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Overall

In all of the books there are various things that one might quibble with or have reservations about. These will often reflect subjective prejudices, local circumstances etc. Sometimes the material used by way of example is less than likely to fire the student imagination for legal research. Clinch and Dane and Thomas in their introductions indicate that the new student of law is their main audience but their examples might not be considered the best in terms of their relationship to the core subjects that new students will begin to study. For example, in discussing the structure of an Act of Parliament Clinch uses the Explosives (Age of Purchase &c.) Act 1976, Dane and Thomas use the Forestry Act 1991 and Holborn relies on the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. One understands why this is done. They are all very short Acts and, therefore, fit easily onto one or two pages at most in which each element of the Act can be annotated and explained by superimposed text. Given the need to make legal research skills relevant and interesting to students perhaps more obviously relevant or interesting examples could be found from criminal law, property law or one of the core subjects, even if it does require some manipulation of the item. At various points in all of the books other examples are similarly uninspiring. It might (righly) be retorted that researchers will often have to wade through many uninspiring statutes, SIs, case law sources etc. That is indubitably the case. But anyone who has taught legal research skills to both undergraduate and postgraduate students knows that much more is likely to be achieved by choosing examples that are directly relevant to immediate needs on courses, or by presenting interesting or unusual (or in some instances bizarre) factual situations from which legal research techniques and approaches can be described. High profile recent issues that new students may have encountered or read about can also be valuable.

It would be invidious to recommend one or another of these books. All of them are thoroughly welcome in their new editions. Legal information specialists owe a debt to all of the authors and contributors to each of these works. Each brings a particular brand of knowledge, experience and commitment to their works. While the authors make the point that these books are not intended to be read as textbooks from cover to cover by students and similar users, legal information specialists (and especially those new to the profession) can learn a great deal about law, its sources and literature from a thorough reading of these books. All of them continue to meet the high standards that have been set by previous editions and no doubt multiple copies of each are already sitting well-thumbed on most law library shelves in the UK and beyond.

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ROZNOVSCHI, Mirela *Toward a Cyberlegal Culture*. Ardsley, New York: Transnational Publishers Inc., 2001.—ISBN 1571051686—xvii, 230p. US$95.00 in US

Mirela Roznovschi is the Reference Librarian for International and Foreign Law at the New York University School of Law. Many will be familiar with her online Guide to Foreign and International Databases (*www.law.nyu.edu/library/foreign_intl/index.html*). In the introduction to her new book, she explains what is meant by the cyberlegal culture. It is due to the huge increase during the last few years in the availability of international legal databases, and the publication on the Web of the legal resources of individual countries. This new culture has brought many opportunities: new patterns of communication between librarians, scholars and lawyers, new strategies for electronic documents, and new models of teaching and training. But it also brings many challenges: the Internet is an unaffordable luxury in much of the world, obsolete standards and protocols still linger, and we still have problems of censorship, crowded lines, and translation. This new cyberlegal world is a bracing and demanding place, in which our users expect ever higher standards of service. The book consists in essence of four extended essays on the themes of how to cope professionally, how to understand the dynamic and metamorphic nature of the Web as a legal resource, how to evaluate databases, and how to teach and train our users for this new world. The book is peppered throughout with telling anecdotes and observations from Roznovschi's professional career in New York University Law Library and her assignments in Armenia, Hungary, Russia and Brazil.

Chapter 1 sets the agenda on updating our skills continuously to help cope with new pressures. The author lists all the skills we need to hone constantly: researching, teaching, evaluating new products, publishing Web copy, prioritising and referring. She also presents ten survival strategies, based on her own experience. These include time management, evaluating new products and services, presentation, and liaison with vendors and ICT departments. These strategies will clearly not work for everybody (for example, 'working on many projects simultaneously') but they do address and discuss a number of dilemmas we face regularly as law librarians.

Chapter 2 is a comprehensive guide to the range of resources on foreign and international law. Some practical examples of searching are included. Both new and traditional resources are discussed in detail, free access as well as subscription. The chapter is arranged under the headings of a good reference toolkit: guide-books to the legal web, public domain gateways, online encyclopaedias, digests, online news sources and dictionaries, listservs, and search engines. I found the observations on search engines particularly helpful.

'Guiding principles on the evaluation of legal databases' is the title of Chapter 3. Roznovschi reviews some published articles and policies on evaluating electronic information, and then does a systematic and full inventory of evaluation criteria for online databases: identification, com-

pleteness, author/publisher, language, accuracy, currency, coverage, archiving, user interface and user-friendliness, costs and copyright. Her discussion here is again anchored in her wealth of experience as a reference librarian in foreign and international law, and she gives many telling examples of practice, good and otherwise, in legal database publishing around the world.

The final chapter is on the theme of the reference librarian as teacher and trainer. It offers a wide and useful survey of electronic learning, whether the learners are students or practitioners, with much discussion of course content, format and evaluation. Examples of a syllabus and modules in international and foreign legal research taught by Roznovschi are included. There is a fascinating account of the challenges of delivering a seven-day course on international and foreign legal research in Yerevan, Armenia, in 1999. Censorship through a proxy server, language difficulties, and cultural differences were eventually overcome and the course successfully delivered.

Hundreds of Web addresses are given in the book, and the dozen or so which I tried connected without problem. The author discusses how quickly a list of Web addresses in hard copy can become outdated, and no doubt some of the addresses given here will move on in time, but Roznovschi is a firm advocate of Web databases, and suggests ways that readers can get round the problem of non-connection.

An appendix gives a useful selective and annotated guide to international and foreign law databases. This is a rich and wide-ranging book on foreign and international legal research, with many pointers to good practice in database selection and searching, and it will help our users to be competent in the challenges of the cyberlegal world.

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Lawrence, P., *Law on the Internet: a practical guide.* London: Sweet & Maxwell, 2000. ISBN 0-421-737-808 (pbk) : £14.95. ix, 227 p.

Penelope Lawrence guides the reader through the Internet in a language which tries to be free from jargon or assumption of prior knowledge.

The book is divided into four parts, the first of which runs through a history of the Internet followed by an overview of the myriad of ways the Internet can assist a lawyer's work. A curious chapter entitled 'How do I get online?' moves from outlining the equipment needed to a screenshot of a Web browser and immediately on to a listing of search engines and guidance on searching tips such as truncation, phrases and excluding and including words. After the carefully paced introductions the speed of this chapter may daunt. Of more concern is that some of the advice for searching techniques is misleading.

The next two parts, which together comprise over two-thirds of the book, list and describe legal research online and then 'other' legal sites such as forms, news, law firms and careers information. The chapter on subscription databases includes scenarios. These descriptions of a real-life need and how it was met gave light relief that would have also benefited the chapters on free sites.

The final, brief, part of the book looks at the opportunities for e-commerce for lawyers and how the technology might develop.

The author is a New York attorney and, although the book is tailored for a UK audience, her American language and her casual grammar and tone may not suit everyone's taste. In an attempt to avoid jargon, her descriptions can become confusing and meaningless, leaving the reader no more enlightened. Pdf files for example were mentioned several times. Each time it was noted that Adobe Acrobat is needed to read these files. The meaning of pdf was also mentioned each time although what it stood for differed. It would have been helpful to explain at some point why a Web publisher might use pdf files and how this format affects what a reader can do with the information. Although the glossary is simplistic, words such as gateway and network crop up in definitions but do not get an entry of their own. I would advise readers instead to consult the excellent index to locate richer explanations.

Sweet & Maxwell have published the book in a large font size with lots of white space and nine blank leaves at the back. A smaller size and price might have tempted more of her target audience of young lawyers to pop it in their pockets to 'read in the comfy chair in the corner, standing up on the bus and even in the bath'.

If you don't know what the Internet is or how you can use it to help you as a lawyer, then this is the book for you. For those who can already navigate their way to LawLinks or Delia Venables' site (and how many young lawyers can't?), then this book is not aimed at you and will merely frustrate you.

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OPPENHEIM, Charles *The Legal and Regulatory Environment for Electronic Information*, 4th ed. Tetbury: Infonortics, 2001 ISBN 1 873699 78 6. 265pp. (£55.00)

In the Preface to this book Charles Oppenheim defines what this book is and is not. "This book is not a legal text. It is not intended for lawyers or law students. It is aimed that [sic] those, who create, disseminate or use electronic information, as well as at teachers or students of these topics."

Certainly the book does not have the layout, style or approach of a legal text. For example, there are no tables of cases, statutory provisions, EC measures etc such as one would encounter in a law book. The reader will find the