

## **:: Research Tips for Undergraduate and Non-Law Students**

### **ARTICLES**

Legal articles are often referred to as law review articles, bar journal articles, or articles from periodicals such as legal newspapers.

Articles are a good starting point for research. They frequently cite cases, books and other articles related to your topic, which can save you time. The library has several different indexes to help you find the articles that you need. There are online legal indexes, such as LegalTrac and Index to Legal Periodicals, which we also have in book form in the Reference area of the library. Note that the Current Law Index is the print equivalent of the LegalTrac online index.

For links to databases that contain legal articles, see the LIC's Finding Legal Articles webpage (<http://www.law.ufl.edu/lic/links/news/legal.shtml>) or see our Guide to Finding Legal Articles for a more complete description of each resource. Our research guides are located at: <http://www.law.ufl.edu/lic/guides/index.shtml>

If you know of a particular journal that has articles relevant to your research, be sure to pick an index that covers that title. To help you do that, try Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory (<http://ulrichsweb.com/ulrichsweb>).

If you want to know if the journal you are looking for is available online, try using the UF E-Journal Locator, which can be found on the LIC homepage (<http://www.law.ufl.edu/lic>) under "Online Research" and "Find e-journals".

### **CASES**

Cases can be located in various ways. First, law articles and books frequently cite to important cases, as do legal encyclopedias (see below).

Another way to locate cases is by using print case digests. Case digests are organized topically and will provide you with condensed versions of decisions and case citations. Using these case citations, you can then go find the text of the case in the proper case reporter. Use our Guide to Using State Digests and Reporters and Guide to Locating Florida Case Law to help you get your research started. Remember that the same principles apply to use of the federal case digests and reporters. Our research guides are located at: <http://www.law.ufl.edu/lic/guides/index.shtml>

For further help, Georgetown University has prepared a good research guide for using legal digests. Note that not all states are included in the regional case digests, so see this map (<http://www.law.ufl.edu/lic/regionalreporters.pdf>) for coverage information.

The final way to find cases is electronically. LexisNexis Academic Universe has both federal and state cases, including cases from the U.S. Supreme Court. You can link to the Academic Universe database from the following page: <http://www.law.ufl.edu/lic/links/news/legal.shtml>

Remember, it is important to keep in mind what jurisdiction you are dealing with. See maps of the Federal circuit courts (<http://www.law.ufl.edu/lic/federalcircuitcourts.pdf>) and the Florida circuit courts (<http://www.law.ufl.edu/lic/floridacircuitcourts.pdf>) to determine what cases have precedential value in your jurisdiction. Also see our Guide to Legal Research on the Internet for links to sites with cases available freely on the Internet. Our research guides are located at: <http://www.law.ufl.edu/lic/guides/index.shtml>

### **CODES (a.k.a laws or statutes)**

The LIC has the United States Code and the state codes from all 50 states in print. Use annotated codes (codes that have indexes and other additional information, which is added by editors) to do your research. In most cases, the LIC only owns the annotated code sets. See our guides on Using the United States Code and Using Florida Statutes for more help. Our research guides are located at: <http://www.law.ufl.edu/lic/guides/index.shtml>

You can also search electronically for state codes (select your state from the listing provided), as well as federal codes and the Constitution through LexisNexis Academic Universe, which allows you to search each code by keyword. You can link to the Academic Universe database from the following page: <http://www.law.ufl.edu/lic/links/news/legal.shtml>

Both federal and state codes are also readily accessible on the Internet. See our Guide to Legal Research on the Internet for links to sites with codes available freely on the Internet. Our research guides are located at: <http://www.law.ufl.edu/lic/guides/index.shtml>

### **DICTIONARIES**

The LIC has various legal dictionaries available in print. The predominant dictionary used by lawyers is *Black's Law Dictionary*, which is located in the Reserve Area behind the LIC's circulation desk. Ask the staff person on duty for assistance.

Alternatively, there are various legal dictionaries available online:

Legal Dictionary (from FindLaw) (<http://dictionary.lp.findlaw.com>)

Everybody's Legal Dictionary (from Nolo)

(<http://www.nolo.com/dictionary/wordindex.cfm>)

Legal Lexicon's Lyceum (from 'Lectric Law Library) (<http://www.lectlaw.com/def.htm>)

### **ENCYCLOPEDIAS**

Legal encyclopedias are a great place to begin your research and to learn about an area of the law. The LIC has print copies of *American Jurisprudence* and *Corpus Juris Secundum*, as well as the *American Law Reports*. Use our Guide to Using Legal Encyclopedias to help you get started. Our research guides are located at: <http://www.law.ufl.edu/lic/guides/index.shtml>

### **REGULATIONS**

Congress, by enacting legislation, gives federal agencies power to carry out the laws. Most federal agencies are part of the Executive Branch, although the growth of independent regulatory agencies is a 20th Century phenomenon. Regulations are made by agencies to help them carry out their missions. Regulations (also referred to as "rules") are legally binding and can be enforced as statutes. Federal regulations first appear in the Federal Register (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>) and are then codified (organized by topic) annually in the Code of Federal Regulations (a.k.a C.F.R.) (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html>). Use this Guide to Locating Federal Regulations to learn more. The C.F.R. is also available in print in the LIC, although there is an approximate 6-month delay in the currency of materials. Our research guides are located at: <http://www.law.ufl.edu/lic/guides/index.shtml>

Each state also has its own set of regulations. Florida has the Florida Administrative Code (<http://fac.dos.state.fl.us>), which is the official compilation of the rules and regulations of Florida regulatory agencies. Consult our research guide for help in using the Florida Administrative Code. Our research guides are located at: <http://www.law.ufl.edu/lic/guides/index.shtml>

Most local (a.k.a. municipal) codes are available on MuniCode.com ([http://www.municode.com/Resources/online\\_Library.asp](http://www.municode.com/Resources/online_Library.asp)).

## **TREATISES**

A treatise is simply a fancy name for a publication about a particular area of the law, which is authored by an expert in that area. Treatises can take the form of books or looseleaf services, i.e., located in binders, and are invaluable for all of your research needs. Check our online catalog for treatises located in the library. For older treatises use the database: Making of Modern Law: Legal Treatises from 1800-1926. You can link to this database from the LIC homepage (<http://www.law.ufl.edu/lic>) under "Online Research" and "Find databases".

## **RESEARCH GUIDES**

It is sometimes difficult getting started on your research. We have compiled research guides on selected topics, which may help speed you on your way. Our research guides are located at: <http://www.law.ufl.edu/lic/guides/index.shtml>

See also Georgetown Law Library's In-Depth Research site (<http://www.ll.georgetown.edu/research/index.cfm>) and NYU Law's Cite-Checker's Guide (<http://www.law.nyu.edu/library/citecheckersguide.html>) for more legal research guides and for more tips to help get your research started.

## **ONLINE RESOURCES**

The University of Florida Libraries are fortunate in being able to provide a large number of online resources to its patrons. Online material can be located via the online catalog (<http://uf.aleph.fcla.edu>) or the Research Gateway. The Research Gateway can be found on the LIC homepage (<http://www.law.ufl.edu/lic>) under "Online Research" and "Research Gateway." Visit the UF Legal Information Center's Selected Online Resources at: <http://www.law.ufl.edu/lic/reference/selectdata.shtml> for a full listing of law-related electronic databases and online resources, as selected by the LIC's reference librarians.

If you have trouble accessing UF databases, see this page for connection tips: <http://web.uflib.ufl.edu/access.html>. If you are still having problems, please contact the Reference Desk at 352-273-0723.

Also, see our Guide to Legal Research on the Internet for links to sites with legal information, which are available freely (or at a low cost) on the Internet. Our research guides are located at: <http://www.law.ufl.edu/lic/guides/index.shtml>