

## LIBRARIANS SAVE TIME AND MONEY FOR THE ATTORNEYS AND CLIENTS

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When an attorney needs to research a new topic they know the importance and value of finding the right resource(s). Utilizing their librarians can be the same as finding the best resources. We generally know the quickest, least expensive and most authoritative resources for legal and non-legal information.

Not every firm utilizes their librarians the same way but here are some of the areas we cover on a regular basis:

- Conduct legislative histories on federal and state statutes,
- Initial research on specific topics requested by attorneys,
- Case reviewed to weed out false hits from citation lists,
- Cite and quote check briefs and memos,
- Create table of authorities for briefs and memos,
- Find biographical information on experts, arbitrators, doctors, attorneys etc.,
- Obtain corporate and business information, such as Dun & Bradstreet Reports, competitors lists and background reports,
- Use local and national networks and catalogs to find information and resources,
- Obtain non-legal articles/publications, such as FASB bulletins, medical articles or news items,
- And some of us also teach the attorneys, paralegals and staff how to use the Internet to find free or subscription information in a fast, efficient manner.

How does this save the firm time and money? Most firm librarians bill their time, just like the paralegals and attorneys bill their time. However, the librarians' rate is generally less than the attorneys and some paralegals. A recent informal poll taken by

a librarian in a Milwaukee firm estimates that professional librarians, in the city, bill their time at 50-100 dollars per hour. We save money for the client because an hour spent of our time is generally much less than an attorney doing the same research. We also save time because librarians

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generally will know what resource(s) to use to find the answer or information. This means less time is spent on the project. Just as it is the attorney's job to know how to interpret the information for the client, we know the best and fastest way to find the information for the attorney. (Attorneys get a degree to learn how to think like a lawyer. Most librarians earn a masters degree in library and information science and they learn to think like a librarian.) The librarians' expertise allows the attorneys to have more substantive time to interpret the information and work on the issues and meet with the clients. Less time spent finding answers translates into less time billed to the client and money saved for everyone.

Librarians also know the least expensive resources to use to find the information. (We keep current on the best and latest online search technologies.) As an example, we know it will take thirty minutes to get a law journal article at the Marquette law library (plus copy charges), versus a flat \$10 to do a "find and print" for the same article on Westlaw/Lexis. The clear choice is to go online to get the article. It is faster and cheaper to do this than go to the Marquette law library. This may be a relatively straightforward example, but there are many other similar examples that librarians weigh every day before proceeding with projects.

Most attorneys learned how to do some legislative history research in law school, but don't do it on a regular basis after they earn their degree. So if they need to find out the original language of a state or federal statute, it would take them longer to go through the process of doing this project. Librarians do this type of research on a more regular basis. We know that you find the annotated version of the statute, check the history at the end of the language, and review the old "laws" for the redlining or additions in the statute. We check out the drafting records for discussion that might suggest the changes and why or how they were made through the years. We know what resources to use and where to go to check the drafting records.

Sometimes, a question or request is new for us, too. If we don't have a ready resource, we often send an email to our local librarians' listserve. Another librarian may have dealt with the same odd request and thereby prevent us from repeating the search. This statewide/nationwide network of librarians is also an excellent resource for borrowing books that aren't in our collections. With the incredible increases vendors are charging for print materials it can be much more cost effective to borrow a print item from another library. It is wasteful and frustrating to purchase a resource because an attorney says, "we really need it" to find it sitting on the shelf collecting dust after it is purchased and processed.

Researching on the Internet is another cost saver. Not only do we use the Internet to find useful and authoritative information, often for free, but many of us teach attorneys and staff to use it too.


An attorney that knows they can get a federal register, U.S. code section or cases for free on the web will save the firm money instead of always jumping on Westlaw/Lexis to get the same information. Most librarians are happy knowing the attorneys are savvy researchers and can find free information on the web. Again, it probably would be

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## Caught on the 'Net

Compiled by Brenda Majewski, Kohn Law Firm S.C.

Following are sites submitted from our membership for your review. Submit those you find educational, informational, or humorous to be included in the next issue of Class Action.

- [www.elawforum.com](http://www.elawforum.com)  
Bidding for legal work is available online for firms doing corporate work.
- [www.legalmatch.com](http://www.legalmatch.com)  
Another site that matches firms with prospective clients.
- [www.pcnineoneone.com](http://www.pcnineoneone.com)  
Here's information for almost every PC procedure imaginable.
- [www.psychicron.com](http://www.psychicron.com)  
What's in your future? Let Ron the Psychic give you his opinion.
- [www.questionabledoctors.org](http://www.questionabledoctors.org)  
Need to know if your doctor has ever been disciplined?
- [www.nala.org](http://www.nala.org)  
The National Association of Legal Assistants has their salary survey available on line.
- [www.currentcodes.com](http://www.currentcodes.com)  
Ever wondered what those promo codes were on Internet shopping sites. Grab one here.
- [www.vintagevantage.com](http://www.vintagevantage.com)  
Wonder what you were wearing in 1978? Check out the "vintage clothing."
- [www.kansascity.com](http://www.kansascity.com)  
Check out Kansas City before heading off to the Region 3 conference October 24 & 25th, 2003.
- [www.2h.com/personality-tests.html](http://www.2h.com/personality-tests.html)  
What kind of personality do you have? Would you like to give someone one of these tests and see how they rate? Can we give them to applicants?
- [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)  
Get local forecasts at your desktop (or put in your dream escape place)
- [www.salaryexpert.com](http://www.salaryexpert.com)  
OK, for those of you who didn't do WALA's salary survey, there is a place to review local salaries.
- [www.microweb.com/pepsite/Recycle/recycle\\_index.html](http://www.microweb.com/pepsite/Recycle/recycle_index.html)  
Check this listing for places to donate or recycle computer equipment.
- [www.turbotax.com/calculators/lawchange/notemplates/](http://www.turbotax.com/calculators/lawchange/notemplates/)  
Do you want to see how the new tax bill will effect you? Check out the tax relief estimator.
- [www.hipaacomply.com](http://www.hipaacomply.com)  
Timelines for compliance are listed.
- [www.lawyersweeklyusa.com](http://www.lawyersweeklyusa.com)  
Subscribe to Lawyers Weekly online.
- [www.acronymfinder.com](http://www.acronymfinder.com)  
Tired of abbreviations and acronyms, or need to know what they mean? Try this one. 

[www.alanet.org/home.html](http://www.alanet.org/home.html)  
[www.wi-ala.org/](http://www.wi-ala.org/)

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cheaper for us to do it for them, but if they need the information that very moment, we can feel comfortable that they will find it and save the client/firm money and time.

Over the years, there have been many attorneys (associates and partners) who have come to the reference desk and said, "I just spent several hours trying to find X and can't locate it". They turn the request over to us and within a short period of time we have the item or know where it is

and take care of the request. How do we do it so fast? We know where to look when "we don't know" what something is or where to find it. Recently, someone came to us looking for an old Wisconsin "attorney general proceeding". We know that is not the same thing as an Attorney General Opinion but where are they printed or housed? They are not on the Internet or Westlaw/Lexis. So instead of trying to find them in print, we called the agency directly. The woman knew exactly

what we wanted and within a short time it was faxed to us. The telephone is still an excellent tool that librarians use every day.

The next time you are looking for ways to save the firm money and time, look to your librarian. 