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Keeping Up with New Legal Titles

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Keeping Up with New Legal Titles

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Keeping Up with New Legal Titles*

Compiled by Benjamin J. Keele** and Nick Sexton***

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* The works reviewed in this issue were published in 2013, 2014, and 2015. If you would like to review books for "Keeping Up With New Legal Titles," please send an e-mail to bkeele@indiana.edu and nsexton@email.unc.edu.

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Murray, Michael D., and Christy H. DeSanctis. *Legal Research Methods, Second Edition*. St. Paul: Foundation Press, 2015. 256p. \$100.

*Reviewed by Beau Steenken**

¶41 *Legal Research Methods, Second Edition*, is the latest installment in the comprehensive system of legal research and writing texts by Michael D. Murray and Christy H. DeSanctis. In addition to *Legal Research Methods*, Murray and DeSanctis have authored *Legal Writing and Analysis*, a number of advanced legal writing texts, and *Legal Research and Writing Across the Curriculum*, which I try to leave in the paths of susceptible doctrinal faculty members whenever possible. Much has changed in the legal research world since the first edition of *Legal Research Methods* appeared in 2009, so the second edition is a welcome addition.

¶42 In the second edition, Murray and DeSanctis replace all of the screenshots in the book to reflect the new generation of legal research platforms. Furthermore, they discuss the relative strengths and weaknesses of the new platforms and provide sound advice on how to narrow in on the most relevant results using the new systems, such as effectively using both presearch and postsearch filters. Also, the new edition provides treatment of Bloomberg Law alongside WestlawNext and Lexis Advance. Similarly, FDSys takes the place of THOMAS in the chapter on legislative history, though Congress.gov is oddly absent. Beyond the technology updates, not much has changed in the second edition, but that is a good thing because the work's organization, content, and tone make *Legal Research Methods* a solid choice as a text for first-year legal research courses.

¶43 As I can attest, having recently coauthored a first-year legal research text for CALI's eLangdell Press, choosing how to organize the vast amount of information that needs to be relayed to first-year law students is a daunting task. This difficulty can be seen in the split among both texts and teachers of legal research in where to begin. Some favor beginning with secondary sources, as those are traditional starting points of the research process. Others prefer beginning with primary sources, as these constitute the most important of potential research results. Murray and DeSanctis take the latter approach, but they bracket it with thorough, readable discussions of the research process in the first and last chapters. The authors show students how to use select secondary sources to find relevant primary sources when introducing the primary sources, then fleshing out secondary sources more fully in a later chapter. This hybrid approach excellently emphasizes the relative importance of primary sources while also highlighting the utility of secondary sources.

¶44 In terms of content, *Legal Research Methods* provides a sound amount of information for a first-year course. The text covers the core topics of constitutions, statutes, cases, regulations, and secondary sources, as well as legislative history and local court rules. Most impressively, Murray and DeSanctis manage to focus on electronic research, to which most students gravitate, while also following up with enough discussion of print sources to provide students with not only background context but also instructions on how to conduct print research if they do not work

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at jobs with expensive research platforms. (Murray and DeSanctis are rightfully skeptical of the efficiency of legal research using free online sources.) *Legal Research Methods* thus would work well with most first-year legal research courses, particularly those that begin immediately with computer-assisted research.

¶45 Finally, Murray and DeSanctis use a direct, unpretentious tone that is likely to connect well with students. The authors use the second person to deliver both specific instructions and more general advice. They often make use of hypotheticals to aid students in understanding the reasons for research steps, as well as the mechanics of conducting research. However, at times the discussion of technical steps, such as Boolean searching, struck me as a bit quick, so I would emphasize to students the value of having a computer handy to follow along and visualize fully the concepts being relayed by the reading.

¶46 In conclusion, *Legal Research Methods, Second Edition*, provides a necessary update to the first edition and would be a solid choice as a text for first-year legal research courses, particularly those that jump straight to computer-assisted research.

Palfrey, John. *BiblioTech: Why Libraries Matter More Than Ever in the Age of Google*. New York: Basic Books, 2015. 280p. \$26.99.

*Reviewed by Jodi L. Collova**

¶47 Libraries will be as necessary in the future as they were in the past—if we play our cards right. John Palfrey, former director of the Harvard Law Library, suggests that to thrive in a “digital-plus” age (p.73), we must “hack” libraries (p.112)—that is, deconstruct the way that we envision libraries and reinvent them. We can no longer think of libraries as storehouses for books, but must reconceptualize libraries as networked platforms. In the digital-plus era, a greater amount of information is available. Meanwhile, library budgets are shrinking. As such, it is not possible or desirable for an individual library to maintain every resource that its users may need. Instead of focusing on individual physical libraries, Palfrey calls on libraries to collaboratively provide networked access to digital collections on a scale much greater than interlibrary loan.

¶48 While Palfrey promotes mass digitization, he advocates for a gradual transition that still includes library materials in print format. “Libraries serve a diverse range of patrons with a diverse set of practices,” he writes, “ranging from the most digitally savvy to the determinedly analog” (p.41). Thus, to serve all of their users, networked libraries need to provide access to materials in multiple formats. Additionally, while the need for digital information has increased, the preservation of digital information presents a problem. Digital information is easy to create but difficult to store, which makes it desirable for a network of libraries to preserve at least one original print copy of an item.

¶49 *BiblioTech: Why Libraries Matter More Than Ever in the Age of Google* is a call to action for librarians and library supporters: “Those of us who care deeply

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