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Recommended Citation

Mary Whisner, *The 4-1-1 on Lawyer Directories*, 106 LAW LIBR. J. 257 (2014), <https://digitalcommons.law.uw.edu/librarians-articles/12>

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The 4-1-1 on Lawyer Directories*

Mary Whisner**

Directories listing biographical and contact information for attorneys have been a publishing mainstay for more than one hundred years. They are used for marketing, as well as historical and genealogical research. However, technology is changing the way attorneys advertise, and Ms. Whisner looks at the current state of lawyer directories and their usage.

Navin R. Johnson: The new phone book's here! The new phone book's here!

Harry Hartounian: Boy, I wish I could get that excited about nothing.

Navin R. Johnson: Nothing? Are you kidding? Page 73—Johnson, Navin R.! I'm somebody now! Millions of people look at this book every day! This is the kind of spontaneous publicity—your name in print—that makes people. I'm in print! Things are going to start happening to me now.¹

¶1 A directory of lawyers: what could be more straightforward? You list lawyers, provide contact information and a brief biography (college, law school, bar membership), and there you go. Simple, right? Well, not so much. In the past, directories prompted serious questions about compliance with ethics rules.² Now there are fewer restrictions on lawyer advertising, but lawyers still can't say just anything.³ In recent years, the medium has changed as we've moved from the huge volumes of *Martindale-Hubbell* to the dancing pixels of our laptop screens. Meanwhile, the players in the marketplace are also changing.

¶2 Let's begin by thinking about the uses of legal directories. Whom do they serve and how? Job applicants use directories to find information about potential employers. They like to learn about the lawyers at a firm and the nature of the

* © Mary Whisner, 2014. I am grateful to my friend Nancy Unger for commenting on a draft of this column.

** Reference Librarian, Marian Gould Gallagher Law Library, University of Washington School of Law, Seattle, Washington.

1. *THE JERK* (Universal Pictures 1979) (quoted passage available at http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0079367/trivia?tab=qt&ref_=tt_trv_qu (last visited Feb. 3, 2014)).

2. See, e.g., *Report and Announcement of Special Committee on Law Lists*, 24 A.B.A. J. 678 (1938) (discussing establishment of a committee to review legal directories for compliance with rules). A new ethical Canon provided that it would be “improper for a lawyer to permit his name to be published after January 1, 1939, in a law list that is not approved by the American Bar Association.” *Id.* at 678. Time precludes me from digging further into this committee and its work, but I know that the committee existed for some time.

3. See MODEL RULES PROF'L CONDUCT R. 7.1 (1983) (communication about lawyer's services); R. 7.2 (advertising), R. 7.4 (communication of fields of practice).

practice. Sometimes they use the biographical information to find a networking connection—such as a lawyer who attended their college or served in the Navy or who does pro bono work for an arts group. Potential clients use directories to find lawyers—sometimes to learn more about someone whose name they’ve been given and sometimes, starting from scratch, to find someone who seems a good match for their needs. Lawyers, for their part, use directories to attract clients and to find out about other lawyers with whom they have dealings. Scholars interested in the legal profession use directories to gain snapshots of lawyers in a community.⁴ Genealogists use old directories to confirm that Great-Uncle Ted was indeed a lawyer.

A Bit of History

¶3 Originally, *Martindale’s United States Law Directory* and *Hubbell’s Legal Directory* were not intended to be the (nearly) comprehensive directory *Martindale-Hubbell* became. Rather, the directories were meant to provide lawyers and businesspeople with selected contacts in cities across the country.⁵ But they grew to offer more comprehensive coverage of the legal profession. The foreword to the first volume after the Martindale Company purchased the publishing rights to *Hubbell’s Legal Directory*⁶ proclaimed that the publishers “spared no effort in their endeavor to accurately compile the only complete list of the bar with ratings for legal ability, local standing and other information of importance to the selection of counsel.”⁷ By 1950, the directory listed an estimated ninety percent of American lawyers.⁸ That year, the American Bar Association voted to cooperate with the company to make the directory more complete and asked state and local bar associa-

4. The American Bar Foundation’s *Lawyer Statistical Report* is based on data from Martindale-Hubbell. See, e.g., LAWYER STATISTICAL REPORT (2005) (“The report is produced in conjunction with the Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory, which supplies baseline statistics.”). See also, e.g., Alex Elson, *Book Review*, 30 U. CHI. L. REV. 784, 789–90 (1963) (criticizing sampling technique in JEROME E. CARLIN, *LAWYERS ON THEIR OWN: A STUDY OF INDIVIDUAL PRACTITIONERS IN CHICAGO* (1962)).

5. See, e.g., JAMES B. MARTINDALE, *MARTINDALE’S UNITED STATES LAW DIRECTORY FOR 1875–6*, at 3 (1875) (“The object of this work is to furnish Lawyers, Bankers, Wholesale Merchants, Manufacturers, Real Estate Agents, and all others who may have need of business correspondents away from home, the address of one reliable Law firm, Bank, and Real Estate Agent in each city and town of the United States”); HUBBELL’S *LEGAL DIRECTORY FOR LAWYERS AND BUSINESS MEN . . . 1874* at 3 (J. H. Hubbell ed., 4th ed. 1873) (directory’s “object is to aid the professional and business community in the transaction of legal and other business in the various sections of our widely extended country by furnishing a list of able and reliable Attorneys throughout the United States and Canada”). Both directories also summarized state laws (especially commercial and collection laws); *Hubbell’s Legal Directory* also had court calendars. Martindale also had a collections business, the Martindale Law and Collection Association, based in New York with associate offices in twenty-three cities in the United States and Canada. MARTINDALE, *supra*, at 3.

6. I had thought the companies merged, but a vice president of Martindale-Hubbell, Inc., described it this way. William Hildebrand, Jr., *Scope of Martindale-Hubbell Rating System*, 46 N.Y. ST. B.J. 433, 433 (1974) (reprinted from LAW OFFICE ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT, Winter 1973).

7. THE MARTINDALE-HUBBELL LAW DIRECTORY, at iii (1931). The title page indicates that *Martindale’s American Law Directory* was published from 1868 to 1930 and *Hubbell’s Legal Directory* was published from 1870 to 1930.

8. *Additional Data, Law Directory, 1951*, 11 ALA. LAW. 348 (1950).

tions to make their rosters available.⁹ Various bar journals urged members to list in *Martindale-Hubbell* to make possible a more accurate census of the profession.¹⁰

¶4 For many years, the mighty *Martindale-Hubbell* volumes were the best way to find information about lawyers and law firms. They were both heavy and heavily used. Each year the volume that included our state became worn.¹¹ The lack of a detailed index system caused a lot of flipping and skimming, and the oil from thousands of fingers darkened the edges of our city's entries. If you wanted to find lawyers who attended a certain college or practiced maritime law, all you could do was skim. If you weren't sure what town a lawyer was in, you had to look under likely locations—for example, lawyers in the Seattle area could be listed under Bellevue, Kirkland, or Renton in addition to Seattle. Individuals were listed in the first part of the book; firms that paid for listings had profiles with much more detailed biographies of their lawyers in the second part. You might find a lawyer in the first part, see that he would be listed with a certain firm, then flip back a thousand pages or so to the firm's listing to find out more about him.¹²

¶5 Enter the electronic age. In 1990 the *Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory* was released on CD-ROM,¹³ and later the same year it became available on LexisNexis.¹⁴ Now it was easy to answer questions that before would have required hours and hours of tedious scanning. Find the lawyers who were admitted before a certain date? Born in a certain year? Graduated from your law school? Piece of cake.¹⁵

¶6 But that was just the beginning of electronic developments that would challenge the prevalence of print. As the Internet blossomed, firms developed an online presence. Once they could present in-depth profiles of their lawyers (complemented by attractive photographs), why should they pay for firm profiles in

9. *Id.*

10. See, e.g., *id.*; *Facts about Lawyers*, 1950 INS. L.J. 384; *National Lawyer Census—Are You Included?*, ST. LOUIS B.J., May 1951, at 9; *Will You Be Correctly Listed in the Next Martindale-Hubbell?*, 28 DICTA 314 (1951); *Will You Be Correctly Listed in the Next Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory?*, 13 GA. B.J. 441 (1951).

11. For another comment on the former popularity of the print volume for one's local jurisdiction, see Jean P. O'Grady, *Martindale Hubbell: Another Legal Icon Bites the Dust. But It Was Once Worth Its Weight in Gold (and Held for Ransom)*, DEWEY B. STRATEGIC, <http://deweybstrategic.blogspot.com/2014/01/martindale-hubbell-another-legal-icon.html> (Jan. 9, 2014, 12:16 AM) (includes ransom note by law firm associates).

12. Many other print directories existed, some listing lawyers in particular practice areas or geographic areas, e.g., THE BEST LAWYERS IN AMERICA (1983–); THE CALIFORNIA LEGAL DIRECTORY (1972–1996); OR. ST. BAR, LAWYERS' DESKBOOK AND DIRECTORY (1980); A DIRECTORY OF KOREAN-AMERICAN LAWYERS (Chin Kim ed., 1987).

13. *Introducing . . . The Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory on CD-ROM*, 21 AALL NEWSL. 363 (1990) (advertisement).

14. See *If You Think the Legal World Is Getting Smaller, You're Using the Wrong Directory*, A.B.A. J., Dec. 1990, at 69; *Of First Impressions: New Products for Attorneys*, A.B.A. J., Nov. 1990, at 105. The company had an in-house database before that. In 1989, it asked librarians to request an electronic version for the benefit of the marketing department. See *Martindale-Hubbell Online*, LAW LIBR. LIGHTS, Mar.–Apr. 1989, at 31.

15. The existence of the electronic versions eventually changed the print version; 2008 was the last year that information for all lawyers appeared in print. See 1 MARTINDALE-HUBBELL LAW DIRECTORY, at iv (2009) (“Only a limited number of Practice Profiles is now being included in the print directory. Complete Practice Profile listings can be found by searching *martindale.com*.”).

Martindale-Hubbell? Firms began shortening their entries (they were charged by the word) or eliminating them altogether.¹⁶ Other directories entered the field. *West's Legal Directory* on Westlaw competes with *Martindale-Hubbell* on LexisNexis. Nolo, the well-respected publisher of self-help law books, publishes *Nolo's Lawyer Directory*, which directs users to lawyers by asking them to select state, city, and area of law.¹⁷ The Legal Information Institute and Justia share a directory.¹⁸ State bar associations often have online directories as well.

A Modest Empirical Study

¶7 I knew from experience that any single directory could have gaps: either it omitted the person I was looking for or it lacked some of the information I wanted. Entries in directories that allow individuals to claim and add to their profiles¹⁹ vary widely, from providing only a name and address to hosting a full page with photo, education experience, publications, and more. Although I could make some generalizations, I couldn't yet back them up with solid data. So I decided to try my hand at an empirical study.

¶8 This was a modest little study, using a small sample from one state and comparing just a few data points in a few online directories: the Washington State Bar Association's directory (pro.wsba.org), Martindale (martindale.com), Findlaw (lawyers.findlaw.com), Avvo (avvo.com), and LinkedIn (linkedin.com).²⁰ The data set is about what I could gather in a weekend,²¹ so the sample is too small to generalize the findings with any precision. Nonetheless, I report my study and its results here both for what they can tell us about directories and as a sketch of what a more rigorous study might undertake.

16. See Gina Passarella, *Martindale-Hubbell Faces Challenges*, LEGAL INTELLIGENCER, Dec. 19, 2007, at 1 (available in Lexis Advance, Legal News); Anthony Lin, *Martindale to Change Focus as Some Firms Opt Out*, NAT'L L.J. (Online), May 21, 2007 (available in Lexis Advance).

17. *Nolo's Lawyer Directory*, NOLO, <http://www.nolo.com/lawyers> (last visited Feb. 11, 2014).

18. *Justia Lawyer Directory*, JUSTIA, <http://www.justia.com/lawyers> (last visited Feb. 11, 2014); *Lawyers*, LEGAL INFO. INST., <http://lawyers.law.cornell.edu/> (last visited Feb. 11, 2014). Lawyers can claim their profiles to add photos and provide information about their experience, areas of practice, and fees (e.g., offering a free consultation).

19. Claiming a profile may be considered advertising subject to ethical rules. See, e.g., *When Lawyers "Claim" Online Profile, Rules on Communications, Advertising Apply*, ABA/BNA LAWYERS' MANUAL ON PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT, CURRENT REPORTS (Nov. 11, 2009) (discussing S.C. Bar Ethics Advisory Comm. Op. 09-10).

20. A few years ago I did an even smaller study comparing the WSBA directory with commercial online directories: *Martindale-Hubbell* on LexisNexis and *West's Legal Directory* on Westlaw. See Mary Whisner, *Comparing Legal Directories*, GALLAGHER BLOGS (May 23, 2011, 7:45 PM), <http://gallagherlawlibrary.blogspot.com/2011/05/comparing-legal-directories.html>.

21. Namely, Friday, Jan. 31, to Sunday, Feb. 2, 2014. I did manage to watch part of the Super Bowl. I gave copies of my spreadsheets to *Law Library Journal's* editor; when this column is published I'll post it on SSRN as an appendix to this essay.

The WSBA Directory

¶9 Washington State has a mandatory bar. That is, everyone who is licensed to practice law in the state must belong to the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA). In recent years, WSBA has built a sophisticated online directory. When searching for names, one can opt to include similar sounding names.²² Users can search for lawyers by city, practice area, or foreign language. It is easy to search for an employment attorney in Seattle who speaks Spanish or someone who practices international law and knows Mandarin. Each attorney's record shows membership status, date of admission, any disciplinary history, and activity in the association.

¶10 I drew my sample from this database.²³ Since each lawyer has a unique bar number and that field is searchable, I searched for the lawyers whose bar numbers end in 501 (501, 1501, 2501, etc.) or 777 (777, 1777, 2777, etc.). I had no particular reason to choose those numbers: I just wanted a spread of lawyers. Let me emphasize the smallness of the sample—just two out of every thousand lawyers.²⁴

¶11 The sample comprised ninety-two current or former members of WSBA. Some directories might not include former members, but I think it's interesting and useful to have them. Suppose you were trying to track down the lawyer who had drawn up someone's will or handled some case. Instead of finding no entry at all, you might find that the lawyer had died (as had four lawyers in the sample)²⁵ and you would know to stop looking. In addition to "deceased," there are several other alternatives to active status. One lawyer, admitted in 1953, has honorary membership (a nonpracticing status available to lawyers who are active or judicial members for fifty years).²⁶ Three had "judicial" status. Five have resigned voluntarily; three were suspended for nonpayment of dues; six have inactive status;²⁷ and one is on disciplinary suspension. That leaves sixty-eight active members in the sample. Half of the lawyers in the sample were admitted in 1993 or earlier and half in 1994 or later.²⁸ Unsurprisingly, lawyers admitted in the past twenty years are more likely to be active than the older group (see Table 1).²⁹

22. E.g., searching for "jon clinch" retrieves John Alfred Clynych. Searching for "hazelton" retrieves Hazelton, Hazelwood, Hauschild, Huguélet, and Hochhalter. The program is not clever enough to retrieve "Penelope" from a search for "penny."

23. Why not start with where I live and work?

24. It might be an even lower percentage, since there happen not to be people with the bar numbers of 34777 or 41501.

25. The WSBA directory did offer contact information—telephone number and either mailing address or e-mail address—for the four people in the sample who were identified as deceased. Although it might be useful to contact the late lawyer's firm or last employer, I suspect the information remains simply because it has not yet been deleted. When I called one of the decedent's phone numbers, I heard a recording that the number was no longer in service.

26. See *Lawyer Directory Statuses*, WASH. ST. BAR ASS'N, <http://www.wsba.org/Licensing-and-Lawyer-Conduct/Membership-Changes/Lawyer-Directory-Status-Reference> (last visited Feb. 11, 2014) (defining all the statuses).

27. I have inactive status, too.

28. I'm using the present tense throughout this discussion, although we all know that status can change. By the time you read this, lawyers who were active could be suspended; lawyers who were inactive could have resumed active status, and so on.

29. The four deceased lawyers were also from the earlier half of the sample: the only lawyer admitted in the 1940s, the only one from the 1960s, and two of the four admitted in the 1950s.

Table 1

Membership Status in WSBA Directory Sample

| | Admitted 1993 and Before (n=46) | Admitted 1994 and Later (n=46) | Total (n=92) |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| Active | 27 (59%) | 41 (89%) | 68 (74%) |
| Deceased | 4 (9%) | 0 (0%) | 4 (4%) |
| Inactive | 2 (4%) | 4 (9%) | 6 (7%) |
| Honorary | 1 (2%) | 0 (0%) | 1 (1%) |
| Judicial | 3 (7%) | 0 (0%) | 3 (3%) |
| Suspended—nonpayment of fees | 3 (7%) | 0 (0%) | 3 (3%) |
| Suspended—discipline | 1 (2%) | 0 (0%) | 1 (1%) |
| Voluntarily resigned | 5 (11%) | 1 (2%) | 6 (7%) |

¶12 I was surprised at the number of lawyers outside Washington State: twenty-two in the sample, or one-quarter of the living lawyers. And they aren't just in neighboring states (although five are in Oregon and one in Idaho)—they are scattered among seventeen states. Just over half of the lawyers in the sample listed one or more practice areas: forty-two of those with active status and five of the others. Four listed a foreign language (two Spanish, one German, and one Farsi).

Coverage in Other Directories

¶13 Once I had this sample, my next task was to find those lawyers in the three free legal online directories I'd chosen (Martindale, FindLaw, and Avvo) and LinkedIn. When a lawyer had a distinctive name (e.g., Rand-Scott Coggan or Neda Sedghi), searching was straightforward: either the lawyer was in the database or not. With more common names (e.g., Janet Thomas or John Wilson) it took some digging to determine whether I'd found a match.³⁰

¶14 The results were very uneven. Avvo draws its initial data from bar membership rolls,³¹ so it has a listing for every lawyer in the sample, active or not.³² Martindale does well, with seventy-four out of the eighty-eight living lawyers. FindLaw's directory has very sparse coverage: only four of the active members and one judicial member. I found LinkedIn profiles for thirty-nine of the people in the sample.³³ See Table 2.

30. For example, when searching for common names in LinkedIn, I'd restrict the industry to law practice or legal services. In legal directories, I made sure that the listed lawyer was admitted the same year as the lawyer in the sample.

31. See *Where Do You Get Information on Attorneys?*, AVVO, http://www.avvo.com/support/Where_do_you_get_information_on_attorneys (last visited Feb. 16, 2014). Avvo has full coverage—that is, listings for all licensed attorneys—for a little more than half the states; the remaining states have profiles only for lawyers who have added them. *Current State Coverage—Attorney Directory*, AVVO, http://www.avvo.com/support/current_states (last visited Feb. 12, 2014).

32. Some lawyers in the sample had two listings because they were members of two state bars and had been picked up from both sources.

33. LinkedIn is not yet a substitute for directories dedicated to lawyers. Among the lawyers

Table 2

Status of Lawyers from Sample in All Directories

| | WSBA | Avvo | Martindale | FindLaw | LinkedIn |
|---|------|------|------------|---------|----------|
| Active | 68 | 68 | 59 | 4 | 34 |
| Judicial | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Deceased | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Other | 17 | 17 | 12 | 0 | 6 |
| Total | 92 | 92 | 74 | 5 | 41 |
| Percentage of living lawyers from sample (n=88) | 100% | 100% | 84% | 6% | 47% |

¶15 Now whether someone is listed is only the first question to ask. You also want to know whether the other directories add anything. The WSBA directory is good, but it doesn't offer pictures, schools attended, experience, or any sort of narrative about the lawyer's practice. It doesn't rate lawyers. It's even spotty on whether it names an employer: it lists employers for only forty-eight of the sixty-eight active members.³⁴ It turns out that the other directories add a great deal of content for some lawyers but not for others. Some lawyers have a strong online presence, with full profiles in Martindale, Avvo, and LinkedIn. Others have a full profile in one directory but not in the others.

¶16 Focusing on the active members in the sample, I looked at the different types of information each directory provides (see Table 3). FindLaw lists only four lawyers, but for each it includes a picture and lists areas of practice, employer, and law school, giving a better sense of the lawyer than can be gleaned the WSBA entry. Martindale and Avvo have listings for many more lawyers. For some there's little more information than name and address, but others have full profiles, sometimes with narratives about their practices, major cases, speaking engagements, publications, or awards. I always look for law school attended, not because it is much help to a potential client in evaluating a lawyer but because, as an academic law librarian, I'm often looking for this information to assist law school administrators or students. And, while WSBA does not list this information, commercial directories often do.

who had listings, many had just the barest public profiles—not even an address or phone number. See Kevin O'Keefe, *Has LinkedIn Buried Other Legal Directories?*, REAL LAWYERS HAVE BLOGS (Feb. 27, 2013), <http://kevin.lexblog.com/2013/02/27/has-linkedin-buried-other-legal-directories/> ("Has LinkedIn made legal directories irrelevant? I don't think so. Sites covering a vertical industry, such as the law, can offer value if done well.").

34. This includes twelve lawyers in solo practice.

Table 3

Types of Information Available in Directories (Active Members, n=68)

| | WSBA (n=68) | Martindale (n=59) | FindLaw (n=4) | Avvo (n=68) |
|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Areas of practice | 42 | 26 | 4 | 51 |
| Employer | 47 | 34 | 4 | 36 |
| Law school | 0 | 32 | 4 | 22 |
| Ratings or recommendations | 0 | Peer rating: 13 Client rating: 4 | 0 | Avvo rating: 47 Client review: 4 Lawyer endorsement: 11 |
| Photograph | 0 | 4 | 4 | 16 |

¶17 Martindale and Avvo both offer what many public patrons ask for: ratings. *Martindale-Hubbell* has provided ratings for more than a century, but in recent years the publisher has introduced client reviews³⁵ and added a numerical component to the peer reviews. Where before an attorney might get “av” (indicating very high legal ability and very high recommendations), now one gets, say, AV and 5.0/5.0 or BV and 4.4/5.0. Not everyone is rated: in the sample, thirteen of the fifty-nine lawyers who had Martindale listings also had peer ratings. Only four had client ratings—variously, 3.8, 4.0, 4.8, and 5.0 out of 5.0. Avvo bases its ratings on data such as bar discipline, professional awards, lawyers’ web sites, and information that lawyers supply; it factors in peer ratings but not client ratings.³⁶ When Avvo lacks sufficient information for a rating, it adds “Attention” or “No Concern” to the profile.³⁷ Avvo posts attorney endorsements and client comments with numerical ratings. Four lawyers in the sample had at least one client review and eleven had at least one lawyer endorsement.³⁸

35. See Lin, *supra* note 16.

36. See *What Is the Avvo Rating?*, AVVO, http://www.avvo.com/support/avvo_rating (last visited Feb. 16, 2014).

37. *Id.* One lawyer in the sample had “! Attention” in the rating area; he had a disciplinary suspension in 2007. Twenty (many of the ones new to practice) were marked “no concern.” Oddly, one was marked “no concern” in his Washington profile and 7.0 in his Oregon profile. It appears that lawyers who stay in practice for 10 years or more and don’t get into trouble get a 6.5.

38. Most of the comments seem relevant and helpful to someone deciding whether to engage a lawyer. An exception was this endorsement: “Any client that calls to inquire of the possibility of hiring me but their case is in Snohomish County, I refer them to Mr. Swanson.” Apart from the odd syntax, that sounds good, until you notice that the endorser is in Oklahoma—a very unlikely place to hear from potential clients in Snohomish County, Washington. *Richard W Swanson*, AVVO, <http://www.avvo.com/attorneys/98204-wa-richard-swanson-4228.html> (last visited Feb. 16, 2014).

Corporate Counsel

¶18 Recently a professor at my school who was trying to help students interested in corporate law careers wanted to find alumni who were in-house counsel. After searching the LexisNexis Law Directory—All Corporate Legal Department Listings (*Martindale-Hubbell* on LexisNexis), *Directory of Corporate Counsel* (an Aspen publication available on Westlaw, CORP-DIR), and West Legal Directory—Corporate Counsel (WLD-CORPCO), I created a spreadsheet of about two hundred alumni with their profiles. Although I won't parse out the differences among the directories here, I will say that the directories provided different coverage. After I showed the spreadsheet to several administrators, one mentioned that one of the lawyers listed had taken a job with a different corporation the previous month. That update illustrates one limitation of any directory: none will ever be completely up-to-date.

¶19 A bigger limitation is that directories generally include only the information that the subjects provide. Lawyers have to tell the bar association their names and addresses, but they don't have to say much more; as a result, the WSBA directory doesn't always include practice areas or employers, and the coverage in commercial directories is uneven. Lawyers in private practice and law firms have incentives to have good profiles so that clients can find them and hire them. Others don't have those incentives. Public defenders, legal services attorneys, government agency attorneys, lawyers who don't practice: for most of them, it just isn't important to claim a profile in a directory, fill in their credentials, and add a photo that makes them look at once warm and professional. This same dynamic may limit corporate counsel listings. Years ago, when I was playing around with rival directories, I noticed that very few lawyers were listed in a legal department that I knew was quite large, and I pointed out this discrepancy to someone I knew in the department. The acquaintance said that it was fine not to have the lawyers listed: everyone inside the company who needed them knew how to find them; the only outsiders who would look for them were headhunters trying to hire them away. I had naively thought that everyone would want the directories to be complete and accurate, but this comment showed otherwise.

Continuing Change

¶20 In August 2013, LexisNexis and Internet Brands announced a joint venture, “bringing together the strengths of the LexisNexis Martindale-Hubbell internet marketing solutions business, including the leading Lawyers.com consumer website, with Internet Brands’ leading online marketing services for lawyers through its Nolo legal division.”³⁹ Two months later, LexisNexis laid off two hundred and five employees, chiefly in the *Martindale-Hubbell* and Lawyers.com units—but LexisNexis’s CEO said that “the joint venture is committed” to those brands.⁴⁰ There was some speculation that *Martindale-Hubbell* was dead or would change

39. Press Release, LexisNexis Martindale-Hubbell and Internet Brands Announce Joint Venture, M2 PRESSWIRE (Aug. 30, 2013) (available in Bloomberg Law).

40. Monica Bay, *LexisNexis and Internet Brands Eliminate 205 Lawyers.com Jobs*, LAW TECH. NEWS (Oct. 24, 2013), available at <http://www.lawtechnologynews.com/id=1202625062133>.

dramatically,⁴¹ but the reports of its demise are probably premature. The joint venture plans to continue publishing the print directories with the same title, to maintain the martindale.com site, and to keep the directories on LexisNexis.⁴²

Parting Words

¶21 I would advise anyone using a legal directory not to stop with just one directory. Using more than one will often garner useful information, such as the lawyer's education and employment history, client or peer evaluations, or a photo. If you don't find much, then you've at least learned that this is a lawyer who doesn't want to bother claiming a profile. You can't tell whether it's because the lawyer doesn't need the business, doesn't like the technology, or doesn't know about the directories, but it's a little more information than you had before.

¶22 Lawyer directories are important tools for librarians, lawyers, and consumers. Because of their long history, their importance to the legal profession, and the shifts caused by changes in technology and business, they are ripe for investigation. My research is just a beginning. I invite others to pursue the topic further, perhaps by looking at larger samples and adding other directories to the mix.⁴³

41. See, e.g., O'Grady, *supra* note 11; Kevin O'Keefe, *Does Martindale-Hubbell, as We Knew It, Still Exist?*, REAL LAWYERS HAVE BLOGS (Dec. 1, 2013), <http://kevin.lexblog.com/2013/12/01/martindale-hubbell-as-we-knew-it-still-exist/>.

42. E-mail from Joe Ewaskiw, Senior Manager, Public Relations, Internet Brands, to author (Jan. 16, 2014, 6:06 PM PST) (on file with author). There has been a change of name. The directories on lexis.com are now called "LexisNexis Law Directories." The name "Martindale-Hubbell" is still in Lexis Advance's list of sources, but the U.S. directory is missing (it includes Canadian, International, and U.S. Government Attorney listings).

43. Research in different aspects of legal directories fits within the AALL Research Agenda:

- "The history of legal publishing, including publishing histories of . . . publishing firms, and histories of legal publications in particular jurisdictions or subject areas"
- "Bibliographies of legal publications of particular states or foreign jurisdictions"

AM. ASS'N OF LAW LIBRARIES, AALL RESEARCH AGENDA 2013–2016 (June 2013), <http://www.aallnet.org/main-menu/Member-Resources/grants/research-grants/research-agenda.html>.

There is plenty to investigate. Just because I've made a small start doesn't mean I own this topic. I'd love to learn what others can find out.