not far from here.](#)" Since 1989, each year, the U.S. President officially pardons a turkey from the Thanksgiving table.