

Virtual Reference



SWALL Virtual Reference Program
April 21, 2007

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Reference Librarian

Topics to be Covered

- Types of virtual reference
- Virtual reference providers
- Tarlton's experience
- Helpful resources



Types of Virtual Reference

- Knowledge Base
- Email
- Web-Based Chat
- Instant Messaging



Knowledge Base

Virtual Library

Electronic research resources

- [Research databases](#)
- [Legal research on the Internet](#)
- [General reference resources](#)
- [Online search strategies](#)
- [Resources for public interest groups](#)
- [Current copyright literature](#)
- [Current capital punishment legal literature](#)
- [Current domestic violence legal literature](#)

Special Library online collections

- [Aztec and Mayan law](#)
- [Hopwood](#)
- [Law in popular culture](#)
- [Language and law](#)
- [Texas constitutions](#)
- [U.S. Supreme Court resources](#)
- [The papers of Justice Tom C. Clark](#)

Legal research outlines ('how to' guides)

- [Finding a case](#)
- [Finding a statute](#)
- [Finding a regulation](#)
- [Finding Texas law](#)
- [Immigration law resources](#)
- [Restatements of the law](#)
- [Self-help materials](#)
- [Texas death penalty law](#)

Email



Law School students

Access/circulation

[Circulation record and renewals](#)

[Circulation policies](#)

[Laptops, batteries, and wireless cards](#)

[Interlibrary loan](#)

New [books](#) and [videos](#)

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[Current copyright literature](#)

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[Actual Innocence awareness database](#)

[Email a reference question](#)

[Reference chat](#) (requires UTEID)



Email

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JAMAIL CENTER FOR LEGAL RESEARCH
TARLTON LAW LIBRARY
The University of Texas School of Law

Students Faculty Staff UT Public

Virtual Library Collections Facility Access Library Staff Publications

Reference desk phone number: (512) 471-6220

All are welcome to conduct legal research at the Library. Reference librarians are usually available to answer requests weekdays until 9 p.m. and weekends until closing. For the reference librarian schedule, please consult the hours of operation web page at <http://www.lawlibrary/facility/hours.html>.

Reference librarians can assist in locating information, in finding volumes in the stacks, and in creating a research methodology. However, no one in the Library can provide legal advice nor can anyone interpret legal materials. Reference librarians do answer reference questions and suggest research strategies, but they do not conduct research for patrons. Simple reference questions may be submitted to refdesk@mail.law.utexas.edu. A response can be expected within 48 hours.

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TARLTON LAW LIBRARY

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Web-Based Chat Features

PROS

- Chat
- Co-browsing
- File sharing
- Chat transcripts archived and emailed
- Scripted replies
- Statistical reports
- Referral option

CONS

- Slow
- Disconnects
- Extensive staff training
- Cost
- Patron computer requirements
- Security



Web-Based Chat Providers

- QuestionPoint
- Tutor.com
- Docutek VRLPlus
- LivePerson

Web-Based Chat Provider Comparison

CHAT REFERENCE	Multiple Users	Training	Tech Support	Separate Chat Ques	Statistics	Chat Logs	Co-browsing	File Sharing	Patron Downloads	Librarian Interface (Excellent, Good, Fair)	Patron Interface (Excellent, Good, Fair)	Price - 1st Yr (Includes installation/implementation)	Price - After 1st year
Tutor.com	X	X	24/7 (on call team)	X	X	X	X	X		E	E	6500	4500
Docutek VRL	X	X	6am-6pm (PST)	X	X (Can track all reference statistics)	X (Must manually delete)	X (performs patron system check, 2 entry modes are possible)	X		G	G	5390	3195
Question Point	X	X	7am-9pm (EST)		X	X	X (PCL has tech problems using this feature)	X		G	G	4250	4250
INSTANT MESSAGING (IM)													
TrillianPro	X		online			X (stored on hard drive)			X			25	25
Meebo									X			0	0

Instant Messaging

- Instant messaging is a real time conversation that utilizes typed text instead of language.



Instant Messaging Providers

- Trillian or TrillianPro
- Gaim > Pidgin
- Meebo



Instant Messaging TrillianPro Preference

- No server
- Economical
- Students use IM program they already use
- Allows multiple users



Instant Messaging Advertising

- Webpage
- Email
- Flyers
- Posters



Instant Messaging Staffing

- Librarian at the reference desk answers all questions
- Minimal Training
 - How to use
 - IM conventions
 - Practice



Instant Messaging Tarlton's Experience



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TARLTON LAW LIBRARY

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Instant Messaging Tarlton's Experience

Chat with a reference librarian

Reference chat is a service that enables users to trade real-time text messages with the reference staff of the Tarlton Law Library. The service is available Monday through Friday from 9am to 5pm, exclusively for members of the Law School community. (Read our Library chat [policies](#) below).

To use the Tarlton Reference Chat service you must have a personal account on one of these three major chat networks: AOL, Yahoo, or MSN.

Each chat network requires you to have installed either its own chat software or a program such as Trillian or GAIM, chat software that allows you to conduct chat sessions over all three networks. Trillian is a program available to UT students, staff and faculty through the [Bevoware](#) project.

If you don't currently use an IM service, click on any of the links to the services listed on this page and sign up for an account.

Instant message us during [reference hours!](#)



**AOL Instant
Messenger**

Our screen name: UTLawLibrary
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**Yahoo!
Messenger**

Our screen name: UTLawLibrary
Download [Yahoo! Messenger](#)



**MSN
Messenger**

Our screen name:
refdesk@mail.law.utexas.edu
Download [MSN Messenger](#)



Instant Messaging

Tarltan's Experience

Tarltan Reference Chat Policies

The Tarltan Law Library reference staff can answer brief, ready-reference questions but cannot do extensive research during chat sessions or provide legal advice. Reference librarians are available to recommend legal resources and to assist in developing research strategies for law-related questions.

Questions are answered in the order in which they are received. During peak times, users may have to wait in a patron queue. Chat sessions typically take 15 minutes or less. If a question requires more time, the librarian may research the question independently and send a response to the user's email address.

Questions may be submitted anonymously as users are not required to include a name in the question or in the chat request form. In order to use the virtual chat service a patron must first verify his or her UT Law School affiliation by using a personal UTEID in order to log onto Tarltan's chat website. Users must have a personal account on one of the following chat services: AOL, Yahoo, or MSN. The reference librarian on duty at the reference desk will monitor all chat services by using Trillian, an open source chat client.

The Library will make every attempt to respect and preserve the users' privacy. Only Library staff members have access to questions submitted to this service. Questions will be retained for 90 days. After that time, any identifying information, such as names and email addresses, will be edited from questions and deleted. Questions may be added to a database of frequently asked questions accessible to librarians for training and evaluation purposes.

Questions or comments about this service can be sent to: Monique Gonzalez (mgonzalez@law.utexas.edu).

Helpful Resources

- Library Success: A Best Practices Wiki
 - <http://www.libsuccess.org>
- WebJunction
 - www.WebJunction.org





Questions

