

Spring 2000

From Page to Technology's Virtual Stage

Camille Broussard

From Page to Technology's Virtual Stage | Camille Broussard

A little more than 20 years ago, lawyers began to incorporate computer-assisted research into their "traditional" research strategies. Today, few projects can be completed without effective integration of paper and computer based sources. Many significant changes in electronic research tools have occurred in the last few years. Several mergers and acquisitions have presented a major realignment of legal publishers and information providers. Research now requires knowledge not only of using a particular system, but also of the information sources within

each of the major systems.

The Internet has taken its place alongside Westlaw and Lexis in the law office. The ability to negotiate the World Wide Web must now be added to the practitioner's skill set. Lexis and Westlaw remain available through proprietary software, but their web presence is becoming the dominant one for both companies. They designed many recent enhancements to the databases for the web versions only. The future of Westlaw and Lexis will most assuredly be Internet based.

One of the biggest changes in the

research world is that Lexis now owns Shepard's and the service is no longer available on Westlaw. In response, Westlaw introduced KeyCite. Lexis has integrated the new Shepard's service throughout the Lexis database, and West has integrated KeyCite into the Westlaw system. The use of a citation service is no longer "just" about updating the procedural status of one's case. In fact, when viewing a case online, you are automatically alerted to the existence of both direct and indirect history. If a point in your case has been overruled or reversed, Westlaw uses a red flag and Lexis a stop sign to warn the viewer.

More important, they have increased the options for evaluating the treatment of issues by subsequent court rulings exponentially. The researcher can review and group citing cases by various attributes including depth of citation treatment; headnotes discussed; jurisdiction; and date. Lexis allows a researcher to manipulate case results by performing word searches within the citing case universe. Westlaw provides a Table of Authorities relied on by the case being viewed. Each of these citation services is becoming increasingly more powerful. The implications for the researcher are quite extraordinary.

The resources available and the skills required to successfully use them are constantly changing. To help students stay abreast of changes, the Mendik Library offers a full complement of research skills classes. NYLS alums are welcome to attend any of our training sessions subject only to space availability. For electronic database classes, the Library staff provides a training password that will be valid for that particular class session.

CAMILLE BROUSSARD is head of Reference Services in the Mendik Library. If you have questions about Library classes or if you would like to receive a copy of the current semester's brochure listing class offerings, please feel free to contact Ms. Broussard (cbroussard@nyls.edu).

International Law and Globalization | Lung-chu Chen

International law is a continuing process of authoritative decision by which members of the world community identify, clarify, and secure their common interests. These common interests consist of minimum world order and optimum world order. Minimum world order refers to the minimization of unauthorized coercion and violence—in other words, the maintenance of international peace and security. Optimum world order refers to the widest possible shaping and sharing of values, i.e., respect, power, enlightenment, well-being, wealth, skill, affection, and rectitude—popularly expressed in terms of human rights, self determination and self governance, education and global communication, health and environmental protection, trade and development, transfer of technology, human solidarity and diversity, and social justice.

The end of the Cold War did not put international law out of business. On the contrary, although the threat of a nuclear holocaust might have been reduced for the time being, the need for maintaining minimum world order and for securing optimum world order has become ever more pressing.

As humankind ushers in a new millennium and a new century of "knowledge power," the degree of global interdependencies has deepened, and the amazing frequency and speed of transnational interaction continue to accelerate. A global village is real both in fact and in

perception. "Globalization" has become a catchword of the new era. As a distinct part of the globalizing process, international law is as dynamic as ever. Taking one another into account, all actors—non-governmental as well as governmental—have intensified their transnational interactions, generating ever increasing and interpenetrating transnational effects.

Humankind is grappling with a host of transnational problems—armed conflicts and the control of armaments, trade and investment, the use and control of the sea and outer space, global environment, illicit drug trafficking, the internet and transnational flows of information, technology transfer, human rights, refugees, ethnic and religious warfare, and so on. It is evident that international law is too important to be left to international lawyers and decision-makers alone. Individual citizens must rise to the challenge of globalization in quest for a world order of human dignity and the rule of law. Citizens of the world must think globally, think about future as well as present generations, think creatively in the common interest, and act locally as well as transnationally.

PROFESSOR LUNG-CHU CHEN, author of *Introduction to Contemporary International Law* (Yale Press, 1999), is working on a new book, *The United Nations and World Order*. His courses include Foreign Affairs, the Constitution, & International Law and The United Nations & World Order. Prof. Chen is founder of the Lung-chu Chen New Century Foundation, a think tank based in Taipei, Taiwan.