



# J. MICHAEL GOODSON LAW LIBRARY

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## DUKE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

### Research Refresher: Getting Background & Keeping Current

#### I. Ask a Librarian

- **Your firm's library:** librarians can be your best friend when you need help!
- **Goodson Law Library** (<http://www.law.duke.edu/lib>): open Mon-Fri 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. over the summer. Call, e-mail, IM or find us on the web/Facebook.

#### II. Search Smarter


- **Kosmix** (<http://www.kosmix.com>): prepares a dossier-like presentation of top search results. See 03/15/09 NY Times article at <http://tinyurl.com/kosmix>.
- **Online Research Guides**
  - **Zimmerman's** (<http://www.lexisnexis.com/infopro/zimmerman>)
  - **Duke Research Guides** ([http://www.law.duke.edu/lib/research\\_guide](http://www.law.duke.edu/lib/research_guide))
  - **Cornell Legal Research Engine** (<http://library.lawschool.cornell.edu/WhatWeDo/ResearchGuides/Legal-Research-Engine.cfm>)
  - **Google Custom Search Engine** (<http://www.google.com/coop/cse/>): to search across sites not in Cornell's engine, create your own search!
- **Print Research Guidebooks**
  - **WorldCat** (<http://www.worldcat.org>): search subject "Legal Research—[State]" for guidebooks on a particular state.
  - **Specialized Legal Research** (Ref Desk KF240 .S64): looseleaf binder with chapters on researching selected advanced legal topics.

#### III. Try an Encyclopedia

- **Wex** (<http://topics.law.cornell.edu/wex/search>): collaborative, Wikipedia-like law dictionary and encyclopedia, hosted by Cornell's Legal Information Institute.
- **American Jurisprudence 2d:** legal encyclopedia; entries provide an overview of a legal topic with references to selected cases and statutes. Available in print; Lexis; Westlaw.
- **Corpus Juris Secundum:** Similar to AmJur, but provides more extensive case references. Available in print; Westlaw.
- **State-specific encyclopedia:** Available for more than half the states; usually part of the *Jurisprudence* series. See Harvard Law Library's list at [http://www.law.harvard.edu/library/research/guides/united\\_states/alr\\_legal\\_encyclopedias.html](http://www.law.harvard.edu/library/research/guides/united_states/alr_legal_encyclopedias.html).

#### IV. Find an Article


- **LegalTrac** (<http://library.duke.edu/metasearch/db/id/DUK00130>): Searches law reviews, bar journals, newsletters, and other legal periodicals; selected full-text. Also available on Lexis and Westlaw as "Legal Resource Index" database.
  - **Law Reviews:** published by law schools; more scholarly in tone and audience. Full text on Lexis/Westlaw back to early 1980s. Earlier years in **HeinOnline** (<http://library.duke.edu/metasearch/db/id/DUK00693>); prepublication articles may be posted on **SSRN** (<http://www.ssrn.com>).

- **Legal Journals/Magazines:** published by bar associations and other organization; written by practitioners for practitioners. Many are available on Lexis/Westlaw; others are available to bar members only.
- **Legal Newsletters/Newspapers:** contain brief articles about the latest court decisions, jury verdicts, and settlements. Many available through **Law.com** (<http://www.law.com>).
- **Finding Full Text:** To check if a journal is available electronically through Duke, search the Libraries' online catalog (<http://catalog.library.duke.edu>) for the **journal title** and look for the  icon to locate the full text in databases.

## V. Other Sources for Background

- **Nutshells:** concise, pocket-sized outlines of a legal topic. Limited footnotes.
- **Hornbooks:** larger, one-volume discussions of a legal topic, with footnotes for further reading.
- **Treatises:** largest, multi-volume treatments of a legal topic, written by leading scholars and with many footnotes. Considered most authoritative; frequently cited to courts for persuasive authority. Helpful list at [http://www.law.harvard.edu/library/research/guides/united\\_states/legal\\_treatises\\_subject.html](http://www.law.harvard.edu/library/research/guides/united_states/legal_treatises_subject.html).
- **American Law Reports:** lengthy, encyclopedia-like entries on selected legal topics. Extensive case references, sorted by jurisdiction & topic. Available print; Lexis; Westlaw.
- **50-State Surveys:** compile references to statutes and regulations across multiple jurisdictions—can save you time while researching.
  - **National Survey of State Laws** (Ref KF 386 .N38 and Westlaw: SURVEYS).
  - **Lexis:** 50 State Surveys, Legislation & Regulations database.
  - **Westlaw:** SURVEYS and REG-SURVEYS database.
- **Pattern Jury Instructions (PJI):** “model” instructions which judge can deliver to jury; outline the elements and causes which the parties must prove. Availability varies by state: print; Lexis; Westlaw; Loislaw; Casemaker.

## VI. Keeping Current

- **Alert services:** Lexis and Westlaw allow you to periodically re-run searches, to inform you of new cases/sources on your topic or of changes to the Shepard's/KeyCite report.
  - **Lexis:** Can save alerts for search results or Shepard's reports. Delivery on Lexis or via email. Manage from the “Alerts” tab in the Research System.
  - **Westlaw:** Can save alerts from search results, KeyCite reports. Delivery to Westlaw sign-on, email, or straight to printer. Manage from “Alert Center” in upper right-hand corner.
- **Looseleaf/Electronic Services:** Topical binders or (more frequently) websites which update lawyers about the latest cases, legislation, and developments. See list of titles in the *Bluebook* (Table 15).
- **Blogs (a.k.a. “blawgs”):** Available on a variety of legal topics; usually written by practicing lawyers. For links to “blawg” directories and search engines, see <http://www.law.duke.edu/lib/blogs>.
- **RSS Feeds:** Available on blogs and many websites, RSS technology brings updates to the site directly to you (rather than you having to check each web page yourself).
  - **Aggregator (Reader):** What you use to collect and view the RSS feeds all in one place. **Google Reader** works with your Gmail account.
  - Once you have set up a reader, **subscribe to feeds** by clicking  on blogs and sites. The latest posts will update automatically in your feed reader.
  - **RSS in Plain English video:** [http://www.commoncraft.com/rss\\_plain\\_english](http://www.commoncraft.com/rss_plain_english)