

Electronic Legal Research Tools: An Examination of the Resources Available, Training of New Attorneys, and Employer Expectations

By Christina Elizabeth Peura. 33 Legal Reference Services Q. 269 (2014).

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Reviewer's Summary:

Peura conducted surveys and looked at many resources to compile this article. Throughout the piece, she looks at resources available for electronic research, the adequacy of legal research instruction, employer expectation of the legal research skills for newer associates, and the information literacy of law firm practitioners. She begins by looking at the legal research resources available, making note of Westlaw and Lexis being the predominant ones. She also talks about how firms are looking at more cost-effective commercial and bar provided resources. Peura then discusses how one of the most practical skills taught in law schools is legal research. She looks into how it's taught in law schools, as well as some things that scholars have expressed about the content of research courses.

Peura also looked at how employers viewed the research skills of law students and recent graduates. Not surprisingly, she expressed that there was a decline. She adds to this in the subsequent part of the article on information literacy in law firms by saying that there was a decline in the research competency of experienced lawyers as well. She attributes this to the changing nature of how people access and interact with information. She ended the article by providing a wealth of information on her study: methodology and an analysis of results. She also includes appendixes of the studies used and alternative resources.

Summarized by: Cassandra Patterson, Georgia State University College of Law, in 2020.