

## **Breaking Down the Black Box: How Actor Network Theory Can Help Librarians Better Train Law Students in Legal Research Techniques**

By Judith Lihosit. 106 Law Libr. J. 211 (2014).

**Article Categories:** Course Creation & Design; Legal Research Instruction for 1Ls

**Keywords:** Actor Network Theory; Course Design; Legal Research Instruction; Pedagogy

### **Reviewer's Summary:**

Lihosit argues that the Actor Network theory can help law librarians to “reclaim their status as legal research experts” (220). First, Lihosit summarizes this theory, drawing on the work of Bruno Latour. This approach focuses on identifying all actors, both human and inanimate, that contribute to our identification of a group formation. In order to identify all actors, an observer must set aside any preconceived ideas: librarians should not investigate the research world of attorneys on the basis that certain sources will or should be used. Lihosit advocates for librarians to look for “traces of group formation” (217) in order to discover how attorneys perform research. She asserts that legal research is in a black box with legal writing, making it difficult to change the relationship between those teaching tasks. Finally, she argues that through scholarship, thoughtful pedagogy, and finding attorney allies, librarians can establish their value as legal research instructors.

**Summarized by:** Susan Azyndar, The Ohio State University, in 2019.