Law Librarian Scholarship   Other Publication Series

2011

Make Your Life Easier: Free Online Productivity Tools and Resources

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By Kincaid C. Brown

L egal information and tools on the web continue to expand in terms of both numbers and robustness, so when asked to write an article for the *Michigan Bar Journal* on information technology law resources, I wanted to highlight some useful web tools that attorneys can use to increase their online productivity. It is no secret that attorneys are being asked to do more with less.[1] Fortunately, these applications can make online research more efficient and are easy to install and just as easy to use.

Jureeka!

Ever wish legal citations on a web page would link to full text? An extension to Firefox[2] named Jureeka![3] does just that. When browsing a web page, Jureeka! identifies legal citations and adds hyperlinks to full-text caselaw, statutes, regulations, federal court rules, and some international legal materials. It translates the citation information into links to the documents at free sites such as the Legal Information Institute,[4] Justia,[5] and government websites.

Jureeka! allows you to type a citation into its search box and then searches for a full-text version of the requested document. If you have a PDF that you want to copy from, Jureeka! will also search for HTML versions of that PDF. With a cable connection, you can download, install, and begin using Jureeka! in approximately a minute.

CiteGenie

Another Firefox add-on, CiteGenie,[6] can copy and paste legal text from Lexis, Westlaw, and Internet reference materials with a correct Bluebook[7] or ALWD[8] citation. Cite-

Genie works primarily for caselaw and Internet resource research but is experimenting with the ability to add citations for statutes and regulations. CiteGenie provides a number of formatting options and allows you to choose citation rules for a particular state, use parallel citations, remove star-pagination marks from quoted texts, and personalize abbreviations. This tool is easy to use; when researching in Firefox, select CiteGenie from the right-click menu and a pop-up displays the copied text and citation to be pasted.

Zotero

Zotero,[9] an application created by George Mason University and the Center for History and New Media, is another useful Firefox extension. It helps researchers collect, store, organize, and cite research materials. Zotero allows you to organize research materials into folders by drag-and-drop and provides the ability to tag and notate your materials. You can also drag and drop citations into e-mails and documents, and style the citations using Bluebook[10] format (Bluebook citation format is not among the default citation choices but can be added in less than a minute). In a single click, Zotero will store PDFs, images, links, and an entire HTML web page in your library. The beauty of Zotero is that your library and research trail lives on the web, so you can access it from anywhere.

Other Useful Firefox Extensions

- DownThemAll![11] allows you to download all the PDFs, images, and text of linked pages with a single click.
- Fireshot[12] creates a screenshot image of an entire web page, even if you cannot see it in its entirety on your screen.

WatchThatPage

Are you waiting for a web page to update with new information and the site does not have a Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feed or an RSS feed that works? Then WatchThatPage[13] is a tool for you. WatchThatPage will track pages you want to monitor and send you an e-mail when those pages are altered. You can opt to have the e-mail include the changes or to list only the pages that have changed. You can also set the frequency with which you want the pages to be checked. WatchThatPage is free, but you must register and create an account.

LibGuides

LibGuides is a fee-based content management system used by university libraries across the country—including many law schools—to organize and disseminate research guides and tips. The law-school guides are written by law librarians who usually have law degrees. These research guides

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range from over-arching discussions of legal research on a subject to tutorials for using a single resource, and LibGuides is free to legal researchers. It provides one-stop shopping for legal research guides, allowing legal researchers to see and search all research guides in the entire system.[14]

OpenOffice and Google Docs

OpenOffice[15] and Google Docs[16] are two alternatives to Microsoft Office that will especially interest small offices and solo practitioners.

OpenOffice is a free, open-source software replacement for the Microsoft Office suite of products that you download onto

> One of the best features of Google Docs is the ease of sharing documents and collaborating with others.

your system. OpenOffice offers Writer, Calc, Impress, and Base as alternatives to Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access, respectively. The OpenOffice products open common document formats like .docx and .xls, and save documents as PDFs or in a compatible OpenOffice format. The interface for these open-source programs is intuitive to anyone who has used the comparable Microsoft products. Extensions like foreign-language dictionaries and templates can be added as well. OpenOffice is compatible with Windows, Mac, Linux, and Solaris operating systems.

Unlike OpenOffice, which you download onto your computer, Google Docs is a web-based program you use online. Google Docs' aptly named Documents, Spreadsheets, and Presentations programs correspond to Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. You can open and save documents in common formats, and since your information is stored online, you can access it any-

where. One of the best features of Google Docs is the ease of sharing documents and collaborating with others; you can share a single file or an entire folder, and multiple users can read and revise documents and reply to comments without refreshing the page. The interface is easy to use and allows for drag-and-drop file organization. Google is consistently adding new features to make Google Docs just as robust as Microsoft Office while still being easy to use.

The resources discussed in this article are examples of some of the more useful tools that legal professionals can incorporate into their work lives. You may find it helpful to consult a law librarian for more information on finding and using resources and tools in the endless battle to increase efficiency. ∎

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FOOTNOTES

1. See Cohen, Law.com, *Law Librarian Survey 2010: More Bang, Less Bucks* (American Lawyer, July 15, 2010), available at <http://www.law.com/jsp/article.jsp?id=1202463542712&rss=newswire&slreturn=1&hbxlogin=1>. All websites cited in this article were accessed June 20, 2011.
2. Mozilla Firefox information and download available at <http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/?ref=logo>.
3. Jureeka! Firefox extension download available at <https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/jureeka-6636/>.
4. Legal Information Institute <http://www.law.cornell.edu/>.
5. Justia.com <http://www.justia.com/>.
6. CiteGenie download available at <http://citegenie.com/>.
7. *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* (Columbia Law Review Ass'n *et al.* eds, 19th ed 2010).
8. *ALWD Citation Manual: A Professional System of Citation,* 4th ed (New York: Aspen Publishers, 2010).
9. Zotero download available at <http://www.zotero.org/>.
10. *The Bluebook.*
11. DownThemAll! download available at <https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/downthemall/>.
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15. OpenOffice download and links to screenshots available at <http://www.openoffice.us.com/openoffice/openoffice-software.php>.
16. Accessible at <http://docs.google.com/>.