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Wendy's Whirlwind: Web Sites You Should Visit for Legal Research

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**Wendy's Whirlwind:
Web Sites You Should Visit for Legal Research**

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I. Introduction

This paper contains a list of 50 websites that you may find helpful when conducting legal research. These websites are just a sample of what is available on the Internet to assist your legal research every day. The list below includes government, educational, and commercial websites, most of which focus on the law and legal related topics. In addition to those, there are also a few non-legal websites included because of their usefulness to legal professionals. This list of 50 websites does not pretend to be the definitive list of legal websites available, but rather a good jumping off point to familiarize you with the types of information available on the Internet to assist you in conducting legal research.

II. The Sites

A. GOVERNMENT

FedStats

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

FedStats is a portal for statistical information from over 100 Federal agencies organized by topic and geographic location. There are also links to important statistical publications, such as *The Statistical Abstract of the United States* and the *State and Metropolitan Area Data Book*.

FirstGov

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

FirstGov is the federal government's official portal to government information on the web. The *FirstGov* search engine searches millions of web pages from federal and state governments, the District of Columbia, U.S. territories, tribal law, and even some other nations around the world. They are working with government agencies to encourage information portals organized around customer groups and topics, instead of the more traditional agency names. This makes it easier to locate information without having to know what government agency is in charge of that area. The site also maintains a Spanish-language portal called *FirstGov en Español* containing thousands of government resources—all in Spanish and developed by, and for, Spanish speakers.

Google – Uncle Sam

<http://www.google.com/unclesam>

A subset of Google, *Google Uncle Sam* provides search results using preset limits to only retrieve websites from the .gov domain. An interesting alternative to the government's FirstGov, although it does have some quirks. Since it pulls only domain's ending with .gov, it retrieves websites from states as well as the federal government, such as Georgia.gov, and it misses government sites that don't end in .gov, such as military sites ending with .mil and sites like the U.S. Postal Service, www.usps.com, which ends in .com. Still it is easy to use, especially if you are already searching in Google.

GovEngine.com

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

GovEngine.com is a directory of over 17,000 federal, state, and local government and court links. There is an easy to navigate map and subsections for "Federal Government," "Federal Courts," "State Government," "State Courts," and "Local Government." The real strength of the website is its collections of links to county and city government webpages. *GovEngine.com* is maintained by its non-profit organization based in Florida.

Law Library of Congress

<http://www.loc.gov/law/public/law.html>

The mission of the *Law Library of Congress* is to provide research and legal information to the U.S. Congress as well as to U.S. Federal Courts and Executive Agencies, and to offer reference services to the public. One way it accomplishes this mission is with online databases and guides to legal information worldwide. The website contains information on available research services and links to digital resources.

Supreme Court of the United States

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

This official site for the Supreme Court posts recent slip opinions of the Court in .pdf format, a searchable docket, case citation finder, oral argument calendars, full transcripts of oral arguments 10-15 days after close of the argument session, biographies

of the justices, a history of the court, the Supreme Court Bar Admission form, and other information and documents. The website developed much later than other governmental websites and is still lacking a sophisticated look, however, the amount of quality content available is growing.

Thomas

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

A service of the Library of Congress, *Thomas* makes available bill texts, summaries, and status; the *Congressional Record* and index; and the Constitution and other historical documents. *Thomas* launched in January 1995 and over the past 10 years has become the source for Congressional information. The website includes legislative documents from the 93rd Congress (1973) through the current legislative session, with full-text bills and the *Congressional Record* available from the 101st Congress (1989) to present. The bill texts are updated several times daily.

B. FOREIGN & INTERNATIONAL LAW

ASIL Guide to Electronic Resources for International Law

<http://www.asil.org/resource/home.htm>

The *ASIL Guide to Electronic Resources for International Law*, maintained by the American Society for International Law, contains detailed chapters discussing electronic resources in several areas of international law. The guide focuses on electronic

resources freely available to international legal researchers around the globe. The chapters, which are revised and updated twice yearly, cover the following subjects: human rights, international commercial arbitration, international criminal law, international economic law, international environmental law, international intellectual property law, international organizations, private international law, treaties, and the United Nations.

EISIL – the Electronic Information System for International Law

<http://www.asil.org/system/eisil.htm>

With the support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, ASIL has developed the *EISIL - Electronic Information System for International Law* database. *EISIL* has been designed as an open database of authenticated materials across the breadth of international law, which until now have been scattered in libraries, archives and specialized web sites. Users can easily locate the highest quality primary materials, authoritative Web sites and helpful research guides to international law on the Internet. *EISIL* offers the international law expert the depth of resources needed for sophisticated legal research. At the same time, *EISIL* provides the novice international law researcher with the information needed to undertake a successful search.

Eur-Lex

<http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/index.html>

Eur-Lex is the European Union's official site providing a single entry point to the complete collections of European Union legal texts in all the official EU languages. Use

this website to locate official EU legislation, case law, treaties, reports, and other documents.

GLIN – Global Legal Information Network

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

The *GLIN - Global Legal Information Network* is a database of laws, regulations, judicial decisions, and other complementary legal sources contributed by governmental agencies and international organizations. These *GLIN* members contribute the official full texts of published documents to the database in their original language. Each document is accompanied by a summary in English and subject terms selected from the multilingual index to *GLIN*.

Hieros Gamos

<http://www.hg.org/>

Hieros Gamos offers a collection of links from its site that are more international in both subject and source of publication than other directories listed in this paper. Under the area of "Law Practice" there are links for over 70 primary practice areas, with each topic sub-arranged from supra-national to local links. Under "International Law" there are links to 230 countries, as well as links to International Organizations and government sites. Started in 1996 by Lex Mundi, an association of independent law firms worldwide, this is a truly international site with many links to foreign and international law firms, law schools, and legal materials. Versions of the site are

available in French, German, Italian, and Spanish through automated translation via *Google*. When one is especially interested foreign or international law, then this would be a good directory/portal to use.

UN Documentation Centre

<http://www.un.org/documents/>

The *UN Documentation Centre* contains texts of United Nations resolutions of the major UN bodies (such as the General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council, and the Secretariat), and provides a helpful *United Nations Documentation: Research Guide*. The website is clearly laid out and easy to navigate.

WorldLII - World Legal Information Institute

<http://www.worldlii.org/>

WorldLII promises free, independent and non-profit access to worldwide law. The website, a collection of searchable databases, was developed collaboratively by various national Legal Information Institutes and similar organizations. Its initial release includes over 270 databases from 48 jurisdictions in 20 countries. The databases provide access to case law, legislation, treaties, law reform reports, law journals, and other materials. The *WorldLII Catalog* links to over 15,000 law-related web sites in every country in the world.

C. LEGAL NEWS, RESOURCE, & ARTICLE PORTALS

Bepress Legal Repository

<http://law.bepress.com/repository/>

The *Bepress Legal Repository* is a network of law-related research materials. Law schools, research units, institutes, centers, think tanks, conferences, and other subject-appropriate groups post materials to specific publications (e.g., the USC Working Paper Series). The papers at this site can be freely downloaded for reading.

FindLaw

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

Findlaw is the most popular legal site on the Internet. The website provides articles about a large number of legal topics and links to internet legal resources for legal professionals, businesses, students and individuals. In addition, *Findlaw* provides Web search utilities, cases and codes, legal news, an online career center, mailing lists, message boards and free e-mail. Because *FindLaw* is a commercial site operated by Thomson West, it offers access to some proprietary sources, such as West's Legal Directory.

JURIST

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

JURIST is hosted by the University of Pittsburgh School of Law and staffed by legally-trained law professors and students reporting and researching law in real time, as a

public service. The mission of its reporters and editors is to focus on the legal importance of news stories rather than on their mass-market appeal. In practice, this means that *JURIST* tends to eschew sensational legal news about crimes, trials and celebrities, and instead concentrates on substantive legal issues with significant social and jurisprudential implications. *JURIST* provides current legal news, live webcasts of law related news events, reviews of recently-published law books, links to law journal articles, legal conference information, tips on surviving law school, career information for those seeking academic legal jobs, and much more. If one was choosing just one source for current legal news, *JURIST* with its Law Wire, frequent law news postings throughout each day, and its live webcasts of hearing, briefings, and events that are law news-related, is an excellent place to start.

LLRX.com

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

LLRX.com is a free Web journal dedicated to providing legal, library, IT/IS, marketing and administrative professionals with up-to-date information on a wide range of Internet research and technology-related issues, applications, resources and tools, since 1996. This legal web journal provides legal columns, feature articles, topical research guides, and legal-tech and library related news resources. The research guides on a number of legal topics and jurisdictions are particularly helpful.

LII - Legal Information Institute

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

LII is an exceptional directory of legal information maintained by the Legal Information Institute at the Cornell Law School. The Institute has pioneered the use of digital information technology in the distribution of legal information, the delivery of legal education, and the practice of law since 1992. The mission of the website is to make the law more accessible not only to U.S. legal professionals, but also to students, teachers, and the general public in the U.S. and abroad. The website first gained notoriety as the source for recent U.S. Supreme Court cases, but now offers links to a wide variety of resources, including, the entire Uniform Commercial Code, opinions of the U.S. Court of Appeals, the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Criminal Procedure, and Evidence, the American Legal Ethics Library, and the constitutions and codes for all 50 states. The Institute is a non-profit and dedicated to the concept of free legal content on the web.

University of Southern California Law Library – Legal Journals

<http://lawweb.usc.edu/library/resources/journals.html>

The best directory for legal periodicals currently available is the *University of Southern California Law Library – Legal Journals* site, maintained by the USC Law Library. It covers nearly 250 publications, organized into the following categories: General Law Reviews, Commercial Law Journals, ABA Journals and Newsletters, General Interest and Computing Periodicals, Subject Specific Law Reviews, Foreign Law Journals, Law Review Locating Services, and E-Journal Locating Services. Nearly half of the publications listed provide full-text of the journal articles. Each title is clearly marked

with a code, indicating what level of content is available at that site. There are also useful, brief annotations describing each publication when appropriate.

The Virtual Chase

<http://www.virtualchase.com>

Designed with experienced researchers, lawyers, and other legal professionals in mind, *The Virtual Chase* offers articles, guides, teaching materials, an alert service, and more information on Internet research strategies and resources. The free weekday newsletter, TVC Alert, discusses law and technology-related news and offers research tips and information about new web sites. There are also RSS/XML news feeds available with their newsletter content and updates about the website.

WashLaw

<http://www.washlaw.edu/>

Produced and frequently updated by the Washburn University School of Law Library staff as a non-profit service to the legal community, *WashLaw* has an extensive collection of law and law-related links in an easy to browse layout. Divided into topical areas, the links provide one-stop-shopping for legal professionals. While most links are law-related, such as links to all 50 state codes, legal news, and bar associations, there are also links to more practical websites on topics like, "Radio," "Travel," and "Zipcodes."

D. TOPICAL LEGAL-RELATED WEBSITES

BankruptcyData.com

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

BankruptcyData.com provides access to information on thousands of business bankruptcy filings from federal bankruptcy districts. Currently there are over 270,000 business bankruptcies in the database. There is a clearly marked section of freely available information, other more detailed information is available with a subscription.

Copyright – United States Copyright Office

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

Copyright, the homepage for the United States Copyright Office serves the copyright community of creators and users, legal professionals, as well as the general public. The website has links to all key publications produced by the agency, including information circulars, application forms for copyright registration, links to copyright law and to the homepages of other copyright-related organizations, the latest regulations, and a link to the copyright records cataloged since 1978.

EDGAR

<http://www.sec.gov/edgar.shtml>

EDGAR is a federal government database providing free access to SEC filings, including registration statements, periodic reports, and other forms. All companies, foreign and domestic, are required to file registration statements, periodic reports, and other forms

electronically through *EDGAR*. *EDGAR* also provides links to written and oral statements made by members of the SEC's staff on various accounting and legal matters and links to related regulatory actions.

FirstGov for Consumers

<http://www.consumer.gov>

FirstGov for Consumers is a directory to a broad range of federal information resources available online concerning consumer issues. Information is arranged by category, such as "Food," "Product Safety," and "Your Money." Each category has subcategories to direct you to areas within individual federal web sites containing related information. The "ScamAlert!" feature provides current information on fraudulent and deceptive practices in the marketplace.

GigaLaw.com

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

GigaLaw.com provides legal information for Internet and technology professionals and lawyers working areas related to the Internet. Includes a detailed and frequently updated news section, a forums section with discussion sessions on a variety of topics related to Internet law, and an articles section with links arranged by subject.

GigaLaw.com was founded in January 2000 by Atlanta attorney Doug Isenberg. He practices IP and Internet law and serves as an adjunct professor at Georgia State University College of Law.

IRS Forms and Publications

<http://www.irs.gov/formspubs/index.html>

The *IRS Forms and Publications* site serves as the official source of Internal Revenue Service tax products. The website is searchable and includes current forms as well as those from past years. The "What's Hot" pages highlight changes to previously published forms and explanations of recent changes in tax laws.

Legal Ethics Blog

<http://legalethicsblog.com/>

Legal Ethics Blog started in March 2005 and is maintained by attorney Ben Cowgill. The blog section contains postings concerning Mr. Cowgill's opinions on the state of legal ethics. What makes this a really useful website, however, is the lists of links to legal ethics websites and sources found under the Focus Pages section. Look for the sections "Legal ethics research" and "Legal ethics & technology."

National Labor Relations Board

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

The National Labor Relations Board website contains a large collection of searchable legal-related documents produced by the agency. NLRB decisions, weekly summaries, manuals, and memos are available in easy to navigate browse screens. The website also contains links to online forms and filings, press releases, NLRB publications for sale, and a question/answer section.

ProBono.net

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

ProBono.net is a nonprofit organization headquartered in New York City. Its mission is to increase access to justice through innovative uses of technology and increased volunteer lawyer participation. The core of the website is its 6 practice areas and regional sections. The website has a regional section devoted to pro bono work in Georgia that can also be accessed at: <http://www.georgiaadvocates.org/>.

U.S. Department of State – Travel and Living Abroad

<http://www.state.gov/travel/>

The *U.S. State Department's Travel and Living Abroad* website provides an excellent starting point for information concerning travel warnings, marriage/divorce overseas, international adoption, passport/visa information, and dual citizenship.

United States Patent and Trademark Office

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

The *United States Patent and Trademark Office* website provides a great deal of information about filing for patents and trademarks. The website allows you both to search for issued patents and for published patent applications and to use TESS, the Trademark Electronic Search System.

Zeno's Forensic Science Site

<http://forensic.to/forensic.html>

Created by a forensic scientist at the Netherlands Ministry of Justice, this site provides links to other sites containing information on forensic science, forensic psychiatry and other aspects of forensic evidence.

E. LEGAL TOOLS

Blawg

<http://www.blawg.org/>

Blawg serves as a directory for weblogs with emphasis on the law or legal related issues and concerns and other blogging information. Currently the website has almost 900 links in 160 categories.

***Introduction to Basic Legal Citation* by Peter Martin**

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/citation/>

Introduction to Basic Legal Citation is an online manual that discusses the principles of legal citation as well as providing a how-to-cite guide and many examples. A useful state-by-state table gives examples of the citation formats for cases, statutes, and regulations.

Law Lists

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/law-lists>

A lawyer's best resource may be another legal professional, and electronic discussion groups (internet listservs and newsgroups) are a handy way to interact via the internet with others interested in a particular topic. *Law Lists* is a keyword searchable database compiling electronic discussion groups, newsletters, and journals related to law. Search results provide a brief description of the mailing group and directions on how to subscribe and post to the group. The website looks very low-tech, but it gives good results.

Law.com Dictionary

<http://dictionary.law.com/>

Law.com Dictionary provides a free and easy to use legal dictionary on your desktop. There are 3 different methods you can use to search the site, including term look up, definition searching, and alphabetical browsing.

The Lawbook Exchange

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

The Lawbook Exchange, Ltd. specializes in buying and selling books covering all aspects of law and legal history. They also have a publication program offering reprints of over 500 landmark works as well as original books. They except offers to purchase antiquarian, scholarly and current practice materials.

Martindale.com Martindale-Hubbell Lawyer Locator

<http://www.martindale.com>

Martindale.com's Martindale-Hubbell Lawyer Locator serves as a directory of attorneys. The database includes over one million attorneys and law firms in over 160 countries. In addition to the electronic version of the venerable directory, the *Martindale.com* website contains legal articles, an Alternative Dispute Resolution Services Locator, a non-lawyer Legal Personnel Locator, legal employment resources, and other resources of interest to legal professionals.

F. WEB TOOLS

The 10,000 Year Calendar

<http://www.calendarhome.com/tyc/>

The *10,000 Year Calendar* can help you determine dates in the past or the future and allows you to print out a calendar by year or month. Holidays are noted for most years.

Babel Fish Translation

<http://world.altavista.com/>

Use *Babel Fish's* automated translation service to translate an entire web page or just a block of text. The *Babel Fish* translator covers the following languages: Chinese, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, and

Spanish. The website is powered by SYSTRAN translation software.

FindArticles.com

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

FindArticles.com contains 5 million articles from over 700 publications on a wide variety of subjects. In addition to keyword searching, which you can limit to free journals only, there are directories of the publications covered arranged by both title and topic. Unfortunately there is not a "Law" topic heading, but one can much of interested in the "News & Society" topic. Publications go back as far as 1998 and make readily available articles that sometimes are no longer directly accessible from their publications home pages. The advance search options allow for limiting searches to publications on specific topics and make it easy to exclude certain terms from the results lists.

Google Maps

<http://maps.google.com/>

Google presents topographical and satellite image maps of the U.S. You can search the database, or just click on the interactive map. Can zoom down to a level that includes only 4 to 5 square blocks. The ability to toggle back and forth between the topographical and satellite maps is an excellent feature.

Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary & Thesaurus

<http://www.m-w.com/>

Merriam-Webster Online offers a dependable and easy to use dictionary and thesaurus that makes having a paper version near your desk unnecessary.

NewsLink – U.S. Newspapers by State

<http://newslink.org/statnews.html>

While there are many sites to get current news from, sometimes what is needed is a specific newspaper article from a specific newspaper. There are several good newspaper and local media directories available on the web that can assist in locating specific newspaper websites. *NewsLink* provides an easy to navigate interface to not only links for daily and major metro newspapers, but also links to specialized newspapers, such as business, alternative, and campus newspapers. It is an excellent starting point when looking for newspaper articles from a particular city or region.

U.S. and World Population Clocks – POPClocks

<http://www.census.gov/main/www/popclock.html>

U.S. and World Population Clocks – POPClocks website is maintained by the U.S. Census Bureau. There is detailed information when you click on each of the *POPClocks* and you can get the population counts sent to you through a RSS Feed.

WatchThatPage

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

WatchThatPage service automatically collects new information from specified web pages and sends the researcher an email containing the new content and/or puts the content on a webpage for you to view. The service is free, but you do have to register your profile. *WatchThatPage* is maintained by the Norwegian software development company, ATS Consulting.

Whois Source

<http://www.whois.sc/>

Want to know who owns a web site? Tools like *Whois Source* collect information retained by web domain registrars. Elements of a *Whois Source* record include the name of the person or entity registering a domain name; contact information, including mailing and email address; the type of server housing the site, and the site's IP address. *Whois Source* is owned and maintained by Name Intelligence, Inc.

Universal Currency Converter

<http://www.xe.com/ucc/>

The Universal Currency Converter is one of the most popular currency converters on the Internet and provides up to the minute currency rates for every world currency. For ease of use, the top ten currencies sorted by popularity are listed first, and then next come the top 85 currencies sorted by country name. Special units and precious metals are listed both alphabetically as well as in their own sections at the end of this list.