

Research on a Dime: Effective Authoritative Sources for the Budget-Minded

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LAWYER’S USE OF ONLINE RESEARCH	2
LEGAL RESEARCH ON THE ‘NET.....	3
OFFERS FROM STATE/LOCAL BAR ASSOCIATIONS	6
CITATORS	6
PRIMARY LAW FROM THE STATES.....	6
INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES	6
EMERGING TRENDS.....	7
ONLINE RESEARCH - DON'T FORGET THE PUBLIC LIBRARY	7
BLOGS.....	7
BROWSER TOOLBARS.....	8
WEB BROWSER SEARCH	9
WEB BROWSER EXTENSIONS	9
METASEARCH ENGINES/AGGREGATORS	9
CREATE PERSONALIZED SEARCH ENGINES	10
DIRECTORIES	11
RESEARCH FOLDERS AND DESKTOP SEARCH.....	11
ONLINE “FAVORITES”	13
WEB LINK AND CONTENT MANAGEMENT.....	13
RESEARCH NOTEBOOKS.....	14

Today’s lawyers face an array of electronic information tools. We’ve moved beyond the basics to a universe of information now available on the Internet. But what’s needed to cope with that information is an understanding of strengths and limitations, of realities and myths, and a recognition that both today and for the foreseeable future lawyers will exist with a multiplicity of tools, conventional print, online, CD-Rom and web-based resources. The information that lawyers will need is not always available free of charge. Understanding where to spend your dollars on research and information is critical.

LAWYER’S USE OF ONLINE RESEARCH

Annually the American Bar Association Legal Technology Resource Center surveys ABA member lawyers in private practice about their use of technology. In 2008 over 5000 lawyers responded and the results were published in a six volume set. An entire volume is devoted to the topic of Online Research. Almost all of the respondents (96%) conduct legal research online. Fifty percent go to a fee-based resource first when starting an online legal research project; eleven percent go to a state bar sponsored free legal research site, 24% head to a general search engine and only six percent go to a legal-specific search engine. While few respondents overall went to a firm resource such as an intranet or a portal first (5%), those from large firms (100 or more attorneys) were more likely to use that type of resource first (15%).

Eighty nine percent of respondents conduct legal research using free online resources; this figure is higher than in previous years (73% in the 2004-2005 survey, 72% in 2003 and 73% in the 2002 survey). A large majority of respondents (87%) also uses fee-based online resources to conduct legal research. Almost three quarters (71%) of respondents have a negotiated flat rate fee structure for their online legal research provider, even with the 2007 survey, but more than in

the 2006 survey (55%). While only 3% of total respondents had a pay-as-you-go fee structure, 11% of solos were among those respondents. Respondents were asked what methods they used to bill online legal research costs to clients; 38% said at cost, consistent with previous years' surveys, while 27% said they don't bill research costs back to their clients, consistent with the 2007 and 2006 surveys, but higher than the 2003 survey (14%). Solos are much more likely to incorporate cost into their hourly rate (18%) or they simply not bill for online legal research (27%).

The number of respondents who regularly use print resources for legal research has gone down in the past three years; in the 2003 survey, 75% regularly used print resources; that number is down to 52% in the current survey. The number of occasional users has gone up from 19% in 2003 to 34% in the current survey. Fewer respondents than ever are using CD-ROMs regularly, with almost as many saying they never use CD-ROMs (23%) as use them regularly 13%. Regular use of free Internet or online services has remained relatively consistent at 52%, as has regular use of fee-based online services at 65%.

As lawyers use online resources, especially free websites, with increasing frequency to do legal research, the necessity of understanding how to do reliable, accurate and expedient online research becomes vital.

LEGAL RESEARCH ON THE 'NET

When using the Internet to conduct free legal research it is best to use focused legal research sites to start the project. Even then, the user must be aware of accuracy, authority, and whether the resource is up-to-date. Some of the best online legal research resources provide pathfinders or bibliographies to help the research get started. Always remember the mnemonic from the American Association of Law Libraries – Just ASK a Law Librarian:

Jurisdiction - Federal or State, Court or administrative, regulatory or legislative, or a combination?

Useful Tips - don't recreate the wheel! Has this research been done?

Scope of Research - How extensive should the search be?

Terms of Art - Determine and define search terms, synonyms, similar concepts

Acronyms - Look them up, find out what they mean

Sources - Any secondary treatments? A treatise, law review articles?

Key Cost Restraints - How much can you bill the client?

Some of the best free online resources are hosted by law libraries or are created by law librarians. Some of the resources online include:

GLIN – THE GLOBAL LEGAL INFORMATION NETWORK

<http://www.glin.gov/>

Hosted, prepared, and maintained by the Law Library of Congress, this resource provides a searchable, full-text online database with laws, legislative records, judicial decisions, and legal literature. The Global Legal Information Network (GLIN) is a public database of laws, regulations, judicial decisions, and other complementary legal sources contributed by governmental agencies and international organizations. These GLIN members contribute the official full texts of published documents to the database in their original language. Each document is accompanied by a summary in English and subject terms selected from the multilingual index to GLIN. All summaries are available to the public, and public access to full texts is also available in participating jurisdictions.

Research on a Dime: Effective
Authoritative Sources for the Budget-
Minded
April 3, 2009



LII – CORNELL’S LEGAL INFORMATION INSTITUTE

<http://www.law.cornell.edu/>

The Legal Information Institute (LII) is a research and electronic publishing activity of the Cornell Law School, founded in 1992. The Institute publishes electronic versions of core materials in numerous areas of the law both online and packaged for download -- ranging from the Constitution to the Uniform Commercial Code. It maintains this Internet site and its many resources.

FINDLAW

<http://www.findlaw.com>

FindLaw, published by Thomson West, is the highest-trafficked free legal Web site, providing a comprehensive set of legal resources on the Internet for legal professionals. Their resources include Web search utilities, cases and codes, legal news, an online career center, and community-oriented tools, such as a secure document management utility, e-mail newsletters, and message boards.

LEXISONE

<http://www.lexisone.com>

LexisONE is published by LexisNexis. While it does not have Canadian or international legal research resources, it does host the most recent 10 years of caselaw for most US jurisdictions and the entire body of published opinions from the US Supreme Court. This database is searchable by keyword, and can be restricted to judge, parties, and jurisdiction. Users can also enter a citation. In addition to caselaw, LexisONE hosts online forms, headline news, and a legal directory.

PRECYDENT

<http://www.precydent.com/>

PreCydent is a free legal search engine in “Beta” release. PreCydent is ambitiously designed for several legal research tasks, as revealed through links above the search bar on the main search pages: searching through opinions, statutes, and GPO documents, searching for lawyers, searching through PreCydent and user-submitted documents, and searching through links to legal information blogs and websites (the Links link). There are also citator functions in PreCydent, which have been reviewed by Bonnie Shucha of the University of Wisconsin Law Library at http://www.law.wisc.edu/blogs/wisblawg/2008/05/review_of_free_citators_availa.html .

ALTLAW

<http://altlaw.org/>

AltLaw is a project dedicated to making federal case law available and searchable at no charge online. The site currently features US Supreme Court and Federal Appeals cases, generally from the last 10 to 15 years. A joint-project between the Columbia Law School’s Program on Law and Technology and the University of Colorado Law School's Silicon Flatirons Program, the project is in “Beta” stage, a work in progress. The site aspires to provide advanced search features such as “proximity searching, Boolean, concentration, wildcards, etc” and to increase their coverage of federal case law in the future. Like Precydent, AltLaw will attempt to provide citatory functions.

PUBLIC LIBRARY OF LAW (PLOL)

<http://www.plol.org/>

The Public Library of Law is a new free online legal research website, billed as the “largest free law library in the world,” created the makers of the commercial online legal research system Fastcase. The Public Library of Law features cases from the U.S. Supreme Court and Courts of Appeals, cases from all 50 states back to 1997, federal statutory law and codes from all 50 states, regulations, court rules, constitutions, and other legal information.

The Public Library of Law lacks the breadth, depth, and many of the advanced features of commercial legal research services like Lexis and Westlaw. As such, it may be best viewed as a free starting point for legal research, to be followed up in more comprehensive sources.

LLRX – LAW LIBRARIAN’S RESOURCE EXCHANGE

<http://www.llrx.com/>

LLRX.com delivers current, high quality content on a broad range of topics including: technology and legal research, a continuously updated free database links to court rules, forms and dockets, reviews of legal and non-legal websites for researchers, international and comparative law guides by authors worldwide, technology training resources, and seminar materials and presentations from leading legal and library-related technology conferences. The site has an email update feature to be alerted of new articles when they are posted.

ZIMMERMAN’S LEGAL RESEARCH GUIDE

<http://www.lexisnexis.com/infopro/zimmerman/>

Zimmerman’s Guide is the brainchild of Andrew Zimmerman, a law librarian with 10+ years of research experience, along with help and input from a bevy of other law librarians. Continuously updated, the guide provides encyclopedic entries on everything from “Texas” to “Blue Sky Laws”. It covers states, federal jurisdictions, popular Acts, associations, practice areas, and much more. Replete with “see” and “see also” references, this heavily linked database offers a

Research on a Dime: Effective
Authoritative Sources for the Budget-
Minded
April 3, 2009



description, research resources, and helpful hints for each entry. For instance, the entry for “Antitrust Law” provides a description, research resources, published works that compile the law, database resources, etc. Anytime a researcher is faced with tackling unfamiliar terrain, Zimmerman’s comes to the rescue!

The structure of the online Guide is very simple. Internal jumplinks to each letter of the alphabet and “see” references provide the initial navigation. There is a search, which can be restricted to “heading”. Any legal researcher, or anyone unfamiliar with this great resource, should go take a look. If you don’t have an experienced law librarian handy, this site will help you get your research started

OFFERS FROM STATE/LOCAL BAR ASSOCIATIONS

Your state bar association may also offer members-only access to case law and other materials. Many states have licensed either Fastcase or joined the Casemaker consortium as a member benefit. Depending on your bar’s participation, you may have state or national coverage, CLE materials, even practice rules and jury instructions.

CITATORS

For those who are using state bar offerings such as Fastcase or free web-based legal research databases, the need for a citator that includes citing opinions, legislation, law reviews and other secondary treatment *and* provides treatment has yet to be filled. There is, however, transactional-based pricing available for several Lexis and Westlaw searches and features, including transaction-based Shepards and KeyCite. You can also subscribe to Shepard’s Citation Services alone or check out software/services like WestCheck that extracts citations out of a word processing document and runs a West KeyCite report, plus verifies correct citation format.

PRIMARY LAW FROM THE STATES

How trustworthy are state-level primary legal resources on the Web? The American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) recently announced the publication of the State-by-State Report on Authentication of Online Legal Resources that answers this very important and timely question. The comprehensive report examines the results of a state survey that investigated whether government-hosted legal resources on the Web are official and capable of being considered authentic.

State-by-State Report on Authentication of Online Legal Resources
<http://www.aallnet.org/aallwash/authenreport.html>

Keep in mind that some jurisdictions have turned their case law publishing over to a commercial publisher. California state case law is available for free through a special LexisNexis site (<http://www.lexisnexis.com/clients/CACourts/>). Alaska case law (<http://government.westlaw.com/akcases/>) and Kentucky Court Rules (<http://government.westlaw.com/linkedslice/default.asp?SP=KYR-1000>) are available from similar, publicly-accessible Westlaw sites.

INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES

Research on a Dime: Effective
Authoritative Sources for the Budget-
Minded
April 3, 2009



Foreign law is increasingly available on the Web. Cornell's Legal Information Institute has lent its name to a growing list of LII's from other countries. WorldLII (<http://www.worldlii.org>) can search and aggregate results from most of the LIIs and you can restrict results by geographic area. Coverage will vary depending upon the jurisdiction.

Some of the LIIs have developed substantial sites, so if you are researching in a particular jurisdiction, you may want to go directly to that country's LII if it exists. Canada's CanLII (<http://www.canlii.org>) includes case law, statutes, and regulations, as well as a citator (known as note up in Canada) and point-in-time legislative comparisons.

EMERGING TRENDS

The impact of free online primary law has been felt by the commercial legal publishers and they are adapting their business to take advantage of Web technology and their extensive coverage. Lexis has developed LexisWeb, a Web search engine that resembles Google in its simplicity but that searches both free Web content as well as information in the LexisNexis databases (<http://www.lexisweb.com>). In addition to your search results, LexisWeb returns search "facets", that enable you to quickly restrict your results list to the most relevant items, by geography, citations, terms, and the like. Thomson-Westlaw released a similar product called Thomson WebPlus but it has become a subscriber-only resource.

Another development is a technical resource called an API. This application programming interface allows access to data without actually visiting the database. Fastcase.com provides a case law API on its Web site. Other Web sites can incorporate the API, and when you search their site, it will return applicable results from Fastcase as well. For example, use Fastcase's querystring API to search by keywords or a citation and it will return a list of search results. Want to access one? You can pay as you go at \$4.99 per document. As more legal research companies create these sorts of add-ons, and other sites use them, you may find access to inexpensive legal research in unexpected places.

ONLINE RESEARCH - DON'T FORGET THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Looking for company information for competitive intelligence or client development? Old news stories? Journals?

Don't forget about the local public library. Many libraries now offer extensive online research databases that can be accessed from home or office with a library ID number. The best part about these services is that they are free so may provide an economical start to research when the bottom line is a concern.

The LTRC has [created a list](#) of links to some local libraries. It is by no means comprehensive so please contact your local library, or look for it online, to see what resources are available to you as a patron.

BLOGS

Blogs, or weblogs, are a new way to get legal research information and current awareness. Many lawyers are blogging, providing commentary on practice area specific information. Some very good blogs provide legal research information and tips.

INTERALIA

<http://www.inter-alia.net/>

Since 2002 Tom Mighell's legal research blog InterAlia has provided a review of the Blawg of the Day, in addition to legal research, web 2.0 and collaboration technology news and updates. The updates are available via RSS feed, or subscribe to the compiled "Internet Legal Research Weekly", an email newsletter compiling the best of the weeks updates.

BESPACIFIC

<http://www.bespacific.com/>

BeSpacific offers daily law and technology news with links to reliable primary and secondary sources on e-government, copyright, privacy, government documents, cybercrime and ID theft, the Patriot Act, and freedom of information, etc. The archives cover entries back to September 2002. Users can subscribe via email or RSS feed.

ABA SITE-TATION

<http://www.lawtechnology.org/site-tation>

Hosted by the staff at the American Bar Association's Legal Technology Resource Center, Site-tation provides information about legal research tools and websites of interest to attorneys.

Updates are available through RSS or users can subscribe to monthly compilations sent via email.

SLAW

<http://www.slaw.ca>

A Canadian-centric legal blog that discusses research and related legal topics, its postings range well into legal research developments in the U.S. and other foreign jurisdictions.

ROBERT AMBROGI'S LAW SITES

<http://www.legaline.com/lawsites.html>

The tagline reads "tracking new and intriguing Web sites for the legal profession", which this blog has been doing since 2002. Ambrogi reviews new legal research sites, social networking tools, web 2.0 and online marketing phenomena.

BROWSER TOOLBARS

Internet browsers, such as Firefox and Internet Explorer, allow research access to the information on the World Wide Web. Search engines and directories have developed toolbars that install as part of the browser for easy access to their services, without the user actually having to navigate to the search engine itself. Additionally, toolbars add additional functionality from stock tickers to form fillers to spell checkers.

Research on a Dime: Effective
Authoritative Sources for the Budget-
Minded
April 3, 2009

Popular toolbars, such as Google's toolbar and the Dogpile toolbar allow user to save search history, customize the look and functionality, and search different resources all from one place. Google's new toolbar offers enhancements like pop-up blocking and bookmarks, while the metasearch Dogpile toolbar allows users to run a search against many different search engines and directories. LexisNexis offers a toolbar that allows users to search LexisNexis directly from the browser. Toolbars are available for a growing number of search engines. Look under "about" or "tools" in your favorite search engine to see if it offers a toolbar. Many toolbars are only available for Microsoft's Internet Explorer, so make sure to check the system requirements if you are using an alternate browser.

WEB BROWSER SEARCH

Search toolbars have been around for awhile but more recently the most popular Web browsers have been incorporating search into their own browser toolbars. Microsoft's Internet Explorer 7 and 8 and Mozilla's Firefox 2 and 3 include a customizable search bar within the browser. Click on Microsoft's IE search bar to "Find More Providers" and it will bring up a list of common Web search engines that you can add.

You can also add your own custom search. Go to a Web site that you search frequently and type the word *TEST* in (uppercase) and submit your search. Copy the Web address (URL) for the search results and return to the "Find More Providers" screen to create your own custom search. Once you add a custom search, it will be available from the search bar and you will not need to visit the site to execute a search.

WEB BROWSER EXTENSIONS

Another interesting development are browser extensions that highlight case law links. J-Link from Justis publishing in the United Kingdom for Microsoft's Internet Explorer, and Jureeka, an open-source extension for Mozilla's Firefox, will add this functionality to your Web browser. (<http://www.justispublishing.com/services/jlink.html> ; <http://www.jureeka.net>) Once you have installed the extension, you will start to see a change in your Web documents. The extension monitors the pages you look at, looking for case citation formats. When it finds one, it creates a hyperlink from the page you're reading, whether it's the New York Times or a Supreme Court opinion, and tries to link you to a free copy of the case.

METASEARCH ENGINES/AGGREGATORS

Metasearch engines allow users to search multiple search engines at once, showing results and helping researchers make sure to see all the results. New "clustering" metasearch engines show results by grouping them topically, a useful feature for very broad searches. Other interesting search engines use mindmapping, displaying results in a way that is conceptually similar to clustering, but with a different visual display.

CLUSTY

<http://clusty.com/>

A search engine from Vivisimo, Clusty simultaneously searches smaller search engines such as MSN, WiseNut, and Gigablast. It also offers .gov, NY Times, and other specific resources as part of the search. The result set can be viewed by topic, URL (.org, .gov, etc.), or source. This is a good search engine for very broad searches, or when the user wants to see results from a very wide range of resources.

DOGPILE

<http://www.dogpile.com/>

Dogpile simultaneously searches MSN, Yahoo!, Google, and Ask.com. Once the results are retrieved, the metasearch technology used by Dogpile goes to work removing duplicates and analyzing the results to help ensure the best results top the list.

LAWKT

<http://www.lawkt.com/>

An offshoot of the metasearch engine SurfWax, LawKT over 50,000 Web-based publications from 280 of the world's leading firms, and searching of major law, Web, and news sites. LawKT has a free "lite" version, but also offers enhanced searches through its Pro and Enterprise editions.

CREATE PERSONALIZED SEARCH ENGINES

ROLLYO

<http://www.rollyo.com/>

Rollyo is a Web 2.0 tool that allows registered users to "roll your own" search engine. The premise behind this tool is that sometimes you may only want to search across certain sites. Rollyo allows users to take up to 25 URLs and create a "searchroll". The search is powered by Yahoo!, and thus uses Yahoo!'s index. For instance, you may want to quickly search across sites about information from the US Supreme Court. You could add [Oyez](#), the [Supreme Court website](#), the [SCOTUS blog](#), the ABA [Supreme Court Preview](#), and any other Supreme Court related websites. Then, you need to simply run a search to see results from only those sites.

As with other Web 2.0 applications, searchrolls are to be shared with friends and colleagues by inviting specific people to view the searchroll or by marking it public. The searchrolls can also be tagged, similar to [del.icio.us](#). Users can also create a searchroll and add that search to your own blog or website, add a searchroll to your Firefox toolbar, create searchrolls from your bookmarks/favorites, and more.

The current drawback to Rollyo is that it does not search specific directories within a domain, such as limiting a search to [www.abanet.org/tech/ltrc](#) rather than [www.abanet.org](#). The search also does not discover "deep web" or database driven content any better than Yahoo! does, as the content is effectively hidden from the search engine. That said, Rollyo is still in BETA and has a promising future.

GOOGLE CUSTOM SEARCH

<http://www.google.com/coop/cse/>

According to a recent Google estimate, the web now includes more than 1 *trillion* pages. That staggering number underlines the necessity of effective search engines: without them, the web would be useless. Users simply wouldn't be able to find the information they need in a reasonable amount of time.

Even the best search engines can cause frustration with the sheer breadth of information. Though attorneys can minimize some of these frustrations by learning search tricks or mastering a search engine's "advanced" search tools, they can also build custom search engine tailored to their needs, built using Google's Custom Search Engine tool. Similar to Rollyo, Google Custom

Research on a Dime: Effective
Authoritative Sources for the Budget-
Minded
April 3, 2009

Search Engine ("CSE") allows users to choose specific resources from the web - blogs, webpages, news sites, etc. and search only those resources, thus cutting down on the noise from the rest of the Web. Creating a Google CSR requires a free Google account. Then follow the simple steps which include filling out a set up form. The Google CSE can then be used as a standalone page or it can be embedded as a "widget" on blogs, websites, and even iGoogle homepages.

DIRECTORIES

Sites like Findlaw and Legal Information Institute are types of directories. Online directories help users to find information by working through a structure from broad term to narrower term. There are some excellent resources on the WWW maintained by researchers and librarians that can help provide a bigger picture than the narrow results of a search engine. Unlike search engines, directories are compiled by humans, not algorithms, and thus offer a different and often better approach to a topic.

LIBRARIAN'S INTERNET INDEX

<http://lii.org/>

This directory has been available almost since the dawn of the commercial Internet. Each broad topic can be followed through until a list of sites is presented. Each site has information, such as topics, description, publisher, Library of Congress subject headings, and date last visited. Each site is vetted and annotated by professional librarians around the country.

DMOZ DIRECTORY

<http://dmoz.org/>

Part of the Open Directory project, which purports to be the largest, most comprehensive human-edited directory of the Web. It is constructed and maintained by a vast, global community of volunteer editors. Users can drill down or search the directory, which offers a different perspective on topics.

RESEARCH FOLDERS AND DESKTOP SEARCH

Many of us have scanned documents, CD-ROMs with CLE materials, and other reference material or "digital assets" that we would like to be able to manage, store, and recall when needed. One simple way to harness all the research materials that you gather can be as simple as create a folder on your hard drive or network drive where you store any materials that you might want to make use of again. Simply create a folder on your computer and call it something like Reference or Library. Save the materials as you gather them to this folder. If you have a CD-ROM with CLE materials, for example, you can simply save the contents to this folder. If the documents are in Portable Document Format (PDF), you will need to verify that there is a text layer in the files so that they can be searched. If they aren't simply run Adobe Acrobat OCR or another Optical Character Recognition (OCR) program such as OmniPage Pro or Abby FineReader. By harnessing the power of OCR you can also scan articles and columns from paper publications and place them in the Reference or Library folder. Save webpages and other materials found on the web as .html by using the "save as" feature in your browser, or saving pages as .PDF.

Then, when you are looking for something, simply type your query into your desktop search engine and all of these resources are available to be searched. What is a desktop search engine? If you aren't using a desktop search engine, look at Copernic Desktop Search, X1, or Microsoft

Research on a Dime: Effective
Authoritative Sources for the Budget-
Minded
April 3, 2009

Windows Desktop Search. These programs can search within multiple file formats, at the speed of light. Of course, the added bonus is that these desktop search tools not only search the research folder, but also your entire hard drive or specified network drives. You will have a fighting chance at finding files, emails, and more on your desktop, even if you haven't been very organized. For some help comparing different desktop search tools, the Goebel Group consulting firm designed a desktop search tool matrix to compare different features and functions. You now have a valuable and easily searchable goldmine of knowledge.

Also, don't let those information-rich emails become lost in the shuffle. The latest version of Adobe Acrobat, 8.0, allows users to save entire MS Outlook email folders to a PDF package. The individual emails are accessible by date, subject, or sender in the PDF package and all attachments from the original emails remain in their original format. This is a great way to archive email messages and save to a document repository without having to worry about dealing with the .pst extensions.

ONLINE “FAVORITES”

Many of us have used our internet browsers to save “Favorites” or “Bookmarks” to keep up with, manage, and maintain links to websites. However, these browser tools are often difficult to manage, have limited functionality, and are only available to when you are sitting have access to that browser installation. Enter the new generation of favorites. These bookmarks travel with us, on the web, accessible by username and password. They are often part of the Web 2.0 applications, providing interactive features such as annotation and sharing. If your browser bookmark tool seems a little staid, try one of these revved up models.

DELICIOUS

<http://del.icio.us/>

In the early days of the Internet, Luddite pundits used to liken the web to a library where all of the books were strewn across the floor. Search directories like Yahoo! came to the rescue, but savvy Internet users continue to look for tools that further tame and organize the World Wide Web. How about an easy-to-use, free tool that organizes your own personal web preferences? del.icio.us succeeds in doing just that, and throws in a few more tricks for good measure.

del.icio.us styles itself as a "social bookmarks manager". It allows registered users to save and organize their Internet bookmarks so they can be accessed at any time, from any computer, regardless of make, model, and browser. After completing the free registration, users are shown how to drag and drop a del.icio.us bookmarklet onto their browser's toolbar. Click on that link when you want to bookmark a website. You will be quickly taken to the del.icio.us posting form, where you will find your site's name and URL already filled out. Users can simply click the save button and be automatically directed back to their site. For those who demand link organization, subject headings can also be created in the tags field on the posting form. (Keep your subject headings to one word.) The subjects are stored on the right side of the page for easy access.

del.icio.us is not only a useful tool; it is also an Internet popularity bellwether. When you save a site on del.icio.us, you can see how many other del.icio.us users have saved that same site. As an added bonus, del.icio.us is RSS friendly. While you can have a feed for your personal links, more useful is the feed for the most popular sites indexed on del.icio.us. This timely information is conveniently sent and updated in your chosen RSS reader, and savvy Internet users are guaranteed they don't miss out on the next big thing.

GOOGLE BOOKMARKS

<http://www.google.com/bookmarks/>

Another tool to save browser favorites, and have access to them wherever you can access the internet, is Google Bookmarks. Google Bookmarks works with the Google Toolbar. Simply export your Internet Explorer favorite to Google Bookmarks and then add bookmarks to Google bookmarks by clicking “add to bookmarks” from the Google Toolbar. This tool allows you to label bookmarks (similar to Gmail) and sort by labels or titles, and search through your bookmarks. If you are using a computer that doesn't have your toolbar loaded don't worry – simply login to Google via your Google Account to access your favorites from any computer.

WEB LINK AND CONTENT MANAGEMENT

Managing and accessing hyperlinks to your favorite research sites, articles, and other web content through bookmarks only solves half the problem. Content on the web tends to be

Research on a Dime: Effective
Authoritative Sources for the Budget-
Minded
April 3, 2009

ephemeral, and content is now so much more than text. There are a number of tools that allow users to manage not only the links, but also content, images, videos and much more.

FURL

<http://www.furl.net>

The challenge, of course, is keeping track of where all the information is located on the Web. Furl is a free “Web 2.0” application and offers users 5-gigabytes of online storage. Furl has a toolbar that is downloaded into Internet Explorer and when a user comes across an interesting website or article that they would like to return to, they click on the Furl It button on the toolbar. A pop-up screen allows them to add information about the site and also save it to a specific folder. The folders can then be made public or private. So if two people in an office are working on similar research they can share the resources in the folder. Because Furl is an online service it can also be accessed from any computer.

With more information becoming available on the internet for free, using an online storage service can be very beneficial to organize resources.

ESNIPS

<http://www.esnips.com>

If one of your goals is to keep better track of the great websites and information you find while conducting online research, eSnips might be the product you need to help out. eSnips is a free service that provides users with 1GB of online storage to manage links, photos, video and information found on webpages. The service works by installing a toolbar in your browser so that you can snip the content you find helpful and store it in your eSnips account.

For example, if your other goal is to take a vacation, and while searching for information on the web you come across blogs and articles about your destination, you can set up a Travel folder in eSnips to help you manage these resources. You can also make the folder accessible by another user and they will receive an update when you add content to the folder. Since eSnips is online storage, you can view your eSnips information from any computer with internet access, which makes it very handy if you use a desktop, a laptop and sometimes visit an internet cafe or use computers at the library.

RESEARCH NOTEBOOKS

Keeping a dog-eared notebook with article clippings, research notes, hyperlinks, case cites and more can now be accomplished with software. Two products allow you to make electronic notebooks, capable of doing what your paper notebook never could.

EVERNOTE

<http://www.evernote.com>

Do you write yourself notes on tiny pieces of paper, and then have to frantically search through the stack to find what you need? Cast your little pieces of paper aside: Evernote is a note-taking application that can help you stay organized. You store notes, web clippings, links, etc. on a single page (Evernote calls it "an endless roll of digital paper"). Instead of keeping notes in separate files, everything is in one place, and you can search for it in multiple ways: through categories, automatic labeling, by time and date stamps, and with keywords. You assign categories manually or automatically, and there are over 50 icons you can also assign to organize yourself visually. An icon is installed in your toolbar; you use this to cut content from the

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April 3, 2009

internet and paste it into your Evernote page -- a full link is provided along with the content. So continue jotting down those notes-- just do it digitally with Evernote!

MS ONENOTE

<http://office.microsoft.com/onenote/>

MS OneNote 2007 is part of the MS Office 2007 suite, but can be purchased for \$99 from retailers. It (like the rest of the new office suite) will work on Windows XP (SP 2) operating system, so you do not need to upgrade to Vista. OneNote is similar to Evernote and allows end users to capture, create, organize, share, and reuse content. While it works best with a tablet PC, it is still a great tool even for a standard laptop or desktop. Think of it as a series of spiral bound notebooks with pocket dividers. You can create notebooks containing folders, subfolders, and pages.

The pages in this program are “unlined” so that text, audio or video can be dropped in anywhere, allowing the user maximum control and providing a digital version of a real notebook. Users can add text, clip web content, clip any content from any MS application, insert text, audio and video files, convert handwritten notes from a table to text, and much more. You can record audio directly into OneNote, while it syncs your notes. You can export OneNote text to MS Outlook as a Task, and share portions of OneNote over a network. Users can flag notes, import content in multiple formats, even import MS Office Calendar events to create a notebook or page around the event. The program is easy to use, very intuitive, and is a great replacement for that dog-eared notebook.