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Buckets

Kincaid C. Brown

University of Michigan Law School, kcb@umich.edu

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“A Day in My Law Library Life,” Circa 2018*

Compiled by Scott Frey**

Inspired by “A Day in My Law Library Life,’ Circa 1997,” this compilation collects descriptions of a day in the lives of law librarians in 2018. The descriptions provide a current snapshot and historical record of the law library profession, with similarities to, and differences from, the profession of 1997.

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Buckets*

Kincaid C. Brown**

¶52 Each day in the law library is different, but I have found that each of the individual tasks, projects, and responsibilities that I take care of each day can be placed in one of several buckets that return on a daily or weekly basis. My buckets today are as follows:

¶53 *Bike to/from work.* On my way to work, as I avoid ice patches and bad drivers, I think about the top things I want to get accomplished today. If I'm lucky, I will get one or two finished. On my way home, I think about what went well and what I hope to finish tomorrow.

¶54 *Supervision and management.* I had a number of meetings today in this bucket: one about a personnel issue; an impromptu meeting about the library budget, discussing the projections and where we stand; and a meeting with a few other supervisors about the staff schedule for opening the library. There are days, certainly, where this bucket takes most of the day, just not this day.

¶55 *Teaching.* During winter terms I co-teach Advanced Legal Research. Next week, I lead the statutes and session laws class. I like to use a flipped classroom model and today am working on the exercises to run through during the class itself. There is no lunchtime faculty talk today, so I eat at my desk and see that the Vermont legislature decriminalized marijuana possession. I turn that into an exercise as I know Lexis and Westlaw will not incorporate this revision into the Vermont statutes by the time of Monday's class, making this a great example of the need to verify statutory language through the session laws. I also revise an exercise proving the importance of using secondary sources, not just in case law research but also in statutory research (especially for researchers who, in this case, might not look for a definition for "waters of this state").

¶56 *Coffee.* Aside from my morning cup at home, only two more (big ones) today. I take the stairs up, to get a bit of exercise. Sadly, I must make the pot of the good stuff both times so as to avoid drinking the weak alternative that tastes like dirty water.

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** Assistant Director, University of Michigan Law Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

¶57 *Collection development.* This can be a mix of meetings, decisions regarding specific titles, and project work, as it is today. I have a meeting with the director and one of the selectors about several subscriptions and whether they should be renewed. I saw in *Above the Law* that a report covering the quality of jobs for law school graduates was released online. Not trusting the permanence of reports released on the web, we print and bind reports that researchers might want down the road. Accordingly, I select this report to be printed and bound. I also make a couple of retention decisions and select a few books for our legal fiction collection.

¶58 *Email.* Since email can take over a day, I am trying the work productivity method of scheduling times of the day for email. Some days I am good at keeping away from my inbox; days when I have a lot of meetings or where I am procrastinating, I often will check email more frequently. I am pretty on task today and there are no fires to put out, so I am able to sequester my email time effectively. I read through and respond to a bunch of internal library emails. I take a look at an announced electronic resource trial, respond to a call for volunteers to judge the law school moot court competition, and agree to participate in the Leadership Academy mentoring program. I also get a couple of emails from faculty for things I don't do anymore that I pass on to the appropriate people—for example, I haven't dealt with new Lexis and Westlaw passwords for a decade and lost the ability when the vendors updated their systems a few years back.

¶59 *Projects.* These vary, obviously. Today, I work on our project to complete the backfiles of the Michigan law journals in the institutional repository, loading volume twelve of *Michigan Journal of Race & Law*.

¶60 *Miscellaneous meetings.* Two today, one with the library's Library Management System Committee, where we discuss outstanding items that need to be fixed and options for sending text messages for overdues, and the other for the General Counsel's Advisory Committee, a committee of the UM Senate Assembly.

¶61 But, of course, my youngest son thinks that compared to the drudgery of school, work is all eating donuts, sipping soda, and playing computer games . . .