

## **Internet Legal Research on a Budget: Free and Low-Cost Resources for Lawyers, 2nd ed.**

By Judy K. Davis & Carole A. Levitt. (2020) 378 pages, ISBN: 978-1-64105-606-9.  
\$89.95

**Subject:** Subject-specific legal research (low-cost legal research)

**Useful for:** Useful for those who teach cost-effective research or those who assist people without access to expensive legal databases.

**Format:** Chapters with index.

### **Reviewer's Comments:**

In law school and in practice, students and attorneys may use a variety of commercial platforms to conduct their legal research. One main drawback to some commercial databases is the cost; many people, especially members of the public, cannot afford access. Internet Legal Research on a Budget is an invaluable book for those users (and the librarians who assist them) because it covers a wealth of budget-friendly online alternatives, providing detailed overviews of how to use those resources.

The book is organized clearly, with chapters focusing on a type of legal material (e.g., federal administrative materials), a specific resource (e.g., Fastcase), or a category of resources (e.g., apps). One chapter even groups resources by area of law. The book is best used as a reference, to consult when needing a low-cost alternative, and it is not really meant to be read cover-to-cover. Further, while this book is useful for legal research instructors, it is not a textbook per se nor does it purport to help you teach people how to use these resources. There are no sample exercises or suggestions of how to incorporate it into a broader legal research class.

That said, Davis and Levitt explain the resources so well that many instructors will be able to use the book's guidance to inform the methods they use to teach students or attorneys how to use the resources. Where applicable on various websites, Davis and Levitt show how to run searches, how to filter results both pre- and post- search, what sorts of tools (e.g., thesauruses or syntax help) are available, as well as other features (e.g., emailing results or saving documents). There are myriad screenshots throughout, which is both a strength and a potential drawback. The screenshots of course help

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users navigate the websites, but if in the future a website's layout or design changes, it could potentially confuse the reader.

That brings us to the issue of currency. This is the second edition, which updates the first edition by using new screenshots, adding new or removing defunct resources, and going into more depth on resources whose prominence rose in the past several years. With how quickly the online legal research industry can evolve, some of the book's content could become outdated. Subsequent editions could address these changes, but the nature of print publication may mean that a new book will inevitably be one beat behind.

**Reviewed by:** Lei Zhang, The University of Texas School of Law, in 2022.