Presentations   Alexander Campbell King Law Library

2-29-2008

Legal Dim Sum: A Few Topical Nibbles (Topic Specific Legal Sites)

Sharon Bradley
University of Georgia School of Law Library, bradleys@uga.edu

Legal Dim Sum: A Few Topical Nibbles (Topic Specific Legal Sites)

Sharon Bradley
Special Collections Librarian
University of Georgia School of Law
Alexander Campbell King Law Library
Athens, GA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

When considering a legal topic or broad legal question a researcher should initially review the widest range of items. Anything may be relevant; law reviews, journals, treatises, even ALR, CJS, and AmJur could prove useful.

With the topic-focused sites another researcher has done a lot of work for you. Because the site focuses on one area of law the editor has probably included valuable content; articles, statutes, and maybe even material you would not think of. All of this in addition to links to other relevant sites. Frequently updated sites usually follow litigation, legislation, or current news.

II. RESEARCH STRATEGIES

Before reviewing some useful sites there are a few research strategies to consider when looking for topical legal resources.

- **Associations**
  There is an association to support every hobby, profession, political position, and legal issue. Association web sites often have resource pages with links to statutes and regulations. Pertinent statistics or government reports are available as well.

  The *Encyclopedia of Associations* is the most comprehensive source for locating relevant associations. Public libraries tend to purchase the print edition, law libraries have access through Lexis and Westlaw.

- **Blogs**
  Lawyers have taken to web logs (blogs) in a big way. Many practitioners post frequently and discuss changes in the law brought about by court decisions or legislation.

  Law.com Blog Categories - http://www.law.com/service/blogcat.shtml#blogcat

Law Librarian Blog - http://lawprofessors.typepad.com/law_librarian_blog/

Legal Blog Watch - http://legalblogwatch.typepad.com/legal_blog_watch/

Rutgers Law Library Legal Blogs -
http://law-library.rutgers.edu/resources/lawblogs.php

- **Journals and Reviews**
  Journals and law reviews can provide great topical information. General coverage journals frequently provide a round-up of legal developments. The specialized journals sometimes include research guides or pathfinders. Comprehensive full-text searchability is still one of the most powerful features of the big commercial research services but with a couple of extra steps the same information is available for free.

  Current Law Journal Content - http://lawlib.wlu.edu/CLJC/index.aspx
  CLJC is an indexing database so it does not contain full-text articles, though it might contain links to full-text. With the citation to a relevant article, it is easy to order an article online or send a paralegal to campus to make copies.

  University Law Review Project - http://www.lawreview.org/
  This site lets you perform full-text searches of the journals that have loaded their content on the Internet. You are saved the trouble of finding the relevant journals and searching them individually.

- **Law Libraries**
  For researchers lucky enough to live near a law library, resources like Hein Online, Lexis Academic, and subject specific databases are often available. Contract restrictions usually require the researcher to be on campus to use the resources but some law libraries, like UGA, have public access terminals.

  Try the law school libraries for guides to state specific topical resources.

Findlaw Law Schools by State -
http://stu.findlaw.com/schools/usaschools/index.html

III. COMPREHENSIVE LEGAL SITES

These sites present more of a smorgasbord. While not all subjects are represented

on each site, among them probably every topic is covered. They tend to be frequently

updated.

• CataLaw - http://www.catalaw.com/
"CataLaw is the catalog of catalogs of worldwide law on the Internet. It aids legal

research by arranging all indexes of law and government into a uniform, universal and

unique metaindex."

• FindLaw Practice Areas library - http://library.findlaw.com/
FindLaw Resources by Practice Area - http://www.findlaw.com/01topics/

While rather all encompassing, FindLaw can sometimes be less than "intuitive" to

navigate. Both links lead to topical resources although not necessarily the same ones.

• HG.com Areas of Practice - http://www.hg.org/practiceareas.html
Hieros Gamos, now just HG.org, was one of the first online law and government

sites. It was founded in 1995 by a network of independent law firms. The practice pages

include articles, publications, and commentary in addition to the expected statutes and

regulations. An additional feature of the site is the publication page which lists almost

all of the online legal publications both commercial and from many associations.

• Law.Net Directory and Search Engine - http://www.law.net/roundnet.html
This site provides searchable drop-down lists. Their legal resources section

provides access to courts, government offices, schools, and many other sources. The

legal services area provides links to appraisers, bail bonding, courts reporters, expert

witnesses, paralegals, private investigation, and many others.

• Laws of All Jurisdictions (arranged by subject) -
 http://www.lectlaw.com/inll/90.htm
State and foreign/international materials are included. While the site could be

more conveniently organized, there is a lot of scrolling, it is comprehensive.

• Legal Information Institute (LII) Law Wex -
http://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/index.php/Category:Overview
The LII created a series of very useful "Law about ..." articles. Each article has an

overview of a legal topic with links to federal statutes, sometimes state statutes, leading

cases, articles, etc. A great resource and good starting point for topical research. The

articles are now part of the Wex service, a collaboratively-created, public-access law

dictionary and encyclopedia.

• LLRX.com Legal Research - http://www.llrx.com/legal-research.htm
LLRX.com was founded in 1996 by Sabrina I. Pacifici who still produces this

favorite resource for law librarians. The focus is to provide legal, library, and IT/IS

professionals with up-to-date information on Internet research and technology-related

issues, applications, resources and tools. A long list of librarians, lawyers, and

researchers contribute timely and informative articles.

• New England School of Law Legal Topics A-Z -
http://www.nesl.edu/research/index.cfm
Really well organized. Using tabs, each topic contains the links to primary

materials but also links to secondary sources which include journals and specific

articles.

• Northern California Association of Law Libraries, Internet Resources by Subject
- http://www.nocall.org/links/index.html
Some sites try to be too comprehensive and include such a large number of links

it's overwhelming. This site gets it right with short lists of useful links. Also includes

California specific information.

• Robert Ambrogi's Law Sites - http://www.legaline.com/lawsites.html
Ambrogi's name is familiar to legal researchers. He is the author of *The Essential*

Guide to the Best (and Worst) Legal Sites on the Web. His web site is also helpful with

the tag line, "tracking new and intriguing Web sites for the legal profession."

In recent posts he's talked about a new search engine PreCYdent,

http://62.149.169.159/ which aims to out-perform commercial search engines in

searching for legal resources in the public domain. The developers of this experimental

legal search engine say their tests outperform "by a wide margin" Westlaw natural

language search. Give it a try.

• Vanderbilt Law on the Web -
http://law.vanderbilt.edu/library/law-on-the-web/index.aspx
This is another example of what law librarians do so well, organize the world. The

descriptions include dates of coverage of the materials, very helpful and not often seen.

• The Virtual Chase Legal Resources -
http://www.virtualchase.com/topics/legal_index.shtml
The Virtual Chase began in 1996 as a resource for law librarians and other

instructors of Internet research. The cite is owned by the law firm Ballard Spahr

Andrews & Ingersoll, LLP, but managed by Genie Tyburski, a familiar name to librarians

and legal researchers. The site offers articles, guides, teaching materials, an alert service

and more on Internet research strategies and resources.

• Zimmerman's Research Guide -
http://www.lexisnexis.com/infopro/zimmerman/
The guide began as a personal resource for Andrew Zimmerman. Eventually his

notes developed into an online guide now hosted by LexisNexis InfoPro service. Lots of

topics, some with a number of links and resources, others with just a note reminding

you where a resource is located, for instance:

Wills

Sample will clauses are available in Murphy's Will Clauses (Matthew Bender).
Murphy's is available on Lexis (ESTATE;MURPHY).

IV. TOPIC SPECIFIC SITES

The following resources, while not exhaustive, were found to be useful, timely,

and hopefully have something a little extra. Generally government sites are not included

because frankly they should be obvious to a researcher. Someone interested in tax will at

some point look at www.irs.gov, the same for securities transactions, www.sec.gov, or

immigration, www.ice.gov.

Administrative Law
• Federal Administrative Decisions -
http://www.lib.virginia.edu/govdocs/fed_decisions_agency.html
This page does not link to the Federal Register or the Code of Federal Regulations

information for each federal agency. It links to other administrative actions which are

outside the scope of the CFR or the FR. What is available on the Internet varies from

agency to agency. Much of the information is material released through FOIA requests

so the page links to the primary E-FOIA Reading Room for each agency covered.

Alternative Dispute Resolution
• American Arbitration Association - http://www.adr.org/
AAA Education Center - http://www.adr.org/education
There is an online library with PDF versions of their publications and links to

ADR laws and statutes at the international, federal, and state levels.

• Conflict Prevention & Resolution - http://www.cpradr.org/
A non-profit alliance of corporations and law firms focused on integrating ADR

into legal practice. See the Clauses, Rules & Procedures,

http://www.cpradr.org/Landing.asp?M=9.0 , section for useful practice aids.

Antitrust

• DOJ Antitrust Case Filings - http://www.usdoj.gov/atr/cases.html
Selected documents filed by the Division since December 1994 are included. No

key word searching, cases are listed alphabetically by the last name of individual

defendants, by company name, or by the entity's first name. Appellate briefs are

available.

Bankruptcy
• American Bankruptcy Institute - http://www.abiworld.org/
Provides a searchable database of selected opinions, analyses, and synopses.

Current news provided by blogs and legislative updates.

• Bankruptcy Law Trove - http://www.lawtrove.com/bankruptcy/
This product of a Boston law firm offers statutes, regulations, court decisions,

government resources, and FAQs about bankruptcy.

Constitutional Law/Individual Rights
• Annotated U.S. Constitution -
http://www.gpoaccess.gov/constitution/browse.html
The Constitution of the United States of America, Analysis and Interpretation:

Analysis of Cases Decided by the Supreme Court of the United States is available in a

series of browseable tables. The 2002 edition is the most recent with supplements for

2004 and 2006. New editions are published as needed with no maximum amount of

time between publications.

• Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) - http://www.eff.org/
The "EFF is the leading civil liberties group defending your rights in the digital

world. The EFF is an organization that sees substantial challenges to basic human and

legal rights on the Internet. It is focused on protecting the rights of individuals

worldwide from those 'threats'." The EFF tracks hot cases and the blogs are a deep well

of information.

• Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC) - http://epic.org/
EPIC is a public interest research center in Washington, D.C. Established in 1994,

the center aims to "focus public attention on emerging civil liberties issues and to

protect privacy, the First Amendment, and constitutional values." Subscribe to the bi-

weekly, free newsletter – the EPIC Alert.

• Privacy Rights Clearinghouse (PRC) - http://www.privacyrights.org/
The PRC is a nonprofit program based in San Diego. Resources available include

fact sheets, speeches, testimony, privacy links, cases, and identity theft resources.

• University of Minnesota Human Rights Library -
http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/
This site focuses on important human rights-related international treaties, as well

as other materials, with authoritative citations provided. Links are provided for national

and international human rights organizations.

Corporations
• Virtual Chase Company Information Guide -
http://www.virtualchase.com/topics/company_information_index.shtml
Use this annotated research guide to find sources of information about

companies. There is a short list of useful legal subject guides, annotated lists of links,

and articles about performing company research.

• GuideStar - http://www.guidestar.org/
A basic search in this database of 1.7 million non-profits is free. The site is for

users who want to verify a nonprofit's legitimacy, learn whether a contribution will be

tax deductible, view a nonprofit's recent Form 990, or find out more about its mission,

programs, and finances.

Criminal Law
• Buffalo Criminal Law Center - http://wings.buffalo.edu/law/bclc/
The penal law section includes codes, court opinions, commentary and the Penal
Code Comparer, which compares penal codes by topic, side-by-side on a split screen.

• Cybercrimes - http://law.udayton.edu/cybercrimes/Institute.htm
The University of Dayton School of Law is producing surveys of cybercrime laws.

So far only a handful of states have been completed but they expect to add more. Model

laws, current news, and articles about cybercrime issues written by Professor Susan

Brenner are also found on the site.

• Feminist Majority Foundation Sexual Harassment -
http://www.feminist.org/911/harass.html
A helpful article on what to do if you or someone you know is being sexually

harassed and links to really informative sites.

• FSU Criminal Justice Links - http://www.criminology.fsu.edu/p/cjl-main.php
A useful site that organizes links in a program approach, like drugs and alcohol,

juvenile delinquency, and police agencies.

• National Criminal Justice Reference Service - http://www.ncjrs.gov/
The site is a little crowded and not easy to weed through but packed with

information, like statistics and reports. There is a searchable FAQ.

Education
• Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) - http://eric.ed.gov/
ERIC is an online digital library of education research and information. It is

sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) of the U.S. Department of

Education and is considered the world's largest source of education information.

Entertainment & Sports
• MegaLaw Sports Law - http://www.megalaw.com/top/sports.php
MegaLaw's entry for this subject includes court decisions, statutes, regulations,

and links to other sites containing additional resources.

• Entertainment Law Resources - http://www.marklitwak.com/
Created by entertainment attorney Mark Litwak with interesting articles on lots

of entertainment related topics like merchandising and protecting story ideas.

Resources include contract clauses and checklists, and fun movie information.

Environmental Law

 • Environmental Law Net - http://www.lawvianet.com/
   Environmental Law Net is produced by environmental lawyers for their clients

who include general counsel, in-house attorneys, and corporate environmental

managers. The site is particularly strong on current news from federal and state

agencies in addition to the well-organized statutory and case law materials.

 • The Right-To-Know Network Environmental Databases (RTK NET) -
 http://www.rtknet.org/rtkdata.php
 On the Right-to-Know Network researchers can identify specific factories and

their environmental effects; find permits issued under environmental statutes; and

identify pending civil cases.

 • Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide (ELAW) - http://www.elaw.org/
 The basic mission of ELAW is to help train public interest lawyers and scientists

so they in turn can assist local communities to protect the environment through law.

While the list of resources by topic is rather exhaustive, the resources under each topic

vary in quality and depth. Still a site worth checking.

Estate Planning, Probate, & Elder Law

 • Estate Planning Links - http://www.estateplanninglinks.com/
 An expansive gateway to estate planning and elder law. The searchable site covers

probate, family limited partnerships, charitable and living trusts, valuation issues,

insurance, business continuity planning , IRAs, government benefits, and more.

 • Stetson University Elder Law Clinic Elder Law sites -
 http://www.law.stetson.edu/excellence/elderlaw/eldersites.htm
 Comprehensive, annotated links to relevant sites with information on nursing,

care giving, and grieving.

 • Senior Law Information for Attorneys -
 http://www.seniorlaw.com/attorney.htm
 Not as well organized as the Stetson site but current lists of elder law attorneys by

state and articles on elder law issues are helpful.

Ethics
       • Legal Ethics - http://www.legalethics.com/
       This web site focuses on the ethical issues associated with the use of technology

by legal professionals.

       • American Legal Ethics Library - www.law.cornell.edu/ethics
       Another excellent resource from the folks at Cornell. The material is organized by

topic and jurisdiction.

Expert Witness
       Daubert on the Web - http://www.daubertontheweb.com/
       An entire web site devoted to the USSC opinion in *Daubert v. Merrell Dow*

Pharmaceuticals. Very comprehensive with federal and state cases and lots of

commentary.

Family Law
       • Domestic violence - http://www.womenslaw.org/
       The Women's Law Initiative is a nationwide resource for women who are victims

of domestic violence. For each state there is an explanation on how to get a restraining

order with the applicable statutes and court forms. It includes a number of articles on

domestic violence, and provides links to state and local domestic-violence resources.

        • The 'Lectric Law Library Lawcopedia on Family Law -
       http://www.lectlaw.com/tfam.html
       Lots of articles and some forms make the site useful particularly for the

layperson. It is the kind of site you could recommend to non-lawyer friends considering

a divorce or maybe even to clients that just want to get more involved.

       • Divorce Net - http://www.divorcenet.com/
       This site has been around since 1995 and offers users a state-by-state resource

center, forums, and a weekly column dealing with financial problems associated with

divorce, and links to other sites.

• Family Law Information - http://adams.patriot.net/~crouch/fln/fln.html
A well-rounded site that offers information and links to all aspects of family law

such as divorce, child support, mediation, custody, and international child abduction.

• Unmarried Couples and the Law - http://www.palimony.com/resources.html
Information for those who live together or have formed some type of domestic

partnership that may involve areas of law such as employee benefits or estate planning.

• Support Guidelines.com - http://www.supportguidelines.com/
This comprehensive site is designed primarily to be an aid for attorneys who wish

to research the law of child support in general and child support guidelines in particular.

Immigration
• The Immigration Portal - http://www.ilw.com/
Offerings include live chat sessions, case tracking resources, forms, an attorney

directory, daily news, and other relevant links.

• VisaLaw - http://www.visalaw.com/
The law firm of Siskind, Susser, Haas & Devine has included links to sites with

immigration information, an immigration bulletin, INS forms, updates on H-1B visas, a

documents collection, and a primer on the subject.

• American Immigration Center -
http://www.us-immigration.com/information/index.html
The tutorials on the different types of visas for immigrants and nonimmigrants

and how to apply for U.S. Citizenship are helpful as is the information on guidelines and

procedures for applications, exams, and the interview process.

Intellectual Property
• Creative Commons - http://creativecommons.org/
The Creative Commons seeks to address the situation in which the creator of a

work of intellectual property does not want to reserve all rights. They have created

materials, and are developing a Web application, that will allow creators to dedicate

their work to the public domain or license it on terms more generous than copyright.

The site also has lots of information for writers and artists.

    • Franklin Pierce Law Center IP Mall - http://www.ipmall.fplc.edu/
    The web site began as a way of promoting the law center's extensive IP Library

and IP programs. It is now a great resource for researchers looking for IP material

including patents, copyrights, trademarks, trade secrets, licensing, technology transfer,

etc. See the topical index sitemap, http://ipmall.info/ip_links/fplchome.asp .

    • Kuester Law Technology Law Resources - http://www.kuesterlaw.com/
    This site is maintained by Atlanta attorney Jeffrey R. Kuester. Neatly organized

links to topic-related cases, statutes, and legislation.

    • Oppedahl Patent Law Firm, http://www.oppedahl.com/ , general information
about :
        Patents - http://www.oppedahl.com/patents/
        Trademarks - http://www.oppedahl.com/trademarks/
        Copyrights - http://www.oppedahl.com/copyrights/
    A question and answer format for these often confusing topics.

    • Copyright & Fair Use, Stanford University Libraries -
    http://fairuse.stanford.edu/
    Copyright Overview from NOLO press and current materials for legislation, court

decisions, and regulations.

    • U.S. Copyright Office - http://www.copyright.gov/
    There is a user-friendly, searchable database and access to forms, regulations,

and more.

    • U.S. Patent and Trademark Office - http://www.uspto.gov/

Internet Law
    • Digestable Law - http://www.digestiblelaw.com/advertising/BlogHome.aspx
    A searchable caselaw datebase dedicated to Internet law.

    • Internet Library of Law and Court Decisions - http://www.internetlibrary.com/
    Created by attorney Martin H. Samson, the site features extensive summaries of

over 500 court decisions shaping the law of the web. Each summary provides facts,

analysis and pertinent quotes from cases on a broad array of topics, including linking,

framing, keying, meta tags, pop-up ads, consumer complaint or gripe sites, clip-art,

online defamation, domain name disputes, e-mail, MP3s, encryption, gambling,

click-wrap agreements, shrink wrap licenses, and spam.

Medical
    • The Med Engine - http://www.themedengine.com/index.htm

    • Medical World Search - http://www.mwsearch.com
    The natural language search engine here looks only at selected major medical

web sites that meet stringent screening criteria, including usefulness to medical

professionals in a clinical practice.

    • National Library of Medicine - http://www.nlm.nih.gov/
    NLM Gateway - http://gateway.nlm.nih.gov/gw/Cmd
    The National Library of Medicine has developed a free database of abstracts from

some 4,300 biomedical journals, called Medline, - http://medlineplus.gov/. You may

search it here, or look through databases of clinical research studies, health

organizations, and toxicology, among others. To search the NIH's directory of more than

4,000 federal and private medical studies, go to http://clinicaltrials.gov

    • University of Maryland Health Law Resources -
    http://www.law.umaryland.edu/marshall/researchguides/specialtypages/health
    resources.asp
    Thurgood Marshall Law School has put together a site offering a selected

collection of health law resources covering topics such as legislation, federal and state

actions, Medicare, mental health, and drug laws.

    • National Network of Libraries of Medicine, Consumer Health Manual -
http://nnlm.gov/outreach/consumer/

Personal Injury

    • Auto Safety - http://www.crashtest.com/

Look up crash test results on any make or model of car

• Forensic Economics - http://www.willyancey.com/forensic.htm
Everything having to do with forensic science or valuation of assets can be found

here. This site is an invaluable starting point for those suing for damages.

• MoreLaw - http://www.morelaw.com/
The website provides free jury verdict, settlement, forensic expert and other legal

information.

• Nations' Law Links - http://www.howardnation.com/lawlinks/
Really nicely organized including sections on injury and causation.

Property
• Pace Law School Land Use Law Center - http://www.law.pace.edu/landuse
Contains the papers researched by the law students working as Center fellows as

well as resources for local groups and officials.

Securities
• SEC LAW - http://www.seclaw.com/Welcome.shtml
This searchable financial market site uses information centers to organize its

extensive resources, which run from federal and state law to market statistics. Under

each heading you'll find relevant articles, links and an archive of documents posted

since the site's inception. Each information center and the top page have links to the

site's search engine, EDGAR (Electronic Data Gathering, Analysis, and Retrieval)

searches, and pertinent laws, rules, regulations, and decisions.

• Stanford Securities Class Action Clearinghouse - http://securities.stanford.edu/
The Robert Crown Law Library at Stanford Law School maintains this searchable

archive of complaints, motions, opinions, settlement memoranda, and other filings in

securities class action suits. The database consists of more than 25,000 documents filed

since the effective date of the 1995 Private Securities Litigation Reform Act.

Tax
• Tax, Accounting and Payroll Sites Directory - http://www.taxsites.com/

This site "is a comprehensive index of web-based tax and accounting resources.

The directory is designed to be a starting point for people who are searching for tax and

accounting information, products, and services."

• Tax Charts by Topic - http://www.andrewmitchel.com/html/topic.html
PDF versions of charts that diagram complex tax transactions, lots of sections,

lots of revenue rulings reduced to a one page visual.

• Essential Links to Taxes - http://www.el.com/elinks/taxes/
This list of links is a mix of legal and accounting practice aids and consumer-

oriented resources. Large accounting firm and tax organization web sites appear on the

list, which also covers federal, state, and international issues, news, newsgroups and

mailing lists, and other collections of tax links.

• The Tax Prophet - http://www.taxprophet.com/
Colorful, fun to use site. More about current awareness than in depth

information.