Basic Legal Research: Tools and Strategies, 6th

By Amy E. Sloan. New York, NE: Wolters Kluwer (2015), 347 pages, ISBN: 978-1-4548-5040-3. $68.75

Subject: Legal research textbook

Useful for: Useful for those who teach

Format: Chapters with index, with charts, screenshots and checklists at the end of each substantive research chapter; E-book and practice questions available (with the purchase of a new copy)

Reviewer's Comments:
I became acquainted with the text Basic Legal Research as a librarian working in access services. The title was a required text for the first year students who were enrolled in the combined legal writing and research course and a copy was stored in the reserves collection. Over the years, I have referred to it while preparing for a presentation or legal research class lecture. Needless to say, I was excited about the opportunity to review the most recent edition.
This title serves as a primer to legal research by exploring the components of the legal research process in depth while simultaneously examining the tools of the trade (i.e. – secondary sources, print sources, citators and databases). This technique is supported by diagrams, charts, screenshots and checklists which help the reader visualize various aspects of the legal research process.

As a librarian who teaches a legal research course to first year students, I find this book particularly useful for emphasizing three areas of legal research that are often neglected: Bloomberg Law, databases and research plans. Detailed instructions on Bloomberg Law's features and search functions accompanies each discussion on finding federal and state resources. Free and subscription databases that tend to be overlooked by the legal researcher such as FDsys and Proquest Congressional are comprehensively covered. Elements of the research process are interspersed throughout the book and culminated in the last chapter – Developing a Research Plan. This chapter fleshes out the steps of research planning with tips for research strategies and 6 different flowcharts that analyze the research paths for different types of research.

Basic Legal Research is an invaluable resource for the law student, recent law school graduate and librarian as a guide for initiating and implementing their own research.

Reviewed by: Gail Mathapo, University of Florida Legal Information Center, in 2017