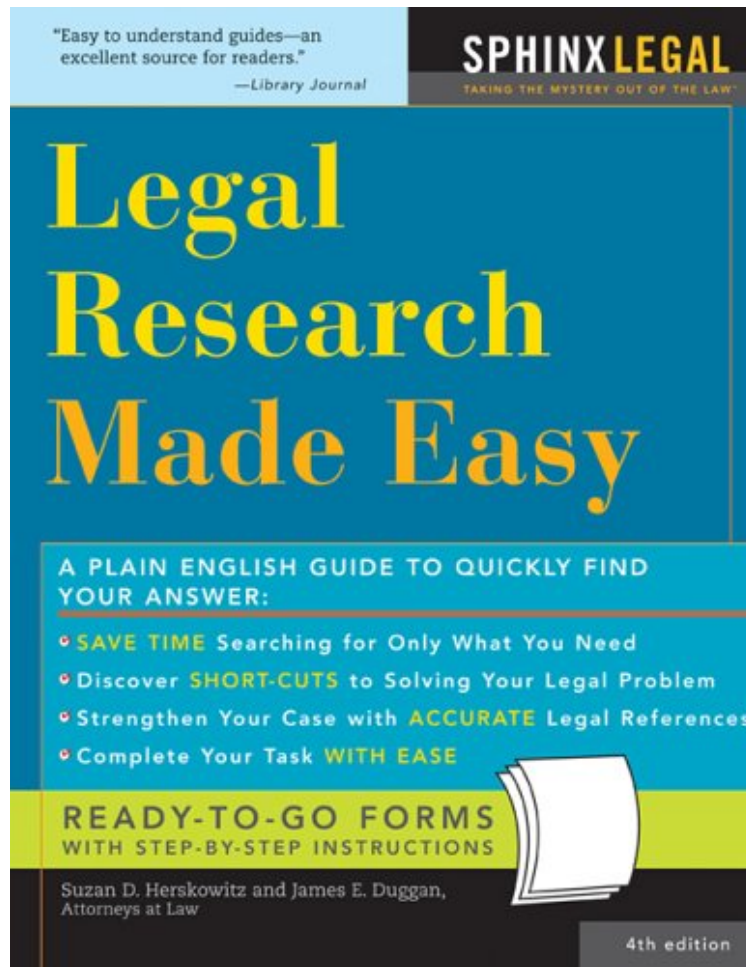


Legal Research Made Easy

Suzan Herskowitz P.L.L.C.

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Suzan Herskowitz P.L.L.C. : Legal Research Made Easy before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Legal Research Made Easy:

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Doing your own legal research can seem like an overwhelming task-especially after you set foot into a law library for the first time. Legal Research Made Easy simplifies the research process, and explains everything from statute research to case law to online databases. Let this book help you save money as you solve your own legal

problems. Learn how to:- Use the Internet in Your Research- Look Up Case Law- Shepardize a Case- Find What You Need When You Need It Includes a sample research problem to put all the pieces together. Essential reference to using:- Practice Manuals- Legal Encyclopedias - Treatises- Computer-Assisted Legal Research (CALR)- And much more . . .

About the Author Suzan D. Herskowitz is a graduate of the Texas Tech University School of Law. She is licensed to practice law in Florida, Texas and West Virginia. Ms. Herskowitz currently practices in West Virginia. James E. Duggan received his JD from the University of Mississippi and MLIS from Louisiana State University. He serves as Director of Information Technology and Professor at Southern Illinois University School of Law Library in Carbondale, where he teaches legal research and advanced electronic legal research. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Using the Internet to Meet Your Legal Research Needs Excerpted from Legal Research Made Easy by Suzan D. Herskowitz and James E. Duggan, Attorneys at Law 2005 From what you have read in prior chapters, the legal community has developed a very precise method of finding legal materials. If you follow the rules, you have a much greater chance of finding the answer to your question. Although potentially expensive to purchase, CALR and CD-ROM can be quite precise. In fact, despite the need for search queries, both CALR and CD-ROM use the traditional legal research framework. Enter the Internet- for a low monthly fee (and sometimes free), you can search the globe for legal materials. Until a few years ago, finding legal information on the Internet was a daunting task. The Internet was wild and confusing. Most sites with legal information were not indexed in any fashion. Searching for anything specific could be like looking for the proverbial needle in a haystack. Luckily, this has changed. In the recent past, much of the Internet's available legal sources have been vastly improved, making them much more accessible. A plethora of websites are available, and detailed search engines make finding the materials easy and fast. What makes this form of research even better is that much of it is absolutely free. This chapter introduces you to some of the best legal sites on the Internet. FINDING RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET USING SEARCH ENGINES A search engine is a program that will allow you to search the Web for websites that match the information you specify in a query, or question. Search engines are necessary because if you use a good search query, they will provide you with a wealth of good information. Otherwise, you will have to hunt and peck your way through the Internet, and if that is not a completely impossible task, it is tremendously time-consuming. That is not to say that a good query will always yield excellent results. It will not. Search engines often provide what can only be called garbage, as well as good information. This is the frustrating aspect of using search engines. What you think is a good, tight query might yield ten thousand or more results, many of which have absolutely nothing to do with what you need. Some search engines will find personal homepages as well as serious research websites. Others find websites that are merely advertisements for consumer and business products. Some find both. Anyone who uses the Internet for any length of time develops a preference for which search engine to use. Ask your friends and colleagues which search engines they prefer, and get the addresses from them. You might find an engine you have never heard of before. Another method is to click on the search link in whatever Internet browser (i.e., Internet Explorer, Firefox, Netscape, etc.) you use. Doing this will take you to a Web page that will allow you to enter a search query. Following is a list of common Internet search engines and their URLs. What is most important is that on the Internet, sites come and go rather quickly, so if you cannot connect to a site because you get a site not available or site not found message, the site may have been moved or may no longer exist. It happens. Just move on to your next choice. GENERAL SEARCH ENGINES (in no particular order) Google: www.google.com Alta Vista: www.altavista.com Dogpile: www.dogpile.com Lycos: www.lycos.com Yahoo: www.yahoo.com Hotbot (part of the Lycos family): www.hotbot.com Metacrawler: www.metacrawler.com Mamma: www.mamma.com LEGAL SEARCH ENGINES: (in alphabetical order) Detod: www.detod.com Law Policy Institutions Guide: www.lpig.org Law Crawler: <http://lawcrawler.findlaw.com> Legal Engine: www.legalengine.com Law Guru: www.lawguru.com/search/lawsearch.html LawKt.com: <http://news.surf wax.com/law> Law Runner: www.ilrg.com/gov.html LegalTrek: www.legaltrek.com FINDING LEGAL RESOURCES ON THE WEB As previously stated, finding legal resources on the Web has become much easier. The first reason for this is the increase in the number of legal websites. Some of these sites are inclusive- that is, they provide the information directly on that Web page. Other sites act as legal search engines. Plug in the information you require, and the site's search engine will connect you to the proper legal Web page in the blink of an eye. This is a particularly nice feature because you will not have to keep track of every legal site you find. Just keep track of the legal search engine information and let it do the rest for you. The second reason is that the individual websites have refined their searching techniques. At one time, if you wanted to find a Supreme Court case, you had to literally hunt and peck for it. Now, some sites allow you to find it by volume and page, case name, and even keyword search. This is a vast improvement. In fact, many legal sites now provide for keyword search, a vital tool for finding anything using a computer. The third reason for the improvements in finding legal research on the Internet has to do with the increase in the information available. The increase has been enormous. For example, you can now access United States Supreme Court cases back to the 1800s. You can find state statutes online and up-to-date. No need to trudge to a law library, and no need to pay for CD-ROM or CALR. Another wonderful point about using the Internet for finding legal

resources is that you can save all of it immediately to your computer's hard drive or to a disk, and access it when it is convenient for you. No need to print it immediately. Following are some legal websites, as well as other Internet sites with access to legal information. The list is far from exhaustive. Keep in mind that the Internet changes on a daily basis and that a website that is available one day may be gone the next. Two of the best legal online sites are www.findlaw.com and the Cornell Law School Legal Information Institute (LII) at www.law.cornell.edu. A state's own official site generally will provide access to its laws (statutes or code) and sometimes even cases. To find federal cases and codes: <http://findlaw.com/casecode> www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode To find state cases and codes (index pages): <http://findlaw.com/casecode/state.html> www.law.cornell.edu/states/listing.html Other Sites: Catalaw: www.catalaw.com Law.com: www.law.com US Law: www.uslaw.com FedWorld: www.fedworld.gov Federal Judicial Center: www.fjc.gov Federal Web Locator: www.infoctr.edu/fwl State Web Locator: www.infoctr.edu/swl Fed Law: www.thecre.com/fedlaw/default.htm Library of Congress: www.loc.gov American Bar Association: www.abanet.org Internet Legal Research Group: www.ilrg.com US Courts: www.uscourts.gov LawGuru: www.lawguru.com NOTE: Pick a law school and you will probably find an online library. For a list of all American Bar Association approved law schools (with their websites), see www.abanet.org/legaled/approvedlawschools/alpha.html.