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2-29-2008

### Destination Law Library—Looking Like a Native

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#### Repository Citation

Graham, Suzanne R., "Destination Law Library—Looking Like a Native" (2008). *Presentations*. 47.  
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Destination Law Library—Looking Like a Native

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## **Introduction**

I love to travel and see new places, but I don't like to be surprised. When I plan a trip, I do a good deal of research on the Web. On GoogleMaps, I locate the single track roads along the route, and at various bed and breakfast sites, I evaluate possible accommodations—down to viewing the rooms—before booking any reservations. When I know what to expect, I can relax and enjoy the journey.

Whether you think of a law library as foreign territory or have your favorite one that you visit exclusively, we'll be taking a little time this afternoon equipping you to explore a library's Web site and to tread confidently in any law library. Our focus will be on three facilities at public institutions convenient to Atlanta: Georgia State University College of Law Library (GSU), University of Georgia School of Law Library (UGA), and the Fulton County Law Library.

Although, special characteristics of each facility will be highlighted, the similarities in collections and services will be clear in this overview, and you will get a feel for what to expect to do and see online and on site at Georgia's law libraries. The tour begins with an exploration of the libraries' Web pages, stressing useful common features. Then the focus narrows to a discussion of unique features of each of the three locations.

## **Common Comforts**

### **Legal Databases**

All of the libraries provide access to major legal databases. LexisNexis, Westlaw, and Shepard's Citation Index may be searched at any facility if the user has a password. The additional legal databases available at GSU and UGA are very similar and very

impressive. GSU has great strength in tax and commercial law with specialized databases like Arbitration Law Online, Construction Labor Report, Corporate Accountability and Fraud Daily, and the Corporate Compliance Library.<sup>1</sup> UGA has unique electronic collections in foreign law, particularly Isinolaw (China), Justis (U.K.), and Manupatra (India).<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the common core of HeinOnline, BNA, and CCH, both academic libraries offer access to RIA Checkpoint, RIA Worldwide Tax Law, InterAm, and the Reynolds & Flores' Foreign Law Guide. These resources require the user to be on campus or to have a password for remote access. The academic facilities also provide onsite unrestricted access to the many databases contained in GALILEO. GALILEO delivers over 1000 databases, including LexisNexis Academic, and more than 2000 full-text scholarly journals.<sup>3</sup>

### Pathfinders & Research Guides

Librarians provide external links to useful and authoritative Web sites from the libraries' sites. These compilations are tools not only for the reference staff but also for researchers to use without assistance. Common links on Georgia law pathfinders include the Georgia Code online, legal aid services, legal abbreviation sites, government agency pages, and state bar associations, but they can be much more extensive. Pathfinders are called different things on different sites. Look for "Legal Research Links," "Favorite Legal Links," and similar phrases to find these Web tools.

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<sup>1</sup> Georgia State University College of Law Library site, Legal Indexes and Databases <http://law.gsu.edu/library/subscriptions.php> [Accessed 8 Feb. 2008].

<sup>2</sup> University of Georgia Law Library, Research Resources <http://www.law.uga.edu/library/research/index.html> [Accessed 8 Feb. 2008].

<sup>3</sup> GALILEO site, Welcome to GALILEO <http://www.galileo.usg.edu> [Accessed 8 Feb. 2008].

Research guides provide information in the form of a short essay to help users begin to investigate popular legal topics. These pages generally are written by librarians in response to frequently asked reference questions. A quick read of a research guide and review of related links on a pathfinder is a powerful combination that could save a trip or call to a reference desk.

### Online Catalogs

When hunting for a particular print legal treatise, journal or electronic book, do a search in the library's catalog. The catalog is an index to the physical holdings of a library and includes many of the electronic resources as well. Online catalogs for the academic libraries may be searched from any internet terminal. There is no need to travel to the library just to see what its holdings are, and any links in the catalog to freely accessible electronic versions of texts will work remotely.

Searches may be done by author, title, keyword, call number or subject. Each of these libraries uses Library of Congress Classification System and Library of Congress Subject Headings, but before skimming the shelves, start with a search in the library's online catalog and note the call number, specific location, and the item's availability. The UGA Law Library catalog features enrichments to the basic catalog record, including book reviews, images of book jackets, and table of contents information when available.

### Layouts

If an information need cannot be satisfied online, check the library's Web site for directions or a map to the facility. A floor plan also is useful to have before a visit. It offers the physical layout to help orient users and to provide a sense of relative size of holdings on various topics. In general, librarians try to position the most used resources

in convenient and prominent locations. For example, at all three libraries, the reference collections and reference desk are visible upon entry into the facilities. Other items on the main floors include West's Federal Reporters and Digests, Georgia Code, and law journals. Security stations and circulation desk are also immediately inside the front doors. Visitors may be required to show photo identification or sign a roster upon entry.

### Computers & Printers

At UGA and Fulton County Law Library several computers with internet access and word processing software are available for public use. From these terminals, patrons may conduct investigations on the Web, access databases, search the online catalogs, email, prepare documents, print copies, and download documents to a disk or jump drive. Public printers and copiers are available, but the per-page fee varies (\$0.05- \$0.15). The academic libraries require users to purchase a copy card for \$1.00.

The Georgia State University Law Library provides computers with access to major Georgia databases (like Georgia Legislative Documents and MuniCode) as well as prominent general legal databases and indexes and the library's catalog, GIL@GSU. The terminals are not to be used for internet searching or document creation. Visitors may use computers at the campus's main library for these needs.

## **Local Attractions**

### Georgia State University Law Library Tour

Located in downtown Atlanta, the Georgia State University Law Library welcomes metro-area lawyers and their staff to use its facility, resources, and services. The library covers two floors. The main floor contains the reference desk and collection, computer alcove, several small study rooms, statutes, reporters, digests, law journals,

and Georgia law treatises. The upper floor houses general law treatises, state materials, microforms, copy room, and many individual study carrels for private research.<sup>4</sup>

The Georgia State Web site offers an easy-to-use guide to its online resources on the “Legal Indexes and Databases” page.<sup>5</sup> This tidy list provides not all the names and links to available databases, but it also offers brief descriptions of the coverage and any limitations on access. “COL” beside the name means that a user must be on campus to access the information. “PW” indicates the database is password protected and therefore may only be used by students and faculty of the College of Law. “GSR” refers to a resource available to the GSU community anywhere on campus. “FAC” indicates that the resource is available only to College of Law faculty. The library also provides links to the attorney work products and expert testimonies of the teaching faculty among the resources in the “Faculty Publications” section.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to the College of Law community, only alumni and law librarians at area law firms may checkout print materials, but all members of the Georgia Bar may access the many of the featured databases onsite. The library is open until 11:00pm on week nights (9:00pm on weekends), and librarians staff the reference desk until 9:00pm (6:00pm on Saturday and Sunday).<sup>7</sup>

#### University of Georgia Law Library Tour

The Alexander Campbell King Law Library is located on the historic North Quadrangle on the campus of the University of Georgia in Athens. The large reading room on the main floor is aesthetically stunning with its two-story glass windows showcasing a small wooded area and Herty Field just beyond. Overlooking the main

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<sup>4</sup> Georgia State Law Library site, Facility Map <http://law.gsu.edu/library/map.php> [Accessed 8 Feb. 2008].

<sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, Legal Indexes and Databases <http://law.gsu.edu/library/subscriptions.php> [Accessed 8 Feb. 2008].

<sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, Faculty Publications [http://law.gsu.edu/library/index/faculty\\_publications/](http://law.gsu.edu/library/index/faculty_publications/) [Accessed 8 Feb. 2008].

<sup>7</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, Regular Hours of Operation <http://law.gsu.edu/library/hours.php> [Accessed 8 Feb. 2008].

floor, the balcony houses the most current works on comparative law, jurisprudence, and U.S. law. The Sohn special collection is also part of the balcony. It holds the personal library of Louis B. Sohn, an architect of the United Nations, and the collection continues to grow with new acquisitions on international law and related topics. The annex and basement contain foreign law, federal depository items, the European Union and United Nations depositories, and state law materials.<sup>8</sup>

The library's databases and indexes are linked from the "Research Resources" page.<sup>9</sup> The UGA Law Library also has an impressive institutional repository. Search the Digital Commons for scholarly research, papers, and presentations created by the teaching faculty. The Digital Commons contains much of the intellectual productivity of the professors and the archival documents of the law school.<sup>10</sup>

Law school alumni and all practicing members of the Georgia Bar Association may borrow materials from UGA. Visiting lawyers will be required to complete an Attorney Information Form and show proof of Bar membership at the circulation desk before checking out items. In addition to many of its print resources, the library also loans DVDs.<sup>11</sup>

The Alexander Campbell King Library is open from 7:00am until 2:00am during the week and until 9:00pm on the weekends while school is in session. Librarians sit at the reference desk until 5:00pm on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and until 7:00pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Attorneys may also submit reference questions via

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<sup>8</sup> University of Georgia Law Library site, <http://www.law.uga.edu/library/libraryinfo/collection.html> [Accessed 8 Feb. 2008].

<sup>9</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, Research Resources <http://www.law.uga.edu/library/research/index.html> [Accessed 8 Feb. 2008].

<sup>10</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, Digital Commons <http://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/> [Accessed 8 Feb. 2008].

<sup>11</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, Circulation Policy <http://www.law.uga.edu/library/libraryinfo/policies/circulationpolicy.html> [Accessed 8 Feb. 2008].

email or by phone. All reference librarians have J.D.s in addition to Master's Degrees in Library Science.<sup>12</sup>

### Fulton County Law Library Tour

The Fulton County Law Library is a special library conveniently located on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor of the Justice Center Tower. This library caters to the needs of the trial lawyer. The Fulton County Law Library offers several of the same core databases as the academic law libraries, including Shepard's Online Citations and Georgia Primary Law and a couple of unique ones: Harrison Premier Analytical Library and Westlaw's All Analytical Library. The collection also features current samples of forms, over 600 law reviews, and nearly 20,000 volumes focused on Georgia and federal law.<sup>13</sup>

Several excellent pathfinders appear on the Fulton County site, including topics such as identity theft and juvenile law.<sup>14</sup> The staff also produce useful short guides with valuable information on subjects ranging from court document preparation to legal separation to the 1990 Georgia "lemon" law.<sup>15</sup>

Members of the Georgia Bar may checkout a VCR/DVD player, overhead projector, and audiocassette tape player for use in the courtrooms from the Law Library. Only the media equipment circulates outside the library, but the facility can accommodate sixty researchers at a time. The library also houses two small conference

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<sup>12</sup> UGA Law Library site, Reference Services <http://www.law.uga.edu/library/libraryservices/reference.html> [Accessed 8 Feb. 2008].

<sup>13</sup> Fulton County Law Library site, About the Law Library <http://www.fultoncourt.org/lawlibrary/aboutus.php> [Accessed 8 Feb. 2008].

<sup>14</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, Favorite Legal Information Sites [http://www.fultoncourt.org/lawlibrary/favorite\\_legal\\_links.php](http://www.fultoncourt.org/lawlibrary/favorite_legal_links.php) [Accessed 8 Feb. 2008].

<sup>15</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, Library Information Guides <http://www.fultoncourt.org/lawlibrary/research.php> [Accessed 8 Feb. 2008].

rooms that lawyers may reserve for depositions. Patrons are invited to use two computers loaded with Microsoft Word to prepare court documents.<sup>16</sup>

The library is open from 8:30am until 4:30pm on weekdays, and a full-time reference librarian is on staff.

## **Conclusion**

The first stop for information is a library's Web site. A quick look online could answer questions and save a drive. Depending on specific information needs, a database, a search in the library's catalog for an electronic resource or a conversation with a reference librarian at one of Georgia's many law libraries might provide timely answers to pressing questions.

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<sup>16</sup> Fulton County Law Library site, About the Law Library <http://www.fultoncourt.org/lawlibrary/aboutus.php> [Accessed 8 Feb. 2008].