

Law Library Briefs

Roger Williams University School of Law Library



No. 26, January, 2006

NELCO DATABASES

Law Librarians Nan Balliot, Emilie Benoit, and Lucinda Harrison-Cox recently attended a meeting hosted by the New England Law Libraries Consortium (NELCO). The meeting was held at the Social Law Library housed in the newly renovated historic John Adams Courthouse in downtown Boston, Massachusetts. They, along with other reference librarians from the NELCO member institutions, were updated on more projects and databases under consideration by NELCO. NELCO member libraries include academic, membership, state government, and trial court law libraries.

As a member of NELCO, the Roger Williams University School of Law library is able to offer its patrons access to various electronic databases. Click on the "Online Resources" link from the Law Library's web page for a listing of these and other databases with a link to each database. Access to most of the databases listed is controlled by IP address. To access the databases from your home PC, click on the instructions link at the bottom of the "Online Resources" web page. The instructions require that you type in your name and the barcode

number on the back of your law school ID. The librarian on duty at the Reference Desk is available to provide assistance in using these and other electronic databases subscribed to by the Law Library.

Here is a brief description of some of the databases to which our library patrons have access through our membership in NELCO.

You can search over 5,000 selected local, state, federal, and intergovernmental websites in the **Bernan's Government on the Internet database**. You can conduct a basic keyword search or an advanced search of the database using the template provided. There is an option to browse a broad list of topics. The retrieved results will have a link to the website, a brief description and evaluation of it, and links to available publications on the website.

Current Index to Legal Periodicals, Index to Legal Periodicals and Books, and Legal Resource Index (LegalTrac) are all excellent sources of finding law review, bar journal, and other legal periodical articles. You can search the **ILP&B** and the **LRI**

databases by subject or keyword.

For researching federal legislative history, check out the **LexisNexis Congressional service**. LexisNexis Congressional provides access to full text bills, House and Senate committee reports, and the *Congressional Record*. Congressional testimony available on LexisNexis Congressional includes transcripts of prepared questions and answers and prepared statements. You can also track the status of your bill and the full text of the bill as enacted into law. Generally, searching for information is by keyword or by bill number with an option to restrict your search by congressional session. Information about committees and individual members of Congress is also available via LexisNexis Congressional.

The **Social Law Library's Massachusetts Administrative Law and Substantive Law** databases include state agency regulations and decisions, court opinions and rules, and laws by session or codification. These databases can be searched using the templates provided. In addition, several of the databases contain a table of contents for browsing. Coverage

for each database varies.

Non-academic Massachusetts Law Libraries

For those of you who intend to practice law in Massachusetts or in a neighboring state, membership to the **Social Law Library** may be of some benefit to you for your legal research needs. The Social Law Library is the oldest continuously chartered law library in the United States. Established in 1803, it is also one of the oldest civic and cultural organizations in Boston. The Library's membership consists of approximately 6,500 lawyers from law firms and corporate law departments in the metropolitan Boston area and 1,900 solo and small firm lawyers who practice outside of Boston. The annual membership fee is \$335.00 per year per attorney inside Route 128 and \$195.00 per year per attorney outside Route 128.

Membership has its privileges! A member can borrow circulating materials from the Social Law Library's collection of over 420,000 volumes and access various electronic databases. There is free access to Westlaw while on the premises. Westlaw access is limited to primary law, *Massachusetts Practice*, the *Restatements*, and the KeyCite service. Members now have access to FastCase which contains state and federal court opinions, statutes, and regulations. There is unlimited access to the Social Law Library's Massachusetts Substantive Law databases and access to the Social Law Library's

Massachusetts Administrative databases for a nominal fee. Also available to members are reference assistance, interlibrary loan, document delivery, website hosting, and training.

Details about the Social Law Library can be obtained at <http://www.sociallaw.com>. The website is updated daily.

Seventeen trial court libraries located in Massachusetts are dedicated to providing legal research services to the bench, bar and the public. These libraries offer reference assistance, borrowing privileges, interlibrary loan, document delivery, and free access to Westlaw, Lexis or both.

The website of the **Massachusetts Trial Court Libraries** at <http://www.lawlib.state.ma.us/index.htm> is a great resource for Massachusetts legal information. There are links to websites for laws, regulations, cases, and municipal ordinances. One can access federal and Massachusetts legal forms for numerous topics. The website has pathfinders that are bibliographies of available print materials and recommended websites for selected topics. There is also a series of "Law About..." on over 100 topics. Each "Law About..." has links to websites for Massachusetts primary and secondary legal materials.



Subject Specialty Dictionaries

In addition to legal dictionaries

like *Black's Law Dictionary*, there are dictionaries for the various subjects taught here at the law school. Some titles include: *Dictionary of Banking Terms*, HG151 .F57 2000; *Dictionary of Real Estate*, HD1365 .S48 1996; *Dictionary of International Trade*, HF1373 .H55 2002, *The Environmental Regulatory Dictionary*, KF3775 .A68 K57 2005, *A Handbook of Business Law Terms*, KF390 .B84 H36 1999; and, *A Handbook of Family Law Terms*, KF503.6 H36 2001.

Intellectual Property Law Dictionary, KF2977.5 .G33 2004 or *McCarthy's Desk Encyclopedia of Intellectual Property*, KF2976.4 .M38 2004 are useful for those studying intellectual property.

Confused by tax terminology? Consult the *WG & L Tax Dictionary*, KF6287 .W37 or *West's Tax Law Dictionary*, KF6287 .W47 2006. *The Dictionary of Finance and Investment Terms*, HG151 .D69 2003, also contains definitions of tax terms.

For students studying marine affairs, three dictionaries of note are: *Dictionary of Shipping Terms*, HE567 .B68 2003; *Eric Sullivan's Marine Encyclopaedic Dictionary*, HE567 .S85 1999; and, *Marine Affairs Dictionary: Terms, Concepts, Laws, Court Cases, and International Conventions and Agreements*, KZA1125 .W47 2004.

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