



Professional legal information, resources, and services

A Monthly Newsletter from the Hamilton County Law Library

May 2010

Legal Research: Yes, there's an app for that!

Written by Jason R. Sowards, Reference Librarian, Wake Forest University School of Law

Editor's note: Although written with law students in mind, the author addresses apps of potential interest to practicing attorneys. These are apps available via Apple but you may find that they've been developed for Android and BlackBerry, too. This article is reprinted with permission. *RIPS Law Librarian* is published by the Research Instruction & Patron Services Special Interest Section of the American Association of Law Libraries. <http://rips-sis.blogspot.com/2010/02/yes-theres-app-for-that.html>

As more law students and lawyers make the transition to iPhones or iPod Touches (and as many of us will soon venture forth with the unfortunately named iPad), I thought I would wander around the App Store to see what, if any, applications exist that law students might find helpful. Here are some of the ones I've found. If you have found others that you like, please comment to this post with your review. Happy app'ing!

Legal Reference & Research
There are a few legal dictionary apps available, but I will only mention 2. The first is Black's

Law Dictionary (8th ed) coming in at \$49.99. This is quite a hefty app, both in price and content. It's also one edition behind its print format. A product description from West may be found http://www.iphonejd.com/iphone_jd/2009/04/review-blacks-law-dictionary-for-iphone.html

If you want a less expensive option with a price tag of "free," NOLO has a legal dictionary app. Known for its publications aimed at the layman audience, this dictionary continues that tradition. Its coverage is nice for a free legal dictionary. For more information, check out this review from [iPhoneJD](http://iPhoneJD.com).

What about rule books? Ever wish there was an app that contained just the text of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure or just the US Code? Well, as you can guess, there are apps for that.

Law Stack combines the current text of the US Constitution, the federal rules of Civil Procedure, Appellate Procedure, Evidence, Bankruptcy Procedure, and Criminal

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Open Monday-Friday 8 - 4

[www.http://www.hamilton-co.org/cinlawlib/](http://www.hamilton-co.org/cinlawlib/)

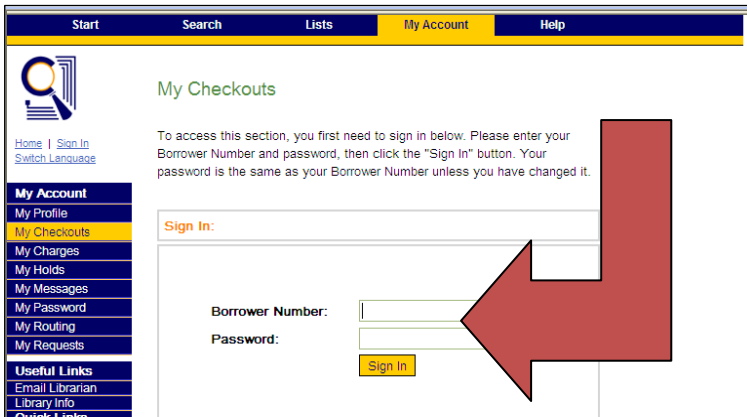
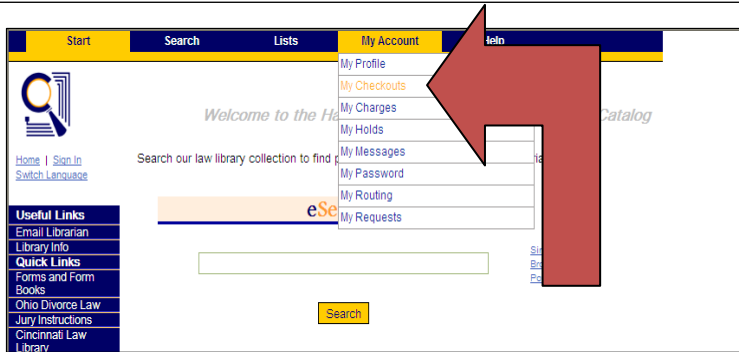
Tech Tip: Renew your law library books from your home or office Online!

By Julie Koehne, Assistant Law Librarian—Systems

Starting at our website <http://www.hamilton-co.org/cinlawlib> click on Online Catalog.

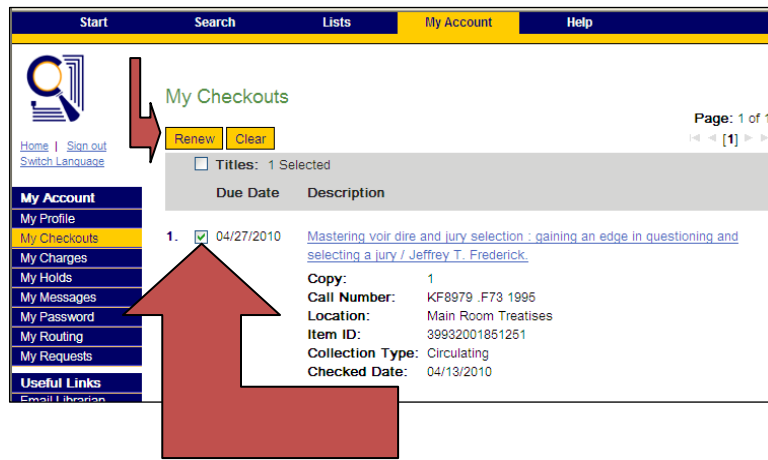


Click on My Account for the drop down menu to popup and go to My Checkouts.



Login using your Borrower Number for both boxes.

Put a check in the box to the left of the item (s) you wish to renew and click on the Renew button.



(App for that!, continued from page 1)

Procedure. Price: free. All rules are current through December 2009.

There is also a free app for the current text of the US Code. More information can be found [here](#).

There are also legal research apps available from LexisNexis and Fastcase. The LexisNexis app allows users who already have a LexisNexis account to retrieve a case by citation and Shepardize it. For lawyers, it also provides a place to enter a client code. The bad news is that there are not hyperlinks available to cases cited in the retrieved case and its Shepard's functionality is not as robust as the web-based Shepard's. A review of this app may be found at [LegalGeekery](#).

Fastcase also has an app that provides access to state and federal case law from all 50 states as well as a library of statutes for most states. You can search by citation, keyword (Boolean or natural language) or browse statutes. Free registration is required. The Fastcase [website](#) has more information.

Apps for state-specific legal resources are also available from many different app developers. The easiest way to locate these apps is to do a search in the App Store by state. Be prepared, though--you will likely wade through many useless apps before finding the legal ones. Some states will take their statutes and break them down into subject areas to create a smaller, less expensive application.

Study Aids

Study aid apps are also available on the iPhone. Two of the biggest are the Law in a Flash flash cards and the Sum & Substance audio series.

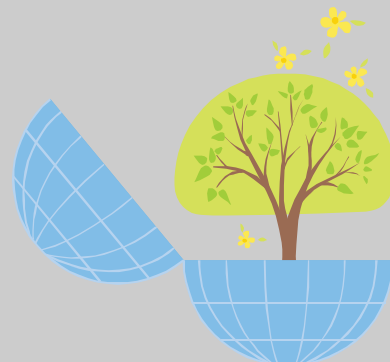
The Law in a Flash flash cards carry an average price of \$31.99 (only Professional Responsibility comes in higher at \$47.99).

Functionality includes shuffle mode and the ability to make notes on the cards. The downside to purchasing study aids in this format, though, is resale. Once you've purchased these flash cards, they are yours. An upside to this is that when it comes time to study for the bar, buyers will have one additional study resource. iPhoneJD has a review.

For the aural learners, West has made its Sum & Substance audio resources available as an app. Consult the West website for topics available. Prices range from \$49.99 to \$59.99. Again, like the flash cards, once buyers purchase, there is no resale.

Save a Tree!

Are you currently receiving the Hamilton County Law Library News in print? Would you prefer an online version? Subscribers who opt for the online version receive it before the print copy is mailed, plus the links for email and websites are active. We send out a summary via email each month with a link to the full text. To switch from print to online, just email reference@cms.hamilton-co.org with a request to switch formats.



HOLD THE DATE

[details to follow next month]

2010 Annual Meeting of the Membership
of the Cincinnati Law Library Association

Thursday, July 1, 2010

12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m.

Hamilton County Law Library

Hon. Robert S. Kraft Boardroom, 6th floor

Hamilton County Courthouse

- ◆ Approval of Minutes
- ◆ Annual Report
- ◆ Election of Trustees
- ◆ Discussion of CLLA's purpose and by-laws
- ◆ Other Business before the Membership

Please Mark Your Calendar.

Cathy R. Cook	Stephen L. Black	Mary Ann Jacobs
Board President	Vice President	Treasurer

What are we missing?

This year, we are doing a comprehensive review of our print materials, discarding and updating outdated titles. Offering library users appropriate, current, and reliable information is our goal. As always, we value your input! We hope you will share with us any suggestions you may have regarding our print and electronic resources. Contact library director Mary Jenkins @ mjenkins@cms.hamilton-co.org or call 513.946.5300 with your ideas. We look forward to hearing from you.

Upcoming Events—Opportunities to Learn and Earn free CLE

Impress clients and shock opposing counsel by expertly using the legal applications available via your iPhone or other wireless device.



On Tuesday, May 25, Emily Janoski-Haehlen from Chase College of Law will offer an introduction to Legal Apps. Bring your questions!

What: Legal apps

Why: To learn about the different applications available to you via your mobile device. *This class does not offer CLE credit.*

When: Tuesday, May 25 @ 12:30

Where: Hamilton County Law Library Boardroom

How: Call 513.946.5300 to register, or email gherald@cms.hamilton-co.org

This program is free to library subscribers, nonsubscribers will be charged a \$35 fee.

Free! 1 Hour of CLE credit

In June, Shannon Kemen will offer pointers on using social media to locate witnesses, vet experts, and research jury members.

What: Mining Social Media: How to Locate Witnesses, Vet Experts & Learn More about Jurors

Why: To earn **free CLE credit** while learning about how to use and locate information on social media sites

When: Thursday, June 24 @ 12:30

Where: Hamilton County Law Library Board Room

How: Call 513.946.5300 to register, or email gherald@cms.hamilton-co.org

Nonsubscribers welcome! \$35 fee.

You and the Legal System: Ten Factors in Every Divorce with Children

Speaker: Jon R. Sinclair, Attorney at Law

Friday, May 21, 2010 at 12:00 noon

Hamilton County Law Library

Free to the public.

To register, call 513.946.5300.

Mr. Sinclair will discuss the factors that people should know before filing for divorce when children are involved.

Please note that this is not a CLE event; it is intended for the general public. However, attorneys may want to pass along the program announcement to clients, staff, and community organizations. For more information, please call 513.946.5300.

This program is brought to you as a public service by the Hamilton County Law Library, in conjunction with the Cincinnati Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service.

Subscriber benefits

Are you familiar with the many benefits included in your subscription to the Hamilton County Law Library? By joining the library you can:

Access: to databases, including **LexisNexis, Shepards', CCH, Hein Online,** and over 70 **Aspen /LOISLaw** treatises in 16 substantive areas

Connect: to the wireless network throughout the Law Library, videoconferencing capabilities, and 5 conference rooms, equipped with speaker phones, are available to our subscribers

Learn: Free CLE opportunities offered throughout the year: Visit our Law Library Subscriber Services page to find out more. <http://www.hamilton-co.org/cinlawlib/services.html>

Family Law Resources

In Hamilton County, the Domestic Relations Division of the Court of Common Pleas handles cases involving divorce, dissolution, the care and support of children, and the protection of victims of domestic violence. The following web sites are good no-cost resources to begin your research.

Ohio Revised Code Title 31 Domestic Relations <http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/31>

Hamilton County Court of Domestic Relations <http://www.hamilton-co.org/domestic/default.asp>

HCLL Forms and Local Rules available online <http://www.hamilton-co.org/cinlawlib/resources/guides/dr.html>

ALLLAW Ohio Child Support Calculator <http://www.alllaw.com/calculators/Childsupport/ohio/>

If your practice flows into Kentucky, you may find finally web sites helpful as well.

Kentucky Revised Statutes Title 35 Domestic Relations <http://www.lrc.ky.gov/krs/titles.htm>

ALLLAW Kentucky Child Support Calculator <http://www.alllaw.com/calculators/Childsupport/Kentucky/>

Kentucky Family Court <http://courts.ky.gov/circuitcourt/familycourt>



Public Law Libraries Report Surge in Visits from Pro Se Litigants

By Mary Jenkins, Law Librarian & Director

Across the country, state, court, and county law libraries that are open to the public have been reporting considerable increases in use by pro se litigants and members of the public, generally. Although I do not have the longitudinal data to claim definitively an upward trend at the Hamilton County Law Library, we do assist public users daily and I would suggest that the economic woes of the past couple of years have led more public patrons to our resources. Some are “career” pro se litigants but many have fallen into financial hardship recently and are in that space between poor and getting by when it comes to qualifying for reduced fees.

We have also benefitted from referrals from the public library, the clerk of courts, word of mouth, and some attorneys who are unbundling services and encouraging clients to do some research themselves.

In 2009, we provided research guidance to approximately 160 members of the public each month. This count does not include walk-ins who did not request assistance (typically, our repeat visitors).

Law libraries are appropriately limited in the guidance that staff can give public users. Our own policy, typical of such policies, says, “To protect the public interest, Ohio law requires that legal advice and services be rendered only by qualified attorneys who are subject to the guidelines of the courts. Hamilton County Law Library staff, as a service to our users, provides reference services and information. We do not interpret the law, provide legal advice, or explain court procedures. The information we provide is not a substitute for legal advice from a licensed attorney.”

While librarians are frequently asked for legal advice, patrons typically understand why we cannot provide it. We regularly refer public patrons to the Legal Aid Society, the CBA’s Lawyer Referral Service, and the

Public Defender’s office. Still, public law libraries like Hamilton County’s are critically important to self-represented litigants. Our website offers public legal research resources such as links to codes and court rules, research guides in areas including bankruptcy and domestic violence, a guide to the courts, and a law dictionary.

On site, public patrons may use any of our books, including useful Nolo guides on a wide variety of legal issues, written for the general public. Anyone may request basic research guidance and use our public computers (although we do not offer public access to proprietary databases). As you’ve read in this newsletter, our law library is partnering with the CBA’s Lawyer Referral Service to offer a series of talks for the public called “You and the Legal System”.

Court budgets have declined in many states and counties but cases are piling up and more people are entering the legal system inadequately informed about the process, never mind the legal issues. Self-represented litigants are turning to or being referred to the libraries to find forms (forms and more forms!), information about civil procedure, and basic information about legal topics.

Results of this surge in public use of law libraries include an uptick in the development of onsite and virtual self-help centers, access to “ask a lawyer” programs and legal clinics in the library, attorney/librarians who provide in-depth support, expansion of legal materials written with pro se litigants in mind, and other access-to-justice initiatives. Here are a few examples:

In East Texas, a law library has an attorney-librarian on staff who assists public patrons with forms and procedures in uncontested family court proceedings. <http://tpstage.sx.atl.publicus.com/article/20100310/NEWS01/3100337>

Family court self-help centers in law libraries have been popping up in many states along with web-based self-help resources.

<http://www.mncourts.gov/district/1/?page=1600>

<http://www.albany.ga.us/content/1800/2889/3011/3528/default.aspx>

<http://www.peoples-law.info/Home/PublicWeb/IndexPages/1390000>

<http://mchenry.illinoislegalaid.org/>

One-on-one sessions with attorneys at the library can be court-initiated or are alliances between bar associations and law libraries.

<http://www.washoecounty.us/lawlib/legalprograms.htm>

<http://www.circuitcourt.org/component/content/article/113>

<http://www.sacramento.com/headline/21630/>

[Sacramento County Public Law Library Lawyers in the Library Program Expands Hours](http://www.sacramento.com/headline/21630/Sacramento-County-Public-Law-Library-Lawyers-in-the-Library-Program-Expands-Hours)

In Dakota County, MN, the courts recently approved a panel providing arraignment day legal advice paired with reduced rates thereafter, following urging by the law librarian there.

<http://www.startribune.com/local/south/84320917.html?elr=KArks:DCiU1OiP:DiiUiD3aPc: Yyc:aUU>

Programming specifically intended for the general public is a mainstay of public law libraries. We offer our *You and the Legal System* series. Many other libraries provide similar programming.

<http://www.saclaw.lib.ca.us/classList.aspx>

<http://www.kcll.org/learnhow/lrtc/index.html>

http://www.sdcll.org/classes_clinics/class_descriptions.htm

<http://www.sflawlibrary.com/index.aspx?page=88>

Some of Minnesota's county law libraries are seeing thousands more public users.

<http://www.startribune.com/local/91560404.html?elr=KArks:DCiUHc3E7 V nDaycUiacyKUzyaP37D MDua eyD5PcOiUr>

As is the case at the Hamilton County Law Library, libraries cited in this article help patrons looking for information, for example, on expungement, landlord/tenant issues, modifications of child support, and legal vocabulary.

Do-it-yourself law is certainly not the best move in many instances and we emphasize the complexities and the referral options to many patrons. Still, we hope that the self-represented litigant who seeks out legal information is more informed and better prepared.

I welcome conversations with attorneys, county officials, and public patrons who have suggestions about access to legal information by self-represented litigants.



Memorial Day

The law library will be closed Monday, May 31 in observance of Memorial Day.



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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