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# The CRIV Sheet

## From the Chair

This, the last issue of *The CRIV Sheet* for the 2001–2002 program year, highlights the CRIV's site visits. The CRIV focused much of its energy this year on direct exchanges with legal publishers. Some exchanges resulted in variations of the site visit formula to explore specific issues with high-ranking company representatives.

Over the past several years, the CRIV has conducted a series of visits that took the full committee to the sites of the major legal publishers, including West, LexisNexis, CCH, Aspen and the Bureau of National Affairs. In her article on site visits in the May 2001 issue of *The CRIV Sheet*, former CRIV Chair Chris Graesser stated, "By taking the time to travel and prepare for a visit, the CRIV and AALL make a statement to publishers that we are dedicated to finding productive solutions to the challenges that face both the profession and the business of legal information."

Last July, the CRIV identified a major need to return to West Group. The CRIV also approached Thomson Legal & Regulatory and Aspen for full site visits. However, West and Thomson declined to host a traditional site visit, preferring other forms of communication. As a result, the CRIV engaged in various other meetings with the two publishers. The committee also initiated a visit to a small publisher with a large base of law library customers. In February, the CRIV was pleased to send several members to Bernan's headquarters in Maryland. Finally, the CRIV has continued to encourage reverse site visits — an opportunity for the publisher to visit the real life, real-time law library environment. These types of visits give the CRIV increased capability for reaching legal publishers in a variety of ways.

The CRIV modified its site visits from the traditional format in meetings with West Group and Bernan. In the fall of 2001, a meeting with West became necessary for two reasons: Its Business Systems Initiative was generating a fair amount of concern and confusion among law librarians; the CRIV had received many requests for problem mediation with regard to BSI and the new label system. The CRIV offered to teleconference with West. I attended the meeting on-site. This combination of on-site participation and teleconferencing with the CRIV Mediation Subcommittee members resulted in a scaled-down but productive exchange. The modified format allows more spontaneous meetings like this as critical issues arise. It is also much less costly for the publisher, who pays for the teleconference call instead of covering expenses for committee members to attend on-site meetings. However, modified visits also mean fewer CRIV members and publisher representatives meet. The teleconference meeting involved only the CRIV Mediation Subcommittee, about one-third of the full committee. One of the CRIV's great strengths is the expertise that all committee members bring to the discussion. So a full committee would triple that impact.

The CRIV assessed how a modified site visit might work with a smaller publisher. Why a small publisher? One of the CRIV's goals is to strengthen competition in legal publishing. While this

is a tremendous challenge, the resources and services available from smaller legal providers are well worth communicating to law librarian customers. Because most small publishers do not have the extra funds to sponsor a full committee site visit, the CRIV was hesitant to request full visits with them. Recognizing that smaller publishers were missing from the full site-visit program, the CRIV wanted to find a way to spotlight these important providers.

As law librarian messages regarding Bernan's new business system began appearing on the electronic discussion list Law-Lib, the CRIV contacted Bernan Marketing Director Bruce Samuelson to determine if a modified site visit would work. Bernan was very receptive to meeting with the CRIV and provided housing for CRIV Mediation Subcommittee Chair Carol Rogers. Two other CRIV members, Janice Anderson and Gretchen Asmuth, who were in the Bernan-headquarters area, also participated in the on-site visit. Bernan's teleconference capabilities connected four additional CRIV Mediation Subcommittee members to the meeting from their home libraries. CRIV funds covered associated transportation costs. Sharing expenses and meeting as a smaller committee highlighted the strengths and problems associated with this smaller publisher. CRIV participants offered suggestions about improving service to law librarians. Bernan was very positive about the meeting and was quite responsive to the CRIV's invitation to attend reverse site visits in the near future. The full report on the visit appears on page 5.

The CRIV formally requested full committee site visits to West Group and Thomson Legal & Regulatory. West Group declined because the CRIV recently visited West Group headquarters in Minneapolis during the 2001 AALL Annual Meeting. West could also conduct teleconference meetings between CRIV members and West representatives throughout the year if either wanted to discuss any issues. West Group, through the efforts of Anne Ellis, director, librarian relations, continued to offer teleconference meetings following the teleconference in Oct. 2001; another occurred in February to clarify new measures West initiated with regard to its label system replacement, back orders and quality issues (see page 4). Thomson Legal & Regulatory market group also declined the CRIV's invitation for a committee visit. Citing the lack of central operations for this international entity, Brian Hall, president and CEO of Thomson Legal & Regulatory, instead suggested that CRIV Chair Sara Galligan and former AALL President Margie Axtmann visit him in Eagan, Minn., to find out more about the company's operations.

The CRIV also approached Aspen about a full committee visit to its customer-care center in Gaithersburg, Md. After meeting with Aspen in Minneapolis in July 2001, the CRIV identified areas for ongoing discussions. As of this writing, Aspen's Law Library Relations Liaison J. Craig Garret has requested support from Aspen senior management for a CRIV visit to the care center. The CRIV hopes that a full visit to Aspen will occur so that the CRIV members and senior management can discuss Aspen's customer-service operations in depth.

The CRIV focused its efforts on Aspen for a reverse site visit as well. The reverse site visit allows law librarians to demonstrate the logistical and procedural issues they face each day. The CRIV encouraged Aspen to attend reverse site visits in the New York area, where its headquarters are located. Jane Butler, Aspen president and CEO, was also willing to participate. However, a drawback for the CRIV in arranging the visit was the absence of any CRIV members in the New York area. The CRIV sought the help of the Law Library Association of Greater New York, which has very graciously supported this effort. Aspen will visit two law libraries and observe firsthand how publisher products and practices affect law libraries.

While its attempts to arrange full site visits with West and Thomson Legal & Regulatory were unsuccessful, the CRIV managed to expand the site visit concept this year, particularly by scaling down the full visit into a modified format. A modified visit to West allowed a timely response to issues affecting many law librarians. The modified visit to Bernan highlighted a smaller publisher competing in the big legal publisher league. For a

reverse site visit, the CRIV ventured into an area where no current or recent CRIV member was available to shepherd its cause. The CRIV was gratified that the LLAGNY chapter stepped forward to champion its efforts and was willing to support Aspen's visits to New York-area law libraries. This expansion into more varied methods for legal publisher visits allows the CRIV greater flexibility for meeting directly with publishers to discuss problems. Although the full site visit still offers the most in-depth method to address mutual issues with legal publishers, the other visit formats have also achieved positive results.

In other CRIV news, Stephanie Schmitt, manager of serials at Yale Law Library, will become the new webmaster of the CRIVPage, succeeding Anne Myers, head of technical services at Boston University Law Library. Schmitt will begin her new duties in July. The CRIV thanks Anne Myers for her outstanding service to the committee over the past two years. Her technical expertise and her commitment to the CRIV were most valuable to the committee's ongoing work.

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## Editors' Corner

The "CRIV Year" is usually predictable. Subcommittee activities relating to the AALL Annual Meeting program, CRIV Tools, the CRIVPage and Mediation are ongoing throughout the year. Planning for site visits begins before the new year. The CRIV reviews nominations for the New Product Award in January and February. Though most of the subcommittees' work takes place behind the scenes, the CRIV communicates to the AALL membership about its activities throughout the year in CRIVgrams and in *The CRIV Sheet*.

All the authors represented in this issue are current members of the CRIV. Our goal is to keep members informed and to highlight our work. This past fall, in particular, was not an easy time to be in the middle of the vendor-librarian debate. Immense frustration was evident from both the CRIV and West over West's Business Systems Initiative transition. The committee did not walk away from the demanding challenge of striking a balance for immediate solutions and patience. Nor were we always successful. Our proposal for a full site visit to West Group was not accepted. But a series of meetings by teleconference with West representatives — a model that proved very productive with the LexisNexis librarian panel in 1999 and 2000 — was held at the CRIV's request. The results have been positive, as you will be able to judge from the teleconference report by Carol Rogers and Sara Galligan in this issue.

Besides the West teleconference report, Carol Rogers and Sara Galligan also report on the modified CRIV site visit to Bernan. The questions and concerns raised with Bernan executives and

customer-service representatives elicited information readers will find informative about Bernan's new business system, shipping and invoicing problems, and upcoming changes in invoice design.

In addition, this issue of *The CRIV Sheet* features two informational pieces. The first describes the composition and organization of Thomson Legal & Regulatory. Most members know that this organization oversees West Group, but most do not know how (or if) this relationship affects how librarians should deal with either company. The second piece is a brief profile of Michelle Wu, who will be saying farewell to the CRIV and as editor of *The CRIV Sheet* at the end of this term.

Finally, Webmaster Anne Myers, another CRIV member who is moving on, has written an article about the CRIVPage, describing its evolution in the past three years. We would like to close our column by giving her our heartfelt thanks. She has created and maintained a spectacular Web page (sometimes under very trying circumstances) over the last few years! She has accommodated us each time we have wanted to toss an issue of *The CRIV Sheet* or a "CRIV Notes" column onto the CRIVPage on short notice — no small feat. Good luck and best wishes, Anne!

Note: Besides describing the work of committee members, the CRIV publishes this newsletter to explain how new developments in legal publishing affect the daily activities of librarians. We would love to have your expertise! If you would like to write an article for *The CRIV Sheet* or even if you would like us to address a particular topic, please contact Stephanie Edwards at [sedwards@law.rwu.edu](mailto:sedwards@law.rwu.edu).

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## Teleconference with West Group

On Feb. 19, CRIV Chair Sara Galligan and CRIV Mediation Subcommittee Chair Carol Rogers teleconferenced with West Group representatives to discuss the discontinuation and interim replacement of its subscription notices as well as a range of back-order and quality issues. West Group Director of Librarian Relations Anne Ellis previously announced these changes in an open letter posted to various listservs on Feb. 1. The CRIV requested a discussion to gain further information about these initiatives.

Representing West Group were Anne Ellis; Mary Ellen Marlowe, vice president for customer operations; Lori Hedstrom, program manager, librarian relations; Mark Witzany, director of the customer-service call center; Kris Keller, director of product and pricing services; Kerri Huncovsky, corporate communications specialist; and Julie Merriam, customer-service representative. The CRIV thanks these individuals for their time in responding to questions related to West Group's products and services.

**Subscription Notices.** West Group rolled out an interim shipping notice beginning on March 1 to replace the problem-ridden label stock that the company recently decided to discontinue. The interim notice is similar to the pre-Business Systems Initiative label notice and will include important BSI information. Discussions will take place shortly to determine a permanent replacement for the labels. In the meantime, the interim shipping notice will contain the following features:

- BSI account number
- Short product description visible through the envelope window
- Detailed product description
- Delivery number — used to reconcile shipments with monthly invoice
- Recipient address information
- Quantity and price information

**Back Order/Inventory.** West Group discussed the measures the company has taken to address its back-order inventory issues. It has convened a three-pronged task force to correct various problems with back orders, including inventory control, back-order elimination and customer communication components. The overall purpose of the task force is to determine how best to meet deadlines and rectify problematic issues. West Group clarified the differences between backlog and back-order problems. The backlog problem experienced by customers last fall occurred because available inventory did not reach customers in a timely manner. This problem was resolved in late November 2001. The back-order problem involves customer requests for items in which no inventory exists. West Group is working on an improved forecasting model, internal restructuring and restoring the critical connection between inventory and sales departments so that future demands are adequately conveyed. While BSI has somewhat complicated the issue, West Group hopes to implement a back-order plan and have corrective actions in place by the end of March.

**Quality Issues.** The CRIV asked West Group to explain a number of quality issues, including filing instructions, "revisions in process" and the problem associated with billing of the McQuillan supplement.

- **Filing Instructions:** West Group is trying to standardize its filing instructions. It is also tracking continuing errors. Senior management is establishing measures to detect when errors occur, their frequency and how to correct problems. Revised instructions are posted at the West Group Store and in the ServiceNews and Product News online publications, which users may consult to find new filing instruction information. (To access filing instructions at the West Group Store, visit <http://www.westgroup.com> and enter a title; once the desired title is retrieved, scroll to the bottom of the page for a link to the filing instructions.)
- **Partially superseded titles,** also known as "Revisions in Process": West Group addressed its practice of sending out new volumes that only partially supersede old volumes. It refers to these materials as "revisions in process" — updates to multivolume sets when the replacement volumes are released over a period of time. The old volume must be retained until the product has been fully revised. West Group tries to avoid this practice. It has received comments and suggestions from customers to improve the updating process associated with these revisions — e.g., holding revisions and providing supplementation until a complete update can be sent; providing a generic spine patch for partially revised volumes, indicating that the volume includes partially superseded material; and revising instructions by detailing exactly what was superseded. West Group is investigating these suggestions.
- **Charges for updates** and recently received revisions of *McQuillan on Municipal Corporations*: West Group sent a Volume 20, 2001 looseleaf supplement to *McQuillan* subscribers in August and the newly revised Volume 20 in December. The \$186 charge for the August supplement was misallocated and actually reflected a balance owed on the subscription price of \$777. Realistically, the supplement material should have had a much lower cost, but West Group had billed only \$591 in charges prior to the August release. Newly revised volumes always have a separate cost; thus the charge for the December revision reflected West Group's practice of charging for completely revised volumes. West Group apologized for the timing and the misallocation associated with the August shipment. The overall subscription price increase for *McQuillan*, including the December volume, was about 8 percent.

The CRIV will convene another teleconference call with West Group in late April for a report on the status of the new subscription notice as well as BSI demonstrations taking place among law librarians in several nationwide locations.

# Bernan Site Visit

Carol N. Rogers

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## Introduction

Earlier this year, CRIV Chair Sara Galligan contacted Bernan Marketing Director Bruce Samuelson to propose a CRIV limited site visit. Because Bernan is a small company with only 60 employees, the CRIV deemed it less of a financial burden for the company to host a limited visit rather than a full visit over several days with all CRIV members. Bernan graciously accepted our offer to visit. We met at Bernan's Lanham, Md., headquarters on Feb. 25.

Present for the on-site meeting from the CRIV were Carol Rogers of Latham & Watkins; Janice Anderson of Georgetown University Law Center; and Gretchen Asmuth of Preston Gates Ellis & Rouvelas Meeds LLP. Representing Bernan were Managing Director Don Hagen, Marketing Director Bruce Samuelson, Distribution Director Libby Bauer, Chief Business Officer Sharon Keyser, IT Manager Brian Taylor and Customer Service Manager Rhonda Spraggins. Joining us midday for a conference call were CRIV Chair Sara Galligan and CRIV Mediation Subcommittee members Ann Jeter from Jackson Walker LLP, Linda McLane from the University of California School of Law Library, and Walter High from North Carolina Central University School of Law Library.

Prior to the site visit, the Mediation Subcommittee solicited comments from the law library community regarding Bernan products, customer service, shipping, invoicing and related issues. The committee thanks librarians for their responses and appreciates Bernan's receptiveness to an open dialog on the issues that the librarians raised.

## Bernan History

Bernan is a small company. It has no outside sales force and employs no telemarketing. Bernan products are sold by direct mail marketing and through its Web site at <http://www.bernans.com>. Its largest market is academic libraries, followed by special and public libraries. Bernan's growing resale market now makes up 15 to 20 percent of its business.

This year marks Bernan's 50th anniversary. It was founded by Bernard and Nan Lockyear in 1952 as a garage startup — long before the days of dot.coms. From 1952 to 1960, Bernan was a subscription agent and its business system was a card file. Around 1960, Bernan began to focus on standing orders for materials, such as the *Code of Federal Regulations*. Standing orders were pre-paid and there was no resale business. In 1977, Bernan was purchased by the Kraus Organization but continued to operate as an independent entity. The company transitioned to pre-paid subscriptions and deposit accounts and moved from its card file system to an IBM system. In 1988, Bernan purchased UNIPUB from Reed (which it operated until 1997, when the two merged), upgraded its IBM system, and began resale operations.

Bernan Press was founded in 1991. It published the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, of which 30,000 copies were sold. In 1995, Bernan signed a publishing agreement with the National

Technical Information Service and published *Big Emerging Markets* and the *North American Industry Classification System*. A new edition of the *NAICS* is scheduled for 2002. Bernan was awarded the World Trade Organization publishing contract in 1998 and has since published the *World Trade Organization Dispute Settlement Decisions*. In addition to publishing, Bernan also regards its distribution services as a major company endeavor.

All of the above changes and growth continued with an IBM system that spanned 24 years and was finally replaced in June 2001.

## A New Business System

In June 2001, Bernan implemented a new business system. Due to the change over to the new system, shipments were halted in June and resumed in August. As with any new system, the conversion was not problem free. Bernan has acknowledged problems with distribution, invoicing and customer service since the system conversion. Lost orders were also a problem at first.

**Shipping Issues.** Shipping under the new business system began in August 2001. As of February, some backlogs remained. In particular, shipments of the *CFRs* are still behind. The new system also has a problem with batch processes and cannot process the invoices to be included with the shipment.

Some of the problems Bernan has contended with since August have nothing to do with the new system. The events of Sept. 11 and the anthrax scare shortly thereafter had affected shipments from Bernan because it uses the Brentwood Post Office, which was closed for some time following its anthrax contamination. Some shipments were merely delayed; some were lost. In addition, during October and November, shipments sometimes went out without invoices and invoices went out without shipments. While there is still a backlog, most of the invoice and shipment issues have been addressed. Packing slips should now be included with each shipment. Lost shipments to customers have been traced or replaced at Bernan's expense.

During the on-site visit, CRIV members were quite impressed with the warehouse operation. Bernan has only seven warehouse employees; five employees pack; two pull the inventory. Given its shipment volume, Bernan's organization and efficiency is remarkable.

**Invoicing.** During a brief period last fall, there was such a problem getting invoices to customers, due to the new business system and the Brentwood Post Office closure, that Bernan could not tell what invoices had been sent. The customer-service department received complaints from customers saying that they were not being invoiced. To correct the situation, Bernan re-invoiced everyone for that period and included any outstanding invoices. Unfortunately, it did not send the duplicate invoices with a cover letter explaining the situation, confusing many customers about the duplicate billing. This problem has now been resolved.

Bernan is redesigning its invoices because the new business system will not print invoices to be sent out with the shipments. The new automated invoice system will provide laser printed invoices on 8½-inch-by-11-inch paper and will include the title and the packing slip number. The new invoice will also include a return policy statement showing an "X" for returnable materials. Materials without an "X" are not returnable. The new design should enable Bernan to invoice customers much more efficiently. It also plans to add more detailed title information.

Within the next two months, the monthly deposit account statements will also include more detailed information. Some customers would prefer to eliminate the invoice and reconcile their packing slips to the monthly statements, thus eliminating a step. On the monthly statements for the deposit accounts, there is no reason to have invoices with a zero balance due. Bernan is receptive to this change. Under Bernan's old business system, the deposit accounts would accept a negative balance. The new business system generated billing for a negative balance, though this should not have happened because Bernan's policy is to allow deposit accounts to go into the negative. Customers with any questions about the balance on their accounts should contact Bernan Customer Service by telephone at 800/274-4888 or by e-mail at [query@bernan.com](mailto:query@bernan.com).

The CRIV suggested to Bernan that customers would appreciate receiving a notification about deposit accounts that are low. Pro forma invoices are again in use and are based on standing-order volume for those with negative balances. Beginning in May, Bernan will generate pro forma invoices for those libraries that would like them. The customer may set the trigger amount. Bernan's trigger default will be \$200.

New edition notices were mailed again in January. The notices should not be sent to accounts with a standing order for these titles.

### **Customer Service**

The customer-service department employs 11 people and receives approximately 700 to 900 calls per week. Of those, about 125 are claims. Unless a claim is marked urgent, it is not given a high priority, though claims are processed daily. In the future, Bernan plans to offer the option of claiming via its Web site. The CRIV suggested to Bernan that it consider designating a claims representative — an idea Bernan is taking seriously. In the meantime, anyone with an urgent claim should refer it to Rhonda Spraggins, Bernan customer-service manager, at 800/416-4385, extension 236, or by e-mail at [rspraggins@bernan.com](mailto:rspraggins@bernan.com).

Some library customers complained to the CRIV about calls not being returned. Managing Director Don Hagen says there is no reason for not returning a call. Customer service was using a paper tickler system for calls. All customer-service representatives moved to Microsoft Outlook in March. Any customer who feels that a call has not been returned in a timely manner should contact Rhonda Spraggins at 800/416-4385, extension 236.

Customer-service representatives do not presently have access to full account or title information. The annotations available under the old business system did not migrate to the new one.

The annotations will again be available to the customer-service representatives within two to three months.

The company must have requests for standing orders in writing because many titles are nonreturnable due to Bernan's obligations to the publishers. E-mails to [query@bernan.com](mailto:query@bernan.com) are sometimes accepted in lieu of a request on letterhead, particularly if the order is for a single title only. Faxed letters are also acceptable. The correct mailing address to use is: Bernan, 4611-F Assembly Drive, Lanham, MD 20706. Fax numbers are 301/459-0056 for local calls and 800/865-3450 for toll-free calls.

Several respondents were concerned about customer service not being able to produce a consolidated report of standing orders. This situation also stemmed from the transition to a new business system. The issue with consolidated reports has now been corrected. To request a consolidated report of standing orders, send an e-mail to [query@bernan.com](mailto:query@bernan.com) or a fax to 301/459-0056 to customer service.

Customer-service representatives receive daily e-mail updates and weekly briefings about distribution schedules from government agencies. When customer-service representatives explain to callers that they don't know the price or release date of a particular title, the government agency owning the title has probably not yet set a release date or price, according to Bernan. If customers do not receive an adequate explanation for a delayed publication, they may refer questions to Bernan's Customer Service Manager Rhonda Spraggins. Customers may also ask representatives to inquire directly to an agency for the status of a publication if needed. The inquiry may take several days. The response time from an agency is not always in Bernan's control.

It is a priority for Bernan to make all titles available for order in the near future at its Web site. Presently only 250 core titles are listed. Bernan has 45,000 active titles, plus 125,000 added editions. Web orders are now submitted in real time and go to a specific group for faster processing. Web-order customers receive a confirmation number by e-mail.

Bernan produces a monthly e-mail summary for its customers, "Bernan Reference Update," which includes new releases, basic bibliographic information and pricing information. Users can sign up for this service through a link on the Bernan Web site, <http://www.bernan.com>. At the CRIV's suggestion, Bernan has added a "coming soon" section to the monthly update.

### **Conclusion**

The CRIV thanks Bernan for its hospitality and frank and open discussion about its new business system, customer-service issues, shipping and invoicing. The CRIV appreciates the opportunity to meet with the Bernan management about the concerns of AALL members and how to resolve those concerns. Bernan, in turn, indicated its willingness to receive feedback from law librarians about the materials that are most needed and how Bernan can best serve as a publisher, distributor and subscription agent.

*Author's note: All the AALL members participating in this visit, in person or by phone, contributed to this summary.*

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## CRIVPage Revisited

For the past two years, I have been privileged to serve as the CRIV's webmaster. Now that my term is coming to a close, it is appropriate to look back at how the Web site has changed during that time, what role it serves for the CRIV and AALL members, and what changes are in store for the future. In the interests of readability, I will not clutter this article with uniform resource locators; the sections will all be linked from the CRIVPage at <http://www.aallnet.org/committee/criv>.

The CRIVPage was unveiled in November 1998 with the goal of becoming a law librarian's first choice among resources for information about the world of legal information publishing. Webmaster Janeen Heath created a content-rich Web site designed to keep AALL members abreast of what was happening in the publishing industry and, especially, what the CRIV was doing to assist librarians and vendors not only to survive but to thrive in today's challenging environment. Though the site design is different now, those goals remain the same in 2002.

The current "look and feel" came in July 2000 after a complete site redesign that involved restructuring the site architecture and updating individual pages to make them more readable and to facilitate navigation between sections. The most popular change was the addition of a "Quick Links" box on the top of every page, allowing users to navigate specific sections quickly, such as vendor contact information and site visit reports.

One of the most popular resources of the CRIVPage are the CRIV Tools, online documents such as checklists or sample letters and forms that aid acquisitions and serials librarians in performing routine tasks or in solving common problems. Although some tools were originally published in print form, others such as the "Divested Titles List" exist only online. The "Sample Letters to Vendors" section has consistently been the most visited area of the CRIVPage; many librarians bookmark this section and link it from library Web pages for quick reference.

The newest CRIV Tool is the "Legal Publishers List," which was originally developed and maintained by Rob Richards at the University of Colorado. (The Feb. 2002 issue of *The CRIV Sheet* explains the history of the list.) Also known as the "Who Owns What" list, this is a wonderful resource for keeping track of the constantly shifting relationships between legal publishers. The CRIV began maintaining the list in January and anticipates that it will be one of the most important resources on the CRIVPage.

In 1998, the CRIV's Mediation Subcommittee began posting CRIVGrams to various listservs in response to problems or issues raised by law librarians. They often include resolution information provided by publishers. But what do you do if you deleted the message when it arrived, accidentally or because you didn't think it was relevant to your library at the time, only to discover a week later that you really need that information? The solution: Go to the CRIVPage and search the CRIVGram archives. CRIVGrams are available on the Web generally within 24 hours of their posting to listservs and currently make up the single largest portion of the CRIVPage — more than half of total CRIVPage Web pages.

Site visits to publishers and their reverse visits to libraries have become an important part of the work of the CRIV. Although site visit reports are published in *The CRIV Sheet*, members have appreciated the immediacy of disseminating reports online. Our goal is to add them to the CRIVPage within two weeks of the site visit; availability of the reports is announced to the membership in a CRIVGram.

**Technical Specs.** The CRIVPage was created and is maintained using Dreamweaver, one of the two Web development tools recommended by AALLNET. There are more than 310 pages that reflect the work of the CRIV. It uses a liquid design and color rather than extensive graphics for loading pages quickly.

Although current AALLNET statistics were not available at the time of this writing, past records indicate that more than 4,500 pages are requested each month. Many are pages deep into the site, indicating that users have bookmarked them for quick and frequent reference. This is particularly true of the "Sample Letters" section. When statistics are available to include the "Legal Publishers List," those numbers will rise dramatically, given the list's popularity.

I have loved the opportunity to serve as the CRIV's webmaster for the last two years and have appreciated the support of the many members of the CRIV who contributed content. I inherited a strong and vibrant site from the CRIV's first webmaster, Janeen Heath. Now it is time to pass it on to my successor, Stephanie Schmitt, manager of serials services at Yale Law Library. She will become the next CRIV webmaster at the July 2002 Annual Meeting in Orlando. I know she will do an excellent job and that "my baby" will be in good hands.

**Anne Myers**

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## Thomson Legal & Regulatory Market Group

On Feb. 11, Brian H. Hall, president and chief executive officer of Thomson Legal & Regulatory, met with CRIV Chair Sara Galligan and former AALL President Margie Axtmann to describe the Thomson Legal & Regulatory market group and how it serves the law library market. Anne Ellis, West Group's director of library relations, helped arrange the meeting and participated

in the discussion. Hall gave an informative presentation, followed by an opportunity for Axtmann and Galligan to ask specific questions about Thomson Legal & Regulatory. The discussion and presentation involved several areas, including Thomson Legal & Regulatory's organization, products, global footprint and business strategy.

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Thomas Law Library  
Minneapolis, Minn.*

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Law library customers should consult Anne Ellis at 651/687-5019 or [anne.ellis@westgroup.com](mailto:anne.ellis@westgroup.com) for customer-service problems associated with Thomson Legal & Regulatory Group.

The CRIV appreciated the opportunity to meet and exchange valuable information with Brian H. Hall. The CRIV also appreciated Anne Ellis' efforts in setting up this meeting. The law library community is well served when legal publishing senior management spends time with the CRIV discussing areas of mutual concern.

**Michelle Wu**

*University of Houston  
Houston, Texas*

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## CRIV Member Profile: Michelle Wu

When I first volunteered for an AALL committee assignment in 1996, I never anticipated that I would still be working with the committee almost six years later! As a public services librarian, I had not been privy to the close (and sometimes heated) relationships between vendors and librarians until I was assigned to the CRIV.

My first year on the committee coincided with some significant changes in the CRIV charge and focus. During the few years prior to the start of my service, the CRIV had noticed an increase in electronic communications, particularly on listservs. In many ways, such communications were driving the CRIV to change. The committee had to find a way to reach the membership more quickly than in the past, and to coordinate meaningful and effective communication. Shortly before my first term on the CRIV ended, thanks to tremendous leadership by Chair Frank Houdek, the committee had begun its metamorphosis. The activities undertaken by the CRIV in 1997 included site visits,

mounting a Web page, creating CRIV Tools, and actively sending out CRIVGrams.

A year later, I was asked to return to the committee to serve as co-editor/editor of *The CRIV Sheet*. Editor Richard Humphrey had done a spectacular job with the publication. However, having served as editor for at least three years, he was ready to train a successor. I was fortunate to be the one selected.

Now, after three years of serving as editor and co-editor, in alternating years, I would like to say my farewell to *The CRIV Sheet*. My time with the committee has been both rewarding and enjoyable. I would like to thank all of the past contributors to *The CRIV Sheet*. Stephanie Edwards, along with a yet-to-be-identified librarian, will be co-editing *The CRIV Sheet* next year. Her dedication to the committee and to the publication will ensure the future quality of CRIV publications. I know that I am leaving *The CRIV Sheet* in the best of hands!