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Federal Resources from the Three Branches

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FEDERAL RESOURCES FROM THE THREE BRANCHES

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* This presentation incorporates the earlier work of Carol Watson

FEDERAL RESOURCES FROM THE THREE BRANCHES

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FEDERAL RESOURCES FROM THE THREE BRANCHES

I. U.S. Constitution

You can find the text of the U.S. Constitution at many web sites. Some of these sites have better formatting and are much easier to read than others. However, the two sites listed below are the only two sites that also include U.S. Supreme Court case law annotations for the U.S. Constitution. Other sites that you visit may include historical documents or hypertext links between sections of the Constitution, but only these two sites include U.S. Supreme Court case law annotations.

A. GPO ACCESS

<http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/senate/constitution/toc.html>

In addition to a literal print of the text of the Constitution, GPO Access includes an analysis and interpretation of the U.S. Constitution prepared by the Library of Congress' Congressional Research Service. This analysis and interpretation was published in 1992 as Senate Document 103-6. This site also includes 1996 (Senate Document No. 104-14), 1998 (Senate Document No. 106-8) and 2000 (Senate Document No. 106-27) supplements to the 1992 publication. The non-cumulative supplements include annotations of U.S. Supreme Court cases decided through June 2000. Plain text and PDF files are available for selection.

B. FINDLAW

<http://www.findlaw.com/casecode/constitution>

The FindLaw version of the Constitution is more easily navigated than the GPO Access site. FindLaw has incorporated the 1996, 1998 and 2000 Supplements into the 1992 Edition text. Findlaw has also added hyperlinks between the sections of the Constitution, as well as links to Supreme Court cases cited in the annotations. The text is html only. The homepage provides links to other Constitution sites, such as those at Emory and Cornell Law Schools.

C. FOUNDERS' CONSTITUTION

<http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/>

The *Founders Constitution* is a joint project of the University of Chicago Press and the Liberty Fund. While it does not provide access to current legal interpretation of the Constitution, it does offer internet access to the foundational documents of the Constitution, such as Blackstone's *Commentaries*, that are keyed to the relevant Article or Amendment.

II. Legislative Materials

A. U.S. CODE

Since 1926, a new edition of the text of the U.S. Code has been published every six years, with annual supplements between each edition. The best site for searching and viewing the *U.S. Code* is the Cornell web site listed below. None of the web sites listed below offer a full-text up-to-date version of the U.S. Code. The House of Representatives site contains citations for public laws that have updated any code section that you are interested in. Once you have a public law citation, you must then visit a site that has the full text of public laws such as Thomas or GPO Access in order to update your code section. Those wishing a brief overview of the Code's structure, and description of the available commercial print versions, can access *Guide to Using the United States Code*, a research guide from the University of Florida Law School Legal Information Center (<http://www.law.ufl.edu/lic/guides/federal/usc/html>).

1. Cornell Law School's Legal Information Institute

<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode>

This site contains the most recent version of the *U.S. Code* made available by the U.S. House of Representatives. This site offers a well-formatted, easily searchable and navigable version of the *U.S. Code*. Cornell has added links within code sections. For example if a code section refers to Section 106 of the Copyright Act, Cornell has added a link to Section 106. The site does have an "Updates" function, which is not current.

2. Office of the Law Revision Counsel

<http://uscode.house.gov/usc.htm>

Each section of the *Code* database contains a date in the top-right corner indicating that laws enacted as of that date and affecting that section are included in the text of that section. When a search is made for a specific section of the *Code*, as opposed to a search for certain words appearing in the *Code*, the hit list will include an "Update" item listing any public law amendments not already reflected in the text of that section. Note, however, that you still must go to another web site and search for any public laws that update your code section. The updating public laws are not hyperlinked from the House Internet Library.

3. GPO Access

<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/uscode/index.html>

The GPO Access site contains archived versions of the *U.S. Code* that precede the current 2000 edition. This site is particularly useful for historical research since you can search U.S. Code supplements for any year subsequent to 1994. Text files only are available.

B. U.S. PUBLIC LAWS

1. Thomas - U.S. Public Laws

<http://thomas.loc.gov/>

The full text of public laws can be accessed by public law number from the 101st Congress (1989) to present. Summaries of public laws are provided for the 93rd Congress (1973) to the present. Thomas provides access to additional information about each public law such as *Congressional Record* page references, lists of sponsors, and legislative tracking information.

2. GPO Access - U.S. Public Laws

<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/plaws/index.html>

The GPO Access database of public laws can be accessed by public law number and is keyword searchable. This database contains the full text of public laws from the 104th Congress (1995) to present in PDF and text format. In fact, if you view the PDF format of a public law, it looks exactly like at page from *U.S. Statutes at Large*.

C. TRACKING CURRENT FEDERAL LEGISLATION

There are many watchdog political sites devoted to providing public information about pending federal legislation. Thomas and GPO Access, however, are the most reliable and comprehensive site for obtaining information about current federal legislation. If you are interested in legislative information, Thomas and GPO Access should be your first Internet stops.

1. Thomas

<http://thomas.loc.gov/>

Named for Thomas Jefferson, this excellent web site from the Library of Congress contains bill summaries and status, the full-text of bills, roll call votes, House and Senate schedules and much more.

2. GPO Access - United States Congress

<http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/index.html>

GPO Access provides the full text of congressional bills (including their multiple versions), documents, hearings, reports, *Congressional Record*, and committee prints.

3. U.S. House of Representatives

<http://www.house.gov/>

The U.S. House of Representatives web site includes schedules such as a weekly list of items that the House intends to consider, matters currently on the House

floor and up-to-date events on the House floor as they happen. Further links are available at <http://clerkweb.house.gov>, the homepage for the House Clerk.

4. U.S. Senate

<http://www.senate.gov/>

Like the House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate web site includes detailed schedules of events and issues of the Senate.

5. FedNet

<http://www.fednet.net/>

FedNet is an Internet news company that provides live or real-time audio and video coverage of floor debates, White House briefings, regulatory hearings, and press conferences via the Internet.

6. C-Span.org

<http://capwiz.com/c-span/home/>

In addition to coverage of the House and Senate floor activities, C-Span tracks current major legislation. This site even provides an opportunity for you to enter your zip code and find out how your congressional representatives voted on current legislation.

D. LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

There are very few web sources that have compiled legislative histories. Occasionally when you are researching a topic that ignites a special interest group, you might stumble across compiled legislative history information. For the most part, you will have to compile your own legislative history piece by piece using the following web sites:

1. Thomas

<http://thomas.loc.gov/>

Thomas is maintained by the Library of Congress and is the best source for federal legislative information available on the Internet. This web site contains legislative histories, *Congressional Record* (from the 101st Congress (1989) to present), the full text of bills and public laws (also from the 101st Congress to present), roll call votes, and committee reports. Because this site was designed by librarians at the Library of Congress, it is easily navigable.

2. GPO Access - United States Congress

<http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/index.html>

GPO Access provides the full text of congressional bills from the 103rd Congress to present, documents from the 104th Congress to present, hearings and prints from the 105th Congress to present, reports, and the *Congressional Record* from 1994 to the present.

3. Legislative Histories - University of Michigan Documents Center

<http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/legishis.html>

Begun in 1993 as a teaching guide for University of Michigan students, this site not only includes a guide to researching legislative histories, but links to available web resources and describes print resources as well. Some links are restricted to members of the University of Michigan community, but these are plainly marked.

III. Executive Materials

A. PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

1. Office of Management and Budget

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/>

Provides access to the President's budget, as well as OMB Circulars.

2. Executive Order Disposition Table

http://www.archives.gov/federal_register/executive_orders/disposition_tables.html

The E.O. disposition table offers click-through viewing of the PDF version of the executive order as it appeared in the *Federal Register*, but only for 1993-2001 executive orders (the Clinton years). Executive orders from George W. Bush are available on the White House website at

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/orders/>. The University of Michigan has a special collection of Kennedy E.O.'s (<http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/jfkeo.html>).

3. American Presidency Project

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/index.php>

The American Presidency Project, housed at the University of California, Santa Barbara, provides access to innumerable presidential documents in the *Public Papers* volumes. This set is keyword searchable.

B. CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS

Choosing whether to use GPO Access or Cornell to search the *CFR* is a mostly a matter of personal preference. While searching and screen formatting is different at each site, the text of the current *CFR* is that same at both sites. Note, however, that GPO Access has archived superseded volumes of the *CFR*. If you need to research a federal regulation as it was worded in at an earlier point in time, GPO Access is an excellent resource.

1. GPO Access - Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) -

<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html>

The GPO Access's version of the *CFR* may be searched by keyword and is also browsable by title. Note that the GPO Access site includes superseded volumes of the *CFR* from 1996, while the Cornell site mentioned below only contains the most recent version of the *CFR*. The GPO Access *CFR* provides both text and PDF formats. A version of the *CFR* that is updated daily is currently in beta testing at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/ecrf>.

2. Cornell Law School's Legal Information Institute

<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/cfr/>

This web site provides a well-formatted version of the *CFR*. At this site, you can search the CFR from this site by citation, a detailed table of contents, an index of all section headings or the Government Printing Office search engine. Like all of the materials provided at the Cornell site, the *CFR* is easy to read, search and navigate.

C. FEDERAL REGISTER

1. Federal Register Online via GPO Access

<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>

The GPO's database includes the 1994 to 2004 *Federal Register* (Volumes 60-69). The volumes are searchable by keyword or date. GPO Access provides the ability to browse the latest *Federal Register* without having to search for a relevant section first.

D. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The U.S. government is a major content web provider. You can find a wealth of resources by searching the following web sites that provide many links to federal government web servers. A searchable listing of federal agencies is sponsored by the Louisiana State University at <http://www.lib.lsu.edu/gov/fedgov.html>.

1. FirstGov

<http://firstgov.gov/>

FirstGov is the award-winning official U.S. gateway to all government information. FirstGov is an interagency initiative administered by the U.S. General Services Administration. Customer feedback is the driving force for how information is organized. On FirstGov.gov, you can search more than 51 million web pages from federal and state governments, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories. This source is also available in Spanish as well as English versions.

2. The Federal Web Locator

<http://www.infoctr.edu/fwl/>

The Federal Web Locator is a service provided by the Center for Information Law and Policy and is intended to be the one stop shopping point for federal government information on the Internet. The structure of this web site matches the one found in *The United States Government Manual*, which is itself available at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/gmanual/index.html> for editions 1995 to present.

3. FedWorld

<http://www.fedworld.gov/>

FedWorld was established by the National Technical Information Service (NTIS). NTIS is the U.S. central source for scientific, technical, engineering, and related business information produced by or for the Federal government.

4. Federal Citizen Information Center

<http://fic.info.gov/>

The Federal Citizen Information Center (FCIC) is maintained by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) as a single point of contact for people who have questions about federal agencies, programs, and services. The principal reference tool is the FIC's electronic database, which lists more than 100,000 points of contact (telephone numbers, addresses, web sites) by agency and subject.

IV. Judicial Material

A. META-INDEXES FOR FEDERAL COURT OPINIONS

Identifying each homepage for each court can be a time-consuming, tedious, and never-ending task. Some public spirited entities, however, have undertaken this burden, and collected in one place many of the most useful of these homepages. These aggregated listings are listed here.

1. Federal Court Locator

<http://vls.law.vill.edu/Locator/fedcourt.html>

The Federal Court Locator is maintained by the Villanova University School of Law. It is intended to give citizens a means to access information related to the federal judiciary, including slip opinions. This site offers easy connection to the U.S. Supreme Court, U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeals, U.S. District Courts, U.S. Bankruptcy Courts, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, U.S. Court of Federal Claims, U.S. Court of International Trade, Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, Federal Judicial Center, U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Sentencing Commission. The Federal Court Locator gives links to both the official homepages for these courts, as well as free alternatives that have been identified.

2. Federal Courts Finder

<http://www.law.emory.edu/FEDCTS/>

Emory Law Library provides links to the following courts: U.S. Supreme Court, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, U.S. Court of Federal Claims, Federal Circuit, D.C. Circuit, First Circuit, Second Circuit, Third Circuit, Fourth Circuit, Fifth Circuit, Sixth Circuit, Seventh Circuit, Eighth Circuit, Ninth Circuit, Tenth Circuit and Eleventh Circuit. Links are arranged by Circuit or accessed by a clickable map of the United States.

3. U.S. Courts - The Federal Judiciary

<http://www.uscourts.gov/index.html>

The U.S. Courts home page is maintained by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. It is intended to be a clearinghouse from and about the judicial branch of the U.S. government. This site links to U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeals, U.S. District Courts, U.S. Bankruptcy Courts, U.S. Court of International Trade, Federal Judicial Center, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces, U.S. Sentencing Commission, and other sites of interest. This site also provides other judicial-related documents such as statistics, annual reports, FAQs and other resources.

B. U.S. SUPREME COURT

Because of its comprehensive coverage, FindLaw is the best source for searching the full-text of U.S. Supreme Court opinions since 1863. You can find selected pre-1863 historical decisions at the Cornell site. Related useful sites for information about the U.S. Supreme Court are Oyez and Lawsource. Oyez has oral arguments from some U.S. Supreme Court cases. ALSO is notable for its collection of amicus curiae briefs from the U.S. Supreme Court.

1. U.S. Supreme Court Homepage

<http://www.supremecourtus.gov/>

On April 17, 2000, the U.S. Supreme Court established its own web site for delivering court opinions and other judicial information. In addition to providing timely releases of bench opinions, the Supreme Court promises to make available via their web site, slip opinions on the day of release. PDF versions of final bound volumes of *United States Reports* are available from volume 502 et seq. This site also offers transcripts of oral arguments.

2. FindLaw - U.S. Supreme Court Decisions

<http://www.findlaw.com/casecode/supreme.html>

FindLaw's database of the Supreme Court decisions since 1893 (US Reports 150-) is browsable by year and U.S. Reports volume number. FindLaw is also searchable by citation, case title and full text. While the Cornell web site splits parts of U.S. Supreme Court opinions such as the syllabus, dissenting and concurring opinions into separate web documents, the FindLaw site displays all of the documents related to one case as a single web document. FindLaw includes U.S. Reports page breaks.

3. Cornell Law School's Legal Information Institute

<http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/>

This archive contains all opinions of the court issued since May of 1990. This site also has a collection of over 300 of the court's most important historic decisions. This comprehensive site also includes the court calendar, current schedule of oral arguments, a gallery of the current justices, including pictures, biographies, and lists of decisions by the current members of the Court, a gallery of former justices, including biographies of all former members of the Court, the Supreme Court's rules, including the amendments to those rules took effect in May 2003 and information about the court's organization, authority, and jurisdiction. When you retrieve a U.S. Supreme Court case from Cornell, a pop-up dialogue box appears with links to related documents such as the syllabus, dissenting and concurring opinions, from which the user may choose HTML or PDF versions.

4. FedWorld - FLITE [Federal Legal Information Through Electronics]

<http://www.fedworld.gov/supcourt/index.htm>

FedWorld's FLITE database consists of over 7,400 Supreme Court opinions dating from 1937 through 1975, from volumes 300 through 422 of U.S. Reports. Opinions from the FLITE database are comprehensive yet sometimes difficult to read because text is displayed in all capital letters.

5. The OYEZ Project - Northwestern University

<http://oyez.nwu.edu/>

At the innovative OYEZ site, you can listen to oral arguments of the U.S. Supreme Court delivered via streaming audio. The OYEZ Project aims to include all leading constitutional law cases.

6. American Law Sources Online [ALSO] - Amicus Curiae Briefs filed in the U.S. Supreme Court

<http://www.lawsource.com/also/usa.cgi?usb>

ALSO has declared that maintaining links to amicus curiae briefs is impractical. Briefs are numerous and transitory on the Internet, and finding new links is inordinately time-consuming. Therefore, while the links on ALSO are preserved for as long as they are viable, new links are not being added. However, ALSO maintains a search box with suggested search strategy for searching for amicus curiae briefs on the web.

C. FEDERAL CIRCUIT COURTS

1. Findlaw - Federal Circuit Court Opinions

<http://www.findlaw.com/casecode/courts/index.html>

Findlaw allows searching of its own database, the holdings of which vary by circuit. It also provides links to other sources that contain a database for that circuit.

2. Cornell – Legal Information Institute

<http://www.law.cornell.edu:9999/USCA-ALL/results.html?search=>

Cornell's Legal Information Institute provides a search engine for searching all of the Circuit Court decisions available on the web.

3. Individual Federal Circuit Courts:

1st U.S. Circuit, since 2000, official site
<http://www.ca1.uscourts.gov/>

1st U.S. Circuit, since November 1995, from Emory School of Law
<http://www.law.emory.edu/1circuit>

2nd U.S. Circuit, since February 2002, official site
<http://www.ca2.uscourts.gov/>

2nd U.S. Circuit since January 1995, from the Touro Law Center
<http://www.tourolaw.edu/2ndCircuit/>

3rd U.S. Circuit, official site
<http://www.ca3.uscourts.gov/>

3rd U.S. Circuit, since May 1994, from Villanova University School of Law
<http://vls.law.vill.edu/Locator/3/index.htm>

4th U.S. Circuit, opinions since January 1, 1996, official site
<http://www.ca4.uscourts.gov/>

4th U.S. Circuit, since January 1995, from Emory School of Law
<http://www.law.emory.edu/4circuit>

5th U.S. Circuit, published opinions from 1993, and unpublished opinions from 2003, official site
<http://www.ca5.uscourts.gov/>

6th U.S. Circuit, since 1994, official site
<http://www.ca6.uscourts.gov/>

6th U.S. Circuit, since January 1995, from Emory School of Law
<http://www.law.emory.edu/6circuit>

7th U.S. Circuit, since 1992, official site
<http://www.ca7.uscourts.gov/>

8th U.S. Circuit, since October 1995, official site
<http://www.ca8.uscourts.gov/>

9th U.S. Circuit, since 1995, official site (although at this writing decisions prior to 2000 have been temporarily removed)

<http://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/>

10th Circuit, official site

<http://www.ck10.uscourts.gov>

10th U.S. Circuit, August 1995 to October 1997, from Emory School of Law <http://www.law.emory.edu/10circuit>

10th U.S. Circuit, since October 1997, from Washburn University School of Law

<http://www.kscourts.org/ca10/>

11th Circuit since 1994, official site

<http://www.ca11.uscourts.gov/opinions/index.php>

11th U.S. Circuit, since November 1994, from Emory School of Law

<http://www.law.emory.edu/11circuit/index.html>

Federal Circuit, decisions since 2003 (download only), official site

<http://www.fedcir.gov>

Federal Circuit, since August 1995 to 2001, from Emory School of Law

<http://www.law.emory.edu/fedcircuit>

Federal Circuit, since August 1995, from Georgetown University School of Law <http://www.ll.georgetown.edu/federal/judicial/cafed.cfm>

D.C. Circuit, since September 1997, official site

<http://www.cadc.uscourts.gov>

D.C. Circuit, decisions since March 1995, from Georgetown University School of Law

<http://www.ll.georgetown.edu/federal/judicial/cadc.cfm>

D. FEDERAL DISTRICT COURTS

Most district court web sites primarily provide documents such as local court rules and court calendars. Gradually district courts are beginning to provide court opinions on their web sites.

1. Findlaw - Federal District Courts

http://www.findlaw.com/10fedgov/judicial/district_courts.html

Findlaw maintains an annotated list of district courts, detailing contents of each web site. Unfortunately FindLaw doesn't provide a search engine for searching all District Court opinions. You must go to each District Court web site to conduct research.

2. U.S. Courts - The Federal Judiciary

<http://www.uscourts.gov/allinks.html#10th>

The Federal Judiciary page maintained by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts is another excellent resource that lists each district court.

E. FEDERAL RULES

1. LLRX – Court Rules, Forms & Dockets

<http://www.llrx.com/courtrules/>

A good resource that links to more than 1,400 sources for federal rules and federal local rules. Note state rules and state local rules are also included.

2. Federal Rules of Civil Procedure - Cornell Law School's Legal Information Institute

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/rules/frcp/overview.htm>

At the Cornell site, you can keyword search the full-text of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure or you can access the Rules by a table of contents. For \$5 you can purchase a downloadable copy of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure from this site.

3. Federal Rules of Evidence - Cornell Law School's Legal Information Institute

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/rules/fre/overview.html>

At the Cornell site, you can keyword search of the full-text of the Federal Rules of Evidence or you can access the Rules by a table of contents. For \$5 you can purchase a downloadable copy of the Federal Rules of Evidence from this site.

F. IN THE NEWS

These sites cover high profile trials or provide links to news sources regarding judicial

decisions.

1. Washington Post – Courts

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/nation/courts/>

The Washington Post maintains a page that archives all news stories about newsworthy judicial activities and actions. Registration is free, but required.

2. CourtTV Online

<http://www.courtTV.com>

Many people overlook this web site, but it provides a vast amount of information about famous court cases, including upcoming, historical and ongoing trials. Cases range from O.J. to Microsoft.

3. JURIST - Legal News

<http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/locate.htm>

JURIST provides coverage of U.S. legal news, Supreme Court legal news and world legal news. The goal of JURIST is to provide an authoritative non-commercial forum in which law professors, students, lawyers, judges, journalists and citizens can share a wide range of legal information. Most of the news summaries on JURIST link to other Internet news sources.

V. Helpful Print Publications

The internet is replete with federal materials, and becoming more so each day. Although the use of Google can help to locate some of these sources, published guides are available to aid the searcher. Print sources can help the user to navigate this

A. BOOKS

Garvin, Peggy, GOVERNMENT INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET (6th ed., 2003).

Provides hints to find not only federal information, but state and international sources as well.

Hernon, Peter, Robert E. Dugan, & John A. Shuler, U.S. GOVERNMENT ON THE WEB: GETTING THE INFORMATION YOU NEED (3d ed., 2003).

This book's lead author is a recognized specialist in the field of U.S. government documents, which leads to a knowledgeable overview of accessing those materials.

Maxwell, Bruce, HOW TO ACCESS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ON THE INTERNET (4th ed., 1998).

Includes not only web addresses, but also specific email addresses and login protocols.

B. NEWSLETTERS

Newsletters can be a highly effective means of keeping informed about new resources available on the internet. Three such sources are listed here.

The CyberSkeptic's Guide to Internet Research

<http://www.infoday.com/cyberskeptics.htm>

Personal subscriptions are currently \$104 for 10 issues. This newsletter “explores and evaluates free Web sites and search strategies to help you use the Internet and stay up-to-date. *The CyberSkeptic's Guide* provides concise, practical information and expresses strong opinions. Geared toward business, news, technical, medical, legal, and international research as well as market research and competitive intelligence.”

Internet for Lawyers, *Internet Legal Research Update*

http://www.netforlawyers.com/legal_research_news_archive.htm

Past issues are archived on the organization's homepage. Each monthly or bimonthly issue provides articles on searching strategies, new sources, and training opportunities.

The Internet Connection

<http://www.legalwks.com/>

Considered by some “the leading newsletter on the vast and growing resources of government information available on the Internet,” *The Internet Connection* is a monthly newsletter that reviews new resources for government information. A paid subscription (currently \$119 for 10 issues) is required to view the newsletter online.

C. BLOGS

Robert Ambrogi's LawSites

<http://www.legaline.com/lawsites.html>

“Tracking new and intriguing Web sites for the legal profession.” Provides useful information, such as a list of advocacy groups that have posted their amicus curiae briefs to their webpages.