

of the cited resources are electronically available. I would have loved to see bibliographic references to older materials as well. In addition, although an index is included, it is somewhat perfunctory. For example, California is mentioned often and has its own subsection in an appendix but didn't warrant an entry in the index. A table of statutes cited would have been helpful.

¶39 Although there is room for a more comprehensive work that covers more jurisdictions and has better finding tools, *Privacy and the Digital State* provides a wealth of practical information and recommendations for public officials and those interested in public policy. As an interested citizen I found it a good read. As an academic law librarian I found it a timely, concise, and serious work on a compelling issue.

Roznovschi, Mirela. *Toward a Cyberlegal Culture*. Ardsley, N.Y.: Transnational Publishers, 2001. 230p. \$95.

*Reviewed by Spencer L. Simons*

¶40 *Toward a Cyberlegal Culture* by Mirela Roznovschi is an extremely informative text on the resources for and techniques of doing and teaching international and foreign legal research using the World Wide Web. It also contains reflections on the dramatic changes the Web has brought to libraries, librarianship, and especially to the community of librarians who specialize in international and foreign law research. Roznovschi, the reference librarian for international and foreign law at New York University School of Law Library, is known for her expertise in international and foreign legal research, for her role in teaching the subject in developing nations, and for her contributions to its bibliographical literature. She also is well known as the co-editor of the LLRX international and foreign law research resources<sup>15</sup> and as webmaster and editor of the *Guide to Foreign and International Legal Databases*.<sup>16</sup> This background is reflected in the thesis of this book:

Cyberlegal culture represents the international and foreign law disciplines' intellectual activity on the "Web." New behaviors and communications patterns generated by the online medium, by institutions with a virtual presence, by new forms of electronic publishing and strategies for accessing online legal documents, and by new models of teaching substantive law and education over the Internet express the essence of the cyberlegal culture (p.xv).

¶41 Roznovschi draws on her wide experience to give tips for surviving the increased complexity of the reference librarian's role in the cyberlegal culture (chapter 1), practical suggestions for using online resources and detailed discussions of many of the most important of them (chapter 2), principles for evaluation

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15. INTERNATIONAL LAW RESOURCE CENTER, at [http://www.llrx.com/international\\_law.html](http://www.llrx.com/international_law.html) (last visited May 15, 2002); COMPARATIVE & FOREIGN LAW RESOURCE CENTER, at [http://www.llrx.com/comparative\\_and\\_foreign\\_law.html](http://www.llrx.com/comparative_and_foreign_law.html) (last visited May 15, 2002).

16. GUIDE TO FOREIGN AND INTERNATIONAL LEGAL DATABASES, at [http://www.law.nyu.edu/library/foreign\\_intl/index.html](http://www.law.nyu.edu/library/foreign_intl/index.html) (last visited May 15, 2002).

of online legal databases (chapter 3), and detailed expositions of the lessons she has gained from teaching international and foreign legal research both at home and abroad (chapter 4). A very valuable supplement is the lengthy appendix with detailed comments on many international and foreign law databases. The main lessons to be gained from this wealth of shared experience and illustrations are that the Web is now the only way to build adequate international and foreign law collections for most libraries in most parts of the world, that the Web is absolutely essential to all international and foreign law librarians everywhere, and that communication and cooperation by law librarians has been and will be essential to the development of Internet resources and of the cyberlegal culture she describes.

¶42 There are some great strengths to this book. The informed discussion of many individual databases makes this a valuable resource for any reference librarian striving to extend his or her international and foreign legal research skills. The guides to teaching cyberlegal research in foreign environments are both informative and fascinating for their revelations on the effects of history, politics, national identity, and technological sophistication on receptivity to both the methods and substance of international and foreign research.

¶43 Unfortunately these undoubted virtues are undermined by the structure of the book. The text, arguing the peculiar nature of cyberlegal culture and explaining what the librarian needs to know to operate within it, is interrupted throughout by long, multiple illustrations of the architecture and operation of particular databases. The results of this are twofold: the force and coherence of the text is lost and the vast amount of detailed information on particular databases is rendered less accessible. The database information is less accessible both because the reader will likely view it as illustrative material to be waded through until the argument resumes and because much of the useful information in the illustrations is effectively buried, invisible to those seeking to use this as a reference book. The location of the illustrations is often not apparent from the structure of the text and, worse, because much that is discussed in the text is not referenced in the index. Thus, the reader who seeks a discussion of, say, the Garant, SCAD, or CIESIN databases will receive little assistance from either the index or the table of contents. This problem is ameliorated by the valuable appendix, but only in part. The text would have benefitted greatly from segregating the argument about the nature of cyberlegal culture and the advice to the legal information specialist from the expert discussion of the databases.

¶44 Readability would have been enhanced by putting the URLs of referenced sources in footnotes or endnotes. The presence of many parenthetical URLs within the text distracts and discourages the reader. The text would have also benefitted from omitting material that adds little or nothing to the illustrations (e.g., much of the detailed discussion of the Open Library for Legal Information in Tashkent). Finally, the gravity of the argument concerning cyberlegal culture suffers from a

common fault in the literature about the cyber-revolution, namely, hyperbole and overblown abstractions. This reviewer was left wondering just what the author meant in some passages.

¶45 These weaknesses do not invalidate *Toward a Cyberlegal Culture* as a useful text. It is especially valuable to experienced legal reference librarians with international and foreign law experience who are seeking to further their knowledge of sophisticated international and foreign legal resources and research techniques. Those anticipating teaching international and foreign legal research, particularly those teaching abroad, really should read this book for Roznovschi's valuable observations. The appendix alone makes this a valuable addition to the reference collection of any library concerned with international and foreign legal research. One concern expressed by Roznovschi herself is that any book on Web resources will rapidly become out of date. For that reason, this book was to have been supported by an online version (p.20), but my attempts to locate it were unsuccessful.

¶46 This book is recommended for law library collections and for those individuals wishing to expand their knowledge of online international and foreign law resources and research and teaching methods.

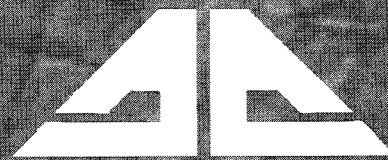
Tomkiel, Stanley A., III. *Manual de Beneficios del Seguro Social*. Translated by Eytan Lasca. Naperville, Ill.: Sphinx Publications, 2002. 325p. Paper. \$18.95.

*Reviewed by Francisco A. Avalos*

¶47 The *Manual de Beneficios del Seguro Social* written by Stanley A. Tomkiel III and translated by Eytan Lasca is an excellent basic source for information on social security and medicare benefits. Tomkiel is an attorney who worked for the Social Security Administration as a claims representative for many years and is now in private practice representing claimants before the Social Security Administration. The *Manual* was written for Spanish-speaking people who need precise and correct information presented in a simple and easy manner. It provides information that goes beyond what can be found in social security publications and is very complete, covering most aspects of social security from eligibility requirements and filing an application to determining the actual amount of money people are entitled to and filing appeals. The book could be given to most Spanish-speaking patrons with little explanation and they would be able to use it without trouble because of its simple presentation.

¶48 The *Manual de Beneficios del Seguro Social* is organized into ten chapters, each of which is divided into sections that provide more detailed information. The *Manual* also contains ten appendixes with primary information, benefit tables, sample applications, and addresses of regional offices. The book is written in a question and answer format, with answers given in simple language and accompanied by practical examples to illustrate each point. A section I found both practical and valuable dealt with documents that can be presented to the Social Security Administration to determine age in lieu of a birth certificate. The lack of

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