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I. GENERAL LEGAL RESEARCH SITES

There are many free legal research sites on the Internet. The sites described below are generally considered to be some of the best for legal research. Nearly all of these sources are free, but a few may require an individual subscription or affiliation with Duke University.

- **Goodson Law Library** (<http://www.law.duke.edu/lib/>) provides access to many online legal information sources from the **Legal Databases & Links** page (<http://www.law.duke.edu/lib/lresources.html>). In addition to primary law from U.S. jurisdictions, you can access **Comparative and International Law** material (<http://www.law.duke.edu/lib/foreign.html>) and **Research Guides** for various legal topics (http://www.law.duke.edu/lib/research_guide.html) as well as many other sources of legal information.
- **Findlaw** (<http://www.findlaw.com>) provides links to online legal resources arranged topically and by user. Includes state and federal primary legal material, as well as legal material from other countries. Also provides forms available for purchase.
- **Hieros Gamos** (<http://www.hg.org/index.html>) is a legal information portal for a wide variety of legal and government information, organized in a directory format.
- **Legal Information Institute** (<http://www.law.cornell.edu>) An extensive collection of legal material including Supreme Court decisions, U.S. Code, U.S. Constitution, Federal Rules of Evidence and Civil Procedure. The “Law About” pages group links to primary legal resources based upon topic.
- **LexisONE** (<http://www.lexisone.com>) Legal information from Lexis for free, but requires registration. Its Legal Web Site Directory provides links to more than 20,000 law-related websites that were selected for their relevancy by legal practitioners. Access to many legal forms, including about 6,000 that are free. Limited to the last ten years for

many state case law databases.

- **PublicLegal** (<http://www.ilrg.com/>) Comprehensive index of more than 4000 websites with an emphasis on United States material. However, it provides access to an extensive collection of legal material from other countries. Websites are selected for relevance and uniqueness. It allows restricting searches to particular jurisdictions or types of domains (e.g. .gov, .org or specific countries .uk).
- **Public Library of Law** (<http://www.plol.org>) provides free access to primary sources in U.S. law, including federal and state cases, statutes, regulations, and constitutions. Legal forms are also available. The Public Library of Law was created by the makers of **Fastcase** (see section IV, Low-Cost Alternatives to Lexis and Westlaw), and also includes ads for fee-based content through the Fastcase service.
- **WashLaw Web** (<http://www.washlaw.edu/>) Large and diverse collection of web links to legal material. The information is arranged by jurisdiction and topic.

II. GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

The Internet remains an important source for legal information from federal, state and local governments. Below are some of the important sites for federal government information as well as a few starting points for locating state law information.

A. Federal Courts

Supreme Court of the United States

- The **Supreme Court** official website (<http://www.supremecourtus.gov/>) includes Court calendars and schedules, background information about the Court and justices, Court Rules, bar admissions information, case handling guides and general public information. Full text of current term opinions are featured with links to previous bench opinions.
- **Oyez** (<http://www.oyez.org>): The OYEZ Project is a multimedia archive that aims to be a complete and authoritative source for all audio recorded in the Court since the installation of a recording system in October 1955. The Project provides other information related to the court in multimedia formats. Also includes “On the Docket”, a calendar of recent and upcoming cases with news and audio.

Supreme Court opinions

- The **Supreme Court** official website (<http://www.supremecourtus.gov/>) also includes slip opinions back through the 2003 term, and opinions as printed in the *United States Reports* available in PDF format as far back as 1991.
- **Fedworld’s FLITE** (Federal Legal Information Through Electronics)

(<http://supcourt.ntis.gov/#FLITEinfo>), provides access to more than 7,000 Supreme Court opinions from the 300 through 422 volumes of the Supreme Court Reporter (1937-1975). Full text and case name searching are available.

- **Cornell LII:** 1990 to current year (<http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/>) New opinions posted within hours of release. Search by keyword; browse by party, date or docket number. Also contains a historical back file of over 300 important opinions.
- **Findlaw:** 1893 - to current year (<http://www.findlaw.com/casecode/supreme.html>) Browse by volume or year; search by party, cite or keyword in full text.

Lower Federal Courts

- **Court Links** (<http://www.uscourts.gov/links.html>): Administrative Office of the US Courts. Links to all available lower federal court web sites.
- **Federal Courts Finder** (<http://www.law.emory.edu/cms/site/index.php?id=2997/>): Developed by the Law School at Emory University, this site provides links to federal courts divided by jurisdiction and specialty.

B. State Court Opinions

- **LLMC Digital** (<http://library.duke.edu/metasearch/db/id/DUK00927>) Availability varies by court. Some volumes are available for all jurisdictions. This resource is most useful for historical information. **NOTE:** Remote access is limited to Duke University faculty, students and staff with a NetID and password.
- **National Center for State Courts** (<http://www.ncsconline.org/>) Several courts provide their own opinions online in PDF form. The National Center for State Courts' Court Web Sites page (http://www.ncsconline.org/D_KIS/info_court_web_sites.html) is an excellent starting place.

C. Legislation and Regulations

Federal

- **THOMAS** (<http://thomas.loc.gov/>) Primary online source for federal legislative material. Contains new public laws, pending bills, status of bills, committee reports and hearings. Full text of legislation available from 1989 (101st Congress) to present. Depth of other material varies -- some items, including public laws, are earlier in scope. Very current.
- **Official U.S. Code Search** (<http://uscode.house.gov/search/criteria.shtml>) Titles are equivalent to the 2006 edition and annual supplements.
- **GPO Access** (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov>) Full-text access to the **CFR** (back to 1996),

Federal Register (back to 1994), **Congressional Record** (back to 1994) and other government documents from the Government Printing Office.

- **Federal Administrative Agency Decisions & Other Actions** (http://www.lib.virginia.edu/govdocs/fed_decisions_agency.html): Can be searched by agency or by subject. Availability of material varies by agency.
- **LexisNexis Congressional** (<http://library.duke.edu/metasearch/db/id/DUK00841>) contains a great deal of federal legislative material, including: the U.S. Code, full text of public laws, Statutes at Large, CFR, Federal Register, CIS Legislative Histories for public laws, committee reports, Bills, Congressional Record, and congressional hearing testimony with various coverage dates. **NOTE:** Remote access is limited to Duke University faculty, students and staff with a NetID and password.
- **USA.gov** (<http://www.usa.gov>) provides one-stop access to all online U.S. government resources (local, state and federal). Includes topical arrangements, a useful A-Z list of government agencies and departments and Spanish translation of several web pages.
- **FedStats** (<http://www.fedstats.gov>): Portal to statistics from more than 100 U.S. Federal Agencies. FedStats can be used to find statistics on many topics without knowing in advance which particular agency has jurisdiction over that topic.

State

- **National Conference of State Legislatures** (<http://www.ncsl.org/>): Many states provide their legislative enactments on free websites. To easily locate those states, begin with this site, which provides links to state legislature websites.
- **WashLaw Web** (<http://www.washlaw.edu/>): Washburn School of Law links to state government websites, where legislative and administrative materials can often be found.

III. LEGAL PERIODICALS

An increasing amount of legal scholarship is available on the Internet. The sites below provide access to many full-text online legal journals.

- **American Law Sources On-line** (<http://www.lawsource.com/also/usa.cgi?usj>). Provides numerous links to online legal journals.
- **HeinOnline** (<http://library.duke.edu/metasearch/db/id/DUK00693>) provides full-text access to hundreds of law reviews and journals. Hein is unique in that it provides access to older articles, with coverage for most journals going back to the first volume. **NOTE:** Remote access is limited to Duke University faculty, students and staff with a NetID and password.

- **Social Science Research Network** (<http://www.ssrn.com>) provides abstracts and PDFs for thousands of scholarly papers, including working papers and pre-publication versions of legal journal articles.

IV. LOW COST ALTERNATIVES TO WESTLAW AND LEXIS

- **Casemaker** (<http://www.casemaker.us>) is a legal research system which is available free to current members of 28 state bar associations, including North Carolina (<http://www.ncbar.org/casemaker/>). **CasemakerX** (<http://www.casemakerx.com>) is a version for law students, which includes full access to the Casemaker research resources, as well as a MySpace-like profile for networking, both professional and social. Duke Law students may register for free access to CasemakerX with a school e-mail address.
- **Fastcase** (<http://www.fastcase.com>) Fastcase includes 50-state and federal case law databases like Federal District, Bankruptcy, and Tax Courts and Federal and state statutes and regulations. There are several subscription plans and Authority Check for updating case law. 24-hour free trials provided. Much of the fee-based material can be accessed via links from the free site **Public Library of Law** (<http://www.plol.org>), which is maintained by the same company (see Section I).
- **LoisLaw** (<http://www.loislawschool.com/>) Loislaw provides access to the full-text of cases, statutes, constitutions, administrative law, court rules, and other authority for all jurisdictions. The material is current, accurate, and includes a citator. **Current Duke Law faculty, staff and students can register for free access that continues through the summer.** Ask at the Reference Desk for the registration code.
- **VersusLaw** (<http://www.versuslaw.com>) Versuslaw is another low cost alternative for legal research mainly for primary law such as state and federal cases, statutes and administrative regulations. Current law students may register under the “Special Groups” section at the bottom of the home page.
- **Westlaw/Lexis a la carte:** Any of these services can be supplemented by access to pay-as-you-go Shepard’s or KeyCite.
 - **KeyCite:** <http://creditcard.westlaw.com/welcome/frameless/default.wl>
 - **Shepard’s:** <https://web.lexis.com/xchange/forms/uas/casepullcheck.asp? SVC=SH>

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