

Murray, Michael D. and Christy Hallam DeSanctis (2009). *Legal Research Methods*. New York: Foundation Press, Thomson Reuters.

Author(s): Murray, Michael D. and Christy Hallam DeSanctis

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Length: 247 pages (including index)

Price: \$89.00 (hard copy or e-book)

Intended Audience: Law students, legal researchers, and attorneys

Illustrations: Yes

Major strengths: This publication is a highly competent collaboration between two law professors which covers the ground most adequately. There is an added emphasis on clear language which may well derive from the fact that one of these authors (DeSanctis) has an educational background in English literature and language, including rhetoric and composition. Additionally, there is attention given to the requirements of “NextGen” students through a design for this work as part of the following series:

- Legal writing and analysis;
- Advanced legal writing and oral advocacy: trials, appeals and moot court; and
- Legal research and writing across the curriculum: problems and exercises.

Each of these titles will ultimately form part of an ‘Interactive Casebook Series’ published by the Foundation Press and will incorporate links to on-line databases and other Internet-based resources. The series also promises to depart from traditional casebooks by incorporating call-out text boxes, diagrams, and relevant, captioned screenshots for additional instruction and background.

Major weaknesses:

Oddly, the hard copy version of this publication makes no reference to the e-book's subtitle: "A contemporary approach." While this is not a significant matter, it does perhaps speak to the need for a more seamless connection between these two formats which are meant to be complementary. And, while the e-book version is useful to have available for a variety of purposes, the authors have, as yet, not provided any student teaching materials (even though a PDF link is offered to the user as a placeholder). Additional pedagogical features, such as the *FYI*, *Take Note*, *Practice Pointer*, *Apply It*, and *Food For Thought*, may appear to be useful but they are deployed sparingly throughout the *Legal Research Methods* publication. This is really an editorial oversight that may be remedied in subsequent contributions to the series. Some of the illustrations in the hard copy of this work are lacking in clarity and this difficulty is definitely compounded in the e-book version which has a fairly ragged appearance that quite significantly impacts on readability.

Recommendation: While the full range of features promised for the 'Interactive Casebook Series' have yet to materialize, this first contribution shows considerable strength and reliability. The work offers good, comprehensive support for those seeking to learn about the process of legal research, or, for those who need to refresh, refine, and review areas that require attention.

Reviewed by:

Paul F. McKenna

Lecturer, School of Information Management

Dalhousie University

(formerly Law Librarian, Osgoode Hall Law School, York University, Canada)