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Law Library Newsletters/Blog


Law Library

4-2022

Law Library Blog (April 2022): Legal Beagle's Blog Archive

Roger Williams University School of Law

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April 2022 Library Blogs

Legal Beagle's Post

April 1, 2022

National Library Week!

April 1, 2022



National Library Week is upon us! It is a time to celebrate the people who work in libraries and what libraries offer. This year we celebrate from Monday April 4 to Friday April 8. Library social media, emails from student groups, and signs in the library and on digital screens will provide more details on the following events:

- Tuesday, April 5: National Library Workers Day – say “thank you” to the student employees at the circulation desk
- Wednesday, April 6th, 10:00am-2:00pm in the atrium: Lexis Digital Library Demonstrations
- Wednesday, April 6th, 12:00-1:30pm in room 262: [Cost Effective Research Training](#) (Registration required - Lunch will be served)
- Thursday April 7th, 12:00-1:00pm: [Bloomberg Law Training](#) (Registration required)

This year's celebration highlights banned books! Banned books are books removed from library shelves for "inappropriate" content or because of the actions of an author. In the United States, books are usually banned in schools or public libraries for obscene language, sex scenes, or sometimes if the book contains aspects perceived to go against a religion, like the occult. The [American Library Association](#) collects data on banned and challenged books. Each day we will focus on one commonly banned book--look to our social media sites for more information on each:

- Monday, April 4: Stamped from the Beginning by Ibram X. Kendi
- Tuesday, April 5: The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood
- Wednesday, April 6: Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone by J. K. Rowling
- Thursday, April 7: To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee
- Friday, April 8: The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini

Not only are banned books an interesting topic for libraries, but they also intersect with the law. There have been numerous court cases over banned books and the First Amendment. As of 3/30/2022, Utah ([H.B. 374](#)), Tennessee ([H.B. 1944](#)), and Florida ([H.B. 1467](#)) have passed bills to restrict access to books in schools. [Missouri](#) recently rescinded their decision to ban one of Toni Morrison's books.

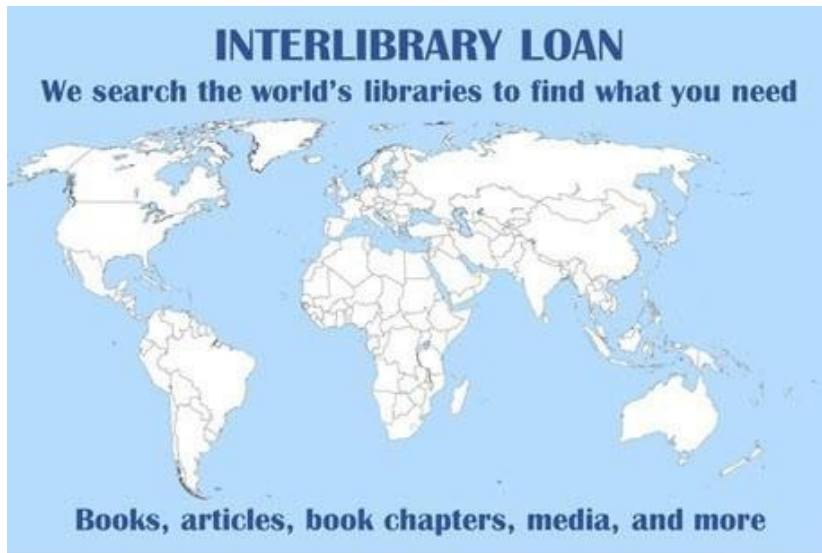
Every patron and every book is welcome here. Come celebrate with us! Be sure to attend our events and complete our Lexis question to be entered into raffles!

"Any book worth banning is a book worth reading." – Isaac Asimov, author of I, Robot

April 8, 2022

Interlibrary Loan: What People Think I Do vs. What I Actually Do

April 8, 2022



Have you seen that meme/graphic widely shared on the internet which depicts what other people think of your profession as opposed to what you do all day long? This year we will be featuring content on our blog using that format to describe what the RWU Law Librarians do all day long. Today we are talking about one of the Law Library's services: Interlibrary Loan (ILL). It may seem simple – request an item, get the item 3-10 days later. But this complex service requires attention to detail, following local and international procedures, and recordkeeping by all parties to keep everyone informed throughout the process.

The [Interlibrary Loan](#) service by the RWU Law Library allows our law school patrons--faculty, students, or staff--to borrow materials from libraries outside Roger Williams University. Our patrons may directly borrow materials found at the [University Library and the Architecture Library](#). If they are unable to locate material they need at the RWU Law Library or the University Libraries, they may request to obtain it through ILL.

All School of Law faculty, students, and staff are asked to make ILL requests through the RWU Law Library. To submit an ILL request to the RWU Law Library patrons must complete the [Law Library's interlibrary loan form](#).

Once a request has been made, Law Library staff receives an email alert. We review the form submission and will contact the person who submitted the request if we have any questions about the request. We then proceed to the OCLC WorldShare Management System to begin the search

for the item needed. OCLC WorldShare is an ILL network that offers libraries access to materials from thousands of libraries across the country and around the world.

Borrowing Materials

We search OCLC WorldShare for the item requested and select the record for the entry that most closely matches the item requested. We verify the information and look at the holdings. The holdings list shows all the libraries that own the item requested and includes information about the possible cost to borrow from the library, turn-around time of requests, and location of the library.

We then select several of the libraries from the holdings to request the item. We consider who charges for copies, scans, or shipping. The RWU Law Library does not charge for most ILLs, so we look for libraries that do not charge fees. Member libraries of the consortia in which the RWU Law Library is a member do not charge other member libraries. We try to request items from these libraries first. We also verify that selected libraries are currently filling requests and fill requests quickly.

Once we submit the request in OCLC Worldshare, the first library on the list receives an alert in their OCLC Worldshare account. If they can fill the request, they process it. If they are unable to fill the request, they reply no, and it is automatically submitted to the next library. We check the progress of these requests several times a day to see if they have been filled and to see if other libraries have submitted ILL requests to us.

Once the request is filled, the lending library marks the request in OCLC Worldshare as filled. If it is an item that will be physically shipped, the request will be marked shipped and listed as in-transit. If the request is for scanned or copied items, the pages are uploaded to a document sharing site and marked accordingly. A link with a password is provided to us to retrieve the pages.

When we retrieve the scanned pages or receive the physical item, we mark the request in WorldShare as received. For scanned pages, we then contact the patron that requested the pages and forward them in an email. If the item is a book, we enter the book into our library system and give the book a temporary RWU barcode. We then check the book out to the patron that requested the book and let the library patron know the book is available to be picked up at the circulation desk. The length of time an item is checked out depends on the owning library's policies.

Most ILL requests will take 3 to 10 days to be fulfilled. There are several reasons why this is the case, and why it may take longer. Every library has lending policies and a request that does not meet their policies will not be filled. Licensing agreements with vendors and copyright laws must be followed. The item requested may be in use or it may be a part of a collection that is not loaned to other libraries, i.e., reserve materials. Physical items delivered through the postal service or private couriers may be delayed due to the service's current volume.

Lending Materials

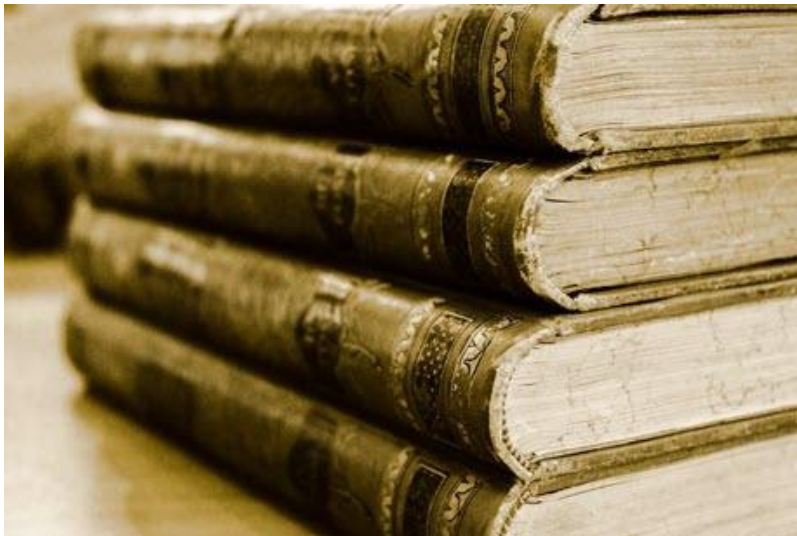
When the Law Library receives an ILL request from another library, we follow our own policies and procedures to help our fellow libraries fulfill their patron's needs. The process is very much the same: we determine whether the requested item can be provided, ensure that we track loaned books in our system, update OCLC WorldShare as needed, and then provide the item via the document sharing site or mail it using the University's mail service.

Interlibrary loan is a complex but vital service. We hope this gives you a glimpse of its complexity and some understanding of why materials can take a long time from request to arrival. If you have any questions about ILL or need any other library assistance, the librarians and library staff are here to answer your questions. You can contact us at lawlibraryhelp@rwu.edu or [Ask a Librarian](#).

April 14, 2022

Finding the Golden Oldies

April 14, 2022



Legal research is all about updating. Then along comes the tantalizing research project that relies on original wording of a statute or the statute's legislative history.

Where do you start?

The answer may depend on just how old the information needed is and whether the source is federal or state.

Timing is important. For those who are too young to remember a time before the ability to “google” anything, 1994 was the “[Year of the Web](#)” and is often thought of as the beginning of the web as we now know it. Material from before roughly 1994 will only be available in digital format in a database or if someone, typically a library or governmental agency, has gone to the effort to go back and digitize it.

For federal material, there are a variety of options for those older materials. The United States Government Printing Office provides an excellent website, [GovInfo.gov](#), that is constantly adding additional older copies of government publications. The [Congressional Serial Set](#) which includes House and Senate Documents and Reports is an excellent example. Digitized by the Law Library of Congress, it is now available from 1817-1952. Of course, it also illustrates the problem. The years before 1817 and after 1952 are not yet available as part of this set. Additional Congressional documents for some Congresses from 1975-1993 are available. Coverage starting with the 103rd Congress (1993-1994) to present is available and good on this free public site.

By comparison, the *U.S. Congressional Serial Set* library on HeinOnline (a subscription service) provides access to the Congressional Serial Set through 2017 as of this writing. It also includes earlier materials from 1789-1838 in the American State Papers and later Congressional documents from 2018-2021. Similarly, HeinOnline provides more complete historical coverage of many other useful resources. RWU Law community members have access to [HeinOnline from the Library’s Digital Resources](#) page.

For state materials, the gaps between free and subscription sources are even greater. A common need for legal researchers is the text of old versions of statutes. These are not available in digital format from free sources. Older versions of the session laws may be found on the state’s legislative website. These do not go back beyond the mid-1990s. Two HeinOnline libraries which can prove helpful are:

- The *State Statutes: A Historical Archive* includes superseded state statutes for all fifty states. The difficulty with this library is that coverage stops due to copyright issues, which affects the period that would be of interest to most researchers.
- The *Session Laws* library on HeinOnline provides the more complete access, but does require the extra effort to “reconstruct” statutes that have changed wording over time.

For those who have physical access to a library, print copies of the older versions or (dare I say it) microfiche versions may be available. [For those of you who have never used it, microfiche is a version of film in small sheets containing images of the pages.]

If what you are seeking is not in digital form and you do not have the ability to visit the library or government agency, what do you do? [Ask a Librarian!](#) We are here to assist you. We can help explore alternative sources or means of obtaining the copies you need.

April 22, 2022

Unconventional Stress Reduction

April 22, 2022



Final exams are upon us again here at RWU Law. It is the culmination of a semester's work for students, with the support and guidance of faculty and staff, taking what they learned and applying it to final papers, exams, etc. Unfortunately, it also brings out a lot of stress and anxiety in many of us but thankfully, there are many ways to lower our stress and anxiety levels. Here in the library we have put together a [mindfulness guide](#) to help you.

In this blog post, we want to look at some scientifically researched ways that you might not be aware of to lower stress.

Bubble gum – almost all of us have chewed it, accidentally swallowed it, and some of us probably stuck it under our chair when we were young. However, according to some scientific studies, [chewing gum has been shown to decrease stress levels](#). In fact, one study exhorts the [benefits of chewing gum before taking an exam](#).

Inflate a balloon – You have probably heard about the benefits of deep breathing and laughter in decreasing stress, well, now we can combine the two by inflating a balloon. Blowing up a balloon [forces you to breathe deeply and slowly, reduces your heart rate, and relaxes your muscles](#). As a bonus, it might elicit some laughter from your study partners.

Wash the Dishes – Maybe it is time to take a break from the dishwasher and hand wash your dishes? Researchers recently found that [mindfully washing dishes](#) upped levels of inspiration and

lowered nervousness levels. The key, however, was to do it mindfully, smelling the soap and feeling the water temperature.

Whether you reach for a stick of gum, a package of balloons, or thoughtfully approach a household chore, remember that it is okay to do things during finals that benefit you and your well-being!

April 29, 2022

Fastcase and the Bad Law Bot

April 29, 2022



As a 1L you learn all about citator services. You even learn a new verb, “Shepardize.” But as you get to the end of the year you may have a class where the law librarians introduced you to Fastcase. [According to their website, Fastcase](#) “was established in 1999 to democratize the law and encourage smarter legal practice with data and visualization tools.” As a law student you have access to [Fastcase via the law library’s website](#).

One of the tools available in Fastcase is a citator called the Bad Law Bot. The Bad Law Bot is possibly the coolest citator. [Officially, the Bad Law Bot was an enhancement to Fastcase’s Authority Check feature](#) “to show you where courts have noted that a case has been treated negatively...Courts will cite negative histories of cases within their opinions. ‘Bad Law Bot’ uses algorithms to find negative citation history.” Unofficially, the Bad Law Bot is a [cute little robot](#).

For a review of Fastcase, [check out Lawyerist](#). For more information about last year’s merger of Fastcase and Casemaker, [check out this blog post](#). If you want to learn a bit more about how to

use Fastcase and the Bad Law Bot, email the librarians at lawlibraryhelp@rwu.edu or check out this [Fastcase Support website](#).