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# The CRIV Sheet

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## Editor's Corner

It seems impossible to us, but we are at the end of another volume of *The CRIV Sheet*. Our next issue will not appear until the fall, well after the annual get-together in Boston.

As we conclude the 26th volume of the newsletter, we want to thank all those who contributed to this year's issues as well as to the entire Committee on Relations with Information Vendors.

This issue starts off with an article that addresses a topic that seems to arise every month on one online discussion or another—the future of *Shepard's Citations* in paper. Jane Morris, director of customer programs, case law and citations editorial at LexisNexis, was gracious enough to pull this article together at our request. We think the information she provides will prove valuable to law libraries who question their collections of paper citators.

Another online discussion tie-in article was been written by Jason Kruppa of the Law Library of Louisiana. Kruppa posted a question to other librarians about the design of loose-leaf binders this past winter. From the responses he received and from discussions with publishers, Kruppa has produced a wonderful *Consumer Reports*-like survey. It is our hope that the dialog he has opened with the publishers will lead to improved loose-leaf binder design.

Next we have an update on the work of the Fair Business Practices Implementation Task Force that was created by the AALL Executive Board in 2003. CRIV committee member Beth DiFelice follows with a vendor profile of Brill Academic Publishers—a company with a long history, but one that has only recently jumped into the world of legal publishing. Susan Siebers, a firm librarian from Chicago, follows with a response to our February interview with a group of firm librarians who purchased HeinOnline. Siebers' comments reinforce the notion that there are times when *not purchasing* a quality product is the best decision for a library.

Next is co-editor Dick Vaughan's look at the lives of several librarians who work for legal publishers. This is a group we have wanted to profile for some time, and we hope it will shed new light on the work of these dedicated, but often forgotten, library professionals. We conclude with a few "Notes of Interest" and Kevin Butterfield's look at several unique features found on publishers' Web sites.

As always, thanks for reading our work, and please send us any comments you have.

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## From the Chair

I recently returned from the Joint Study Institute in Sydney, Australia, where I had an opportunity to talk with librarians from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United Kingdom. A frequent topic of conversation was the state of legal publishing and the impact of publisher practices on library budgets and services.

"What are you doing?" people asked me. "What is CRIV doing?"

With the vast majority of print and electronic resources being produced by two or three publishing conglomerates, libraries and other consumers of legal information have few choices in how to spend their dwindling budgets. The sheer size and global nature of the companies make it nearly impossible to have our voices heard, individually as law librarians and collectively as AALL and the Committee on Relations with Information Vendors. As one Australian librarian put it, "They just sit back and add 8 percent every year without adding any content or value."

One of the most frequent concerns I hear from librarians is about pricing. These are just a few of the common problems we face:

- A huge portion of our incoming material is paid on receipt rather than on an annual subscription basis, making it nearly impossible to plan and control our budgets. We don't know what we can afford, because we can't predict how much anything will cost.

- Publishers recompile or reissue large sets with little advance warning, and libraries must either absorb the cost or cancel the set. Collection development becomes a reactionary process rather than a thoughtful one.
- Postage and handling charges continue to rise unnecessarily, eating up more and more of our acquisitions funds.
- Some publishers discount new sales more attractively than standing orders, leading libraries down the path of cancelling and reordering. The recordkeeping is labor intensive, and the impact on our collections is undeniable.
- Bundling of resources, either in electronic databases or in print/electronic combinations, can allow a library to maximize subscription dollars. But it also reduces flexibility and takes the choices out of the hands of librarians so that we are shaping our collections according to packages designed by the publishers and not according to our needs.

Continual evaluation of collections and services is a basic principle of librarianship, and it is even more critical for us to undertake collection assessment at a time when library budgets mandate that we do more with less. But our ability to build and manage our resources according to our library's mission and user population is greatly limited by the pricing strategies currently prevalent in the legal publishing industry. It's not just

about keeping our budgets under control; it's also about making the decisions that are right for us rather than the decisions that are expedient for publishers.

What is the CRIV doing about all of this? The committee works hard, often behind the scenes, to help publishers understand how their pricing policies affect libraries. We engage in conversations that articulate these general issues as well as address specific problem areas identified by law librarians. It is more difficult to have meaningful dialogue in the global publishing environment that exists today, but we continue to make personal contacts and to advocate for sound practices. We encourage better communication between publishers and librarians, but the CRIV can't do it alone.

Ultimately law librarians also must take a personal stand against poor pricing strategies and other publisher practices that reduce our ability to make intelligent choices. We need to persuade publishers to provide us with more annual subscription price information so that we can manage our budgets. We need to convince them that the package that is right for one library

may be wrong for another so that they will build more flexibility into their content and pricing structures. We don't always speak with one voice, and it's important for each of us to make our individual opinions known.

Publishers also have a responsibility to explain their prices and to inform customers in advance of changes to those prices. They must recognize different customer needs and work to accommodate those needs within their own policies. This is a challenge for global publishers, but they must maintain effective communication and personalized customer service in order to keep library customers satisfied.

This is a watershed time for the legal publishing industry and its customers. Law librarians and legal publishers would do well to work toward a better understanding of each other's needs, because we can't continue with business as usual. The CRIV stands ready to facilitate this discussion and to monitor trends in legal publishing and pricing. I'd be glad to hear more from publishers and librarians on this topic.

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## The Future of *Shepard's*<sup>®</sup> Citations in Print

*Shepard's Citations* has been a cornerstone of the legal research process for 130 years. Back in 1873, Frank Shepard invented the legal citator as we know it today. In time, the use of his invention to conduct legal research came to be known as Shepardizing<sup>™</sup>. During the early 20th century, Shepard's invention was ranked—along with the telephone (invented in 1876) and the typewriter (1873)—among the three top productivity tools for lawyers.

For nearly 110 years, *Shepard's* information was available only in print. Initially, the product was called *Shepard's Adhesive Annotations*. The citations were printed on gummed, perforated sheets, which were designed to be divided and pasted onto pages of case law. Known to the profession as "stickers," most *Shepard's* first editions were literally torn to bits and stuck to pertinent margins of case reporters.

By the early years of the 20th century, the citations were bound into maroon volumes with *Shepard's Citations* stamped in gold on their spines, much like the ones still found on library shelves 100 years later. While today's law students are most likely to associate *Shepard's* with the LexisNexis Total Research System at *lexis.com*<sup>®</sup>, print remains the medium of choice for many experienced legal researchers.

Learning to Shepardize<sup>®</sup> in print was once a rite of passage for all first-year law students. Until quite recently, generations of lawyers Shepardized<sup>™</sup> in print to be sure their authorities were still good law. They also Shepardized to retrieve comprehensive lists of authorities—including cases, annotations, law review articles, and other sources—that cited their cases or statutes.

### Print v. Online

Today, some of these lawyers still prefer to do their citations research in print. Our market research plainly indicates that most attorneys and librarians conduct the majority of their research online. But our market research also tells us that there are a number of experienced attorneys, principally in smaller firms, who still prefer print and who are extremely unlikely to change their ways. Given the ripe old ages at which many lawyers continue to practice their profession, we don't see the market for *Shepard's* in print disappearing any time soon.

Clearly, subscription lists for *Shepard's* products are declining as online usage grows. Attrition has been steepest in large law firms, where relatively junior associates conduct a great deal of citations research online. Attrition has been less steep in libraries and small firms where attorneys who prefer print continue to do their research.

For many years, attrition in academic law libraries was relatively low. Many law school libraries continued to retain relatively substantial collections of *Shepard's* in print. In recent years, attrition has increased—especially in law schools that no longer teach their students how to Shepardize in print. But because many law school libraries are open to the public (or at least to graduates of the school), including practicing attorneys in the communities they serve, a typical law school library continues to retain at least a basic collection of *Shepard's* print products.

Let's assume that attrition continues. Will the day come when *Shepard's* will no longer be available in print? When it comes to forecasting, never say never is good advice. Thus we wouldn't

Jane W. Morris

LexisNexis<sup>™</sup>  
Colorado Springs

want to predict that the end of the road for *Shepard's* in print will *never* arrive—but we're confident it won't be soon. Several factors support this conclusion.

### **Print Still Profitable**

As an organization, LexisNexis is strongly committed to delivering products in the media our customers need. We derive a substantial percentage of our revenues from print products. This may be surprising to those who associate the LexisNexis name with online legal research. But it's not so surprising when you consider the longtime print publishers, including Matthew Bender®, Anderson Publishing®, and Michie™ in addition to *Shepard's*, that are also part of today's LexisNexis.

Despite the trend toward ever-increasing online use, certain print resources are highly valued and seem unlikely to disappear. Most attorneys want to have ready desktop access to the statutes and court rules they frequently use. Others want to have some secondary materials close by, including practice guides and treatises for areas of law that are important to their practices. Matthew Bender, Anderson, and Michie publish many of these must-have-in-print titles.

*Shepard's Citations* is a beneficiary of this association. Because our LexisNexis manufacturing and distribution operations support a variety of print products, including Matthew Bender, Anderson, and Michie titles, we can continue to provide cost-effective support for *Shepard's* in print, even as *Shepard's* print subscription lists continue to decline.

There is another major factor that contributes to the continuing viability of *Shepard's* in print: a very substantial amount of the editorial work we do for *Shepard's Citations* is necessary to support the online *Shepard's* product. Thus our cost structure for print includes paper, ink, and postage, but not the analytical work that our editors perform. This means that even small print subscription lists can be profitable.

After *Shepard's* became a part of LexisNexis, we totally redesigned the way we process case law and citations. The multi-million-dollar Citations Redesign (CR) project was intended to eliminate duplication and allow us to deliver current, accurate information unmatched by our competition. The ability to produce *Shepard's* print pages quickly and efficiently was built into the CR requirements—another factor contributing to the continuing viability of *Shepard's* in print.

It should be noted that over the years, we have determined to discontinue a few *Shepard's* titles. In the main, the cancelled titles have been *Shepard's* case names citators. Two other discontinued products (*Shepard's Fifth Circuit Citations* and *Shepard's California Federal Citations*) contained subsets of information that are also available in two of our flagship print products, *Shepard's Federal Citations* and *Shepard's United States Citations*.

Unfortunately, the lists for these lesser titles were never large. Over time, they had declined to the point where the costs of producing them exceeded the revenues they generated. It is possible that other individual titles might be discontinued in the future. But fortunately, these products represent the exception to the general rule. Almost all of our core citator products remain solidly profitable.

So long as they remain profitable—and so long as our customers value this medium for their research—we are committed to producing *Shepard's* traditional print products. Judging from the market research we do, a small but viable minority of legal researchers continues to prefer print, and they tell us they would rather retire than move online.

### **Mixed Feelings**

We confess to being just a little conflicted by all of this. On one hand, we'd like everyone to experience the powerful navigational tools that make Shepardizing on lexis.com so easy and fast. We'd like everyone to see how Frank Shepard's invention, the *Adhesive Annotation*, has come full circle, with *Shepard's Signal*™ indicators appearing on the face of LexisNexis case documents to provide at-a-glance indications of precedential status. We'd like everyone to share our conviction that *Shepard's* on the LexisNexis Total Research System is simply the best way for legal researchers to be sure they have reached sound conclusions about their research.

On the other hand, we value the long tradition that *Shepard's* in print represents. It's because of print that Shepardize has long been one of the most widely recognized words in the lawyer's lexicon. The little editorial shorthand that Frank Shepard developed—"a" for affirmed, "r" for reversed, "f" for followed, and "o" for overruled—lives on in print. We like knowing that *Shepard's* expert legal editors continue to apply this analysis today, just as they did when Frank Shepard was still directing their work.

Going forward, we couldn't produce *Shepard's Citations* without computers, but some of us still remember that *Shepard's* information was processed manually for more than a century. More than 100 million citations were originally extracted onto slips of paper by clerical employees, analyzed by legal editors, sorted and validated, set into lines of hot metal type, and carefully proofread for inclusion in a *Shepard's* bound volume or cumulative supplement. The painstaking work that made *Shepard's* in print possible continues to inspire us today.

Therefore, we wish long, productive lives for the lawyers, law librarians, judges, and law professors who still prefer to use *Shepard's Citations* in print.

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## Loose-leaf Binders: A Plea for Consistency

Jason Kruppa

Law Library of Louisiana  
New Orleans

Ask anyone on the street about the importance of loose-leaf binders in the grand scheme of things and you'll probably get a blank stare. But open up discussion on the topic to any group of law librarians and you're likely to get a response that's quite a bit more sanguine. I discovered this very truth when I posted an e-mail on the law-lib online discussion list detailing my own frustrations with inconsistencies and flaws in the usability of various binder designs. Over the next few weeks, I received numerous e-mails from librarians and professional filers around the country who concurred with my sentiments and amplified them with their own experiences.

In preparing this article, I used those responses as a basis for speaking with personnel from several of the major legal publishers about their chosen style of binders and elicited further comments via e-mail from staff members of law libraries and filers around the country about their experiences. This article summarizes those exchanges and moves to open a dialogue between publishers and the community they serve in hopes of establishing a standard that all parties may find satisfactory.

Because regularly updated loose-leaf services, by necessity, constitute a significant portion of some law library collections, those of us who work in this field often deal with loose-leaf binders many times during the day. Any material used this frequently will doubtless come under close scrutiny, and as a result, the wide variety of binders from different publishers has given rise to comments ranging from praise to very pointed criticism.

### Product Critiques

LexisNexis' Matthew Bender binders received the most positive comments overall for their sturdy five-ring, round-backed design. In 1995, Bender changed the style of its binders, and the CEO of the company took measures—including customer focus groups—to assure that it was choosing a design that users would prefer. Like other publishers, Bender also performs a "tumble test" to determine how much wear and tear its binders will withstand and has set page limits for each binder to reduce overfilling. These last two points may still need a bit of attention; at least one librarian complained of "flimsy" rings on binders she received recently, and a few volumes scattered throughout various sets remain too full. By and large, though, most people who have dealt with Bender's loose-leaf binders are satisfied with their general design.

Thomson/RIA also received compliments for its use of well-constructed ring binders, though the actual binder size in some cases presents a problem. Library shelves are commonly quite narrow, and publications such as the *Payroll Guide* often challenge the available space. The size of the forms in this particular publication dictates the size of the binder, so making the binders smaller may not be an option. These larger binders also present a problem because RIA's ring mechanism does not lock, and the rings can come open easily if the binder is dropped.

For some of its titles, Aspen Publishers chose the D-ring style binder, which it contends allows for more pages per binder (and therefore fewer binders for each title). Because the rings are riveted into the rear panel of the binder, as opposed to the spine like most other binders, these binders can fall open as one removes them from the shelf. This places extra stress on the rings and makes the binder easy to drop, which any user is likely to find annoying. The rings themselves, however, seem to be fairly strong and open and close with a top *and* bottom lever mechanism. This assures even pressure on the rings and keeps them closed better. Still, the basic design of the binder is unwieldy.

CCH prefers the ring mechanism with the sliding lock system, because it finds the tension is more consistent overall than the lever mechanism. Once notable for some of the sturdiest, most well-designed binders in the field, CCH recently (within the past five years) changed some manufacturing practices, resulting in a less reliable product. To be fair, various manufacturing issues—the use of synthetic instead of animal-derived glues, a general push to use more environmentally friendly materials, etc.—have affected all legal binders, but CCH seems to have suffered the most dramatic change in quality.

Various users reported problems with the ring mechanism becoming detached from the spine (at least one person even used a rivet gun to fix the problem) as well as ineffective adhesive. Another recent change saw the ring size increase by 1/2 inch to allow more pages to be filed in each volume, which has only exacerbated the problems. Fortunately, CCH has addressed some of these complaints, and binder construction appears to be more dependable. The overall quality, however, is not as good as it once was; binders that are 20 years old still seem more solid than binders that are just one year old. CCH has expressed a willingness to work on this issue and certainly seems to be open to suggestions.

Because of the number of smaller companies it has absorbed over the years, Thomson/West has the greatest variety of binders within one organization. To its credit, the publisher revised *some* of its binder designs for greater consistency, but it still has work to do in this area simply because of the number of titles it publishes. Some of the loose-leaf services formerly published by Clark Boardman Callaghan, which are now under West's banner, use the post-style binder design. This design features a clip that is supposed to release the post mechanism and free the top cover for removal. The benefit of this design is durability, but the downside is that the binders are often difficult to open due to tightness of pages; filing is inconvenient; and the clip often does not release as intended. I have personally had to take a hammer and screwdriver to several of these binders to open them, a measure that usually damages the binder beyond further use.

Some current West titles are housed in the aforementioned D-ring binders, but the binder style it seems to be using most is

the round-backed, five-ring binder, similar to those used by Bender. While West indicates it has not made it a goal in the past to convert to any particular design across the board, its periodic review of binder designs for user satisfaction has often revealed that the five-ring design is preferable. West also reported it is conducting research on the binder mechanism to assure that it “opens and closes more easily” and has editorial practices in place in an attempt to keep page limits manageable.

Of all the binder styles surveyed, the one that drew the greatest criticism was the Bureau of National Affairs’ (BNA) four-inch, double-prong design, specifically the *Labor Relations Reporter*. Common complaints include misaligned prongs (that cause damage to the loose-leaf pages), difficulty opening/closing/filing in the binders, pinched fingers in the binder hinge, and overstuffed binders. BNA acknowledges that the binder design has been in use for so long—up to 30 years—that the originators of the design are no longer with the company, and the reasons for choosing the design are therefore unclear. What is clear, however, is that despite the excellent construction, these binders are impractical for filing and/or reading the material within. It is encouraging that BNA is aware of this problem, and Bob Robbins, executive editor for BNA’s legal and business publishing group, says he continually examines ways to improve the company’s publications.

### **What Do Users Want?**

Complaints about the various binder designs lead, of course, to the question of what users *do* want in a loose-leaf binder. Not surprisingly, simplicity and ease of use are prime considerations. Nearly all users who responded to this survey prefer ring binders over other styles, such as post binders. Those who file large amounts of materials find that a mechanism located at the bottom of the binder (older CCH binders, for example) increases filing speed, though most prefer a mechanism at the top to avoid scratching shelves. Sizes of binders are also important and should reflect not only average shelf depth but also take into consideration, “How many pages are too many pages?”

This last point is as much an editorial as a manufacturing issue. Too often, it seems, the binders are made larger to hold more material, when a more practical solution (from the user’s point of view) would be to add more binders to accommodate the

increase in pages. More binders means greater expense, naturally, but many users of these materials go this route anyway by ordering extra binders from the publisher, splitting up the material, and simply affixing their own labels to the spines to reflect the adjustment.

In summary, the round-backed, five-ring design—similar to the one used by LexisNexis/Matthew Bender or even the older CCH design—seems to be the preferred format overall, but with the caveat that there is some room for debate on the ring mechanism itself. Post binders and double-prong binders drew the greatest disdain, and D-ring binders also garnered little enthusiasm.

The bottom line here is usability. People who file in these binders, as well as those who turn to the content of the binders for research, should experience the least amount of resistance from these very necessary tools. An ongoing collaboration between vendors and users should result in greater usability and improve consistency dramatically.

Thanks in preparing this article must be extended to the individuals who contributed from the various publishing houses, all of whom were very helpful.

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## **Fair Business Practices Implementation Task Force Update**

Those who keep abreast of librarian-vendor relations will be aware that in 2000, despite substantial comment from AALL and its members, the Federal Trade Commission rescinded its *Guides for the Law Book Industry*, indicating that associations could adopt guides of their own. AALL responded in 2002 by adopting the *AALL Guide to Fair Business Practices for Legal Publishers*.

Based on five principles—Truthful and Accurate Communication, Disclosure, Fair Dealing, Customer Satisfaction, and Product Quality—the *Guide* covers the full range of interactions in

which publishers commonly engage, from ensuring accurate information in advertisements to resolving account problems in a timely manner. To facilitate the distribution and promotion of the *Guide*, in 2003 the AALL Executive Board created the Fair Business Practices Implementation Task Force.

With a life span of only two years (its final report will be presented to the Executive Board in July 2005), the charge to the task force may seem a bit daunting. Chaired by Kay Todd, members Michael Beard, Kamla King Hedges, Linda Kawaguchi

McLane, Judy Lauer, and James Mumm manage assignments and discussion via e-mail as well as meeting monthly by teleconference. The task force maintains frequent contact with the CRIV through its chair Margie Axtmann.

The task force is initially engaged in distributing copies of the AALL *Guide* to legal publishers; efforts are being made to ensure that publishers may obtain additional copies easily and at minimal cost. An essential part of encouraging use of the *Guide* is publicizing its existence, not only to vendors and AALL members, but also to a wider audience of legal professionals and librarians outside of AALL.

Task force members have created a series of short e-mail notifications that are dispersed via several online discussion lists. Each of these notifications targets a specific principle from the

*Guide* and presents it in a condensed form. As these are issued, they are also mentioned in the *From the Desk of ...* alerts from AALL Executive Director Susan Fox. AALL members are also encouraged to read the full text of the *Guide* either in paper or on AALLNET ([www.aallnet.org/about/fair\\_practice\\_guide.asp](http://www.aallnet.org/about/fair_practice_guide.asp)).

A press release has been prepared and is being distributed to various library associations. In the December issue of *AALL Spectrum*, James Mumm authored an article describing the *Guide* as well as the creation of the implementation task force, its charge, and a few of the projects underway. Kay Todd wrote an article that appeared in the December 2003/January 2004 issue of *Against the Grain*, a journal for librarians, vendors, and publishers. Articles for other publications, both print and online, are in progress.

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## Vendor Profile: Brill Academic Publishers

Brill Academic Publishers is (and has always been) an independent commercial publishing company. The company was founded in 1683 in Leiden in the Netherlands. It was originally named Luchtmans after its founder Samuel Luchtmans. In 1848, the company was purchased by the Brill family who subsequently changed the name. The company remains headquartered in Leiden, but has two North American offices—an editorial and marketing office in Boston and a customer service department in Herndon, Virginia.

Early publications of Luchtmans and Brill include works of the physician and botanist Boerhaave (1666-1738), early editions of Pierre Bayle's (1647-1706) *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique*, and Arabist Dozy's (1820-1883) *Histoire des Musulmans en Espagne*.

Today, Brill Academic Publishers concentrates on the areas of history, religion, Islamic studies, Asian studies, classical studies, and, most recently, international law. Brill's principal markets are Europe, the United States, and Japan. The majority of its customers are libraries.

Brill expanded into the legal world in June 2003 when it acquired the public international law and human rights law lists from Kluwer Law International. This list had been published under the imprint Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, and Brill will continue to publish these titles under that imprint. Nijhoff is well known for its book series, such as *International Studies in Human Rights*; *International Humanitarian Law Series*; *Developments in International Law*; *Publications on Ocean Development*; and *Legal Aspects of International Organization*.

New international law books published by Brill this year include a sixth edition of Rosenne's *The World Court: What It is and How It Works* and a fourth edition of *International Institutional Law*.

Brill publishes 19 international law journals, such as *The International Journal of Children's Rights*; *The Legal History Review*; *Nordic Journal of International Law*; *The International Journal of Marine and Coastal Law*; and *the European Journal of Crime, Criminal Law and Criminal Justice*, as well as the new journal, *The Law and Practice of International Courts and Tribunals*, begun in 2002. A new journal this year is *International Organizations Law Review*, which will serve as a discussion forum for academics and practitioners of the law of international organizations.

Last December, Brill acquired the Arab and Islamic law list from Kluwer Law International. This list includes *Arab Law Quarterly*, *Yearbook of Arab and Middle Eastern Law*, the *Arab and Islamic Law* book series, *Register of Laws of the Arabian Gulf*, and *Business Laws of the Middle East*. The Arab and Islamic law materials will also be published under the Martinus Nijhoff Publishers imprint.

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## HeinOnline in the Law Firm Environment: Comment

*Editors' Note: In our last issue, we published an interview with a group of firm librarians who work in libraries that had purchased access to the HeinOnline law review database. Susan Siebers, director of library and information services at Katten Muchin Zavis Rosenman in Chicago, offers reasons why her firm decided not to purchase access.*

First, I feel that HeinOnline is an excellent product. I had been aware of it through discussions with Dick Spinelli, Hein's vice-president of sales and marketing, throughout the process of its initial development and have been following its progress with great interest since its release. HeinOnline definitely deserved the AALL New Product Award.

Katten Muchin Zavis Rosenman (KMZ Rosenman) currently only has a HeinOnline subscription in its New York office and for now will not extend that subscription to Chicago, our largest office, or any of our other offices. This decision has nothing to do with the quality of the product. It relates only to the firm's practice and attorneys' current need for the information contained in HeinOnline. For this firm of approximately 600 attorneys, it currently would not be a cost-effective purchase.

Our New York City library had a subscription when it was Rosenman and Colin. After the merger that created KMZ Rosenman in March 2002, that subscription was maintained. The service is used frequently by the librarians, so there was and continues to be no reason to discontinue it. As we surveyed potential usage in our other offices, however, and compared it to the price, we decided not to extend the subscription nationwide.

In Chicago, historically we don't purchase more than a very few law reviews, and even those have been canceled during the last

few years. We do not accept offers of issues of law reviews from attorney alumni, since those issues would merely take up shelf space. We maintain a firm membership in Chicago Kent College of Law's library, conveniently located a block from our office, and have been able to meet the few requests received each year through its library and document delivery service. We simply have not experienced a great need for law review articles.

The only other KMZ Rosenman office that had maintained law reviews was our Los Angeles office, which had subscriptions to California law reviews. These have been canceled as space became an issue and the usage declined. They are not expensive, but do take time to process. Since the usage of these publications declined and there was no need for other law reviews, the additional cost of HeinOnline could not be justified. If a specific article is needed, it will be obtained and the client charged.

I was very pleased when the decision was made by Hein to offer subscriptions to the various components of HeinOnline, since I think that flexibility will make it a viable, cost-effective option for many libraries. A subscription to the *Federal Register* portion of the database is currently the only part of the service that is somewhat appealing for KMZ Rosenman. Since we have maintained this publication in paper and our coverage coincides with the years being requested, we are currently continuing to maintain it that way. Shelf space, convenience, and attorney practice will definitely continue to be monitored and balanced against the cost of HeinOnline.

We will certainly be monitoring developments with the product and our needs for what it contains. At some time, this may still become a cost-effective purchase for us.

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## The View from the Other Side of the Desk: Librarians Employed by Legal Publishers

I have worked in academic acquisitions-related positions for 20 years; more than half of those in law libraries. During that time I have worked with a lot of publisher and vendor representatives. The vast majority have been hardworking, honest, and dedicated to their profession. I view most as colleagues and a few as friends. When I first started out, the average publisher representative a.) was male, b.) spent most of his time "on the road," and c.) held no library degree. Today I find more and more a.) are female, b.) still travel, but do much of their work from their homes or offices, and c.) hold library degrees.

Although I have never seriously considered crossing over, I do admit that I have wondered what it would be like to work for a legal publisher. Certainly if I were just entering the profession, I would owe it to myself to take a serious look at working outside the traditional library environment. In an attempt to find out just what it is like on the other side of the desk, I contacted a small sampling of librarians, or soon to be librarians, who currently work for legal publishers. Thanks to the following:

- Lori Hedstrom, Manager of Librarian Relations, West (MLS, University of Minnesota)
- Larry Lempert, Director, Product Research and Planning, Bureau of National Affairs (MLS in progress, University of Maryland)
- Jill Porter, Director of Library Relations, Practising Law Institute (MILS, Pratt Institute)
- Cindy Spohr, Senior Director, Librarian Relations Group, LexisNexis (MLS, Indiana University-Bloomington).

Thanks also to Kamla Hedges, director of library relations at the Bureau of National Affairs Inc. (MLS, Peabody College), who also helped us.

### Starting Off

To my surprise, only one of these individuals worked for a legal publisher prior to his library school education. In fact, their reasons for entering the field of librarianship are no different

than most other librarians I know. Hedges (BNA), Hedstrom (West), Porter (PLI), and Spohr (LexisNexis) all entered library school after completing their undergraduate studies. "I was very interested in literacy and urban public libraries' role in the community and felt that librarianship would allow me to contribute to society in a meaningful way," Hedstrom recalls. "I expected that when I graduated I would work at a large city's public library downtown in some type of outreach capacity."

Porter, a liberal arts major, was looking for a career in something other than teaching. "Since I spent more than my fair share of time in libraries and bookstores, becoming a librarian seemed like a logical choice," she says.

Spohr, like so many of us, worked as a circulation clerk at her undergraduate library. "In watching the work of the reference librarians, I decided I wanted to become a librarian," she says. "When I entered library school, I planned to seek employment as a reference librarian at a university. After my first semester of library school, I decided that special libraries would be a better fit for me, and I specifically became interested in law libraries."

Only Lempert (BNA) started his library education after he was employed by a legal publisher. Lempert, who also has a law degree from the University of Michigan, had worked for BNA for 16 years prior to his decision to pursue a degree in information studies. Hedges notes that the idea of going to library school was, for Lempert, "to add depth, breadth, and coherence to the body of knowledge and experience that he had been building on his own."

### **Early Days**

For the others in my survey, the first job after library school was in a traditional library environment. Hedges began as a legal legislative librarian at the Connecticut State Library and then moved on to become a firm librarian in Washington, D.C. Hedstrom's first two jobs were with Minneapolis firms. "For one, I managed the branch office of a large firm that was very involved with Minnesota politics and lobbying," she says. "In the next firm I was a solo librarian for 40 attorneys who practice in corporate law and general litigation. I felt this was a particularly good fit for me, because as the firm's first librarian, I was able to set things up the way I thought they should be done and enjoyed the independent nature of the work."

Porter worked as a librarian in several types of settings before she began working for PLI. "I spent my last eight years as a librarian in law libraries," she says, "first as a tax librarian, eventually becoming the associate librarian in charge of reference for a large New York firm."

Spohr was first employed as a librarian for a Dayton-based firm. "I was the only professional librarian on the staff, responsible for managing four library clerks, reference requests, collection development, and budget for all three offices," she says.

The twists and turns of most librarians' careers cannot be mapped in advance, and the careers of these librarians are no exception. None of them planned to work for legal publishers—it just worked out that way. For Hedstrom, the connection was made because she worked for a firm that represented West Publishing. "When West was preparing to move from downtown St. Paul to its current headquarters in Eagan, a member of

the editorial management team asked me for assistance in preparing a job description for a soon-to-be-hired law librarian," she recalls. "Previously there were libraries throughout the departments that were administered by people in each group. With West's first librarian in mind, I very carefully crafted a job description and plan to assess issues connected to the move that emphasized the value of a professional law librarian. To my surprise, they offered me the job, and I accepted!" Hedstrom has been with West since 1991, starting as the law librarian and moving to her current position with the Library Relations Group when it was consolidated in 1998.

Similarly, Porter was contacted by PLI to "get my ideas when PLI was first considering having a librarian liaison," she says. "June McDonald, who was the library community's customer service contact at PLI, had retired a few years before. As part of their 1998 strategic plan, PLI had decided they wanted to reinvent the position, this time with a librarian manager. Perhaps my verbosity during focus group sessions stuck out, because shortly thereafter, PLI called to see if I was interested." Porter was interested and has been the director of library relations ever since.

For Spohr, it was just a matter of needing a change. "I fully expected to move to another law firm librarian position," she says. "I was aware that this would require moving to another city, as I was the only professional law firm librarian in Dayton, Ohio. As it turned out, LexisNexis was looking for an experienced law librarian, and I joined the company at that time. So, I did not actively seek employment with a legal publisher, it just happened that they were looking for someone with my education and experience when I was looking for a new job."

Spohr has been with LexisNexis since 1985. "My first position was to manage hard copy resources that were received in print form that were then converted to an electronic format to be placed online," she says. "Much like the first professional librarian joining any organization, I needed to organize material, determine where materials were received in order to centralize both receipt and payments, establish tracking methods, etc. From this position I moved to online product development focusing on special libraries. Then I held two different positions that worked closely with technical development for the online services. In 1993 I became one of the founding members of the Librarian Relations Group (LRG). I've held a variety of positions within the LRG and remain with this group today."

Lempert's approach has been completely different, as he was already working for BNA when he decided to work on his library degree. During his tenure at BNA, Lempert has been managing editor to several reference services and has been active in building and launching new products. "Larry's role in product research and planning involves interviewing customers either to establish information needs or to get reactions to prototypes of new services or approaches," Hedges says. "Examples include: (1) interviewing a law firm librarian when the firm asked if and how we could create feeds of BNA headlines to several dozen practice group pages; and (2) getting HR professionals' feedback on a taxonomy-based navigation system for our HR library. The MLS program helps him with customer-related work, because the degree is very focused on user needs—identifying

them and then selecting and presenting information in light of those needs.”

### **Today**

And now that they have worked their way up the professional ladder, what do these librarians do today? In her role as manager of librarian relations, Hedstrom is “responsible for strengthening our relationships with our law librarian customers by providing services specifically tailored to them,” she says. “West understands that our products and services are used differently by librarians than by attorneys, faculty members, or law students. My contributions include supporting the AALL and SLA annual meetings and chapter and SIS activities, offering the Westlaw in Library Schools and West Excellence in Law Librarianship Scholarship programs, and working with our advisory boards. I serve as a resource for West product developers, customer service, and other departments seeking to understand the challenges and issues important to law librarians and am available to assist librarians with feedback they’d like to share with West. I also manage several of our newsletters and other vehicles for communication with law librarians.”

West requires that the manager of librarian relations hold a library degree. “It is essential,” Hedstrom says, “to have education and experiences in common with law librarians so we can better understand their needs.”

While working on his degree, Lempert continues to work as BNA’s director of product research and planning in its product development department. His experience and education are complementing each other on a daily basis because his degree has a concentration in information architecture. “One experience he had with ‘information architecture,’ which occurred before the term had actually evolved into widespread use, was in the mid- and late-90s, designing a finding aid that organized the subject of Medicare hierarchically with hypertext links to a variety of document types,” Hedges says. “This experience taught him what a challenge it is to organize information in ways that the user will perceive as intuitive and simple, even when the material is highly complex.”

While a library degree is not required in his current position, Hedges views Lempert as “reflective of a new breed of vendor/publishers librarians who will join our ranks,” she says. “The experience that new librarians like Larry bring to our profession will certainly expand our traditional horizons.”

While Porter’s title has not changed in her years at PLI, her responsibilities have. “At this time, library relations oversees PLI’s treatise Standing Order Plan, Course Handbook Series subscriptions, and Library Contract program,” she says. “This is in addition to our original mandate to facilitate relations between the library community and PLI through outreach, education, and account assistance. I work directly with our library customers on a number of levels, though the department’s library account specialists, Nickola Francis and Josephine Vega, handle day-to-day customer service issues. This allows me to spend more face-to-face time with librarians (I travel a lot!) and to present librarians’ issues more effectively to other PLI divisions.”

Porter notes that PLI “requires the director of library relations to have a library degree, as well as substantial experience in the field. Experience obviously gives the person much better insight and enables him/her to help align PLI’s products and services with librarians’ needs and requirements.”

In her position as the senior director of the LexisNexis Librarian Relations Group, Spohr is “responsible for successfully managing the relationships between LexisNexis and our law librarian customers,” she says. “In order to accomplish this goal, I manage 14 librarian relations consultants who work with our law librarian customers on a daily basis, providing product training and specialized support. I also manage the marketing aspects of the Librarian Relations Group, including newsletters, advertising, and our Web site ([www.lexisnexis.com/infopro](http://www.lexisnexis.com/infopro)); working with associations as well as their tradeshow; and managing our professional education conferences.”

LexisNexis requires that the person in Spohr’s position hold a library degree, “as well as experience working in a library,” she says. “In addition, the librarian relations consultants are required to have a library degree and experience as well.”

### **Customer Contact, Professional Participation, and Colleague Reaction**

I was pleased to learn that all of these librarians work with their customers on a daily basis. And it is when working with customers that their degrees and their library experience become most apparent. “I believe that having both a library degree as well as experience in working in a law library is of great benefit to my direct work with customers,” Spohr says. “This provides me with a better understanding of the issues our librarian customers are facing. Because of this education and experience, I share a common language and a common understanding of the world of library science with my customers.”

Hedstrom agrees. “I work with customers everyday,” she says. “Whether they are library school students, practicing law librarians, or others within our profession, my degree enables me to grasp the subtleties of their requests or concerns in a way I could not do without that background. Having used West products in my firms, I am able to communicate better with those who develop new features or services here at West.”

Being more involved with the technology side of publishing than the others we surveyed, Lempert is active in the American Society for Information Science and Technology, especially through ASIST’s Information Architecture Special Interest Groups. The others are all active members of AALL and other professional library associations. Hedstrom is good example. She is a former president of the Minnesota Association of Law Libraries and has a long history of working on AALL committees and task forces. “In order to properly support the organization, it is essential to participate and work with other law librarians for the benefit of our profession,” she says.

I asked each of these librarians what sort of reaction they got when they told other librarians that they worked for a publisher. I expected them to list a litany of misconceptions about working for a publisher, but I was happy to learn that all of the respondents have only received support and respect from other

librarians. "The librarians I've spoken with are very positive," Porter says. "I'm sure that over the years they've seen what people in these roles can do to benefit the library community. There seems to be a less adversarial relationship between librarians and vendors, and much of that has to do with these new positions at the vendors."

### **Crossing Over**

I concluded by asking the librarians if they would recommend librarianship to other colleagues in the publishing field. They all said they would, and in fact many of them have recommended it to their cohorts. As to whether they would recommend that a librarian consider working for a legal publisher, the answer is an unequivocal, "Yes."

Kamla Hedges and Larry Lempert of BNA: "Larry and I would both encourage a law librarian considering employment with a legal vendor/publisher to go for it! It's a challenging alternative career path. While many of us assume that the jobs all fall into a traditional area, such as library relations or the corporate library, librarians should not overlook how their skills can be used throughout a publishing company. Librarians can add a great deal to publishers' understanding of the way customers use information—that makes librarians influential players in legal publishing today."

Lori Hedstrom of West: "Working for a legal publisher allows a librarian to use his or her education and experience in a very different way than what is required in a library setting. The organization benefits greatly from having employees who have been customers and who see trends, training, and education issues and technology utilization through the lens of the end user."

Jill Porter of PLI: "My suggestion to law librarians looking for a career with a vendor would be to gain as much experience in your organization as possible. Try to work in both reference and tech services—it's amazing how much both contribute to your overall understanding. It's also important to have some understanding of business and finance."

Cindy Spohr of LexisNexis: "Legal publishing offers a lot of great opportunities! Working for a legal publisher has brought me wonderful opportunities by allowing me to remain in the legal information field while at the same time working for a large corporation that has allowed me to expand my skills in relationship building, leadership, innovation, and finance."

### **The Future**

Based on this small survey, the outlook for librarians working in legal publishing looks bright. Hedstrom notes that her company "employs many people with library degrees to work in many different departments. As an information provider West knows that holders of the MLS degree have a detailed understanding of the organization and management of information, and those skills are crucial here."

Porter agrees. "I believe that legal information vendors will continue to hire librarians in the future," she says. "Librarian relations specialists at the different vendors have all made strides in improving the dialogue between the library community and the vendor. This, in turn, ultimately improves the vendors' bottom line. It would be against their best interest to phase out these programs."

Spohr notes, "Librarians bring a great skill set to legal publishing. In addition to the Librarian Relations Group, LexisNexis currently employs librarians in product development, editorial areas, customer support, and sales, and I expect this to continue."

So there you have it. There is life for a law librarian outside the traditional walls of a law library. And like those of us who work within those walls, librarians who work for publishers face many of the same challenges and goals. The world *is* smaller than we think, and all of us share much more in common than not. Who knows, if the trend continues, maybe AALL will, as Porter suggests, have to start a new SIS. How does PUBLI-SIS (Publisher Librarians Special Interest Section) sound?

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## **Notes of Interest**

### **2004 Online Law Review Directory Available**

The 2004 edition of the *Directory of Law Reviews*, compiled by Michael Hoffheimer of the University of Mississippi Law School, is now available online. The *Directory*, previously known as *Anderson's Directory of Law Reviews*, is now published by LexisNexis. The publication lists address information for law reviews produced in the United States. The *Directory* is arranged by the following headings: General Student-Edited Journals, Special Focus Student-Edited Law Journals, and Non-Student-Edited Peer Review and Trade Journals. The *Directory* also includes a list of selected university presses, a bibliography of articles about law reviews and scholarly legal publishing, and a title index. The online version of the publication can be found at [www.lexisnexis.com/lawschool/faculty](http://www.lexisnexis.com/lawschool/faculty).

### **PILP 2d Now Searchable**

The Association's *Price Index for Legal Publications*, 2d is now searchable. Found on the Members Only Section of AALLNET, the *Index* can now be queried by publisher, subject, category, and state. The *Index* contains pricing data for more than 900 legal titles and currently contains data for the years 1998-2002, with 2003 data due to be loaded in the near future.

### **JSTOR Adding Law Titles**

JSTOR, the not-for-profit online collection of scholarly journals ([www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org)), has announced that it will release a new collection of journals in 2004. Included in the new *Arts & Sciences IV Collection* will be a number of law-related titles. Details about the new collection, along with a list of initial titles to be included, can be found at [www.jstor.org/about/asiv-ascomp\\_release.html](http://www.jstor.org/about/asiv-ascomp_release.html).

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## Some Thoughts on Publisher Web Sites

Whether it is from our directors, deans, or the ABA survey, librarians are often asked to provide detailed descriptions of their collections. What we are buying, how much are we paying for it, how costs are rising or falling, how we manage updates and subscriptions, and are we getting what we are supposed to be getting? The queries are constant and, just as often, inconsistent.

Libraries with an Integrated Library System (ILS) can use the system to gather a great deal of this information. Now, however, we may also use publishers' Web sites to pull such information directly from their end. This is a boon to both our libraries and for the publishers/vendors. For us, more useful information is always helpful, as long as that information is well organized or available to us in a format we can manipulate. For publishers/vendors, being able to deliver frequently requested information over the Web saves time and money. But what types of information are we interested in? Generally the information provided by vendors falls into two categories: information about the publications they provide, and information about the accounts we have with them.

Information about the purchase and ongoing maintenance of legal publications is now a staple of the Web. Having a sales catalog available to users over the Web has become a ubiquitous marketing tool. Rarely do I pull out a print catalog these days. The bulk of my searching for prices, content, currency, etc., is done via the publisher's Web site or through a seller such as Amazon.com. Only when this fails do I go digging through my print catalog collection.

The most useful sites are those that have taken the Web-based catalog beyond a simple hypertext version of its print counterpart. These catalogs are designed to sell products, of course, but also allow consumers to build relationships with the publications and ensure longer-term satisfaction with the products. For instance, some publisher/vendor sites now link information about their publications' maintenance and upkeep. Filing instructions for loose-leaves, release dates for supplements and upcoming editions, editorial information, shipping dates for new volumes, and the ability to order replacement pages from the catalog are innovations we have come to take for granted. Thomson/West has posted filing instructions on its Web catalog for some titles going as far back as 1998. These release notes can be a great source of information about a publication's update cycle and extremely helpful in tracing filing errors. Borrowing a page from Amazon, it would be helpful to some in supplying sample pages for a person looking to purchase items, related titles, etc.

The more innovative publishers have applied these business e-commerce approaches to the claiming and maintenance process as well. In addition to using the term "building a

relationship with the product" to sell it, publishers should also consider working with librarians on building systems to help maintain our accounts. The harder that business relationship becomes, the less likely we are to want to continue it.

A second category of data available from publisher or vendor Web sites is information about accounts. While those libraries with ILS can often pull subscription reports from their catalogs, those that lack ILS, or lack one with reporting capabilities, are at a disadvantage. Customer account Web sites that provide data on subscriptions are a great help. Subscription summary reports that we can run, download, and import into a spreadsheet or database are very helpful in gathering information about the collection. Ebsco provides this feature on its Web site EBSCONET. West and LexisNexis offer similar "your account" features that provide information regarding invoices, shipping lists, and dates. While there can be no universal scheme that will satisfy the reporting needs of all our libraries, being able to grab the information and put it into a spreadsheet or database is a good first step and a feature that vendors should continue to expand upon.

When we need information about our accounts, we are typically reacting to a request from a director, partner, etc. The more information a publisher can provide us in a canned format that we can download and manipulate, the better we are at responding to those requests. We look better to the deans and directors, and the vendor looks much more helpful to us as a partner in the process. It is in this area that the e-commerce principles can come into play the strongest. In helping us manage our accounts and giving us the ability to retrieve and manipulate information about our transactions, we not only help ourselves, but also help the publisher by allowing them to devote resources to resolving more complicated issues.

At present we have the ability to access information about our account and the publications we have and wish to purchase. What about the future? Being able to go beyond Electronic Data Interchange for payments, to being able to link our systems together would be an interesting path to research. Myriad systems on multiple platforms make attempts at delivering information a tricky proposition, but standardizing the format in which information can be delivered would be a big first step. Once this hurdle is met, direct interaction between an ILS and the vendor on levels beyond claiming and invoicing will be possible.

In the end, however, no matter how wonderful the Web site, it is the personal relationship between the vendor and the library that makes or breaks the transaction. The Web site, like the print catalogs that came before it, only supplements the working relationship between people—it does not replace it. Wise publishers recognize this and build upon it.