

Z-Flyer

the Newsletter of the Doraine Zief Law Library



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Spring, 2007

Law Library Update

With this spring edition of the *Z-Flyer* we offer a few notable statistics and an introduction to “blogging” for law faculty.

Did you know that the Zief law librarians have taught over 75 classes/workshops to our students since the beginning of August? These classes included 24 sessions of first year Lexis/Westlaw training, 16 orientation tours for first year students, topical sessions on legal research for substantive classes, research training for law journals and presentations for our clinical interns, among others. Starting next year, the librarians will teach 2 advanced legal research classes for the first time here at USF. These classes include a 2-credit Advanced Legal Research class in the fall and a 1 credit California Legal Research class in the spring. If you are interested in a having one of the librarians give a presentation on topical legal materials to your students, please contact Lee Ryan, John Shafer or Amy Wright directly.

USF law faculty currently have 31 articles posted on SSRN from 7 of our full-time professors. We’re investigating the possibility of creating an institutional link on LSN that so users will be able to pull-up all USF faculty contributions at once. Meanwhile, the library staff will continue to provide help to faculty in loading articles. So, let us know if we can be of assistance to you in this effort.

Another number of interest is the 500 hits that our blog *ZiefBrief* receives each week. Many of our first year students have rapidly become regular readers,

as well as submitting items of interest for posting. We hope you’re reading too and contributions are always welcome!

Speaking of blogs - begining on the following page of this editon of the *Z-Flyer*, Amy Wright has put together some information for law faculty on creating a blog with answers to frequently asked questions about “law blogging.” We hope that you’ll find this information useful. If you have any questions or would like assistance in setting up a blog, any of us would be happy to work with you on blogging!

USF University of San Francisco
Jesuit Education

HOME ABOUT USF LAW PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS CURRENT STUDENTS ACADEMICS FACULTY ALUMNI

School of Law, Doraine Zief Library

SEARCH USF

Law Library Home

- Library Catalog
- Library Information
- Library Services
- Research & Study
- Library News
- Faculty Information

SEARCH IGNACIO

For books, journals, and other materials available at the USF libraries

Keyword Go

Library Information

- Welcome / Mission
- Hours
- Contact Library Staff
- Access / Eligible Patrons
- Library Policies
- Maps & Directions
- Facilities
- Collection Development
- More Library Information

Library Services

- Borrowing
- Renew Books Online
- Interlibrary Loans
- Course Reserve
- Group Study
- Printing
- Copying

Research & Study

- Research Help / Reference
- Research Guides
- Class & Exam Prep
- Lexis & Westlaw
- CALL Lessons
- First Articles (Legal & Other)
- Local Research Resources
- Free Local Websites
- Connect from Off-Campus

Faculty Information

- New Faculty Scholarship
- Law Faculty Publications
- Library Services for Faculty

ZiefBrief

- Advanced Google
- CMS Guide: Tracking Current Federal Legislation
- Bluebook Halku
- Premium New York Times Content - Free to Students & Faculty
- Online Petition Protesting Proposed Settlement of B&W/RT Suit

Library and Legal News

- Zief Acquisitions
- Z-Flyer (Zief Library News)
- The JURIST - Paper Chase

powered by feedroll

About USF Law | Prospective Students | Current Students | Academic Programs | Faculty | Alumni Contact | Law Library Home

Coming Soon! A new & improved home page for the law library!



Made Easy...

by Amy Wright

What is a blog?

A **web log** or **blog** is a website that features commentary from the blog's author. People refer to the broad collection of blogs as the **blogosphere**, and blogs with legal themes are often called **blawgs**. Each separate written entry in a blog, commonly referred to as a "post," usually features links to other websites and blogs. Generally, blog authors arrange their posts in chronological order, with the most recent post appearing at the top of the page. Most bloggers like to categorize their posts by assigning one or more topics to each post, making it easier to find all of a blogger's posts about a particular subject.

Why do members of the law school community blog?

Some individuals, particularly tenure-track faculty members, blog so that they can share their scholarly ideas with a wider community and engage in an ongoing dialogue with other specialists in their areas of expertise from different law schools. Some faculty prefer to use blogs as a tool for administering their classes with greater ease. If you use the right blogging software, you can upload documents, presentations, multimedia files, and more to one website in seconds. Faculty also use blogs to hold regular online discussion sessions with students. Law school librarians often use blogs to dispense information about breaking developments in legal research in an efficient fashion.

How do they differ from course websites that I create on TWEN?

The blog functions described in this article may sound a lot like the functions available through TWEN, Westlaw's course site software. In fact, you can create a blog that functions solely as a course website if you wish to do so. The major difference between a TWEN site and a blog is that TWEN access is restricted to individuals with an academic Westlaw password. Therefore, if you wish to create a blog in order to collaborate with other professors and share your legal scholarship with a wider audience, you will want to use one of the blogging options that we discuss later in this article.

Which legal scholars have blogs?

You can find a wide variety of blogs written by attorneys, law professors, and law librarians on the following web pages:

Law Professor Blogs Network:

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

Blawg Directory:

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

Some law professor blogs are collaborative endeavors, with contributions from several authors. Because blogs that are updated more frequently capture wider audiences, many academic bloggers are choosing to combine their efforts with colleagues so that they can share blogging duties.

How do I get started?

In order to publish a blog, authors need to first identify the blogging software that is right for them. Zief's reference librarians can help you select the software package that's best for your blogging needs, and we can assist you with blog creation. Contact us at 415-422-6773 if you're interested!

What should I consider when selecting blogging software?

While there are several free versions of blogging software, most of these free services come with some significant drawbacks. For example, USF's Center for Instruction and Technology (CIT) encourages the use of Blogger, but Blogger does not allow its users to password-protect a blog or assign subject categories to posts. Additionally, some blogging software requires knowledge of special codes for simple posting and design functions, and most novice users aren't prepared to learn the technicalities of web design in order to create a blog.

Some popular law blogs:

- *The Volokh Conspiracy*:
<http://volokh.com>
- *PrawfsBlawg*:
<http://prawfsblawg.blogs.com/>
- *Science & Law Blog*:
http://lawprofessors.typepad.com/science_law/
- *TaxProf Blog*
<http://taxprof.typepad.com/>
- *Technology & Marketing Law Blog*
<http://blog.ericgoldman.org/>

Fortunately, CALI, the Center for Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction, offers free blogging software to professors, librarians, and staff at member schools who wish to launch blogs. In addition to posting traditional text and uploading files, Classcaster offers faculty an easy way to load audio posts or "podcasts" to their blogs.

For novice bloggers who don't have access to Classcaster or who simply prefer a more independent web presence, there are two other popular blogging software options that are worth considering: TypePad and Blogger. Here is a comparison of the three:

	ClassCaster	TypePad Pro	Blogger
Cost	Free (unlimited number of blogs, multiple authors.)	\$149.50/year (unlimited number of blogs, multiple authors.)	Free (unlimited number of blogs, multiple authors.)
Ease of Use	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Podcasts	Yes; easy instructions for the novice podcaster.	Yes, but slightly more complicated for the novice.	Yes, but slightly more complicated for the novice
Spell-Checking	No (separate shareware software can perform this function.)	Yes	Yes
Visitor Statistics	No	Yes	Yes
Reader Comments	Yes, with ability to moderate by the blogger.	Yes, with ability to moderate by the blogger.	Yes, with ability to moderate by the blogger.
Blog Design	Limited number of customizable preformatted templates.	Wide range of customizable preformatted templates.	Modifying standard designs requires special web skills.

ZiefBrief In Brief:



Billed as “Announcements, news and legal research tips & tools from USF's Dorraine Zief Law Library,” this is the place to go to learn the latest and greatest research tips from the crack reference librarians here in the law library. The librarians scan dozens of blogs, electronic discussions, listserves, and other resources and share the best with you. We have reproduced some the most recent postings below, but to get the most out of ZiefBrief check it frequently at :

<http://ziefbrief.typepad.com>

Pin Cite Smackdown:

Concurring Opinions penned a long post that is critical of the Bluebook rules for pin cites ... All in all, the post generated 33 lengthy comments from law professors and current and former editors, all fiercely defending or condemning the pin cite requirement. If you're cite-checking and need to take a break, this post and its comments should provide welcome comic relief from the tedium of cite-checking.

Lawsagna Dishes Up Advice On Briefing Cases

Lawsagna, a blog that's all about innovative and useful ways for law students to study and learn, is talking about briefing cases today. In her post *What's in your brief?* Anastasia offers 7 succinct tips on becoming better at briefing cases, and she links to several other useful sites as well. If you'd like to tune up your case-briefing skills, check it out.

Test Your Web Savy

Draw a line between the web service/software and the description on the right:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| (1) Dodgeball • | • (A) Blog/RSS Aggregator |
| (2) del.icio.us • | • (B) Wiki Engine |
| (3) Epinions • | • (C) Open Source Mind Mapping Software |
| (4) MySpace • | • (D) Blog Publishing Site |
| (5) Bloglines • | • (E) Webmail Service |
| (6) Flickr • | • (F) Cellphone Social Networking |
| (7) Wikipedia • | • (G) "Circle of Friends" Social Networking |
| (8) Blogger • | • (H) Web Review Site |
| (9) Clusty • | • (I) Metasearch Engine |
| (10) FreeMind • | • (J) Image Sharing Social Network |
| (11) TikiWiki • | • (K) Social Bookmarking Web Service |
| (12) Gmail • | • (L) Free Content Encyclopedia |

Stumped? To learn more about these and many other web tools just ask one of the expert reference librarians.
Answers:

1-F, 2-K, 3-H, 4-G, 5-A, 6-J, 7-L, 8-D, 9-I, 10-C, 11-B, 12-E