

THE DAILY RECORD

LAW, REAL ESTATE, FINANCE AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE SINCE 1908

Legal Currents

Conquering the information highway

20 useful Web sites ideal for lawyers practicing in New York

This column, featured every Monday, tackles timely issues important to the local legal community.

BY NICOLE BLACK

Daily Record Columnist



NICOLE BLACK

There's so much in-formation out there — and not enough time in the day to conquer it all.

It's a conundrum for lawyers. Information is our business, or at least a large part of it. But laws and regulations change. Courts across the state issue decisions on a daily basis that drastically affect our legal practices. Accordingly, one of the more difficult tasks that we face is finding ways to keep up with the changes as efficiently possible.

One obvious source of virtually unlimited information is the World Wide Web. Of course, the trick is sifting through the vast amount of information available and locating useful Web sites. Look no further. What follows are what I find to be 20 of the most useful (and free) online resources for New York legal practitioners.

What better place to start than with the highest court in the state, the New York Court of Appeals? A list of the most recent decisions and a searchable database of the full text of decisions from 1990 to present can be found at Cornell's Legal Information Institute (www.law.cornell.edu/nyctap). Other useful resources include a thorough outline detailing the procedure for appealing cases to the court (www.nycourts.gov/courts/appeals/forms/civiltoc05.htm) and the practice handbook on the certification of questions by the Second Circuit to the New York Court of Appeals (www.nycourts.gov/courts/appeals/Cert.pdf). The court's Web site also provides links to a number of items of interest, including Webcasts of recent lectures, including U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer's speech last Spring, notable oral arguments, such

as the same sex marriage appeals and death penalty cases, and important and timely notices to the bar (www.nycourts.gov/ctapps/crtnews.htm).

There are a number of useful online resources that allow you to research the judge assigned to a case, your opponent and the status of a particular matter pending in certain courts.

A very interesting and relatively new site that has the potential to provide great insight into the skills, knowledge and temperament of judges in New York is The Robing Room, which allows lawyers to rate judges and leave

anonymous comments regarding their experiences before both federal and state court judges. There is a section devoted to Second Circuit District Judges and Magistrates (www.therobingroom.com/District.aspx?ID=2) and New York State Judges (www.therobingroom.com/newyork).

Another useful resource is the New York State Unified Court System's attorney database, from which you can obtain information regarding the address, phone number and year of admission of any attorney admitted to practice in New York State (<https://iapps.courts.state.ny.us/attorney/AttorneySearch>).

The New York State Unified Court System's Web site also provides a free service, eCourts, which allows you to obtain information regarding both pending and, in some cases, closed cases in Family Court and civil Supreme Courts across the state (<https://iapps.courts.state.ny.us/caseTrac/jsp/ecourt.htm>).

Should you have a case scheduled downstate in a courthouse unfamiliar to you, you have the option of viewing maps, floor plans of select areas and photographs of the building at Courtguide.com (<http://courtguide.com/pro/main1.html>). From that site, you can obtain select information regarding the federal courts in New York

Continued ...

THE DAILY RECORD

LAW, REAL ESTATE, FINANCE AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE SINCE 1908

Continued ...

as well (<http://courtguide.com/pro/main31.html>).

If you practice criminal law, there are a number of resources available to you. The Buffalo Criminal Law Center's "criminal law Web" provides easy access a large database of important New York criminal law decisions and to the Penal Law statutes with imbedded links to definitions of the terms used therein (<http://wings.buffalo.edu/law/bclc/web/nycriminallaw.htm>).

The New York Criminal Jury Instructions are available online (www.nycourts.gov/cji/index.htm) as is an annotated search warrant manual prepared for New York judges (www.nycourts.gov/judges/SearchWarrant_Manual.pdf). The New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services provides a handy list of registerable offenses for the Sex Offender Registry, current through April 13 (<http://criminaljustice.state.ny.us/nsor/sortab1.htm>).

Finally, the Center for Appellate Litigation's Web site includes a list of significant criminal cases pending in the New York Court of Appeals along with a summary of the issues presented (www.appellatelitigation.org/html/court_updates/court_updates_fs.html).

Electronic discovery is a relatively new and confusing issue for many lawyers who practice in federal court, but the extremely helpful Electronic Discovery Rule Wizard provides an easily navigated tool that resembles an "e-discovery for dummies" (<http://technology.findlaw.com/electronic-discovery/electronic-discovery-wizard.html>).

An outdated, but still useful Article 78 primer is available online (<http://article78.com/primer/1.shtml>). There also is a detailed and annotated New York Evidence outline prepared by Syracuse University Law School Profes-

sor Travis H. D. Lewin (www.law.syr.edu/Pdfs/0NY%20EVIDENCE%20LAW%202006%20UPDATED.pdf).

A detailed New York legal research guide with imbedded links to relevant online resources can be found at the Georgetown Law Library's Web site (www.ll.georgetown.edu/states/newyork-in-depth.cfm). If you need a refresher course regarding researching the legislative history of a New York statute, look no further than free and comprehensive New York State Legislative History Tutorial offered by the New York State Library (www.nysl.nysed.gov/leghist).

Another indispensable online resource is the Second Department's searchable database of appellate briefs for cases calendared between January 2004 and six months prior to the date that the search is run (<http://decisions.courts.state.ny.us/ad2/search/queryad2briefs3.asp>).

This list of 20 Web sites is just the beginning. Take a stab at conquering the information highway and put these free resources to use in your law practice. You won't regret it.

Author's Note — All Web sites referenced in this article can be accessed online through <http://ny-lawblog.typepad.com/suigeneris/legal-currentslinks.html>.

Nicole Black is of counsel to Fiandach & Fiandach. She also publishes a popular New York law blog, Sui Generis, nylawblog.typepad.com and a blog devoted to legal humor, Legal Antics, nylaw-blog.typepad.com/legalantics.