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# Blawgs, Podcasts, Wikis? Deciphering the Lingo and Evaluating Current Awareness Tools

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**Blawgs, Podcasts, Wikis?  
Deciphering the Lingo and Evaluating Current Awareness Tools**

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## **I. Useful Current Awareness Tools for Legal Professionals**

### **A. Introduction**

Information is power and access to the latest information increases your power. With headline news throwing around words like blogs, wikis and podcasts, it's not unusual for the average adult to feel overwhelmed about the latest information technology and worried that we might be missing out on current news, information and trends. Don't be intimidated by the new terminology. The terminology may sound mysterious, but the concepts behind the new terminology are often quite simple. Armed with basic knowledge about these new tools, you can make informed decisions about which technologies can increase your current awareness knowledge.

Methods and technology for keeping track of current legal news range from simple to advanced. Simple methods such as becoming familiar with legal news web sites and visiting them regularly are still highly effective. More advanced technologies such as blogs and podcasts offer more diverse methods of delivering information by using sound and video (as opposed to reading plain text).

It's important to note that rather than try to regularly use all of the methods and resources described herein, my suggestion is that you sample them and try to figure out which ones best suit your needs. Once you settle upon which tool works best for your purposes, you should probably limit yourself to a few current awareness resources daily. It's easy to get caught up in tracking the numerous current topics. My advice is that you slow down and focus on the implications of the news you discover. Try not to become obsessed with tracking current news

just for the sake of doing it. Take the time to contemplate whether you are receiving a good return on your time investment.

## **B. Legal News web sites**

Sometimes the simplest methods are the most effective. Quickly browsing timely text headline legal news might be sufficient to meet your information needs for current awareness. There are many legal news websites, but some are better than others in terms of timeliness and comprehensiveness. One strategy for keeping current on certain legal topics is to identify a legal news web site that you find particularly relevant, bookmark it and regularly visit that website. Below are summaries of recommended general purpose legal news web sites that provide current and thorough legal news coverage.

### ***1. FindLaw Legal News***

<http://news.findlaw.com/>

FindLaw's news pages provides top legal news headlines in an easily browsable format with links to the full text of stories. FindLaw also provides a subject breakdown of news headlines covering a range of legal practice areas including civil rights, business, environmental, immigration, personal injury, crime, politics, Supreme Court, and many more. FindLaw maintains its up-to-the-minute service by obtaining much of its content from newswire services like the Associated Press and Reuters. This means that the stories you'll find will cover the same type of legal news that you'd find in the newspaper. However, the distinct advantage that FindLaw offers is that it often provides the full text of primary documents discussed in the news.

FindLaw maintains a Featured Documents section that contains final reports, orders, complaints, etc. If you've ever had to track down these documents, you can truly appreciate this feature of Findlaw Legal News.

FindLaw also provides free newsletters delivered via email. FindLaw offers more than 50 newsletters. You can opt to receive legal news headlines delivered to your email daily, but the majority of the FindLaw newsletters are weekly or monthly. Examples of weekly newsletters include: environmental law, cyberlaw, small business tips and sports law. FindLaw also offers weekly and daily email case summary notifications. You can choose to receive daily case summaries from a particular court such as the U.S. Supreme Court or any of the federal Courts of Appeals. You can also choose to receive weekly case summaries based on legal practice areas such as bankruptcy, personal injury, family law and insurance.

## **2. Law.com**

<http://www.law.com/index.shtml>

Law.com also offers free access to top legal news headlines in a browsable format. In fact, Law.com's format is more aesthetically pleasing than FindLaw's website. However, not all of the specialized content on Law.com is free. Law.com is maintained by American Lawyer Media and publishes original news stories in addition to those that appear on the new wires. American Lawyer Media has a stable of reporters because it publishes legal news publications such as the *American Lawyer*, *National Law Journal*, and *Fulton County Daily Report*. While many articles appear in full-text for free, some articles, especially the in-depth feature stories, require a paid subscription. For example, the articles in the legal practice areas such as business

law, ip law and litigation are considered premium content and require a subscription.

### **3. Daily Report**

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

The Daily Report provides a good list of Georgia legal news headlines. Since American Lawyer Media publishes the *Fulton County Daily Report*, its web site is under Law.com's parent web site. Like its parent, not all of the The Daily Report content is free. The Daily Report provide news feeds from Law.com as well as headlines and teaser text for feature articles from the *Fulton County Daily Report*. Although the national legal news articles are freely accessible, the most you can generally gain from the Daily Report's web site is a quick headline browse for legal news relevant to the Atlanta legal community. The Daily Report offers a paid subscription service that will notify you via e-mail with automatic Georgia opinion notifications and Fulton County court calendar alerts.

### **4. LexisOne Headline Legal News**

<http://www.lexisone.com/news/index.html>

LexisOne provides free legal news headlines from the newswires as well as the major newspapers such as the *Boston Globe*, *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, etc. Additionally LexisOne provides a list of summaries of cases in a column entitled Newsworthy Decisions. The Newsworthy Decision articles are from the newswires as well as from Mealey Publications, a legal publisher that specializes in legal news gathering. If you are interested in monitoring a particular legal subject rather than general legal news, LexisOne also breaks down its news

coverage into the following categories:

- Business Litigation and Bankruptcy
- Criminal Law
- Estates, Trusts and Tax Law
- Family Law
- Intellectual Property Law

### ***5. Jurist Legal News and Research***

<http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/>

Jurist is a legal news web site powered by a team of law student reporters, editors and web developers led by law professor Bernard Hibbitts at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law. Its layout is very compact and you can browse many top legal news headlines at a glance. Jurist includes links to video clips and webcasts in addition to text news stories.

Jurist is the only legal news and research service based in a law school and staffed by law professors and students. The Jurist reporters and editors focus on the legal importance of news stories rather than on their mass-market appeal. Jurist tends to eschew sensational legal news about crimes, trials and celebrities, and instead concentrates on substantive legal issues with significant social and jurisprudential implications. Jurist purports to be sensitive to law's global context and attempts to provide an even balance of U.S. and international legal news.

Befitting its academic roots, Jurist puts particular emphasis on quickly locating and presenting primary source materials - judicial decisions, legislation, testimony, reports and releases - that are behind the legal news, so that readers can review and evaluate those directly.

Jurist is ad-free and entirely non-commercial. It is also completely open and accessible, putting no registration or subscription barriers in the way of anyone seeking the latest legal information.

#### **6. *Topix.net - Law News***

<http://www.topix.net/law>

Topix.net bills itself as the Internet's largest news site, with over 150,000 topically based, micro-news pages presenting stories from more than 10,000 sources. Topix.net has created technical algorithms that continuously monitor breaking news from over 10,000 sources. These algorithms read every story as it is released and then categorize each one into one or more of the more the 150,000 'topix.net' pages such as law. Topix.net does not use human editors when constructing its news pages, but rather relies on its technology to do the work. Similar to LexisOne, Topix.net provides sub-sections of legal topics in the following areas:

- Corporate Governance
- Corporate Law
- Environmental Law
- Healthcare Law
- Labor Law
- Patent Law

#### **7. *CourtTV.com***

[http://www.courttv.com/home\\_news/index.html](http://www.courttv.com/home_news/index.html)

Although it includes some general legal news headlines, Court TV primarily focuses on trial coverage. Be forewarned: Court TV has a reputation for sensationalizing trial coverage. If, however, you are interested in a current trial that is receiving much news coverage, Court TV is a good resource. Also Court TV's web site also includes selected litigation documents.

#### **8. *CNN.com Law Center***

<http://www.cnn.com/LAW/>

CNN's Law Center provides a familiar interface for attorneys who are familiar with CNN's web format. Most features are headline-oriented major news stories. Generally there are no more than half a dozen legal news stories featured on CNN's Law Center.

#### **C. E-mail alerts**

Rather than regularly visiting a legal news web site, you might prefer to have current legal news delivered to your e-mail inbox. Deciding between visiting a legal news web site and having headlines delivered to your email inbox is really a matter of personal preference. Some lawyers already receive too many emails and do not want to add more distraction. Others are more likely to read the headlines if they pop up among their business emails. Several web sites offer e-mail subscriptions. Be sure to keep up with where you sign up for an e-mail subscription. If you find yourself overwhelmed by the volume of emails or if the content is irrelevant, you'll want to unsubscribe as quickly as you can. Below is a list of recommended e-mail news services.

## ***1. Lii*bulletin**

Cornell University Law School Legal Information Institute

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/focus/bulletins.html>

One of the most popular free legal e-mail alert services is offered by Cornell's Legal Information Institute (LII). LII is the most linked-to law site on the Internet, with more than one million data requests daily from around the world. At the LII web site, you can sign up to receive syllabi of U.S. Supreme Court decisions within hours after their release. You can also sign up for a Supreme Court preview service edited by second and third year Cornell law students. Written in an easily understandable style, the goal of the analyses of upcoming Supreme Court cases is to help people who are neither lawyers nor legal scholars grasp the issues at stake and why they are important.

## ***2. ABA Journal eReport***

<http://www.abanet.org/journal/redesign/home.html>

The *ABA Journal* is a familiar magazine to most attorneys. It includes general-interest news stories about the law and the practice of law written in the same style as such magazines as *Time* or *Business Week*. Most stories in the *ABA Journal* are "big picture" stories with broad reader interest. The *ABA Journal* also provides a weekly e-mail alert, *ABA Journal eReport* (<http://www.abanet.org/journal/ereportinfo.html>), to all ABA members who provide an e-mail address. The editorial content is unique to the eReport and is not simply a repetition of the contents of the magazine. eReport has timely stories about tissues affecting lawyers and the

justice system.

### **3. *Law.com's Daily Legal Newswire***

<http://www.law.com/newswire/>

Law.com's Daily Legal Newswire will deliver each day's top legal news and feature stories to your e-mail inbox for free. Your e-mail will contain breaking legal news gathered from American Lawyer Media's national and regional print publications and other leading legal publishers.

### **4. *Court TV***

<http://www.courtTV.com/Newsletter/NewsletterRegister.asp>

On the registration page for CourtTV's newsletter service, they promise not to fill your e-mail box! CourtTV's newsletter e-mails contain the latest trial news, verdicts, feature stories, video and documents.

### **5. *Topix.net***

<http://alerts.topix.net/cgi-bin/newsalert.cgi?action=request&cat=law/law>

Topix.net's legal news service is described above. You can choose to receive a weekly or daily e-mail alert from the law channel of topix.net.

## **D. Legal Listservs**

Another method for staying current on legal topics is to join a listserv that specializes in

the topic you are interested in. A listserv is an online e-mail discussion group to which participants have chosen to subscribe. All discussion is done via e-mail. Some would argue that blogs are now more useful than listservs, but there are still many, many legal active listservs on almost any legal topic that you can imagine.

How do you locate a listserv on legal topics?

### ***1. FindLaw's Legal Minds Community***

<http://legalminds.findlaw.com>

FindLaw provides links to many legal listservs and includes instructions on how to subscribe to each listserv. Additionally FindLaw provides access to the archives of many legal listservs. Many times, you can browse the listserv archives first to determine if you are really interested in subscribing to a listserv.

### ***2. LawGuru.com***

<http://www.lawguru.com/subscribe/listtool.html>

LawGuru provides an online form that facilitates subscribing and managing subscriptions to more than 600 legal-related listservs. Simply complete the online web form to subscribe to a listserv.

## **E. Legal Blogs**

Blogs have been receiving a lot of buzz in the media lately. Dictionary publisher Merriam-Webster's reported that "Blog" topped their list of the top 10 words of 2004. Blog was

the most looked-up word on its dictionary publisher's website last year. What exactly is a blog?

Blog is a shortened form of weblog. It actually is what it sounds like...a log or journal of an individual's or institution's postings available on the Internet. Note: You will sometimes see legal blogs referred to as blawgs to reflect the focus of the weblog is law. Blogs or blawgs include a variety of articles such as philosophical reflections, opinions on social issues, or lists of the author's favorite web links. Blogs are usually presented in journal style with a new entry each day. Blogging has become very popular for disseminating information because users don't have to have any technical knowledge of software in order to create and update a blog on the web. Adding content to a blog is as easy as writing an e-mail.

Blogs are ubiquitous. It's almost impossible to run a Google search without finding a blog reference in your results. It has been theorized that blogs are the future of journalism. The most important aspect of a blog is their capability for delivering the very latest opinion and news. Bloggers are unfettered and can publish opinions and commentaries instantaneously. When a controversial legal issues erupts, bloggers are the first to provide reactions.

There are millions of blogs in existence and reading them can be very addictive. You must keep in mind, however that there is no peer review of the published opinions so it's caveat emptor. You must use all of your critical thinking skills to evaluate the blogs that you choose to read. How do you locate legal blogs? I've included a list of a few general purpose recommended blogs but I've also included a list of websites that list blogs that you can choose to read.

### **Recommended Blawgs or Legal Blogs**

## ***1. Wall Street Journal Law Blog***

<http://blogs.wsj.com/law/>

The Wall Street Journal Law Blog was launched in January 2006 with much fanfare. WSJ.com's law blog focuses on law and business, and the business of law. The lead writer is Peter Lattman, who has worked on Wall Street for Goldman Sachs, been a writer for Forbes magazine and litigated at a New York law firm. Lattman states that the mission of the blog is to “write about industry news and legal trends, with a sprinkle of good old-fashioned gossip.” So far the blog has lived up to its promise by offering timely stories with insightful and witty analysis. Excerpts from recent sample stories include:

- *Rule of the Marlboro Man*: For every lawsuit dismissed against Philip Morris, another one must be filed. Yesterday, reports the New York Times, a group of career smokers filed a lawsuit in Brooklyn, N.Y., federal court against the tobacco maker, seeking to require the company to pay for medical tests to detect early-stage lung cancer
- *Milbank: Taking its (Silicon) Chips off the Table*: The New York Law Journal is reporting today that New York’s Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCoy is closing its 10-lawyer office in Palo Alto, which opened four years ago.

*Angry Parents v. SpongeBob and Scooby Doo*: Two consumer advocacy groups have notified media company Viacom and cereal giant Kellogg that they plan to file a lawsuit over the marketing of food of “poor nutritional quality” to children.

## ***2. Law.com’s Legal Blog Watch***

[http://legalblogwatch.typepad.com/legal\\_blog\\_watch/about.html](http://legalblogwatch.typepad.com/legal_blog_watch/about.html)

Legal blog watch aggregates the blog postings from 183 popular legal bloggers

including:

- ***May it Please the Court*** - <http://www.mayitpleasethecourt.com/journal.asp> - daily observations on law and legal news
- ***Adam Smith, Esq.*** - <http://www.bmacewen.com/blog/> - an inquiry into law firm economics
- ***Blawg Review*** - <http://www.blawgreview.com> - articles selected from the best recent law blog posts.
- ***I/P Updates*** - <http://ip-updates.blogspot.com/> - intellectual property law
- ***MyShingle*** - <http://www.myshingle.com/> - guide for starting and running a solo or small firm
- ***Jottings by an Employer's Lawyer*** - <http://employerslawyer.blogspot.com/> - labor and employment law
- ***Crime and Federalism*** - <http://federalism.typepad.com/> - federal crimes, federalism, and section 1983 actions.
- ***Silicon Valley Media Blog*** - <http://www.svmedialaw.com/> - covers e-commerce, technology industry events, technology and venture capital.
- ***Insurance Scrawl*** - <http://insurancescrawl.com/> - focuses on the law of insurance, the insurance of business, and the business of insurance.
- ***The Common Scold*** - <http://commonscold.typepad.com/commonscold/> - named after a cause of action that originated in Pilgrim days, when meddlesome, argumentative, opinionated women who displeased the Puritan elders were punished by a brisk dunk in

the local pond.

- **Robert Ambrogi's lawsites** - <http://www.legaline.com/lawsites.html> - tracks new and intriguing web sites for the legal profession
- **Law Department Management** - <http://lawdepartmentmanagement.typepad.com/> - managing attorneys and outside counsel
- **Excited Utterances** - <http://excitedutterances.blogspot.com/> - chronicles the world of legal technology, knowledge management and professional training in legal domains.
- **Prism Legal** - <http://www.prismlegal.com/wordpress/> - strategic technology planning, knowledge management, litigation and practice support, and serving clients more effectively with technology.
- **InHouseBlog** - <http://www.inhouseblog.com/> - news for inhouse counsel.
- **The Wired GC** - <http://www.wiredgc.com/> - law for business from the inside out
- **Future Lawyer** - <http://www.futurelawyer.com/> - future technology for the lawyer of today
- **Legal Pad** - <http://legalpad.wordpress.com/> - covers the legal industry in California

### **Sources for Locating Other Legal Blogs**

Once you get your feet wet and have read a few legal blogs, you'll want to venture out on your own and find new blogs that interest you. One method for locating new blogs is to visit sources that aggregate descriptions of new blogs such as the ones listed below:

#### **1. Blawg**

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

Blawg maintains a list of legal-related blogs. Blawg includes more than 800 blog links divided into more than 150 subject categories. Blawg also lists the top 30 most popular blawgs as measured by clickthroughs as well as a list of recently listed blogs.

## ***2. Blawg Republic's Blawg Directory***

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

Blawg Republic monitors the legal blogging community by hourly checking all of the blawgs in its database for updates. You can get a feel for various blogs by reading the entries on Blawg Republic's page. Blawg Republic's Blawg Directory lists blogs in more than 40 standard legal subject areas. Blawg Republic also includes a Trend Analysis section which lists the top 20 most popular items.

Once you've located a few blogs that you like to read, finding new blogs will become easier. To find new blogs, follow the links in blog comments. When people comment on a blog, they often leave a link to their blog. Follow that link and see what types of things they are saying. Also most blogs provide a blogroll of favorite or inspirational blogs. Follow the blogroll links to check out new blogs. Finally, you can always run a Google search for blog and the subject you are interested in.

After selecting several legal blogs or blawgs that you are interested in, how do you keep up with the changing content? In the beginning, you can either regularly visit the blog web page that you are interested in and read it as you would any other web page. However, once you become interested in several blogs, you'll probably want to obtain blog reader software or

aggregator. Using a blog reader allows you to monitor several blogs simultaneously without having to visit individual web sites. There are many different tools available for reading several blogs simultaneously. You can do a Google search for news readers or news aggregators and many free software options will be among your search results. My personal favorite is a web-based reader known as bloglines. It's available at: <http://www.bloglines.com>. Bloglines is free and easy to use. After registering for bloglines, you subscribe to the blogs you are interested in reading and bloglines will monitor changes for you. Your bloglines feeds are accessible via any web browser so you can read your favorite blogs from any computer with an Internet connection.

### **3. *Law Professor Blogs***

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

While this website is designed to help law professors in their scholarship and teaching, it is also beneficial for practitioners. Numerous law professors have started blogs on subjects such as elder law, land use, state and local government law, family law, and products liability that include links to cutting edge news resources. While the name of the blogs sound as though the discussion will be related to academia, most of the blogs are very helpful to a legal practitioner interested in keeping updated on a particular legal practice area.

### **F. Podcasting**

2005 was dubbed the Year of the Podcast, but how many of us know exactly what podcasting is? The word podcast was created by combing the words iPod and broadcasting. Podcasting is defined as placing sound files on the internet similar to radio broadcast format

which users can download and listen to via an iPod or other MP3 player. Podcasts have been described as Tivo for your iPod. Although the name implies that only iPods can listen to podcasts, in fact any MP3 player or MP3 playing software such as Real Player can play a podcast. Podcasting is easy and inexpensive. All you need is a computer and a microphone to record a podcast. Like blogging, it breaks down communication barriers. Anyone can broadcast a radio-like program using podcasting.

How can podcasts be useful to a busy practicing lawyer? Perhaps you don't have the time to sit at your computer and listen to a podcast. Maybe you don't own a portable MP3 player. You still have options for listening to podcasts. Just like books on tape allow you to "read" a book while driving, you can burn a podcast to a CD and listen to it in on your automobile stereo, thus making drive time more useful. P.S. If you thought iPods were only for teenagers, you might be surprised to know that current President Bush is reported to be an iPod fan. Bush's iPod is reportedly loaded with country songs from George Jones, Kenny Chesney and Alan Jackson. But it also includes Aaron Neville, Creedence Clearwater Revival and Van Morrison.

### **Sources for Locating Podcasts**

How do you find legal podcasts that might be of interest to a legal practitioner? A simple method is to type "podcast and law" as a Google search. You can also try Google searching for podcast and an area of law that you are interested in. For example, you can type "podcast and bankruptcy." Another alternative is to visit one of the sites below that list popular podcasts.

### **1. Blawgcast**

<http://www.blawgcast.com>

Blawgcast aims to be a one-stop shop for browsing law-related podcasts. Blawgcast launched in March 2005 and has quickly become an excellent resource for news about legal podcasting.

### **2. Yahoo! Podcasts**

<http://podcasts.yahoo.com>

Yahoo! Podcasts enables you to listen to and subscribe to podcasts. You can also read and write reviews of podcasts. The reviews and star ratings of podcasts can be very helpful by steering you to podcasts that are tailored to your interests. By searching for the terms “law or legal,” I located many podcasts. A sampling of the titles includes:

- How the Electronic Age Has Affected the Practice of Law
- Digital Debates Series from the National Constitution Center including such episodes as Sandra Day O'Connor - The Court's Most Influential Justice, Akhil Reed Amar's 'The Constitution: A Biography', Prominent Princeton professor Cornel West discusses Democracy Matters.

### **3. Apple iTunes Store**

<http://www.apple.com/itunes/>

In June 2006, Apple iTunes began listing free podcasts in its online music store. Again,

the iTunes store implies that you need an iPod to take advantage of the store's offerings, but that is misleading. Anyone can purchase an iTunes and burn it to a CD. Although the majority of music listed on the Apple site is for purchase, the podcasts are free. The iTunes store currently has more than 20,000 free podcasts available ranging from ABC News Nightline to the ESPN Radio Show.

#### ***4. 2005: Year of the Podcast***

<http://www.law.com/jsp/ltn/pubArticleLTN.jsp?id=1133517911750>

Robert J. Ambrogi's Law Technology News blog entry for December 5, 2005 reviews 10 law-related podcasts and provides links to 10 more popular podcasts. Ambrogi cautions that his list is not a "top ten," but instead is a sampling of that type of quality podcasts that are currently available.

The future for broadcasting CLEs via podcasts looks very promising! Find out much more about podcasting from the Wikipedia., <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcasting>

#### **G. Vodcasts?**

Now that broadband and the technology has come of age, it has been predicted video or vodcasting will surpass podcasts in 2006. Vod is shorthand for video on demand.. And it's the same concept as podcasting only video rather than audio is transmitted via the web. In fact, the term vodcast hasn't been fully settling upon. Some other references to the concept of sending video over the Internet have been referred to as videocasting, videopodcast, vid pod, videozine.

Prognosticators are watching to see if vodcasts will be the “next big thing,” but in the meantime the technology is still emerging. The new Sony Playstation Portable (PSP) and the Apple iPod are currently capable of playing video casts. While there are not any law-specific vodcasts, but some believe that it is only a matter of time.

## **H. Wikis**

A discussion of the latest current awareness tools would not be complete without a discussion of wikis. Although a wiki is not technically a tool for monitoring current information, its popularity is increasing and its various roles are still being defined; therefore, a closer examination of the topic is worthwhile.

So, what is a wiki anyway? Technically a wiki is a method for organizing and propagating information. A wiki is a website which any new visitor can edit, with changes showing up immediately. The name is based on the Hawaiian term wiki, meaning "quick", "fast", or "to hasten." Hawaiian airport shuttles were called wikis. Theoretically public wikis depend upon the contributing community to correct any mistakes that are discovered in a wiki. Wikis survive based on the initiative, honesty, and integrity of its users. The community polices itself.

Currently, the English-language Wikipedia (<http://www.wikipedia.com>) is, by far, the world's largest wiki and biggest encyclopedia in the history of the world. Wikipedia receives 2.5 billion page views a month. The number of articles, already close to two million, is growing by 7 percent a month. According to Alexa, a web traffic tracking site, Wikipedia is the 37th most highly visited site on the Internet. Wikipedia is now more than an encyclopedia however.

Because of the immediacy of article postings, it has begun morphing into a hybrid encyclopedia/current news website. In fact, Wikipedia has a WikiNews website (<http://en.wikinews.org/>) where you can read or write news articles on current topics.

Unfortunately, there have been recent bouts of vandalism at the Wikipedia website. A recent New York Times story reported that a Wikipedia biography entry had been changed to reflect that John Seigenthaler Sr., a former administrative assistant to Robert Kennedy "was thought to have been directly involved in the Kennedy assassinations of both John and his brother Bobby." After the publication of the New York Times story, information experts began warning that researchers should use Wikipedia with caution and verify facts, when necessary. In response to the criticism, Wikipedia changed its rules so that anonymous writers could only edit encyclopedia articles rather than author new articles.

In the meantime, however, *Nature* magazine published the results of an investigation (<http://www.nature.com/news/2005/051212/full/438900a.html>) comparing Wikipedia and Encyclopedia Britannica regarding accuracy of scientific information. The result: almost a tie. Examining 42 scientific topics, *Nature's* team of experts and editors found an average of four inaccuracies per Wikipedia entry, and three per Britannica entry. The Nature investigation proposes that such high profile examples of Wikipedia vandalism are the exception rather than the norm.

Cornell Law School's Legal Information Institute just announced the debut of a legal research wiki called Wex, a collaboratively built, freely available legal dictionary and encyclopedia, intended for a broad audience of people which Wex refers to as "law novices" -- In Wex's own words law novices at one time or another describes practically everyone, even law

students and lawyers entering new areas of law. Wex's creators plan to be much more selective. According to this page on editorial contributions, Wex contributors will be pre-screened before they can start writing Wex content. At the time of this writing, Wex has over 128 articles ranging from administrative law to workplace safety. For more information, visit Wex at: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/index.php/Category:Overview>