

Say Goodbye to the Books: Information Literacy as the New Legal Research Paradigm

By Ellie Margolis & Kristen E. Murray. 38 U. Dayton L. Rev. 117 (2012).

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

Keywords: Analytical Skills; Computer-Assisted Legal Research; Course Design; Curriculum; Digital Natives; Flipped Classroom; Generational Differences; Google; Information Literacy; Law Schools; Learning; Legal Research Instruction; Millennials; Online; Print; Research Log; Research Skills; Technology

Reviewer's Summary:

In this article, Margolis and Murray advocate for a fundamental shift in the way law schools in the U.S. teach legal research, one that forgoes the bibliographic, print-based approach, and focuses instead on information literacy skills. They describe the manner in which print legal materials are organized, and how this historically influenced research instruction, but argue that the evolution of online search tools has changed the manner in which most researchers will approach the same content today. Whereas accessing material was once the focus, now, they believe, it is more important that students know how to efficiently and effectively review online search results. They describe information literacy frameworks published by the Association of College and Research Libraries and how these might be adapted to the subject of law. Finally, they describe their survey of incoming law students, designed to assess their familiarity with and confidence in certain information literacy skills.

Summarized by: Meredith Capps, Vanderbilt University Law School, in 2020.