

1996

Computer-Assisted Legal Research

Peggy Roebuck Jarrett

University of Washington School of Law, pjarrett@uw.edu

Nancy McMurrer

University of Washington School of Law, mcmurrer@uw.edu

Mary Whisner

University of Washington School of Law, whisner@uw.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.law.uw.edu/librarians-chapters>



Part of the [Legal Writing and Research Commons](#), and the [State and Local Government Law Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Peggy R. Jarrett, Nancy McMurrer & Mary Whisner, *Computer-Assisted Legal Research*, in PENNY A. HAZELTON, PEGGY ROEBUCK JARRETT, NANCY McMURRER, CHERYL RAE NYBERG, AND MARY WHISNER, WASHINGTON LEGAL RESEARCHER'S DESKBOOK, 2D 217 (1996).

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.law.uw.edu/librarians-chapters/20>

This Book Chapter is brought to you for free and open access by the Librarians' Publications at UW Law Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Librarians' Chapters in Books by an authorized administrator of UW Law Digital Commons. For more information, please contact cnyberg@uw.edu.

Washington Legal Researcher's Deskbook, 2d

by
Penny A. Hazelton
Peggy Roebuck Jarrett
Nancy McMurrer
Cheryl Rae Nyberg
Mary Whisner

Number 10 in the Marian Gould Gallagher
Law Library Research Study Series

Published by the
Marian Gould Gallagher Law Library
Seattle, Washington
1996

© Marian Gould Gallagher Law Library

Washington Legal Researcher's Deskbook, 2d

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	ix
Author Biographies	xii
Chapter 1 How to Use a Law Library	1
Chapter 2 The Process of Legal Research	25
Chapter 3 Fundamentals of Legal Research in Washington	69
Chapter 4 Administrative Decisions and Materials	133
Chapter 5 Legislative History and Bill Tracking	153
Chapter 6 Washington Practice Materials	161
Chapter 7 Nonlegal Research	207
Chapter 8 Computer-Assisted Legal Research	217
Chapter 9 Managing Your Library: With or Without a Librarian	239
Appendix I City and County Codes in Washington Libraries	261
Appendix II Acronyms and Abbreviations	277
Index	283

DETAILED TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1, How to Use a Law Library

I.	Getting Acquainted	1
II.	People in Libraries	2
III.	Collection Organization	4
IV.	Access to the Collection	5
V.	Access to the Contents of the Library Collection	7
	A. Searching Bibliographic Records	7
	B. Searching Indexing and Abstracting Services	8
VI.	Access to Legal Information Without Leaving the Comfort of Your Home or Office	10
	A. Electronic Access to Library Catalogs	10
	1. Access Without a Personal Internet Account	10
	2. Access With a Personal Internet Account	11
	B. Electronic Access to Legal Information	11
	C. What You Miss by Staying Home	12
Appendix 1,	Law Libraries in Washington State	14
	A. State	14
	B. County	14
	C. Court	17
	D. Academic	17

Chapter 1, How to Use a Law Library, cont'd

Appendix 2, Free or Low Cost Advocacy, Information, and Referral for King
County Residents 18

Chapter 2, The Process of Legal Research

I. Introduction 25

II. Strategies for Effective Legal Research 26

 A. Rombauer Framework 26

 1. Preliminary Analysis 26

 2. Search for Statutes 29

 3. Search for Mandatory Case Precedent 31

 4. Search for Persuasive Case Precedent 32

 5. Refine, Double-Check, and Update 34

 B. Conclusion 35

III. Integrating Manual and Computerized Legal Research Tools 36

IV. Managing Your Legal Research 59

 A. General Suggestions 59

 B. Note-Taking 60

 C. Help! A Dead End! 66

 D. When to Stop the Search 66

Chapter 3, Fundamentals of Legal Research in Washington

I. Introduction and General Legal Research Texts 69

II. Secondary Sources 71

 A. Practice Materials 71

 B. Encyclopedias, Texts, and Treatises 72

 C. Legal Periodicals 74

III. Statutes 78

 A. Session Laws 78

 B. Codes — The *Revised Code of Washington* and Its Predeces-
sors 81

 C. Annotated Codes 84

 1. *West's Revised Code of Washington Annotated* 84

 2. *Annotated Revised Code of Washington* 87

 3. Checklist for Updating Statutes in Print 88

 D. Electronic Versions of Washington Statutes 89

 E. Uniform Laws and Model Acts 91

 F. Court Rules 91

IV. City and County Codes 93

V. Administrative Regulations 94

 A. *Washington State Register* 95

Chapter 3, Fundamentals of Legal Research in Washington, cont'd

	B.	<i>Washington Administrative Code</i>	97
	C.	Electronic Versions of Administrative Regulations	98
VI.		Case Law	100
	A.	Official Reports	100
	B.	Unofficial Reports	102
	C.	Legal Newspaper	104
	D.	Electronic Versions of Case Law	105
	E.	Unpublished Opinions	106
VII.		Case Finding Tools	107
	A.	Secondary Sources and Annotated Codes	107
	B.	<i>Cumulative Subject Index</i>	107
	C.	<i>Shepard's Washington Case Name Citator</i>	108
	D.	West Digest System	108
	E.	West Searchers	112
	F.	Citator Services	112
	G.	Computer-Assisted Legal Research	113
	H.	Checklist of Case Finding Tools	114
	I.	Briefs	114
VIII.		Attorney General Opinions	116
IX.		Citator Services	117
	A.	Shepard's	117
	B.	Electronic Citator Services	121
		1. Shepard's	121
		2. Shepard's PreView and Shepard's Overnight	122
		3. Auto-Cite and Insta-Cite	122
		4. Full-text Searching, LexCite and QuickCite	124
X.		Citation Format	126
XI.		Appendix, Office of Reporter Style Sheet	131

Chapter 4, Administrative Decisions and Materials

I.		Introduction	133
II.		Administrative Agencies' Functions and Procedures	133
	A.	Enabling Legislation	133
	B.	Administrative Procedure Act and Model Rules of Procedure	134
	C.	Bibliography	135
III.		Multi-Agency Sources of Administrative Decisions	136
	A.	CD Law	136
	B.	L.A.W. BBS	137
	C.	LEXIS-NEXIS	138
	D.	West Publishing Company	138

Chapter 4, Administrative Decisions and Materials, cont'd

IV.	Agency-Specific Sources	140
A.	Administrative Hearings Office	140
B.	Ecology Department	141
C.	Education Department	141
D.	Employment Security Department	141
E.	Environmental Hearings Board	141
F.	Ethics Advisory Committee	142
G.	Executive Ethics Board	142
H.	Financial Institutions Department	142
I.	Fish and Wildlife Department	142
J.	Forest Practices Appeals Board	142
K.	Governor	143
L.	Growth Management Hearings Boards	143
M.	Higher Education Personnel Board	143
N.	Human Rights Commission	143
O.	Hydraulics Appeals Board	144
P.	Industrial Insurance Appeals Board	144
Q.	Insurance Department	144
R.	Judicial Conduct Commission	145
S.	Labor and Industries Department	145
T.	Legislative Ethics Board	145
U.	Minority and Women's Business Enterprises Office	146
V.	Personnel Appeals Board	146
W.	Personnel Board	146
X.	Pollution Control Hearings Board	146
Y.	Public Disclosure Commission	147
Z.	Public Employment Relations Commission	147
AA.	Retirement Systems Department	148
BB.	Revenue Department	148
CC.	Secretary of State	148
DD.	Securities Division	149
EE.	Shorelines Hearings Board	149
FF.	Tax Appeals Board	149
GG.	Utilities and Transportation Commission	150
V.	Agency Decisions at a Glance	150

Chapter 5, Legislative History and Bill Tracking

I.	Researching Legislative History in Washington	153
A.	At the Law Library	153
B.	The State Archives	154
C.	The House and Senate Journal Tapes	155
D.	Other Sources	155

Chapter 5, Legislative History and Bill Tracking, cont'd

E.	Bibliography	155
F.	Phone Numbers	156
II.	Legislative Bill Tracking	156
A.	How a Bill Becomes a Law	156
B.	New Sources	157
C.	<i>Legislative Digest and History of Bills</i>	157
D.	<i>Meeting Schedule and Bill Status</i>	158
E.	Legislative Hotline	158
F.	Governor's Office	158
G.	LegLink	158
H.	Washington State Legislature Public Access System	159
I.	LEXIS-NEXIS and WESTLAW	159
J.	Legi-Tech	159

Chapter 6, Washington Practice Materials

I.	Introduction	161
II.	Encyclopedic Sources	161
A.	<i>Washington Practice</i>	161
B.	<i>Washington Lawyers Practice Manual</i>	167
III.	Deskbooks, Manuals, Treatises, and Self-Help Sources	169
A.	Introduction and Overview	169
B.	Deskbooks, Manuals, Treatises, and Self-Help Sources: Arrangement by Subject	171
IV.	Continuing Legal Education Materials and <i>CLEDEX</i>	189
A.	CLE Materials	189
B.	<i>CLEDEX</i> : Locating CLE Chapters	190
V.	Litigation Aids	191
A.	Benchbooks	191
B.	Pattern Forms	193
1.	Mandatory Forms	193
2.	Optional, Suggested Forms	194
C.	Jury Verdicts, Arbitration Awards, and Expert Witnesses	194
1.	Jury Verdicts	195
2.	Arbitration Awards	196
3.	Expert Witnesses	196
D.	Judicial Biographies and Backgrounds	197
1.	State Judges	197
2.	Federal Judges	198
VI.	Ethics Opinions	199
VII.	Directories	199
A.	<i>Washington State Yearbook</i>	200

Chapter 6, Washington Practice Materials, cont'd.

B.	<i>Resources</i>	200
C.	<i>Attorneys ... Red Book</i>	201
D.	<i>Washington Legal Directory</i>	201
E.	<i>Washington Court Directory</i>	201
F.	Online Directories	202
VIII.	Current Awareness	202
A.	Bar Periodicals	203
B.	Legal Association Publication	204
C.	Legal Newspaper	204
D.	Access to Current Awareness Materials: <i>NEWDEX</i>	204

Chapter 7, Nonlegal Research

I.	Introduction	207
II.	Finding People, Organizations, Etc.	207
A.	Phone Books	208
B.	Directories of Associations	208
C.	Government Directories	208
D.	Corporate Directories	209
III.	Finding Factual Information	210
A.	Almanacs	210
B.	Atlases and Maps	210
C.	Statistical Sources	210
D.	Medical Information	211
E.	Interest Rates	212
F.	Consumer Price Index	212
IV.	Writing	212
A.	Dictionaries and Thesauruses	213
B.	Usage Guides	213
C.	Quotation Books	214

Chapter 8, Computer-Assisted Legal Research

I.	Introduction	217
II.	Reasons to Use CALR	217
III.	Types of CALR	218
IV.	Online Services: LEXIS-NEXIS and WESTLAW	219
A.	Features of LEXIS-NEXIS and WESTLAW	219
B.	Washington Materials on LEXIS-NEXIS and WESTLAW	219
C.	LEXIS-NEXIS and WESTLAW Cost-Control Tips	224
1.	Prepare Before Going Online	224
2.	Use the 800 Numbers	224
3.	Know Your Prices; Know Your Contract Terms	224

Chapter 8, Computer-Assisted Legal Research, cont'd

4.	Use Print Sources in Conjunction with CALR	225
5.	Retrieve Documents in One Step	225
6.	Scan Documents Quickly	225
7.	Use Hypertext Capabilities	225
8.	Proofread Your Query	225
9.	Use Smaller or Subject-Specific Files or Databases	226
10.	Use the Fastest Modem You Can Afford	226
11.	Use Fields and Segments	226
12.	Use Key Numbers	226
13.	Stack Commands	226
14.	Modify on LEXIS-NEXIS	227
15.	Keep Track of Your Searches	227
16.	Save Your Last Search	227
17.	Automatically Run Searches	227
18.	Update Your Research	227
19.	Reduce Printing and Downloading	228
20.	Change Client Information Online	228
21.	If You Are In Trouble, Sign Off	228
22.	Use Less Expensive or Free Electronic Sources When Available and Time-Efficient	228
23.	Use Documentation, Help Screens, and Other Search Aids	229
24.	Use Vendor Representatives	229
25.	Keep Up with New Developments	229
26.	Ask a Librarian	230
V.	CD ROM Products	230
A.	Features of CD ROM Products	230
B.	Washington CD ROM Products	231
VI.	Bulletin Board Systems	231
A.	L.A.W. BBS	231
B.	Court Record Information	232
1.	JIS-Link	232
2.	PACER	233
3.	CourtLink	233
VII.	Internet	234
A.	Introduction	234
B.	Internet Guides	236
C.	Selected Washington Internet Sites	236

Chapter 9, Managing Your Library: With or Without a Librarian

I.	Managing Your Library: With or Without a Librarian	239
A.	If Your Firm Has a Librarian	239

Chapter 9, Managing Your Library: With or Without a Librarian, cont'd

B.	If Your Firm Does Not Have a Librarian	240
C.	Using a Consultant	241
D.	How Do You Know When You Need a Librarian?	241
II.	Hiring a Librarian	242
III.	Managing Your Library: A Selected Bibliography	243
IV.	Selection of Materials	245
A.	Questions to Consider	245
B.	Selection and Acquisitions Tools	246
C.	Publishers on the World Wide Web	248
V.	Library Support Services in King County	249
VI.	Document Delivery Services	250
A.	Pacific Northwest	250
B.	National	251
C.	Electronic	252
VII.	Legal Publishers and Distributors: A Selected List	252
VIII.	Publishers of Washington Legal Periodicals	257
A.	Law Reviews	257
B.	Legal Newspapers	258
C.	Bar Publications	258
D.	Indexes	258

Appendix I, City and County Codes in Washington Libraries

A.	Cities	261
B.	Counties	270
C.	Library Directory	273

Appendix II, Acronyms and Abbreviations 277

Index 283

INTRODUCTION

The *Washington Legal Researcher's Deskbook* has been written to assist lawyers, librarians, legal assistants, legal secretaries, and members of the public in the complex task of researching legal problems. This book focuses on the law of the state of Washington and the legal materials that are available to the Washington practitioner. The reader will not find answers to legal questions but rather will find a rich array of information that can help in the process of researching the law.

The importance of legal research certainly cannot be overstated. Most lawyers want to give good advice to their clients. If the client's problem is new to the practitioner, chances are good that a review of the legal issues and authority will be necessary. This may plunge the researcher into unfamiliar areas of law.

If it were not enough to want to give good advice, the Washington Rules of Professional Conduct (RPC) 1.1 require that a practitioner "shall provide competent representation to a client." This rule requires familiarity with the relevant law through previous knowledge or through conducting adequate research. No Washington State Bar Association Ethics Opinions interpret this rule regarding the standards for performing competent legal research.

A 1975 California Supreme Court case, *Smith v. Lewis*, 10 Cal.3d 349, 530 P.2d 589 (1975), articulates a standard of care for legal research. The standard requires (1) sufficient research (2) using standard research techniques (3) to obtain readily available authority. The Court found that the defendant lawyer failed to meet this standard of care. Cases in other jurisdictions have reached a similar result. Washington has apparently adopted this standard in *Halvorsen v. Ferguson*, 46 Wash. App. 708, 718, 735 P.2d 675, 681 (1986).

A study commissioned by the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar recently listed legal research among ten skills necessary for the practice of law. The Task Force identified three specific skills needed for thorough and efficient research:

- 3.1 Knowledge of the Nature of Legal Rules and Institutions;
- 3.2 Knowledge of and Ability to Use the Most Fundamental Tools of Legal Research;
- 3.3 Understanding of the Process of Devising and Implementing a Coherent and Effective Research Design.

Task Force on Law Schools and the Profession: Narrowing the Gap, *Legal Education and Professional Development — An Educational Continuum* at 138 ("The MacCrate Report")(1992).

The legal researcher of the 1990s cannot rest on the knowledge of legal research tools acquired while in law school or even as recently as two years ago. The computerization of legal information has completely changed the world of legal research and the practice of law. Some recent commentators have even suggested that computerized research is required in order for practitioners to avoid malpractice. See David M. Sandhaus, *Computers Are Required for the Practitioner to Avoid Malpractice*, 47 Washington State Bar News 51-52 (no. 11, Nov. 1993); Robert C. Berring, *Technology and the Standard of Care for Legal Research*, 3 Legal Malpractice Report 21-22 (no. 4, 1992).

The purpose of this *Deskbook* is to provide a broad spectrum of information that would be helpful to the person who must research Washington State law. In the first chapter, I describe how to use a law library. From using law libraries in person to using law libraries without leaving the comfort of your home or office, the tips provided in this chapter will be useful to all legal researchers.

In the second chapter, I outline a strategy to help a legal researcher design a research process or framework. Practical tips for efficient use of legal tools are discussed. A reprint of an article that discusses the relative merits of computer and manual legal research tools has been included to help researchers sort through the maze of legal information products. If taking good notes is your downfall, be sure to read the note-taking article found near the end of this chapter. This piece is full of practical hints that can help any researcher create a fine research product.

Chapter three was written by Mary Whisner and is an excellent review of the most basic and important legal research tools used for researching Washington law. Ms. Whisner reviews secondary sources, statutes, city and county codes, administrative regulations, case law, case-finding tools, Attorney General Opinions, citator services, and basic citation information. She includes information about electronic versions of these information tools as well as the printed texts. Every legal researcher should be familiar with the contents of this chapter. This is one of the chapters that should be read completely by any researcher who must use Washington legal information resources.

Washington State agencies promulgate a variety of administrative decisions or actions. These are ably discussed in the next chapter by Cheryl Nyberg. Pay particular attention to the description of the Administrative Procedure Act and its requirements. Ms. Nyberg discusses each state agency that issues administrative determinations and even provides a summary chart of the various sources of agency quasi-judicial actions in order to speed your research.

Never done a Washington legislative history? Follow the clear step-by-step directions written by Peggy Roebuck Jarrett in Chapter five on legislative history and bill tracking. Clearly our author has had some experience with this awesome task!

Ms. Jarrett shows the novice exactly how to follow the legislature's process and includes important tips for accomplishing this research chore efficiently and competently.

Using one or more of the many excellent handbooks and deskbooks available on Washington law can help the legal researcher quickly and efficiently define the problem and locate the primary sources to answer the question. In Chapter 6, Nancy McMurrer provides annotated descriptions both of broad, multi-topic sources and other, more specific titles listed by subject. Organized into sections on encyclopedic sources; deskbooks and treatises; continuing legal education materials; litigation aids (benchbooks, pattern forms, jury verdicts and judicial biographies); ethics opinions; directories; and current awareness services, this chapter is crucial for the researcher who is not intimately familiar with the wealth of secondary literature available in Washington.

This edition of the *Deskbook* contains a new chapter on nonlegal research written by Mary Whisner and Peggy Roebuck Jarrett. In a clear and direct style, the authors cover sources that will help you find information about people and organizations, find factual information, and improve your writing skills.

Peggy Roebuck Jarrett, Nancy McMurrer, and Mary Whisner have written the chapter on computer-assisted legal research (CALR). Although the *Deskbook* is replete with references to and discussions of electronic research tools, this section discusses CALR generally. Highlighting the electronic tools and information available to the Washington legal researcher, this chapter includes excellent sections on different types of access to computer-assisted legal research: online services, CD ROM products, bulletin board systems and the Internet. Comparative tables of the most important Washington legal materials and their availability on WESTLAW and LEXIS-NEXIS are also included. If you have little or no exposure to electronic legal information systems, this chapter is a must.

In the final chapter Ms. Jarrett compiles a collection of information about legal resources in Washington. Included here are tips on how to manage your library, hire a librarian, and select materials and research tools for your library. Lists of filing and library service organizations, document delivery services, legal publishers with addresses and telephone numbers, publisher information for Washington legal periodicals, Washington CLE providers, and libraries that have various city and county codes complete the informative material to be found in this section of the *Deskbook*. This chapter will be a great help to those trying to keep their libraries current and properly managed, to those making decisions about purchases for office libraries, and to those trying to locate legal materials available in the local area.

I am very pleased with the high quality of the material you will find within this *Deskbook*. Many thanks to the authors for their tireless work. Janet Abbott worked many hours to put our draft material into final form — thank you! Thanks

also to Reba Turnquist who helped update information about publishers, prices, and the like; to the Gallagher Law Library staff for being supportive and helpful; to the law librarianship student interns who helped cover the Reference Office when we needed extra time to write; to various colleagues around the state who responded cheerfully to our requests for information; and, finally, to our library patrons for asking us questions and helping us learn what legal researchers in Washington need to know.

Penny A. Hazelton
Seattle, Washington
July 1996

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

PENNY A. HAZELTON. Professor Hazelton has been the Director of the Marian Gould Gallagher Law Library at the University of Washington School of Law since 1985. Teaching legal research to law students, law librarianship students (lawyers training to be law librarians), library students, attorneys, legal secretaries, and paralegals has occupied a good part of Professor Hazelton's twenty-year career. She earned her JD from Northwestern School of Law of Lewis & Clark College and received a Masters in Law Librarianship from the University of Washington in 1976. Professor Hazelton is a member of the Washington State Bar Association and has served as a member and Chair of its Editorial Advisory Board Committee. Professor Hazelton spent five years at the University of Maine and four at the U.S. Supreme Court Library as head of the research services department.

PEGGY ROEBUCK JARRETT. Peggy Roebuck Jarrett received a BA in Economics from the University of California, Davis, in 1981 and an MSLS from the Catholic University of America in 1984. Ms. Jarrett spent seven years working in private law firm libraries in Washington D.C. and Seattle before joining Gallagher Law Library in August of 1990. Ms. Jarrett is a member of the reference staff and is also the Collection Development - Documents Librarian. She has served as President of the Law Librarians of Puget Sound and is an active member of the American Association of Law Libraries.

NANCY M. McMURRER. Ms. McMurrer received a BA in History/Political Science from Furman University in 1966 and a JD from the University of Virginia Law School in 1969. She practiced with the Office of Chief Counsel, Internal Revenue Service from 1969 until moving to Germany in 1976. She earned her Masters of Librarianship with Law Librarianship Certificate from the University of Washington in 1990. Ms. McMurrer was a Reference Librarian with a law firm in Seattle before joining the reference staff at the University of Washington in 1994. Nancy McMurrer is a member of the Virginia State Bar Association, the American Association of Law Libraries, and the Law Librarians of Puget Sound.

CHERYL RAE NYBERG. Cheryl Nyberg received her BA cum laude in English in 1977 and her MS in Library Science in 1979, both from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Before joining the Gallagher Law Library reference staff in 1995, she worked at the University of Illinois Law Library for fifteen years, principally as government documents and reference librarian. Since 1985, she has authored the *Subject Compilations of State Laws* bibliography series. Her articles have appeared in *Government Publications Review*, *Jurisdocs*, *Law Library Journal*, and *Legal Reference Services Quarterly* and her chapter on federal and state government documents is included in *Law Librarianship: A Handbook for the Electronic Age* (Rothman, 1995). Cheryl Nyberg is an active member of the American Association

of Law Libraries and the Law Librarians of Puget Sound, and is a former officer and member of the Mid-America Association of Law Libraries.

MARY WHISNER. Mary Whisner received a BA in Philosophy from the University of Washington in 1977, a JD from Harvard Law School in 1982, and an MLIS from Louisiana State University in 1987. Ms. Whisner clerked for Judge Stephanie K. Seymour of the U.S. Court of Appeals, Tenth Circuit, and practiced law for two years in Washington, D.C. at the National Labor Relations Board and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. She has been on the reference staff of the Gallagher Law Library at the University of Washington since 1988. Mary Whisner is a member of the American Association of Law Libraries, Law Librarians of Puget Sound, and the Washington State Bar Association.

Washington Legal Researcher's Deskbook, 2d - Chapter 8
COMPUTER-ASSISTED LEGAL RESEARCH
Peggy Roebuck Jarrett, Nancy McMurrer, and Mary Whisner

I.	Introduction	217
II.	Reasons to Use CALR	217
III.	Types of CALR	218
IV.	Online Services: LEXIS-NEXIS and WESTLAW	219
A.	Features of LEXIS-NEXIS and WESTLAW	219
B.	Washington Materials on LEXIS-NEXIS and WESTLAW	219
C.	LEXIS-NEXIS and WESTLAW Cost-Control Tips	224
1.	Prepare Before Going Online	224
2.	Use the 800 Numbers	224
3.	Know Your Prices; Know Your Contract Terms	224
4.	Use Print Sources in Conjunction with CALR	225
5.	Retrieve Documents in One Step	225
6.	Scan Documents Quickly	225
7.	Use Hypertext Capabilities	225
8.	Proofread Your Query	225
9.	Use Smaller or Subject-Specific Files or Databases	226
10.	Use the Fastest Modem You Can Afford	226
11.	Use Fields and Segments	226
12.	Use Key Numbers	226
13.	Stack Commands	226
14.	Modify on LEXIS-NEXIS	227
15.	Keep Track of Your Searches	227
16.	Save Your Last Search	227
17.	Automatically Run Searches	227
18.	Update Your Research	227
19.	Reduce Printing and Downloading	228
20.	Change Client Information Online	228
21.	If You Are In Trouble, Sign Off	228
22.	Use Less Expensive or Free Electronic Sources When Available and Time-Efficient	228
23.	Use Documentation, Help Screens, and Other Search Aids	229
24.	Use Vendor Representatives	229
25.	Keep Up with New Developments	229
26.	Ask a Librarian	230
V.	CD ROM Products	230
A.	Features of CD ROM Products	230
B.	Washington CD ROM Products	231
VI.	Bulletin Board Systems	231
A.	L.A.W. BBS	231
B.	Court Record Information	232
1.	JIS-Link	232
2.	PACER	233
3.	CourtLink	233
VII.	Internet	234
A.	Introduction	234
B.	Internet Guides	236
C.	Selected Washington Internet Sites	236

Chapter 8
COMPUTER-ASSISTED LEGAL RESEARCH
Peggy Roebuck Jarrett, Nancy McMurrer, and Mary Whisner

I. Introduction

Computer-assisted legal research (CALR) has dramatically changed the way legal research is performed. Legal researchers now have at their disposal all of the tools that were used two decades ago — encyclopedias, annotated codes, looseleaf services, etc. — and a range of electronic tools as well.

Nearly every chapter of this book mentions electronic resources. They are so pervasive that we could not isolate them in one chapter (nor would we want to). Legal researchers should be aware of the variety of print and nonprint tools available, whether or not they choose to use them for any given task.

This chapter is aimed at researchers who might not have much experience with CALR. It cannot be a complete guide — there are many books for that — but it is an introduction to some of the issues. See also Chapter 2, Section III, Integrating Manual and Computerized Legal Research Tools.

II. Reasons to Use CALR

There are many reasons to use computers in legal research. Here are some:

- They may enable you to do research in ways that are impossible with print tools. For instance, you can find Washington Supreme Court opinions written by Justice Callow that mention the phrase "land use planning," or *Washington Administrative Code* sections that cite a particular RCW section as authority.
- CALR may enable you to find material that is unavailable in print sources — e.g., very recent cases that are not yet in the advance sheets or unpublished cases.
- CALR is often much faster and more convenient than research using only print sources. For instance, you can find the same law review articles using the print *Current Law Index* as using the electronic *Legal Resource Index*, but you would have to look in over fifteen different volumes to do so.
- CALR is very space-efficient. Some law firms are deciding to use more electronic resources in order to free up library space.
- CALR may give you access to materials that are far away. Perhaps you have the last fifteen years of *Washington 2d* in your office but need to drive to a law library to read older cases. Retrieving the cases you need from an electronic source could save you valuable time.

- Materials in electronic form may be transferred to other electronic documents. It is much easier to cut and paste several paragraphs from an electronic version of a case into a word processing document than to retype the whole passage.
- CALR may be the *only* tool that is available. For example, the Gallagher Law Library no longer has a *card* catalog; the only way to search for books in the collection is to use the online catalog.

III. Types of CALR

From the 1970s to the early 1990s, LEXIS-NEXIS and WESTLAW were clearly the dominant services for computer-assisted legal research. These are both online systems — that is, users connect their own computers to a distant computer's database via a modem. Several years ago, CD ROM products came into the picture. CD ROM (Compact Disk, Read Only Memory) technology stores data on disks that can be read at the user's own computer. Around the same time, electronic bulletin board systems (BBS) were developed. To access a BBS system, users dial in with a modem; in contrast to the big, commercial services, like LEXIS-NEXIS and WEST-LAW, bulletin board systems are often community-based and low cost. In the mid-1990s, popular applications of the Internet exploded. Researchers now use the Internet for communication via electronic mail (email) and for research on the World Wide Web.

Types of CALR (with examples)	
Commercial online systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ LEXIS-NEXIS▶ WESTLAW
CD ROM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ CD Law▶ Michie's Washington Law on Disc
Electronic bulletin boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ L.A.W. BBS▶ SCOMIS
Internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Washington Legislature gopher and Web site▶ Washington State Courts Web site

What all of these systems have in common is that they use computers to provide access to text. The access they provide varies. Some provide very sophisticated search tools, customer support, training, and documentation. Others have fewer bells and whistles (but also charge much less). Coverage also varies. For instance, the Washington State Courts provides the last three months of Washington Supreme Court and Court of Appeals cases on an Internet site; LEXIS-NEXIS, WESTLAW, and several CD ROM products go back many decades.

IV. Online Services: LEXIS-NEXIS and WESTLAW

A. Features of LEXIS-NEXIS and WESTLAW

Both LEXIS-NEXIS and WESTLAW have very sophisticated searching. In fact, each systems offers more than one way to search: a method that uses connectors (AND, OR, NOT, etc.) and a method that uses "natural language." Both systems offer citator services — both *Shepard's Citators* and citators that exist only online — to complement their case law databases. Finally, both LEXIS-NEXIS and WESTLAW provide their subscribers with toll-free customer support lines, training, and documentation.

Of course, subscribers have to pay for the comprehensive databases, the sophisticated searching, and the extensive customer support. But even though the subscription fees and online charges may be hefty, efficient research on the systems can still be cost-effective. Finding five relevant cases in ten minutes online may save hours of an attorney's billable time and, in effect, pay for itself.

Both LEXIS-NEXIS and WESTLAW offer a variety of subscription plans. Some plans charge by the search or by the minute; some plans involve fixed fees.¹ If you are considering subscribing to one of the systems, talk with your representative about a plan to fit your practice.

B. Washington Materials on LEXIS-NEXIS and WESTLAW

LEXIS-NEXIS and WESTLAW both offer extensive databases of Washington materials, summarized in the following chart. (Note that both systems regularly expand their databases. This chart is current as of early 1996.)

¹ For instance, LEXIS-NEXIS offers one plan aimed at smaller firms. For a set monthly fee, this plan, called "LEXIS Advantage," provides access to Washington materials only.

Washington Materials	LEXIS-NEXIS	WESTLAW
Washington Statutes, Codes, and Legislative Material		
<i>Revised Code of Washington</i> (including the Constitution)	No	Current, unannotated RCWA WA-ST
<i>Revised Code of Washington</i> table of contents	Current ARCW WASH;WATOC	Current RCWA TOC-WA-ST
<i>Annotated Revised Code of Washington</i> (Michie)(ARCW)	Current ARCW WASH;CODE	No
<i>Revised Code of Washington Annotated</i> (West)(RCWA)	No	Current RCWA WA-ST-ANN
RCWA Index	No	Current RCWA WA-ST-IDX
Historical RCWA	No	1989-present WA-ST-ANNYY*
Washington Session Laws West's Legislative Service	1989-present WASH;WAALS	1988-present WA-LEGIS WA-LEGISYY*
Tracking pending bills	Latest session only WASH;WATRCK	1991-present WA-BILLTRK
Full text bills	Latest session only WASH;WATEXT	1991-present WA-BILLTRK BILLTRK-OLD
Washington Regulations and Administration Decisions		
<i>Washington Administrative Code</i>	Present WAC WASH;WAADMN	Present WAC WA-ADC
Tracking pending regulations	1990-present WASH;WARGTR	1990-present WA-REGTRK
Attorney General opinions	Selected: 1973-76 Comprehensive: 1977-present WASH;WAAG	Selected: 1973-76 Comprehensive: 1977-present WA-AG
Board of Tax Appeals proposed and final decisions	April 1980-present WASH;WATAX	June 1979-present WATX-ADMIN

Chapter 8, Computer-Assisted Legal Research

Washington Materials	LEXIS-NEXIS	WESTLAW
Utilities and Transportation Commission decisions	July 1974-present; 1987-present (through <i>Public Utilities Reports</i>) WASH;WAPUC	Selective 1919-73; full from 1974-present (through <i>Public Utilities Reports</i>) WA-PUR
Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals decisions (worker's compensation)	No	Oct. 1985-present WAWC-ADMIN
Department of Licensing Business, Securities Division	1974-present WASH;WASEC	1974-present WASEC-ADMIN
Forest Practices Appeals Board	No	1985-Sept. 1993 WAENV-ADMIN
Hydraulics Appeals Board	No	1992-Sept. 1993 WAENV-ADMIN
Pollution Control Hearing Board	No	1985-Sept. 1993 WAENV-ADMIN
Shorelines Hearing Board	No	1985-Sept. 1993 WAENV-ADMIN
Case Law, Shepard's, Verdicts and Settlements, Court Rules, and Jury Instructions		
Supreme Court cases	1898-present WASH;WASH	1880-present WA-CS
Court of Appeals cases	1969-present WASH;APP	1969-present WA-CS
Federal courts cases from or authoritative in Washington	1789-present WASH;WAMEGA	1789-present WA-CS-ALL
<i>Shepard's Pacific Reporter Citations</i>	1 P., P.2d-present	1 P., P.2d-present
<i>Shepard's Washington Citations</i> (case citator only)	1 Wn., 1 Wn.2d, 1 Wn. App.-present	1 Wn., 1 Wn.2d, 1 Wn. App.-present

Washington Legal Researcher's Deskbook, 2d

Washington Materials	LEXIS-NEXIS	WESTLAW
Jury verdicts, settlements, and arbitrations	No	1988-present (through <i>Jury Verdicts Northwest</i>) JVN
Court rules (state and federal)	1989-present WASH;WARULE	As of latest West publication WA-RULES
Court orders	No	Any subsequent to latest West publication WA-ORDERS
Pattern Jury Instructions- Civil	No	As of latest West publication WA-WPI
Pattern Jury Instructions- Criminal	No	As of latest West publication WA-WPIC
Public Records and Filings		
Environmental records (state site listings)	No	1991-present EDR-WA
Tax assessor/property records (seven counties)	Current WASH;WAPROP	No
Corporate and limited partnership records	Current information CORP;ALLSOS	Current information WA-CORP
Civil litigation (lawsuits)	No	Varies by court, earliest is from 1989-present LS
Judgment and lien filings (thirty-two counties)	June 1992-present WASH;WAJGT	No
Deed transfers (seven counties)	June 1994-present WASH;WASALE	No

Chapter 8, Computer-Assisted Legal Research

Washington Materials	LEXIS-NEXIS	WESTLAW
Bankruptcy filings	June 1992-present WASH;WABKT	W.D. Tacoma, 1980-present; W.D. Seattle, E.D., 1982-present BKR
Uniform Commercial Code filings	Jan.1983-present LIENS;WAUCC	No
Law Reviews		
<i>Gonzaga Law Review</i>	1994 (v. 30)-present WASH;GONLR	Selective 1983 (v. 18); full 1993 (v. 29)-present GONZLR
<i>Pacific Rim Law & Policy Law Review</i>	No	Selective 1992 (v. 1)-present PACRLPJ
<i>Seattle University Law Review</i> (formerly <i>University of Puget Sound Law Review</i>)	1993 (v. 16)-present WASH;UPSDLR	Selective 1983 (v. 7); full 1993 (v. 16)-present SEAULR
<i>Washington Law Review</i>	1982 (v.58)-present WASH;WASHLR	1980 (v. 56)-present WALR
Directories		
West's Legal Directory	No	Current WLD-WA
<i>Martindale-Hubbell Directory</i>	Current WASH;WADIR	No
<i>Martindale-Hubbell Law Digest</i>	Current WASH;WADIG	No

* YY Indicates last two digits of a year, as in WA-LEGIS91

Both systems also offer a wide array of databases covering state and federal law and nonlegal information.

C. LEXIS-NEXIS and WESTLAW Cost-Control Tips

1. Prepare Before Going Online
2. Use the 800 Numbers
3. Know Your Prices; Know Your Contract Terms
4. Use Print Sources in Conjunction with CALR
5. Retrieve Documents in One Step
6. Scan Documents Quickly
7. Use Hypertext Capabilities
8. Proofread Your Query
9. Use Smaller or Subject-Specific Files or Databases
10. Use the Fastest Modem You Can Afford
11. Use Fields and Segments
12. Use Key Numbers
13. Stack Commands
14. Modify on LEXIS-NEXIS
15. Keep Track of Your Searches
16. Save Your Last Search
17. Automatically Run Searches
18. Update Your Research
19. Reduce Printing and Downloading
20. Change Client Information Online
21. If You Are In Trouble, Sign Off
22. Use Less Expensive or Free Electronic Sources
23. Use Documentation, Help Screens, and Other Search Aids
24. Use Vendor Representatives
25. Keep Up with New Developments
26. Ask a Librarian

1. Prepare Before Going Online

Plan your research strategy *before* going online! Pick your WESTLAW database or LEXIS-NEXIS library and file, think about alternative words and phrases, choose connectors, and be prepared with date restrictions or other limiters, **before** going online.

2. Use the 800 Numbers

LEXIS-NEXIS (800/543-6862) and WESTLAW (800/937-8529) customer service staff offer more than technical help with equipment – they can help you formulate search strategies, including choosing databases, search terms, and connectors. WESTLAW offers a direct line (800/733-2889) to its staff of Reference Attorneys. When you are not sure about a search, use the 800 numbers **before** you go online. Customer service personnel will actually run test searches to ensure you get the desired results.

3. Know Your Prices; Know Your Contract Terms

Which WESTLAW pricing plan do you have? Which LEXIS-NEXIS pricing plan do you have? Do you have more than one option for pricing? With some pricing plans, online time is very expensive, and a good strategy is to print a list of citations and go to the library to read the material in hard copy. With other pricing

plans, online time is relatively inexpensive and money is saved by browsing online rather than making a trip to the library.

Review your bills. Is the pricing plan you currently have the one that best suits your research habits?

4. Use Print Sources in Conjunction with CALR

Use print secondary sources to find background information, leading cases, and terms of art. Read a nutshell, hornbook, law review article, or ALR annotation before going online. Go online to do a quick and dirty search in a law review index, print the citations, and look up the articles in the library.

5. Retrieve Documents in One Step

If you have a citation to a document, use the LEXIS-NEXIS **lexsee** or **lexstat** commands, or the WESTLAW **find** command. With these commands you avoid choosing a database and running a search.

6. Scan Documents Quickly

Browse your LEXIS-NEXIS documents in **kwic** and your WESTLAW documents in **term**. The LEXIS-NEXIS **focus** and the WESTLAW **locate** commands allow you to scan retrieved documents for specific words or phrases. This is especially useful if your search includes a fairly common word, but you really just need to see portions of text containing a more specific word or phrase.

7. Use Hypertext Capabilities

Use Westlaw's **Jump** and Lexis' **Link** feature to move quickly from one document to another. Both **Jump** and **Link** allow you to quickly and easily access the full-text of cited documents. Cases, code sections, and other types of documents are marked with a symbol that you use to retrieve them, without having to type the citation or worry about the proper format. You save time by saving key strokes.

8. Proofread Your Query

If you proofread your query, you can avoid retyping your search and wasting valuable computer processing time. It is particularly important if your LEXIS-NEXIS pricing plan is transactional — you are charged for *each* search or request you type. Proofreading your search before you hit the enter key can save billing headaches.

9. Use Smaller or Subject-Specific Files or Databases

If your pricing plan is directly linked to the amount of time you spend online and you need to browse some results to make sure your search is effective, use a small database, browse the results, refine the search, and then quickly run it in the largest database you need. Quickly print the cite list and sign off.

Rather than use a large jurisdictional database such as WESTLAW ALL-STATES or LEXIS-NEXIS STATES;OMNI, search a more specific jurisdiction. Use smaller, subject specific databases or files (but be careful: some subject databases and files, such as those covering tax materials, can be quite expensive).

Remember that the larger the database or file and the more common the search terms, the longer it takes the computer to process your request. Smaller files and more specific requests mean less processing time.

10. Use the Fastest Modem You Can Afford

Connect time can be significantly lowered by using fast telecommunications. Even if your pricing plan adds a surcharge for a fast modem, your bills will be lower in the long run.

11. Use Fields and Segments

Make your searches more efficient by limiting search terms to appropriate fields or segments. Use date restrictions. The more specific you are, the less computer processing time needed. Also, consider printing field or segment restricted text only to reduce the number of lines printed.

12. Use Key Numbers

On WESTLAW, use key numbers or key numbers combined with keywords to pinpoint cases. Use the expanded Key Number Service and the **key** command to identify key numbers, which you can use to narrow or expand your search.

13. Stack Commands

LEXIS-NEXIS dot commands can be stacked, separated by semi-colons. Stack-ing commands allows you to bypass menu screens. For example to find citations to law review articles by Abner Mikva, starting with the client identification screen, type **your identification;lawrev;lgind;au(mikva)**. To run the search in the full-text law review file type **.cf;allrev; ;**. The semicolon functions as the transmit or enter key. The dot commands, such as change file (**.cf**), change library (**.cl**), next page (**.np**), and new search (**.ns**) are listed on the back of your LEXIS-NEXIS password card.

On WESTLAW, separate search and print commands with a semi-colon. To run the same Mikva search, type **db;lri;au(mikva)**. To run the same query in the full-text law review database type **sdb tp-all**. If you want to edit the query first, type **qdb tp-all**. To print a document on the attached printer and then sign off, type **pr;d;atp; off;y**.

14. Modify on LEXIS-NEXIS

Modifying on LEXIS-NEXIS allows you to create new levels of research without incurring new search charges. If your pricing plan is transactional, use modify (**m**) to narrow an overly broad search or broaden an overly restrictive search.

15. Keep Track of Your Searches

Get into the habit of printing out your request screen. These screens are a useful record of your strategy, especially if you need to modify your search or take a different approach later. LEXIS-NEXIS has a command, **.keep**, that allows you to maintain a complete list of all searches done during a session. After running a search, type **.keep** before moving on to a new library, file, or search. To view kept searches, type **.log**.

16. Save Your Last Search

Get into the habit of saving your last search, so you do not have to retype it if you need to go back to it later in the day or if you have printing problems. WESTLAW automatically saves your last search for several weeks; log on, choose a database, type **q**, and your last search will appear on the screen. On WESTLAW, you can also use your **options** command to request that your searches always be saved and thereby skip the step when you sign off; **options** also allows you to automatically set the printer destination.

17. Automatically Run Searches

If you need to regularly run the same search over a long period of time, use LEXIS-NEXIS **Eclipse** or WESTLAW **PDQ**. Both these services automatically run queries on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis and print out the results or hold them online. **Eclipse** and **PDQ** allow you to avoid the cost of logging on and re-entering your search.

18. Update Your Research

Use Auto-Cite or Insta-Cite to verify cases. Use Shepard's online to avoid checking hardbound volumes, supplements, and advance sheets separately. If appropriate, limit your results to display only references that overrule, reverse, limit,

criticize, or modify your case. Limit your results to cases within a particular jurisdiction. Use WESTLAW's WestCheck or LEXIS-NEXIS' CheckCite programs to cite-check entire documents quickly and easily.

19. Reduce Printing and Downloading

Printing and downloading charges can add up quickly so avoid unnecessary and overlong print requests. Instead of printing all documents in full, try the following: print lists of citations; print field or segment restricted text; print term or keyword restricted text; print selected screens; print the first page of documents; and depending on your pricing plan, take notes!

Downloading charges are usually the same as printing charges, but downloading can be faster and may save paper and ink costs.

20. Change Client Information Online

You do not need to sign off and sign on again to change client information. If you do a search for one client and you need to do a search for another, just type the word **client**. Both LEXIS-NEXIS and WESTLAW allow you to type in new client identification, which will be reflected on your bill.

21. If You Are In Trouble, Sign Off

If your searches are not working, sign off. Call the 800 customer service number, consult a colleague, and rethink search strategy and possible sources.

22. Use Less Expensive or Free Electronic Sources When Available and Time-Efficient

For Washington State research, consider using one of the available CD ROM products. If you have access to the World Wide Web (WWW), use the free sites for current cases, current legislative information, and a searchable *Revised Code of Washington*:

Washington State Courts	http://www.wa.gov/courts/home.htm
CD Law	http://www.cdlaw.com/
Washington State Legislature	http://leginfo.leg.wa.gov
RCW Text Search	http://leginfo.leg.wa.gov/cgi-bin/rcwsearch.pl

Remember, free is not always time-efficient. It may cost less, if you count time spent, to use a commercial service than to browse the WWW. Also keep in mind that the search capabilities of LEXIS-NEXIS and WESTLAW (and CD ROM products) are far more powerful and sophisticated than what is currently available on the WWW.

23. Use Documentation, Help Screens, and Other Search Aids

WESTLAW has printed guides to general and subject searching and a list of databases. Online, WESTLAW offers the IDEN database, which contains documents describing all available databases and services, including Dialog databases. For each database, you can search the originating source of the information, the names of any equivalent print sources, and the coverage and currentness of the material. If you know the name of a print source, you can use IDEN to quickly find out what database to search. Once you identify the database you need to use, check the **scope** screens for field names and search tips.

Like WESTLAW, LEXIS-NEXIS has printed guides and database lists. The most comprehensive guide is the *LEXIS-NEXIS Product Guide*, a multi-volume set which includes an index to publications and sources, detailed descriptions of libraries and files, tips for searching, explanations of how documents are arranged and displayed, transactional pricing information, and descriptions of common sources. One of the most useful features is sample documents from each file with the segment names clearly marked. LEXIS-NEXIS also offers online **guides** to its libraries and files.

24. Use Vendor Representatives

Use the local vendor representatives. They can help you with specific problems and keep you informed of new features.

25. Keep Up with New Developments

Take advantage of the training options available to you. Locally, both LEXIS-NEXIS and WESTLAW send out monthly calendars of classes. The classes include introductory training, refreshers, advanced techniques, and topical searching. It is extremely important to keep online skills up to date. LEXIS-NEXIS and WESTLAW also offer the occasional "special" — during a limited time period they will waive database charges for a particular (usually new) database. These "specials" are announced on the welcome screen when you log on.

Keeping up with CALR is also possible through reading. LEXIS-NEXIS and WESTLAW have subscriber newsletters, and bar journals and legal newspapers often publish CALR-related articles. CALR is constantly changing and growing, so the effective and efficient searcher needs to be informed about new pricing structures, database content, and software enhancements.

26. Ask a Librarian

Talk to your librarian, if you have one. Most librarians are expert online searchers and knowledgeable about prices and billing policies. Find out what your librarian can do for you.

V. CD ROM Products

A. Features of CD ROM Products

One CD ROM disk can hold up to the equivalent of 300,000 typewritten pages, so that it is possible to have a whole encyclopedia on one small disk. Add software for searching the text that is stored and a powerful research tool is at your fingertips.

Many CD ROM products offer searching that is similar to online searching. They generally allow for full-text searching, using connectors such as AND, OR, and NOT. Many systems combine some online search techniques with some techniques from traditional, manual research. For instance, you can bring a "book" to your "desktop" and browse through the table of contents. If you want to come back to a passage later, you can put a "bookmark" at that "page." On some you can mark a passage and attach an electronic note to remind you of its significance.

Despite some similarities with online systems, the price structure for CD ROM products is often quite different. You might have a licensing agreement for its use or an annual subscription that would include, say, quarterly or monthly updates. Once you have made those investments — and purchased or leased the equipment you needed to play the CD ROM — you can use it as much or as little as you want, with no further charges. If you do only one search a month, this would be no bargain, but if you use the system frequently, your savings could be considerable. The cost of a CD ROM product is typically similar to the cost of a looseleaf service — you pay for an annual subscription, not for each research session.

Note that CD ROM systems cannot be as current as online systems. Many databases on LEXIS-NEXIS and WESTLAW are updated daily. Again, a CD ROM product is more like a looseleaf service: it is as current as the latest supplement. Many CD ROM products allow updating via online systems.

B. Washington CD ROM Products

Product or Producer	Contents
CD Law	Decisions (v.80-200 Wash., v.1-current Wn.2d; v.1-current Wn.App.), RCW, WAC, <i>Washington State Register</i> , court rules, ethics opinions, attorney general opinions, various administrative decisions, several city and county codes.
Office of the Code Reviser	RCW, WAC, Administrator for the Courts Pattern Forms.
Washington Law on Disc (Michie)	ARCW, advance legislative service material, <i>Washington Rules of Court Annotated</i> , decisions (Wash., Wn.2d and Wn.App.) 1898-date, WAC.
West's CD-ROM Libraries	Several disks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Washington Practice</i>; ● <i>West's Washington Case Law and Revised Code of Washington Unannotated</i> (decisions, 1898-date; RCW; court rules; ● <i>Washington Administrative Code</i>; ● <i>West's Washington Digest CD-ROM Edition</i>; ● Available or coming soon: <i>Northwest Personal Injury Litigation Reports</i>, <i>Spokane Municipal Code</i>, various administrative decisions.
Washington Digital Law Library Foundation	Decisions (Wn.2d and Wn. App.), RCW, WAC.

VI. Bulletin Board Systems

A. L.A.W. BBS

The Legal Access in Washington Bulletin Board System (L.A.W. BBS), developed and staffed by volunteers and currently subsidized by the Washington State Bar Association, offers a variety of services and searchable databases. Attorneys may download files, send and receive email, and subscribe to electronic discussion groups or "conferences."

Currently, users may dial in to six nodes (five for the Seattle area and one for Tacoma):

Line 1 (206) 727-8312
Line 2 (206) 728-2884
Line 3 (206) 728-2885
Line 4 (206) 728-2886
Line 5 (206) 728-2887
Line 6 (206) 927-1030 [Tacoma]

Searchable databases include:

- *Revised Code of Washington*
- *Washington Administrative Code*
- *Washington Reports 2d*
- *Washington Appellate Decisions*
- Washington court rules
- attorney general opinions
- selected city and county codes
- Washington corporations
- Washington contractors
- Washington lawyers

Caution: some of the legal databases are two or three years out of date. Users should be sure to check the scope of whatever database they are searching.

Instructions for using L.A.W. BBS are published in Washington State Bar Association, *Resources* (1996-97), at 359-63.

B. Court Record Information

1. JIS-Link

The Washington Office of the Administrator for the Courts (OAC) provides access to its statewide computer system called JIS-Link (for "Judicial Information System"). The first component made available to the public was SCOMIS ("Superior Court Management Information System"). It now contains docket information for all the Superior Courts in Washington, giving subscribers information to the fact and progress of litigation across the state (though some types of actions, like juvenile proceedings, are unavailable to subscribers). The basic search is by party name either in one county's court or statewide.

JIS-Link has been expanded to include similar systems for district and municipal courts across the state in DISCIS ("District and Municipal Court Information System") and for state appellate courts in ACORDS (for "Appellate Court Records and Data System"). In all these instances, the systems are used by clerks' offices to manage case information; public access is a by-product of standardizing the case docketing process. Public access, at least to the specific local court's records, is sometimes available free in the local clerk's office. Statewide subscriptions may be

contracted through the JIS-Link Coordinator at (800) 442-0439. Ask about coverage of the particular courts in which you are interested; although all Superior Courts participate in SCOMIS, the same may not be true for the other courts across the state.

There is one other part of the JIS-Link service to which the public may subscribe. This system is called the Washington Legal Database. It is described as an "umbrella for storage" by the OAC and contains two types of information: (1) court decisions of the Washington Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court; and (2) local court rules filed by any Washington court with the OAC in electronic format. One may search the decisions or the local rules by word or phrase.

2. PACER

Federal court records from district and bankruptcy courts across the country (though not from every district or bankruptcy court) are available through the PACER system. PACER, which stands for Public Access to Court Electronic Records, was developed by the Federal Judicial Center, working with the U.S. Courts. PACER is similar to JIS-Link, in that it is a standardized electronic case docketing system (though district and bankruptcy courts are in separate systems). Unlike JIS-Link, however, one must subscribe separately to each court and the modem connection is via a different telephone number to each court; for instance, if one subscribes to Washington's Eastern and Western District and Bankruptcy Courts, one has four separate subscriptions and four different modem-access telephone numbers. PACER subscriptions are also not easy to maintain if one needs only occasional court records from a particular court; a subscription is canceled automatically if the user has not accessed a particular court within a set number of weeks or months. For more information or to subscribe, call the PACER Service Center at (800) 676-6856.

3. CourtLink

For those interested in having access to both state and federal court records, there is a local commercial service: CourtLink, produced by Data West Corporation. CourtLink is "Windows-based" and offers access not only to the court records of all Washington Superior Courts and about 140 district and municipal courts across the state, but also to the records of many federal district and bankruptcy courts across the country, including the Eastern and Western Districts of Washington. CourtLink allows one to search for a party's name in both state and federal court records and then to combine the search results into one report. Forthcoming features include automatically notifying a subscriber when a specific event occurs in a particular case (for instance, when a reply is filed), or when a new case is filed against a particular party. For more information or to subscribe, call (206) 450-0390 or (800) 774-7317.

VII. Internet

A. Introduction

The Internet is a global network of computer networks. It facilitates quick communication and transfer of data across great distances. In the 1990s, legal researchers began using the Internet for electronic mail (email) and for research, and interest has swelled.

The World Wide Web is a portion of the Internet that uses hypertext links to organize and present information. To use the World Wide Web, you need a subscription to some service that provides you access to the Internet – that is, an Internet Service Provider (ISP). A piece of software called a "Web browser" then allows you to search for Web sites, or to enter an address, called the Uniform Resource Locator (URL), of a site you know. Netscape is a popular Web browser that is available in free and commercial versions. Many Internet Service Providers also offer Web browsers as part of their subscription packages.

Those unfamiliar with the Internet might find an example helpful at this point. Suppose you have a computer and Internet access (that is an account with an Internet Service Provider and a Web browser loaded on your own computer). You could "visit" the Washington State Courts' Internet site (or "Web page" or "Web site") by typing in its URL,

<http://www.wa.gov/courts>

The first screen that appears (in June 1996) includes the following:

Court Information

- About Washington State Courts

Information on all levels of Washington State Courts.

- Washington Court Directory

A directory of courts and addresses.

- JIS-Link

Discover how to obtain on-line access to court information in Washington State.

- Court News

Press releases and reports.

You could select any of the underlined headings (for instance, by clicking a mouse), and then will see another screen of information. For instance, choosing "About Washington State Courts" brings up the following:

About Washington State Courts

Washington State Judiciary

- State of the Judiciary
A speech by Chief Justice Barbara Durham (01/23/95)
- Caseloads of the Courts of Washington
Statistical information summarizing judicial caseloads

Washington State Courts

- Supreme Court
- Court of Appeals
- Superior Courts
- District Courts
- Municipal Courts

Informational Brochures

- Jury Service
- A Citizen's Guide to Washington Courts
- Citizens and Their Courts - Building a public constituency

Again, you could click on any of the underlined items. Clicking on "State of the Judiciary" brings up the full text of Chief Justice Durham's speech. Clicking on "Supreme Court" brings up a list of several options; at that point, you could choose to see issue summaries, the court's calendar, or biographies of the justices.

Hundreds of government agencies, law schools, law firms, and individuals have set up Web pages with legal information. Material available includes cases, statutes, regulations, forms, and directory information. Some sites consist of information prepared by the organization that created the Web page. Others consist almost entirely of lists of links to other sites.

Researchers should evaluate carefully what they find on the Internet. Consider the source: for instance, information about the Washington Supreme Court that is provided by the Washington State Courts is accurate and reliable; information about the court system that a high school student put on a Web page for a social studies project would probably be less so. The American Civil Liberties Union's Web page has a different slant from the National Rifle Association's. Look for a statement of authorship or responsibility: who wrote the material? who maintains the site? how often is the material updated?

Web sites are often edited or revised. Of course, it is good to have new material added, to catch typos in early drafts, and to improve the sites. However, sometimes it can be frustrating to researchers to realize that a document viewed last week may not be anywhere to be found today. For that matter, sometimes entire sites disappear. This can happen for any number of reasons: for example, a law student who had a great Web page might graduate and lose her university account, or an institution has to make budget cuts and decides not to fund the staff person who was responsible for the page, or the author of a Web page simply loses interest in maintaining it.

B. Internet Guides

A full discussion of the Internet is beyond the scope of this book. Go to the shelves of any bookstore or computer store, and you will see dozens of books about using the Internet. A few books aimed at legal researchers are:

- G. Burgess Allison, *The Lawyer's Guide to the Internet* (1995) (Section of Law Practice Management, American Bar Association)
- James Evans, *Law on the Net* (1995) (Nolo Press)
- Erik J. Heels, *The Legal List: Internet Desk Reference: Law-Related Resources on the Internet and Elsewhere* (1995) (Lawyers Cooperative Pub.)
- Don MacLeod, *The Internet Guide for the Legal Researcher: A How-to Guide to Locating and Retrieving Free and Fee-Based Information on the Internet* (1995) (Infosources Pub.)

Two recent CLEs are:

- *The Internet and the Practice of Law* (1995)(Washington State Bar Association)
- *The Lawyer on the Internet: Becoming an Effective User* (1995) (Washington State Bar Association)

C. Selected Washington Internet Sites

Source/Name	Uniform Resource Locator (URL)	Contents
Home Page Washington	http://www.wa.gov/wahome.html	Links to Washington State agencies, including local government.

Chapter 8, Computer-Assisted Legal Research

Washington State Legislature	http://leginfo.leg.wa.gov/	Information about the legislature, including bills, bill status, and a searchable version of the RCW.
Washington State Courts	http://www.wa.gov/courts/	Information about the courts, including court structure, addresses, recent opinions, and domestic relations forms.
Municipal Research & Services Center	http://www.mrsc.org	Information about MRSC, news about municipal government law, searchable index of selected Washington ordinances, RCW, WAC, several city codes.
Washington State Bar Association	http://www.wsba.org	Information about the bar, including discipline, CLE, and licensing information.
King County Bar Association	http://www.owt.com/kcba	Hot topics, CLE calendar, membership information.
CD Law	http://www.cdlaw.com	Information about CD Law; recent cases.
The Emerald Web	http://www.cyberspace.com/bobk	Links to a variety of sites in the Puget Sound area, including local government, recreation, and business.
University of Washington School of Law	http://www.law.washington.edu	Information about the law school, including CLE calendar; links to search tools and law sites.

Washington Legal Researcher's Deskbook, 2d

Gonzaga University School of Law Li- brary	http://law.gonzaga.edu/ li- brary/libhome.html	Information about the library; links to Washing- ton and Pacific Northwest Web sites.
Seattle University School of Law	http://192.124.98.48/ mainmenu.htm	Information about the law school and the law li- brary.