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Legal Beagle Blog (May 2008)

Roger Williams University School of Law Library

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Legal Beagle's Blog

LexisNexis and Westlaw Summer Access

Posted by Library Blog on 05/01/2008 at 12:00 AM

[LexisNexis](#) offers access privileges during the summer to August 1st. You will need to register for summer full access through the Summer Access Registration link on the "My School" page or on the LexisNexis Lawschool Portal page. You are eligible for summer full access for:

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Summer School

School-Related Research Assignment

Moot Court Research

Law Review or Journal Research

Working as a Professor's Research Assistant

Non-Profit Externship

Unpaid Internship/Externship

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Bar Review

[Westlaw](#) summer access begins on June 1st and ends on August 1st. If you do not qualify for an extension, you will have 2 hours of access per month in June and July and will receive a warning when you have used 90% of your monthly access. Graduating students can get an extension as well for bar review. To file for an extension, log on to Westlaw, and enter your password. The extension link is on the main Westlaw page - look on the lower left margin of the screen for the blue vertical banner with the beach scene on it. The link for graduating students is on the right margin - another banner ad. If you're not graduating, you are eligible to register for an extension if you are:

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Taking summer law school classes

Doing law review or journal work

Working as a research assistant for a professor

Involved with Moot Court

Working at an unpaid/non-profit public interest internship/externship

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Doing pro-bono work required for graduation

Electronic Resources of the Rhode Island State Law Library

Posted by Library Blog on 05/05/2008 at 12:00 AM

If you are working in Rhode Island for an attorney or law firm this summer and do not want to travel to Bristol, check out the [State Law Library](#)! The State Law Library is located in the Frank Licht Judicial Complex at 250 Benefit Street in downtown Providence. In addition to the print materials in its collection, the State Law Library provides to all its library patrons free access to electronic resources such as Westlaw for Patrons, Shepard's citator service, Matthew Bender treatises, and Loislaw. Westlaw for Patrons has cases, statutes, law reviews/journals, *American Jurisprudence 2d*, the *Restatements*, and the *American Law Reports*. If you are using the Shepard's citator service, you can also access the "Get a Document" feature in addition to fully shepardizing a case or a statute. The Matthew Bender treatises are provided via Lexis.com with options to browse the tables of contents or conduct keyword searches of the various Matthew Bender treatises. Loislaw provides cases, statutes, agency rules and regulations, and other primary law for all fifty states and federal jurisdictions. In addition to the primary legal materials, Loislaw includes access to treatises focused around practice areas. For access to Loislaw outside of the confines of the State Law Library, you can sign up to use [Loislaw](#) through the law school. Most importantly, unlike LexisNexis and Westlaw, you can use Loislaw while working for an attorney or a law firm. Contact a librarian for the law school's special access code.

The State Law Library also has CD-ROMs containing primary legal materials for Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. Federal and general legal materials are available on CD-ROMs or via the Internet.

Connecticut Judicial Branch Law Libraries

Posted by Library Blog on 05/07/2008 at 12:00 AM

For those of you who will be working in a legal job in Connecticut, do not overlook the resources of the Connecticut Judicial Branch Law Libraries. There are fifteen law libraries located in courthouses around the state. These libraries are for use by legal professionals and the public. Library staff provide reference assistance, interlibrary loan, and copy/fax services. Please note that circulation of library materials is limited to officers of the court and pro se patrons.

Check out the Connecticut Judicial Branch Law Libraries [website](#) for a wealth information on Connecticut law and practice. At the website are links for opinions issued by the various courts, court forms, statutes, court rules, pathfinders and research guides. The research guides section consists of a few bibliographies, the Connecticut Family Law Notebooks, "Connecticut Law About..." series, links to official state publications, some legislative histories, and pathfinders. The pathfinders focus on three areas: civil practice and procedure; family, juvenile, and domestic relations; and property. Keep in mind that these pathfinders and research guides are intended to be a starting point for research and that help from a Connecticut law librarian is only a phone call or email away!

Law Libraries in Massachusetts

Posted by Library Blog on 05/14/2008 at 12:00 AM

For those who intend to practice law in Massachusetts or in a neighboring state, membership to the [Social Law Library](#) may be of some benefit to you for your legal research needs. The Social Law Library is the oldest continuously chartered law library in the United States. Established in 1803, it is also one of the oldest civic and cultural organizations in Boston. The Library's membership consists of approximately several thousand lawyers from law firms and corporate law departments in the metropolitan Boston area and outside of Boston. The annual membership fee is \$355.00 per year per attorney inside Route 128 and \$215.00 per year per attorney outside Route 128. There are several pricing plans for members of firms and corporate legal departments.

Membership has its privileges! A member can borrow circulating materials from the Social Law Library's collection of over 420,000 volumes and access (remote and on-site) various electronic databases such as HeinOnline, LexisNexis, and Westlaw. There is access to FastCase which contains state and federal court opinions, statutes, and regulations. Unlimited access to the Social Law Library's Massachusetts Substantive Law databases is provided while there is a nominal fee to access the Social Law Library's Massachusetts Administrative databases. Also available to members are reference assistance, interlibrary loan, document delivery, website hosting, and training.

Seventeen trial court libraries located in Massachusetts are dedicated to providing legal research services to the bench, bar and the public. These libraries offer reference assistance, borrowing privileges, interlibrary loan, document delivery, and free access to Westlaw, LexisNexis or both. The website of the [Massachusetts Trial Court Libraries](#) is a great resource for Massachusetts legal information. There are links to websites for laws, regulations, cases, and municipal ordinances. One can access federal and Massachusetts legal forms for numerous topics. The website has pathfinders that are bibliographies of available print materials and recommended websites for selected topics. There is also a series of "Law About..." on over 100 topics. Each "Law About..." has links to websites for Massachusetts primary and secondary legal materials.

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

Posted by Library Blog on 05/21/2008 at 12:00 AM

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.

Here are some survival tips for conducting legal research:

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Make sure you allow enough time. Good legal research takes time to thoroughly check all the appropriate sources and to update the citations.”

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If you are researching an area with which you are unfamiliar, use sources such as hornbooks, nutshells, 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 on LexisNexis or Westlaw, use the indexes to the sources (codes, digests, periodical literature, legal encyclopedias, and American Law Reports annotations). When using the West Digests, note both the Topic and the Key Number. A Key Number without a Topic is useless!”

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Read carefully what the appropriate legislative body, administrative agency, or judiciary has to
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say.

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Update, update, update! Look for pocket parts and pamphlet supplements. Shepardize any cases
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or statutes upon which you may be relying. You always want to be citing good law.

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Last, but not least, do not hesitate to seek the assistance of librarians!
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Legal Humor - Limericks

Posted by Library Blog on 05/29/2008 at 12:00 AM

Looking for humorous reading material about cases in contracts? Believe it or not, it does exist at the [Limericks Topical Archive of the Contracts Prof Blog](#). Limericks based upon various contract cases are composed by D.A. Jeremy Telman, Associate Professor of Law at Valparaiso University Law School and a contributing editor to the [Contracts Prof Blog](#). For the majority of the cases, Professor Telman describes the legal concept(s) he is teaching from the case along with its limerick. Given the popularity of his limericks, Professor Telman recently signed a book contract for his *Limericks for Lawyers* project. The Limericks Topical Archive contains the Limerick of the Week dating back to September 27, 2006.