Six Easy Steps to Stress-Free Legal Research

The following checklist highlights the fundamental steps for performing effective legal research. Use these techniques to begin in-depth research or to simply familiarize yourself with a new area of law. For those desiring a full description of books and services with which to perform legal research, a *Legal Resource Guide on Research Techniques and Skills* is available in the Law Library and is also reprinted in this issue of the Newsletter.

1. **For a broad overview of a topic, first consult the secondary sources.**
   a. Legal Encyclopedias
   b. Treatises, handbooks, CLE and Bar publications – search the catalog
   c. Legal periodicals – search the LegalTrac Index at the Law Library

   **Note:** A keyword search in an electronic database is not generally the best place to start. An authored or edited treatment is a value-added source that will provide a more complete and organized coverage. Take advantage of a table of contents and an index.

2. **Review the primary source material that is cited in the secondary source.**
   a. Session laws; codes; regulations; case law – find them in:
      1. print sources
      2. topical loose-leaf services
      3. online databases
         a. LexisNexis
         b. Westlaw
         c. Ohio Capitol Connection

   **Note:** Verify effective dates and jurisdictions.

3. **Consult specialty finding tools either in print or online.**
   a. ALR system
   b. West’s Digest System
   c. Annotated Forms

   **Note:** Again, enjoy the benefit of professional editing and organization.

4. **Determine the existence of public documents and retrieve them from LexisNexis; Westlaw; Internet Sources; loose-leaf services; or government depositories.**
   a. Legislative histories
   b. Government filings
   c. Agency records and bulletins

   **Note:** The electronic preservation and retrieval of these documents is a true technological advancement.

5. **Verify, verify, verify.**
   a. Shepard’s Citators Online – LexisNexis
   b. KeyCite – Westlaw

   **Note:** Although a few print Citators remain available in the Library, it is recommended that the verification process be brought up to date online.

6. **Contact the Law Library staff for assistance at any step along the way.**

   **Note:** Statistics indicate that 81% of the DLLA reference requests are received via a phone call or in person. Consulting with the people who regularly select, process, and use these sources is the best way to ease the stress of legal research.
Legal Resource Guide on Research Techniques and Skills

Texts located in the Law Library -

Searching the Law – 2nd Edition
Doyle, Bae, Fishman, Preble
KF 240 .B365 1999

How to Use the Internet for
Legal Research
Josh Blackman
KF 240 .B52 1996

How to Find the Law – 8th Edition
Morris Cohen and Robert Berring
KF 240 .C538 1983

Legal Research in a Nutshell
Morris Cohen
KF 240 .C54 1985

Legal Research: Techniques and Strategies for Associates
Jean O’Grady
KF 240 .L43 1991

Legal Research and Law Library Management
Julius Marke, Richard Sloane, Linda Ryan
KF 240 .M24 1990

Practical Approaches to Legal Research
Keri Olson and Robert Berring
KF 240 .O37 1988

Effective Legal Research – 4th Edition
Miles Price, Harry Bitner, Shirley Bysiewicz
KF 240 .P7 1979

Legal Problem Solving – 4th Edition
Marjorie Rombauer
KF 240 .R64 1983

Selected Law Review Articles -

“Rule 11-Sanctions and a Lawyer’s Failure to Conduct Competent Legal Research” 29 Capital Univ. Law Review 681 (2002)


“Standardizing the Rules Restricting Publication and Citation in the Federal Courts of Appeals” 63 Ohio State Law J 833 (2002)

“Lurching Towards the Millennium: The Law School, the Research University, and the Professional Reforms of Legal Education” 60 Ohio State Law Journal 1985 (1999)

“Design Principles for Universal Legal Citations” 30 University of Toledo Law Review 631 (Summer, 1999)


“Here’s a Scoop for the Law Profs: Teach Your Students to “Think Like a Journalist”” 81 University of Detroit Mercy Law Review 179 (Winter, 2003)
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### Journal Watch

**ADA**


**BANKRUPTCY**


**BUSINESS LAW**


**CRIMINAL LAW**

“Admissibility of Lab Reports: The Right of Confrontation Post-Crawford.” 19 *Criminal Justice* 26 (Fall 2004 No. 3).


**DRAM SHOP**


**ELDER LAW**

“Protecting the Older Client in Multi-generation Representations.” 38 *Family Law Quarterly* 247 (Summer 2004, No. 2).


“How to Prove Management Flaws in Nursing Homes.” 49 *Trial* 30 (October 2004, No. 10).

**EMPLOYMENT LAW**


**ESTATE PLANNING**


**FAMILY LAW**


**HIPPA**


**TAX LAW**

“What is a Metropolitan Area for Transportation Cost Purposes?” 35 *The Tax Adviser* 665 (November 2004, No. 11).


An updated Journal Watch with additional articles can be found on the Library website at www.daylawlib.org
Recent Acquisitions

KF 1614 .C68  Do's and Don'ts in Advertising.
KF 8947 .S546 2004  The Evidence Camera.

Highlighting Records Retention

At the end of each year questions are often asked about the retention of records in law firms. The following two sources may provide a few answers.


The Dayton Law Library Association

41 North Perry Street
P.O. Box 972
Dayton, OH 45422-2490
www.daylawlib.org