

Chat Room Transcript (unedited) for TheLawLibrarian on BlogTalkRadio
3 September 2009
(times are Central Standard Time)

*** (13:35:15):Welcome to the Richard Leiter Chat Room.

Co-host - Marcia says to (14:01:38):

Welcome everyone!

Sarah Glassmeyer says to (14:04:08):

Hi Marcia!

Sarah Glassmeyer says to (14:04:31):

Hi and thanks!

Ken Hirsh says to (14:07:51):

Are you talking about summer associates or law graduates?

Melissa Bernstein says to (14:16:34):

I think it would be great if students can hear firm librarians actually tell them this, maybe while they're still in school. We tell them some of this in class but they don't believe us!

Sarah Glassmeyer says to (14:17:35):

I know some places have a pre-summer "boot camp" where firm librarians come in and talk to students. The Seattle area has/had a big one and UC/NKU had one for the Cincinnati area.

Co-host - Marcia says to (14:17:42):

I contacted the our Career Services about this show but never heard back. It will be available via podcast in iTunes after the show

Susanna Leers says to (14:18:02):

BNA doesn't have the sort of rep support that WL & Lexis have; don't even have good handouts.

Carole Levitt says to (14:21:23):

Are the law school librarians/legal research professors and law firm librarians teaching law students how to use free Internet sources?

Susanna Leers says to (14:22:06):

We try!

Sarah Glassmeyer says to (14:22:11):

I give a guest lecture on free internet resources to the ALR course, but not 1L legal research.

Rob Richards says to (14:22:30):

Do you think it's feasible to cancel any of the BNA newsletters in favor of lower-cost competitors, such as the Law360 titles, or free-of-charge blogs that are very current and thorough?

Susanna Leers says to (14:24:33):

I teach sections of 1Ls when requested on internet legal research and encourage them to use free resources. But I can't offer free printing and constant help in the computer lab like WL and Lexis. The free printing is huge for our students.

Saskia Mehlhorn says to (14:25:05):

There are excellent blogs but you always have to make sure that it's authoritative and you won't have this problem with BNA or the like.

Rob Richards says to (14:27:55):

Svengalis lists the key treatises for US law

BrianLBaker says to (14:35:32):

We owned all the Rutter Group materials at SJCL, Rich.

LAnderson says to (14:38:13):

The problem with not learning restatements, treatises, etc., is not whether they're taught in print or electronic, but the amount of time we're given to teach them.

Jeremy Sullivan says to (14:40:05):

that's always been a hard thing for me to wrap my head around - some much of practicing law IS research...why wouldn't legal research and advanced legal research by MANDATORY in law school instruction?

LAnderson says to (14:40:09):

When legal research is mandatory only at the beginning of the first year, it's unrealistic to expect students to remember how to do it three years later.

Carole Levitt says to (14:40:55):

In the Advanced Legal Research class, do you teach students how to find public records free online or how to do back ground research on people or businesses? As a law firm librarian, I did more of that type of research than legal research for attorneys.

LAnderson says to (14:41:19):

Jeremy: Exactly! Everyone I know who's been to law school has said that legal research should be more heavily taught. One friend said "Legal research should be taught all three years, and it should be mandatory."

v.eldridge says to (14:41:35):

dallas area

Jeremy Sullivan says to (14:42:07):

I mean, don't get me wrong, it keeps us all in jobs, but

BrianLBaker says to (14:42:10):

Carole, Many of those DB's are too expensive for law school libraries

Jeremy Sullivan says to (14:42:50):

I would think the privacy issues on those public records dbs would be a bigger issue in law schools

Carole Levitt says to (14:43:01):

I'm talking about FREE public records-not expensive investigative databases!

Melissa Bernstein says to (14:43:51):

We have a new research course this semester called fact research for lawyers...

Jeremy Sullivan says to (14:44:16):

the cost-effective piece of the puzzle is the issue...law students never see a Lexis/westlaw bill

Carole Levitt says to (14:44:34):

Melissa, that's great! What law school are you at?

Melissa Bernstein says to (14:44:50):

University of Texas @ Austin

LAnderson says to (14:44:54):

I push the cost effectiveness issue heavily in my lectures.

BrianLBaker says to (14:45:46):
Melissa - that's very interesting. I'd love to see the syllabus

Carole Levitt says to (14:45:54):
Jeremy-what privacy issues? If public records are public...they are public and have no privacy rights.

Susanna Leers says to (14:46:39):
The reps do tell them how much things cost when they do the Prepare to Practice lessons.

mak506 says to (14:46:42):
Now I want to meet Rich's dad! :)

Jeremy Sullivan says to (14:46:59):
well, i was focused on services like accurint/autotrack (which aren't actually very expensive), but you have to indicate what your 'approved use' is before running a search

Richard Leiter says (14:47:07):
You'd like him. He's a blast

Jeremy Sullivan says to (14:47:12):
there are a number of laws that users must comply with

Jeremy Sullivan says to (14:47:28):
so that they're not stalking people, etc.

Jeremy Sullivan says to (14:47:48):
or using the info for other nefarious purposes

BrianLBaker says to (14:48:11):
Meg, he's a great guy. Met him once when we worked at Howard.

Carole Levitt says to (14:49:59):
The only info on Accurint (and databases like that) that have privacy issues are the credit headers (which include SSNs) that those databases contain.

Co-host - Marcia says to (14:51:09):
how many librarians teach or co-teach a research class at your law school?

Sarah Glassmeyer says to (14:52:35):
3 co-teach 1L legal research and director teaches ALR.

TerryM says to (14:53:12):
Just wait, Rich. Electronic will drive out print, tho Texas still gets the paper Daily Tax Report, but that is a ridiculous way to get daily information.

BrianLBaker says to (14:53:30):
I taught Advanced Legal Research & Writing. No one taught in the 1L LRW courses.

mak506 says to (14:53:32):
Marcia: 7 or 8 here.

Darin Fox says to (14:53:41):
When to teach research is a real struggle. We can't send 1Ls into summer jobs w/o knowing what a code is, right? But the light bulbs *really* turn on for 2L/3Ls in elective advanced classes once they have a little experience.

Carole Levitt says to (14:54:05):

When I worked at Pepperdine years ago, I taught the Legal Res and Writing course. They required a law degree, which I have, but I was the only librarian who had one, so only I could teach. I used the other law librarians to help teach Lexis/Westlaw.

LAnderson says to (14:54:17):

We have 1 librarian for each 2 sections of LR&W, so 5 librarians for the 1Ls, and director teaches ALR.

Pam Brannon says to (14:54:43):

We don't get the Daily Tax Report in paper at GSU - in fact, the only times I've seen the paper copies were in the AALL exhibit hall!

BrianLBaker says to (14:54:47):

Darin, that's exactly right. Almost need a required research class every year.

LAnderson says to (14:55:07):

Brian, I agree.

Darin Fox says to (14:55:21):

Hard to convince folks to make room in the curriculum for *both* a required 1L and upper division research class...plus hard to staff both.

Pam Brannon says to (14:55:59):

We have 5 librarians teach 1 section each of a required 1L legal bib class, and Nancy (our director) teaches a small section of ALR.

LAnderson says to (14:56:07):

I wonder if the lack of more practice-oriented classes comes from the academia vs. trade school line that law schools straddle.

BrianLBaker says to (14:56:46):

Most schools, I think, have an ALR course. But a required 1 or 2 credit course in Research annually would make a huge difference.

Jeremy Sullivan says to (14:56:54):

a large percentage of attorneys become solo practitioners...they don't have firm librarians to rely on

Rob Richards says to (14:56:56):

Many graduates are going to work as solos or in small firms, that don't have law librarians

Jeremy Sullivan says to (14:57:09):

jinx Rob, buy me a Pepsi

Rob Richards says to (14:57:33):

Jeremy: Will do, if you buy me a DietCoke!

Jeremy Sullivan says to (14:57:41):

done and done

BrianLBaker says to (14:57:57):

LAnderson - the growth of clinical legal education courses is changing that.

BrianLBaker says to (14:58:20):

or education

Rob Richards says to (14:58:40):

Often, when we discuss "fact research" in the practice context, we mean "fact-focused legal research," not a pure fact question

Melissa Bernstein says to (15:00:44):

Brilliant? Wow. That's high praise.

Pam Brannon says to (15:01:03):
It's kinda true. It's amazing.

Susanna Leers says to (15:01:52):
But I'm sad Hein is adding everything as "modules" with their own price now.

Susanna Leers says to (15:05:00):
I just had a student stop by my office who was captivated by listening to this show. Maybe we should make our ILR students listen to this for homework/

Darin Fox says to (15:05:35):
Good information in the annual ABA Legal Technology Survey Report. Vol. V discusses attorney research habits. Showing stats on what firms use helps make research class a little more "real" for 1Ls. Local surveys good too.

Co-host - Marcia says to (15:05:43):
Great idea, I agree. I told my student workers about this show.

Sarah Glassmeyer says to (15:07:29):
I think we do underestimate the interest of students in the business of libraries...what we stock on our shelves (or only have electronically) and why. With the economy what it is, they are terrified of not being as marketable as possible and...

Sarah Glassmeyer says to (15:08:05):
want to know how to be the best summer job candidate.

Sarah Glassmeyer says to (15:08:33):
Susanna's comment about having students listen to the show made me think of that.

Co-host - Marcia says to (15:08:50):
The cost effectiveness of good research should scare students into learning either print or electronic!

Jeremy Sullivan says to (15:08:51):
the difference between the authoritative and the spurious

Carole Levitt says to (15:08:53):
Since most lawyers don't have law librarians once they begin practicing--tell them about county law libraries and free Internet resources.

BrianLBaker says to (15:09:27):
Interesting point Sarah

Darin Fox says to (15:10:49):
Westlaw and LexisNexis are *reluctant* to give out price lists. Like pulling teeth. Has anyone found a location where these are accessible on the web easily??? I would like to find them every year.

Sarah Glassmeyer says to (15:11:57):
We have some from a few years ago. If Wexis don't want us to discuss our contracts, perhaps they could make easily available the ranges for DB pricing.

LAnderson says to (15:12:23):
When I worked at a law firm, I was able to hit the (i) button on every Lexis or Westlaw database, and it would give me the price of a search in that database. Yesterday, I tried to do that on Westlaw, and it told me it was under the Premier Pricing Plan..

LAnderson says to (15:12:53):

...or something of that sort. No actual dollar figure.

Darin Fox says to (15:12:55):

LAnderson - the SUBSCRIBER database is *unavailable* to academic users. It is totally blank. We can't get pricing that way. :(

Carole Levitt says to (15:13:12):

Are you telling new lawyers to use lexisone for free before hopping onto the real Lexis, for example?

BrianLBaker says to (15:14:19):

We are telling them that in law schools, Carole.

Susanna Leers says to (15:15:14):

I need a personal knowledge management strategy too.

Susanna Leers says to (15:16:23):

It would be nice to be able to have a class for 3Ls where they had to see how much they were spending!

LAnderson says to (15:16:31):

Susanna, that would be great!

Susanna Leers says to (15:17:18):

Why couldn't Lexis and Westlaw offer that? Even if it was just a hypothetical typical firm.

LAnderson says to (15:18:31):

We wouldn't need them to, if we had price sheets. Just require students to turn in their research trails along with their results plus the time spent.

Sarah Glassmeyer says to (15:18:34):

We sort of tried to do that with our outdated price lists by hand. But yeah, it would great if we could get more "official" pricing.

BrianLBaker says to (15:20:07):

If they allowed us to have them, Wexis would lose the huge bounce in income for the last quarter of the calendar year when the new lawyers join post bar exam results.

merleslyhoff says to (15:20:11):

Has PLL-SIS worked with ALL-SIS on the issues discussed today?

Carole Levitt says to (15:20:30):

I provide in-house CLE Internet research at firms. I'm not exactly a vendor--I teach how to find free stuff-- but I also try to explain when to use pay sources.

BrianLBaker says to (15:20:30):

Not that I'm aware of Meryle

Susanna Leers says to (15:20:36):

Good for you Sarah. But clearly WL/Lexis have very sophisticated software to charge for all sorts of situations; they could set up something so we could teach an advanced legal research that included cost-effectiveness.

merleslyhoff says to (15:21:34):

I think this is a great topic to pursue as a discussion between the 2 SISs

Carole Levitt says to (15:23:16):

Is anyone teaching Casemaker or Fastcase (now that about 42 states are offering one of the two for free as a member benefit)?

Jeremy Sullivan says to (15:23:29):

I'm a big fan of Justia

Co-host - Marcia says to (15:24:03):

<http://www.courthousenews.com/>

jill brooks says to (15:25:03):

PLL and ALL along with other SIS groups are currently working on creating literacy information standards.

Carole Levitt says to (15:25:24):

I'm a big fan of Justia too-they were the first to offer free federal district court opinions online. The owners of Justia were the FindLaw founders.

Carole Levitt says to (15:26:49):

no CA doesn't have Casemaker or Fastcase--yet. I've been evaluating them for the Bar.

Jeremy Sullivan says to (15:27:58):

This was great...thanks everyone

v.eldridge says to (15:28:14):

Thanks! very interesting

Susanna Leers says to (15:28:19):

Yes, that was great, let's do it again! Thanks Richard.

Co-host - Marcia says to (15:28:20):

Thank you for all the comments and suggestions.

Saskia Mehlhorn says to (15:28:34):

Thanks! That was great.

LAnderson says to (15:30:27):

I'd love to continue the conversation on teaching cost-effective legal research.