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J is for Jurisprudence: An Alphabet of Websites for Lawyers

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**J is for Jurisprudence:
An Alphabet of Websites for Lawyers**

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Introduction

While searching the Internet often yields useful results, when conducting legal research, it is helpful to be knowledgeable of a pool of websites, which one can draw upon for fast and authoritative information. This paper contains an alphabetical list of 26 websites, each of which contains worthwhile information for one's research or professional development. The list features topical legal blogs, Federal and state government websites, free legal information from both commercial and not-for-profit organizations, educational resources, and helpful non-legal research tools. This list of websites is not a definitive list of the best legal websites available, but rather these websites are a good starting place to familiarize oneself with the types of information available on the Internet that can help one stay informed about legal issues and make conducting legal research more effective.

The Sites

A to D



Attorney at Work

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

Knowing that information overload can be a problem, *Attorney at Work* is a blog that

promises “one really good idea every day” for practicing lawyers. Its writers draw upon their expertise in practice management for their original and insightful daily blog posts. The site covers practice management topics such as developing a client base, dealing with personnel issues, incorporating technology into legal practice, and achieving one’s goals while maintaining work-life balance. One can sign up to get their “Daily Dispatch” or “Weekly Wrap” sent directly to one’s email account, or one can follow the blog via RSS, Facebook, LinkedIn, or Twitter.



Bloomberg

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

Bloomberg.com offers news and market analysis from this major financial information service provider. Under their News section drop down, in addition to being able to select subject categories such as “Law,” “Politics,” or “Economy,” there is also an “Exclusive” category containing news found only at *Bloomberg.com*. Their “Market Snapshot” section is a way to get current market information in an easy to navigate interface. Under the “TV” and “Radio” sections, there are links to *Bloomberg* schedules, live feeds, and podcasts. The affiliated *BusinessWeek* magazine <<http://www.businessweek.com/>> can be accessed from *Bloomberg.com*. One can also access *Bloomberg Law* <<http://www.bloomberglaw.com/>>, but one will need an account to get anything beyond the “Legal News,” “Law Reports,” “Podcasts,” and “Practitioner Contributions” sections they make freely available.



Court Listener

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

Court Listener provides a free and timely way to get alerts of cases at the Federal court level. After creating an account, one can create alerts based on search queries. Even without creating an account one can use the site to search across the Federal courts for court opinions. Currently the site has over 600,000 documents with daily uploads of information concerning all precedential opinions issued by the 13 Federal Circuit Courts and the Supreme Court of the United States. There are also uploaded each day non-precedential opinions from all of the Federal Circuit Courts except for the D.C. Circuit. The site is very forthcoming about privacy issues, clearly stating what site use they track and why, with their stated goal to making the site as secure and private as possible. *Court Listener* is an open source project created by Michael Lissner as part of his Master's thesis at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Information.



Digital Library of Georgia

<http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/>

Based at the University of Georgia Libraries, the *Digital Library of Georgia* is an initiative of *GALILEO*, the state's virtual library. The *Digital Library of Georgia* connects users to digital objects from 60 institutions and 100 government agencies of

cultural and historical value in the state of Georgia. The various databases that make up the *Digital Library of Georgia* contain digitized books, manuscripts, photographs, government documents, newspapers, maps, audio, video, and other resources. One can search across the many databases that make up the *Digital Library of Georgia* or browse the databases by topic, time period, county, institution, or media type. There is also an A-Z list of all the databases one can browse. Under the topic 'Government & Politics,' one will find several databases that could be useful for legal research. Listed below is a sampling of these 'Government & Politics' databases.

- **Historic Georgia Codes Collection**

<http://www.archive.org/details/ugalaw>

Made available by the University of Georgia School of Law Alexander Campbell King Law Library, this collection includes historical Georgia codes beginning with the 1799 Watkins Digest of Statutes through the 1933 code.

- **Georgia Government Publications**

<http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/ggp/>

A collection of monographic public documents from state government departments and agencies, published from 1994 to the present.

- **Georgia Legislative Documents**

<http://www.galileo.usg.edu/express?link=zlgl>

This collection contains fully searchable versions of the Georgia General Assembly's Acts and Resolutions from 1799-1999. An excellent legal resource, when one wants to do a keyword or subject search of the Georgia Laws.

- **GeorgiaInfo**

<http://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/>

GeorgiaInfo provides extensive information about political life and governance in Georgia.

- **New Georgia Encyclopedia**

<http://www.galileo.usg.edu/express?link=ngen;id=type%3DCategories%3Bid%3DGovernmentPolitics>

The New Georgia Encyclopedia provides an authoritative source of information about people, places, events, institutions, and many other topics relating to Georgia.

- **Trademark Registrations, 1894-1959**

<http://content.sos.state.ga.us/cdm4/trademarks.php>

This collection is made up of trademarks from products sold in Georgia from 1894 to 1959.

E to H



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. Go to the website listed above, then click on the 'Search for Company Filings' link to access the several search options for accessing *EDGAR* information. All public companies, foreign and domestic, are required to file registration statements, periodic reports, and certain other forms electronically through *EDGAR*, making it an excellent source for company information. The *EDGAR* homepage provides a link to the current SIC Code List and a tutorial for using the database. The website 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.



Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)

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

The *FDIC website* is an excellent source of information about the banking industry and can be helpful in factoring risk for a financial institution. The website features on its homepage a “Bank Closing Information” section along with recent “Press Releases,” “What’s New,” and “Consumer Resources” sections. At the top of the *FDIC website* is a navigation bar to access articles, data, and statistics in the following categories: Deposit Insurance, Customer Protection, Industry Analysis, Regulations & Examinations, Asset Sales, and News & Events.



Georgia.gov

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

Georgia.gov is the definitive portal to access information about Georgia from the state government and its agencies. The homepage features a recent ‘Headlines’ section that shares state government press releases about related news and events. Other sections on the homepage include links to the most used ‘Online Services,’ quick links to ‘Local Information’ for Georgia regions, counties, and cities, a ‘Most Search Items’ section that brings attention to helpful resources, and the ‘At Your Service’ section linking to directory information for members of state government. The topical menu list on the upper left of the homepage, allows one to navigate to lists of links to the most prominent state resources in those areas. While there is state information that could be of assistance with legal research in all these topics, the two sections one should become most familiar with are “Government” and “Legal, Public & Consumer Affairs.” The “Government” section is subdivided into “State Government” and “Local Government” with further subdivisions by branch of government. The “Legal, Public & Consumer Affairs” section contains subdivisions focusing on the courts, law enforcement, safety, and consumer protection, with quick links to offenders databases, parolee database, the Georgia’s Most Wanted list, and crime statistics. One of the most useful parts of the *Georgia.gov* is the ‘Search’ box found in the upper right of every page, which is very helpful in tracking down a specific resource on this information rich site.



Hollywood, Esq.

<http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/blogs/thr-esq>

Part of *The Hollywood Reporter* website, *Hollywood, Esq.* follows notable issues happening in the entertainment industry with a strong focus on intellectual property rights and contracts. While a majority of the blog posts focus on the film and television industry, other entertainment subjects such as music, gaming, and sports are touched on as well. This site allows one to learn about legal issues, while keeping up with celebrity news at the same time!

I to L



iPhone J.D.

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

iPhone J.D. describes itself as a website for lawyers using Apple's iPhone or iPad. Started in November 2008 and maintained by New Orleans attorney Jeff Richardson, the site is not affiliated with a firm, organization, or Apple itself. Every Friday there is an "In the news" post giving one a rundown of relevant news from the week pertaining to Apple devices. There are insightful reviews of iPad and iPhone related products and apps that a practicing attorney may find useful, including recent reviews of *Westlaw*

Next, *Lexis Advance*, and *Fastcase* for the iPad. The site has a very useful “Index to Prior Posts” arranged by category making it easy to access from alphabetical lists previous reviews of apps, hardware accessories, books, movies, websites, tips, practice stories, and “classic” posts (that may now be outdated). The site was voted the Best Legal Technology blog by the *ABA Journal* for 2010 and 2011.



Justia

<http://www.justia.com>

Run by the original co-founders of *FindLaw*, *Justia* is a legal information portal committed to making primary legal materials freely available for the benefit of society. They also partner with educational, public interest, and like-minded organizations to provide legal and consumer information to legal professionals and the public. The website has a simple directory style layout, with the two major sections divided into ‘Legal Practice Areas’ and ‘Legal Research & Law Practice.’ There are also free daily opinion newsletters one can sign-up for, documents for cases in the news, a separate “News” page that gathers legal news from authoritative sources in one place, their own “Law, Technology & Legal Marketing Blog,” and a listing of other useful legal websites, with a special focus on sites committed to free primary law. *Justia* has a “Lawyer Directory” and a “Legal Answers” section that allows the public to ask lawyers questions for free. The website also maintains a law blog directory (*BlawgSearch*), lists of law podcasts (*Blawgs.fm*), and a directory of legal professionals on Twitter (*LegalBirds*).



Koehler Law

<http://www.koehlerlaw.net/blog>

D.C. based solo practitioner Jamison Koehler blogs about criminal law and his experiences as a defense lawyer on the website *Koehler Law*. His well-written posts focus on issues he encounters in the criminal justice system and stories from his practice. This blog was voted the Best Criminal Justice blog as part of the 2011 *ABA Journal* Blawg 100.



Lawscape

<http://lawscape.wordpress.com/>

Lawscape is a blog that looks at the law and legal issues in Georgia. The site offers commentary, resources, and news, with a special focus on the rural areas and small cities around the state. Mike Monahan, Director of the Pro Bono Project of the State Bar of Georgia and Georgia Legal Services Program, is the primary contributor to *Lawscape*, but the blog is in no way associated with those programs.

M to P



Municode

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

Municode provides access to over 2,700 local codes from all around the country. The coverage of Georgia county and municipal codes is particularly strong. One can browse and search one code at a time for free under their ‘Code Library’ from the link in the navigation bar or from the button on the homepage. The codes are now also available in a mobile platform version in addition to the desktop browser version. The codes are only as current as the most recent update from the local government, however, the last updated date is clearly marked in the banner information for each code. Under the ‘Online Services’ link in the navigation bar, *Municode* also makes available free annual “State Law Pamphlets” for 15 states, including Georgia and Florida, highlighting important changes that have occurred to these state codes. *Municode* is the oldest and largest codifier in the country and has demonstrated a strong commitment to making these ordinances freely available on the Internet.



NICB – National Insurance Crime Bureau

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

The *NICB – National Insurance Crime Bureau* is a not-for-profit organization whose

mission is to facilitate the identification, detection, and prosecution of insurance criminals by partnering with insurers, transportation-related firms, and law enforcement. While their website offers information for their members, it also makes available some helpful resources to the public. *NICB's* VINCheckSM database is a free resource to assist the public in tracking if a vehicle has been reported stolen or salvaged by *NICB* members. In order to use the search, one must have the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) and are limited to a maximum of five VIN searches in a 24 hour period. Under the 'Theft and Fraud Awareness' section on the navigation bar, there is access to helpful brochures, posters, fact sheets, and checklists to assist the public with protecting themselves from theft and fraud. There are even topical videos related to insurance fraud and theft recovery, taken from various news programs as well as the *NICB*, under their "Multimedia" subsection.



OpenSecrets.org

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

Produced by the Center for Responsive Politics, *OpenSecrets.org* is an independent website tracking the influence of money on U.S. Federal politics, public policy, and everyday citizens. Gathering data beyond the offerings from the Federal Election Commission, *OpenSecrets.org* looks at lobbying, the "revolving door" phenomenon, politician's personal finances, and congressional travel. The navigation bar allows one to access information by 'Politicians & Elections,' 'Influence & Lobbying,' and 'News &

Analysis' on this data rich website. There is a "Get Local!" subsection that breaks contribution data down by state, by zip code, and by earmarks on what they term "money maps." *OpenSecrets.org* makes it easy to track donations and expenditures by SuperPACs which have been in the news during the present election cycle. The *OpenSecrets Blog* is an excellent source for news about money in politics. The 'Resources' and 'Take Action' sections offer FAQs, tools, apps, and social networking opportunities for those looking to become more engaged in advocating for government transparency. To locate information related to state government and politics in Georgia, one should explore the resources available through the state run portal *OpenGeorgia* <<http://www.open.georgia.gov>>. The resources linked on this site are gathered from a variety of state agency websites, where they are sometimes difficult to locate, even if one knows of their existence. While much of the information is only updated annually, *OpenGeorgia* is an excellent, time-saving resource for Georgia state financial-related information.



Public Library of Law - PLoL

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

Created by *Fastcase*, the *Public Library of Law – PLoL* is a resource for searching freely available law on the Internet. It provides a searchable interface to a large collection of primary law at both the state and Federal levels. *PLoL* features cases from the U.S. Supreme Court and Courts of Appeals, cases from all 50 states back to 1997, as well as

codes from all 50 states, regulations, court rules, and constitutions. There are also helpful video tutorials and guides to learn more about searching for cases and statutes on the site. *PLoL* requires registration and login before materials can be accessed, however they note that they never give registration information to third-parties. It also offers links to information on *Fastcase* that can be accessed through the State Bar of Georgia agreement with *Fastcase*.

Q to T



Quitamhelp.com

<http://quitamhelp.com/>

Quitamhelp.com is a blog focused on providing news and information about the False Claims Act qui tam whistleblower law and related tax, securities & commodities, and state whistleblower laws. The blog is primarily focused on descriptions of current False Claims Act news and cases, with links to news articles for further reading. The left column provides links to explanations of qui tam and the specific Federal and state laws. The “Articles” section takes one to a list of qui tam articles prepared by lawyers at Getnick & Getnick LLP, a New York based commercial law firm that sponsors and maintains *Quitamhelp.com*. The “Whistleblower Stories” section shares this firm’s view on whistleblowers and examples of some of the lawsuits on which they have worked.



Regulations.gov

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

Regulations.gov is a one-stop source to find and view all Federal regulations and related materials. Through *Regulations.gov*, one may also comment on proposed regulations open for comment and view closed for comment regulations. *Regulations.gov* is managed by the eRulemaking Program with assistance from partner agencies. The recently redesigned website offers three tabs in the upper right to help one explore regulatory information. The default tab is the "Search" tab, which provides a keyword search box to look for rules, comments, adjudications, and supporting documents. The returned search results offer a variety of facets to simplify narrowing one's results. There is also a "Browse" tab which groups regulations into ten industry-related categories, which allows one to locate recent actions of interest by subject. Finally, there is a "Learn" tab which gives a step-by-step explanation of the rule-making process and helps to fulfill the website's mission of making it easier for the public to participate directly in the regulatory process.



Stateline

<http://stateline.org/>

An excellent source for state government and political news, *Stateline* has an easy to navigate, feature-rich website. One can view recent news stories gathered from

newspapers, wire services, and from *Stateline* staff writers by selecting a specific state, browsing all states, or in one of 15 issue areas. RSS feeds are available for individual states and issue areas as well. The "Special Reports" section includes in-depth reporting on issues of state services, budgets, and legislation. *Stateline* is a nonpartisan, nonprofit news service of the Pew Center on the States. *Stateline* content is published daily at *Stateline.org* and can be found on *LexisNexis*, *Factiva*, and news outlets served by McClatchy-Tribune Information Services.



Thomas

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

A free service of the Library of Congress, *Thomas* provides Federal legislative materials in a timely manner, making it easy to access the texts of bills and resolutions, bill summaries, and tracking bill status and actions in Congress, with bill texts being updated several times daily. *Thomas* also provides a searchable version of the *Congressional Record* and its index. The 'Current Activity' section is especially helpful for keeping abreast of current actions and upcoming schedules, including links to video from the House and Senate floors and committees. 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. In addition to legislation, there are also searchable databases on *Thomas* containing information on 'Presidential Nominations' back to the 100th Congress (1987),

'Treaties' back to the 90th Congress (1967), and 'Committee Reports' back to the 104th Congress (1995). The 'Government Resources' section provides many additional links to procedural, biographical, and historical documents. *Thomas* launched in January 1995 and over the past 17 years has become the most important source for Congressional information.

U to Z



USPTO.gov

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

USPTO.gov, the newly redesigned website for the United States Patent and Trademark Office, provides a wealth of practical information and resources for filing for patents and trademarks, as well as offering news, public notices, and press releases from the agency. The three primary sections of the website, “Patents,” “Trademarks,” and “IP Law & Policy,” can be accessed from the large links under the revolving news photos or from the navigation bar at the top of every page. Under “Patents” the variety of patent related databases one can search are laid out and described. The patent search allows one to search either issued patents or published patent applications. Under “Trademarks” one can also access trademark application databases and search the Trademark Electronic Search System (TESS), which contains the USPTO’s pending and registered trademarks. There are step-by-step directions under “Patents Process” and “Trademarks Process” to

help individuals and legal professionals with the process of obtaining a patent or a trademark. While the USPTO.gov website is attractive and functional, the patent and trademark database searches themselves are still very basic and remain unchanged from years past. Under “IP Law & Policy” there is information that could be of interest to a practicing attorney such as rulemaking, enforcement, and foreign protection of intellectual property.



Virtual Law Practice

<http://virtuallawpractice.org/>

Can legal services be provided in a professional and ethical way from a web-based virtual law office? North Carolina solo practitioner Stephanie Kimbro does just that and uses her blog, *Virtual Law Practice*, to share her experiences with the issues surrounding lawyering without a brick and mortar office. This blog is an excellent source for articles and other information sources about virtual lawyering, including links to downloadable books and presentations. The “Topics” section has a useful subject list making it easy for one to access information on a specific topic. *Virtual Law Practice* was named to the 2011 *ABA Journal* Blawg 100.



Wex

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

Wex is a freely available legal dictionary and encyclopedia hosted by the *Legal Information Institute (LII)* at Cornell Law School. It is edited and maintained collaboratively by selected volunteer authors with qualified legal backgrounds. One can keyword search *Wex* using the "Search *Wex*" search box on the right of the homepage or clicking on the "Search" link. Clicking on the "Browse" link will take one to an alphabetical list of all entries, so one can look up terms just like in a print dictionary. Sometimes entries have lists of additional resources or illustrative examples in addition to the overview definition.



XE.com

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

Launched in 1995, *XE* provides helpful foreign exchange tools and services for individuals and businesses. Their Universal Currency Converter is the most popular currency converter on the Internet. One can also access historical currency rate tables or download their free mobile apps. *XE* has a news feed called "Forex News" focusing on foreign exchange and currency news and in depth currency profiles as part of their "Currency Encyclopedia."



YouTube - EDU

<http://www.youtube.com/education>

The ready availability of authoritative, high-quality educational videos on the Internet makes it easy to explore new topics as well as brush up on legal subjects. *YouTube* actually has a large collection of educational videos as part of their *YouTube EDU - Education* subsection. Under "University," there is a "Law" section devoted to legal topics, further subdivided by legal subject areas. Other sections, such as "Business," "History," "Languages," and "Social Sciences" may also have topics related to the law. One can view entire courses, such as the Harvard University course 'JUSTICE' with Prof. Michael Sandel (a total of 18 lectures) or the University of California, Berkeley, 'Law 271 - Environmental Law and Policy - Spring 2008' course (a total of 28 lectures). There are also single classes, panel discussions, and special guest lectures featured among the available videos.



zShare

<http://zshare.net/>

zShare is a free file hosting provider primarily used for large files that would be too large to send via email or might need to be shared with several individuals. After creating an account, one can upload audio, video, image, or flash files as well as document and presentation files. The only people who can view these files are those with whom one

chooses to share the files, as there is no publicly available search of all the files on the site. *zShare* can also be used as a cloud-based location for backups for one's own use. There is unlimited downloading and no limit as to how long one can leave a file on the site; however, any file that has not been downloaded for 60 days is automatically deleted by the site. There are restrictions against uploading copyrighted material, as well as offensive or sexually explicit materials. Their "Terms of Service (TOS)" is easy to reference and clearly outlines conditions of use. Of course, one must be careful not to place confidential or discoverable information on any file sharing site. For more on the ethics of cloud computing, see Sharon Bradley's *Internet Legal Research* CLE article, "Ethics on the Wing: Examination of Opinions on Electronic Services and Cloud Computing" (March 19, 2012).

Conclusion

These websites are just a sample of what is available on the Internet to assist one in staying informed on legal issues and conducting legal research. When one knows some 'go-to' websites that provide helpful and convenient information, then using the Internet for legal research becomes a straightforward and successful experience.