Reflections on Tackling a Book Project in Stride: Musings on a Successful Co-Authorship

Heidi Frostestad Kuehl

Although the timeline for a book project may seem daunting at the outset, it can be one of the most rewarding projects of a law librarian’s career. My co-author, Megan O’Brien, and I fearlessly embarked on this journey to co-author a new book on International Legal Research after Carolina Academic Press agreed to publish the proposal a few years ago. The keys to writing a book and completing a quality product are similar to constructing a new course and outlining the components: prior knowledge, experience in the field, consultation with other peers, multiple reviews of drafts, a bit of tenacity combined with levity when you are getting fatigued, passion for the area of law, and the support of your law school administration and colleagues.

Megan and I embarked on the CAP book collaboration during the late summer of 2014 when I was beginning a new job, and we’re so thankful for the opportunities that we’ve had to reflect on our teaching process and joined experiences while crafting a unique approach to the international legal research literature. This month, we’re also continuing our work and drafting as we are completing the teacher’s manual for the text. Working on this large project while juggling other duties has taught us some of the key components for any type of writing project: 1) clear deadlines for accountability; 2) multiple reviews of drafts; and 3) the value of writing groups, peer review, and editorial review. Finally, of course, choose the right talented co-author to collaborate with (which I already had from the outset…

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From the Chair

Alex Zhang

Time flies when you are having fun. I can’t believe that it is already May 2018 and we are officially two months away from the annual conference in Baltimore! It has been the busiest year ever for me since I started working as a law librarian almost ten years ago. It has also been one of the most fruitful years for me, for my dear colleagues in the leadership team of FCIL-SIS, and hopefully also for everyone in the FCIL-SIS community! Words cannot describe how grateful I am to the members of Executive Committee, Catherine Deane, Sabrina Sondhi, and Alison Shea for their constant contribution of time, energy, and brain power. Special thanks go to Alison Shea and Lucie Olejnikova for their extremely helpful advice and suggestions throughout the year. Their institutional memories, and eagerness and willingness to share information with me without reservations, are eternally appreciated! The transition to the new platform for the FCIL-SIS online community would not have been as smooth without Lucie Olejnikova, our website master! Needless to say, you probably won’t be able to see this message from me without the impeccable work done by Melissa Abernathy, our newsletter editor and Carmen Valero, our copy editor!

I also wanted to express my gratitude to all SIS special interest groups and standing committees members and chairs for their excellent contributions. Many thanks to Alyson Drake and Susan Gualtieri, Co-Chairs of the Publicity Committee, for making a series of informative, thought-provoking and fun blog posts available to us. Sincere thanks to Sherry Chen, Chair of the Electronic Research Interest Group, and her team for writing and publishing thoughtful reviews of FCIL-related electronic resources in the Newsletter. The FCIL-SIS Latin American Special Interest Group published yet another critical and gap-filling legal research guide, Guide to Cuban Law and Legal Research (eds. Julienne E. Grant, Marisol Florén-Romero, and Sergio D. Stone). Great gratitude expressed to Mark Engsberg, Chair of the FCIL Schaffer Grant for Foreign Law Librarians Selection Committee, and his team for making such an impressive selection and for introducing us to Ms. Daniela Majorie Akama dos Reis, the very first Brazilian FCIL Schaffer Grant recipient! Last but not least, many thanks to Paul Moorman, Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee, and his team for working diligently on drafting a realistic, meaningful and ambitious strategic plan for us! Stay tuned for more information about our strategic plan.

What I can describe here is just the tip of the iceberg. If you would like to learn about many other accomplishments our SISIGs and Standing Committees have made throughout the year, please join us at our Business Meeting on Monday, July 16 from 7:30 am to 8:45 am in Hilton Holiday Ballroom 1.

MEMBER NEWS

If you are interested in knowing more about our experienced FCIL librarians, Sherry Chen, Joan Policastri, and Anne Burnett, check out our DipLawMatic Dialogues!

James Hart, Senior Reference Librarian of the University of Cincinnati College of Law and a long-term FCIL librarian and FCIL-SIS member, will be retiring in July 2018. Jim is well known for his knowledge, expertise, resourcefulness, and passion for legal research and open access to legal information. Jim has served in multiple FCIL-SIS leadership positions, including most recently serving as chair of the FCIL-SIS Electronic Resource Interest Group (2015-2017) and as a member of the FCIL-SIS Strategic Planning Committee (2014-2017). He received the Spirit of FCIL-SIS award in 2014 for his service, contribution, and positive influence on the FCIL-SIS community. I personally have had the privilege to work closely with Jim on different projects in the last couple of years. He is a great mentor and a definitive source of inspiration and motivation for me. Congrats, Jim! Stay in touch!!

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AALL 2018
The AALL 2018 annual meeting is fast approaching! The FCIL-SIS once again has an impressive lineup of programming and meetings waiting for you in Baltimore. The entire list is available at the AALL’s official website. To highlight a few:

Sunday, July 15
- FCIL-SIS E-Resources Interest Group Meeting (7:30 am to 8:45 am, Hilton Poe B)
- Jewish Law “Lunch and Learn” (12:45 pm to 2:15 pm, Hilton Key Ballroom 11)
- FCIL-SIS Jurisdictions Interest Group Joint Meeting (1:00 pm to 2:15 pm, Hilton Pickersgill)
- FCIL-SIS Foreign Selectors Interest Group Meeting (5:15 pm to 6:15 pm, Hilton Paca)
- FCIL-SIS Standing Committees Joint Meeting (6:15 pm to 6:45 pm, Hilton Marshall Board Room)

Monday, July 16
- FCIL-SIS Business Meeting Breakfast (7:30 am to 8:45 am, Hilton Holiday Ballroom 1)
- Publicizing Faith or Privatizing Law? Researching Religious Arbitration and Private Dispute Settlement (10:00 am to 11:00 am, BCC Room 318-19/321-22)
- FCIL-SIS Teaching Foreign and International Legal Research Interest Group (3:30 pm to 4:30 pm, Hilton Armitstead). Marci Hoffman (co-author of International and Foreign Law Research: A Coursebook and Heidi Kuehl (co-author of International Legal Research in a Global Community) will be discussing their books respectively.
- FCIL-SIS Schaffer Grant for Foreign Law Librarians Recipient Presentation (4:45 pm to 5:45 pm, Hilton Carroll A). 2018 Recipient, Ms. Daniela Majorie Akama dos Reis will be discussing Brazilian Law Librarianship with us!
- International Attendees Joint Reception (AALL/FCIL/IALL) (6:00 pm-7:00 pm, Hilton Holiday Ballroom 1-2)

Tuesday, July 17
- FCIL-SIS Education Committee Meeting (7:00 am to 8:15 am, Hilton Calloway A)
- FCIL Basics for Metadata Professionals: Collaborating to Ensure Access to Foreign and International Legal Materials (10:00 am to 12:30 pm, BCC Room 318-19/321-22)

ELECTION
It is my great pleasure to share with you that Loren Turner was elected as the vice-chair and chair-elect of FCIL-SIS. Loren will start her term as the vice-chair in July 2018. Congratulations to Loren!

Please also note that there will be a vote conducted at the FCIL Business Meeting on Monday, July 16, on Bylaw changes. For members who won’t be able to attend the business meeting in person this year, we will have a proxy vote option available online. Details on the proposed Bylaw changes and voting procedure will be shared through our FCIL-SIS email listserv soon.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!
As always, the Executive Committee is enthusiastically seeking volunteers who would like to get involved in the FCIL-SIS community. Currently, we have one opening to chair the Customary and Religious Law Interest Group “CARLIG” for a two-year term, starting in July 2018. More information about CARLIG’s mission and past activities is available here and here. Please send me a brief statement of interest by email (zxm@law.stanford.edu) by Friday, June 15, 2018, for consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions regarding the position or would like to learn more about how to get involved in the community!

I look forward to seeing you all in Baltimore soon.

European Law IG announcement

Erin Gow
If you’re attending the AALL Annual Meeting in Baltimore this year and are interested in European law and legal resources, please join us at the FCIL-SIS Jurisdictions Interest Group Joint Meeting on Sunday, July 15 at 1pm. We’ll be discussing the future of the group and developing ideas for programming and projects.
Resource Reviews: The Peace Palace Library, The Hague, Netherlands

Part of series of reviews prepared by the Electronic Research Interest Group

Steven C. Perkins

**INTRODUCTION**
The Peace Palace Library, The Hague, Netherlands, was founded through a gift of Andrew Carnegie, and opened in 1913 to support the Permanent Court of Arbitration. Soon it added the Permanent Court of International Justice and The Hague Academy of International Law. It has since added the International Court of Justice (as successor to the Permanent Court of International Justice). Other entities which use the Peace Palace Library are the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, The Hague Conference on Private International Law, the Yugoslavia Tribunal, The Special Tribunal for Lebanon, the Iran-US Claims Tribunal, and the International Criminal Court.

**HOW WELL-KNOWN IS THE SOURCE?**
The Peace Palace Library is extremely well-known among practitioners of international law.

**HOW ACCESSIBLE IS IT?**
The Library is open to students of International Law from educational institutions within and without The Hague. The Library also has a number of online access points on its website and can be used from anywhere in the world with Internet access.

**HOW AUTHORITATIVE IS IT?**
As the official location of the several international law organizations named in the Introduction, its resources are authoritative for those institutions and their particular legal jurisdictions.

**HOW COMPREHENSIVE IS IT, IN TERMS OF ITS CONTENTS?**
Particular strengths of the collection are nearly all publications on international law throughout the world. There is an extensive collection of Research Guides covering these areas: Public International Law; Private International Law; Special Topics; Individuals and Groups; International Organisations and Relations; Economic and Financial Law; Settlement of International Disputes; War, Peace and Security; International Criminal Law; and Other Topics. The Research Guides reflect the Collection Profile. Under “Additional Information” in the catalogue, you can subscribe to weekly alerts in areas of interest.

**HOW EASY-TO-USE (USER-FRIENDLY) IS IT?**
The Peace Palace online catalogue is easy to use and allows one to search the collection of the Peace Palace Library as a simple search or using fields. Items are returned in either chronological order or by relevance or other sort terms of your choice. The return page has a column of either Hints or Filter choices on the left side. This can be hidden if desired. A “more” tab next to the search allows one to do a more extensive search from fields. Another way to get to the extensive search is by clicking on the “Advanced” tab in the area above the search field.

Selecting an item will bring up a page where you can borrow the title, use e-resources, apply for a library card, get more subject information related to your current search, rate, share or tag an item, and under “Additional Information” you can subscribe to weekly alerts. The page also has sections for research guides, topics, or Keywords, as well as a section on “Related items in our collection”.

**HOW USEFUL IS IT IN TERMS OF ITS ABILITY TO ANSWER BOTH COMMON AND RARE (DIFFICULT-TO-FIND) QUESTIONS?**
Not being a database it does not directly answer a question but the website is extremely helpful in the search for an answer.

**HOW CURRENT (UP-TO-DATE) IS IT?**
The Research Guides are very current and the website interface is well designed and uses current best practices. As items are added to the collection they appear in the catalogue.

The Peace Palace Library is a wonderful asset and should not be overlooked by anyone doing research in International Law.
Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals Case Law Database

Part of series of reviews prepared by the Electronic Research Interest Group

Catherine Deane

INTRODUCTION
The MICT Case law database - Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals (available at http://cld.unmict.org/) provides online access to precedent-setting case law (appeal judgements and decisions) from the Appeals Chambers of the:
- International Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR)
- International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY)
- Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals (MICT)

HOW WELL-KNOWN IS THE SOURCE?
Although this database recently got a lot of attention in the legal and law librarian world because of the new interface, it is not as well-known as some other international law resources because it is so specialized in nature. It would be nearly impossible not to come across this database while doing research as it appears in many relevant online research guides. The website might benefit from some search engine optimization to improve findability.

HOW ACCESSIBLE IS IT?
This is a free online resource.

HOW AUTHORITY IS IT?
This is a United Nations database containing authoritative United Nations documents.

HOW COMPREHENSIVE IS IT, IN TERMS OF ITS CONTENTS?
This collection of over 2,300 appeal judgments and decisions covers case law from the date of establishment of each tribunal and was last updated in late 2017. Not all cases are included; the database “does not include confidential decisions and restatements of established case law and does not necessarily contain all notable rulings by the Appeals Chambers.”

HOW EASY-TO-USE (USER-FRIENDLY) IS IT?
This is one of the most user-friendly, free international law databases that I have encountered. In particular, the Notions List provides researchers with a useful tool for finding cases by topic, or to view at a glance which issues come up frequently in international criminal tribunals (mitigating circumstances), as well as helping to identify the needle in the haystack, issues which are only found in one case out of hundreds.

The Notions search box offers predictive text, so that users can guess a potential search term and will be offered a search term in the drop-down menu.

Some databases provide all materials related to a particular case in such a way that the researcher finds it difficult to know whether they are looking at an interlocutory order or a final decision. This database does a good job of making it clear when the researcher is looking at a filing that is not a final decision, and the search interface allows you to filter your results first by a particular case (by party name) and then by the type of filing. I wish that some subscription databases would provide this level of granularity for my searching.

As expected, you can also limit your search by date, tribunal, and you can do a full-text search using key words; however, hold your quotation marks. Many researchers are used to using quotation marks to search for a phrase, but in this case, you can search for a phrase by providing more than one word, but adding quotation marks yields zero results.

Another unique feature of this database is the ability to browse and sort the entire database, or only the results of a key word search, by Notion (subject), Party Name, type of filing, and by specific articles in a tribunal statute or by specific tribunal rules or other instruments.

This is the second citator function that is exhibited in the database. The first is the concept of Notions (which are analogous to Key Number topics on Westlaw); the second is this ability to filter and sort cases based on which statutes or rules are invoked in the case. Since you do not always want to use this function, you can add or remove columns of data in order to focus on what matters. Arguably, the third function is the “show extract”; these extracts are similar to headnotes in that they allow the researcher to see at a glance what the case is about. These citator functions do not add up to the functionality of a robust citator like Shepards or KeyCite, but they still constitute a valuable resource.

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The Basic search results are easier to navigate and manipulate when you are dealing with a large number of cases and you want to see trends, but the Advanced Search is excellent if you need a specific known document.

HOW USEFUL IS IT IN TERMS OF ITS ABILITY TO ANSWER BOTH COMMON AND RARE (DIFFICULT-TO-FIND) QUESTIONS?
Because of the sophistication of the search and citator functions of this database, it is particularly useful for topic based research on International Criminal Tribunals. One can move beyond mere document retrieval and see how the same issues were treated similarly or differently in different cases or in different courts.

HOW CURRENT (UP-TO-DATE) IS IT?
I was unable to discover the exact updating schedule, and as of May 10th, 2018, the most recent decision available in the database is December 19th 2017.

Reflections on Tackling a Book Project in Stride continued from page 1

Megan and I continually strengthened each other’s writing styles and creative visions for the book via candid feedback on chapters). Overall, although we had some stalled time along the way because of competing grading deadlines, other small and large writing projects, and law school commitments that depleted our time and availability to meet in person or virtually, we conquered the process through our organizational efforts, conscientious check-ins and reviews of drafts, and thorough editing of the final manuscript from CAP and integral stages of peer review.

For anyone embarking on a large writing project, I would offer the following writing tips and takeaways:

TIP #1: CREATE A TIMELINE FOR THE PROJECT AND CLEAR DEADLINES

During our first meeting together, Megan and I charted a long-term timeline and outline of the chapters of the book beyond the initial Carolina Academic Press proposal. This proved to be invaluable for our later check-in meetings (either on the phone, in person, or virtually…we took a hybrid approach of meeting in myriad ways throughout the stages of our drafts). We often circled back to our draft timeline when we needed additional incentive to meet deadlines or when we needed to be more flexible and revise the timeline to be more realistic based on job demands. Fortunately, we both strictly kept to our set deadlines to ensure ample time to review drafts and give each other constructive feedback. It also facilitated our editing process because we could see any overlap of material in our assigned chapters and integrate ideas or edit chapters for improvement in the final stages of the book.

TIP #2: REVIEW MULTIPLE DRAFTS

Sharing unfinished drafts or imperfect chapters is an especially painful process for law librarians. We are programmed toward thorough research and writing as a direct result of our education, perfecting Bluebook citations, and carefully crafting sentences; however, it is imperative during large-scale book projects to exchange multiple unfinished drafts. Megan and I acknowledged this process up-front and committed to sharing whatever work we had at various stages without judgment. Accordingly, we could offer timely feedback and let our drafts blossom and expand throughout each stage of the writing timeline. My own personal experience was driven by the demands of tenure deadlines and participation in writing groups, so sharing my drafts was stimulated by review of my work in other settings. This was a growing experience for me because it often felt like my drafts were being torn apart and then carefully re-envisioned and put back together after meaningful feedback, but it is definitely worth the angst and toil to get a better product via multiple rounds and stages of feedback. Some of our reviewers had a background in foreign and international law and some of the readers did not, so it helped inform the drafts toward an audience of scholars, law librarians, and legal practitioners without a background in FCIL research.

TIP #3: WORK WITH A FACULTY OR LAW LIBRARIAN WRITING GROUP (OR BOTH!)

I cannot emphasize enough the value of participating in one or more writing groups to provide comprehensive feedback while working on one, two, or more writing projects. I tend to be working on multiple projects at once (e.g., smaller pieces, large drafts, or long-term law review style articles), so participating in writing groups helps me organize my thoughts, move forward with drafts, get constructive criticism, and then rework articles based on feedback from these groups. I participate in a faculty writing group that meets every week (with rotating presenters) and a law librarian writing group that meets monthly. During a typical term, I am cumulatively presenting in one or both writing groups at least four to five times. This helps keep me on my toes and
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moves forward drafts in a way that I just could not do in a silo in my office. It facilitates accountability, improves my work, and I reap the benefit of multiple readers (inside and outside of my field of expertise) who inform and improve my writing.

TIP #4: BE PREPARED FOR UNKNOWN TWEAKS TO SCHEDULING AND PUBLISHING REQUIREMENTS

As with any writing process, Megan and I found that there were unforeseen events that affected our self-imposed deadlines and, in those situations, it is important to pivot and set more realistic expectations based on new information. We regularly communicated and checked in with our publisher when necessary, and also learned about additional features of books that required extra time (e.g., indexing, prefatory materials, and style of references plus congruence of footnotes when doing a master edit of the text). My advice would be to manage your expectation of the writing and submission process, be patient with yourself and others, communicate regularly and meet in person at intervals to review and talk about drafts (because, often, ideas/critique may be more easily offered in person than over the phone or email), and try to find the humor in the unexpected and grow from the experience. Listen with an open-mind to any feedback from scholars, publishers, peers in the law librarianship community, and keep learning to build your writing repertoire. It’s one of the joys of the experience—learning new things and adapting to the collaborative writing endeavor (which is quite different from solo authorship!).

So, after these tips, I would encourage you this summer to pursue a writing project that you’ve always wanted to do and dive right in after careful planning. It will provide a world of opportunity for professional growth and a tremendously rewarding experience for one’s career that has a natural synergy with improvement of teaching and careful rethinking of course design. Bonne chance! ~ Heidi

FCIL Newsletter

FCIL Newsletter is a publication of the Foreign, Comparative, and International Law Special Interest Section of the American Association of Law Libraries.

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FCIL Newsletter is looking for submissions for our next issue.

ARTICLES
Conference reports, library visits, exhibit descriptions, resource reviews, member news, etc. Open call for authors.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE
October 1, 2018.

QUESTIONS?
Contact Melissa Abernathy.
FCIL-SIS Member Recent Publications Round Up

Our SIS is fortunate to include in its ranks exceptionally talented and enthusiastic writers. With this feature, we are happy to spread the word of their recent publications.

SPECTRUM


BOOK


BLOG POSTS

RIPS Law Librarian Blog

- Lora Johns, Not Just Winter Blues: Can the Library Help Improve Law Student Mental Health?
- Lora Johns, How Do We Engage with Ideas that Make Us Uncomfortable?
- Lora Johns, Leadership and Charisma for the Female Librarian

SLAW

- Lyonette Louis-Jacques: So You Want to Be a Foreign Law Librarian
- Lyonette Louis-Jacques: The INT-LAW Email Discussion List Migrates to Google Groups
- Lyonette Louis-Jacques: New Developments in International Legal Information Resources

DipLawMatic Dialogues

- Charles Bjork & Mike McArthur, Getting to Know the IFLP, Part II: Breadth & Scope of the Index
- Charles Bjork, ASIL 2018 Recap: 2018 Annual Grotius Lecture
- Catherine Deane, Transition to Law Firm From Academia
- Yemisi Dina, Regional Integration among African Nations — The Birth of AfCFTA
- Alyson Drake, 7 Things I Wish I Knew Before I Started Teaching Legal Research
- Alyson Drake, Using the “A” Word in Legal Research Instruction
- Gabriela Femenia, ASIL 2018 Recap: Legal Education and Professional Training in the Culture(s) of International Law
- Amy Flick, ASIL 2018 Recap: Building Victim-Led Coalitions in the Pursuit of Accountability
- Julienne Grant, MHz & Me: How a Crime-Solving Priest Saved My Italian
- Marci Hoffman, Getting to Know the Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals
- Caitlin Hunter, ASIL 2018 Recap: Rule-Making By International Organizations
- Lora Johns, From the Reference Desk: When Librarians Google
- Lora Johns, From the Reference Desk: Research in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights
- Lora Johns, From the Reference Desk: “Can You Strip Mine An Asteroid?”
- Mariana Newman, ASIL 2018 Recap: The Use of Force Against Non-State Actors
- Katherine Orth, The Long and Winding Road to Using Reading Knowledge in French and Spanish in the Service of FCIL Research: Speed Bumps and Detours
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- Carlos Andrés Pagán, *The Organization of American States: Brief Comments on Occasion of Its 70th Anniversary*
- Jessica Pierucci, *New FCIL Librarian Series: ASIL Annual Meeting*
- Jessica Pierucci, *ASIL 2018 Recap: International Law as a Tool in the Fight Against IUU Fishing and Seafood Slavery*
- Jessica Pierucci, *New FCIL Librarian Series: Collection Development in 2018*
- Marylin Raisch, *Teaching Religious Law Research as Part of Comparative Law: Focus on Jewish Law*
- Beau Steenken, *Teaching FCIL Research Series: Textual Selection*
- Beau Steenken, *Teaching FCIL Research Series: Fun with FCIL Assignments*

Newsletter Articles

ALL-SIS Newsletter

- Amelia Landenberger, *New Library Week Toolkit for Outreach: Seeking Your Ideas*
- Benjamin J. Keele, *Why Must a Copyrighted Work Be Fixed?*
- Benjamin J. Keele, *What Is a Tangible Medium*
- Kim Nayyer, *Experiential Legal Research Learning at UVic Law Library*

Government Documents SIS Newsletter – JURISDOCS

- Edward T. Hart, *IALL: 36th Annual Course on International Law and Legal Information*

TS-SIS Newsletter – Technical Service Law Librarian

- Luz Verguizas, *A Multi-Part ILS or Management Sys...

Book Reviews

International Journal of Legal Information


Law Library Journal


Member Publications

Have you recently published an article or blog post? We would love to highlight it in our Recent Member Publications.

Send your information to Jingwei Zhang for the next issue.