Foreign & Comparative Legal Research Guide

Foreign and comparative legal research involves researching on foreign countries' domestic laws and legal principles. The challenges lie in many aspects: different legal traditions, the lack of efficient legal information systems or the lack of access to certain fee-based databases from that jurisdiction, language barriers, etc. This guide is prepared to help researchers with foreign and comparative legal research by accessing resources available to Osgoode Hall Law School Library patrons.

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General Reference tools:

Use general reference tools to start. Some of the following titles give information on how to do comparative legal research and foreign research. Some provides general introduction to legal systems of specific countries.

Reynolds, Thomas H. *Foreign Law: current sources of codes and basic legislation in jurisdictions of the world* (Littleton, CO : F.B. Rothman, 1989-), Library Call Number: K 38 R49 1989 (Law-Ref)

International Encyclopedia of Comparative Law (Tubingen, J. C. B Mohr (Paul Siebeck); New York, Oceana, 1973-), Library Call Number: K530 I62 (Law-Ref)

De Cruz, Peter. *A Modern Approach to Comparative Law* (Deventer; Boston: Kluwer, 1993). Library call number: K 559 D42 1993

Reimann, Mathias & Zimmermann, Reinhard eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), Library Call Number: K 48 O94 2006 (Law-Ref)

Örücü, Esin & Nelken, David. *Comparative law: a handbook* (Oxford; Portland, Or.: Hart, 2007), Library call number: K 561 C625 2007

Kritzer, Herbert M. ed. *Legal Systems of the World: a political, social, and culturasl encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2002), Library Call Number: K 48 L44 2002:

Modern Legal Systems Cyclopedia (Buffalo, N.Y., U.S.A.: W.S. Hein, 1984-) Library Call Number: K530 M62 (Law-Ref).

Menski, Werner, *Comparative Law in a Global Context: the legal systems of Asia and Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Library Call Number: K 559 M46 2006.

The World Factbook of Criminal Justice Systems: provided by the U.S. Department of Justice, this source includes reports from countries worldwide on their criminal justice system.

Country Background Information:

If one is not familiar with the country, it may help to get the basic information about the country profile before starting legal research. Such information includes information on a country's economies, political system, government, legal history, etc. Here are some suggested sources for this purpose:

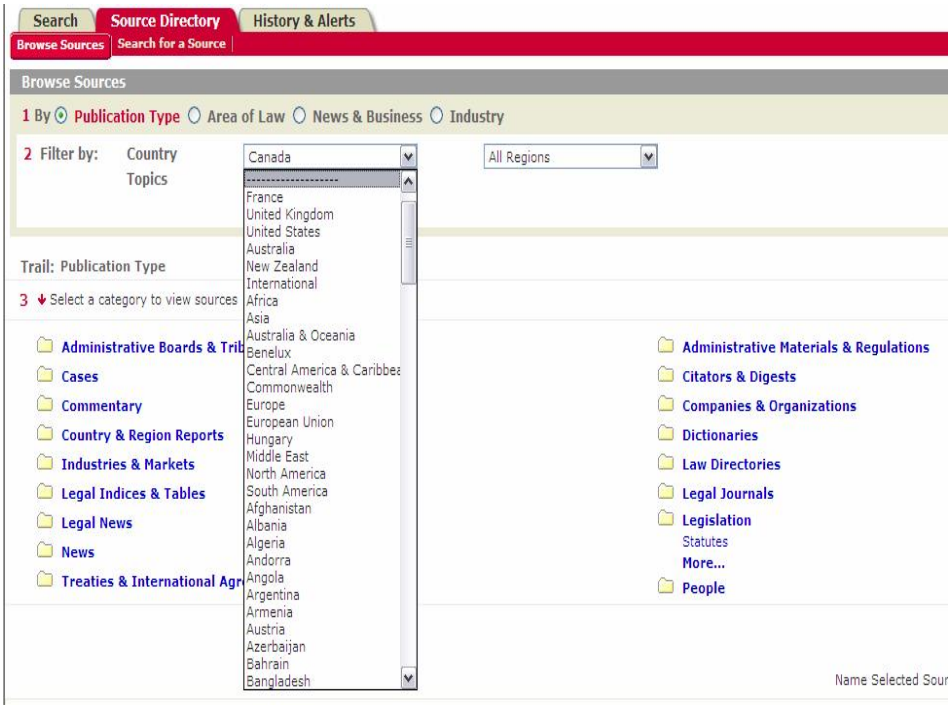
The World Factbook: provides brief background information on countries.

Library of Congress Country Studies: provides a series of profiles of foreign nations. Information provided includes a country's historical background, geography, society, economy, transportation and telecommunications, government and politics, and national security.

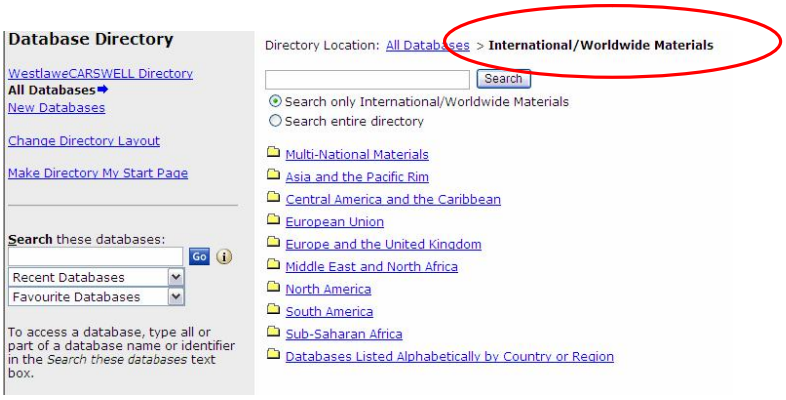
Governments on the WWW: most of the countries have official website of their own, where all types of information may be found, such as an introduction to a country's legal and political systems. This source provides list of governmental official sites.

Primary Sources:

A. LexisNexis Quicklaw: in Source Directory, filter by country gives the choice of searching for legal information from specific countries:



B. Westlaw*e*Carswell: check "all database directory", under "International/ Worldwide Materials", there are many foreign law databases listed by regions.



C. The LIIs: *Legal Information Institutes* are initiatives to bring legal information accessible to the public through Internet. On the LII sites, both primary and secondary sources are listed with some annotations. One can search sources by either jurisdictions or subjects. Most of the listed sources are free web sites. The current LII sites, in addition to CanLII, include the following:

WorldLII: World Legal Information Institute
AsianLII: Asian Legal Information Institute
AustLII: Australasian Legal Information Institute
BAILII: British and Irish Legal Information Institute

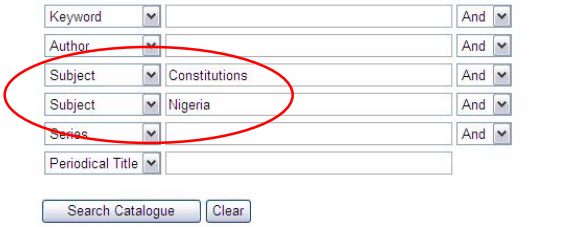
CommonLII: Commonwealth Legal Information Institute
Cornell LII: Cornell Law School Legal Information Institute (covering the United States)
CYLAW: the Cyprus Source of Legal Information, not all contents are available in English.
Droit Francophone: Legal Information Institute for French speaking countries
HKLII: Hong Kong Legal Information Institute
NZLII: New Zealand Legal Information Institute
PacLII: Pacific Islands Legal Information Institute
SAFLII: Southern African Legal Information Institute
ZamLII: the Zambia Legal Information Institute

D. Global Legal Information Network (GLIN): A public database of official texts of laws, regulations, judicial decisions, and other complementary legal sources submitted to the Library of Congress by member countries in their original official language accompanied by a summary in English and subject terms selected from the multilingual index.

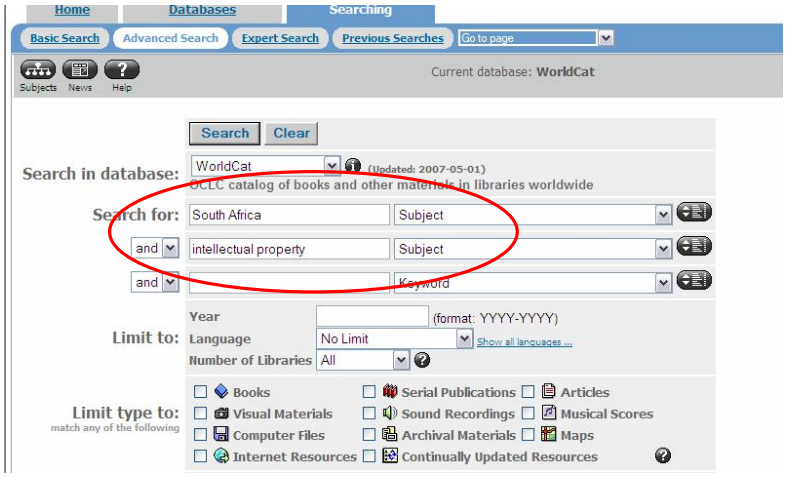
Secondary Sources:

Books:

Although Osgoode Hall Law Library primarily collects Canadian legal materials, it also has a significant amount of materials on foreign legal subjects. Generally, to search for books on a legal topic from another jurisdiction, use the country name as a keyword in the Subject field combined with the keyword for the topic, for example, search in York Libraries Catalogue:



Search in WorldCat (for books not available at York Libraries, please use RACER to place an ILL request):



Articles:

Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals (1985-present): indexes legal literature worldwide in multi-languages. The types of documents covered include journal articles, congress reports, essay collections, yearbooks, and book reviews.

Index to Legal Periodicals (1981-): indexes a selected list of over 1000 legal periodicals published in the United States, Great Britain, Canada and Australia, with some full-text available. Also available in print (1928-1994), Library Call Number: KF 8 I53 (Law-INDEX).

LegalTrac (1980-present): indexes law journals *published* in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand.

AGIS Plus text (1975-): an index to Australian and New Zealand, and also some UK, Canadian and US legal articles with some fulltext articles.

Foreign & International Law Resources Database: available through Heinonline, includes the full-text of a comprehensive collection of periodical publications on the subject of foreign and international law.

Current Awareness:

Global Legal Monitor (GLM): a monthly electronic publication of the Law Library of Congress, providing brief description of legal developments from around the world. Contents are organized by legal topics.

Citation of Foreign Materials:

Canadian Uniform Guide to Legal Citation (Toronto: Thomson Carswell, c2006), Library Call Number: KF245 C34 2006 (Law-RESV and Law-Ref): has instructions on citing primary sources from the United Kingdom, the United States, France, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, and South Africa.

The Blue Book: a uniform system of citation (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Law Review Association, c1991-), Library Call Number: KF 245 H3 (latest edition available at Law-RESV): has a chapter on citing foreign materials. No specific jurisdiction is mentioned. Instructions are general and cover both primary and secondary materials' citation.

Washington University Global Law Studies Law Review International Citation Manual: provides general information on citing foreign and international legal materials as well as specific citation information from more than 35 countries.

Other Foreign Law Research Guides:

GlobaLex from NYU Law Library Research Guides series
LLRX Foreign & Comparative Law Guide series
Duke Law Library Foreign & Comparative Law Guide
NYU Law Library Foreign Databases Collections
Finding Foreign Law Online When Going Global
Foreign Law: subject law collections on the web

Created by *Sharon Wang* on May 1, 2007
Last updated on January 29, 2008
Osgoode Hall Law School Library