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since this is our technology-themed issue, the Q&A interview on page 32 with Shon Hopwood—the 2019 AALL Annual Meeting keynote speaker—serves as a nice juxtaposition to the excellent articles on artificial intelligence, chatbots, privacy, open source ERM, and more. An associate professor of law at Georgetown, Hopwood became interested in the law when he worked in a federal prison library as an inmate. His journey began with traditional print resources, but his work in prison, and now as a law professor and co-owner of Prison Professors LLC, is an access to justice story.

The intersection of evolving legal technology and access to justice issues is where, perhaps, the most dramatic impacts of legal technology on our justice system will occur in the coming years.

Clearly, the technological changes we are experiencing are having profound changes on the legal industry and society in general. Artificial intelligence, machine learning, the IoT (internet of things), and legal analytics are just a few of the technologies changing the practice of law and the administration of justice, as well as our traditional notions of privacy. (Be sure to read Shane Dempsey’s article on GDPR on page 18.)

Most technological developments come with a hefty price tag for early adopters. However, there are many efforts underway to use technology to solve access to justice issues. For example, A2J Author, a joint project of CALI (The Center for Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction) and Chicago-Kent College of Law, is used by countless legal aid organizations, courts, and others to create guided interviews to assist self-represented litigants to complete forms or start the intake process. Many of you may also be aware of projects such as the DoNotPay app that started out as a free, guided process to dispute parking tickets. The developer, Joshua Browder, provided his code for free to assist institutions trying to design systems to help legal consumers.

In February and March, Global Legal Hackathon 2019 took place at venues around the world. The event brings together people from the legal industry with technologists to solve problems that have either a private or public benefit. The private benefit projects are designated as benefiting the “business and practice of law” while the public benefit projects are targeted at “good government, legal systems, and A2J.”

A small sample of the first-round hackathon winners gives an idea of how technology can be deployed to solve access to justice issues. From Brazil, winners “e-Defensoria” created a system to connect public defenders and citizens. Team “Granite Apple” won in New York City for City Alert, which alerts users to crimes in the area and helps them connect with legal assistance. In Hong Kong, “Access our Community” won for creating a platform that matches lawyers with pro bono cases. These three are a very small sample of the solutions created in one weekend when the right people came together.

As you read this issue and learn about chatbots, data privacy, and open-source ERM software, think about ways we can use technology to provide solutions in the justice system, both privately and publicly.

Kristina L. Niedringhaus
krisnl@gsu.edu
Create and build your own law library chatbot.

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If retirement is in your future, and you want to stay connected to your friends and colleagues as well as the legal community, consider the Sustaining Member payment option. For a one-time renewal rate of $425* continue enjoying all the benefits of membership:

- Networking
- Continuing Professional Education
- Career Resources
- Publications
- Leadership Opportunities
- Financial Support
- Advocacy

* Does not include SIS memberships
As the only national association dedicated to the legal information profession and its professionals, we continue to make advances toward safeguarding, preserving, and making government information on public websites accessible. In fact, we have a Washington, DC-based government relations office overseen by AALL’s Director of Government Relations, Emily Feltren. Our priorities center on access to justice, balance in copyright, greater access to government information, transparency, and the protection of privacy.

We have been at this for a while: this year marks our thirtieth anniversary successfully representing AALL interests in Washington, DC. In 1989, the AALL Executive Board approved restructuring the existing Legislation and Legal Developments Committee into the Government Relations Committee with AALL members Robert L. Oakley of Georgetown University Law Library and Joanne Zich of American University Washington College of Law Library as the first Washington representatives for the Association.

Since then, we have achieved many successes, including, most recently, the approval by the Uniform Laws Commission of the Uniform Electronic Legal Material Act (UELMA) in 2011, now in force in 20 jurisdictions, including the District of Columbia, stipulating that legal material published in an electronic-only format must be designated as official. It also mandates that official electronic legal material be authenticated, preserved, and made permanently accessible to the public.

Other significant legislation that we have successfully advocated for includes the Government Printing Office (GPO) Electronic Information Access Enhancement Act of 1993, which established a means for providing the public with online access to electronic public information of the federal government, and the Openness Promotes Effectiveness in our National (OPEN) Government Act of 2007 that included several key reforms to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), including ensuring timely agency responses to FOIA requests.

You, too, can be an advocate for law libraries. A great opportunity to help you get started is our upcoming AALL Day on the Hill: Advocacy Leadership Training & Lobby Day, July 12 in Washington, DC. (To register visit bit.ly/AALL19LobbyDay) Participants will learn about the information policy issues on AALL’s agenda and how to successfully advocate for law libraries. You can then take our message to Capitol Hill for meetings with your members of Congress and their staff. I am excited about this year’s event and I hope to see you there!

Femi Cadmus
femi.cadmus@duke.edu
RENEW YOUR AALL MEMBERSHIP

Continue to enjoy the benefits of membership and renew today.

We Champion Our Profession & Our Members

KNOWLEDGE Law librarianship continues to evolve rapidly. AALL offers ongoing professional development opportunities that keep you on the leading edge of changes in legal information.

COMMUNITY A network of colleagues for resources, best practices, and recommendations is critical. AALL offers you perspective only peers can provide.

LEADERSHIP Legal information professionals are essential. AALL communicates the value of law librarians and offers opportunities for you to establish, grow, and share your professional value and expertise.

RESOURCES Legal information is a unique field. AALL members know the power of having knowledge of, and access to, the right information at the right time; leveraging online resources, national alliances, and the collective brainpower of nearly 4,500 law librarians, you can always deliver.

THE NEW MEMBERSHIP YEAR STARTS JUNE 1

ONLINE bit.ly/AALLrenew19

PHONE 312.205.8022
Every day, law librarians from all over North America post errors they have encountered while doing research to Law-Lib. The purpose of “Error of the Day” is to get these errors corrected. It is not to shame or embarrass publishers. As researchers become more and more reliant on analytics and Artificial Intelligence (AI), it is important to make sure the data being used is correct. Some of the errors might be caused by bad algorithms. AI is great, but we have to make sure the “computer” is actually getting the correct answer. The same is true of analytics: if the computer is giving us statistics for John Smith, we want to make sure the analytics are giving us the information for the John Smith who is of interest to us.

COMMON ERRORS
So far, the errors that have been found range from the serious to the humorous, and include:
- Errors in the currency of statutes and issues with citators
- Simple typos
- A publisher changing the Honorable Judge Gibson’s name to Bigson (this error has since been corrected)
- Google posted a picture of John Oliver’s dog when discussing Kansas v. Carr (also corrected)
- The Appellate Division, First Judicial Department, Supreme Court of the State of New York lists Susan Axelrod as both the Appellant and the Respondent in People v. Knidell 148 AD3d (1st Dept 2017) (the official print version does not list the attorneys)

Of the 40 or so errors posted in 2018, 22 have been addressed. Publishers are working on long-term solutions to prevent certain types of errors in the future. Issues such as geographic and jurisdictional tagging seem to be a point of disagreement between librarians and publishers. Law librarians prefer the legal definition of jurisdiction, whereas publishers seem to equate jurisdiction with geography.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND AN ERROR
- Take a screen shot
- Highlight the error
- Link to the page where the error occurred (others need to be able to recreate the error)
- Determine if the document is correct on other services (include screenshots)
- Post the error to Law-Lib
- If you receive a reply from a publisher, publish it to the list

SUBSCRIBE
From the Treasurer
Looking Back and Moving Forward

Each year, the AALL Executive Board sets aside time to assess the financial health of the Association. The process includes preparing year-end financial statements and an examination and audit of these statements by a certified public accountant. Here are the highlights from the annual report.

In March 2019, the AALL Finance and Budget Committee met in Chicago to review the Association's financial statements, listen and respond to presentations by representatives from our audit firm and investment advisors, consider funding requests, begin the budgeting process for 2019-20, and review the proposed budget guidelines for 2019-20.

Members of the committee were pleased to hear the conclusions of Legacy Professionals LLP, an independent audit firm. In the firm’s report, dated February 18, 2019, it rendered an unmodified opinion that the Association's financial statements “present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the American Association of Law Libraries as of September 30, 2018 and 2017, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended, in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.” The audit also noted that “the disclosures in the financial statements are neutral, consistent, and clear.”

During a closed session, committee members had the opportunity to ask questions about the statements, methods, records, and procedures utilized by the financial staff. The auditor confirmed that AALL staff was well prepared and that AALL’s financial position remained strong.
financial documents are correctly maintained. The audit reflects well on the Association. To request a copy of the complete report, please contact AALL Executive Director, Vani Ungapen.

**Association Assets**

A representative from Chevy Chase Trust met with committee members in March to review and discuss our Association’s investment portfolio. The portfolio, which represents the greatest percentage of our Association’s assets, is comprised of three invested funds: the Permanent Investment Fund (PIF), the Restricted Endowment Fund (REF), and the Current Reserve Fund (CRF). Figure 1 illustrates the importance of these investments to the Association’s long-term financial security. Each year, one of the goals of this meeting is to ensure continued compliance with the Association’s investment policy objectives. See AALL’s Permanent Investment Fund Policy at bit.ly/AALL-PIF.

Moderate investment objectives drive our Association’s investment strategy. We “seek to balance the possibility of increased gains with a desire to avoid substantial risk to principal.” Our investment advisor informed us that Chevy Chase Trust followed a similar asset allocation the prior year. While our economy grew last year, the developed economies outside of the United States were doing even better. Chevy Chase began investing more outside of the U.S., while still focusing on robotics, artificial intelligence, and other technology equities. As of September 30, 2018, $494,997 of our investment income was realized, an increase over the $482,745 realized in 2017.

The largest fund within our investment portfolio is the PIF; it is invested in a variety of managed equities and fixed income instruments, such as corporate bonds, securities, REITs, and municipal funds. Contributions to a variety of endowed funds form the basis of the REF. These funds include the Scholarship Fund; the AALL and Thomson Reuters George A. Strait Minority Scholarship & Fellowship Endowment; the LexisNexis/John R. Johnson Memorial Scholarship Endowment; and the Foreign, Comparative, and International Law Special Interest Section Schaffer Grant for Foreign Law Librarians. Like the PIF, this fund is also invested in a variety of fixed-income instruments and equities. The CRF fund serves as a short-term reserve for investing cash.
Association Revenues
AALL saw total revenue of $4,241,661 in 2018, which was a 1 percent increase over the $4,189,179 in 2017. There are three major sources of revenue for our Association, which fund Association programs and activities: membership dues, AALL Annual Meeting registrations and fees, and revenue from the Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals (IFLP). In reviewing how each of these revenue streams performed in the 2018 fiscal year, we found that membership dues of $926,267 was up from the $921,984 collected in the 2017 fiscal year. Membership dues constituted 25.5 percent of the Association’s overall revenue. Revenue from the AALL Annual Meeting increased by 11 percent from the prior year. Income from IFLP was slightly down by $28,368 over 2017. See figure 3.

Overall, AALL’s net assets showed an increase of approximately 3 percent over the prior fiscal year for a total of $6,090,624.

Looking Ahead
The AALL Executive Board continuously evaluates how specific Association activities and related costs advance the profession of law librarianship and support the professional growth and development of our members. The Finance and Budget Committee works with staff to ensure the Association budget is not only aligned with the strategic goals of knowledge, community, and leadership, but that it is also consistent with AALL financial policies. The Executive Board has to determine whether activities are still relevant and provide meaningful benefits to members, while also investigating new activities that may be better positioned to move the Association forward and provide enhanced value to members and stakeholders. During the 2018-19 year, the Association published the State of the Profession 2019 report, saw a continued increase in nonmember subscriptions to KnowItAALL, introduced our first Innovation Bootcamp, offered a sold-out, biannual Management Institute, and presented several revenue-generating Vendor Showcase webinars.

If any member has questions or comments about the Association’s financial performance or policies, please don’t hesitate to contact me or Vani Ungapen.

Jean L. Willis
Assistant Director for Support Services
Sacramento County Public Law Library
jwillis@saclaw.org

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2019 CALENDAR

MAY

06  AALL Annual Meeting
    Innovation Tournament
    submissions due

16  AALL/LexisNexis Call for Papers Award
    submissions due (student division)

17  AALL Annual Meeting early-bird registration
    deadline
    AALL Executive Leadership Institute
    early-bird registration deadline

29  Law Librarians of Puget Sound Annual Meeting

JUNE

01  2019-2020 AALL membership year begins

06  Law Library Association of Greater
    New York Annual Meeting

14  AALL Annual Meeting preconference
    registration deadline for:
    workshops, library tours, and
    ticketed SIS events
    AALL Executive Leadership Institute
    registration deadline

JULY

11  AALL Executive Board Summer Meeting

12  AALL Day on the Hill:
    Advocacy Training & Lobby Day,
    Washington, DC

13-16  112th AALL Annual Meeting & Conference,
       Washington, DC

QUICK LINKS

- AALL ANNUAL MEETING
  bit.ly/AALL2019

- AALL EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE
  bit.ly/AALLelinstitute

- AALL/LEXISNEXIS CALL FOR PAPERS
  bit.ly/AALL-callforpapers

- AALL SCHOLARSHIPS
  bit.ly/AALL-scholarships
SHELF LIFE

TECH RECS

What resource do you use to stay current on advancements in legal technology?

1. "DIGITAL DETECTIVES" (Legal Talk Network). “I have a monthly calendar reminder set to check the American Bar Association Legal Technology Resource Center (LTREC) ‘Law Technology Today’ newsletter to keep track of blog posts and podcasts. Recently, I listened to ‘Digital Detectives,’ a podcast about digital forensics, e-discovery, and information security issues. The particular episode, ‘Cybersecurity: Getting to Good for the Small Law Firm,’ addressed cybersecurity preparedness, including using encrypted client communication portals and having redundancies in place. Also, in the age when subpoenas are being issued to unlock phones, hosts Sharon Nelson and John Simek said it is essential to actually read the terms-of-service/cookie policy so you are aware of how companies will handle a subpoena and if they even have the ability to decrypt your firm’s files. I definitely think it’s worth setting a calendar reminder to see what’s new in ‘Law Technology Today,’ the ABA LTREC newsletter.”
   Dinah Minkoff; Reference/Research Librarian; Seton Hall University Law Library; Newark, NJ

2. LLRX (Law and Technology Resources for Legal Professionals; www.lrx.com). “There are several resources I follow to stay current on advancements in legal technology, but the one I check the most frequently is probably the LLRX web journal. In addition to recurring features such as the cybersecurity column, LLRX contributors regularly publish subject-specific reviews of legal technology that link to multiple news articles and research guides addressing the subject of the review. As a librarian, I also appreciate the number of subject keywords (many of which are specific to legal technologies) that have been provided for readers to use to search or browse the journal’s archive.”
   Daniel G. Donahue; Foreign and International Law Librarian; O’Quinn Law Library; University of Houston; Houston, TX

3. THE RIPS LAW LIBRARIAN BLOG (AALL Research, Instruction, and Patron Services Special Interest Section; https://ripslawlibrarian.wordpress.com/). “When it comes to keeping current on legal technology, I like to cast a wide net because I don’t know what I don’t know, and I also don’t know who will tell me what I need to know. That’s why the RIPS Law Librarian Blog has become my go-to for keeping up with the latest in legal technology. With its rotating roster (there are term limits), there is a guaranteed new perspective. As an added bonus, because each entry contains post tags, you can see how certain technologies and/or platforms—as well as the ways they are used—have evolved over time.”
   Christine George; Faculty & Scholarly Services Librarian; Yeshiva University; Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law Library; New York, NY

4. ALGORITHMS OF OPPRESSION: HOW SEARCH ENGINES REINFORCE RACISM by Safiya Umoh (NYU Press; 1 edition; February 20, 2018). “A work of Information Studies scholarship that attracted mainstream attention last year, Algorithms of Oppression uncovers a new site of institutional racism: the big data algorithm. Noble argues that search algorithms like those employed by Google reflect the biases of the humans who design them and can often support racist and sexist attitudes. I was initially skeptical of Noble’s remedy to the problem, which essentially amounts to censorship. But this book did something for me that is rare in today’s political climate—it changed my mind.”
   Erik R. Beck; Head of Library Information Systems; University Library; California State University, Sacramento, CA
MEMBER PROFILE

VANTAGE POINT

PAULINE AFUSO

- LAW LIBRARY SENIOR ASSOCIATE
- RAMSEY COUNTY LAW LIBRARY
- ST. PAUL, MN

THREE GOALS FOR THE YEAR?

- Learn how to ice skate backwards without falling.
- Start and complete an introductory Spanish language course.
- Tidy my desk and recycle all the paper that does not spark joy in my life.

FAVORITE THING ABOUT YOUR JOB?

There is always a variety of things to do, which I appreciate, because it is never boring. It always surprises me how many ways people can ask for legal information.

FAVORITE QUOTE?

“Get pucks to the net and good things will happen,” says every hockey coach, analyst, and fan. To me, the point is you have to try if you want to get anything done.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU MOST?

I have a friend who suffered a concussion three years ago, and since then, she has been learning to live with the effects of a traumatic brain injury. I’m not sure how she does it, but even with the concussion symptoms, she persists. She has a life—she’s working, volunteering, and making a difference in her community. I wish I could be as strong as she is.

ADVICE TO YOUR 20-YEAR-OLD SELF?

Just try. You can change your mind or fix mistakes later.
1. Washington, DC, is home to some of the most notable museums in the world, many of which are also free. All 19 Smithsonian Museums—from the Air and Space Museum to the Museum of Natural History—offer an unforgettable experience.

2. Visit the Library of Congress, the largest library in the world, with its collection of more than 160,000,000 objects, including 6,000 books originally owned by Thomas Jefferson.

3. Make your voice heard during AALL Day on the Hill, Friday, July 12. Join your colleagues for a full day of advocacy training and lobbying to champion legal information and the profession. Separate registration is required; free.

4. Take a tour of the iconic White House. Be sure to plan and make reservations well in advance.

5. Experience Arlington National Cemetery, where more than 250,000 men and women who served in the U.S. Military have been laid to rest.

6. Average high temperatures in July range from the mid to high 80s.

7. When it comes to American history, DC is where it all comes together. See it all—from monuments and memorials—on the Old Town Trolley Tour!

8. Bring your appetite! With more than 2,100 restaurants in the area, the DC dining scene is as colorful and eclectic as America itself. From crave-worthy dishes served by celebrity chefs to chili-smothered half-smokes served at a diner, DC’s local flavor has one thing in common: it’s all delicious.

9. No matter what you’re shopping for, with its enormous variety of stores, boutiques, gift shops, and malls, DC is a premier shopping destination.

10. With its ample sidewalks, abundant public parks, and miles of panoramic trails, DC is an extremely exercise-friendly destination. Rock Creek Park, in Northwest DC, is a 2,000-acre park and urban oasis with 32 miles of trails for hiking and plenty of paved roads for biking. You can even go for a horseback ride!

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**FUN FACTS**

- A sculpted head of Darth Vader adorns the National Cathedral. Bring binoculars and check him out in the northwest tower.
- There are elevators in the Capitol Building that are off limits; this is because they are reserved for Senators.
- There is a crypt under the Capitol Building that was made for George Washington.
- Woodrow Wilson is the only U.S. President to be buried in DC at Washington National Cathedral.

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Photo © 2019 by AALL
ASK YOUR FRIENDLY LIBRARY CHATBOT

How to create and build your own law library chatbot for your organization.

BY ROBERT BRAMMER & SASKIA MEHLHORN
Chatbots provide information professionals with a new tool to do what we do best, organize and deliver information.

Just as businesses hurried to create an app to take advantage of the ubiquity of smartphones in the early 2000s, businesses—including law firms—are now creating chatbots to take advantage of the popularity of instant messaging platforms.

“Given a choice, 70 percent of customers today prefer messaging over voice for customer support,” says author Chris Vennard in his article “The Future of Call Centers and Customer Service Is Being Shaped by AI.” (Read the article at bit.ly/MJ19IBM.) Further, in a July 2018 study, Verto Analytics reported that Facebook Messenger is now the third most popular mobile social networking app in the United States. (Learn more at bit.ly/MJ19Statista.)

Chatbots provide lawyers with an opportunity to address the frequent criticism that their websites are often nothing more than static advertisements for potential clients to call them. However, lawyers must be vigilant to provide only legal information, and not legal advice, through their chatbots to avoid any ethical dilemmas.

What Is a Chatbot?
One of the first chatbots in the legal domain to gain media attention was a parking ticket bot called DoNotPay. Designed by Joshua Browder, an undergraduate student at Stanford, this bot allowed the user to generate a form letter to appeal a New York City or London parking ticket. It has since expanded to other cities. Users input their name, address, and other standard information, and then choose from a series of excuses or justifications, drawn from the municipal code, that indicate why they should not have received a parking ticket. They can then elaborate on that excuse. For example, they may pick the excuse that the No Parking sign was obscured. They can then attach a photo or a text description supporting that excuse. The user then copies and pastes the appeal into an online form or prints out the appeal and mails it in.

“Lawyer bots take the hassle out of fighting parking tickets and property taxes—and could cost local governments real revenue,” says Teke Wiggin in an article published in Recode. (Read the article at bit.ly/MJ19Recode.) The DoNotPay bot was so successful that the company has since launched one that allows users to sue in any small claims court; additional consumer protection-focused bots are planned for the future.

The ChatFuel Platform
Building a chatbot can be as simple or as complicated as you want,
example. One thing to note is that you need a Facebook Business account if you actually want to deploy your bot. If you do not have a Facebook Business account, you can still follow along and build one with a basic Facebook account, you just will not be able to deploy it.

First, visit ChatFuel.com. You must log in with your Facebook account in order to see the dashboard.

Click “create from template.” This is a new feature that wasn’t previously available, and allows you to share templates for chatbots for common business types.

Go ahead and click “blank bot.” Now you’re back at your dashboard. Click on your new blank bot.

Next, let’s define the welcome message. Leave the first sentence depending on the platform used. The chatbot discussed in this article, the Law Library of Congress’s chatbot is built in ChatFuel. While there are other platforms, such as WhatsApp, Slack, etc., we used ChatFuel because Facebook is the most popular messenger app for the intended audience. Also, ChatFuel is free (unless you have an excessive number of users), it doesn’t require you to set up a development environment for programming, and once you wade through the documentation, it’s easy to use. If you want to explore other platforms and see a comparison, take a look at Chatbots Journal’s article titled “25 Chatbot Platforms,” which provides a detailed comparison of the available chatbot platforms. (Read the article at bit.ly/MJ19ChatJ.)
intact and delete the rest of the default text. Provide a welcome sentence, such as “Welcome to the Law Library.” The sentence after that should tell the user what the bot does. For example, “I can help you find information about the library and research guides.” Add a sentence describing how they can interact with the bot. For example, click “Get Started” or “List of Commands.” And, finally, add a sentence that indicates that the bot cannot provide legal advice. The “List of Commands” button should point to a URL that provides example commands.

Add your first button. Click “add button” and type “Get Started.” Leave the space below it blank for now.

Add additional text blocks and buttons. Now you’re going to add another block of text. Under “add blocks here” on the left, click the “plus” symbol and name the block “research guides or operating hours.” Add text, such as “Are you interested in research guides or operating hours? Please choose an option below.”

Add a button to this block and name it “Research Guides.” In the research guides button, you probably want to point it to a URL. For our example, we pointed to an index for Law Library of Congress research guides. One thing to note is that, ideally, you want to point to URLs for pages that use responsive web design, since you may receive traffic from a number of different devices (see example at bit.ly/MJ19LOCguides).

Add another button to this block and name it “Operating Hours,” then click the URL field and point it to your page for operating hours. (For example, see bit.ly/MJ19LOChours.)

Finally, add another button to return to the main menu. Title it “Main Menu,” but in the field you won’t point to a URL this time. Instead, you’ll point back to the welcome message block.

Now we need to define a default answer. This is the answer that is triggered if the user types something the chatbot doesn’t understand. Ideally, this would point to a phone number, a chat service, or Ask a Librarian so that the user can receive assistance from a librarian. Click on “default answer.” Next, delete the default text. Replace that text with, “I’m sorry. I didn’t understand that command. If you would like to talk to a human, please click Ask A Librarian. You can also browse our site index or return to the main menu.”

You might provide three buttons here—one that allows users to contact a human, one that points to a site index, and one that points to the main menu. Add one button that points to Ask a Librarian and then add one that points to your website’s site index. Finally, add a URL that points to the main menu block, the welcome message.

Set up text triggers. Now you have defined some basic functions that you can add to later. But what about text inputs to trigger those functions? Click on “Set up AI” on the left, then “Add AI Rule.” ChatFuel prefers complete sentences, as they work better than simple phrases in terms of recognition. Start by defining inputs that will take them to the hours card. You might enter: “Are you open on Saturday”; “Are you open on Sunday”; “Hours”; “What are your hours”; and “When are you open.” Next, choose the block that responds to the input. Click on “text” and select “block” and choose the “research guides or operating hours” block.

Next, add another input for research guides by adding another AI rule. You might type “research guides” or “research help” and then point it toward the “research guides or operating hours” block.

Finally, let’s go back to the welcome block and point the “Get Started” button to the “research guides or operating hours” block.

Congratulations! You have created a very basic chatbot that you can add more content in order to suit your particular needs. To deploy your chatbot, you’ll need a Facebook Business account, but you can test your chatbot without one by clicking “Test This Chatbot” at the top and then clicking “View on Messenger.com.” It will take a minute or so to give you a prompt to continue to Messenger. The test space is kind of slow, so bear with it.

Get Excited!

While this emerging technology may seem intimidating or inaccessible at first glance, we hope this article has demonstrated that you don’t need to be a coder to build your own chatbot. There are many platforms that make chatbots accessible to non-programmers, all you need is a willingness to experiment with this new technology. The application of artificial intelligence to information processing is powerful, so get in on the ground floor of this exciting new technology—just have fun and give it a try.
THE GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION IS HERE, AND IT’S NOT GOING ANYWHERE

BY SHANE DEMPSEY
In May 2018, the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) went into effect. While the main impetus for this wide-reaching regulatory action was to give citizens in the EU greater control over how organizations process their personal information, the implications are worldwide and touch upon many industries—and libraries are not exempt. The GDPR requires companies that process personal information to follow the GDPR tenets or face painful monetary sanctions (up to 4% of global revenue or €20 million, whichever is greatest!).

The territorial scope of the GDPR raises very complicated issues for individuals, companies, organizations, and governments—the true meaning of which is still being sorted through as we find ourselves in a brave new privacy-concerned world. For example, the GDPR applies even when non-EU based companies offer services to individuals living in the EU, whether they are EU citizens or not.

How and Why Did We Get Here?

Since the dawn of the internet, people have been giving away their personal information in return for a slew of free services such as email, social networks, entertainment, online shopping, and travel assistance. Concerns about privacy barely registered with the public, even though the Wild West reputation of the early internet should have raised warning flags.

Almost everything we do in our modern lives can be broken down into bits of data, much of which could be used to piece together the personally identifiable information of individuals. Yet, barely a month goes by without news of another data breach in some industry and the subsequent exposure of personal data that could be used to identify individuals and expose them to fraud, theft, or other criminality.

So, it makes perfect sense that any coherent idea of a globalized digital marketplace must be based on trust. And the only way to accomplish that is with a broad set of common standards for data processing and protection that simplifies the regulatory environment so that both citizens and businesses can benefit. And that is where the GDPR comes in.

How Is the GDPR Relevant for Libraries?

Libraries—whether they are located in the city center, a university campus, a law firm, a court house, or a building on Main Street—have been on the forefront of the digitization of records that contain all types of personal information; therefore, every library that has any interactions or transactions with users in the EU needs to comply with the GDPR. It is highly impractical, and potentially dangerous, to handle data differently between EU and non-EU individuals.

Understanding the risks and benefits of the GDPR for libraries.
Libraries almost always require at least a name, a street address, and an email address before a user can access materials. Some libraries collect credit card information, an especially tempting target for criminal hackers. Libraries also track the borrowing history of users, and that history could tell others more about a person than they would normally give consent to be shared. Imagine how much drug companies would pay to obtain information on which individuals checked out books on diseases such as cancer or diabetes.

And even though libraries are not normally in the business of selling aggregated data about their users or tracking behavioral patterns that lead to direct marketing from any of this information, they must be highly vigilant when it comes to their internal procedures and how they interact with individuals.

Libraries may benefit from the fact that one of the key aspects of the GDPR, the so-called “Privacy by Design” concept (i.e., implementing GDPR principles into processing activities, from the coding done in the design stage all the way through the entire data lifecycle), has been part of our operational and technological model for a long time.

What Are the Main Consequences of GDPR for Libraries?

Legal Basis
Libraries of all types must have a legal basis for processing personal data of EU citizens. Libraries may rely on one of the following grounds:

- The positive consent of the user, also known as “Opt-in”
- Processing is necessary for the performance of a contract with the user
- Processing is required for compliance with legal obligations

There are some specific, limited, exemptions in the GDPR that relate to how libraries operate. There are archival exemptions for those libraries that archive materials in the public interest—there is a legal obligation to perform these activities, so these exemptions would mostly pertain to public or university libraries. There are other exemptions for historical or scientific research, and this includes statistical analysis of personal data. These exemptions are not mandatory for all EU Member States and may be implemented by them, so careful adherence and knowledge of applicable country laws would be necessary.

A more powerful exemption is the one based on freedom of expression. As it is acknowledged that libraries play a crucial role in preserving the freedom of expression through the holding of news, press, and TV broadcast material, they may gain exemptions that reduce the burdens of the regulation.

Security and Breach Notification
Libraries also have new, extremely important responsibilities that must be strictly adhered to, such as ensuring the security of the personal information we hold and notifying authorities within 72 hours if there has been a data breach of any kind. In some cases, where there is a high risk for the individual’s rights and freedoms, the users affected must also be notified as soon as possible. Failure to do either will lead to severe financial penalties.

Data Transfer Outside of the EU
Another key issue concerns the restrictions on transferring personal data outside the EU. Libraries can only transfer personal data to countries that offer an adequate level of protection of personal data according to the EU, or if they have implemented appropriate GDPR
safeguards such as standard contractual clauses approved by the European Commission. US-based libraries in particular should consider self-certifying under the EU-US Privacy Shield.

Privacy Policy
We must also ensure that any contractual terms and conditions are expressed in understandable, layman’s terms, along with clear explanations for the usage of an individual’s personal data. Adopting a privacy policy is generally seen as a good way to comply with these requirements.

Individuals’ Rights
Perhaps most importantly, there is now a new digital bill of rights for every individual that all libraries need to understand and know how to comply with and integrate into their privacy policies. These rights include:

- The right to be informed about the collection and use of personal data—this requires libraries to draft privacy policies and notices to inform users.
- The right of access to personal data, including a copy of the data being processed.
- The right to rectify any inaccurate or incomplete personal data.
- The right of erasure of personal data if it is no longer needed for the original purpose it was collected, or if consent is withdrawn, or if the data has been processed unlawfully, or if the erasure is necessary for compliance with EU law. This is also known as the “right to be forgotten.”
- The right to restrict processing of personal data if the accuracy is contested, the processing unlawful, the user objected to the processing, or the information is no longer needed for the purposes of processing.
- The right to data portability allows individuals to move, copy, or transfer personal data easily from one IT environment to another in a safe and secure way, without affecting its usability.

Libraries will play an important role in this new GDPR environment, as we are well placed to assist our users by helping them navigate the new controls over how their data is collected, processed, and transferred.

- The right to object to processing must be obeyed unless the processor can demonstrate that there are legitimate grounds for overriding the objection.
- The right to not be subject to automated processing such as profiling, which produces legal effects concerning the individual or similarly significantly affects him or her, unless it is necessary for the entering or performance of a contract, or it is allowed by EU or Member State law, or the individual themselves.

Data Processing Agreements
Libraries must also ensure that companies that process personal data on their behalf (such as cloud service providers) comply with the GDPR. Libraries are required to have appropriate processing agreements in place with such companies.

The Libraries’ Role in the GDPR Environment
Libraries will play an important role in this new GDPR environment, as we are well placed to assist our users by helping them navigate the new controls over how their data is collected, processed, and transferred. As ardent defenders of privacy rights, libraries must continue to be on the forefront of protecting users’ rights to privacy over their personally identifiable information. Libraries have ethical responsibilities to not only act as privacy safe harbors for our users, but to also increase awareness of how to utilize their new digital rights.

Due to the ever-increasing global nature of data, the GDPR is here to stay and will only grow in importance as a worldwide guiding principle. The good news in all of this is that the underlying GDPR principles align with the core mission of all types of libraries, and how we leverage that will help shape the future of how libraries will function in the coming years.

## AALL 2019 ALERT
Don’t miss the session “GDPR: What Your Library Needs to Know,” Sunday, July 14, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. For more information visit bit.ly/AALL19GDPR.

Shane Dempsey
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Shane Dempsey is a senior research and reference specialist in the WilmerHale Brussels office. In his role, Dempsey is responsible for assisting the global library team in responding to complicated research projects sent from all WilmerHale offices, worldwide. He also works closely with Brussels-based client matter teams on large antitrust and merger notification cases. He has been assisting lawyers as they work through the implications of the GDPR for the firm and its clients. Leveraging this network, his main focus has been on tearing down geographical silos and building out the idea of a global research team. He often presents seminars to the entire library staff on this issue with the goal of increasing efficiency, awareness, and internal client satisfaction.
The benefits of using an open-source electronic resource management system in your organization.

BY KEELY WARD & MORGAN WOOD

Electronic Resource Management (ERM) systems are essential for tracking the ever-increasing collection of electronic resources in today’s libraries and information organizations. Using open-source software is an extremely cost-effective way to incorporate an ERM system into your organization.
Open-source software is available to everyone at no cost and is developed by the community on a volunteer basis. Accordingly, its development stems from user needs and input. In this case, the users are librarians.

**Why an Open-Source ERM System?**

At our firm, we had never used a true ERM system to organize our information. Most recently, we were using a SharePoint list. But once we got going with the process, we quickly realized how desperately we needed a true ERM solution. Our firm selected CORAL, the only actively updated open-source ERM program on the market. Other open-source ERM systems are available, but none of the others are kept up to date. CORAL was particularly appealing to us because of its highly interconnected modules.

When assessing ERM platforms for our law firm, we focused on three factors. The first was price, and due to the nature of open-source, it was the most cost-effective option. The second factor was adaptability. We wanted something that could adapt to us, rather than us having to adapt to it. The final factor to consider was the lifespan. Our mindset when evaluating any new product is to look for something that will not only work for us today, but for the next five to 10 years. Open-source programs not only meet but exceed these three requirements.

Further, we spoke with Ladd Brown, head of acquisitions and a member of the Electronic Access Team at Virginia Tech, to see what they looked for in an ERM product. Ladd said that “with the vast number of purchased and open access electronic resources we maintain, contacting the vendor is a critical and constant task. The contact features of hot email addresses and admin module URLs in CORAL are very useful; [with] CORAL, it is pretty easy to keep the contact and admin information up to date.” He also discussed the importance of storing licensing information, mentioning that he was “excited about adding acquisitions data and retrieving it without going into another system.”

**Planning and Implementation**

In order to become familiar with the program and to begin planning for implementation, we spent several hours exploring the software’s demo site. This sparked a conversation about exactly how we wanted to manage our resources. The data we were holding was loosely shaped and structured. It became apparent that we needed to converse about what qualified as a resource versus an organization. The planning process moved into a deeper analysis phase to define what data would need to be sifted through these classifications. CORAL’s lack of concrete conventions, while at first intimidating, became one of its greatest assets.

We found that it was important to set clear expectations about what information would be manually transferred because we believe an ERM system should be alive and constantly evolving—never fully complete.

Our server-side configuration was done by the support service provider ByWater Solutions. The front-end configuration that remained for us to complete was made easier because design customizability is at the heart of the CORAL system. While the beauty of the software is that it can be changed at any time, we wanted to start the project on a clean and solid foundation.

Once the front end of the ERM program was set up, we were ready for data entry. We entered everything manually to ensure accuracy and clean data. We tackled the Resources module first and entered in more than 200 resources and their corresponding information. Our previous ERM solution had little structure, so it made the most sense to start working in the module that had the most entries. The Organizations module was the next one we set up, which led us to look at which resources...
had parent companies. Linking the organizations to the resources gave us our first taste of untangling webs we did not realize existed. CORAL’s ERM licensing module requires license records to be attached to organizations. We combed through our licenses to find any other organizations that needed to be added for this purpose. After organizations were finalized and licenses were added, licenses were attached to their unique resources. Licenses can include several products, so this step required reading through each document before uploading it to the proper location.

In our efforts to further streamline our electronic resource acquisition process as a department, we took advantage of CORAL’s Workflow feature. This feature alerts the whole team when new records are added and keeps records of acquisitions centralized in one place. CORAL’s Management module was the last one to be tackled and allowed us to better document changes and revisions in department-specific materials. We chose to add only documents that were relevant to our team, rather than to a specific office or group.

We created our training for our ERM program by using three different methods: a training manual, video training, and test tasks for team members to complete. This helped cover all learning styles and ensured there were instructions that team members could reference in the future. Adding in the test tasks allowed everyone to have a hands-on experience and feel comfortable before adding real information.

**Best Practices**

- **Cut off access.** When we unveiled our ERM program, we immediately cut off access to the old solution. As administrators, we still kept access for ourselves in order to reference it as needed for when users might have questions.

- **Get the team invested.** In open-source software, changes and upgrades are made based on the users’ direction. Getting the team involved gives everyone a stake in the program. During one of our weekly team meetings after debuting the program, we held a discussion to get feedback on what everyone thought and took suggestions for what could be improved.

- **Set clear guidelines.** With our previous ERM solution, everyone would add information and there was no clear standard on what to add or where to add it. For our new ERM program, one of the best things we did was create clear standards for what kinds of information users should input into the program and where each item should be added.

- **Get IT on board.** In some cases, you may want to use an internal IT liaison you trust. It’s important to have someone within your organization you are able to contact; otherwise, the process and implementation may be slowed down. In our case, we used ByWater Solutions to handle all of our IT questions and needs.

- **Participate in software conversations.** Many open-source software platforms use a website such as GitHub to track software improvements and additions, a system also known as version control. By being active on GitHub for CORAL, we were able to keep track of what issues other users were having, what projects were being worked on within CORAL, what the latest patch would include, and when it would be released.

- **Be flexible with the process.** While the target debut date never changed, the schedule we originally set in our planning process had to be adjusted several times. As we went through the process, some modules took longer than expected and some data needed to be cleaned up more than we anticipated.

- **Be flexible with the program.** While open-source software is highly customizable, it can only be changed so much. At some point, you have to adapt to where (e.g., which module) you must input information into the existing program. In order for the software to remain open-source, the code cannot be independently developed outside of the community’s standards and processes.

**The Future**

Open-source ERM systems are constantly evolving, and some features might not be solidly developed yet, but because changes are originated from within the community, libraries have a say in future developments. As Ladd points out, one of the most appealing aspects of switching to an open-source software is “the community of development and the transparency apparent from the community.” Uniquely, open-source means not relying on top-down decisions for how library software should function. Additionally, it means not having to justify changes and needs to C-Suite commercial executives. As the library and legal fields are constantly evolving, committing to a flexible solution with a long-term deployment capability is paramount.

Open-source ERM is a free and strong alternative to current legal and library products that will empower librarians and libraries of all types.

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**AALL 2019 ALERT**

Don’t miss the session “Deep Dive: Things You Need to Know Before Moving to a New ILS,” Monday, July 15 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. For more information visit bit.ly/AALL19ILS.
AALL DAY ON THE HILL

ADVOCACY LEADERSHIP TRAINING & LOBBY DAY

Friday, July 12
8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (EDT)
Marriott Marquis / Capitol Hill
Washington, DC

• Join your colleagues in Washington, DC, for advocacy training and AALL Day on the Hill.
• Learn about AALL’s information policy issues and how to successfully advocate for law libraries and the legal information profession.
• Meet with your members of Congress and their staff.

Event is open to AALL members only and no prior legislative experience is necessary; registration is required.

learn more at bit.ly/AALL19LobbyDay
Throughout his career, Allen Moye, current chair of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) George A. Strait Scholarship & Fellows Committee, has been steadfastly helping students get the education and skills they need to succeed. His love for teaching and watching students grow professionally has been one of the most rewarding aspects of his career in law librarianship.
Sharing experiences and exchanging ideas with others who are in similar roles has really been helpful. AALL provides a mechanism for doing this, and it has allowed me to enhance my skills and develop in new ways.” — Allen Moye

Criminal defense, that is the type of law Allen Moye thought he wanted to practice when he made the decision to attend law school at the University of Richmond in 1987. After earning an internship spot with a criminal defense attorney following his first year of law school, he quickly realized criminal law wasn’t for him. “At that point I was just trying to figure out what I wanted to do. I started working in the law school’s library and I had an internship with the Virginia State Law Library. I found that I really enjoyed researching and helping other students,” said Moye. He received his JD in 1990. “After I graduated, I did some work for the Virginia Industrial Commission (researching and writing memos on Workers’ Compensation claims) and I also did research for a personal injury firm,” recalls Moye. After being encouraged to pursue law librarianship from the folks at the University of Richmond—including Steve Hinckley, who was the director of the law library at the time, and deputy director, Joyce Janto, Moye decided to pursue his MLS part-time from Catholic University, while working as a reference librarian. “A few years after I graduated, the University of Richmond offered me a temporary reference librarian position, which also gave me the opportunity to teach; that’s when I got hooked. I did this for about four years, and it was a great experience. It solidified my intention to become a law librarian.”

Moye took over as associate director for public services at George Mason (now Scalia School of Law) in 1998, and received his MLS in 1999. After spending six years in that role, he was ready to move on to the next step in his career: a directorship. Moye began his current role at DePaul College of Law in January of 2005. Besides supervising the College of Law’s technology support team, Moye is an associate professor, and serves as director of the Rinn Law Library. He is responsible for the financial and personnel management of the library, as well as the quality of information resources and support for faculty research. Moye also teaches in both the JD and MJ programs. “The position at DePaul was actually vacant in 2003, but I wasn’t quite ready to move then,” notes Moye. “As it turned out, they had a failed search and re-advertised the position a year later. By that point, I was ready to move on.”

Moye is a member of several professional library associations, including AALL, which he joined in 1994, along with the American Bar Association, American Library Association, Mid-America Association of Law Libraries, and the Chicago Association of Law Libraries. He served as chair of the George A. Strait Minority Scholarship Review Special Committee from 2016-2017, and as chair of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee from 2004-2005. In addition, Moye served as president of the Mid-America Law Library Consortium from 2017-2019.

Here, he discusses his path to becoming a director, why it’s important to incorporate technology into law school education, and what skills are needed to help students succeed in today’s legal environment.

**How do you stay abreast of changes in the field?**

Changes are happening so quickly that it can be hard to keep up, just because the change is the latest thing doesn’t necessarily mean it’s the greatest. If there is a change that I think will be beneficial for my staff, our patrons, or in the classroom, I am happy to adopt it. As an example, we have been adding more e-books and digital resources to the collection to meet the needs and learning styles of our students. I find the director’s listserv a good way to keep up with new developments, to learn what other directors are talking about. I also pay attention to alerts from major vendors about new products and services coming out. And, of course, AALL Spectrum and KnowItAALL are really good resources for learning about developments in the field.

**ALLEN MOYE**

- DIRECTOR OF THE LAW LIBRARY
- ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & LIBRARY SERVICES
- DEPAUL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LAW
- RINN LAW LIBRARY
- CHICAGO, IL
What can you share about your path to becoming a director?

I was ready to move, when I felt that I had achieved all that I could as an associate director. I enjoyed my time at George Mason. I learned a lot, and worked with some really great people, including Deborah Keene, who was the director, and Femi Cadmus and Roger Skalbeck, who both moved on to directorships of their own. The idea of being able to “run my own shop” and be involved at a higher level in terms of policy making, as well as implementation, seemed like the next logical step in my career.

Like some others in this profession, I think my path to becoming a director was more accidental than providential, but it could have been a little of both. That is why I say it is good to remain open because you never know what or when opportunities might become available.

How has participation in AALL impacted your career and/or leadership capabilities?

It has opened up a lot of doors for me. I have been able to connect and work with a wide and vast network of people. While I am a member of the faculty at a law school, I have a unique and discrete function. I have attended ABA, Association of American Law Schools, and American Library Association conferences, but it is not quite the same as my experience with AALL. Sharing experiences and exchanging ideas with others who are in similar roles has really been helpful. AALL provides a mechanism for doing this, and it has allowed me to enhance my skills and develop in new ways.

In particular, I am very proud of the work I have done with the Black Caucus of the American Association of Law Libraries (BCAALL), which I have been involved with from its inception. I have also served on the Annual Meeting Program Planning Committee and have been involved with the George A. Strait Scholarship & Fellows Committee from its inception as well. The many opportunities I have had to get involved with different types of projects and initiatives, as well getting to know and work with individuals from a variety of library types and backgrounds, has been beneficial to my professional development and growth.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I think at this point, I would have to say teaching. I enjoy working with students, who are enthused and eager to learn something new. I teach Advanced Legal Research in addition to an Introduction to American Law and Legal Systems course, which is one of the foundational courses of the MJ (Master’s in Jurisprudence) program. I have been teaching this course for about two years. I teach both an online and live version. The live class is for a special cohort of Chicago Police Officers that provides them with a foundation about the law to help them advance in their career. It has been a very rewarding experience. When you’re working with highly motivated individuals and you see that light bulb or “ah-ha” moment when they get it, or when they come back and reach out to you and say, “I really enjoyed the class, I learned so much,” that’s very gratifying.

Favorite book or author?

The Feast of All Saints by Anne Rice. It was one of the first books that she wrote and remains one of the best books I’ve ever read.

Favorite TV show to binge watch?

It’s a toss-up between Black Mirror and The Crown.

Favorite weekend getaway?

After living in Chicago for 14 years, any place that’s sunny and warm.

Superpower you wish you had?

Flight. The ability to fly without a plane or a pilot.

Words to live by?

Keep it simple. I think all too often we try to overcomplicate things, when there may actually be a simple solution or explanation.

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ABA requirements of an equivalent level of security for the position, it can still work out for anyone not interested in pursuing a tenure role within the organization.
What are the biggest technology changes that you are seeing?

The most significant change is that so much can be done from these small hand-held devices that were at one time limited to making or receiving a phone call. Smartphone technology has single-handedly changed the way we get information and communicate with one another, and it has changed what we expect from technology.

Our phones and our computers are such a big part of everything we do; it has made our world smaller, more pocket-sized and accessible. Yet, in some ways, this technology has also isolated us. How often do we bury our heads in our phones when we get on an elevator with strangers?

In what ways do you think technology could be better taught in law school to prepare students to practice law?

Some faculty shy away from using technology because they are mistrustful of it, or they do not use it that much themselves so they do not really understand how it can be used as a teaching tool. But the truth is that technology is such a major part of everyday life, certainly, when it comes to students and their daily social media habits; it just makes sense to incorporate it in some way. As teachers, we should figure out how to integrate technology into what we teach. Learning which technology resources are used in the practice of law and providing an introduction, or assigning a project using it, may be one approach. Many schools now offer law and technology courses. We are just jumping into this and in January offered two, one-credit Legal Practice courses: one focused on researching using legal technology and the other on intellectual property. Librarians taught both classes.

In my classes, I try to engage students by utilizing surveys and group quizzes that they can take in real time. CALI’s (The Center for Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction) InstaPoll provides a very simple format where I can ask a question on the fly, and the students can respond on their phone, tablet, or laptop. The results will appear in graph form on the screen instantly, and we can discuss their choices. I think it is helpful to integrate technology into the learning process, because it helps to keep students engaged and exposes them to different modalities, which can lead to better understanding.

What skills do law students need to be successful in today’s workplace?

I think student’s need more exposure to soft communication skills, things such as professional manners, office etiquette, and understanding the difference between formal and informal communications. I think many of today’s students are unaware of these formalities and do not understand the impact that this can have on their professional career. For instance, if a senior-level person addresses the student as “Mr. or Ms.” Smith and the student responds addressing the senior by their first name, thinking that’s acceptable, or thinking “it’s okay to call me by my first name, because I’m calling you by yours,” that could be a problem. In an era where quick responses and casual text messaging have become very commonplace, it’s more important than ever to understand that how you address someone can make a difference. You should consider the context, but err on the side of formal over informal. It is not that informal methods of communicating are always inappropriate, but you have to understand that in certain settings, it may not be the best course to take. Some students are not familiar with these skills and many law schools (DePaul among them) have been working to bridge that gap by better preparing their students for practice by teaching them soft skills, such as how to craft an appropriate letter or email for formal communications.

What career advice would you give to newer law librarians just entering the profession?

Be flexible. Transition and disruption in the legal profession has resulted in changes in legal academia. These changes have affected libraries and librarians, in terms of downsizing the print collection, physical space of the library; and adapting to declining enrollments by reducing staff. There is a consensus among some that we no longer need libraries as repositories of information, since everything is on the internet.

While this may sound dire, I would say it is important to remain optimistic and flexible. Librarians are trained to classify, organize, and categorize data; helping to transform it into useful information, which is the foundation and building blocks of knowledge. This skill set is just as important as ever. We just need to think of different ways to apply our talents and abilities. We can still make significant contributions to the goals and overall enterprise of our institutions—often just by thinking outside the scope of the traditional librarian role.
Question: What technology competencies do librarians and legal information professionals need to assist their organizations as they grapple with issues such as data analytics, artificial intelligence, etc.?

While much discussion of technology competency is platform (e.g., Microsoft Word or Excel), system type (e.g., e-discovery and social media), or topic (e.g., security and artificial intelligence) specific, I think that the overarching competency that can lead to success in all of the above is inquisitiveness, or having a questioning mind. To me, that breaks down into three segments.

First, it means thinking consciously about what you are doing and what the technology you are using is doing behind the screen. A lot of technology interaction in society is done in a rote manner (e.g., throwing search terms into the big search box, posting pictures to Instagram, or liking on Facebook), but legal technology requires engagement. To be a fully competent lawyer or librarian you need to ask the hows, why, and what’s: How can you use this platform more efficiently? Why is the algorithm returning these results? What are the benefits and risks inherent in the system (with a nod to Monty Python)? Conscious engagement allows you
to always wonder if there is an easier or better way, and to ward off both the complacency of assuming our technology will work just fine and the bias of putting too much trust in computerized systems.

Second, it means being both systematic and flexible. Being systematic means that you understand the breadth (why this tool, what does it do/what are the expectations, and how does it work?) of not only the platforms, tools, and technological concepts that you use in your work, but also those that your lawyers/clients/patrons use as well. Being systematic is also about fully immersing yourself in the technology you use in your work, so you know the shortcuts, tricks, and affordances that allow you to use the system more effectively and efficiently. Flexibility is important because things change—nothing more so than technology. There is always a new technology or new version of existing technology that needs to be learned (just because I preferred the old dot commands in Lexis doesn’t mean I have the software loaded on my computer). Technology competence is an iterative process, it moves forward into the future and you have to be comfortable with questioning it every step of the way.

Finally, it means asking for or finding help when you need it. There is always going to be someone who knows more than you. So, ask that question or find the appropriate help tools/bot; otherwise, you are just spinning your wheels and may not learn the best way to do something.

Data and artificial intelligence. These terms are literally in almost every legal headline these days and are certainly important technologies for the legal industry. Luckily, there is no better time to be a librarian or informational professional (herein after “infopro”), nor is there a group of professionals more suited to lead this evolution (revolution?) within the legal profession, given their core skills of evaluating, using, and building information products.

To stay on the cutting edge, infopros need to understand the basics of artificial intelligence (AI) and be conversant in the various branches of AI—know how these branches differ and the impact the different branches of AI have on information products. When a vendor says “This tool uses AI,” a skilled infopro should be able to ask probing questions about the AI technology. Does the tool use natural language processing or machine learning or is it really an expert system? In any case, these differences impact how the technology works, and it is the infopro’s job to understand the underlying technology in order to properly evaluate it and utilize it within their business.

As for data, infopros have long been expected to understand the underlying data sources in any information product. Now, infopros should have the ability—or have the leadership vision—to use AI-driven data extraction tools, manipulate data in spreadsheets, and visually display data in a business intelligence tool such as Tableau, Microsoft’s Power BI, or Qlik. Our finance department colleagues have traditionally held the organizational reins when it comes to creating slick dashboards and using other data reporting tools, but that is no longer true as AI tools evolve. Concepts long buried in language and in hundreds of thousands of documents will be the territory of infopros when they use these new, powerful AI tools and transform data into actionable intelligence.

Lastly, let’s not forget my favorite infopro competency—the skill of teaching and educating others about information and information technologies. I regularly hear myself saying “remember, you don’t have to build one of these.” Above all, demystifying and getting lawyers and organizational leaders comfortable with AI and the power of data should be an infopro’s key objective.
Shon Hopwood takes you on his personal journey of rising through the legal system, from prison inmate to practicing attorney to associate professor at Georgetown to criminal justice advocate. His path toward a law career began quite unexpectedly when he started working in the prison law library.
When you were in prison, you worked in the law library. What made you open up the books and start investigating the law? When did you decide to start helping other prisoners?

Well, I didn’t open any books right away. In fact, those books were big, they were thick, and they were intimidating; when I did pull one off the shelf, it felt like it was written in another language. But on June 26, 2000, something major happened—the Supreme Court of the United States issued a decision that allowed inmates to appeal their sentences to the court to try and get a sentencing reduction. Of course, none of us really knew how that worked, but that didn’t stop anyone from trying. So, I started researching my own case and reading law books for the first time. This was probably around my second or third year in prison.

What I discovered was that I kind of liked this process of solving a legal puzzle and then writing out the solution. And for some strange reason, even though I hadn’t taken freshman undergrad English and knew nothing about the law, I was always able to pick the law up easily and, in a way that I never could with Algebra or Calculus.

Eventually, I wrote a brief for my own case that I pecked out on a prison typewriter and promptly filed in the incorrect court. I mostly just started writing memos to friends of mine,
I worked on a federal criminal justice reform bill for a year that was passed overwhelmingly by Congress in December 2018 and I watched President Trump sign it; that has given me a lot of encouragement.

where the important parts were located. By the time I started law school I hadn’t been in a real school for a long time, so I was concerned about whether or not I could translate my litigation experience into good grades.

Q: You’re an advocate for criminal justice reform. Why is this issue so important in today’s legal environment?
First of all, you can’t claim that the United States is the land of liberty on one hand and on the other know that we incarcerate people at a greater rate than almost any other country on the planet. Not only do we have too many people locked up, but as someone who studies the system, I think it’s very counterproductive and makes us less safe to have that many people in prison cells in America. For me, obviously, this is a pretty personal issue. I just don’t think prison and criminal law fixes most of our societal problems. But the current system in place sure seems to suggest that our government does.

Q: What do you think would improve the system?
Well, that’s a big question. There are lots of things; for instance, shorter sentences across the board, and prisons that operate under the notion of correcting or rehabilitating people, rather than just being a place for punishment. We also need to be staffing prisons with more social workers and less prison guards and cutting back on the amount of criminal laws we have. We need additional funding for defense attorneys in the same way the system currently funds prosecutors’ offices—or there are a host of things that we currently do wrong that could be improved.

When I went to prison, I thought I would be surrounded by nothing but murderers and rapists and people like that. But the truth is, most of the people in prison are serving 10- to 15-year sentences for a burglary or a handful of crack cocaine. It’s astounding to see the length of sentences for crimes that, yes, were violent in nature, but there was no actual physical violence done to another person. When people think about prison, they think that only the Larry Nassars and the Jerry Sanduskys of the world end up there. But I saw a lot of people that committed relatively minor crimes serving several years of imprisonment.

To take it a step further, prisons are the biggest welfare system in America. Not only are you paying for that one individual, everything from their healthcare to their food, but so many of the people that go to prison are married and have kids. And when the husband or the wife goes to prison, the rest of the family goes on public assistance. So, then you’re paying for it twice. Not to mention that incarcerating someone for that long has all sorts of negative consequences, not the least of which is that it’s hard for that person to ever get back up and have a law-abiding successful life. If the system makes people worse, not better, then it’s not a good system.

Q: Your time in prison gave you an unusual perspective on the law, sentencing, and the dramatic growth of incarceration in the United States. What does this number look like and do you think it’s likely to change in the coming years?
Right now, there are roughly 2.2 to 2.3 million people in American prisons. I think more Americans are waking up to the fact that our criminal justice system has huge problems and needs solutions. There was an article that came out in USA Today in December, 2018 stating

Q: You entered law school with a lot of legal experience already. What surprised you the most when you finally started law school?
I was surprised by how much my classmates stressed over law school. But, of course, this observation comes with perspective. I had 10 or 15 years on most of my classmates, and unlike other students, going to law school for me was a privilege. Frankly, I was just happy that I didn’t have to worry about anyone chasing me around with a toothbrush sharpened into a knife! In comparison to prison, law school seemed tame. I also didn’t have to work nearly as hard in law school because I had mastered the art of reading cases and finding out

Q: As you dug into the cases of fellow inmates, what were the most common mistakes you uncovered? Or did you notice particular patterns in their journeys through the justice system?
I noticed defense lawyers missing things that impacted their defendant’s sentencing. The law itself is very complex and difficult, and defense lawyers, especially public defenders, have way too many cases and are too often overworked. So, it’s hard for everyone to catch everything all the time. About 97 percent of federal cases end in a guilty plea, so a lot of the inmates’ cases that I reviewed had not actually gone to trial. But what I found was that a lot of lawyers had missed objections to calculations under the guidelines and sometimes it cost their clients up to 10 or 15 years of additional imprisonment.

lawyers, and pointed out what I thought could be potential issues. Most of the time, the attorneys completely ignored what we sent them. I was a jailhouse wannabe lawyer who hadn’t completed an undergrad degree, let alone attended law school. So, what ended up happening was instead of writing memos, I started writing briefs for other prisoners. Of course, I was never able to get any relief for my own sentencing, but I was able to get shorter sentences for other inmates. And that was the start of my legal career; after that happened, I was hooked.
that about 113 million Americans have someone in their immediate family who has spent time in jail or prison. Part of the reason we’re finally starting to see some reform of the system is because the system’s gotten so big that it’s impacting more and more Americans than it ever has in the past. It used to be the case that you rarely knew anyone that had gone to prison. Now, 113 million Americans have someone in their immediate family who has spent time in jail or prison. And it is estimated that 20 million Americans have felony convictions and up to 75 million Americans have misdemeanor convictions. These are huge numbers. I hope those numbers change, and if I have anything to do with it, they will change.

Q: In what ways does racial bias affect these outcomes?

The whole criminal justice system disproportionately targets people of color and poor people across the board, from charging decisions to interactions with police to sentencing disparities. You are much more likely to get a mandatory minimum sentence if you’re black than if you’re white. It’s pernicious all the way through the system, from the very front end to the very back end. Re-entry into society is another issue. If you get out of prison with a felony, you’re going to have a much easier time getting a job if you are white than someone who gets out of prison and is a person of color. Even if we had the best policies in place, which we don’t, and even if we held more police accountable when they shoot people in cold blood, which again, we don’t, I still think there will be places, such as Chicago, where it will take time to repair the damage that some communities feel has been done by having been targeted by police.

Q: What issues are currently affecting the American incarceration system, and can they be fixed?

The number of people we put in prison is certainly something that can be fixed. But it took 30 years for the build-up of mass incarceration and it will probably take 60 to break it down. No one bill is going to make this problem go away. It’s going to have to be a sustained effort and an effort not only on policy reform but through cultural change as well. Before I went to prison, my family and I thought that prison was a place where evil people go, because we had no experience with it. And when I got there, I realized it wasn’t evil people, it was just people that for whatever reason made really poor decisions. Most of these people have the power to turn it around—they just need some help. If we move from less punishment to more rehabilitation across the board, we’ll have a better system and we’ll all be safer.

Q: Why do you think our justice system keeps failing?

Because we rely too much on incarceration. I think that’s at the core of it. We are just too punitive. If somebody breaks the law, we get really mad and angry, and for too long, we’ve let emotions, rather than sound public policy decisions, drive the criminal justice system.

Q: What role do legal information professionals play in the justice system? Are there things they can do to help alleviate the problem?

I think law librarians could be a big help in providing access to courts for poor people who can’t afford lawyers and who go to public law libraries to try and figure out how to investigate their cases because they can’t afford attorneys. From that perspective, law librarians and those in the legal information field can help a great deal by providing access to courts and judicial opinions that a lot of Americans can’t locate on their own.

Q: Your book Law Man carries with it a message of hope, the idea that with enough determination, you can break down barriers and change not only your life but others’ as well. What trends are you seeing that give you cause for hope?

I worked on a federal criminal justice reform bill for a year that was passed overwhelmingly by Congress in December 2018 and I watched President Trump sign it; that has given me a lot of encouragement. The federal system takes the longest to penetrate because of the political problems with trying to get criminal justice reform through the U.S. Senate. So, I was greatly encouraged to see all of that happening. And then my client, Matthew Charles, was the first person to be released under that bill and I got to watch him tell his story on ABC Nightly News. I think things are moving in a positive direction—we are just not going to get as much reform as we want as quickly as we want it.
More than two decades ago, the Boston College (BC) Law Library moved into a new building. The new space featured additional study areas for students, more space for a growing collection, and a large atrium with cascading natural lighting. Unfortunately, the Law Library’s Information Desk was not included in this list of excellent features. During construction of the new building, the library staff were, for the most part, not consulted about the design or configuration of the Information Desk. On the few occasions they were, their ideas regarding the design of the desk were not taken into account. With a small workspace, large sections that blocked staff from patron view, a bulky and unapproachable exterior wall, and no quick way to get in or out from behind the desk, the Information Desk was not conducive to patron interaction from its inception.

How the staff at Boston College Law Library created a more engaging and functional Information Desk to better assist patron needs.

BY LILY DYER, BRIAN HARKINS & ANUPAMA PAL
A Need for Change
Remodeling the Information Desk had been a long-awaited and much needed project. After many years of considering the need for a new desk that provided better, more-approachable, and more-agile service, the University gave its approval, along with generous funding. In February 2017, the full law library staff began work with Peter Bracciotti, senior designer in Capital Planning and Engineering at Boston College, to create a new Information Desk. The following sections detail the process and strategies that led to the success behind the new and supremely functional Information Desk.

The Design Process
The Information Desk at the Boston College Law Library is unique in that it is shared by two service departments: Access and Organization (A&O), and Education and Reference (E&R). A&O provides all circulation needs, while E&R provides reference assistance to the law library’s patrons. The departments’ service points are located at the respective ends of the Information Desk, and whereas an A&O staff member is always present at the Information Desk when the law library is open for circulation assistance, E&R staff members often conduct reference services from their offices. A&O staff members call their E&R counterparts when patrons require or inquire about reference assistance.

To ensure the needs of both departments were met, the design process included input from all staff, A&O, E&R, and those in the technology department. Departments first met individually to discuss what functionality and design they would like to see featured in the new desk and then later met as a full staff group to bring these ideas together. Once the law library staff had a better idea of what their ideal Information Desk would look like, these ideas were brought to BC architects. BC’s Peter Bracciotti listened to staff comments regarding the appearance of an ideal Information Desk. He then created blueprints and brought them back to staff for revisions. After a series of revisions and a lengthy back-and-forth, a final plan was created, communicated to the staff, and then executed in a timely fashion.

From Vision to Reality
Demolition of the old Information Desk started on December 21, 2017, and construction of the new desk began in early January 2018. As the law library remained open for much of the demolition and construction period, many considerations were necessary to set up a temporary Information Desk, which was ultimately placed in the library’s reference area. Upon completion of the new Information Desk, staff quickly inhabited their new home. Within two hours, the move to the new desk was complete, with minimal interruption to patron services. While the process ran smoothly and quickly, there were a few notable moments.

Project Highlights
During the individual department meetings with Bracciotti, staff were able to present a more unified position as they shared their ideas. These smaller department meetings, in turn, made the full staff meetings far more productive, as more minute and department service-specific decisions had already been addressed and were now simply shared and refined with the entire group.

The main considerations from the A&O service department included:

- Taking stock of all circulation services offered and determining how to arrange and provide them in both the temporary transition space and at the new Information Desk with minimal disruption and adjustment, particularly with course reserve and permanent reserve items.
- Creating an open design where staff could readily move from behind the desk to help patrons, as well as easily ask patrons to come behind the desk to look at the computer monitor.
Creating two comfortable workstations with options for staff to either sit or stand

Ensuring immediate visibility of the entrance from either workstation, as previously only one workstation had a view of the entrance

Adding seating for student workers to complete filings and other tasks

Removing the book drop, where books were often occasionally forgotten and consequently went overdue

The main considerations from the E&R service department included:

- Assessing the current use of the reference side of the Information Desk
- Determining the configuration of space, including where to put ready reference materials in the new desk
- Having a space where students could easily move around the desk to see the computer monitor for resource demonstrations
- Including a countertop power source for easy access to patrons
- Making the space more inviting for staff to regularly sit at the desk and be seen as approachable and available

**Reflections: Lessons Learned**

With the project having been completed more than a year ago, there has been time to reflect on the process as a whole. The design process was essential to the success of this undertaking. It led to the creation of an Information Desk that is both functional for all users and a recognizable and attractive cornerstone of the law library. To achieve this goal, it was imperative to hear the voices and value the opinions of each and every library staff member.

Although unanticipated problems are a part of any large-scale project, most can be addressed and resolved. Inevitably, when there are so many strong-minded contributors—22 to be exact—troubleshooting and compromise will be elements of the process. For example, one of the workstations on the circulation side was uncomfortable to sit at due to molding around the opening of the workspace. Without having used the space, issues such as these were hard to anticipate. We kept a list of items that needed to be readdressed and worked with our administrative offices and the architects to make sure they were completed. Further, there were a number of other issues that the law library staff never reached a consensus on, such as the aesthetics of the desk. In those cases, the majority opinion moved things forward. These issues were long forgotten by the time the new desk was unveiled.

Finally, and perhaps the most important consideration, is that of patron experience. Based on feedback received and our own assessment of patrons’ interactions, the new Information Desk has led to notable improvements in the provision of efficient service to patrons. An open design with pass-throughs in the desk allows for patrons to be invited behind the desk for help as well as for staff to gracefully exit the desk to help.
patrons on the other side. While the staffing model remains mostly the same, there is now both more space and ease with sitting at the Information Desk. The design aesthetic is far more pleasing and there are designated spaces for librarians to convene with students and answer questions. The lighting and openness of the space is also more inviting to patron inquiry and interaction. Both physically and metaphorically, a wall has come down between the library staff and its patrons.

Located in Social Law Library’s reading room, the half-circle Reference Desk features an eye-catching marble countertop and ample room to assist patrons.

A Welcoming Desk at Social Law

The Social Law Library has served the Massachusetts bench and bar for more than two hundred years, relocating as new courthouses were built in downtown Boston. In December 2004, the library moved from the high-rise “New” Suffolk County Courthouse, where it had been for more than 60 years, to the renovated and renamed John Adams Courthouse, along with the Supreme Judicial Court and the Appeals Court.

The move presented many opportunities to improve services to our public agency and private law firm members. Increased space gave better access to the print collections and an up-to-date infrastructure made electronic databases and Wi-Fi more available. New staff offices would make more efficient workflow possible.

At the previous location staff space was very tight. The reference librarians had small open offices close to each other, but there was no central reference desk, and major dictionaries, directories, and other reference books were dispersed among several nonadjacent bookcases. Therefore, staff were hopeful when meeting with the planners from the State Division of Capital Management, which oversaw the building renovation project, and the architects of the Boston firm CBT. The architects in particular were enthusiastic about designing an attractive and inviting structure that would ease the work of providing legal reference.

With staff input, CBT designed a marble-topped half-circle (or horseshoe) desk with ample shelving behind it that blends well with the rest of the fourth-floor reading room. Though librarians do not often sit at the desk, they do meet members with research inquiries there every day. At present, the desk has two telephones where staff can pick up calls when away from their offices. It also features staff-written research guides for particular areas of law, an electric stapler, and a scanner from which members can email or save library materials on flash drives. The desk has also served as a bar when the library has hosted festive occasions, including the American Association of Law Libraries State, Court, and County Special Interest Section (now the Government Law Libraries Special Interest Section) reception during the 2012 AALL Annual Meeting.

— Brian Harkins
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In the evolving landscape of litigation research tools, incumbent vendors are reshaping their offerings and startups are envisioning new platforms. Buzzwords such as big data, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and legal analytics abound. The marketers are quick to declare revolution, and they are not wrong. Information professionals certainly welcome the advancements—legal information should be more accessible, easier to analyze, and more efficient to distribute. Litigation analytics tools offer solutions in this changing landscape and attorneys are beginning to recognize the potential usefulness in having access to such tools. For law librarians and legal information professionals, this often means being asked to acquire, assess, and provide input on such offerings. Despite the close alignment of these tools with traditional legal research mechanisms, some legal information professionals are challenged to find comfort and confidence when it comes to understanding and exploring litigation analytics resources.

The good news is that evaluating these new tools employs classic skills. Law librarians and legal information professionals bring deep experience to critically evaluating how information is authored, published, and summarized. Although the landscape may change quickly, the fundamental concepts and features of legal information organization can help identify appropriate tools and approaches for evaluating litigation analytics tools. With this framework in mind,
law librarians and legal information professionals can easily apply their core professional competencies to evaluating these newer tools, focusing especially on the following criteria:

**Jurisdiction and Court Coverage**

As the environment for electronic court information matures, there’s an increasing expectation that every filing is readily available. This is not the case. Accessing federal litigation documents through PACER (Public Access to Court Electronic Records) is unwieldy and expensive. The picture for the states is disjointed—some systems are robust but others non-existent. Litigation information vendors do a great service in streamlining access across jurisdictions and courts. As they seek to quantify and summarize, however, it becomes even more important to understand exactly which courts are included and excluded.

**Topical Coverage**

Some tools select cases based on topical practice areas. Docket Navigator, for example, has historically focused on patent litigation, but recently expanded to include other intellectual property topics and antitrust. Similarly, Lex Machina has incrementally added practice area classifications that impact their collection and reporting. Some vendors may have non-obvious selection criteria as well. For example, in Lex Machina the NOS code for “Contracts” only covers business-to-business, not business-to-consumer, litigation. General guidelines are useful, but if sweeping summaries are to inform decision-making, then precise understanding of the selection criteria is important.

**Court Updates**

Although we’re becoming accustomed to “push-button publishing,” connections to court systems and updates to intricate analytics systems understandably require some amount of maintenance and incur lag times. The PACER fee structure and associated pass-through costs make it impossibly expensive and technically challenging to get an up-to-the-minute picture of litigation. Consider, for contrast, Courthouse News Service’s emphasis on comprehensive court coverage and quick alerts to new litigation. Their teams have a history of careful attention to new dockets. Providing the same sort of attention to every filing in every case would be daunting—unless, at the least, courts overhaul the ways they provide data.

**Document Access**

Although the focus of many new innovations is now on analytical summary features, accessing litigation documents is still a welcome and necessary feature. A powerful benefit of analytical tools is exploring unexpected trends. Getting to the heart of those trends requires accessing and analyzing the underlying documents. Platforms that make that process easy and provide price transparency for all services have an advantage.

**Field Searching and Normalization**

Litigation has some natural and familiar axes of analysis (e.g., every case has a court, a judge, a plaintiff, etc.). How those fields are expressed in litigation documents and ingested digitally can introduce unexpected variations that frustrate comprehensive searching. The platforms must either normalize field value names or provide straightforward ways for the researcher to account for them.

**Full-Text Search**

Despite natural axes of analysis—and significant efforts to clean and normalize the data—a researcher may nonetheless have an inquiry that requires wading into the full-text of the filings. For example, Bloomberg Law is a pioneer in making dockets searchable. The company clearly separates their Litigation Analytics offering that summarizes federal litigation by discrete fields from their Dockets Search feature that allows for full-text searching of dockets and documents. Other tools and future iterations may blur results and summaries, further reinforcing the importance of information professionals’ expertise in understanding the mechanics of search processes.

**Document Analysis**

Whereas established tools such as West’s Drafting Assistant and Shepard’s BriefCheck automate the process of pulling citations and citator reports, newer tools such as Judicata’s Clerk, CaseText’s Cara, and Ross’s Document Analyzer take further steps and suggest related research items or qualitatively summarize issues in them. What they have in common, however, is using a document as the input for analysis. Although supremely efficient, this approach can gloss over the fact that they rely on a data set of litigation documents. The sophisticated systems that analyze text and wrangle cases are only as good as their underlying data set.

**Report and Export Options**

Modern data visualization tools make it easy to understand trends and manipulate the analysis in fluid ways. But those tools are largely delivered as online experiences. Some users aren’t as adept or willing to engage with the information online. Sharing that information also presents hurdles when individual accounts are required for viewing or sharing with clients or colleagues. Thus, how reports and visualizations are exported is just as important as the online presentation—maybe more so.
if the executive decision makers in an organization don’t engage online. Also, where report production is lacking, the ability to export the data can be key for creating better reports. If you can’t get a good “canned” visual out, then how can you get the data itself and do your own summary?

API Access

Litigation analytics are useful, but next-level thinking includes how to synthesize litigation information with other information needs. Whereas exporting data can be useful, connecting to the data through an API (application program interface) is more efficient. Tools such as FastCase’s Docket Alarm, CourtDrive, and CourtListener that allow API access can offer users increased ways to utilize and integrate data within their institutional environment. Legal information users are becoming more sophisticated. The tools and skills for building in-house platforms are becoming more accessible. Information professionals have the skills to be at the front of identifying sources and vendors that provide seamless, automated access to their sources and metadata.

Customization and Follow-up Service

If reporting tools are too inflexible, the analytical work may have to move in-house. As data management and visualization systems become more accessible, litigation analytics tools serve just as much as data sources as reporting tools. In some environments this is a reasonable outcome, but it may be important to consider whether you ask a question and get a customized answer—either from the portal or a person. Services such as LegalMetric, for example, have been providing customized reports for some time. Individual, bespoke reports are potentially expensive. But those evaluating such costs must consider the value of customization and the feasibility of creating these reports in-house.

The Next Level

As litigation analytics tools become more sophisticated, we expect to see them move from providing descriptive (e.g., “Judge Smith denied summary judgment motions 80% of the time last year”) to predictive results (e.g., “There is an 80% chance Judge Smith will deny the summary judgment motion you just uploaded”). New systems may use machine learning, artificial intelligence, or other as-yet-undeployed technology to recommend actions, but the underlying litigation data will undoubtedly factor into their models. Whether suggested by a human or a piece of software, any recommendation must be substantiated by the data.

Legal information professionals are already armed with the proficiencies needed to make collection decisions on litigation analytics resources. Just like other collection development assessments, users will need to take this framework and develop a personal rubric that aligns with the unique needs of their environment and users.

READ


AALL 2019 ALERT

Don’t miss “Deep Dive: The Federal and State Court Analytics Market—Should the Buyer Beware? What’s on the Horizon?” Monday, July 15 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. For more information visit bit.ly/AALL19Analytics.
A simple definition of innovation is a change that adds value. In the legal world, innovation can often take on different meanings, from offering a better solution to a problem to expanding on an already established idea and taking it in a whole new direction. After the success of last year’s Innovation Tournament and the accomplishments of the winners within the last year, the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) will host the tournament again with the hope of bringing new creative solutions to the legal community.

Leading up to the 111th AALL Annual Meeting in Baltimore, Maryland, legal information professionals were invited to showcase their innovative ideas and turn those ideas into results. AALL’s second Innovation Tournament (once again sponsored by Bloomberg Law) attracted all kinds of applicants with real, tangible solutions. In the end, three concepts made it to the final round, and their creators—John W. Adkins (director of libraries, San Diego Law Library); Ayyoub Ajmi (associate director of the law library, University of Missouri-Kansas City); and Todd T. Ito (head of instruction and outreach and lecturer in law) and Scott Vanderlin (student services librarian), both at the University of Chicago D’Angelo Law Library—presented them to a live audience and a select panel of judges during the AALL Annual Meeting.

Below we discuss the process for how applicants were selected and check in with the 2018 finalists to see how their innovative ideas are progressing.

Selecting the Finalists
Applications for the Innovation Tournament were solicited with a deadline of May 5. A sub-team made up of Annual Meeting Program Committee members from each library type—academic, private, and government—was established to
review applications and determine who would present their ideas to a live audience and panel of judges in Baltimore. Judges used the following criteria to score finalists:

- Clear articulation of the problem
- Clear articulation of the innovation
- Detailed demonstration of who will be served
- Approach is novel/unique/creative
- Information provided suggests likely successful outcomes if the innovation is implemented

Finalists were given five minutes each to pitch their innovation plans.

Judges for the live contest included: Kenton S. Brice (University of Oklahoma Law Library); Casandra Laskowski (Duke University School of Law); Katherine Lowry (BakerHostetler LLP); Andrew Weber (Library of Congress); and Melanie Heller (Bloomberg BNA).

Judges were given five minutes to ask the presenters questions about their innovation plans before taking time to debrief and choose a winner. While the judges were busy adding up their scores, audience members were asked to select the innovation that impressed them the most. Using a voting feature in the AALL Annual Meeting conference app, they determined the Audience Choice Winner.

At the conclusion of the tournament, Todd T. Ito and Scott Vanderlin were selected as the Audience Choice Winners for their “Browser Extension (Superseed) to Determine the Version of a Cited Statute” concept. Ayyoub Ajmi was chosen as the Judges’ Choice Winner for “Using CiviCRM as a Comprehensive Case Management Tool.” Although John Adkins did not win, he still went ahead with his innovation plans.

**Audience Choice Winners:**

**Todd T. Ito & Scott Vanderlin**

Browser Extension (Superseed) to Determine the Version of a Cited Statute

Todd T. Ito and Vanderlin wanted a tool to locate the exact version of a statute discussed in a legal opinion or within a journal article but were unable to find one in the current legal marketplace. So, they proposed creating a browser extension that uses an algorithm to scan the information provided in a legal opinion or journal article, such as the citation information, to determine which version of the statute is being cited. The information would then be used to check against a database of all different versions of every statute. Here, they share some insights about Superseed.

**How will “Superseed” work?**

Imagine that in 2019, you are reading a 2007 judicial opinion interpreting a statute as it applied to events that occurred in 2004, and the statute was amended in 2005 and then again in 2009. If you are using a service such as Westlaw or Lexis, the link to the statute will send you to the most current version of the statute, which could be drastically different from the version in force in 2004 when the relevant events occurred or in 2007 when the case was decided.

Using the example above, Superseed would determine—from the language and citation information provided in the opinion—that the version of the statute at issue in the case is the version that was in force in 2004. The tool will then use information in the Credits or History note of the statute, as well as other available information, to surface the version that was in force in 2004, rather than the current version.

**Who is your primary audience?**

Due to our intimate familiarity with the frustrations of parsing different code versions, we anticipate that the most appreciative contingent of our audience will be fellow law librarians. With that said, our audience is truly anyone who regularly does legal research.
What have you learned since implementing your innovation?
We are currently still in the process of coding and testing new versions of our extension, so our learning process is still very much ongoing. I think that it’s fair to say that we have learned more than we ever thought we would know about APIs (application program interfaces), browser specifications, responsive design, usability, and government information. In short, we’ve learned how much we didn’t know, and are still learning just how much there still is to know about implementing even a relatively straightforward tool such as ours. We’ve also learned how expensive good coders can be.

What has surprised you during the implementation process?
I can’t say that it has been a surprise, exactly, but we have consistently been amazed and humbled by the creativity and generosity of our colleagues within the law librarian community. We have had so many people reach out to us offering help or encouragement for no other reason than that they saw our presentation and liked our idea. Again, not a surprise, but definitely reinforcement of the fact that we have great people all around us in this profession.

Have you been able to measure the value of your innovation?
Yes and no. We have received overwhelmingly positive feedback from fellow law librarians who recognize the need for a tool that fills the research gap that we have identified. To us, the value of our innovation is clear, and is reinforced every time we speak to a colleague about what we are trying to accomplish. However, at this point we have not been able to gauge the reactions of actual users due to the lack of a working prototype.

What’s next?
Profit? I think we’re both hoping for someone to make us an offer we can’t refuse.

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**Judges’ Choice Winner:**

**Ayoub Ajmi**

**Using CiviCRM as a Comprehensive Case Management Tool**

After successfully deploying CiviCRM (an open source web-based constituent relationship management system) at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) School of Law in spring 2017 as an event management and online payment platform for the Continuing Legal Education program, Ajmi and his team have extended its use to manage more than 20,000 contact records, the adjunct faculty program, the Bar Preparation program, and the Law Review journal membership. The platform is also now used to securely process online payments for the Law Foundation, the Study Abroad programs, the On-Demand Learning programs, and the Law Review subscriptions. Since its deployment, the law school has saved hundreds of hours of administrative work and more than $150,000 in payment fees.

However, CiviCRM, much like many open source solutions, can be challenging for unskilled users. The lack of quick and direct support can also prevent small organizations from adopting it. Currently, there are seven clinics at the UMKC School of Law that offer real-life experience to law students while helping hundreds of low-income clients every semester:

1. Appellate Practice Clinic
2. Child and Family Services Clinic
3. Guardian and Litim Clinic
4. Entrepreneurial Legal Services Clinic
5. Incubator Clinic
6. Kansas City Tax Clinic
7. The Midwest Innocence Project

At the time of Ajmi’s presentation, only one clinic was using a commercial case management system. However, the system was not tailored for education and is missing several features needed by the clinic. The other clinics are still operating largely as a paper-filled office with some tasks conducted using off-the-shelf consumer grade solutions.

In his application, Ajmi noted that “My goal is to package CiviCRM as a comprehensive low-cost case management tool and promote its use among law school clinics.”

**What challenge/issue does your Comprehensive Case Management Tool address?**

My goal is to build and deploy an easy-to-use case management system for law school clinics. While other commercial applications come with a high level of security, for some clinics and some
institutions, having their sensitive data stored locally is also very important. An open source program provides the peace of mind of knowing how your data is being handled and where it is being stored. Another challenge this system will address is the flexibility and customization lacking on every other commercial platform. During our implementation, we were able to customize the case management system to fit the needs of all of our clinics. We were able to build custom reports that provide valuable data to clinic directors and administrators. We were also able to create new activities and workflows tailored to each individual clinic. In addition, we supplemented the case management system with additional learning management features—things we couldn’t achieve with any commercial alternative.

**How does your innovation work?**
The system we built is based on an existing platform called CiviCRM. CiviCRM comes with several extensions, such as CiviEvents, CiviContribution, and also CiviCase. Our system relies primarily on the later.

Our first task was to simplify the user interface by disabling features that we are not using while providing the user with a simple yet powerful system. By the time we started working on the project, we discovered that a nonprofit organization based in the UK funded the development of a new user interface and made it available to the community. Implementing this new user interface saved us time and allowed us to move to the customization phase and to build additional features that we hope we can bring to a stable stage and share back with the community. The features we developed include:

- **Activity Timer:** We added a timer that automatically starts when a new activity is created. This allows for an accurate reporting on time spent on each task as well as the overall time spent on the case.
- **Productivity Report:** This report is available to students to allow them to easily track time spent on activities and cases.
- **Pro Bono Report:** This report generates the dollar amount or value of the work provided by each member of the clinic based on a predefined rate.
- **Expense Activity and Report:** This is a new activity created to track expenses associated with cases.
- **Demographic Report:** This report tracks the demographic distribution of the clients based on gender, age, race, household income, number of people in household, veteran status, and other parameters that can be customized for each clinic.
- **Reference Request Logger:** This is a new activity created to log library reference transactions for pro se users.

We also spent several hours fixing bugs and tweaking access permissions to accommodate each clinic.

**Who is your primary audience?**
We are currently beta testing the case management system with two clinics: the Child and Family Services Clinic and the Library Pro Se Clinic. This limited deployment provides us with valuable customer validation and field testing. The feedback we received is tremendous and we are continually improving the system.

In its current state, we consider this system as a proof of concept. We hope we can have enough support to continue the development and share our progress with other schools and clinics.

**What have you learned since implementing your innovation?**
While working with our clinics, I learned more about the value of the work they do. Some clinics have been providing free and outstanding services to our community for decades but they have never benefited from the new technologies and tools available to their for-profit counterparts.

Making the system available to end users dealing with real cases is the best way to identify bugs and issues we overlooked during the development. We also identified several new features that could be further improved. While the system is flexible and can be customized for each clinic, we learned it is more beneficial to us at this stage to focus on few features and build a stable and consistent version that will accommodate most of our needs.

**What has surprised you during the implementation process?**
The most challenging part of this process was to coordinate time with students and clinic directors to work on the case management system. Since most law students are taking a full load of classes, it is very difficult to have them work on this project or share their feedback unless it is part of a course or an assignment. Fortunately, our school is committed to providing students with various experiential learning opportunities through our clinics and externships. The idea of building a new case management system was exciting to some students as it allowed them to see behind the scenes of one of the most important tools in any law practice. Finally, in addition to the generous prize we received from Bloomberg Law during the 2018 AALL Innovation Tournament, we were able to secure additional funding thanks to the support of our dean and library director.

**Have you been able to measure the value of your innovation?**
The built-in reports we developed will provide us with new data and analytics that we were not able to capture in the past. We hope we can learn from them and showcase the value of the work that our clinics provide to the community.

From prior experiences using CiviCRM and other open source platforms, we already know that this system will improve our productivity, secure our data, and save us money.

**What’s next?**
Our ultimate goal is to package the case management system as an easy-to-deploy extension that can be installed on any content management system, such as Drupal, WordPress, and Joomla. Reaching this goal requires additional testing and improvement
that we hope we can achieve with the help of our clinics.

We are also considering applying for a grant to complete the development and perhaps provide a hosting and support option for other law school clinics interested in this tool. It is important to note that we are not trying to compete with commercial case management systems. We value the work they do and we appreciate the generosity of those who provide these powerful tools to law school students. However, students will also benefit from learning about alternative systems, especially if they can be involved in building and improving them.

And, in conclusion, I would like to invite anyone who is interested in supporting or learning more about this initiative to get in touch with us. In the true spirit of free and open source initiative to get in touch with us. In the true spirit of free and open source software, we want to talk to you and share our progress with you—for the greater benefit of all of our communities.

**Finalist:**

**John W. Adkins**

**Access-to-Justice Incubator**

Looking for a cost-effective way to increase access to legal representation and the courts for underserved populations, Adkins proposed creating the Access-to-Justice Incubator. The incubator will be housed inside the Superior Court itself, in the San Diego Law Library’s South Bay branch, to help new lawyers open cost-conscious firms and bring legal help to those in need. His premise—giving pro se litigants access to low- or no-cost legal representation—would allow them to pursue their claims with the advice of counsel.

This start-up incubator would be hosted by local American Bar Association (ABA)-accredited law schools in San Diego County and aimed at recent law school graduates who want to start their own firms. Participants would receive up to a year’s worth of advanced legal and entrepreneurial training through mentorship with established lawyers. They would also be provided with office space, access to legal print resources, legal databases and research sites, restrooms, kitchen privileges, and a relaxation lounge via the law library. In exchange, participants would devote some of their billable hours to providing pro bono legal services for indigent clients in San Diego County.

**What challenges/issues does your Access-to-Justice Incubator address?**

Our first challenge is taking an abstract concept and getting buy-in from community leaders. Although other county law libraries have created self-help centers, to our knowledge, this would be the first to reside inside the courthouse. Sacramento County Public Law Library, Kern County Law Library, Harris County, and many others serve as great blueprints for success.

**How will it be implemented?**

A blue-ribbon committee of legal community leaders met at the end of February to discuss the concept and mechanics of the proposal. The committee is chaired by a Superior Court judge and the Court’s family law facilitator. Members include president of the county bar and its referral service, a city attorney, representatives from nonprofit legal aid providers, and the legal clinic directors from three ABA-accredited law schools. The committee has been briefed about the work done in other county law libraries to create hybrid opportunities for legal services between the law library and legal aid providers.

**Who is your primary audience?**

The self-help center will serve the population of the South Bay region, many of whom are Spanish-speaking immigrants. The U.S./Mexico border is a short distance away, so immigration law topics are likely to be a priority.

**What have you learned since implementing your innovation?**

This is a work in progress. With a recent infusion of funds from the state legislature for increasing access to justice projects, the law library is ready for whatever the committee decides to implement.

**What has surprised you during the implementation process?**

I was surprised by how eager and responsive people in the legal community were to the invitation to serve on this committee. There was a lot of enthusiasm, which I hope translates into energy, momentum, and eventually success.

**Have you been able to measure the value of your innovation?**

The self-help center concept will be invaluable to the people of San Diego County, especially Spanish-speakers. Value will be measured by number of users, user survey feedback, and focus groups, along with interviews with attorneys and their supervisors.

**What’s next?**

The committee will assess the incubator’s potential for a host of possibilities. With the input of court staff and judges, bar leaders and nonprofits, as well as the city attorney and legal educators, we are heading in the right direction. Which way is up? We are finding out with every step we take toward the creation of this new public legal service center, and we are looking forward to the day we open our doors to expand access to people seeking justice in San Diego County.

**THE NEXT INNOVATION**

Are you in the process of developing a new, innovative, and implementable idea to improve your workplace? We want to hear from you! Submit your idea by May 6 for a chance to win one of two $2,500 prizes to help you put your plan into action. Submit your application at bit.ly/AALL19innovation.

**READ**

More than a decade ago, when PowerNotes founder and CEO Wilson Tsu was in law school, he typically saved online research he planned to use in papers by copying and pasting it into a Microsoft Word document. More than half of law school students still start the writing process that way, according to a survey Tsu conducted—a method he says isn’t ideal. If source material gets misplaced, for instance, plagiarism issues can occur. Reorganizing items can also seem cumbersome because more copying and pasting is required.

Convinced there had to be a more efficient way to transition from the research phase to writing, Tsu, who previously worked as a process engineer, launched LearnLeo, a suite of free productivity tools for law school students, in 2012. In 2016, he added a new element to the platform—LearnLeo Research, a proprietary note-taking technology that allowed users to save webpage text under different topic headings. As they added items, an outline was automatically created, which they could reorganize by dragging and dropping items into place.

After realizing students in a variety of academic programs might benefit from using LearnLeo Research’s functionality, Tsu began offering it as a separate product called PowerNotes in 2017.

Today, in addition to selling PowerNotes directly to law schools, undergraduate institutions, and individual subscribers, the company is currently piloting the program to U.S. high schools. During a recent visit to PowerNotes’ loft-style headquarters in Chicago’s Greektown neighborhood, AALL spoke to Tsu about his inspiration for creating the product, how law students use it, and...
the company's plans to eventually offer PowerNotes to a broader legal industry audience.

**How does PowerNotes differ from LearnLeo, the initial solution you launched?**

PowerNotes was originally part of LearnLeo, which had three other components: a case briefing app that allowed students to use our mark-up technology to take notes and highlight their case materials; another part that taught pre-law students how to read and brief a case before law school; and a piece intended to help students research law firms after their first year. They could also get summaries of the top 200 firms in the country to help them decide where to apply.

The LearnLeo case briefing app and PowerNotes have similar interfaces, except PowerNotes can be used on almost any digital content. LearnLeo’s mark-up and annotation tools can only be used on content that’s been saved to LearnLeo.

**How would you describe PowerNotes’ value proposition?**

In law school, I found there were aspects of research and writing that weren’t taught. A lot of law librarians mainly teach students how to use Lexis and Westlaw effectively, but what are the next steps before you actually start writing? My feeling is educators assume you have a certain amount of paper-writing knowledge because you are in law school, but students aren’t necessarily taught how to manage the writing process in undergrad.

If you look at how students approach it, and how I did, you find something on Westlaw or Lexis, copy and paste it into a Word document, and keep doing that until you think you have enough research to start writing. The process is distracting; every time you need to save something, you need to leave the source you are reading and paste it into another application—and the Word document looks like a disaster. Once you’ve copied and pasted things, how do you organize them? We surveyed law students, and they actually like reading, learning, and formulating arguments. They see saving quotes and citation information, organizing research, and outlining as the tedious and cumbersome aspects of research and writing. The thing that’s hardest for them is going from research to writing; they don’t know how to make that transition from research to the first draft.

With PowerNotes, we set up a process to handle the mechanical aspects of research and organization. There is also citation support; you just highlight something in Westlaw, Lexis, Bloomberg Law, and HeinOnline, and it will pull a citation automatically. We didn’t create the process by ourselves; we had feedback from librarians and writing professors.

**What type of input did law librarians provide?**

Many aspects of PowerNotes have been influenced by librarians. For instance, librarians really wanted to add citation support, so we added that as part of our core functionality.

**How is the product priced?**

Individuals can buy it and set up an unlimited number of research projects, or they can set up one project for free to try it out. You pay a price—$5 a month, or $50 a year—for unlimited access. We also have institutional subscriptions, depending on the size of the law school and the number of students. We have four tiers: the biggest is 900-plus, down to 300 or less students. We charge a different amount per tier.

**How did you introduce PowerNotes to law schools?**

We haven’t spent any money on digital marketing; we push it through direct sales to schools. Our individual users typically find us through Google or word of mouth.
In the beginning, we just let librarians roll it out how they wanted; some
did a good job, some did not. Some
paid for PowerNotes without doing
much with it. We try to meet with
schools and say, “These are the things
other schools have found are effective.”
Ideally, we want to partner with law
libraries and first-year writing programs
to launch PowerNotes. When all stu-
dents are presented with PowerNotes
in class, we typically get a 95 percent
adoption rate. That’s our preferred way
of launching now, but not all law librar-
ians have that relationship with writing
professors, so we try to approach both.
Once it gets going in a certain way, it
just takes off.

One of our biggest ongoing issues
has been trying to get at least a yearly
call with our partner law libraries. Some
are way more accessible; sometimes you
get nothing. Even then, we keep sending
usage data to them every year.

How have users reacted to
PowerNotes since its introduction?
Professors and librarians like it because
it forces students to be more organized
early on in the writing process when
they’re doing research. It makes you
think about how the source relates to
what you are writing about, biting off
a little chunk at a time. We’ve received
a lot of testimonials from students who
didn’t realize the time they’d save not
stopping to copy and paste.

Undergrad and online education
users have also found other applications
for the product. We looked at the law
school data and noticed that students
were using PowerNotes with Canvas
and Blackboard for general note-taking.
They can highlight something in the
syllabus, add information from links
and attachments and the internet, and
pull it all into a PowerNotes outline. We
thought that was pretty awesome.

Do law firms use PowerNotes?
We know there are solo practitioners
and small firms that use it. What people
do or don’t use it for, we don’t know, but
they’re out there. We’re cloud-based;
all notes and highlights are stored in
the cloud. That’s not a huge deal for
students—in fact, most have come to
expect it—but it is a big deal for big
firms. A lot of it is comfort level. We’ve
asked firms for their cloud security per-
spective; that’s where things stall. But
it’s something we will be working on in
the future.

Are there any international users?
There aren’t a lot, but we’ll get a law
student in Australia or England who
asks a question or two. Anyone can use
it—even if they aren’t doing serious
research.

A bunch of people use it at muse-
uums; we ended up providing it for free
to nonprofits. There are a good number
in Chicago that use it. We work with
the Chicago Bar Foundation to get the
word out about it locally.

In the beginning, in 2017, our user
base was about 90 percent law school
students; that’s shifted to probably
half undergraduates because there are
more colleges and universities than law
schools, and the student populations are
much larger.

Has anything else changed since
PowerNotes launched?
I hear this from other startups, too—
in the beginning, you don’t have the
money or resources to hire the best
people. You hire whomever you can.
We started out with a couple of people
right out of school and Big Law refu-
gees willing to work at a start-up they
believed in for less money. Those were
our people up until the end of 2017;

2018 was a transition year for us. We
were beginning to understand who we
really needed from a personnel stand-
point, and what we had wasn’t it.

We got into law schools pretty
quickly because law librarians are pretty
much the only people buying something
like this. Reaching out to colleges and
universities took a lot more time and
energy. Their libraries are huge—they
have IT, tech, education components;
we knew we needed to hire professional
salespeople who had experience selling
to undergraduate institutions. We have
three salespeople selling to undergrad-
uate schools now. They’re not the same
people we had when we were only
selling to law schools.

What’s next for PowerNotes?
Law schools are asking when we will
come out with a mobile app—some
schools give an iPad to all students. I
don’t think having dedicated terminals
in a library is the future; students are
going to use their own device, a tablet
or phone. As younger students get older,
there’ll be even more mobile device
usage. That’s going to change research
over the next 10 years.

Most people don’t do research on
mobile devices now because of the bad
user experience, but soon you’ll be able
to enjoy research on tablets and phones
with PowerNotes, if we get the interface
where it needs to be. Everyone will have
their own account that’s cloud-based
and mobile-friendly. We plan to build a
way to access all research engines from
a mobile device, and everything would
be saved in the cloud—you could go
to a device or desktop computer, and
it would all be there. Creating a basic
mobile app for users is one of our top
2019 goals.

POWERNOTES BY
THE NUMBERS

Year Founded: 2012
Headquarters: Chicago, Illinois
Number of employees: 6
Number of law libraries using
PowerNotes: About 25

Research + Analysis
Teaching + Training
REFERENCE DESK

Securing Buy-In

BY DOLLY M. KNIGHT, MARIBEL NASH & SCOTT VANDERLIN

You’ve come up with a way to improve services to your patrons in your organization, or maybe you’ve found a more efficient way to tackle new technology. Great—but how do you gather support and buy-in from both those within and outside of your organization? Our Reference Desk columnists offer their advice.

I’ve recently come up with a way for my team to greatly improve services we provide to our patrons, but I’m running into obstacles in bringing my vision to life. While most of my colleagues are on board, not everyone is. I’ve been approved to try it out; however, the budget I’ve been given isn’t quite what I’d hoped it would be. I also don’t have the complete buy-in from other departments outside of the library, and their support would make things a lot easier. What should I do?
Maribel: Congratulations on getting approval to try your new idea! Though you’ve not been given the budget that you might have wanted, I hope that you realize the win you’ve achieved by getting the powers that be to trust you enough to give your idea a shot. Now all you need is to have a successful trial run!

We’re not sure what your idea is, but do you know why people aren’t on board? Is it a matter of staff time, money, or both? Is there a general reluctance to try something new or to learn something new?

If possible, be creative and start with a low-budget or low-tech version of your idea and build from there. If you lack necessary technical expertise, learn or figure out how to do it yourself, or find assistance from your colleagues or an outside source.

Find out who on your team is supportive of your idea and start from there. Other departments (for example, IT, Marketing, or Facilities) may not be completely on board at an institutional level, but are there friendly individuals in those departments that you might be able to ask for a favor?

In a recent Private Law Librarians & Information Professionals Special Interest Section (PLLIP-SIS) webinar, Martin Korn, director of research knowledge services at Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton LLP, suggested finding people who are not necessarily on your staff who have skills you need, and bringing them on board. Asking them for a favor could be considered flattering, and paying them a compliment by asking them for something goes a long way. Building key relationships now could be a great start for getting not only this project, but future ideas, off the ground.

After a reasonable amount of time, I would encourage you to honestly assess how it is going. Often, the biggest obstacle to progress is the inability to let go of an idea that doesn’t work. Ask yourself: Were services actually improved? How do you know? (Try to have a pre-defined metric for determining this.) Have you won any staff or outside departments over? Are more people willing to assist going forward? If your innovation is as successful as we hope it will be, you’ll have won the buy-in from all of your stakeholders to continue on. Good luck!

Dolly: With a more modest budget and a team that is not fully on board, I encourage you to revisit your initial plan and consider if you can roll out your improvement gradually. Some programs can be initiated in one department, then moved to the rest of the library if the results speak for themselves. With regular assessments, you can determine if the project is working as you hoped, and if your assessments honestly show that the improvement isn’t giving you the results you wanted, you can work on tweaks to make it better. The scaled-down version, while not your initial goal, will give you something to start with, especially if you can start it in a department with people who are excited to try your new project.

In building a new project, as in warfare, you’re often working on multiple fronts. Getting that outside buy-in is important—what can you do to sell those outside the library on the project, as well? I would encourage you in these strategy-building initial few months to take your time figuring out how to sell the project, and to sell it well. Since you mentioned that the project is designed to improve services to users, hopefully that is a goal that everyone in your organization—whether in or outside the library—can relate to and prioritize.

Some people are always going to be wary of change, but as Maribel suggested, if you can narrow down some of the reasons for your internal colleagues’ concerns, you can build into your plans ways to alleviate their issues and build a more cohesive team going forward. Getting other people as excited for the project as you are, and then demonstrating it works the way you intended it to, will be key to long-term success for your new initiative.

Scott: Speaking as the resident voice of academia, I think it’s fair to say that law schools have not traditionally been hotbeds of change or innovation.
Institutional resistance to change may be frustratingly common, but understanding where and why this resistance originates can go a long way toward helping you find ways to effectively communicate your message and overcome obstacles.

To do that, it’s important to recognize that change is closely associated with risk, and that risk in general is something that most organizations are hard-wired to avoid. Institutional culture, the size of your organization, and the presence of visionary leaders in key positions can all help overcome the inertia of risk-avoidance, but it is ultimately up to you to present your innovation in a way that will either minimize the perceived risk, or, even better, to show why the real risk lies in not implementing your idea. To do that, a clear vision of your idea and the ability to answer questions will be crucial. Organization and planning go a long way to allay fears over perceived risk.

To give your innovative idea the best chance of finding a receptive audience, create a statement highlighting the benefits of your idea and any costs associated with its implementation. Importantly, you should also take time to highlight the opportunity cost of a failure to implement your idea. Have your processes become stagnant? Is there a foreseeable obsolescence of some equipment or software that your innovation will help mitigate? This doesn’t have to come off like you’re strong-arming anyone (e.g., “Pretty little ILS you’ve got there. It sure would be a shame if anything happened to it.”), but it may be that not everyone has fully considered the relative risk of not innovating. When crafting your pitch, be sure to include a detailed statement that includes what you are attempting to accomplish, a description of your innovation implementation process, any resources that you will need to be successful, and how your innovation will affect various stakeholders in your organization.

Those who are either in charge or personally invested in the status quo will always be resistant to change. If you allow for that from the earliest stages of your push to implement change, you will be better situated to deal with resistance when it comes. You have your job for a reason, and part of that includes some measure of trust in your judgment. Show everyone involved that their trust is well-placed by telling a story that ends in a positive return on investment.

After that, you just need the thing to actually work … Good luck!
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The 2019 AALL Management Institute was held March 28-30 in Chicago. The Institute, featuring organizational development consultant Maureen Sullivan, provided managers with skills to help them excel in their roles, support organizational strategy, and solve business issues. During a follow-up survey, participants were asked what outcomes/practices they planned to adopt as a result of the AALL Management Institute. Here’s what a few of them had to say:

- Carve out time to stay current on trends in the field
- Implement approaches to conflict resolution
- Implement the SOAR method instead of SWOT, focusing on strengths not weaknesses
- Delegate more lower level/repetitive work
- Engage with law school faculty more frequently and in new ways
- Utilize the client/coach/observer exercise
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- Reach out to practice group leaders for an invitation to demonstrate the resources the firm has to offer
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SPEAKER
Risa Mish is professor of practice of management at the Johnson Graduate School of Management. She designed and teaches the MBA Core course in Critical and Strategic Thinking, and previously worked as a partner in the New York City law firm of Collazo Carling & Mish LLC, where she represented management clients on a wide range of labor and employment law matters.

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