Law and Order for Resource Discovery in Cyberspace*

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The Internet provides the librarian with a powerful information network service and the ability to go far beyond the restrictions of the office environment, geographical location or subject area The Internet offers the user access to numerous networked information resources, such as documents, software, databases and library catalogues There is also the opportunity to be involved in networked communication through Discussion Lists and Newsgroups

The sheer volume of information resources available via the Internet can be overwhelming It soon becomes evident after traversing the Internet a few times that locating specific information resources can prove difficult The very nature of the Internet makes browsing for resources easier than searching Browsing the Internet is a time consuming task that gives no guarantee that you will find what you are looking for Rather than wandering the Web a more structured approach to locate resources on the Internet is required This paper outlines several access points for resource discovery in the area of law on the Internet

Search Engines

The first approach for resource discovery is through using search engines Terms such as robots, wanderers, worms and spiders are also used to describe search engines, however there is a fundamental difference between a robot and a search engine Robots were the first tool designed to search the World Wide Web Robot is the term used to describe computer programs which have been designed to automatically travel the World Wide Web's hypertext structure to count and retrieve documents [1] The robot creates an indexed database of World Wide Web resources The original aim of the robot was to measure the size of the World Wide Web but it soon became apparent that there was potential to use the collected information as a means for resource discovery [2] Search engines were developed to search the databases created by robots. A user may type a query into the search engine's keyword search feature to initiate a search of the database Search engines are a useful place to begin a search for legal resources of the Internet There are several search engines available on the World Wide Web. Wide variations exist between

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1. Koster, Martijn A list of robots http://web nexor co uk/mak/doc/robots/active html
2. Stanley, Tracey Searching the World Wide Web with Lycos and InfoSeek http://www.leeds ac uk/ucs/docs/fur14/fur14.html

search features, availability of the search engine, size of the database and currency of the information Possibly the two most popular search engines are InfoSeek and Lycos Other search engines include WebCrawler, BabyOil and Open Text Web Index

Subject-Oriented Directories

The second approach is to use subject-oriented directories to locate legal information These directories have been compiled by several organisations and individuals in an attempt to organise information on the Internet There are many subject-oriented directories available and they vary in coverage, currency and ease of use[3] Standardisation between subject-oriented directories is virtually non-existent Classification of information depends on the individual indexer, so it is worthwhile selecting a directory that has been compiled by a legal professional The main difference between using subject-oriented directories and search engines is that resources indexed by a subject-oriented directory have the benefit of being evaluated and categorised by people This often results in a higher degree of relevance than the search results of a search engine which simply provides a list of sites based on the keyword appearing in the document

The major subject-oriented directories are WWW Virtual Library, Yahoo, EINET Galaxy, Global Network Navigator and BUBL WWW Information Server These subject-oriented directories index a range of topics including law There are also subject-oriented directories devoted entirely to law The Seamless Web is a commercial legal web site which provides many services to the legal profession including an index of legal resources on the Internet In Australia, David Levin's Law Page contains an extensive listing of legal resources With the growth of the World Wide Web and the increase in the number of users on the Internet, the creation of more subject-oriented directories is inevitable

Topical Guides

Legal professionals may find it useful to consult an Internet topical guide before embarking on their own legal resource discovery The Clearinghouse for Subject-Oriented Internet Resource Guides provides access to topical guides for Internet resources This site is sponsored by the University of Michigan and Argus Associates, Inc Internet users are invited to contribute their own topical guides The majority of submissions are made by librarians or library students Legal resource guides are indexed under *Government and Law* This site also provides a rating system for each topical guide

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3. Dougherty. D and Koman, R *The Mosaic Handbook for Microsoft Windows* Sebastopol CA: O'Reilly & Associates, 1994

University Law Schools

The volume of information resources indexed by many subject-oriented directories and topical guides can be quite overwhelming. For this reason it may be more effective to search for legal resources according to country. A useful starting point for locating country specific legal information is to access the home pages of university law schools. There are several reasons why this can be a useful place to start. Academic institutions have been part of the Internet for much longer than many other organisations and therefore, have been instrumental in compiling lists of legal web sites. Whilst Law School web pages are primarily aimed at students, they still offer a useful starting point for other users. There are law schools in nearly every country in the world. In most cases the primary focus of the law school is their country's legal resources. Therefore by accessing the relevant country's law school, you are most likely to find legal information pertaining to that country. Many university law schools have a web presence. I advise Internet users to select two law schools in the country relevant to their practice and use these sites as an access point for legal resource discovery. Outlined below are some of the major law schools in Commonwealth countries and the United States which provide useful legal information via the World Wide Web.

In Australia the key site for legal resources is the Australasian Legal Information Institute (AustLII) which was jointly established by the University of New South Wales and the University of Technology, Sydney. AustLII aims to place Australian legal material, including primary source material such as legislation and case law, on the Internet. The site features fulltext versions of Commonwealth Acts and High Court of Australia cases.

The University of Melbourne provides many useful links to legal resources on the Internet including links to legal sites on the World Wide Web, legal databases via the Internet and Australian Governments on the World Wide Web.

The University of Warwick CTI Technology Centre and the Sheffield Hallam University Law School is working on a project to make information about every law school in the United Kingdom available via the World Wide Web. This site provides an overview of English legal resources and Internet developments throughout the country. It also provides useful links to other Commonwealth and United States legal resources.

The University of Alberta provides a very structured web site for accessing legal resources in Canada and the United States. In New Zealand both the University of Waikato and the University of Auckland provide links to New Zealand legal information. The latter provides access to a selection of the country's legislation.

In America the Legal Information Institute from Cornell Law School provides a comprehensive listing of Internet legal resources. The focus is on United States' material, but legal links worldwide are also accessible. This site is referred to at

nearly every legal site on the Internet Many links to legal resources have mirrored Cornell's Legal Information Institute web site which gives an indication of how useful the site is to legal professionals The Indiana University maintains the Law subject-oriented directory at the World Wide Web Virtual Library

Government and Public Access Points

Throughout the world many governments and public bodies have developed a web presence which allow you to access a range of legal materials They are often a useful place to begin searching, especially if you are seeking primary sources of legal information The Australian Government home page provides links to Australian and State Government Departments and agencies This site also provides a useful access point if you are interested in state legislation The coverage of state legislation on the Internet is increasing The ACT Attorney-General's Department provides access to ACT legal information through the web site ACT LawNet The Victorian Government is undertaking a trial of publishing legislation on the Internet To date three acts are available The Supreme Court of Victoria have developed a site which makes full text copies of current criminal cases of Victoria accessible.

Governments, universities, supreme courts and libraries worldwide are working on projects independently or jointly to provide access to legal information via the Internet One of the most innovative projects to make legislation and legislative material accessible via the Internet has been the THOMAS service from the Library of Congress The University of Montreal and the Supreme Court of Canada have cooperated to make all Canadian Supreme Court rulings from 1993 onwards available via the Internet

Commercial Access Points

Legal firms and other commercial organisations are using the World Wide Web as a marketing tool Constructing a web page which combines structured information, good presentation and useful legal links to other Internet sites, encourages network users to visit your firm's home page As a result several legal firms and other legal organisations, such as book publishers, provide useful sites for locating legal information

Discussion Lists for Resource Discovery

Along with accessing various Internet sites for resource discovery and utilising computer programs such as search engines, the Internet allows you to draw on the expertise of other network users to locate information resources Discussion lists refer to a group of network users discussing issues regarding a particular subject via email Discussion lists provide a medium for communication and are used for making announcements, asking for assistance in problem-solving and exchanging information

and opinions There are several lists of lists which provide details of discussion lists on the Internet, including those relating to law If you are unable to locate a specific legal resource, it is worthwhile asking members of a discussion list for assistance

Keeping Current

The number of resources available and the dynamic nature of the Internet makes it impossible for one person to keep up-to-date with all developments in the legal field In addition to assisting you locate specific legal resources, discussion lists may be used to assist subscribers keep up-to-date by arranging for new legal developments to be posted to the list All list members can assist other members stay up-to-date by regularly posting to the discussion list their own legal resource discoveries

Another method for remaining current with new developments is to monitor the What's New sections at various legal sites LawNet, an Australian commercial legal site, features a What's New section New legal developments are indexed every month The ACT LawNet also has a What's New feature, whilst the AustLII regularly lists new additions of Australasian legal resources to the World Wide Web

The Internet provides the Librarian with the means to access a multitude of legal resources As the amount of information on the Internet continues to grow, there is a need to develop methods for accessing information effectively and efficiently The access points outlined in the paper provide a guide for locating legal resources on the Internet in a structured manner

Uniform Resource Locators (URL)

SEARCH ENGINES

InfoSeek	http://www infoseek com/
Lycos	http://lycos cs cmu edu/
BabyOil	http://www dstc edu au:80/projects/babyOil/
WebCrawler	http://webcrawler cs washington edu/
Open Text Web Index	http://www opentext com

SUBJECT-ORIENTED DIRECTORIES

Yahoo	http://www yahoo com
EINet Galaxy	http://www einet net/
Global Network Navigator	http://www gnn com/wic/newrescat toc html
BUBL WWW Information Server	http://www bubl bath ac uk/BUBL/home html
WWW Virtual Library	http://www w3 org/hypertext/DataSources/bySubject/Overview html
The Seamless Web	http://seamless com
David Levin's Law Page	http://lawnet com au/~dlevin/lawpage html

TOPICAL GUIDES

Clearinghouse for Subject-Oriented Internet Resource Guides
http://www.lib.umich.edu/chhome.html

LAW SCHOOLS

Australasian Legal Information Institute	http://austlii.law.uts.edu.au
University of Melbourne Law School	http://r106.law.unimelb.edu.au/
University of Warwick CTI Technology Centre	http://ltc.warwick.ac.uk
University of Alberta	http://www.ualberta.ca/~slis/guides law/law1.htm
University of Waikato	http://www2.waikato.ac.nz/law/law related.html
University of Auckland	http://mark.law.auckland.ac.nz
Cornell Law School Legal Information Institute	http://www.law.cornell.edu/

GOVERNMENTS

Australian Government Home Page	http://gov.info.au/
ACT LawNet	http://actag.canberra.edu.au/actag ag1.html
Victorian Government legislation	http://www.vicnet.net.au/vicnet vicleg.html
Supreme Court of Victoria	http://203.13.233.3/lawweb/leo cc.htm
Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia	http://www.aph.gov.au
United States House of Representatives	http://www.house.gov/
CCTA Government Information Service (U K)	http://www.open.gov.uk/
New Zealand Government Web Page	http://www.govt.nz/
Canadian Parliament	http://www.parl.gc.ca/english/
THOMAS Legislative Information on the Internet	http://thomas.loc.gov/
The Supreme Court of Canada	http://www.droit.umontreal ca/SCC.html

DISCUSSION LISTS

WWW View of Directory of Scholarly Electronic conferences by D Kovacs
http://www.mid.net:80/KOVACS

List of Legal Lists compiled by Lyonette Louis-Jacques
gopher://lawnext.uchicago.edu:70/00 internetfiles/lawlists

List of Legal Discussion Lists from the University of Alberta
http://virgo.gem.valpo.edu/~medic/lists1.html

KEEPING CURRENT

LAWNET	http://lawnet.com.au/