



Faculty Research Assistant Training
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Developed by Aimée S. Mangan, Faculty Services Librarian,

Purpose and Goals

The purpose of this handout is to give Faculty Research Assistants an overview of the libraries on campus, a review of basic legal research, and to give some research tips to help to make your job a bit easier.

Library Catalogs at the University of Michigan

There are three library systems at the University of Michigan: the Law Library, Kresge Business Administration Library and the University Libraries System. The University Libraries system is made up of a number of libraries, including the Hatcher Graduate Library, the Shapiro Undergraduate and Science Libraries, Taubman Medical Library, etc. Each of the three library systems has a separate catalog: the Law Library uses the UMich Law Library Catalog, the Kresge Business Administration Library uses the Kresge Library Catalog, and the University Libraries System uses Mirlyn. In order to completely check to see if materials are on campus, you need to check all of three library catalogs. You can find links to all of these catalogs on the Law Library Homepage (www.law.umich.edu/library).

Law Library

There are quite a number of resources that are accessible to you via the Law Library webpage (www.law.umich.edu/library). We have worked hard in order to compile resources that we believe will help you in your research. You will want to make sure that you are familiar with our web page since almost all of the resources that will be covered in this presentation can be accessed via the library website.

Reference Resources

This section includes information that the Reference Department has compiled to assist students and other patrons in conducting legal research. It includes research guides, book lists, and answers to some questions about basic legal research. For example, under “research guides” you can find a guide to conducting foreign legal research. The “book lists” section includes lists of treatises on legal topics. If you are beginning a research assignment and have no idea of where to look for information, this is a good place to start.

Electronic Subscriptions to Journals

You can find the list of the Law Library’s electronic Subscriptions to Journals on our website (www.law.umich.edu/library/eres/ereslist/ereslistindex.htm). The list is organized alphabetically, so you can browse the titles and find the one that you need. You can also run a search if you prefer to find the journal that you need by searching. You can then follow the links to find the articles that you need and print them out.

You can also find out if the Law Library has an electronic subscription to a journal by searching for the journal in MLaw, our online catalog. For example, if you go to MLaw (<http://umil.iii.com/>) and search the Library catalog for the title “Howard Journal of

Criminal Justice,” you will see a hyperlink included in the catalog entry. This indicates that we have an electronic subscription to the journal, which you can access via the hyperlink.

Electronic Resources List (www.law.umich.edu/LibraryResearchLinks/Resource.asp)

The Library has a very large collection of electronic resources (also referred to as the Electronic Reference Collection). The collection is arranged both alphabetically and by subject. All of the resources listed are accessible to you via the computers in the law library. You can also access most of the materials at an off-campus computer. If you are using an off-campus computer, just type in your username and password when prompted to login. Rather than try to discuss all of the materials that you have electronic access to, I am going to highlight a few resources that are very helpful in identifying and obtaining full text pdf versions of articles.

1. **HeinOnline:** This database includes hundreds of law journals which can be searched and retrieved in pdf format. This database is a very good addition to using Westlaw and Lexis because Westlaw and Lexis usually only have journal issues from 1980 – present (there are a few exceptions to this rule, for example, Harvard Law Review is on Westlaw from 1949, Vol. 63 to the present). In contrast to Lexis and Westlaw, HeinOnline will have most of the back issues of the journals that are in its databases. The most recent copies of the journals are not included in its databases, however. For example, HeinOnline has the Michigan Law Review from 1902 – 2003. To access the law journals database in HeinOnline follow the law library electronic resources link (listed above), then click on “H”, then click on “HeinOnline”, then click on “Law Journal Library.”
2. **Jstor:** This database includes hundreds of social science, humanities, economics, business, and science journals. They have begun to add a law journal database to Jstor, and they plan on adding more journals in the future. Jstor is very similar to HeinOnline in that it includes the earliest issues of the journals included in its databases, although it does not have the most recent issues. For example, the Quarterly Journal of Economics is included in Jstor from 1886 – 1998. To search Jstor, follow the law library electronic resources link (listed above), then click on “J”, then click on “Jstor”, then click on “Search.” If you are not sure if the journal that you need is included in Jstor, you can click on the “advanced search” button, then scroll down to see the different types of journals. If you click on the “+” sign next to a journal type, you can see each of the journals included in that category.
3. **LegalTrac, Index to Legal Periodicals and Books, Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals:** These are not full text resources, they are journal indexes and can be searched by keyword, author, title, subject, etc. Using these indexes is a good way to find articles that are not included in Westlaw and Lexis. There are a number of journals that are included in these indexes that are not in Westlaw or Lexis. Another good trait of these indexes is that you can search them by keyword, which you cannot do in Westlaw and Lexis. For example, if you run a search for the term “constitutional law” in Lexis or Westlaw your search will result in thousands of articles which have the term “constitutional

law” somewhere in the text, and which may or may not discuss the topic in depth. However, if you run a keyword search in one of the above indexes for “constitutional law” your search will result in only those articles which discuss the topic in depth.

4. **Compiled European Union Links:** Much of the information that the EU releases is accessible online. This section of the electronic resources collection includes a number of websites for court opinions, legislative decisions, journal articles, etc.
5. **United Nations:** Just like the EU, much of the information that the UN releases can be accessed online. This section includes links to some of the UN commissions, committees, etc., as well as information on treaties and other documents released by the UN. The UNBISNET is the library catalog to the Dag Hammarskjöld Library, and has some links to full text documents, as does the United Nations Official Documents link. Another good website for finding documents is AccessUN. This database gives you information on documents that are included in our UN Microfiche collection.

University Libraries

Electronic Journals and Newspapers – University Libraries Homepage

There are two main ways to discover if the University Libraries have an electronic journal or newspapers. First, on the University Libraries Homepage (<http://www.lib.umich.edu/index.html>) there is a link to “electronic journals and newspapers” (<http://www.lib.umich.edu/ejournals/>). The list is alphabetical, so if you know the name of the publication that you need, you can browse the list to find the publication. The list is also searchable, so if you are not sure of the title of the publication that you need, you can search the list in order to find it.

Electronic Journals and Newspapers – Mirlyn

Second, you can use Mirlyn to search for the title of the publication that you need. If the University Libraries has an electronic subscription to the journal or newspaper, you will find a link to the publication in the Mirlyn Entry.

Networked Electronic Resources

The University Libraries networked electronic resources are organized alphabetically and by subject. You can also run a search in order to find a resource. There are a great many resources that the University Libraries has access to, but I will only mention a few that you might find especially useful.

1. **ABI/Inform Global:** This is a journal index which includes business journals.
2. **ArticleFirst:** This is a journal index which includes science, technology, medicine, social science, business, the humanities, and popular culture journals.
3. **Proquest Research Library:** Indexes journals and magazines covering all fields and topics, academic and popular, beginning as early as 1971. Provides

full text for articles as early as 1987 from over 1,400 of these journals and magazines.

4. **Proquest Historical Newspapers:** Full-text searchable access to the back files of the New York Times (1851-2001), Wall Street Journal (1889-1987), Washington Post (1877-1988), Christian Science Monitor (1908-1991), and Los Angeles Times (1881-1984; in progress).
5. **Wilson:** Indexes abstracts from general, humanities, business, science & social science periodicals. Some of the articles are available online in full text.

Web Forms

The University Libraries has various forms on their webpage that you can fill out in order to recall or renew books, have books delivered to a specific library for pick-up, and have books pulled from the Buhr storage facility. There is also a form for requesting a “proxy card” which allows you to check out books on behalf of a professor. The forms can be found at www.lib.umich.edu/forms. Please note that these forms will only work for University Libraries books. For books that are at the Kresge Library, follow the instructions below.

Kresge Business Administration Library

Electronic Resources

Most of the electronic resources that are available at the Kresge Business Administration Library can only be used from terminals located at the Kresge Library. The electronic journals that Kresge has that are open to the wider University community, can be accessed via Mirlyn or the University Libraries Electronic Journals and Newspapers list (see above).

Web Forms

The Kresge Library has forms on the web that allow you to renew books and to request books from the Buhr storage facility. Please note, that these forms are different than the ones that the University Libraries has on-line. If a book is a Kresge book, you must make sure that you fill out the form on the Kresge webpage. The forms can be found at www.bus.umich.edu/KresgeLibrary/Services/CirculationServices.

Caselaw and Court Documents

As most of you know, you can access html versions of all published federal and state cases via Westlaw and Lexis. Both Westlaw and Lexis have unpublished cases as well. However, some unpublished cases are in neither Westlaw nor Lexis. Each of the services has different unpublished cases, so if you do not find a case in one database, you will want to make sure to check in the other one too. Below is some additional information about both Westlaw, as well as information on other places to look when you are searching for case law.

Westlaw

Westlaw is currently in the process of loading the page images from the Regional Reporters (including A., A.2d, NE., NE.2d, NW, NW.2d, P., P.2d, Pd.3, SE., SE.2d, So., So.2d, SW., SW.2d and SW.3d), and from the Federal Reporters (including F., F.2d, F.3d, F.Supp., F.Supp.2d, S.Ct., and U.S.) into their databases. Eventually, they will have all of the page images loaded into Westlaw. To access the reporter image of a case, use the “find” function, and type in the citation of the case which you are trying to find. When the case comes up, if there is a reporter image, you will see a link at the top of the case which you can click on in order to access the image. A notice will appear stating that it might cost extra to view and print the reporter image. You can click on “ok” and ignore the message, since it does not cost us extra to access the image (it is part of our contract with West). You can then print out the case to your attached printer.

Westlaw also has briefs for quite a number of different courts and they are continually adding more briefs. The databases with the briefs in them can be accessed via the caselaw directories. Lexis also has briefs in their database. They do not necessarily have the same ones included in the Westlaw databases, so if you do not find a brief in Westlaw, make sure to check Lexis as well.

Lexis

Because of copyright restrictions, Lexis cannot load the pdf images from the reporters into their databases. However, like Westlaw, Lexis also has briefs for various courts, which you can search via the caselaw directories. They do not necessarily have the same ones included in the Westlaw databases, so if you do not find a brief in Lexis, make sure to check Westlaw as well.

Supreme Court Website

The Supreme Court website -- <http://www.supremecourtus.gov> – includes pdf copies of opinions for the most recent sessions of the Court. To access the cases, go to the website and select “opinions.” Next, choose the session in which the decision was announced, then choose the opinion which you would like to see.

You can also access oral argument transcripts on the website. From the main menu, choose “oral arguments”, then scroll down and choose “argument transcripts.” The link to the page is www.supremecourtus.gov/oral_arguments/argument_transcripts.html.

HeinOnline

In addition to having journal articles, HeinOnline also has the United States Reporter in its database. To access the cases, go to HeinOnline as described previously. However, instead of choosing “Law Journal Library” choose “U.S. Supreme Court Library.” You can then access the U.S. Reports and print out any cases that you need.

Court Websites

Many state and federal courts post recent opinions on their websites. Sometimes they will be in pdf format, sometimes they will be in html format. If you are having a difficult

time finding a case, it can be helpful at times to visit the court website to see if an opinion has been posted. Links to the Federal Court websites can be found at www.uscourts.gov/links.html. It is usually fairly easy to find state court websites using www.google.com.

United States Legislative History

Conducting legislative history searches can be a very difficult and time consuming process. I list below a few sources that you can use for legislative history searches. For a more thorough and in depth discussion of legislative history searches, see the guide that the Reference Department has compiled which can be found at www.law.umich.edu/library/refres/resguides/pdfs/uslegmats.pdf.

Congressional Record

This resource is basically a transcript of all debate that occurs on the floors of the House and the Senate. It is important to not that the Congressional Record does not contain testimony from committee hearings. The Congressional Record can be searched on Lexis, Westlaw, Lexis-Nexis Congressional, GPOAccess and Thomas (all of these resources can be accessed via the Law Library webpage).

Congressional Information Service/Lexis-Nexis Congressional

The CIS set contains legislative histories for bills that have been passed and have become law. There is a paper copy of the index to the CIS microfiche set at the Reference Desk. It can also be searched online via Lexis-Nexis Congressional. Some of the documents may be online in full text format, but you may also need to obtain documents from the microfiche set.

Thomas

This is the website run by the Library of Congress. It has a great deal of information on bills, public laws, testimony, committee reports, etc. The website can be accessed via the Law Library Webpage.

Congressional Testimony

Some testimony can be accessed via Thomas and Lexis-Nexis Congressional as described above. However, Westlaw and Lexis also have databases that contain Congressional testimony. The one for Westlaw is located under the US Federal Materials – Congressional Information directories. The Lexis one is located in Legislation and Politics, US and UK – US Congress.

Federal Documents

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)

The CFR is where federal rules and regulations are published. We have a paper copy in the library, and it can also be accessed online via Westlaw, Lexis, and GPOAccess.

Federal Register

This is where presidential proclamations, presidential orders, proposed rules, comments on proposed rules, and other federal branch materials are published. There is a paper copy in the library, and it can also be searched online via Westlaw, Lexis, and GPOAccess.

GPOAccess

This is the Government Printing Office's online information. It contains Congressional, Executive and Judicial Branch materials. It can be accessed via the library webpage or at www.gpoaccess.gov/index.html.

United Nations Documents

The United Nations has a great many of its documents online. The UN website itself (www.un.org) is not very good for searching documents, but the websites of its various bodies, commissions, committees, working groups, etc., often have documents online. The electronic resources webpage has a section which includes UN web pages. Below are just a few resources that you might find helpful. More detailed information on UN documents can be found in the research guides that the Reference Department has compiled (www.law.umich.edu/library/refres/resguides/pdfs/international.pdf).

UN High Commission on Human Rights

This website can be found at www.ohchr.org. To search the databases, choose "Document Search" from the options listed on the right side of the screen. You can then run a search in the various databases for the document which you need.

UNBISNET - United Nations Bibliographic Information System

This is the library catalog for the Dag Hammarskjold Library and can be accessed at www.unbisnet.un.org. Many UN documents are included in the catalog in pdf form. You can run searches for UN documents by document number if you choose the "New Browse List Search" option, and you can run searches using keywords if you use the "New Keyword Search" option. If there is a full text version of the document available, there will be a link in the record that you can use to access the document.

Google

Often, if you run a google.com search with the document number for the document that you need, you can locate either a pdf or an html copy of the document. You do need to be careful, however, in order to make sure that the document that you find is the "official" version of the document.

AccessUN

The library has the UN Readex set which includes most UN documents. AccessUN is the index for the Readex set. By searching in AccessUN you can identify which documents you need and where they are in the microfiche set.

Foreign Law

Conducting research on the law in other countries can be a very complicated task. The Law Library has some resources which can help make your research a bit easier. I list a few resources below which I think you might find helpful. More detailed information on researching foreign law is in the research guides that the Reference Dept. has compiled (www.law.umich.edu/library/refres/resguides/pdfs/foreign.pdf).

Foreign Law Guide

This resource can be accessed via the law library's electronic resources, and there is also a paper copy in the Reference Collection (the call number is Bibliog Reynolds). It is perhaps one of the most useful and comprehensive sources on the laws of the various jurisdictions in the world.

Legal Information Institute (Cornell University)

This website contains information on where you can find online sources for the law of many countries of the world. The site can be found at www.law.cornell.edu/world.

Constitution Finder

This website includes information on the constitutions for many countries of the world. It can be found at www.confunder.richmond.edu. Not all of the information is in English, but it is a good place to start research. Also, the information is not necessarily updated regularly, and it might not be the "official version" of the constitution, but it will at least give you a good idea of what you are trying to find.

Foreign Primary Law on the Web

This website is sponsored by the University of Houston Law Center and contains a wide variety of sources for online information on various countries.

Constitutions of the Countries of the World

This is a set of English translations of a number of countries. It can be particularly useful for conducting historical research since many older (superseded) constitutions are included as well. Please note, however, that the set is not updated every year, so some of the constitutions are out of date. The set can be found in the Reference Collection (the call number is Ref Call Const.)

European Union

The University of Michigan was the first depository for European Union documents in the United States. This means that we have a wonderful collection of EU documents both in paper and online. A more detailed guide for conducting EU research can be found at www.law.umich.edu/library/refres/researchguides.htm. Also, there is a section on the library's electronic resources page which includes information on the EU and their various online resources.

Research Tips

Start with secondary sources

Resist the urge to run to the internet! Many of you will be tempted to use the internet for most of the research that you do. While resources like Westlaw and Lexis, as well as other internet resources, are important tools that you need to use, starting out a project by first turning to online sources might not always be the most efficient way to conduct research. This is especially true if you do not have much knowledge about an area in which you need to conduct research. Rather than running to Westlaw and Lexis, run a few searches in MLaw and try to identify some secondary sources (such as treatises) which might be helpful. If you need help locating treatises on a specific topic, the Reference Department has compiled book lists for various subjects which you can find online at www.law.umich.edu/library/refres/bibliographies/bibliographies.htm. It can also be helpful to try to locate articles on the area of law that you are researching using the journals databases in Lexis and Westlaw, or databases such as LegalTrace, Index to Legal Periodicals and Books, or Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals. By going to secondary resources first, you can get a much better understanding of your topic which can help you come up with better searches. In addition, you might find that someone else has already researched the area for you, which means that your work becomes much easier! Some other good secondary sources to use are ALR, AmJur, and CJS.

Keep a research log

This is a very important step! Your research log does not need to be very detailed. Simply listing where you searched, the terms that you used, and what you found can be enough. Keeping a log means that you do not repeat searches which you have already done, and it helps you to organize your research better. In addition, the professor you are working for might like to know where you searched and what you found in order to make sure that you are covering all of the resources that need to be covered.

Make sure to update your research

If you are doing research which involves caselaw, make sure that you Key Cite or Shephardize the cases that you find. Make sure that you are checking pocket parts in the books that you are using.

Become familiar with the Law Library webpage

We have a great deal of resources that are available to you. Spend some time searching the webpage so that you can be more familiar with what we have.

Don't be afraid to ask for help

If you get stuck, don't be afraid to come to the Reference Desk and ask for help. Also, feel free to ask to make an appointment with one of the Reference Librarians. We are always happy to meet with you to discuss any problems that you're having.