

COIL Meeting Minutes

October 2nd, 2015

University of Tulsa Law Library (Mabee Legal Information Center)

Attendees: Melissa Kunz, Sarah Whittle, Richard Todd, Kristen Burkholder, Jamie Holmes, Jim Cloen, Lisa Haldeman, Megan Donald, Andy Taylor, Jennifer Tatum, Krista Ramirez, Adam Brennan, Dan Bell

Pre-presentation

Megan showed the newly redesigned COIL website. She wants to launch a shared repository across the state to share handouts, presentation, and PPTs for instructional use. Kristen suggested using a creative commons license for it.

Presentation: Legal Research for the Non-Law Librarian –Dan Bell

As a librarian, we are in a position of trust; an authority figure. However, often we don't know the whole story behind what a patron needs. We ask questions, because a patron doesn't necessarily know what details are important for us to help them. When it comes to legal research, sometimes there is the "right" answer, and sometimes the "legal" answer. Dan Bell gave us an example about speed traps in construction zones in NE Oklahoma where a Missouri resident uncovered that the state wasn't following its own regulations.

Dan Bell stressed that if someone has a legal question, mainly the important thing is to get them to an attorney. Tulsa County Bar Association has a referral service in Tulsa: 30 minutes with an attorney for 24 dollars. Dan recommended exploring your home area for such services. Most legal questions are too complex for a librarian to answer, and even if you can find a patron a source, interpretation of that source can be different depending on the situation. Dan considers a patron transaction successful if he can point them to a source and let the patron go from there, rather than "answer" a question (sticky for all the reasons mentioned).

Dan gave a presentation with a PPT. He had an accompanying handout that explained some common definitions and terms, such as primary resources, and "official" versus "unofficial" sources. He discussed chronological arrangement of law versus by subject: session laws versus code. We viewed the website oscn.net and looked up the statutes.

Dan covered the digest system and topic and key number system. The West Key number system arranges law by 450 topics. Cases will have key numbers in the headnotes. Digests by West are organized by this taxonomy. In print, full cases are in the Reporter; Digests are a finding aid, a map to the cases.

Dan mentioned not everything goes into the code, like budgets. Things like this happen every year and aren't worth codifying, so it stays in chronological arrangement and can be found in the session laws.

Dan showed how when you look at a law in OSCN, if something is underlined, it's new text. If there is a strikethrough, it's been repealed. In Oklahoma, the statutes are re-codified every ten years. So, in citing modern law, it would be 2011 plus 2015 amendments. The law will be re-codified in 2021.

Dan recommended "The Accidental law librarian" as a great resources for the group.

Minutes by Adam Brennan