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Legal News and Periodicals

Wendy E. Moore

University of Georgia School of Law Library, wemoore@uga.edu

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Legal News and Periodicals

Wendy E. Moore, M.S. in L.S.
Acquisitions/Serials Librarian
The University of Georgia School of Law Library
Athens, GA

Legal News and Periodicals

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Introduction

There are a growing number of legal periodicals and news sources that are freely available via the Internet, but sometimes tracking down a specific topic or article can be a lot of work. For example, what if you are interested in following news on a certain legal topic or identifying some current articles published in a certain legal field, such as immigration? No matter how good a searcher you are, it is nearly impossible to put "recent Immigration Law News" into Google and get back a concise, usable list of articles. Instead, the best searching method to follow is making use of specialized legal websites which assist in finding legal news and periodicals on the Internet. Below are a few of these sites that will make the task of searching out legal news and periodicals easier and more time-efficient.

"Headline" Legal News

Forget about wading through CNN.com and the New York Times in search of legal news. When you want to follow the news in the legal world, the best way is using a specialized legal news website. Keeping up with legal news developments is fast and convenient with one of the following three websites. All three sites are of very high quality and easy to navigate. Each pulls up unique articles not listed by the other two, making it worth while to use all three when trying to get as much information as possible on a news topic. For daily use, any one of these three would provide the user with a good overview of legal news developments.

JURIST – Legal News
<http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/issues/index.htm>

Of these three legal news sites, *JURIST – Legal News* provides the broadest coverage. The URL above takes you to the "Breaking Legal News" page, with the latest headlines culled

from a variety of sources including newswires, newspapers, and magazines. In addition to the "Breaking Legal News", on the left navigation bar under "Legal News" there are three additional subdivisions: "The Paper Chase", "Hot Topics", and "Full Coverage." "Paper Chase" is a weblog of new law in the news, including selected blogs written by professionals and links to the news and sources they discuss. You can also sign up for a daily email digest of this weblog. The "Hot Topics" page organizes news items into categories such as Death Penalty, Copyright & Patents, Human Cloning, Homeland Security, Patriot Act, etc. "Full Coverage" provides an even more extensive list of news topics, currently around 100 different subjects. These appear to be made up of popular topics and former "hot topics." Current "hot topics" are not listed on the "full coverage" page, so one has to look in both places to see all topics available. The *JURIST* website is edited by a team of law professors from several U.S. and International law schools and is hosted by the University of Pittsburgh School of Law. It is a non-commercial site designed for people learning, teaching, or researching the law. Since the site is non-commercial, there are no "fee-based only" sections, nor advertisements.

FindLaw – Legal News and Commentary
<http://news.findlaw.com/>

The front page of *FindLaw*'s news section provides links to "Top Legal Headlines." In the left navigation bar under the heading "News Front Page", there are links to specialized legal news topics, such as Business, Crime, Environment, Immigration, Labor, Product Liability, Tech & IP, etc. There are also broader news topics listed in the left navigation bar, including a link to "Special Coverage" that has additional links to significant legal news stories from the past few years, such as "Enron," "Napster," and "Tire Litigation." *FindLaw* offers a free email newsletter subscription service called "FindLaw Newsletters." You can sign up to have the "Legal News

Headlines," as well as other topics (including commentary), sent to you each day. The bulk of the news sources in *FindLaw* are wire stories from AP and Reuters. *FindLaw* is a commercial site that is targeted to legal professionals, businesses, and students.

LexisONE – Headline Legal News
<http://www.lexisone.com/news/index.html>

This URL takes you to the "Headline Legal News" site of LexisNexis' *LexisONE* resources for small law firms. The front page of the site contains a major section called "Headline Legal News" and a smaller section called "Noteworthy Decisions." On the right-hand side, there is a dropdown menu labeled "...more News Topics" that has links to legal news topics of interest to practicing attorneys, including: Business Litigation & Bankruptcy, Criminal Law, Estates, Trusts, & Tax Law, Family Law, Intellectual Property Law, and their News Library. This site provides access to a broad array of news sources – not just newswires, but also content Lexis has re-packaged from various newspapers, legal publications, industry newsletters, and such (including the Fulton County Daily Report and the AJC). *LexisONE* is a commercial site targeted to practicing attorneys.

Legal Periodicals

Many legal periodicals, especially law reviews sponsored by law schools and newsletters from non-profit organizations, are publicly available on the Internet. Commercial legal periodicals, too, will sometimes offer articles freely on the Internet, or at least make the table of contents or an abstract available publicly. The coverage varies greatly from title to title – sometimes there are full-text articles, other times only abstracts or tables of contents. However, even abstracts and tables of contents can be helpful when trying to get a full citation or more

information before you spend money getting the article from a commercial provider, such as Westlaw or Lexis.

Legal Periodical Directories

One problem with legal periodicals on the Internet is that the links to this content are often buried deep on their host's websites. There are specialized directories of legal periodicals on the web, which take away much of the guesswork and ease the problem of locating articles from these publicly available sites. Below are listed four of the best of these directories, in descending order. The first two, *University of Southern California Law Library – Legal Journals* site and the *JURIST – Law Reviews* site, are the strongest in depth of coverage and information and are highly recommended. The remaining two directories are of good quality and still better than most other directories of this type, but they cover fewer titles and have a few more inaccuracies. Nevertheless, these sites would be useful as supplementary resources, when you want to conduct a thorough search for a legal periodical.

Legal Periodical Directories – For Primary Use

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. It covers nearly 250 publications, organized into categories such as: General Law Reviews, Commercial Law Journals, Subject Specific Law Reviews, Foreign Law Journals, etc. 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. The codes are: F = Full-text; A = Abstracts; T = Table of Contents; S =

Subscription Information. Whenever there is a discrepancy between this site and another law directory concerning the level of content available (such as if a particular journal is full-text or not), this list from the University of Southern California Law Library almost certainly has the correct information. There are also useful brief annotations describing each publication when appropriate.

JURIST – Law Reviews
<http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/lawrev.htm>

The *JURIST – Law Reviews* site provides a listing of American law reviews that have a substantial web presence. The display is an easy to browse, straight alphabetical list, with no categorizations or annotations. The nearly 100 titles available in full-text are clearly marked with a "Full Text" surscript note. A unique feature of this site are the links to specific parts of each journal's website. These links display as the following:

[Current](#) | [Back](#) | [Search](#) | [Submissions](#) | [Subscriptions](#) | [Board](#) | [Contact](#)

Legal Periodical Directories – For Supplemental Use

LawSource – United States – Law Reviews and Periodicals
<http://www.lawsource.com/also/usa.cgi?usj>

While not having the depth of the first two sites mentioned, the *LawSource* site is still a good source for links to legal periodicals. Titles that provide public access to full-text articles are listed in boldface, currently around 100 titles. However, the error rate on whether full-text is available was a little high. The titles are arranged alphabetically, with no categorizations or annotations. The titles are followed by their standard Bluebook citation abbreviations, which can be helpful with so many similar sounding titles.

LexisONE – Legal Journals

http://www.lexisone.com/legalresearch/legalguide/legal_journals/legal_journals.htm

The *LexisONE – Legal Journals* site has an alphabetical list of online legal periodicals with each title followed by an extensive annotation. While this site provides significant descriptive information about each title, it only covers about 50 publications, making it nowhere near as comprehensive as the *USC* or *JURIST* sites. Within the annotations there is usually information about how to access the title and if full-text is freely available, but this isn't as handy as the codes and symbols used to display this same information in the previous sites mentioned.

Periodical Databases with Full-Text Articles

Access to commercial periodical databases providing full-text articles is available only by subscription or for a fee. In Georgia, some of commercial periodical databases are available to state citizens through GALILEO, a virtual library sponsored by the Board of Regents for the University System of Georgia. The Georgia General Assembly funds a core group of databases, and then individual library groups may purchase additional databases for their specific users. Some of the core databases available include: ABI/Inform, MEDLINE, and EBSCOhost's Psychology & Behavioral Sciences Collection. Access to GALILEO is available at your local public library. Passwords/PINs for remote access to GALILEO databases can often be obtained from your local public library, if you are a cardholder for that library. For example, remote user passwords/PINs can be obtained for cardholders at: Atlanta-Fulton County Public Library, Conyers-Rockdale Library System, DeKalb County Public Library, Forsyth County Public Library, and Gwinnett County Public Library. Each library has different steps you must follow

to obtain a password. Go to the libraries' web pages for more information (a list of links to Georgia public library sites is at: <<http://www.public.lib.ga.us/pls/publibs/plsites.html>>).

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Staying current with recently published articles in legal periodicals can be accomplished using freely available services on the Internet. While there are current awareness pages available at many educational and commercial sites, scope and coverage is limited at most of them. The one site that rises above all the rest, because of its depth and search capabilities, is the University of Texas School of Law's *Tarltan Law Library – Contents Pages from Law Reviews and Other Scholarly Journals*. There is really no need to use anything else, if you just want to stay current with recently published law articles. Below is more information about the *Tarltan Law Library* site and one of the better examples of a more general legal literature current awareness site from *JURIST*.

**Tarltan Law Library – Contents Pages from Law Reviews and Other Scholarly Journals
(University of Texas School of Law)**
http://tarlton.law.utexas.edu/tallons/content_search.html

The University of Texas School of Law's *Tarltan Law Library – Contents Pages from Law Reviews and Other Scholarly Journals* is the definitive table of contents service available covering legal periodicals. The site is made up of a keyword searchable database of tables of contents from more than 750 law reviews and other scholarly publications about the law. The database is updated daily, and covers titles from the United States and abroad received over the previous three months at the Tarlton Law Library. One can simply view table of contents pages for specific journals or do a keyword search on a topic of interest. When you do a keyword

search, such as for the word "river", it returns a list of links to each table of contents page containing that word. Once you are on a specific table of contents page you may need to browse or do an "Edit/Find in page..." search to locate the instance of your search term in that table of contents. The site also provides lists of the journals indexed in the database and links to those journals on the Internet. This site used in conjunction with the legal periodical directories described above creates a powerful tool for accessing freely available legal periodical articles.

JURIST – New Articles and Books
<http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/new.htm>

The *JURIST – New Articles and Books* site is nowhere as complete as the Tarlton Law Library site. However, it pulls its current awareness information from more than just legal periodical articles. Breaking down its information into brief sections, it is a convenient, easy-to-browse current awareness source. It includes, "caught my eye" highlights from *CILP*, lists of new working papers from *Legal Scholarship Network*, new law books with links to publishers' websites, and new law reviews gathered, of course, from *Tarlton Law Library* site.

Conclusion

Whether you are trying to locate a particular legal periodical, stay current with the latest articles on a legal topic, or keep abreast of the current news headlines in the legal world, there are many publicly available Internet sites that can assist you in finding the desired information quickly and easily. Making use of the sites described above can save you time and money when you are conducting research, whether for a client or for your own professional growth.