



Law Offices Of Donald Cox, LLC
Patent, Trademark and Copyright Matters

Donald J. Cox, Jr.
Attorney at Law

Phone: (609) 921-1166
Fax: (609) 921-8131

Email: info@iplawonline.com
Website: www.iplawonline.com

INTERNET STRATEGIES FOR LEGAL RESEARCH

DONALD J. COX, JR.



Strategic Use Of The World Wide Web

- ▶ How To Get Started
- ▶ Search Engines
- ▶ Hot Sites
- ▶ Effective and Efficient Browsing Techniques



Choosing Your Browser

- ▶ Once you have a computer with Internet access getting to the World Wide Web is easy. In most cases your computer already has the software needed to access the Web on the hard drive or integrated into the operating system of your computer. The two most popular Web browser programs are Netscape Navigator found at WWW.NETSCAPE.COM and Microsoft Internet Explorer found at WWW.MICROSOFT.COM.



What is the Internet

- **A collection of computer servers linked together with no centralized control**
- **The Internet includes:**
 - **E-Mail for the transfer of text files.**
 - **Newsgroups - a collection of linked email messages categorized by like subjects.**
 - **File Transfer Protocol (FTP) - a method for sharing files across the internet.**
 - **TELNET - a method for remotely accessing computer servers across the internet.**
 - **World Wide Web.**




What is the World Wide Web

- **The World Wide Web is a collection of computer files that can include text, graphics, sound and even programs such as Java or ActiveX. The files are organized using a very simple type of programming language, known as HyperText Markup Language (HTML). HTML organizes the presentation of the text graphics and other features of the Web site into a set of Web pages that is pleasing to the viewer.**




Accessing Web Pages

- Access to the World Wide Web is provided through addresses known as a Uniform Resource Locator (URL). For example, the URL for the White House Web site is:
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/>
- The prefix “http://” is an indicator that the remainder of the address relates to an HTML file.
- The Domain Name Endings
 - Most commercial businesses use the global TLD COM, other global TLDs include .NET, .ORG, .EDU, .MIL and .EDU.
 - A complete listing is available at
<http://www.uninett.no/navn/domreg.html>



Accessing Web Pages (Cont 1)

- Locating a Web site using only the business name can be tried by simply typing the business name, such as WWW.MICROSOFT.COM or WWW.IBM.COM.
- Beware of Exceptions to the general rule.
 - For example, CNN uses both CNN.COM and WWW.CNN.COM where “WWW” is optional in their address.



Accessing Web Pages (Cont 2)

- Sites developed on computers that use the UNIX operating system may be case sensitive in which using lower case, upper case or initial caps may be required to properly address the site.
- Other companies may use less familiar names.
 - For example, the site for United Airlines is WWW.UAL.COM.



Search Engines

- ▶ Selecting the Right Engines for the Job
 - ◆ Menu based - Yahoo
 - ◆ Spiders - Lycos, Altavista
 - ◆ MetaEngines - Metacrawler
- ▶ Search Methods
 - ◆ Boolean is Rare
 - ◆ Pick Key Words



Hot Sites

- ▶ Surfing the Net
 - ◆ Adds on Television
 - ◆ Finding links of interest for later download
 - ◆ Find a Good Site - Check Out Their Links



Effective and Efficient Browsing Techniques

- ▶ Internet Growth Means More Information
- ▶ Stay Focused on Research
- ▶ Recognize this is Not the Library or Lexis



Search Tips

- ▶ **Decide in advance how much time you can afford on-line. This will take time to develop and may vary according to skill level. Unless you are overwhelmed with information and need time to sort through you search results or verify it, if you have not found what your looking for in your time limit, it may not be there.**



Search Tips (Cont 1)

- ▶ **Skim through your search engine results. Many of the Web sites listed will include an abstract giving you clues as the content of the Web site. The Web sites are usually ranked by relevance to your search parameters. If you don't see what you want on the first page consider modifying your search before continuing on to the next page.**



Search Tips (Cont 2)

- ▶ **Keep track of where you are, use book marks to tag the sites that are relevant.**
- ▶ **Consider opening multiple browser windows so relevant sites are kept in their own window.**
- ▶ **Use the Find command, <CTRL> F, to search through long textual Web pages for your key words.**



Search Tips (Cont 3)

- ▶ **Use the back and forward buttons to navigate and see where you have been and gone to quickly jump through your trail of sites.**
- ▶ **If a site looked like it had your information, but didn't, check to see if they had a useful links section. Many times links may be the needle you've searched for.**



Search Tips (Cont 4)

- ▶ **Monitor your time on-line and the time it is taking to download a site. If you use a modem to connect to the Internet or share a network connection, observe how long it is taking for the Web pages to download. If it seems unusually slow, try logging on and off your connection or wait until fewer people are using the shared connection.**



Search Tips (Cont 5)

- ▶ **The time of day may improve your search efforts. Consider that there are a lot of casual surfers going on-line at lunchtime all across the country. The worst times to access the Internet seem to be from 12-4pm Eastern time when at least some portion of the country is taking a lunch break.**



Using the Internet for Substantive Legal Research

- ▶ How to Put Internet Search Tools to Work for You
- ▶ The Art of Using Links and Bookmarks
- ▶ Specific Legal Searching Tools You Need to Know About
- ▶ How to Use, Save, and Send the Data You've Located
- ▶ How to Cite Resources Found on the Internet



How to Put Internet Search Tools to Work for You

- ▶ **Keep the Library**
- ▶ **Use Westlaw**
- ▶ **Use Lexis**
- ▶ **Supplement with the Internet**
 - ◆ **Secondary References i.e. WWW.MARTINDALE.COM**
 - ◆ **Out of State Courts**
 - ◆ **Federal Resources**



The Art of Using Links and Bookmarks

- ▶ **Searching on the Internet is a must to discover the resources useful to your area of practice. However, once you've found the needle in the haystack, how do you preserve the address for future reference?**
- ▶ **Most Web browsers include a bookmark or favorites function. By selecting add to bookmarks or add to favorites, your Web browser makes a copy of the Web site address for you.**



The Art of Using Links and Bookmarks (Cont 1)

- ▶ **With the later versions of WordPerfect and MS Word, Web links may be incorporated directly into a word processing document or the word processing document may be saved as an HTML file. Type up a list of your favorite links in your word processor. In most cases, your word processor will automatically recognize the address as a Web link. Pass the link file around to your co-workers or make it available on your network for everyone to access.**



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Specific Legal Searching Tools You Need to Know About

- ▶ The Internet is a good secondary source for legal information.
- ▶ Some of the more developed sites include:
 - ◆ FindLaw
WWW.FINDLAW.COM
 - ◆ LawCrawler
WWW.LAWCRAWLER.COM
 - ◆ Internet Legal Resource Group WWW.ILRG.COM




Specific Legal Searching Tools ... (Cont 1)

- ▶ **Check out other Law Firms that have developed their own Web sites including case summaries and legal links directed at specific areas of legal specialization.**




Specific Legal Searching Tools ... (Cont 2)

- ▶ If you are going to rely on the Internet for legal information, my personal favorite starting point is FindLaw. FindLaw is set up like Yahoo with categories and sub-categories directing you to specific legislative and judicial sites. There is also a search engine, but is more useful for finding information on legislation and cases if you know the parties involved. Substantive searches can be conducted, but given the unpredictably nature of the Internet such searches are best done using Lexis or WestLaw.




How to Use, Save, and Send the Data You've Located

- ▶ Now that you have found the information that you need, you need to pass that information on to the people that can use it.
- ▶ Create and distribute a list of links.
- ▶ If you're using government Web sites with information that is updated regularly, you can provide updates of useful links.




How to Use, Save, and Send the Data... (Cont 1)

- ▶ **Print Out the Information**
- ▶ **Consider the Non-Computer Literate**
- ▶ **In many instances, you may want to include the date the information was obtained, the Web page address or the title of the Web page. All this information can printed out in the headers and footers of your document.**




How to Use, Save, and Send the Data... (Cont 2)

- ▶ **Create an Offline Copy of the Web Page or Site**
- ▶ **In some instances your legal research may include downloading Web pages that contain evidence of wrongdoing. More sophisticated Web site developers may use features such as changing images that cannot be reproduced on a printout. In these instances, you may need to make a copy of the site in its on-line form. Once you send the cease-and-desist letter, the infringing material may be withdrawn or deleted. The copies you make may be your only evidence of infringement. By making an off-line copy of the site, you can preserve the evidence and reproduce it on your computer in the manner it was publicly shown.**




How to Use, Save, and Send the Data... (Cont 3)

- ▶ **Cut and Paste**
- ▶ **Just as you can cut and paste information from one word-processing file to another you can copy text from the Web page in the same manner.**



How to Use, Save, and Send the Data... (Cont 4)

- ▶ **Downloading Documents and Forms**
- ▶ In many instances the information you need is already provided in an easy to use format such as WordPerfect, ms word or adobe's portable document format (PDF). PDF files are not word-processing files, rather they preserve the formatting of the document at the time it was created. Most of the federal forms use this format. A free program called "Acrobat Reader" capable of viewing and printing PDF documents can be found at WWW.ADOBE.COM. The full version of Acrobat allows you to edit the information or create form fields, which permits you fill out the forms on the computer.



How to Use, Save, and Send the Data... (Cont 5)

- ▶ **Sending Information to Others**
- ▶ **Your browser may allow you to send the Web page to another via e-mail using the Send command found in the File menu. If you have saved the Web page or files from the Internet, you can send them using you e-mail program as an attachment.**



How to Cite Resources Found on the Internet

- ▶ **DO NOT CITE STATUTE OR CASE INFORMATION FOUND ON THE INTERNET using a URL. Follow the Guidelines developed by the local jurisdiction.**




How to Cite Resources Found on the Internet (Cont)

- ▶ If you're citing to published commentary or other material relevant to your brief, print out a copy of the Web site and include it as an exhibit. Provide the title of the Web page and the URL in the brief. Many courts may have local rules on citing to Internet material, check the local rules before including the citation to the Web page.




Where and How to Find Specific Legal Information

- ▶ **The Top Web Sites No Legal Researcher Should Be Without**
- ▶ **Finding Legal Collections**
- ▶ **Where To Search For Federal, State and Local Statutory Information**




Accessing Web Pages (Cont 1)

- ◆ For Federal government resources, the best place to look is at www.firstgov.gov.
- ◆ The Federal government recently consolidated all the Federal web resources into one interface with everything from A to Z can be found on this comprehensive website.



Accessing Web Pages (Cont 2)

- ◆ **The key to doing legal research on the Internet is to know that the Internet supplements, but does not replace other trusted resources for doing legal research.**
- ◆ **As with anything that is free you should not always rely entirely on that resource.**



Accessing Web Pages (Cont 3)

- ◆ If you download a key case from a web site, don't automatically believe that what you got is what was intended to be published.
- ◆ Slip opinions may contain typos or may be de-published.



Accessing Web Pages (Cont 4)

- ◆ Before you use that key piece of information, check the case on a trusted source such as your library, Lexis or Westlaw.



Finding Legal Collections

- **There is no magic solution for finding legal collections on the Internet.**
- **The reality is that you have to find them.**
- **Sites run by organizations with lots of links are a good place to start as many of these organizations have an interest in keeping up-to-date with the introduction of new web sites.**



Finding Collections(Cont 1)

- ◆ **There are several search engines and Web sites that are useful to conducting traditional legal research.**
- ◆ **A number of Law Firms have developed their own Web sites including case summaries and legal links directed at specific areas of legal specialization.**



Finding Collections(Cont 2)

- ◆ Join e-mail newsletters or newsgroups that provide information on updates to changes in the law such as at:
 - Find Law at <http://newsletters.findlaw.com/>.
 - Law Guru at <http://www.lawguru.com>
- ◆ If you have legal research questions, this is a great way to ask questions.



Finding Collections(Cont 3)

- ◆ As with any newsgroup, you should become aware of their rules for asking questions. This is usually found at the FAQ's page on the web site.
- ◆ LawResearch.Com also provides a free newsletter with updates to new legal research links and information about changes in the Internet legal community. The newsletter is free and can be found at <http://www.lawresearch.com/>.



Finding Collections(Cont 4)

- ◆ Other great sources for news and information can be found in traditional newspapers.
- ◆ The New York Times and other newspapers typically now includes links and Internet resource information with its news reports.



Finding Collections(Cont 5)

- ◆ As you develop your list of favorite sites, these resources can continue to provide you with fresh new sources from time to time.



Where To Search For Federal, State And Local Statutory Information

- In Searching for Federal, State and Local information on of the best places to start are sites such as:
 - FindLaw
WWW.FINDLAW.COM
 - LawCrawler
WWW.LAWCRAWLER.COM
 - Internet Legal Resource Group WWW.ILRG.COM



Information (Cont 1)

- For Federal information use
WWW.FIRSTGOV.GOV
- In New Jersey Consider:
 - Welcome to the New Jersey Judiciary's Homepage This is the Official New Jersey site for court information.
<http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/>



Information (Cont 2)

- **In New Jersey (Cont):**

- New Jersey Law Network (sm) - www.njlawnet.com
- New Jersey Lawyer On-Line Edition <http://www.njlnews.com/>
- The New Jersey Law Journal www.law.com



Other Internet Resources For The Legal Researcher

- ▶ **Finding Credit Reports**
- ▶ **Locating Persons Or Corporations**
- ▶ **Statistical Information And Databases**



Finding Credit Reports

- ▶ Credit Reports are private and are not available on the Internet for free.
- ▶ A number pay services do advertise credit reports on the Internet.
 - Qspace <http://www.qspace.com/>



Locating People

- There are several sources for locating people on the Internet. However, in general, these resources contain little more information than one would find in a phone book.
- You can look someone up by name, address, or even by reverse telephone number. The later method involves entering a phone number and letting the computer look up the name. ATT at www.att.com and all of the major commercial search engines – Lycos, Yahoo, etc. – have a people find section.



Locating People (Cont)

- Another good resource for locating people is The Stalker's Home Page at www.glr.com/stalk.html.



Locating Businesses

- ▶ A simple way to locate a business is through one of the yellow page directories available on the Internet. Some of the major sources for yellow pages (now combined) are:
 - **AT&T Directories** www.att.com
 - **Yellow Book** www.yellowbook.com
 - **Verizon Superpages** www.superpages.net



Locating Businesses (Cont 1)

- ▶ MapQuest www.mapquest.com is another great site for locating a business and getting driving directions.



Locating Businesses (Cont 2)

- In addition to simply locating an address for a business, you may want financial information about the company. The EDGAR database is maintained by the Securities and Exchange Commission at www.sec.gov/cgi-bin/srch-edgar.
- US SEARCH.com - a leading online provider of public record information about individuals and companies is at <http://www.ussearch.com/>



Locating Businesses (Cont 3)

- ▶ Another useful site is you are trying to locate an attorney or law firm is the full text site of the Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory at www.martindale.com.



Statistical Information and Databases

- ▶ The Bureau of Labor Statistics web page at www.firstgov.gov contains statistical information of major financial indicators such as the Consumer Price Index.
- ▶ Another interesting database is found at the Central Intelligence Agency's Web site. It is the C.I.A.'s World Fact Book at www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html.



Databases (Cont)

- ▶ Currently, the United States Patent and Trademark Office does maintain an official site for patents and trademarks at WWW.USPTO.GOV.
- ▶ The Library of Congress provides access to Copyright Registrations through WWW.LOC.GOV



How To Become Your Firm's Vital Link To Cyberspace

- ▶ Educating Yourself and Keeping Your Skills Updated.
 - As in any other endeavor put in the time, practice searching, develop the listing of vital sites for your firm, keep the listing up to date. Download and distribute important slip opinions, subscribe to a listserv such as Find Law at <http://newsletters.findlaw.com/> and distribute the information they send you when it is relevant to your firm. Be the first one to download the new government fees and routinely scan the government Web pages for updated forms and regulations.



How To Become Your Firm's Vital Link To Cyberspace

- ▶ Educating Yourself and Keeping Your Skills Updated.
 - Keep current, there are no rules on the Internet and there is no centralized control. The information that you have today may be gone and irrelevant tomorrow. Keep your links current, get on mailing lists that will keep you abreast of the latest changes.



Educating others as to the Benefits of Using the Internet

- ▶ **Now that you have people interested in the slip opinions and forms, encourage them to start using these materials. Provide copies of your bookmarks to others in the office. Develop a firm policy for sending E-mail in the office and E-mail over the Internet. Develop Web and E-mail policies that meet the needs of your firm and its clients. Make the office aware of the benefits and risks of connecting your computers to the Internet and consider the needs of your clients in assessing the risk.**



Maintaining a Home Page

- ▶ **As indicated earlier, many of the latest word-processors will allow you to create Web pages without any knowledge of HTML. Put up a mini-Web site on your office network with all the links and forms you've found. Propose developing a basic Web site for your office. In most cases, keep it simple. When using graphics, picture perfect graphics can take forever to load.**



Maintaining a Home Page (Cont 1)

- ▶ Use graphics and text that use as little memory as possible. Keep the Web site up-to-date. There are a number of commercial programs such as MS FrontPage Express that can be used to publish your Web page. The procedures for Web publication vary according to the ISP's set up. Check with your ISP for procedures that you will need to follow.



Maintaining a Home Page (Cont 2)

- ▶ View what others have done on other web sites
- ▶ Review sites that teach HTML basics:
 - ◆ <http://htmlgoodies.com/>