

A PUBLICATION OF THE MARYLAND STATE LAW LIBRARY

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CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH RESOURCES

BY STEVE ANDERSON

Librarians generally know that, occasionally, an answer to a question exists outside the four walls of the library. The best available resource sometimes is not a book, database or website. From time to time, another person or another organization provides the most valuable information. The librarian then connects the researcher to this resource by making a referral.

The State Law Library's reference staff goes to great lengths to provide high quality information to customers during their visits to the Library. Every once in a while, however, Library staff needs to recommend other libraries that own materials that this Library never acquired. Similarly, Library staff may need to contact publishers, editors and database providers to verify information or ask how to get a copy of a hard-to-find publication. In these instances, while the Library cannot provide all of the required information, it tries to ensure that the customer can access useful information elsewhere.

Importantly, the Library employs a similar strategy when members of the general public ask for assistance. Of course, the Library provides the direction needed for beginning research and recommends the most relevant legal titles and databases. There are times though when legally-phrased questions appear to be rooted in other areas, such as health care or government or employment benefits. Then there also are situations when complex problems do not lend themselves easily to a single legal research topic. When individuals ask these sorts of questions, the Library staff typically suggests that the customer also contact a government agency or other entity that might provide more information and thoroughly explain procedures. Significantly, the Library also urges that individuals seek legal counsel.

One of the most useful sources for attorney referral information is the People's Law Library's "[How Do I Find Legal Help?](#)" page. (The State Law Library maintains the award-winning People's Law Library website.) This page links to all of the legal services providers operating with assistance from the Maryland Legal Services Corporation. There are additional links to telephone hotlines, reduced fee services, attorney directories, the [Mediators Online Directory](#) from the [Maryland Program for Mediator Excellence](#), and courthouse-based self-help legal centers. The page also provides information on selecting and working with an attorney. The State Law Library recognizes that some exceptional resources lie outside its doors and that guiding customers to other knowledgeable members of the legal community is another way to provide a necessary and worthwhile service.

PIXELS

BY MARY JO LAZUN

RSS OR TWITTER -- SAME NEWS, YOU CHOOSE

Stay current with news from the Maryland State Law Library using either RSS or Twitter. Both services enable subscribers to keep current with news updates from the Maryland State Law Library without having to remember to visit the web site. When the Library posts an update to its RSS feed at <http://www.lawlib.state.md.us/library.rss>, those updates are "syndicated" (that is, made available) to individuals who have subscribed to the feed. Think of it like a newspaper's wire service. Browsers like Internet Explorer, Safari, and Firefox now include an RSS reader.

Those who "tweet" can follow the Library on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/mdstatelawlib>. Twitter is a very flexible tool-- updates can be read on Twitter or even cell phone. Tweets are very short, only 140 characters are allowed, so most of our tweets include a link to a web page with more detailed information. To come full circle it is even possible to have the library's tweets as an RSS feed.

Recent posts include information on new materials available at the Library, updates on new databases, use of our WiFi, the features of our new copy machine, where to find bill files and session laws, sample pleading forms and more. Updates are done just once a week so you will not be inundated with updates.

Which to use? It really doesn't matter. The same updates will be available regardless of the service you subscribe to so you can choose the update service that works best for you.

The Library would be interested to know what kinds of updates would be useful to you. Contact Mary Jo Lazun at mjlazun@mdcourts.gov or call the Information Desk at 410-260-1430.

Want to learn more about RSS and Twitter? See:

"RSS in Plain English" at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0klgLSxGsU>

"Twitter in Plain English" at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddO9idmax0o>

"How to Use RSS" at <http://reviews.digitaltrends.com/guide/35/how-to-use-rss>

"Twitter Review: Waste of Time or Extremely Valuable?" at <http://tinyurl.com/2oh2lp>

PRESERVING INTERNET MATERIAL CITED IN MARYLAND JUDICIAL OPINIONS

BY KATHERINE BAER

The Judicial Conference Committee on Court Administration and Case Management of the United States Courts recently made recommendations to the Judicial Conference on how to cite and manage Internet materials in Federal court opinions. (See [Report of the Proceedings of the Judicial Conference of the United States, March 17, 2009](#), at page 10.) One of the primary recommendations, which the Conference approved, was to preserve the Internet resource cited in the opinion. For more information about the Judicial Conference guidelines, see [The Third Branch, July 2009](#).

The Library believed that a similar preservation effort could be applied to the Internet sources cited by Maryland appellate opinions. Because of the Library's other work in digital materials, staff members knew that many links were at risk of becoming inoperative, especially as they grew older. By searching for the unique term "http" (the beginning part of a web address), the Library identified 90 Maryland opinions via Lexis that contained hyperlinks to Internet materials. The first case citing an Internet source was from 1998, and the number of hyperlinks each year has been steadily rising. The cited links cover a wide variety of topics, from census data to song lyrics.

Library staff attempted to locate each cited Internet source, finding all but one (and the search for that one continues). If the link was no longer active, staff used the Internet Archive's [Wayback Machine](#) to locate the original web page. Because of concerns related to copyright and appropriate reproduction, the Library selected a conservative approach to preservation. Library staff printed a single copy of the cited web page onto archival paper and placed the printout in a file, organized by court, year and docket number. The Library will continue to monitor newly-issued Maryland opinions and keep this collection up-to-date. It is hoped that this project will maintain cited sources for many years to come.

EDUCATIONAL DISPLAYS AT THE STATE LAW LIBRARY

BY RUDOLF B. LAMY

If you haven't been to the State Law Library for a few months, you probably missed some of the educational and informational displays the Library has offered in its public exhibit cases.

This year, in addition to the permanent rotating exhibit of James J. Audubon "Birds of America" prints in the Library, the Library has offered several displays marking 2009 as a bicentennial anniversary year. During the first few months of the year, the Library celebrated the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth (1809) with material from the Library's holdings and a copy of a new publication on "Lincoln in Maryland" from the Maryland State Archives. Another display recognized the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth, highlighted by material from the Library's collection related to the "Scopes Monkey Trial" (*State v. Scopes, Scopes v. State, 152 Tenn. 424, 278 S.W. 57 (Tenn. 1926)*). Finally, the life and works of Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) were featured in a display marking the bicentennial of this famous Marylander's birth.

While you are visiting the Library, don't forget to view the rest of the art and history on exhibit on our walls and in our display cases. For more information on educational displays and Library tours, contact the Library's Information Desk at 410-260-1430.

CIRCUIT COURT LAW LIBRARIES: CONSIDERING WEB 2.0 TOOLS?

BY CATHERINE MCGUIRE

Does your library use Web 2.0 tools? Do you mostly wonder what those really are? Do you wonder if they are useful to a library such as yours?

Web 2.0 generally refers to a range of tools, using the Internet as a platform, that assist in communicating, collaborating, and informing locally and community-wide. The key component to the Web 2.0 revolution is the user-based design. Many tools that we may already use are considered Web 2.0 tools. The best-known are probably the social networking sites (Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn), but also included are blogs, RSS feeds, and wikis. Google, with its many added applications (Docs, Reader, Alerts, etc.) is solidly in 2.0 territory.

What advantages are there to using these types of tools? Herewith follows a brief summary of some 2.0 gems and their potential usefulness for court law libraries:

Blogs (short for weblogs) are used essentially as an online newsletter. Easy to update, immediately posted and available, they make communicating with your users simple. There are several nice county law library blogs, including Stark County, Ohio (www.starklawlibrary.org/temp.blog/index.html) and Kent County, Washington (www.kcill.org/wordpress/). Closer to home, the Anne Arundel County Public Law Library also has a blog at <http://aacpll.wordpress.com/>.

Blogs are an easy alternative to the print newsletter. In electronic format, they are easy to update, and can be updated often rather than done as a periodical, thus making their contents more timely and immediate. They also do not cost postage to reach readers. A law library putting time and money into a print newsletter may want to consider the advantages of a blog. Make sure to "syndicate" the content so that interested users can subscribe on their RSS feeds.

RSS delivers web content from multiple sites to a single location. Blogs, news-related sites and other online publishers syndicate their content as an RSS feed to any subscriber who so chooses it. Rather than visit each website in which you are interested regularly, which can consume considerable time, you subscribe to your favorite sites using a feed reader. There are different platform based readers depending on whether you use Windows, Mac, etc.; there are also many web-based readers, including Google Reader, Bloglines and My Yahoo. You can find a simple explanation of RSS at www.WhatIsRSS.com and in the sources mentioned in the *PIXELS* article, above.

RSS can help you stay on top of the news, without the time-consuming need to go from site to site. A reader can be set up to stream in feed from the Maryland State Law Library (yes, we use RSS), the AALL State, Court and County Law Libraries SIS, interesting law library blogs, the Maryland Judiciary (see http://www.mdcourts.gov/rss_xml.html for information on how to subscribe), other court systems (the US Courts system has several topical RSS feeds), and much more. You as the subscriber then go to your reader – a single stop on the web – to see abbreviated feed from all those sites. If a story synopsis looks good, the full text can be accessed from the reader.

Wikis are websites that allow users to edit pages using a web browser. Wikis can be used collaboratively. Multiple persons can sign in to edit materials, thus making the edits easily accessible and editable by all on the team.

The Conference of Maryland Court Law Library Directors (CMCLLD) uses a wiki for internal work. Documents such as the Maryland County Public Law Library Standards 2009 were posted in draft form on the wiki, with Conference members then able to edit and comment on the text in a single location. The process of commenting and editing then becomes much quicker than when the full document was emailed to each member in turn to make comments.

Social Bookmarking is often overlooked but is something that could be useful to an organization that partners or collaborates with other entities having similar missions. Social bookmarking (Delicious, Diigo and others) allows users to store and tag bookmarks in a single location for multiple users to access. Used by most if not all public library systems in Maryland, social bookmarking can be helpful to any type of library where more than one computer or more than one staff member participates in directing and assisting library users.

The Maryland State Law Library has ten regular reference providers on staff. Rather than having each staff member maintain his/her own list of bookmarked sites, sites are now bookmarked to Delicious and given appropriate tags so that all staff can access the same material, no matter whether on their own computers or on the reference desk computer. The list of Delicious tags has been added to the staff start page, thus making access to useful sites easier.

Social Networking sites include Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace and more. Many large libraries now use these sites for business purposes. However, at this time, there is some question as to whether the time and labor investment by smaller court libraries in these tools will result in commensurate benefits to users. Still, it is worthwhile to learn more about social networking tools; LLRX has a good summary available at <http://www.llrx.com/node/1846>.

LAWYERS' JOKES: DEFINING THE LAW JUST A LITTLE BIT *RENTE*

BY RUDOLF B. LAMY

prima facie: best face forward
imprimatur: the guy who does your ink
pro bono publico: a big U2 fan
pendente lite; *lis pendens*: immature thoughts
inter alia: Alia just came in
in camera: still on the memory card
ex parte: no longer at the party
ad infinitum: way, way too many commercials on TV
fiat: small Italian automobile
casus belli: Melvin's father
restitutio in integrum: a really good nap
nemo debet esse iudex in propria: fish with lemon and tartar sauce
per contra: according to Oliver North
ultra vires: a really bad flu season
exempli gratia: best tip you can give the waitress
subpoena: less than the best poena
affidavit: Michelangelo's statue right after the "David"
modus operandi: directors at "La Scala"
scandalum magnum: large, overpriced bottle of champagne
a priori: just one priori
a posteriori: a treatise filled with sticky notes
writ: past pluperfect of "write"
bail: run away
duplicatum jus: toner
non sui juris: no judicial alumni from the University of Arkansas
nundinae: Sister Dinae
nuper obiit: the latest death notice
privy: the little house out back
pro se: testimony from an expert witness
personal tort: single serving pastry
unitas actus: one man show
vacua possessio: has a Hoover