2002

Nonlegal Resources

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Washington Legal Researcher's Deskbook 3d

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The Washington Legal Researcher’s Deskbook 3d has been written to assist lawyers, students, librarians, legal assistants, legal secretaries, and members of the public in the complex task of researching legal problems. This book focuses on the law of Washington State and the legal materials that are available to the Washington practitioner. The reader will not find answers to legal questions but rather will find a rich array of information that can help in the process of researching the law.

The importance of legal research certainly cannot be overstated. Lawyers want to give good advice to their clients. If the client’s problem is new to the practitioner, chances are good that a review of the legal issues and authority will be necessary. This may plunge the researcher into unfamiliar areas of law.

If it were not enough to want to give good advice, Rule 1.1 of the Washington Rules of Professional Conduct (RPC) requires that a practitioner “shall provide competent representation to a client.” This rule requires familiarity with the relevant law through previous knowledge or through conducting adequate research. No Washington State Bar Association ethics opinions interpret this rule regarding the standards for performing competent legal research.

A 1975 California Supreme Court case, Smith v. Lewis, 10 Cal.3d 349, 530 P2d 589 (1975), articulates a standard of care for legal research. The standard requires (1) sufficient research (2) using standard research techniques (3) to obtain readily available authority. The Court found that the defendant lawyer failed to meet this standard of care. Cases in other jurisdictions have reached a similar result. The Washington Court of Appeals has apparently applied this standard in Halvorsen v. Ferguson, 46 Wash. App. 708, 718, 735 P2d 675, 681 (1986).

A study commissioned by the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar listed legal research among ten skills necessary for the practice of law. The Task Force identified three specific skills needed for thorough and efficient research:

3.1 Knowledge of the Nature of Legal Rules and Institutions;
3.2 Knowledge of and Ability to Use the Most Fundamental Tools of Legal Research;
3.3 Understanding of the Process of Devising and Implementing a Coherent and Effective Research Design.


The legal researcher of the twenty-first century cannot rest on the knowledge of legal research tools acquired while in law school or even as recently as two years ago. The computerization of legal information has completely changed the world of legal research and the practice of law. Some recent commentators have even suggested that computerized research is required in order for practitioners to avoid malpractice. See David M. Sandhaus, “Computers Are Required for the Practitioner to Avoid Malpractice,” Wash. St. B. News, Nov. 1993, at 51; Robert C. Berring, “Technology and the Standard of Care for Legal Research,” Legal Malpractice Rep., 1992, at 21. You will find electronic resources noted and discussed throughout the entire Deskbook.

The purpose of this Deskbook is to provide a broad spectrum of information that would be helpful to the person who must research Washington State law. In the first chapter, Ann Hemmens describes how to use a law library. From using law li-
libraries in person to using law libraries without leaving the comfort of your home or office, the tips provided in this chapter will be useful to all legal researchers.

In the second chapter, I review the formats of legal information and outline a strategy to help the legal researcher design a research process or framework. Practical tips for efficient use of legal tools are discussed. If you must research an area of law you know nothing about, the article reprinted in Appendix II will be extremely useful. If taking good notes is your downfall, be sure to read the note-taking article found in Chapter 2, Appendix III. This piece is full of practical hints that can help any researcher create a fine research product.

Chapter 3, written by Mary Whisner, is an excellent review of the most basic and important legal research tools used for researching Washington law. Ms. Whisner reviews secondary sources, statutes, administrative regulations, case law, case-finding tools, attorney general opinions, citator services, and basic citation formats. She includes information about electronic versions of these information tools as well as the printed texts. Every legal researcher should be familiar with the contents of this chapter.

Using one or more of the many excellent handbooks and deskbooks available on Washington law can help the legal researcher quickly and efficiently define the problem and locate the primary sources to answer the question. In Chapter 4, Nancy McMurrer provides annotated descriptions both of broad, multi-topic sources and other, more specific titles listed by subject. This chapter is crucial for the researcher who is not intimately familiar with the wealth of secondary literature available in Washington.

Washington State agencies promulgate a variety of administrative decisions or actions. These are ably discussed in Chapter 5 by Cheryl Rae Nyberg. Pay particular attention to the description of the Administrative Procedure Act and its requirements. Ms. Nyberg discusses each state agency that issues administrative determinations and even provides a summary chart of the various sources of agency quasi-judicial actions in order to speed your research.

Never compiled a Washington legislative history? Follow the clear step-by-step directions written by Peggy Roebuck Jarrett in Chapter 6 on legislative history and bill tracking. Clearly our author has had some experience with this awesome task!

Ms. Jarrett shows the novice exactly how to follow the Legislature's process and includes important tips for accomplishing this research chore efficiently and competently. Researching state initiatives can also be problematic; see the tips included by the author.

A completely new chapter on local government law has been researched and written by Mary Ann Hyatt. After an excellent background of the authority and role played by local governments, Ms. Hyatt analyzes the primary and secondary materials for cities, counties, and special districts.

Historical and archival sources of legal information are new in this edition of the Deskbook. In Chapter 8, Cheryl Nyberg and Ann Hemmens have tracked down nearly everything you might need from official documents in the territorial and early statehood periods in Washington.

Chapter 9 is also new to the Deskbook. With 36 Indian tribes in Washington State, 6 percent of the state's land held by Indians or Indian tribes, and a growth in tribal self-government, every Washington practitioner should know the basics of Indian law. The chapter reviews federal Indian policy and includes a minimal list of federal, state, and tribal resources that can be used in legal research projects.

"Nonlegal Resources" is the title of Chapter 10 written by Peggy Roebuck Jarrett. In a clear and direct style, the author covers sources that will help you find information about people and organizations, locate factual information, and improve your writing skills.

In the final chapter Jonathan Franklin compiles information about legal resources in Washington.
Included here are tips on how to manage your library, hire a librarian, and select materials and research tools for your library. Directories of filing and library service organizations, document delivery services, legal publishers, and Washington legal periodicals complete the informative material found in this section. This chapter will be a great help to those trying to keep their law libraries current and properly managed, to those making decisions about purchases for office libraries, and to those trying to locate legal materials available in the local area.

The Deskbook’s appendix presents acronyms and abbreviation used throughout this book and that frequently appear in Washington legal materials.

I am very pleased with the high quality of the material you will find within this Deskbook. Many thanks to the authors for their tireless work. Special thanks to the general editor, Cheryl Nyberg, who edited all the chapters, created the book’s index, and provided the consistency and standard of excellence so necessary for a work like this. Theresa Knier worked many hours to put our draft material into a final form with a professional touch—thank you! Thanks also to Reba Turnquist who helped update information about publishers, prices, and the like; to the Gallagher Law Library staff for being supportive and helpful; to the law librarianship student interns who helped cover the Reference Office when we needed extra time to write; to various colleagues around the state who responded cheerfully to our requests for information; and, finally, to our library patrons for asking us questions and helping us learn what legal researchers in Washington need to know.

Readers and Washington legal researchers are invited to send comments and suggestions via email to deskbook@u.washington.edu.

Penny A. Hazelton
Seattle, Washington
January 2002
Notes on Using This Book

This section explains citations and references used throughout this book.

Books, Articles, and Legal Citations

The Deskbook contains many references to other publications. The authors have used several formats to distinguish categories of material.

Titles of books, periodicals, looseleaf services, CD-ROM products, and similar items generally appear in italics. Authors, editors, and compilers are often named and the publisher and year of publication are given. For periodicals and other publications that are issued or updated on a regular basis, the initial year of publication is followed by an open hyphen (e.g., Washington State Environmental Reporter (Book Publishing Co., 1974-)).

References to articles include the author(s), the title of the article in quotation marks, and the abbreviated title of the periodical in italics. These abbreviations are spelled out in the Appendix: Acronyms and Abbreviations. If the issues of a volume are paginated consecutively, the volume number appears before the title of the publication and the first page number follows the title, with the year of publication in parentheses (e.g., William R. Andersen, "The 1988 Washington Administrative Procedure Act: An Introduction," 64 Wash. L. Rev. 781 (1989)). If the issues of a volume are not paginated consecutively, the citation identifies the issue and then the beginning page number (e.g., Nancy Carol Carter, “American Indian Tribal Governments, Law, and Courts,” Legal Ref. Serv. Q., No. 2, 2000, at 7). For articles that are available for free on the Internet, their citations include the Uniform Resource Locators (URLs) (e.g., Eron Berg, “Unpublished Decisions: Routine Cases or Shadow Precedents?,” Wash. St. B. News, Dec. 2000, at 28, available at http://www.wsba.org/barnews/2000/12/berg.htm).

Citations to some legal sources (such as statutes and cases) follow rules set out in The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation, 17th ed. (Harvard Law Review Association, 2000), with exceptions recommended by the Washington Office of the Reporter of Decisions Style Sheet. The Bluebook and the Style Sheet are described in Chapter 3, Fundamentals of Legal Research in Washington, Section X, Citation Format.

Internet Websites

In less than a decade, the Internet has become a major legal research tool. Thousands of academic, commercial, governmental, organizational, and personal websites contain the text of legal materials and/or guides, indexes, and commentaries on the law. Government agencies at all levels have quickly made the Internet a primary means for communicating with the public.

Throughout this book, URLs identify websites that contain Washington State legal materials. In many cases, “deep links” to pages buried several layers beneath an agency’s main homepage have been used to direct readers to the specific location of legal documents and databases. These URLs and the descriptions of website contents were accurate in fall 2001.

Website addresses and contents change frequently, however. If a website address fails and the source is part of the Washington State government, use the “State Agency Index” on Access Washington, http://access.wa.gov/, to locate the agency’s new URL. Then look for navigation links, a site index, or a search feature to locate specific material. If the source of the website is not part of the Washington State government, pare back the URL to the first slash after the domain name (ending with .com, .edu, or .org). This shortened URL should
take you to the website homepage. For example, the URL for the Gallagher Law Library’s collection of legal research guides is http://lib.law.washington.edu/ref/guides.html. If you eliminate “/ref/guides.html”, you will go to http://lib.law.washington.edu/, the Law Library’s homepage.

The University of Washington Gallagher Law Library maintains an Internet Legal Resources page, http://lib.law.washington.edu/research/research.html, that links to free websites providing Washington State primary law sources, including the constitution, bills, statutes, court opinions, court rules, regulations, administrative agency decisions, and municipal codes. Comparable links for U.S. government sources are also provided. Internet Legal Resources is updated regularly.

**LexisNexis and Westlaw**

Many chapters describe files and databases found on the two major commercial legal research services, LexisNexis and Westlaw. In some cases, specific libraries and file names are mentioned. For example, Chapter 5, Administrative Decisions and Materials, includes a list of LexisNexis libraries and files containing administrative agency decisions. The reference to “WASH;WAGMHB” includes the LexisNexis library name for Washington (WASH) and a specific file within that library for the decisions of the Growth Management Hearings Boards decisions (WAGMHB). The comparable database on Westlaw is called WA-GMHB.

When no library, file name, or database identifier is given, the researcher may explore several options for finding relevant material. Both services maintain extensive directories of their contents and these directories are available in print and online. The Westlaw Database Directory is published annually; the 2001 edition is 842 pages. The online edition is found at http://directory.westlaw.com/. The LexisNexis Directory of Online Services is also published annually; the 2001 edition is 736 pages. The “Searchable Directory of Online Sources” is at http://web.nexis.com/sources/. The directories are organized by jurisdiction (Washington), type of legal material (Legislation), and subject or practice area (Environmental Law). They also include indexes by title (Washington Administrative Code). Users may also contact the customer service representatives to ask about the availability of particular sources and get advice on constructing effective searches. LexisNexis customers may dial (800) 543-6862. The Westlaw Reference Attorneys may be reached at (800) 733-2889.

Because of their expense and complexity, these services are most often used by members of the legal community. Few public law libraries can afford to make these services available. Faculty and students at some colleges and universities may have access to a version of LexisNexis called Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe or a version of Westlaw called Westlaw Campus. These services offer an abbreviated list of certain legal sources, including full-text federal and state cases, statutes, and law reviews. Other users may take advantage of the vendors’ credit card options. LexisNexis by Credit Card, http://web.lexis.com/xchange/ccsubs/cc_prods.asp, is available on a “pay as you go” basis. A user may search legal materials (including federal and state cases, constitutions, statutes, court rules, and law reviews). Westlaw’s WestDoc program, http://www.westdoc.com, allows users with citations to obtain documents by credit card.

**Email the Authors**

The authors are interested in readers’ comments and suggestions. Please contact us by electronic mail at deskbook@u.washington.edu.
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Mary Whisner. Mary Whisner received a BA in Philosophy from the University of Washington in 1977, a JD from Harvard Law School in 1982, and an MLIS from Louisiana State University in 1987. Ms. Whisner clerked for Judge Stephanie K. Seymour of the U.S. Court of Appeals, Tenth Circuit, and practiced law for two years in Washington, D.C. She has been on the reference staff of the Gallagher Law Library at the University of Washington since 1988. Mary Whisner is a member of the American Association of Law Libraries, the Law Librarians of Puget Sound, and the Washington State Bar Association.
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Peggy Roebuck Jarrett

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* Some of the material in this chapter was adapted from materials by Ann Hemmens and Mary Whisner.
I. Introduction

Legal researchers often need to find information that is not strictly legal. What day of the week was September 5, 1987? How do I contact the Washington State Gambling Commission? How much has the Consumer Price Index changed in the last five years? Who said "misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows?"

Depending on your questions, you may from time to time need to use libraries other than law libraries. Get to know your local resources, especially public libraries and academic libraries. Many college and university libraries are open to the public. Some public libraries have telephone information lines and many have informative websites. For example, the Seattle Public Library has two good resources: a Quick Information Line at (206) 386-4636 and a “Selected Web Resources” page, http://www.spl.org/selectedsites/selectedsites.html. Different libraries have different strengths and focuses. You may need to venture beyond local resources if you need a specialized library for medical, business, or engineering information, but your local library should be able to refer you.

Electronic resources, both fee-based and free, are valuable for nonlegal research. Westlaw and Lexis-Nexis include many newspapers, magazines, and business information sources. Much nonlegal information is available on the Internet, but finding the best site can prove to be challenging. A good starting point for Internet sources is the Librarian’s Index to the Internet (LII), http://lii.org/. LII is a searchable directory of Internet resources, evaluated, annotated, and indexed by librarians. Be sure to evaluate any website you use: is the source reliable, official, up-to-date?

Nonlegal resources is a rather broad topic. This chapter is not a comprehensive look at everything outside the law. It is meant to be a sampling of resources that can be used to answer some of the most common questions of legal practitioners.

II. Finding People, Organizations, Agencies, and Corporations

Legal practitioners and researchers may need to contact an individual, business, association, or government agency. Calling experts can be a good way to get information. In addition to the sources in this section, check the University of Washington Gallagher Law Library’s “People-Finding” guide, http://lib.law.washington.edu/ref/people.html. The guide is updated regularly.

For judicial biographies, see Chapter 4, Washington Practice Materials. For historical biographies see Chapter 8, Historical and Archival Sources.

A. Telephone Numbers and Email Addresses

Your local phone book is an often overlooked resource; it has area codes, community service listings, and a variety of government pages. If you regularly deal with people and businesses in a neighboring city, consider obtaining that phone book.

The Internet offers a multitude of telephone directories. Some researchers may prefer a simple and easy to use site for people and business finding such as Switchboard, http://switchboard.com/, or Yahoo! People Search, http://people.yahoo.com/. Others may prefer a more complicated site such as The Ultimates, http://www.theultimates.com/, which offers an interface for six different Internet telephone directories.

QwestDex, http://rw.qwestdex.com/cgi/search.fc, is an Internet telephone directory from Qwest Communications. It covers residential, business, government, and toll-free listings and offers a reverse phone number look-up feature in the advanced search section.

Telephone Directories on the Web, http://www.teldir.com/eng/ is an index of online phonebooks, including more than 400 links to yellow pages, white pages, business directories, email addresses, and fax numbers from over 170 countries.

B. Locating a Lawyer

1. Washington State

contains contact information and WSBA numbers for active, inactive, judicial, emeritus, foreign law consultant, and suspended or disbarred attorneys. It can be searched by name, WSBA number, or phone number. Entries do not contain law firm affiliation, practice areas, or education.

Resources (Washington State Bar Association, annual) includes alphabetical and geographic listings of bar members, plus lists of section members. It gives contact information and WSBA numbers only.

The Attorneys Red Book for Washington State (A.N.P Publishing, annual) is an easy-to-use source that includes lists of attorneys and law firms organized by county. It also contains federal, state, and city government contact information; court and public port district information; and listings of court reporters.

The Corporate Counsel Directory (Washington State Bar Association, Corporate Law Department Section, annual) provides contact information for attorneys who practice in a corporate setting in Washington State and it lists individual attorneys alphabetically and by company name. The latest edition is 1998-1999.

2. United States

The Martindale-Hubbell Lawyer Locator, http://www.martindale.com/xp/Martindale/home.xml, is a directory of lawyers and law firms. Users can search by location, practice area, law school, languages spoken, and firm size. It includes some government, corporate, and law school faculty listings. The print version, The Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory (annual), is a multi-volume set with an alphabetical index of lawyers and a practice area index. It is also available on LexisNexis.

The West Legal Directory, http://directory.findlaw.com/, can be searched or browsed by lawyer name, practice area, or location. It includes some government and corporate listings. It is also available on Westlaw.

Hieros Gamos, Law Firms Worldwide Directory, http://www.hg.org/lawfirms.html, is a website searchable by law firm name, location, practice area, and size. It covers 170 countries.

The AALS Directory of Law Teachers (Association of American Law Schools, annual) alphabetically lists faculty and includes a list by subject specialty. AALS provides web links to member schools at http://www.aals.org/members.html, and the Directory is available on Westlaw.

C. Directories of Associations

Associations often track legislation and monitor legal developments of interest to their members. They often have websites, publications, and staff that may be able to assist you. If you know of specific organization that might have helpful information, such as the Sierra Club or the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, you can simply type the organization name in a search engine such as Google, http://www.google.com. If you want to browse on the Internet, try Yahoo, http://www.yahoo.com. Yahoo is a subject index, and "organizations" is a subcategory. So you can find human rights groups by following the categories: Society and Culture > Issues and Causes > Human Rights > Organizations.

The Encyclopedia of Associations (Gale Research Co., annual) includes information about thousands of nonprofit associations, professional societies, and trade groups, arranged by general subject. Entries include contact information, website and email address, membership size, description of activities, and major publications. It is available on LexisNexis and Westlaw, and larger libraries may subscribe to the web version, Associations Unlimited, but access may be restricted.

The University of Michigan Documents Center’s International Agencies and Information on the Web, http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/intl.html, has two main features. One is a list of websites that try to compile comprehensive links to intergovernmental and nongovernmental international organizations. The other is the Documents Center's own list of links to international agency websites. Some entries are annotated.
D. Government Directories


1. Washington State

The *Washington State Yearbook: The Evergreen State Government Directory* (Electronic Handbook Publishers, annual) is an extremely useful reference source. It lists state government officials, agency addresses and descriptions, city and county governments, Indian tribes, special districts, public school districts, colleges and universities, and media outlets. It provides biographical information for high-ranking officials, Supreme Court justices, and legislators. Includes statistics, election information and calendar, and some state history. Also available on CD-ROM.

Access Washington, [http://access.wa.gov/](http://access.wa.gov/), the Washington State homepage, provides links to agencies, boards, commissions, and departments. It has an agency name index, state service subject index, and online telephone directory.

Washington State Legislature member profiles can be found on the House and Senate websites. Profiles include contact information, committee assignments, biographies, and pictures. House member profiles are at [http://www.leg.wa.gov/house/default.htm](http://www.leg.wa.gov/house/default.htm) and Senate member profiles are at [http://www.leg.wa.gov senate/default.htm](http://www.leg.wa.gov senate/default.htm).


The *Directory of Washington City & Town Officials* (Municipal Research & Services Center of Washington, annual), [http://www.mrsc.org/roster.htm](http://www.mrsc.org/roster.htm), details contact information for city and town officials, and includes business hours and council meeting times.

2. United States

The *United States Government Manual* (U.S. Government Printing Office, annual), [http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/nara001.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/nara001.html), is the official handbook of the federal government. This comprehensive directory of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches lists the names of top officials, provides contact information, and provides organizational charts and descriptions of each agency's history, mission, and powers, often citing the enabling statute. The Government Manual also covers quasi-official agencies, boards, commissions, and committees.

The University of Michigan Documents Center's *Federal Government Resources on the Web*, [http://www.lib.umich.edu/ovdocs/federal.html](http://www.lib.umich.edu/ovdocs/federal.html), is a compilation of websites organized by branch of government and selected topics. It links to various directories of agencies and websites and is an excellent starting point.

The *Washington Information Directory* (Congressional Quarterly, Inc., annual) covers official as well as unofficial Washington: agencies, Congress, associations, think tanks, embassies, media, etc. It is organized by topic, with both a name and subject index.

The *Official Congressional Directory* (U.S. Government Printing Office, biennial), [http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/cong016.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/cong016.html), contains members' biographies, office listings, and district descriptions. It is arranged by state and indexed by name. It includes officers and officials of the House and Senate, committee assignments, maps, press galleries, and executive branch directory informa-

3. Other States

If you need to find government information for states other than Washington, Piper Resources offers a current and comprehensive list of links at its State and Local Government on the Net site, http://www.piperinfo.com/state/index.cfm. For each state, links are provided to the state homepage; statewide offices; legislative, executive, and judicial branches; boards and commissions; counties; and cities.


The Book of the States (Council of State Governments, biennial) is a one-volume work packed with information. This is the place to look up governors' compensation, time limits on bill introduction, selection of judges, limitations on campaign contributions, number of registered motor vehicles, and excise tax rates.

E. Corporate Directories

The Washington Secretary of State's Corporations Division—Registration Data Lookup, https://wws2.wa.gov/sos/cor/search.jsp, provides registration information on corporations, limited liability companies, limited partnerships, limited liability partnerships, and other entities required to file with the Secretary. Information includes organization name, type, status, and registered agent name and address, and limited searching is available. The website is updated daily. Also published in microfiche, titled Corporation Records (monthly).

For federal filings, try the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, SEC Filings and Forms (EDGAR), http://www.sec.gov/edgar.shtml. This is a searchable database of many of the forms public companies are required to file with the SEC. Coverage generally begins in 1996.

A helpful starting point for researchers trying to find and sort through company information on the Internet is the Librarians Index to the Internet: Business Topics, http://lii.org/search/file/business. The "companies" link takes you to an annotated list of websites. Organized by "best of," directories, and specific resources.

For more detailed corporate information, check LexisNexis, Westlaw, or the nearest large public or academic library for a variety of expensive print and electronic directories and resources, some of which cover larger privately held companies. Academic and public business libraries also have expert reference staff to assist users with this specialized information.

III. Finding Factual Information

A. Almanacs

Almanacs are compilations of information on a variety of subjects. General almanacs cover geography, economics, science, biography, sports, and more. You can look up forms of address, perpetual calendars, and presidential succession. They are handy and inexpensive.

One of the standard general almanacs is The World Almanac and Book of Facts (The World Almanac, annual). A tip: the index is in the front.

Information Please, http://www.infoplease.com, is a website offering searching and browsing of some of the Information Please product line, including several almanacs, an encyclopedia, atlas, and dictionary.

B. Atlases and Maps

Large public and academic libraries may have map collections and staff specialists to assist users. The University of Washington is the State Regional Map Depository Library and receives all maps and digital mapping products issued through the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Government Printing Office. The U.W. Map Collection and Cartographic Information Services website, http://www
.lib.washington.edu/maps/, describes collections and services and links to Internet resources for finding maps and digital geographic information.

If you just need a road map, try the Rand McNally Road Atlas (Rand McNally, annual). It is the standard. Another option is one of the interactive websites that provide maps and driving directions such as MapBlast!, http://www.mapblast.com, or MapQuest, http://www.mapquest.com.

C. Country Information


The Statesman's Yearbook: The Politics, Cultures, and Economies of the World (St. Martin's Press, annual) provides information on international organizations as well as countries. This excellent snapshot contains statistics and text.

D. Statistical Sources

1. General Sources


The Washington State Almanac: An Economic and Demographic Overview of Counties and Cities, 14th ed. (Public Sector Information, Inc., 2000) is a compilation of data from a variety of federal and state sources. The main section contains population, income, and business statistical profiles organized by county. The volume also includes rankings, maps, and charts.


The U.S. Census Bureau's Statistical Abstract of the United States (U.S. Government Printing Office, annual), http://www.census.gov/statab/www/, is the standard summary of U.S. statistics—social, political, and economic. It includes over 1400 tables, ranging from population to prices, energy to trade. The tables give source citations, so researchers may be able to gather even more detailed statistics on a given topic. The Statistical Abstract is well-indexed and an excellent resource.

2. Court Statistics

Caseloads of the Courts of Washington (Washington Office of the Administrator for the Courts, annual), http://www.courts.wa.gov/caseload/, provides criminal and civil filings and disposition figures for appellate, superior, and district/municipal courts. It includes five-year historic summaries and the website provides monthly and year-to-date data.


details the work of the federal courts. The volume is mostly tables, but there are some text summaries.

State Court Caseload Statistics (National Center for State Courts, annual), http://www.ncsc.dni.us/divisions/research/csp/csp-index.html, provides a variety of tables of information about specific state courts. Companion volume is Examining the Work of State Courts (annual), which provides overview and analysis.

3. Criminal Justice Statistics

Crime in Washington State (Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, annual) includes tables of offenses statewide and by reporting agency such as city, county, etc. Includes hate/bias crime statistics. This source is compiled by the Washington Uniform Crime Reporting Project, which is a joint effort of the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs and the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission.


The U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics’ Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics (U.S. Government Printing Office, annual) is a comprehensive, indexed volume of national statistics from a wide variety of agencies and organizations. It is divided into six sections: characteristics of the criminal justice system, public attitudes toward crime and criminal justice-related topics, nature and distribution of known offenses, characteristics and distribution of persons arrested, judicial processing of defendants, and persons under correctional supervision. Also available as Sourcebook Online, http://www.albany.edu/sourcebook/.


For more specific criminal justice statistics, try the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) or the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS) websites. The Bureau of the Justice Statistics, http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/welcome.html, is part of the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs. Many of the Bureau's publications are available on its website. Titles are wide-ranging: Civil Rights Complaints in U.S. District Courts, 1990-98; Capital Punishment 1999; Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 2000; and Juvenile Felony Defendants in Criminal Courts. The National Criminal Justice Reference Service, http://www.ncjrs.org/index.html, is a federally-sponsored information clearinghouse that provides a variety of statistical publications. There is duplication between the two sites, since the NCJRS clearinghouse includes BJS publications.

4. Economic Statistics


The Thorndike Encyclopedia of Banking and Financial Tables, 3d ed. (Warren Gorham & Lamont, 1987; supplemented by Yearbook, currently published by A.S. Pratt & Sons) is a substantial compilation of amortization tables, compounded interest rates, historical interest rates, and more.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). BLS has a comprehensive Consumer Price Indexes website at http://stats.bls.gov/cpihome.htm. It links to LABSTAT, a database of current and historical CPI data. Summary tables can also be found in the Statis-
tical Abstract of the United States; updates are in the "Current Labor Statistics" section of Monthly Labor Review (also at http://stats.bls.gov/opub/mlr(curlabst.htm#cls). Recorded summaries are available on regional 24-hour hotlines; the Seattle hotline number is (206) 553-0645. Recorded detailed CPI information is available at (202) 691-5200.

Several websites offer interactive foreign currency converters. One of the cleanest is the Universal Currency Converter, http://www.xe.net/ucc/. Just type in your amount, pick your two currencies from drop-down menus, and click. Over 180 currencies are supported. A list of currency converters can be found at the AcqWeb's "Reference Resources: Money Matters" site, http://acqweb.library.vanderbilt.edu/acqweb/ref_money.html.

5. Census

Census data is voluminous and confusing. Often what researchers need can be found in the Statistical Abstract of the United States or a good almanac. If you need to go further, a good starting point is the Census 2000 guide prepared by University of Washington Libraries Government Publications division, http://www.lib.washington.edu/govpubs/census2000.html. The guide links to the most recently-released Washington State and United States census data, plus links to other census resources. The official U.S. Census Bureau site for the 2000 Census is at http://www.census.gov/dmd/www/2khome.htm.

6. Advanced Statistical Finding Tools

If you need statistics not available in the sources above, try the University of Michigan Documents Center's "Statistical Resources on the Web," http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/stats.html. Categories include agriculture, health, housing, sociology, and environment.

Two fee-based services also provide access to statistics. Statistical Universe, from LexisNexis Academic & Library Solutions, is an expensive and powerful commercial web index to statistical publications of governments, associations, and organizations. The University of Washington Libraries provides access to onsite users and has a microfiche set of the indexed publications. If you are outside the Seattle area, check with your local academic or public library to find out if they subscribe to Statistical Universe, or if staff can refer you to a more convenient subscribing library. The other fee-based service is the low-cost STAT-USA, a business, economic, and trade data website from the U.S. Department of Commerce, http://www.stat-usa.gov/. Check with your local library for access; many libraries that have government documents collections offer STAT-USA to the public.

E. Medical Information

The Internet is full of sites providing medical information. A good starting point is the Librarians Index to the Internet: Health and Medicine, http://lii.org/search/file/health, which categorizes and annotates a wealth of information. Also check out the University of Washington, Gallagher Law Library legal research guides, http://lib.law.washington.edu/ref/guides.html, for health law topics. These guides are created for specific law school classes, but they may be helpful. The University of Washington Health Sciences Libraries Healthlinks website, http://healthlinks.washington.edu/hsl/, provides much information and includes a link to PubMed, the National Library of Medicine's public access index and abstract of biomedical journals. PubMed can be directly accessed at http://www4.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/PubMed/.

The standard print reference source on the use, side effects, and chemical composition of prescription drugs is the Physicians' Desk Reference: PDR (Medical Economics Co., annual). Two basic medical dictionaries are Stedman's Medical Dictionary, 27th ed. (Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2000) and Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary, 19th ed. (F.A. Davis Co., 2001).
IV. Writing Resources

A. Dictionaries and Thesauruses

Everyone should have a good dictionary and thesaurus within reach. There are many on the market and which one you choose depends on personal preference and price. An easy-to-read standard dictionary (with color pictures) is The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 4th ed. (Houghton Mifflin, 2000). An Internet publisher, Bartleby.com, provides a version, http://www.bartleby.com/61/.


Another useful tool to have close by is a small “speller” such as Webster’s New World Speller/Divider (Hungry Minds, 1992) or Spell Check (Houghton Mifflin, 1996). As any writer knows, word-processing spell-checkers are not perfect.

B. Usage Guides


Bryan A. Garner’s Dictionary of Modern American Usage (Oxford University Press, 1998) is scholarly yet readable; authoritative yet witty. It is an alphabetical arrangement of word entries, discussing a particular word or words, and essay entries, discussing usage and style.


The Chicago Manual of Style, 14th ed. (University of Chicago Press, 1993) is a weighty guidebook covering punctuation, spelling, quotations, bibliographies, notes, copyediting, proofreading, typography, and printing.

There are several sources on bias-free writing, including Marilyn Schwartz’s Guidelines for Bias-Free Writing (Indiana University Press, 1995). This volume was prepared under the auspices of the Task Force on Bias-Free Language of the Association of American University Presses.

C. Quotation Books

Speeches and written work are often spiced up with a judicious use of quotations. Here is a sampling of the many quotation books available.

Fred R. Shapiro, comp., The Oxford Dictionary of American Legal Quotations (Oxford University Press, 1993) has more than 3,500 quotations about American law, from the famous to the not-so-famous. The citations are in a modified Bluebook form, which is a nice touch.

John Bartlett, Familiar Quotations: A Collection of Passages, Phrases, and Proverbs Traced to Their Sources in Ancient and Modern Literature, 16th ed. (Little, Brown, 1992) is the classic quotation book. Quotations are arranged by author, in chronological order, and a keyword index is included.

Suzy Platt, ed., Respectfully Quoted: A Dictionary of Quotations Requested from the Congressional Research Service (Library of Congress, 1989) is arranged by subject and easy to browse. Many quotations relate to politics, civil rights, justice, etc.

Elizabeth Knowles, ed., The Oxford Dictionary of Twentieth Century Quotations (Oxford University Press, 1999) is a fascinating collection of quotes from a variety of cultural, political, and scientific figures, including Vaclav Havel, Stephen Hawking, Henry James, Bob Marley, Groucho Marx, Robert McNamara, Camille Paglia, and Dorothy Sayers. The volume has a selective thematic index and an extensive keyword index.