Resurrecting (and Modernizing) the Research Treasure Hunt


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Reviewer’s Summary:

In this article, Vettorello considers the research skills that are lacking in students and in new attorneys. She focuses specifically on employers’ expectations that new attorneys will be able to conduct administrative law research and legislative history research, retrieve pleadings and other litigation-related documents, research transactional law issues, and find relevant non-legal information, all while determining the validity of the sources found and keeping their legal research cost-effective. Vettorello then provides an overview of the broad changes in methodologies for legal research instruction from the 1950’s forward, specifically examining bibliographic, process-based, computer-assisted, and curriculum-based legal research methodologies. Finally, Vettorello shares her experience revamping the legal research treasure hunt as a type of legal research assignment and incorporating it in order to meet the needs of her first-year legal methods course. She ends by discussing the advantages of and caveats to consider when using legal research treasure hunts. Two example research problems are included as an appendix to the article.