GETTING MORE OUT OF WILSONDISC

by Keith Buckley

In observing Law Library patrons using the various periodical indexes available in the back of the Reserve area, I’ve noticed a number of researchers tend to prefer the LegalTrac stations or overlook WILSONDISC. While WILSONDISC indexes fewer journals than LegalTrac and only covers articles published after late 1983, it also contains several unique features that make it an important adjunct, if not to say an excellent starting point, for any serious journal searching. Because WILSONDISC limits its coverage to articles that are five pages or longer appearing in the scholarly law journals and the major national law journals, a WILSONDISC search will always produce in depth, critical analysis of legal issues rather than a mixture of substantive and news-related materials. In addition, WILSONDISC’s assignment of subject headings is usually far more predictable than LegalTrac. Unlike LegalTrac, WILSONDISC does not make use of extensive subheadings, all of which must be searched in order to root out relevant articles. Finally, WILSONDISC offers a special type of searching, WILSEARCH, which provides additional points of access not available on the LegalTrac CD-ROM stations.

After you’ve loaded the WILSONDISC CD-ROM (available at the Circulation Desk) into the non-LegalTrac workstation in the periodicals index area, select the WILSONDISC option from the onscreen menu. You will then be offered several searching options. Once you’ve selected Option Number 2, the WILSEARCH option, the computer will load the contents of the CD-ROM. You are then asked to enter a new search, after which you will see a blank search form. Looking at the search form, we see that WILSONDISC allows you to search up to three different subject headings or words, words that appear in the title of the article, the author’s name or the name of the journal. You may search any one of these article segments separately, or combine several segment searches for more focused search results.

Here are a few of my favorite WILSEARCH techniques. I have often found that a combination subject heading/title search gives me the best list of titles. When performing this search, remember that you don’t have to give complete titles—you need only choose one or two words. If you use more than one word, you can insert the search connectors AND or OR between them for a LEXIS/WESTLAW style Boolean search. If you are not sure about which subject terms to use, be sure to go to a bound copy of Index to Legal Periodicals and examine the list of subject headings in the front of the volume. Also, remember that if you want to add a case name to your search, you need to put the names of the party or parties in your subject segment search. Should you decide you only want articles that have appeared in a specific journal, remember to enter the journal’s complete name in the journal segment search. Once you have entered your search (moving from segment to segment with the ENTER key), hit the END key and the ENTER key to initiate your search. After you have reviewed your search results on WILSEARCH, be sure to run your research request on WILSONLINE, WILSONDISC’s on-line database, to obtain brand new titles that are not yet on the CD-ROM.

Finally, you should always remember to search both WILSONDISC and LegalTrac whenever you need to make an exhaustive study of all available journal articles on your subject. Using both systems is quick and easy, and also reduces the chances that you’ve missed a crucial article. As always, if you have any questions about using these or other periodical indexes, be sure to see one of the Reference Librarians.
NEW & NOTEWORTHY:
Documenting the Civil Rights Movement


LAW LIBRARY CALL NUMBER: KF 4749 .A2 C58 1991 v.1-18

Garland Publishing, long a source of reprinted government documents and personal papers, has just published this 18 volume collection which spans more than 20 years of documenting the civil rights movement. As Belknap (California Western School of Law) explains in the introduction, "the purpose of this collection is to provide scholars with easy access to primary material that would otherwise be difficult for them to obtain." To this end, the collection does not contain many of the best known documents that are often cited in civil rights research. Rather the set contains everything from little known handwritten memos by White House aides, to the personal papers of Arthur Brann Caldwell, the Justice Department's highest ranking civil rights lawyer during the 1950's and early 60's.

Most of the material contained in the set are reprints of documents that are housed in the presidential libraries of Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson. In addition to the papers of Caldwell (housed at the University of Arkansas), the set also contains letters and papers of Attorneys General J. Howard McGrath, William Rodgers, Robert Kennedy and Ramsey Clark.

The format of the original documents range from memos, letters, telegrams, minutes of meetings, transcripts of telephone conversations and speeches. Unfortunately, the reproduction quality of these materials is often poor and it can be quite difficult to read some of the documents. This is especially true of the handwritten documents. Luckily, each document is labeled to show the source from which it was obtained (library where it is located, collection in the library, box and/or file number), so researchers can easily find the original.

Each volume is organized topically (see below), has a table of contents, and also contains a Cross Reference Guide for accessing related documents in the other volumes. Within each volume the documents are arranged, with a few exceptions, chronologically. Of special note are the last three volumes. Volume 16 is a reproduction of Caldwell's two loose-leaf notebooks which served as the Justice Department's "Policy Directives" and "Civil Rights Division Manual". Volume 17 (in 2 parts) is the Johnson Administration's official "Administrative History of the Civil Rights of the Department of Justice". Volume 18 (also in 2 parts) contains 17 briefs filed by the Justice Department in major civil rights cases decided by the Supreme Court between 1948 and 1968.

While Garland has often been criticized for reproducing material already available to researchers and often not finishing their multi-volume projects, this set truly seems to pull together an eclectic collection of revealing documents all in one place. Despite the reproduction quality, and the lack of any indexing, this set should prove to be helpful to civil rights researchers.

SERIES CONTENTS BY VOLUME NUMBER:

1. Attitudes, Goals, and Priorities.
2. Presidential Committees and White House Conferences.
3. Integration of the Armed Forces.
7. Desegregation of Public Education.
9. The Drive to Desegregate Places of Public Accommodation.
11. Urban Race Riots.
15. Voting Rights
17. [NOT-YET-RECEIVED] Administrative History of the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice During the Johnson Administration.

Dick Vaughan, Acquisitions & Serials Control Librarian

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY SEARCHING MADE EASIER BY WESTLAW

Westlaw's legislative history database ("LH") now contains congressional committee reports of public laws and Presidential signing statements issued at the time the President signs a bill into law. The period of coverage for the committee reports ranges from 1948 through December, 1989. In addition, the database contains all congressional committee reports of bills that did not become law. Coverage of Presidential signing statements includes all statements reprinted in the U.S.
Two new libraries have been created on the Lexis legal information service to make it easier for researchers to focus on mass tort cases and on judicial codes of ethics. The "mass tort library" (MSTORT) contains cross files from several other libraries and groups, including labor, environment, federal case law, legal journals and law reviews, health publications and Occupational Safety & Health Review Commission decisions and state case law.

A mass tort is one in which many victims are injured by the same wrongful conduct. The injuries occur in one of two forms under the law. The first is an accident or disaster other than natural calamity that kills or injures a multitude of victims, such as a hotel fire or an airplane accident. The second type involves many individuals being hurt over time and at different locations from the same cause, such as exposure to asbestos.

The new library will allow comprehensive research in a unique area of law. It has NO EQUIVALENT in hardcopy or other forms of computer-assisted legal research.

The second new library, ETHICS, is a grouping of state ethics decisions and the American Bar Association Code of Professional Responsibility, Code of Judicial Conduct, and Model Rules of Professional Conduct. The library is another Lexis aid to legal professionals who need to keep abreast of the dynamic area of law.

Mitch Counts,
Computer Services Librarian
DAT 2

What's DAT you ask? The Documents Aptitude Test (DAT, second edition) is a non-standardized test that measures a document user's potential ability to succeed in the use of government publications. The following five questions must be answered correctly within one minute and 30 seconds for a perfect score of 50 points. If two or more questions are answered incorrectly please see the Documents Librarian for possible career alternatives.

CHECK YOUR WATCH...BEGIN!

1. Harvey, Harriet, Hank, Hanna and Hal are hunting for Heidi Hartmann's testimony in a House Hearing. Who found Heidi's Hearing?

A) Harvey, Harriet and Hank hunted at Hooligan's
B) Hanna and Hal hunted in the CIS Annual Index to Congressional Publications and Legislative Histories which is housed in the Reference Section of the Law Library.

a) A and B   b) B and A   c) A only   d) B only

2. Which of the following statements most closely parallels reality?

A) Some legal citation books have blue covers. The Law Library has many blue books, so they are probably all legal citation books.

a) A and B   b) B and A   c) A only   d) B only

3. What is a "government document"?

a) secret information known only to a few officials in high office.
 b) publications produced by government agencies commonly available in libraries.

4. Three law students are sitting in a row. Two are too stressed out to read. Where can the third student find the status of a recently proposed federal bill on the topic of "campaign financing"?

a) in a Commerce Clearing House publication entitled Congressional Index.
 b) it can't be done

5. What types of government publications can be found in the Law Library?

a) periodicals
 b) statutes
 c) administrative rulings (like: National Labor Relations Board Decisions)
 d) judicial opinions (like: United States Reports)
 e) Congressional publications (like: hearings, committee reports, bills)
 f) topical studies (like from: the Environmental Protection Agency)
 g) all of the above

Marianne Mason,
Government Documents Librarian

WORKING THE HALLS

Welcome to Jacquelyn Hickey, who has just joined the library staff as the Media Center Coordinator. Jackie's previous work experience includes work as a public cluster consultant and as an instructor for University Computing Services. We are pleased to have her join us.

Congratulations to Len Fromm and his wife Donna Wilber on the birth of their son, Erik Donovan. Erik was born at 2:47 am on February 4th, and weighed 9 lbs., 5 oz. Len and Donna also have a two year old daughter, Callan.

Faculty Publications:


Happy March Birthday to:

Professor Joe Hoffmann on the 1st;
President Tom Ehrlich on the 4th;
Kris Nielsen-Mantz in the Community Legal Clinic on the 15th;
Matt Gullett in the Library on the 23rd;
Assistant Dean Frank Motley on the 23rd;
Linda Rich in the Library on the 25th;
Toni Sammy in the Library on the 26th; and
Jodi Graham in the Library on the 29th.

Best wishes for a wonderful day!!!