Databases

The library currently subscribes to Lexis-Nexis for access to UK and NI case-law, UK legislation and Blackstone online, while the Westlaw UK Crime package provides e-access to Archbold, criminal law journals and law reports. Frequent training in database use is provided for legal staff.

Services

In addition to responding to daily queries on legislation and case-law, the library also delivers a research service for the Director and other legal staff.

It also provides counsel with legislation and authorities upon request. Often this is required during the course of a trial when documents have to be faxed to the relevant court within minutes.

In the past, the library provided a daily press cuttings service for the Director but this work ceased a few months ago, when the PPS developed its own press office. Library press cuttings have since been discarded with the exception of cuttings relating to the Saville Inquiry.

The library is also responsible for the design, layout and maintenance of the legal intranet. Virtually all legal guidance is published on its pages and as Librarian it is part of my role to ensure that guidance is edited, published and distributed.

Alongside this I publish a weekly electronic current awareness service with links to full text where available. All NI judgments from the NI Court Service are catalogued, abstracted and published on the legal pages.

The PPS may have a capsule library but it punches above its weight to fully meet the needs of the new service.

Biography

Jacki Sleator has been Librarian for the PPS since 2002. Prior to this she worked as Assistant Librarian at the NI Assembly Library from 2000. In 1975 she joined the staff at Loughry College as Librarian.

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Checklist

Books You Cannot Afford to be Without!

Abstract: Dunstan Speight, of Berwin Leighton Paisner LLP, gives his recommendations for some essential reference desk titles.
Keywords: law books; legal research

We are all familiar with the key legal textbooks, but the books listed below are my personal recommendations for titles to keep behind the reference desk to make your own research more efficient.

1) Stoakes (Christopher): *All you need to know about the City: who does what and why in London's financial markets*, Longtail Publishing 2011

There are a number of books available explaining how the City works: this is one of the best. Chris Stoakes has the knack of being able to strip away all the mystique from complex topics such as IPOs or securitisation and explain technical processes and jargon in layman's terms. This provides an easy way to improve one's knowledge of the commercial context in which lawyers operate – a key factor in creating a well respected research service.

A second volume, subtitled "Understand the world's financial markets and why London dominates" picks up on many of the themes in the first volume and explores them in greater depth. It also provides useful overviews of the world's financial centres, explaining how they have

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developed – again very useful in helping librarians understand the broader context of their research.

2) Ward (Richard) and Akhtar (Amanda): *Walker & Walker's English legal system*, 11th ed. OUP 2011

It goes without saying, of course, that your research staff, should have a good grasp of the English legal process. This overview of the English legal system provides the right level of detail if you need a reminder of exactly how the courts are structured or guidance on key concepts like judicial precedent. It is an ideal book to give to junior staff who are new to legal research – and also handy if you have lawyers from other jurisdictions visiting your office who want a guide to our system.

3) Gray (John): *Lawyers' Latin: a vade-mecum*, Robert Hale Ltd, 2006

In line with the general trend to make life less interesting, the last decade has seen a strong move to eliminate the use of Latin from the law, but lawyers still encounter Latin tags and quotes in many contexts. This is one instance when all lawyers naturally turn to the librarian, so it is well worth having this book to hand. (It is also an entertaining read, should you ever have a quiet moment on the research desk).

4) The City UK: *Guide to the sources of statistics*

The City UK website is in its own right a repository of a huge amount of useful market information on different aspects of the City. In addition, it publishes an annual online guide to the sources of statistics which is an essential guide for any research librarian who is asked to provide such information at the drop of a hat. From trends in international wealth management to hedge fund statistics to carbon trading, this guide summarises what is available on a host of freely accessible websites, potentially saving you hours of Google searches. The 2010 edition is online at http://www.thecityuk.com/media/180097/guide%20to%20sources%20of%20statistics%202010.pdf

5) *Chambers UK – lists of in-house and external counsel*

Lawyers always want to know details of corporate counsel and the law firms they instruct. Often this information can be hard to find, but for the FTSE 350, this information appears at the front of the Chambers UK directory. Lawyers obviously expect the directories to be in the reference section of any library, but this list is certainly the section of the directory I turn to most often.

6) Cane (Peter) and Conaghan (Joanne) (eds): *The new Oxford companion to law*, OUP 2008

This book is aimed at non-lawyers with an interest in legal matters and provides short articles on a large number of legal terms and concepts. Many of the entries relate to legal issues which regularly crop up in the news or in everyday life, but it also covers many historical items. As such, it is an extremely useful resource if you are looking for a quick background summary prior to starting your research proper. The book also contains summaries of ground-breaking cases and a smattering of some of the more notorious murder trials. You may start off looking for a definition of *acquis communautaire*, but it is hard not to be distracted by an account of the Rugeley poisoner.

7) Holborn (Guy): *Butterworths legal research guide*, 2nd ed. Butterworths LexisNexis, 2001

Much has changed in legal publishing over the past ten years, particularly as regards electronic sources. Nonetheless, this is still an indispensable book for training new staff and for reference. It is particularly good at explaining all the details of legal publications which are usually overlooked, such as the variety and forms of case names. The section on Pepper v Hart research is invaluable.

For more recent sources of legal information, ***Legal research: a practitioner's handbook*, by Peter Clinch and James Mullan, (Wildy, Simmons & Hill, 2010)** provides an impressive checklist of printed and online sources, including key sources of business information. Particularly useful are the directory of sources for treaties and the table of popular names for cases and EU legislation.

8) Murray (Fiona): *EU and member state territories: the special relationship under Community law*, Sweet & Maxwell, 2004

One of those fiddly questions which crops up frequently across many areas of law is how EU law provisions relate to dependant territories of EU member states – particularly the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and Gibraltar. Fiona Murray's book provides a very useful guide to this – setting out the broad principles for when EU legislation does take effect in these jurisdictions.

9) Gorman (Michael): *The Concise AACR2*, 4th ed. CILIP, 2004

Cataloguing may not receive the attention it once did, but I maintain that you cannot run a library efficiently unless you have an accurate catalogue. This is true, even if you have largely given up the battle of persuading your lawyers to use a catalogue, since at least your library staff will have an authoritative record of library holdings. I found this book extremely helpful when I was putting together a cataloguing manual for my firm and have often had occasion to refer to it since. It is full of practical examples and more user-friendly than the full AACR2.

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10) Vaitlingam (Romesh): *The Financial Times guide to using the financial pages*, 6th ed. FT Prentice Hall, 2010

Questions relating to financial data can sound fairly innocuous until you find yourself faced with a vast table of figures in the FT and very little idea as to which one you need. This book, illustrated with many examples of data from the paper and the FT website, is very useful in explaining what the different figures are, how they are calculated and where they are used.

Biography

Dunstan Speight is the Library Manager at the city law firm, Berwin Leighton Paisner LLP. The BLP Library Service recently won the Halsbury's Award for 2011 in the category of Best London Legal Information Service in the Commercial Sector. Dunstan currently serves on the LIM Editorial Board.

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Practical Matters

Online Screencasting Tutorials: a Way Forward for Legal Resources Training?

Abstract: Lisa Peters offers some thoughts on the development of screencasting.
Keywords: legal education; e-learning; skills training

Introduction

At the University of Chester, we have been using screencasting tutorials for two years as another way of training students in how to use our online databases and other resources.

What is screencasting?

Screencasting captures a recording of a computer screen with associated movements such as mouse movements and clicks. It can be accompanied by an audio voiceover or callouts (such as speech bubbles and arrows) which direct attention to a particular part of the database. The advantages of screencasting include:

- Students can access tutorials when and as many times as necessary so as to enforce learning and accommodate slower learners
- Available online 24/7 so students can access and learn when it suits them
- Simple, low-cost technology
- The tutorial visually guides the students through using resources step-by-step
- Each tutorial can focus on a particular aspect of a resource (for example, logging on, how to find an Act of Parliament) so students can select the tutorial that they require

Screencasting at the University of Chester

The University of Chester uses a screencasting software called Camtasia. More information about Camtasia is



Figure 1: The final side in the tutorial gives contact details should further help be required.

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