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### For Your Dining Pleasure: A Menu of Legal Websites

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**For Your Dining Pleasure:  
A Menu of Legal Websites**

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# For Your Dining Pleasure: A Menu of Legal Websites

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# **Introduction**

The focus of this paper is to explore websites that you may find helpful in your daily work and research. There are 40 featured websites drawn from governmental, educational, and commercial information resources. Consider these websites a good jumping off point to familiarize yourself with the types of information available to assist you in your Internet legal research needs.

## **On Today's Menu...**

Choosing a legal website for your research is a lot like selecting an item off a menu at a restaurant, the item may sound delicious, but you don't really know how it tastes until you try it. Below, arranged like a restaurant menu – appetizers, salads, entrees, etc., are brief descriptions of legal websites. Go through the menu from time to time and create yourself a “meal” of websites to explore. No doubt, you will find some new favorites and some you do not like, some that are filling and some that leave you still hungry, and sometimes just a salad will hit the spot!

## **Appetizers – Tasty Legal Fingerfoods**

Sometimes the first thing you need in legal research is just some basic reference tools. The websites covered below offer tools such as dictionaries, directories of people, directories of topics, and historical information. These websites are not going to meet all of your legal research needs, but they will keep you satisfied until your dinner arrives!

### **Law.com Dictionary**

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

*Law.com Dictionary* provides a free, easy to use legal dictionary on your desktop. There are three different methods you can use to search the website: term look up, definition searching, and alphabetical browsing. Not the depth you might find in Black's Law Dictionary, but much easier to carry around with you.

### **Legal Services & Lawyers Directory – LII/Cornell**

**<http://lawyers.law.cornell.edu/>**

*Legal Services & Lawyers Directory*, a free service by LII – *Legal Information Institute* at Cornell University Law, contains listings of lawyers who have authenticated their information on LII's partner site *Justia*. In addition, lawyers who provide monetary support for LII receive a special “badge” and increased standing in the search rankings. The full listing of every American lawyer that LII could identify through bar-association rosters, etc., whether or not they have authenticated their listing, is available as the *Justia Legal Services and Lawyers* directory at <http://lawyers.justia.com/>.

### **Legal Research Search Engine**

**<http://library.lawschool.cornell.edu/WhatWeDo/ResearchGuides/Legal-Research-Engine.cfm>**

The Law Library at Cornell University maintains the *Legal Research Search Engine* as a tool for accessing authoritative legal research guides and locating substantive legal

information identified by the law librarians as useful. There are four different search boxes to select. The first one is for accessing legal research guides. The second one searches the Cornell Law Library e-newsletter *InSITE* that features descriptions of important and useful legal webpages. The third one searches across a selected group of academic legal blogs. Finally, the fourth one called “I want it all!” allows you to do a combined search of the other three. While the total number of results returned in the *Legal Research Search Engine* is much less than a traditional search engine, it has a much higher rate of relevancy for legal research needs.

### **FindLaw for Legal Professionals**

**<http://lp.findlaw.com/>**

*FindLaw* remains the most popular legal site on the Internet. On the homepage, there is a link to their *FindLaw for Legal Professionals* website, which is geared towards marketing *FindLaw*'s resources that would be of interest to a practicing attorney, although the content available is not different from that found through the general *FindLaw* homepage. On the *FindLaw for Legal Professionals* website, there is a section 'Research the Law' that provides a directory of links arranged by topic. The 'You Need To Know' section focuses on news of legal interest, rather than popular culture, as well as recent opinions and featured legal documents. The 'Find A Professional' section contains links to services as well as attorneys and the 'Manage Your Practice' and 'Manage Your Career' sections contain a wide variety of additional information on special topics and job location services. The feature that makes *FindLaw* especially useful is the 'Search' section at the top of the page. It allows one to search the entire

*FindLaw* website or to expand one's search to other parts of the Internet. *FindLaw* is a commercial site operated by Thomson Reuters.

### **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 500,000 digital objects in 105 collections 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. You can search across the many databases that make up the *Digital Library of Georgia* or you can browse the databases by topic, time period, county, institution, or media type. There is also an A-Z list of all the databases, if you already know the database's name. Under the topic 'Government & Politics,' you will find several databases that could be of interest in your legal research. Listed below is a sampling of these 'Government & Politics' databases.

- **Georgia Government Publications**

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

Monographic public documents of departments or agencies within the state government, published from 1994 to the present.

- **Georgia Legislative Documents**



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

Fully searchable versions of the Georgia General Assembly's Acts and Resolutions from 1799-1999. An excellent legal resource, especially when you want to do a keyword or subject search the Georgia Laws.

- **GeorgiaInfo**

**<http://www.cviog.uga.edu/Projects/gainfo/contents.htm>**

GeorgiaInfo, created by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government, provides extensive information about political life and governance in Georgia and the wider United States.

- **Historic Documents of Georgia**

**[http://www.georgiaarchives.org/what\\_do\\_we\\_have/online\\_records/historic\\_documents/default.htm](http://www.georgiaarchives.org/what_do_we_have/online_records/historic_documents/default.htm)**

Significant state documents from Georgia's history dating from 1732 to 1983 from the collections of the Georgia Archives.

- **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 the state.

- **Trademark Registrations, 1894-1959**

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

Trademarks from products sold in Georgia from 1894 to 1959.

## **Soups – Blog de jour**

Blogs are a great way to keep up on developments in certain legal areas or to learn more about how other legal professionals handle similar issues to your own. Blogs can also provide insight on a variety of legal issues through their commentaries and, of course, provide entertainment. Below are some tools to help you discover a legal blog or two to follow, learn from, and enjoy.

### **Blawg**

**<http://www.blawg.com/>**

*Blawg* began in 2002 as a way to keep track of the growth of legal blogs. *Blawg* currently tracks over 2300 blogs with around 1350 of them given active status. You can search what it terms the “Blawgosphere” for information in its tracked legal blogs. There are featured blogs in different categories and a directory arranged into broad topics.

### **Blawg Search**

**<http://blawgsearch.justia.com/>**

*Blawg Search* is both a search engine of the content of legal blogs or “blawgs” and a directory of the blogs themselves found at *Justia.com*. The directory is very helpful if you are trying to identify legal blogs in particular practice areas or jurisdictions. At the

top of the page, you can see the ‘Most Popular’ legal blogs, based on what users of Blawg Search are accessing most frequently. The ‘Categories’ section features more than 60 topics plus additional links to law schools, states, and countries, covering around 2500 legal blogs.

### **ABA Journal Blawg Directory**

**<http://abajournal.com/blawgs/>**

*ABA Journal.com* maintains an easy to use directory of legal blogs arranged into four categories: subject alphabetical, author type, region (federal courts, state, & international), and law school. Exposing you to the wide variety of legal blogs available, ‘This Week’s Featured Blawg’ provides brief reviews of blogs listed in the *ABA Journal Blawg Directory*.

## **Salads – Get your Greens with Google!**

*Google* produces some of the most interesting special topic databases currently under development on the Internet. Rather than just searching basic *Google*, try utilizing some of these specialized databases to locate information. From the *Google* homepage you can find these under the “more” link at the top of the page or you can use their URLs to go directly to these search screens.

### **Google Book Search**

**<http://books.google.com/>**

*Google Book Search*, easily accessed under the ‘more’ dropdown menu at the top of *Google’s* homepage, provides a searchable database of information about books and their contents from a variety of sources. Some source information comes from authors and publishers looking to promote their publications as part of their Partner Program. Large academic libraries are also a major source of book information and contents, with scanning projects now being conducted at nearly 30 libraries from around the world, making up the *Google* Library Project. If the book is in the public domain, you can page through the entire book, print it, or download it. If the book you identify is under copyright, and the publisher or author is not part of *Google’s* Partner Program, then only brief information about the book appears, with occasionally from the books scanned as part of the Library Project, ‘snippets’ of sentences showing your search terms in context. The Advanced Book Search option allows you to narrow where your search terms are retrieved from, such as title or publication date, and to limit results to books that have full view available. *Google* professes that the aim of *Google Book Search* is to help you discover books and learn where to purchase them or locate a library from which to borrow them. There has been a lot of controversy surrounding the legality of *Google’s* massive scanning project and concern in academia about its effect on research, but everyone agrees that *Google Book Search* is here to stay and could make a huge mark in the future as it continues to grow.

## **Google Scholar**

**<http://scholar.google.com/>**

*Google Scholar* provides access to scholarly articles, papers, books, theses, and abstracts

through a full-text search of research materials from academic presses, university and scholarly organizations, preprint repositories, and professional societies. Results are ranked for not only appearance of your search terms, but more importantly for the scholarliness of the publication by analysis of its source, author, and citation in scholarly literature. *Google Scholar* allows you to search a wide breadth of subject areas and materials in a single search. The results consist mainly of citations and abstracts, but include ways of locating articles or papers at local libraries and provide links to where the content can be purchased on the web. Like *Google Book Search*, *Google Scholar* offers an Advanced Scholar Search option that is very useful for refining your results, such as limiting them to specific subject areas.

### **Google Translate**

**<http://translate.google.com/>**

Like many translation websites, *Google Translate* allows you to enter text or a webpage URL needing translation. It offers translation to or from 41 languages including Arabic, Hindi, Chinese, Vietnamese, and most major European languages (Spanish, German, French, etc., but also Latvian, Norwegian, Serbian, etc.). A special feature of *Google Translate* is its “Translated Search” option. You input a search in English, such as “Beijing Restaurants,” but tell it to look for pages in Chinese. Your search terms are translated into Chinese, results are found on Chinese language websites, and then those results are translated into English for you.

## **Google Patent Search**

**<http://www.google.com/patents?hl=en>**

*Google Patent Search* is made up of over 7 million patents. These patents made available by the United States Patent and Trademark Office were issued between the 1790's and mid 2006. Since it does not cover current applications or international patents, it is primarily useful for historical research. If you know someone's name and location, for example a search for George L. Moore Iowa returns several matching results, including an exact match for the patent needed, which turned out to have been issued in 1916. The *Google Patent Search* interface certainly makes it easier to search than the *United States Patent and Trademark Office* website at <http://www.uspto.gov/>, where the patents from 1790 through 1975 are searchable only by issue date, patent number, and current US classification. *Google Patent Search*, of course, searches the entire full-text of the patents allowing for the location of a specific patent without knowledge of its issue date or number as required on the government site.

## **Google U.S. Government Search**

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

Designed to provide a single location for searching for government information, *Google U.S. Government Search* creates a specialized search that limits results to only U.S. federal, state and local government websites. A search from *Google U.S. Government Search* provides more depth of coverage, than limiting your search to a specific domain such as .gov, since it also includes selected sites with .mil, .us, .edu, and even .com. A quick search for Georgia State Parks returned relevant results from a variety of state

and federal domains including, nps.gov, georgia.gov, tennessee.gov, state.ga.us, and fed.us.

## **Sandwiches – Legal News Served Up Either Hot or Cold**

The Internet makes news and current information readily available. Using RSS feed readers and setting up topical alerts are an easy way to stay informed. The following websites are good sources of legal news on the Internet for you to track, since they are updated frequently and generated by respected legal authorities. Making one of these websites a part of your daily news review will keep you well informed about legal issues in the news.

### **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 have less sensational news about crimes, trials and celebrities, and instead concentrates on substantive legal and political issues with significant social and jurisprudential implications. *JURIST* provides on its webpage and through RSS feeds access to the following: current legal news, live webcasts of law related news events, a video archive, links to legal documents in the news, discussion

forums, a hotline section, in depth coverage of a current news topic, real time user information about latest searches and most viewed news items, and a this day in legal history section.

### **ABA Journal**

**<http://abajournal.com/>**

*ABA Journal* is an excellent source for free legal news on the Internet. The homepage contains the its top stories, the latest stories arranged by topic, links to the most read stories, and links to its most popular legal blogs tracked in their “Blawg Directory.”

Under the ‘Subscribe’ tab there are directions on subscribing to one of their three RSS feeds, their email newsletters, and even, for a fee, the monthly paper magazine version.

### **Law.com**

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

Produced by Incisive Media, formerly American Lawyer Media, *Law.com* offers a variety of sections and tools in support of the legal profession. While some of its sections are fee based, *Law.com* is an excellent free source of legal news, including headlines from Incisive Media publications such as “The American Lawyer,” “The New York Law Journal,” and “Legal Week.” There are 6 different free RSS feeds that you can sign up for as well as the *Law.com* Newswire which delivers top legal news to your e-mail inbox twice daily.



## **Wall Street Journal - Law**

**[http:// online.wsj.com/public/page/news-law-legal.html](http://online.wsj.com/public/page/news-law-legal.html)**

Many traditional news outlets such as newspapers and television networks offer special topic webpages devoted to crime and courts news. *The Wall Street Journal – Law* focuses more specifically on legal news beyond tabloid crime or celebrity court cases.

This Law subsection can be accessed from the WSJ.com homepage under the “Business” tab. While some articles are limited to subscribers only, a good portion of the articles is freely available to the public.

## **Pasta – Build Your Own Bowl of Free Law**

Commercial providers such as Westlaw and LexisNexis have offered online access to U.S. laws and court decisions for a fee for years. Many people believe that the public should have free online access to documents created by the government as part of public record. Aggregator websites, developed by both non-profit organizations and commercial enterprises, serve as freely available public clearinghouses for primary legal information.

## **LIJ - Legal Information Institute**

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

*LIJ* is an exceptional directory of legal information maintained by the *Legal Information Institute* at the Cornell Law School. *LIJ* 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. *LII* is always adding new content to the site, which one can review in the 'New from LII' section. The *Legal Information Institute* is a non-profit and dedicated to the concept of free legal content on the web.

### **WorldLII - World Legal Information Institute**

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

Developed collaboratively by various Legal Information Institutes and similar organizations from several countries, *WorldLII* currently features 892 databases from 123 countries, including 23 international databases. *WorldLII*'s core purpose is to provide a consistent and comprehensive approach to accessing the vast amount of legal information found in databases around the world, and to ensure free access to that information, as demonstrated by its affiliation with the Free Access to Law Movement. The various databases provide access to case law, legislation, treaties, law reform reports, law journals, and other materials. In addition to the databases arranged by jurisdiction, *WorldLII* contains a Catalog of links to law-related web sites in every country in the world. This Catalog is searchable and can be browsed in several ways,

including directories of countries and legal subjects. *WorldLII* has a very simple interface, but offers one stop searching when trying to identify available foreign and international law information sources.

### **AltLaw.org**

**<http://altlaw.org/>**

*AltLaw.org* is a free legal search engine covering over 700,000 documents with the goal “to make the common law a bit more common.” There is a full-text searchable database of Supreme Court and Federal Appellate case reports for the past 40-50 years. The site is easy to navigate and use. *AltLaw.org* is a joint project of Columbia Law School’s Program on Law and Technology and the Silicon Flatirons Program at the University of Colorado Law School.

### **Public.Resource.Org**

**<http://public.resource.org/>**

*Public.Resource.Org* is another website devoted to “making government information more accessible.” They do not offer a nice search engine like you find at some websites, but rather they are more of a clearinghouse for government data and information, including 50 years of U.S. Court of Appeals decisions. They take a much more radical approach to making the law freely available – they encourage their users to go out and take the law back into the public domain. In fact, their attempt to download as many *PACER* documents as possible during a free trial of *PACER* at 17 Federal Depository libraries caused the government to suspend the entire *PACER* free trial in September

2008.

### **The Public Library of Law**

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

*The Public Library of Law* launched in February 2008 as a source for freely available law on the Internet by *Fastcase*. It provides a searchable interface to a large collection of primary law at both the state and federal levels. *PLoL* requires registration before materials can be accessed. It also offers links to information on *Fastcase* that can be accessed for a fee.

## **Entrees – Federal Government Main Courses**

The federal government produces a wealth of information freely available on the Internet. In recent years there has been a push to develop websites that are user content focused rather than websites solely defined by their department or agency in an effort to make information easier for citizens to find and use. It is difficult to remember which agencies or services are in which departments, much less keep track of all of the possible information sources they produce. Below are some examples of content focused sites and departmental focused sites produced by the federal government. Always keep in mind that a good way of identifying these sites is using specialized subject search engines like *USA.gov* at <http://www.usa.gov/> and the previously described *Google U.S. Government Search* at <http://www.google.com/unclesam>.

## **Thomas**

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

A free service of the Library of Congress, *Thomas* provides 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 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. In addition to legislation, there are also searchable databases on *Thomas* containing information on 'Presidential Nominations' back to the 100<sup>th</sup> Congress (1987), 'Treaties' back to the 90<sup>th</sup> Congress (1967), and 'Committee Reports' back to the 104<sup>th</sup> 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 14 years has become an important source for official Congressional information.

## **www.Recalls.gov**

**<http://www.recalls.gov/>**

Product recalls continue to be in the news, with high profile recalls of toys, dog food, and, most recently, peanut butter. Pulling information from six different federal government agencies, *www.Recalls.gov* provides a single website to access information concerning product recalls. The recalls are divided into topic and agency groups, but one can also search the multiple agency websites from one screen and read recent recall notices from each agency as well. There is also an option to sign up for free direct

notification of recalls from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Food & Drug Administration, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The six agencies participating in *www.Recalls.gov* include the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (also using the name *Safecar.gov* on the web), the U.S. Coast Guard, the FDA, the USDA, and the EPA.

### **U.S. Department of State – Travel.State.Gov**

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

*Travel.State.Gov* is an easy to navigate website produced by the Bureau of Consular Affairs in the U.S. Department of State. The website is an information-rich grouping of resources covering international travel (including warnings and alerts), passports, visas (for both U.S. and foreign citizens), and children & family issues (including adoption). There is also a section devoted to law and policy information. This section focuses on both “private matters” such as marriage, divorce, the need for a foreign attorney, acquisition of U.S. Citizenship, or the birth/death of a U.S. citizen abroad and “public matters” such as our international law obligations with regard to foreign nationals arrested or detained in the United States and other treaty, legal or public policy matters.

### **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*, you may also comment on proposed regulations open for comment and view closed for comment regulations. *Regulations.gov* is

updated daily by the National Archives and Records Administration using electronic versions of the same Federal Register documents printed every business day to ensure that regulations open for comment are available for public access. The information displayed on *Regulations.gov* docket and document details screens and comment forms is unique for each Department and Agency. These dockets usually consists of one or more Federal Register documents, the materials specifically referenced in those documents, any public comments and submissions received, and other information used by decision-makers or otherwise related to the Agency rulemaking activity, such as supporting and related materials and analyses. Nearly all Departments and Agencies are now using *Regulations.gov* to post their complete dockets. The website's mission is to make it easier for the public to participate directly in the regulatory process by enabling individuals, businesses, educators, interest groups, and state and local government officials to search, view, and comment on hundreds of Federal regulations.

### **elaws – United States Department of Labor**

**<http://www.dol.gov/elaws/>**

The website *elaws* maintained by the United States Department of Labor provides information on employment laws for workers and small businesses. It features the “elaws Advisors” which are compliance tools to help provide information on specific topics and problems. While they do not yet have an “elaws Advisor” for every Department of Labor law or regulation, they do cover topics such as the Family and Medical Leave Act, Fair Labor Standards Act, Drug-Free Workplace, Veteran's Preference, and the “FirstStep” Employment Law. There is also an electronic copy of the

most recent “Employment Law Guide” published by the Department of Labor.

### **Copyright – United States Copyright Office**

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

*Copyright.gov*, the homepage for the United States Copyright Office serves the copyright community of creators, users, legal professionals, as well as the general public.

One of the core features of the website is the ability to search all copyright ownership and registration documents since 1978, although there is a lag of several months before recent registrations appear in the database. *Copyright.gov* has links to all key publications produced by the United States Copyright Office, including information circulars, application forms for copyright registration, links to copyright law and policy, links to copyright-related organizations, and the latest regulations. There are also sections on 'Hot Topics' and 'What's New' which can also be accessed through a RSS feed. The site is easy to read, navigate, and is rich in information.

### **PACER**

**<http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov/>**

A service of the United States Judiciary and run by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, *PACER* is an electronic public access service that allows users to obtain case and docket information from Federal Appellate, District, and Bankruptcy courts, and from the U.S. Party/Case Index. Updated each night, the U.S. Party/Case Index allows for nation-wide index searches to determine if a party has been involved in federal litigation. Then one can go to the link for the particular jurisdiction to locate



more detailed information, since *PACER* access is through links to specific courts. Searching on *PACER* does require registration with the *PACER* Service Center and, while registration is free, there are charges for searching *PACER*. However, the charges are limited to \$.08 per page retrieved in a search with no extra charges to view, print, or download pages. *PACER* bills quarterly for cumulated charges over \$10.00 and allows for tracking of expenditures by client code. Best of all, if one has less than \$10.00 worth of charges during a calendar year, there is no charge at all!

### **Child Welfare Information Gateway**

**<http://www.childwelfare.gov/>**

A free service of the Children's Bureau in the Department for Health and Human Services, the *Child Welfare Information Gateway* provides access to print and electronic publications, websites, and online databases covering a wide range of topics including child abuse and neglect, family permanency, and adoption. Under the section 'Responding to Child Abuse & Neglect' there are a series of links to various articles and publications, such as one containing information and resources about 'Mandated Reporting' of suspected abuse situations. The 'Adoption' section has many subdivisions including 'Types of Adoption,' 'Foster Care Adoption,' and 'Search & Reunion' all of which provide the user with links to related guides and resources.

### **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. From the website listed above, you should click on the 'Search for Company Filings' link to go to the several search options for accessing *EDGAR* information. All 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.

## **FedStats**

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

*FedStats* is a portal for statistical information from over 100 Federal agencies organized by topic, geographic location, and reporting agencies. There are also links to important statistical publications under 'Statistical Reference Shelf,' such as *The Statistical Abstract of the United States* and the *State and Metropolitan Area Data Book*. The 'Data Access Tools' provides a listing by agency of statistical databases available for searching. It is the information that is contained in these statistical databases that is often referred to as the "invisible web" making a list these statistical databases especially valuable. *Fedstats* is a very basic website that looks about the same as it did when it started over 10 years ago. However, it remains an excellent starting point when trying to identify and locate statistics for use in your research.

## **Recovery.gov**

**<http://recovery.gov>**

*Recovery.gov* is one of the newest federal government websites focusing on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The website is to feature information on Federal grant awards and contracts, accountability on how the money is being spent, tracking of job creation, and links to similar agency and state specific recovery websites.

## **Today's Dinner Special**

### **USA.gov**

**<http://www.usa.gov/>**

If you are looking for information from a Federal government agency or department, then start your search at the Federal government's search engine at *USA.gov*. Began in 2000 and evolved through several name changes, the *USA.gov* search engine allows you to search all government websites for rules, reports, and regulations needed in your legal research. It is a great choice if you are looking for information created by the federal government, but are not certain which agency or department would have what you are looking for. *USA.gov* now also covers state, local, and tribal government information websites in addition to the federal government websites.

## **Desserts – Decadent Delights**

These final websites do not cover legal topics, however, you may still find them useful and even entertaining. Dessert isn't supposed to be good for you!

### **Creative Commons Search**

**<http://search.creativecommons.org/>**

*Creative Commons Search* allows you to locate materials created by others on the web and facilitates your legal use of those materials for your own commercial or creative enterprise. *CCSearch* helps you find photos, music, text, books, etc. that those authors have marked as free to use with only "some rights reserved" or in some cases works in the public domain with "no rights reserved." There are also specific repositories of *Creative Commons* licensed content under "Content Directories." You can utilize *Creative Commons* enabled search services at *Google*, *Yahoo!*, and *Flickr* directly, usually under their Advanced Search features, and *CC Search* can be added to your Firefox web browser.

### **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. 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.

### **Live Search Farecast**

**<http://farecast.live.com/>**

Purchased by Microsoft and made part of the *Live Search* suite of products in May 2008, *Live Search Farecast* is an award winning tool to help you get the best price for your travel needs. Different from online travel agencies such as Expedia, Orbitz, or Travelocity, *Farecast* provides you with all available flight and hotel options. Its “Know When to Buy” feature recommends when to make your purchase based on predictions of rising and falling prices. Its “Know Where to Stay” feature tells you if a rate at a specific hotel is a good deal based on that hotel’s observed historic rates. *Farecast* also lets you search multiple travel sites at a time. Once you have found the deal you are looking for, you select it and are taken to that travel website to book your reservation directly.

### **Picnik**

**[http://www.picnik.com /](http://www.picnik.com/)**

With *Picnik* you do not have to be an expert at digital editing in order to enhance your photos. *Picnik* is an online digital photo-editing website, which offers its basic features free of charge or registration. *Picnik* allows you to crop, resize, rotate, and fix red-eye in your photos. You can also add text, embellishments, and effects, even create a photo collage, such as used in holiday photos or scrapbooking. If you want to save your photos to their site for further editing, registration is required. Additional premium features are available for a fee, but these are clearly marked, so there is no confusion.

### **RetailMeNot.com**

**<http://www.retailmenot.com/>**

*RetailMeNot.com* gathers coupon codes for various online retailers and makes them available for use. All you have to do is input an online retailer's URL into the search box and it will tell you if there are available coupons. It also gives a success rate for use of the coupon and a place for user feedback. The website provides an easy to add bookmarklet for your browser to make it simple to access *RetailMeNot.com* while doing your online shopping.

### **Simpsonize Me**

**<http://simpsonizeme.com/>**

Developed as an advertising tool for Burger King in support of its promotion of "The Simpsons Movie" in 2007, *Simpsonize Me* allows you to upload a photo of someone and turn that person's image into a cartoon character, modeled after the characters on the long running television show. It is a free feature, however, to save your character you do need to register with the website.

## **Conclusion – Don't Always Order the Same Item from the Menu!**

These are just a brief sampling of the many websites available for use in conducting your legal research on the Internet. Always keep in mind the rich diversity

of websites you can use – do not let yourself be stuck using the same websites, which might not meet your needs. Set aside time (about once a week) to explore a website you do not regularly visit or to add a new blog to your news reader. You can use these websites as a starting point, or explore websites you see mentioned in news articles, on blogs, or a friend tells you about. Remember, just as it is good to try a different dish at your favorite restaurant every once in a while, it is also good to explore different websites, so you do not miss out on something good! Bon Appétit!