

LISP NEWSLETTER

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In this Issue:

From the Chair: Incoming Officers for 2004

From the Editor: New Editor Needed

Article: The Inside Information on New Jail Kiosk, by Amy Hale-Janeke
AALL Annual Meeting

From the Chair: Incoming Officers for 2004

The results of the recent election for the LISP SIS are:

Vice Chair/Chair-Elect- Sara Galligan-

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Amy Hale-Janeke, Chair
LISP Special Interest Section

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From the Editor: New Editor Needed

This is my last issue as the LISP newsletter editor. If you're interested in editing the newsletter, please let Marie Erickson know. Marie's email address is merickso@lasc.org.

Debby Norwood
Editor

Article: The "Inside" Information on New Jail Kiosks

by Amy Hale-Janeke, J.D., M.L.S.

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It seems that prison and jail law libraries have finally entered the electronic age (some of them anyway). Several county jails in California and Hawaii have completely discarded their legal print collections in favor of touch screen kiosks containing computer loaded with state and federal codes and cases, legal dictionaries, and guides to criminal defense.

Lexis teamed up with Touch Sonic Technologies (www.touchsonic.com), a California based computer and software design company, and developed wall-mounted kiosks that use touch screens to find and access legal information. The kiosks are made of shatterproof glass and no mouse or external keyboards are used. According to Touch Sonic, these kiosks are specifically constructed for a prison's tough environment and can withstand daily abuse. In fact, Touch Sonic said they tested the endurance of the kiosks with crowbars and all the kiosks withstood the abuse, according to an article by Peter Boylan in the March 16th edition of the Honolulu Advertiser (<http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2004/Mar/16/ln/ln28a.html>).

Boylan's article said the cost of the kiosks was \$20,000 for Hawaii and \$94,000 for California. I am not sure why there is such a discrepancy in the pricing. Perhaps Hawaii requires less access to materials than California and therefore chose a lower priced plan?

The wall-mounted kiosks will certainly help save money on hardware, according to San Diego County Jail Counselor Julie Hardardt. I previously interviewed Julie about the accessibility of legal materials at her facility and have been to her library facility several times. When I talked with her about electronic access to legal materials, she pointed out that one problem of maintaining access via technology is that as inmates vandalize the hardware of traditional computers, including mice and keyboards. I wondered aloud why inmates who need access to legal materials would vandalize their own equipment. She replied, "It's not the ones who are really using the equipment for legal research who tear up the equipment. It's those who only want pro per status so they can get out of their cells who end up tearing up the equipment."

Once I found out that eight of the kiosks were located in California, I set out to see if I could ferret out some additional information not included in the traditional press releases. I found that all eight units are all within Riverside County. Three of the kiosks are in the

Robert Presley Detention Center (RPDC), and the others are located in the Blythe Jail, Indio Jail, Southwest County Jail, and Larry D. Smith Correctional Facility.

I called RPDC to see if I could get more information about how the kiosks work and how they are used. I spoke with Corporal Segovia at RPDC. She was very helpful, especially when I told her that I wanted to find out as many specifics as I could so that I can share the information with other county law librarians.

Segovia said there are three kiosks in the RCDC and only about 10 inmates are representing themselves, so there isn't a lot of conflict over accessibility at this time. However, inmates have to sign up to use the kiosks and those who are representing themselves have priority access.

Two kiosks are located on different floors of the RPDC, each in an isolated room, according to Segovia. Additionally, the rooms are accessible only at certain hours. Only one person at a time is allowed in the room, and they are locked in by themselves. The inmates are removed from the room at mealtimes but are usually allowed to go back into rooms afterwards. An inmate is allowed to use a kiosk for up to four hours a day.

The third kiosk is located in the administrative segregation floor where dangerous or high risk inmates are housed. These inmates are known as "greens" due to their distinctive prison attire which shows their risk status. "Greens" are allowed to use this kiosk. This allows greens access to legal information without taking up excess manpower because in order to go to any other floor, greens have to be fully shackled (both feet and hands) and two deputies must escort them to and from the location. By having a kiosk available on the administrative segregation floor, the greens can use the room easily and do not have to be shackled and escorted to a different floor.

Segovia said the kiosks do not allow inmates to save information on them, and no printing is allowed. In addition, inmates may not save information on disks as disks have the potential to be used as weapons. I was told that metal parts of the disks can be turned into shivs- boy, the things you learn from those who work in jails! Inmates do have access to a typewriter if they want to make notes. Inmates use their booking numbers as their password.

As far as the scope of legal information available on the kiosks, Corporal Segovia said, "Inmates have access to all California state codes and cases, including title 15 and parts of title 24 which deal with housing issues for inmates. All federal cases and codes are part of the package, including all Supreme Court decisions. Shepards and Witkin is included too." I wondered if the California portion included periodicals or newspaper access, but they do not. Additionally, the kiosks do not have a live internet connection. Instead, Lexis representatives come to the facilities every 90 days and update the system

Until about three or four years ago, the RCDC had solely print material, according to Segovia. Then about two years ago the jail purchased Law Desk from West, but they kept the print materials too so that inmates could get used to using the electronic materials

gradually. When the jail was ready to switch over to completely electronic access, they solicited bids from West and LexisNexis. They chose to go with LexisNexis.

Although these kiosks now allow prisoners to perform legal research, no instruction on how to use the system or how to do legal research is available. Perhaps this system is so easy to use that explaining the legal system and legal research isn't necessary (insert big belly laugh here). If it turns out that the kiosks are cost effective, saving staff time (which translates into money), perhaps other counties and states will adopt them. I will keep you posted as I know more info...

Foreign, Comparative and International Law Special Interest Section

Do you teach an advanced legal research course that focuses on foreign, comparative or international law?

The Foreign, Comparative and International Law Special Interest Section is re-designing its' webpage and updating our course materials currently accessible at:

<http://brkl.brooklaw.edu/screens/fcilsis.html> We welcome new submissions of all types of course materials including syllabi, reading lists, PowerPoint slides, handouts, bibliographies, assignments, final exams and final projects.

Materials in HTML and non-HTML formats are welcome - the SIS will facilitate conversion to PDF or HTML formats and will host the materials if necessary.

If you know of others who teach ALR-FCIL please encourage them to submit materials.

Please contact Lee Peoples at lpeoples@okcu.edu if you are willing to share your materials.