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Federal Law and U.S. Government Information: Exploring a Wealth of Resources

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Federal Law and U.S. Government Information: Exploring a Wealth of Resources

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Introduction

The federal government provides a plethora of free legal resources that are useful for attorneys conducting legal research tasks. In addition to providing inexpensive alternatives to commercial databases, online federal resources offer many bells and whistles such as multimedia, unique searching options, and even crowd-sourcing, that enhance their content.

Free online federal legal resources do not replicate the same services available from commercial vendors such as Westlaw, LexisNexis, Bloomberg BNA or FastCase, but free resources have evolved enough that being strategic about deciding which free online legal resources you want to rely upon can help you reduce your research costs and in some case, you might gain some advantages over commercial services.

One of the main limitations of using any online legal resource, commercial or free, is lack of authentication. If you plan to rely upon online legal primary sources, you should be certain that your documents are authentic and unaltered. Relying upon authenticated legal resources ensures that the source of the document has been verified and the content is unaltered. The U.S. Government Printing Office has been working on authentication for many of its documents. Notations of authenticated documents will be included in the descriptions of the resources below.

Many of the U.S. Government Printing Office documents (hereinafter referred to as GPO) have been made available via their FDsys website. It should be noted that the GPO is transitioning their website to a new platform, Govinfo. GovInfo is currently in beta release and is cross-linked from the FDsys website. FDsys is the go-to website for the U.S. Code, C.F.R., Federal Register, and many other documents from the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government and will be referenced frequently in this paper. Upon public release, GovInfo will maintain digital certification of authentication of selected documents (as is the current practice in FDsys). No specific timeline has been released for the switch from FDsys to GovInfo.

Portals for Federal Law and U.S. Government Information

There are a few major portals for federal law and government information that you will likely return to repeatedly. Content often overlaps among these websites and each portal has its own unique features. Content will be highlighted in more detail in the sections that follow the brief descriptions below. However, if you routinely conduct federal legal research, you should familiarize yourself with these portals. They are excellent starting points for beginning your legal research.

1. **FDsys/GovInfo** – <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/> or <https://www.govinfo.gov/>

FDsys and GovInfo provide searchable access to the full text of the U.S. Code, Public Laws, Code of Federal Regulations and the Federal Register and many other federal government resources.

2. **Congress.gov** - <https://www.congress.gov/>

Congress.gov is the official website for U.S. federal legislative information and is a service of the Library of Congress. The website provides access to federal bills, laws, treaties and other congressional documents using data from the Office of the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Office of the Secretary of the Senate, the Government Publishing Office, Congressional Budget Office, and the Congressional Research Service. Congress.gov was previously known as Thomas. Thomas was replaced by the Congress.gov website on July 5, 2016. At Congress.gov, you can search all federal legislation introduced since 1993, the Congressional Record from 1995, and profiles of members of Congress since 1973.

3. **Justia** - <https://www.justia.com/>

Justia includes or links to cases, codes, regulations, practice area information, and newsletters. Justia includes BlawgSearch, a legal blog search engine as well its own in-depth blog, Verdict, which analyzes current legal issues. Justia offers law firm website design services for attorneys interested in increasing their marketing.

4. **Cornell's Legal Information Institute (LII)** - <https://www.law.cornell.edu/>

Cornell Law's LII provides many legal materials including U.S. Supreme Court opinions, federal court rules, the *U.S. Code*, and the *Code of Federal Regulations*. The Cornell portal also includes Wex, a wikipedia-like legal encyclopedia. Wex entries are collaboratively created and edited by legal experts.

5. **Findlaw** – <http://lp.findlaw.com/>

Owned by Thomson Reuters, the Findlaw portal provides links to federal and state law including case law, statutes, and legal forms. Findlaw provides legal news and includes a lawyer directory. Note that Findlaw.com consists of two websites – findlaw.com, which is designed for lay persons and lp.findlaw.com which is designed for legal professionals.

U.S. Code and Related Resources

The *U.S. Code* is freely available from several websites. The downside to using a free online version of the *U.S. Code* is that case references and other annotations are not provided. If you

are seeking cases that have interpreted a code section or links to related resources, your best bet is to use a commercial database or print resources. However, if you wish to verify the text of a federal statute, locate a historical version of a statute, or find an authenticated version of the text of the *U.S. Code*, you can easily do so for free on the web.

You must also be careful to note the currency of any federal statutes you locate on free websites. Remember from your first year legal research course, the *U.S. Code* is published every six years. Consequently, individual code sections may be outdated. You may need to update an individual code section using session laws.

If you wish to search the full text of the *U.S. Code* or related resources, these websites will be useful for you:

1. **U.S. Code - Office of the Law Revision Counsel, U.S. House of Representatives** (1988 –)
<http://uscode.house.gov/>

The most frequently updated version of the *U.S. Code* is available at the website from the House of Representatives' Law Revision Counsel. The U.S. House of Representatives is responsible for publishing the print version of the U.S. Code. Researchers can retrieve code sections by citation or search by keyword.

2. **U.S. Code – FDsys/GovInfo** (1994 –)
<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collectionUSCode.action?collectionCode=USCODE>
<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/#browse/collection?collectionCode=USCODE&searchPath=>

The official online version of the *U.S. Code* provided at the GPO's website and is available in authenticated PDF. Although the online version of the *U.S. Code* is authenticated, note the following language from the FDsys' website:

While every effort has been made to ensure that the U.S. Code on FDsys is accurate, those using it for legal research should verify their results against the printed version of the U.S. Code available through the Government Publishing Office.

3. **U.S. Code – Cornell's LII** (current version)
<https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/titles.html>

The most robust search engine for the *U.S. Code* is available from Cornell's LII. However, this version of the code may not be as current as the GPO or House of Representatives websites. Code sections contain amendment history and CFR rule making authority links. Each section contains a "current through" notation indicating the currency of the text.

4. **Historical Versions of the U.S. Code – Law Library of Congress (1925 – 1988)**
<http://loc.heinonline.org/loc/LOC?index=uscode/loc>

Historical versions of the U.S. Code can be invaluable if you need to know the language of a law from a particular year. The Law Library of Congress provides a very helpful archive of annual versions of the *U.S. Code*. Historical versions of the *U.S. Code* are not available on FastCase. You can save yourself fees from a commercial vendor such as Westlaw or LexisNexis, if you use the Law Library of Congress' free versions of the older codes.

5. **U.S. Session Laws – U.S. House of Representatives Office of Law Revision Counsel (1995-)** <http://uscode.house.gov/classification/tables.shtml>

Session laws are the collection of statutes enacted by a legislature during a single **session** of that legislature, often published following the end of the **session** as a bound volume. The Office of Law Revision Counsel provides the U.S. Code Classification Table while includes links to recent session laws available for updating the U.S. Code.

6. **Public and Private Laws (Slip Laws) – FDsys/GovInfo (1995-)**

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=PLAW>

<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/#browse/collection?collectionCode=PLAW&browsePath=>

Newly enacted public and private laws are also known as slip laws. A slip law is an official publication of the law and is competent evidence admissible in all state and federal courts. Public laws affect society as a whole, while private laws affect an individual, family, or small group.

7. **U.S. Statutes at Large – FDsys/GovInfo (1951-2011)**

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=STATUTE>

<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/#browse/collection?collectionCode=STATUTE&browsePath=>

The *U.S. Statutes at Large* is legal and permanent evidence of all the laws enacted during a session of Congress (1 U.S.C. §112). It also contains concurrent resolutions, reorganization plans, proposed and ratified amendments to the Constitution, and proclamations by the President.

8. **Legex- Center for American Politics and Public Policy - <http://www.legex.org/>**

Legex, short for Legislative Explorer, is an interactive visualization tool that allows users to explore patterns of lawmaking in Congress. Legex allows you to visualize which bills are introduced, where they go, and what their ultimate fate is. You can animate each individual

Congress to watch bills move through the process (or not). You can sort by individual lawmakers, parties, topics, committees, and more.

United States Constitution

The Constitution is the founding document for the United States federal government. It is the “supreme law of the land.” In addition to the full text of the U.S. Constitution, numerous websites offer access to historical resources for research into the drafting of the Constitution. Some of the recommended websites for accessing the Constitution and related materials include:

1. **Constitution of the United States of America: Analysis and Interpretation – FDsys/GovInfo and Congress.gov -**
(1992-)

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/GPO-CONAN-REV-2016/content-detail.html>

<https://www.govinfo.gov/browse/constitution-annotated>

<https://www.congress.gov/constitution-annotated>

Both FDsys and Congress.gov provide the same version of a searchable pdf version of the Constitution on their websites. This version of the Constitution includes historical notes, legal analysis, and interpretation based primarily on U.S. Supreme Court case law and prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). This regularly updated resource is especially useful when researching the constitutional implications of a specific issue or topic. The Featured Topics and Cases page highlights recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions that demonstrate pivotal interpretations of the Constitution's provisions.

2. **Guide to Law Online: U.S. Constitution – Law Library of Congress -**

<http://www.loc.gov/law/help/guide/federal/usconst.php>

The Law Library of Congress’ website provides an extensive list of links to texts, commentaries, historical texts, influences, judicial decisions, and additional information.

3. **Founder’s Constitution – University of Chicago Press -** <http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/>

The Founders' Constitution was first published in 1986 in five oversized volumes with more than 3,200 double-column pages. The online version of this text is regularly

updated and provides links to historical documents related to the development of the Constitution. The documents included range from the early seventeenth century to the 1830s, from the reflections of philosophers to popular pamphlets, from public debates in ratifying conventions to the private correspondence of the leading political actors of the day.

4. **Documents from the Continental Congress and the Constitutional Convention, 1774 to 1789 – Library of Congress** - <https://www.loc.gov/collections/continental-congress-and-constitutional-convention-from-1774-to-1789/about-this-collection/>

This Library of Congress collection contains original images of 277 documents relating to the work of Congress and the drafting and ratification of the Constitution. Items include extracts of the journals of Congress, resolutions, proclamations, committee reports, treaties, and early printed versions of the United States Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. A number of these items contain manuscript annotations not recorded elsewhere that offer insight into the delicate process of creating consensus.

Bill-Tracking

There are many watchdog political websites devoted to providing free information about pending federal legislation. Using a variety of online tools, attorneys can easily monitor and track specific pending federal legislation that might affect their client's interests. There are several helpful resources with legislative tracking tools and current alert services.

1. **Congress.gov – Library of Congress** (1973-) <https://www.congress.gov/>

Congress.gov is the official website for federal legislative information. It provides extensive bill tracking information and timely information for tracking bills through each stage in the legislative process. Congress.gov is updated the morning after a session adjourns.

2. **Govtrack** – <https://www.govtrack.us/>

Govtrack is an independent non-governmental entity, Civic Impulse, LLC, that aggregates legislative data from official government websites. You can search bills easily and sign up for automated updates. You can also browse by subject area and voting records. Govtrack also includes statistical analyses of pending legislation including prognosis of passage.

3. **U.S. House of Representatives** - <http://www.house.gov/legislative/>

The website of the U.S. House of Representatives provides numerous links related to its work such the text of bills, schedule of hearings and committee meetings for the day, voting records for recently considered bills, and bill reports. The website also includes streaming video feeds of House floor proceedings, back to the beginning of the 111th Congress.

4. **U.S. Senate** - <http://www.senate.gov/>

The website of the U.S. Senate also provides links to resources related to its work such as the schedule of hearings and committee meetings for the day. The website provides statistics, information on nominations, a virtual reference desk, a biographical directory, and an organizational chart.

5. **Congressional Record – FDsys/GovInfo** (1994-)

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=CREC>

<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/#browse/collection?collectionCode=CREC&browsePath=>

The Congressional Records, the official record of the proceedings and debates of Congress, consists of four parts: the Daily Digest, the House section, the Senate section, and Extension of Remarks. The Daily Digest summarizes bills introduced, committee meetings, and joint meetings, while the House and Senate sections provide more lengthy details on any actions concerning bills.

6. **Twitter** – <http://www.twitter.com>

Do not forget to consider twitter as a resource for tracking recent legislative action...@housefloor and @senatefloor tweet House and Senate floor votes.

Legislative History and Related Research Guides

Some of the types of documents that may be useful for legislative history research include:

- **Congressional Bills** - A bill is a legislative proposal before Congress. Bills from each house are assigned a number in the order in which they are introduced, starting at the beginning of each Congress (first and second sessions). Public bills pertain to matters that affect the general public or classes of citizens, while private bills pertain to individual matters that affect individuals and organizations, such as claims against the Government.
- **Congressional Hearings** - A hearing is a meeting or session of a Senate, House, joint, or special committee of Congress, usually open to the public, to obtain information and opinions on proposed legislation, conduct an investigation, or evaluate/oversee the

activities of a government department or the implementation of a Federal law. In addition, hearings may also be purely exploratory in nature, providing testimony and data about topics of current interest.

- **Congressional Reports** - Congressional reports originate from congressional committees and deal with proposed legislation and issues under investigation. There are three types of reports: House and Senate Reports, Senate Executive Reports, and Conference Reports.
- **Congressional Committee Prints** - Congressional Committee Prints are publications issued by Congressional Committees that include topics related to their legislative or research activities, as well as other matters such as memorial tributes. The prints are an excellent resource for statistical and historical information, and for legislative analysis. The subjects of the Committee Prints vary greatly due to the different concerns and actions of each committee. Some basic categories of Congressional Committee Prints are: draft reports and bills, directories, statistical materials, investigative reports, historical reports, situational studies, confidential staff reports, hearings, and legislative analyses.
- **Congressional Record** - The Congressional Record is the official record of the proceedings and debates of the United States Congress.

There are very few free web sources that have compiled legislative histories. Occasionally when you are researching a topic that ignites a special interest group, you might stumble across compiled legislative history information. For the most part, you will have to compile your own legislative history piece by piece using the following websites:

1. **Congress.gov – Library of Congress** - <https://www.congress.gov>
 - Congressional Bills (1973 -)
 - Committee Reports (1995-)
 - Committee Hearings (2012 -)
 - Congressional Record (1995-)
 - Treaty Documents (1995-)
 - Member profiles (1973-)
2. **FDsys/GovInfo – U.S. GPO** (authenticated) - <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/>
<https://www.govinfo.gov/>
 - Congressional Bills (1993 -)
 - Congressional Hearings (1985-)
 - Congressional Committee Reports (1995-)
 - Congressional Record (1994-)
 - Congressional Committee Prints (1975-)

3. **American Memory: A Century of Law Making for a New Nation - Library of Congress** (1774-1875) <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lawhome.html>

Congressional documents from the first 100 years of the U.S. Congress (1774-1875) are available from the American Memory website including:

- Congressional Bills (House 1799-1873, Senate 1819-1873)
- Congressional Committee Reports (1833-1917)
- Congressional Record (1789-1877)

4. **The Legislative Process - U.S. House of Representatives**
http://www.house.gov/content/learn/legislative_process/

The House of Representatives provides a comprehensive explanation of the legislative process from a bill's introduction to consideration by the President.

5. **Congressional Record – Govinfo.gov** (1981 – 2001)
https://www.govinfo.gov/app/#browse/collection?collectionCode=CRECB_GPO&browsePath=Congressional+Record+%28Bound+Edition%29

Debates and proceedings of the 98th thru the 101st Congresses, exactly as the text appears in the permanent bound edition.

Federal Rules & Regulations

The executive branch of the U.S. government provides substantial online content. The executive branch consists of the President, Vice-President, the Cabinet and federal administrative agencies. Congress gives federal agencies the authority to promulgate rules and regulations, to interpret, and to administer those laws. In addition to searching useful administrative law resources such as the *Code of Federal Regulations* and the *Federal Register*, you can find a vast amount of resources by searching the websites of administrative agencies and the related resources described below.

1. **Code of Federal Regulations, CFR – FDsys/GovInfo** (1996-)
<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collectionCfr.action?collectionCode=CFR>
<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/#browse/collection?collectionCode=CFR&searchPath=>

The *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) is a codification of the general and permanent rules published in the *Federal Register* by the federal agencies. The GPO provides a searchable and browsable version of the *CFR*. Furthermore, the GPO's website contains historical versions of the *CFR* from 1996 to present. Historical versions are very useful for identifying which regulations were in effect at any particular point in time.

2. **Electronic Code of Federal Regulations, e-CFR – FDsys/GovInfo** (current)
<http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/ECFR?page=browse>

Although it is not an official legal edition of the *Code of Federal Regulations*, the e-CFR is a currently updated version of the *CFR*. The e-CFR is an editorial compilation of CFR material and *Federal Register* produced by the National Archives and Records Administration's Office of the Federal Register and the GPO. The e-CFR is updated on a daily basis.

3. **Federal Register, FDsys/GovInfo** (1994-)
<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=FR>
<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/#browse/collection?collectionCode=FR&browsePath=>

The *Federal Register* is the official daily publication for rules, proposed rules, and notices of federal agencies and organizations, as well as executive orders and other presidential documents.

4. **Federal Register, Law Library of Congress** (1936-1994)
<http://loc.heinonline.org/loc/LOC?index=fedregloc>

Historical versions of the *Federal Register*, volumes 1 – 58, are available from the Law Library of Congress' website.

5. **Regulations.gov** <https://www.regulations.gov/>

Regulations.gov allows users to search for proposed and final rules, comment on proposed rules, and sign up for e-mail alerts and track pending regulations. Regulations.gov is searchable by agency, type of document, docket number, and keyword.

6. **Reginfo.gov** <http://www.reginfo.gov/public/>

At RegInfo.gov, the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs and the Office of Management and Budget publish information on federal regulations. Reginfo includes the Unified Agenda, a reporting of data on regulatory activities under development throughout the federal government. The Reginfo.gov website also includes Reg Map (<https://www.reginfo.gov/public/reginfo/Regmap/index.jsp>), a detailed description of the regulatory process.

7. **Administrative Decisions, University of Virginia Library**,
http://guides.lib.virginia.edu/administrative_decisions

Many federal agencies have a quasi-judicial power to determine cases and to rule about questions arising from their regulations. The University of Virginia's Library provides an A-Z listing of administrative agencies and links to their decisions.

8. **U.S. Government Manual, FDsys/GovInfo, (1995-)**

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=GOVMAN>

<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/#browse/collection?collectionCode=GOVMAN&browsePath=>

The *U.S. Government Manual* is a directory of the federal government's administrative agencies, quasi-official agencies, and international organizations in which the U.S. participates. The directory includes statutory authority, jurisdiction, directories of personnel, and major publications.

9. **FedStats, <https://fedstats.sites.usa.gov/>**

FedStats provides statistics from more than 100 federal agencies and does not require users to know in advance which federal agency produces which particular statistic.

10. **Data.gov, <https://www.data.gov/>**

Data.gov is a central repository for statistical datasets produced by the federal executive branch. Datasets can be downloaded and used with popular statistical programs.

11. **Guide to the Rulemaking Process, Office of the Federal Register,**

https://www.federalregister.gov/uploads/2011/01/the_rulemaking_process.pdf

The Office of the Federal Register provides a comprehensive description of the administrative rulemaking process.

Presidential Resources

The Office of President releases many types of documents. The two most important documents for legal research purposes are executive orders and proclamations. There is not much distinction between presidential proclamations and executive orders although usually proclamations deal with general matters of widespread interest, while executive orders relate to the conduct of government. Executive orders are printed in the *Federal Register*.

1. **Compilation of Presidential Documents , FDsys/GovInfo (1992-)**

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=CPD>

<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/#browse/collection?collectionCode=CPD&browsePath=>

The Compilation of Presidential Documents collection consists of the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* and the *Daily Compilation of Presidential Documents* which are the official publications of materials released by the White House Press Secretary. The presidential documents in this collection include statements, nominations, messages, speeches, press conferences and other presidential materials released by the White House.

2. **The White House: Presidential Actions** <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions>

The White House's website provides links to current presidential documents such as press releases, executive orders, proclamations, and presidential memoranda.

3. **Public Papers of the President, National Archives** (Ronald Reagan -)
<https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/publications/presidential-papers.html>

The National Archives provides an official series including presidential writings, addresses, and public remarks, organized chronologically from President Reagan to present.

4. **American Presidency Project (1826 -)**
http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/executive_orders.php?year=2016&Submit=DISPLAY

The American Presidency Project provides the full text of executive orders from 1826 to present. The APP provides the most comprehensive collection of resources related to the study of the American presidency. The APP was established in 1999 as a collaboration between John Woolley and Gerhard Peters at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Its archives contain over 103,000 documents.

U.S. Supreme Court

The Supreme Court was organized in 1790 with judicial power to review cases arising under the Constitution, the Laws of the United States and treaties. There are several free options for finding U.S. Supreme Court opinions. These sites vary in coverage and search capabilities.

1. **Supreme Court of the United States, U.S. Supreme Court** (1991 -)
<https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/boundvolumes.aspx>

The official website for the U.S. Supreme Court provides case information, oral argument transcripts, audio, briefs, court opinions, and court rules. The court's website can be searched by docket number or case name. Recent opinions are available and

remain online until published in a bound volume of the U.S. Reports. Newly released opinions are posted within hours after being issued.

2. **Cornell's LII, Supreme Court Decisions** (1990 -)
<https://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/home>

Cornell's LII provides user-friendly access to court decisions issued by topic, keyword, author, or party name. The LII includes all of the Supreme Court decisions after 1990 and over 300 of the court's most important decisions in its historic collection.

3. **OpenJurist, U.S. Reports**, <http://openjurist.org/us>
(1790 -)

OpenJurist's mission is to provide access to U.S. court opinions and the U.S. Code, free of charge. Open Jurist provides U.S. Supreme Court opinions in pdf format from the U.S. Reports, 1790-

4. **U.S. Supreme Court Historical Society**, <http://www.supremecourthistory.org/>

The Society's website provides a history of the Court, an explanation of how the court works, and publications such as the *Journal of Supreme Court History*.

5. **Casetext** - <https://casetext.com/>

Casetext is a new legal tech start-up that provides a searchable database of all U.S. Supreme Court cases with annotations provided by the legal community.

6. **SCOTUSblog** - <http://www.scotusblog.com/>

SCOTUSblog is a legal blog about the U.S. Supreme Court sponsored by Bloomberg Law. This famous blog tracks cases from the certiorari stage onwards. The site comprehensively covers all of the cases argued before the Court and maintains an archive of the briefing and other documents in each case.

7. **Oyez, ITT Chicago-Kent College of Law**, (1968-) <https://www.oyez.org/>

Oyez posts oral arguments and transcripts for most cases from 1968 to the present, as well as selected leading historical cases. The website "aims to be a complete and authoritative source for all audio recorded in the Court since [...] October 1955 (when a recording system was installed at the court).

8. **U.S. Supreme Court Briefs, U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Solicitor General**
<https://www.justice.gov/osg/supreme-court-briefs> (1985-)

The Department of Justice's website provides a searchable database of all briefs filed by the Office of Solicitor General from 1985 to present.

Federal Case Law Portals - U.S. Supreme Court, Circuit Courts of Appeal, District Courts and Specialized Federal Courts

In addition to resources that provide access to U.S. Supreme Court opinions, many legal portals have created a one-stop shop for access to a federal court opinions and related resources.

- 1. Justia - U.S. Supreme Court, U.S. Courts of Appeals, and U.S. District Courts,**
<https://www.justia.com/courts/>
 - U.S. Supreme Court (1791-)
 - U.S. Courts of Appeals (1951-)
 - U.S. District Courts and Bankruptcy Courts (Coverage varies)
 - Also provides links to other federal courts such as military courts, tax court and international trade courts.
- 2. FindLaw, U.S. Supreme Court, U.S. Courts of Appeals and U.S. District Courts,**
<http://caselaw.findlaw.com/>
 - U.S. Supreme Court (1893-)
 - Federal Circuit Courts and District Courts including tax and bankruptcy (Coverage varies)
- 3. Google Scholar - U.S. Supreme Court, U.S. Courts of Appeals and U.S. District Courts,**
<https://scholar.google.com/>
 - U.S. Supreme Court (1791-)
 - U.S. Courts of Appeals (1923-)
 - U.S. District Courts (including tax and bankruptcy courts) (1923-)
- 4. FDsys/GovInfo, U.S. Supreme Court, U.S. Courts of Appeals and U.S. District Courts,**
<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=USCOURTS&browsePath=CourtType1&isCollapsed=true&leafLevelBrowse=false&ycord=0>
<https://www.govinfo.gov/app/#browse/collection?collectionCode=USCOURTS&browsePath=>

FDsys, the official U.S. GPO website provides selected United States appellate, district, and bankruptcy court opinions since 2004.

5. Public Library of Law, <http://www.plol.org/Pages/Search.aspx>

Sponsored by FastCase, the Public Library of Law provides the full text of all U.S. Supreme Court cases and the Circuit Court opinions from 1950 to present. Requires registration and provides advertisements for fee-based access to FastCase. The Public Library of Law is not aimed at power-user legal researcher type, but rather for non-lawyers to get a streamlined view of cases and access to primary legal resources.

6. OpenJurist, Federal Reporter, <http://openjurist.org/> (1880 -)

- Federal Reporter, First Series, 1880-1925
- Federal Reporter, Second Series, 1925 - 1993
- Federal Reporter, Third Series, 1993 –

Federal Courts – Related Resources

1. United States Courts, Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts <http://www.uscourts.gov/>

The Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts is the official website of the federal courts. The website links to all federal courts, court rules and rule amendments, as well as the federal court locator (<http://www.uscourts.gov/court-locator>) and PACER.

2. Federal Judicial Center, <http://www.fjc.gov/>

The Federal Judicial Center is the education and research agency of the federal courts. The Judicial Center's website contains resources such as a federal judiciary history, biographies of federal judges from 1789 to the present, research publications, studies, and statistics. Examples of useful resources, videos, and publications include:

- Resources for Managing Capital Cases
http://www.fjc.gov/public/home.nsf/autoframe?openagent&url_r=pages/389
- Resources on Courtroom Technology
http://www.fjc.gov/public/home.nsf/autoframe?openagent&url_r=pages/1100
- Resources on Special Masters and Court-Appointed Experts
http://www.fjc.gov/public/home.nsf/autoframe?openagent&url_r=pages/1100
- Patent Case Management Judicial Guide
[http://www.fjc.gov/public/pdf.nsf/lookup/Patent-Case-Management-Judicial-Guide-3d-ed-2016.pdf/\\$file/Patent-Case-Management-Judicial-Guide-3d-ed-2016.pdf](http://www.fjc.gov/public/pdf.nsf/lookup/Patent-Case-Management-Judicial-Guide-3d-ed-2016.pdf/$file/Patent-Case-Management-Judicial-Guide-3d-ed-2016.pdf)
- The 1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction
[http://www.fjc.gov/public/pdf.nsf/lookup/Hague-Convention-Guide-Second-Edition-2015.pdf/\\$file/Hague-Convention-Guide-Second-Edition-2015.pdf](http://www.fjc.gov/public/pdf.nsf/lookup/Hague-Convention-Guide-Second-Edition-2015.pdf/$file/Hague-Convention-Guide-Second-Edition-2015.pdf)

- Awarding Attorneys' Fees and Managing Fee Litigation
[http://www.fjc.gov/public/pdf.nsf/lookup/Awarding-Attorneys-Fees-and-Managing-Fee-Litigation-Third-Edition-2015.pdf/\\$file/Awarding-Attorneys-Fees-and-Managing-Fee-Litigation-Third-Edition-2015.pdf](http://www.fjc.gov/public/pdf.nsf/lookup/Awarding-Attorneys-Fees-and-Managing-Fee-Litigation-Third-Edition-2015.pdf/$file/Awarding-Attorneys-Fees-and-Managing-Fee-Litigation-Third-Edition-2015.pdf)
- Consumer Bankruptcy Law: Chapters 7 & 13
[http://www.fjc.gov/public/pdf.nsf/lookup/consumer-bankruptcy-law-chapters-7-13-brown-fjc-2014.pdf/\\$file/consumer-bankruptcy-law-chapters-7-13-brown-fjc-2014.pdf](http://www.fjc.gov/public/pdf.nsf/lookup/consumer-bankruptcy-law-chapters-7-13-brown-fjc-2014.pdf/$file/consumer-bankruptcy-law-chapters-7-13-brown-fjc-2014.pdf)

3. Justia Federal Court Filings and Dockets <https://dockets.justia.com/> (2004 -)

At Justia, you can search case filings from federal district civil court cases by party name, court, type of lawsuit or date. Information provided includes case caption, date filed, court, judge, type of lawsuit and cause of action. Justia also provides a link to the docket sheets of federal courts but access to the docket entries requires a subscription to PACER.