

Research Resources for Practitioners—It's a New World

The quest for information is part of the lawyer's stock in trade. Until a generation ago, the digests and reports one practitioner used were consulted by all. Computer assisted legal research began the disintegration of the commonality of legal research techniques, and the advent of the Internet blew it out of the water completely. What was once a clear and well-worn research trail is now uncharted territory.

Attorneys need business, medical and scientific information. The shibboleth that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing applies to the many fields in which attorneys must develop expertise. Not only are other disciplines increasingly important, but computing skills are also needed in the 21st century law office.

In a legal system based on precedent, what will near anarchy in research methodology mean for the future? This is a question for legal scholars. In practical terms, lawyers need research advice and consultation from law library professionals who perform a wide variety of research every day. As choices of sources, formats and methodologies proliferate, it makes sense to use an intermediary to perform preliminary research or advise on the best sources.

The members of the Virginia Association of Law Libraries invite you to review the articles that follow. The authors demonstrate the wide-ranging expertise of Virginia's law library community. Consult a law librarian when faced with research quandaries, large or small.

Visit our Web site at law.richmond.edu/vall/vallmembers.htm to locate contact information for your local public law library if your firm or organization does not have a professional law librarian on staff. We welcome your calls and e-mails—just ask!



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