

ORALL NEWSLETTER

OHIO REGIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LAW LIBRARIES

MARCH 2007

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President's Column – Miriam Ann Murphy

President's Column **CONTEMPLATING OPPORTUNITIES**

As I sit here at the library reference desk on another quiet Saturday taking my turn to staff the desk, I have time to contemplate many things. I see the buildings of downtown outside the window and I know that I am missing wonderful Saturday shopping and entertainment opportunities. I then recall that I am part of providing a service to our students and the public by taking turns being available in person almost all day every day. Are they taking full advantage of the in-person instructional and informational opportunities we can offer? Occasionally, but for the most part, no.

I had the opportunity to co-teach an online advanced legal research (ALR) course this semester. I understand that computers are a large part of the future of libraries and legal research instruction but I was initially concerned that I would lose that personal interactivity and ability to respond if the computer came between me and the students. The online ALR class was hugely popular with the students as they enrolled.

Obviously the students had no such reservations. I was amazed students would be willing to skip something so critical in the legal research relationship; a chance to listen to me lecture. Then I recalled that while students only occasionally come in person for research instruction, I have observed they have a very warm, personal and fairly constant relationship with computers. If I can be a participant in that relationship, then perhaps I have found a way for the students to embrace what we in the library can provide. This may be old news to you, but it was a revelation to me to see how willing students are to embrace online-only

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Newsletter

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Profile

ORALL is a 4-state chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries [Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan]. It was formed in 1949 "to further the development and usefulness of law libraries and to stimulate a spirit of mutual helpfulness among law libraries of this region." An annual conference is held each fall. ORALL publishes or sponsors the following publications: *Core Legal Collection* [bibliographies for Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan], ORALL Membership Directory, ORALL Newsletter, Ohio Legal Resources Annotated Bibliography & Guide 3rd.

Scholarships Available

For the AALL Annual Meeting !!!

The theme of this year's AALL Annual meeting is **Rise to the Challenge!** Rising implies not just reacting to events or changed circumstances, but being on the leading edge, finding creative solutions, and guiding our law libraries and parent institutions through necessary adjustments. Dealing with challenges in our increasingly complex work lives is part of our responsibility as professionals. The Program Announcement describes an exciting array of educational sessions around this theme!

The ORALL Board encourages members to attend the AALL Annual Meeting if possible. To ensure this possibility for several ORALL members, the ORALL Board is pleased to announce that four \$490 scholarships are available for application by the ORALL membership to attend the AALL Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA!

Three of the \$490 scholarships are aimed at newer ORALL members (members of ORALL for three years or less). If one or more newer members apply, up to three of those newer members will be given this scholarship. In addition, ORALL has received one full registration from AALL for the New Orleans meeting to be awarded to an ORALL member, specifically targeted to a newer member. This award may be made in conjunction with the \$490 ORALL scholarship, or awarded to a fourth newer member recipient. The fourth \$490 scholarship is aimed at veteran members who have been with the association for more than three years. If one or more veteran members apply, one of them will be given this scholarship.

A maximum of four \$490 scholarships and the full registration from AALL will be awarded. If fewer than three newer members apply, the additional "newer member scholarships" may be awarded to veteran member applicants. If no veteran members apply, the "veteran member scholarship" might be awarded to a newer member applicant.

The ORALL Executive Board asks that each scholarship recipient prepare a short article for the ORALL Newsletter. Details will be provided along with notification of scholarship award. The ORALL Board encourages application for these scholarships no matter the type or size of your organization. Complete this form and return to:

Cindy Spohr
LexisNexis
1617 Wood Moor Drive
Fort Wayne, IN 46804
Fax: 937-865-1585
e-mail: cindy.spohr@lexisnexis.com

Applications must be received by April 20, 2007.
All applicants will be notified by May 4, 2007.

If you would like to receive the application form in an electronic version, please e-mail Cindy at cindy.spohr@lexisnexis.com

ORALL SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Submit by April 20, 2007

I am applying for the (please check one):

New Member scholarship

Veteran Member scholarship

1. Name: _____

2. Organization Name: _____

3. Address: _____

4. Phone (include area code):

5. E-mail address: _____

6. Employment in Law Librarianship (include dates and places; if currently a student please indicate school): _____

7. Other recent employment: _____

8. Education: _____

9. Professional Activities and Committee Memberships: _____

10. Member of ORALL since: _____ Member of AALL since: _____

11. What percentage of your expenses will your employer pay for you to attend this meeting?

12. Have you previously attended AALL or ORALL meetings? If so, when?

13. Please describe your responsibilities in your current position:

14. Please attach a summary of your career goal and a statement of how you will benefit from attending this meeting.

15. Please include one letter of recommendation from a person familiar with your work, potential and need of this scholarship.

instruction.

The advantages of an online course were made apparent when the law school was closed two days during a recent snow storm. My class was still in session, I was connected to my students because of our constant companion, the computer. My computer at home is where I can look out the window. This time instead of craving the opportunity to get out, I savored the opportunity to stay put because I was needed by my students. It felt good to be able to look at my screen and observe the numerous questions from students. When I responded to their questions, they were thrilled (okay, maybe not thrilled, but pleasantly surprised) that they could get answers and proceed with their work. I was able to check my e-mail several times that day and each time found students waiting in line for help. It made my day. I can't remember the last time I had students waiting in line for assistance during a Saturday reference desk shift. The online ALR class has expanded my universe of opportunities in another way. I have taught traditional legal research for almost twenty years. (Gasp! Can it be that long?) and therefore may have become complacent. I have handled the advent of Computer Assisted Legal Research and think I do well with my traditional lecture format. The online course took away my security blanket of being able to lecture at will. I had to now come up with new ways of communicating to the students using only one tool, the computer.

I have to be more thorough, more organized, to be sure I'm not missing any key instructional detail that will make a difference in their ability to utilize the particular tool. Introductory outlines, clear labeling, research and resource options, and lots of annotated screen shots are the core components of my Power Point "lectures". Because learning is taking place when I'm not there I have to anticipate their questions and encourage them to explore the resources on their own.

The online ALR class has also affected how I teach my traditional legal research lecture classes. Last night I had a session on searching the ADA in federal resources. My first reaction on discovering that I was teaching these resources was dread. I had already instructed on case, statutory and secondary research; how many times can you explain the codification structure and not be 'tuned out' by your average overworked 1L (especially on a Friday night)? I used my ALR skills and created a Power Point that would work as a stand-alone research guide. Now you may be saying, "Then why lecture? Are you even necessary?" The answer is yes. The personal touch helped the neophyte researchers. I went through the session, flipping back and forth between the Power Point guide and the actual online resources, demonstrating and answering questions. Several students came up after class and thanked me. Okay, part of their enthusiasm might be that they had just gotten an assignment on the ADA and this looked like

it could really help out. But that connectivity between research and legal education should be our goal.

I'm not saying that I've perfected legal research instruction, but I seem to have found a way that connects with student needs. If the Power Point isn't promptly placed in their course website I get besieged by e-mails asking me to send them the file. I can't tell you how many times I have had students come up to me with their laptops and my Power Point on the screen and then proceed to ask a fairly intelligent research question. They are using the Power Point as the instructional tool I intended. My old lectures used their textbook's sample research pages for instruction, and the context wasn't there. The legal research textbook and my lectures were something students survived; the Power Points might be something they embrace. Why? Perhaps it is because it is customized to their research needs. Perhaps it is because it saves time since I provided just the essential information. Perhaps it is because they are visual learners preferring the colorful Power Point to the auditory lecture. Perhaps it is because they have a resource guide they can refer to again and again. But I think it is because it is provided by their best friend and companion, the computer.

Who knows? Maybe a student with a Power Point will show up at the desk any minute. Or maybe I will be getting another e-mail question. So many opportunities to contemplate....

* * *

ORALL Member Spotlight

ANITA SHEW

By Claudia Zaher

**Salmon P. Chase College of Law Library
Northern Kentucky University**

Last year Anita Shew, director of the Butler County Law Library Association, announced her impending retirement. A party to celebrate her long career was held at the Butler County courthouse in Hamilton, Ohio on January 18, 2007.

All the speakers mentioned Anita's tenacity in finding needed information, her management skills in building the library, her leadership among county law librarians, and her persistence in contacting decision makers about funding not only for her library, but for county law libraries across Ohio. It was obvious that Anita was well liked and well respected, and that the library would not have become the fine library it is without her input.

Beth Yauch, on behalf of the Butler County Bar Association, presented Anita with a print of the old Butler County courthouse, and thanked Anita for all she had done and all the information she had found for attorneys over the years.



Fred Miller, the President of the Board of the Butler County Law Library Association, and Courtney Combs, Ohio state representative, both praised Anita's work and leadership over her career, and declared January 18th "Anita Shew Day" in Butler County.

The ORALL members who attended the event, Carol Bredemeyer, Carol Suhre, David Whelan, and Claudia Zaher, informally agreed that Anita has always been a knowledgeable, approachable colleague and a friend who was always willing to help. She will be missed, and she leaves big shoes to fill. Happily for Butler County and ORALL, the librarian filling that position is a skilled and experienced county law librarian who can continue the library's growth. Linda Hostetler, formerly of Akron Law Library Association, assumed the position of Butler County Law Library Director in January 2007. Linda had already assumed a leadership role among Ohio county law librarians, and we're delighted that she has chosen to remain in our ORALL region and take over the directorship at Butler county.



Fred Miller, President of the Bd, Butler Co Law Library Assn, Linda Hostetler, incoming Butler County Law Library Director; JC Shew, Anita's husband, and Anita Shew



Three former ORALL presidents:
Carol Bredemeyer 1993-94
Claudia Zaher 2004-05
Anita Shew 1986-87

ORALL 2007 Annual Meeting
FALLING IN LOVE WITH TORONTO
Mike Whiteman
Salmon P. Chase College of Law Library
Northern Kentucky University

While we are anxiously awaiting spring, it is not too early to start thinking about Fall. The 2007 ORALL Annual Meeting will be a joint meeting with a number of other groups throughout the Northeast including our friends to the North. "Libraries Without Borders II" will be held in Toronto, Canada October 17-20, 2007.

Toronto in October. The morning air is crisp, the trees laden with brilliant reds and golds. The planners of the 2007 Northeast Regional Law Libraries Meeting invite you to join us and experience the best of an Ontario fall.

The themes for the program include:

Law Libraries and Librarianship - covers a range of topics on the direction of the profession and the competencies of current law librarians

Substantive law topics - this stream will offer presentations on specific legal issues, from Canadian and American perspectives

Law Libraries beyond the law - how are we taking our skills and our organizations beyond the borders of our libraries

While the Program and Social Committees continue to build a conference which will capture your imagination and much of your time, don't forget to take time to experience the diversity and diversions available in Toronto.

The Royal Ontario Museum will be featuring the exhibit *Korea around 1900: The Paintings of Gisan*.

Jump on a bus and take the short trip to Casa Loma, a castle in the middle of the city. Wander the gardens or tour the house itself – and don't miss the secret tunnels or the climb into the turret!



The more sports-minded will enjoy the Hockey Hall of Fame on Front Street. Interactive displays and historic artifacts (including, of course, the Stanley Cup) make this spot a favorite.



At the other end of Front Street is the CBC Broadcasting Centre, with the CBC museum. On display are artifacts from various CBC programs, including the Friendly Giant's castle and the Tickle Trunk from Mr. Dressup. The Graham Spry Theatre features continuous screenings of CBC programming, dating from 1952.

Walking is a great way to see the city – and the Discovery Walks help you find the best that the city has to offer. You can download the maps for the downtown Discovery Walks at http://www.toronto.ca/parks/brochures/walks/DW_Downtown.pdf. The uptown walk, which includes Queen's Park and the grounds of the University of Toronto, is a particular favourite http://www.toronto.ca/parks/brochures/walks/DW_Uptown.pdf.

Don't forget to visit the Distillery District – see the galleries and shops, have a craft beer at the Mill St. brew pub (and maybe buy a little chocolate at Soma!).

With all of this to see and do, you may want to extend your visit! The meeting itself runs October 17-20, and will be held at the Marriott Eaton Centre. Rooms are now available - call 1-800-905-0667 and quote NE2007 to guarantee the conference rate of C\$179 per night.



Watch for program details at our website <http://Librarieswithoutborders.net>.

* * *

There's Something (Link)Rotten in Denmark

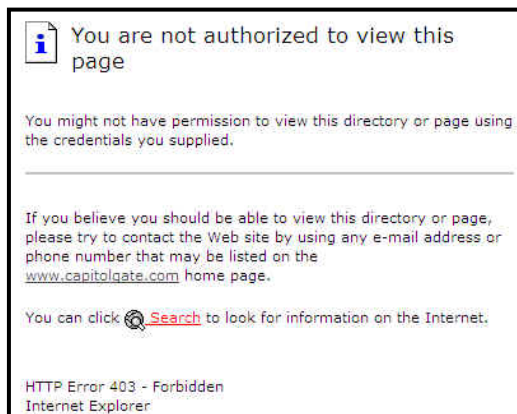
By Ken Kozlowski
Director of the Law Library
The Supreme Court of Ohio
kozlowsk@sconet.state.oh.us



that

With apologies to Shakespeare, I'm actually going to restrict my remarks to Ohio and an exploration of web sites that have been cited in Supreme Court of Ohio opinions since November 18, 2004. Why November 18, you might ask? To the best of my recollection, I read an article or a blog post that day concerning the broken URLs or "linkrot" within federal appellate opinions. I decided to search the opinions of Ohio's high court. I subsequently performed the search again on November 9, 2005, and finally on January 31, 2007 in preparation for the writing of this article.

My research in 2004 found 21 results for the Supreme Court of Ohio. I then set out to check the URLs within those opinions for accuracy and whether they were still active. This research was commented upon, albeit very quickly, as part of Program D-1, *The Great Disappearing Act*, held at the AALL Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas on July 18, 2005. See also *The Great Disappearing Act*, 9 GREEN BAG 2d 3 (Autumn 2005). What the moderators of that session were most interested in was what happened with one of the decisions where the link was hopelessly dead. In **DeRolph v. State**, 93 OS3d 309, 342 (2001), two articles from the web site "capitolgate.com" were referenced. The links were given as *Sunny Senators*, <http://www.capitolgate.com/OH/pressroom/leadstory.asp?id=35>, and *Holding Out Hope*, <http://www.capitolgate.com/OH/pressroom/leadstory.asp?id=109>. On the date I searched for



those articles (11/18/2004), they did not exist. The links were "rotten." I contacted the kind folks at the web site, and they posted the articles to a URL for a few hours. I was able to download them, and still have them today. However, and here's the rub, I attempted to search for "capitolgate.com" on February 9, 2007, and was presented with the screen you see at the left. If anyone would like to see those articles now (and school funding, the subject of **DeRolph**, is still very much in the news) they may be out of luck even more so than I was on that cold November day in 2004.

Let's take a look at some statistics before we explore any more Supreme Court of Ohio decisions.

The searches I conducted in November, 2004, yielded the following results: 21 cases in the Westlaw database OH-CS, with 10 of those being from the Supreme Court of Ohio. I performed the same search again on January 31, 2007 (with a date restrictor), and the results jumped to 45, with the SCO total staying at 10. West must have added cases to the database after the November 18, 2004 date that were decided before that date. The search I conducted on November 9, 2005

yielded 56 results (increased to 58 when I ran the search again), with only two additional cases being from the SCO. The bigger jump came when I ran the search for cases decided after the November 9, 2005 date (on January 31, 2007). The number of Ohio cases increased from 56 to 84. Thirteen of those decisions hailed from the SCO.

Let's take a closer look at those cases from 2004. Of the ten SCO decisions, I was able to locate all of the materials cited to, albeit with a little digging (aside from the aforementioned capitolgate.com). I saved the materials either in PDF or JPG format in the off chance I might need them at some later date. On February 9, 2007, I re-checked those 22 URLs from the cases and found out that linkrot had set in. I was only able to find 11 of the URLs, with two of those being found only after further research because the citing URL was too general and not actually to the document indicated within the opinion. Of the 11 "rotten" URLs, one did refer to a new page that offered the document, while 2 (cites to the SCO opinions on the Court's web site) were accurate in 2004, but are broken in 2007. That's a 50% linkrot cases for cases decided between the years 2000 and 2004.

In looking at the two cases decided in 2005 by the SCO that cited to URLs, there were no broken links. However, in one case, **Cleveland Bar Assn. v. Pearlman**, 106 Ohio St.3d 136, 140 (2005), the decision cited to the Cleveland Heights Municipal Court's Small Claims Division at <http://www.clevelandheightscourt.com/main.html>. In reality, that information is at <http://www.clevelandheightscourt.com/scguide.html>, and probably was at the time of decision as well. You see, if you browse over to the link for the court itself, and then click on the small claims link, the URL on the location bar does not change even though a different URL's information is being displayed. Some web sites do this for reasons I am not privy to. A small trick for procuring the proper URL is to simply right click on the link, copy the location (or shortcut), and paste it into your document. While not exactly a "rotten" link, it still does not point to the quote within the opinion, merely to a main court web page. If you're keeping score, it's now 12 good, 12 rotten.

Twenty-eight cases appeared with citations to URLs from the time period November 9, 2005 through January 31, 2007. Thirteen of those were SCO decisions. Within those 13 decisions, 17 URLs were cited to, 8 of which I would consider broken, rotten, or improperly used. Right around 50% again. Here are some examples:

- In **State ex rel. Repository v. Nova Behavioral Health, Inc.**, 112 Ohio St.3d 338, 348 (Ohio,2006), a PDF document was cited to on the website of the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors Research Institute. I could not find it with the web citation. A Google search came up with this:

[\[PDF\] State Profile Highlight](#)
File Format: PDF/Adobe Acrobat - [View as HTML](#)
Program Directors Research Institute, Inc (N RI), No. 1, August 10, 2000. Closing and Reorganizing State Psychiatric Hospitals: 2000. MAJOR FINDINGS ...
www.nri-inc.org/reports_pubs/2001/SH_RPT.pdf - [Similar pages](#)

The above is the correct document, although the cite within the decision offered a note stating that it had been accessed on December 6, 2006 at http://www.nri-inc.org/SH_RPT.pdf.

- In **State v. Ketterer**, 111 Ohio St.3d 70, 111 (2006), a document entitled *ABA Report with Recommendation No. 122A, Adopted August 2006* was cited to at <http://www.abanet.org/leadership/2006/Fannual/dailyjournal/hundredtwentytwoa.doc>. It was found at <http://www.abanet.org/disability/docs/DP122A.pdf>. This may have been a case where the original link was only temporary until a linked PDF could be established on the ABA's site, but it is still an example of linkrot.
- **State ex rel. Triplett v. Ross**, 111 Ohio St.3d 231, 240 (2006) cites to a bill analysis from the Legislative Service Commission, but simply cites to the LSC main page at <http://lsc.state.oh.us>. There is a direct link to the analysis at <http://lsc.state.oh.us/analyses/analysis126.nsf/6d65e275e273cc9f85256da40066ecbf/0a3588ec572ee4ec85257145004350d0?OpenDocument>. It's quite possible the Court did not want to use such an amorphous cite to a document. However, by using the web widget **tinyurl.com**, the cite can be reduced to <http://tinyurl.com/25sh2z>. It's also very possible the Court does not want the term "tinyurl" to appear within its opinions either. (NOTE: a Westlaw search in the ALLCASES databases yielded zero results for the term "tinyurl.")
- Finally, in **Portage Cty. Bd. of Commrs. v. Akron**, 109 Ohio St.3d 106, 130 (2006), the quote "[w]here the Cuyahoga River flows into Lake Erie shall rise a community of vast commercial importance" appears with a citation of <http://www.britannica.com/ebi/article-198791>. Now this is not actually a "rotten" link. Britannica Online is a fee-based service. The citation above, while accurate for the text quoted, is just a small snippet of the actual article (75 of 2033 words). It might be just me, but I think a link to a hardcopy version of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* might have added a bit more punch to the quote, especially with the web page encouraging one to sign up for a free trial of the service to see the full text of the article entitled, *Cleveland History and Government*.

There are a few sites that you should keep bookmarked for those times you need to find dead, rotten, or defunct web sites. One of those is the CyberCemetery, located at <http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/search.htm>. It is a joint project between the University of North Texas Libraries and the U.S. Government Printing Office that attempts to provide permanent public access to the Web sites and publications of defunct U.S. government agencies and commissions. The URL above will take you to the search page.

Another useful cite is the Internet Archive at <http://www.archive.org/index.php>, along with a resource that can be accessed from that page, Wayback Machine. This service allows you to browse through 85 billion web pages archived from 1996 to a few months ago. To start surfing



the Wayback, type in the web address of a site or page where you would like to start, and press enter. If the page is found, you can then select from the archived dates available. Keyword searching is not currently supported.

The Internet Archive has vast holdings of moving images, live music, audio recordings, and texts. You just never know what a court is going to cite to within their opinions.

That's about it for linkrot. The accompanying chart presents my results from searches conducted over the past few years within various Westlaw databases. A couple of article I found that will shed some more light on disappearing URLs and linkrot are:

- Ken Strutin, *Written on the Wind*, NEW YORK LAW JOURNAL (July 8, 2004) at <http://www.law.com/jsp/law/LawArticleFriendly.jsp?id=1088699793813>

and

- David Ziemer, *Linkrot - The problem of disappearing URLs*, ST. LOUIS DAILY RECORD & ST. LOUIS COUNTIAN (May 22, 2006) at http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qn4185/is_20060522/ai_n16412030/print

Good luck with your own searches.

Jurisdiction	11/18/04 (1/31/07)	11/9/05 (1/31/07)	1/31/07	Increase*
Ohio (State)	21 (45)	56 (58)	84	86.7%
6th Circuit	NA	NA	113	NA
Fed. D. Cts-OH	NA	NA	64	NA
Allstates	NA	2,045 (2,075)	2,864	38%
AllFeds	NA	4,664 (4,768)	7,234	51.7%

* Increase percentage is calculated from the earliest date forward to 1/31/2007. However, the revised results totals from 1/31/2007 (in parentheses) for the earlier searches are used in the calculation.

* * *

Watch This (My)Space

By Sarah Glassmeyer, Reference Librarian
Alvin E. Evans Law Library
University of Kentucky College of Law



I just didn't get it.

MySpace¹ entered my consciousness slowly. It first entered my radar when I read mentions of it being the “Next Big Thing” here and there on the web. As we entered 2005, I found myself using it occasionally, mainly in the context of checking out musical acts. For the most part, however, neither I nor seemingly anyone over the age of 22 paid much attention to the site.² This began to change when News Corporation paid \$580 million and created an entirely new Internet division for MySpace in July 2005.³

After the acquisition, MySpace had the mainstream media's full attention.⁴ One of the first MySpace-centered news stories that really made an impression on me was how comedian Dane Cook used his one-million-plus “MySpace Friends” to successfully promote his career.⁵ Stories about the downsides of the site, such as its use by sexual predators, also began to surface.⁶ By the end of 2006 the media was in a frenzy over MySpace⁷ and the next thing I knew, thanks to MySpace⁸, I had been named Time Magazine's Person of the Year for 2006⁹.

Through it all, MySpace was something I regarded as a curiosity and not at all applicable either personally or professionally to me, a 31-year-old Academic Law Librarian. A couple of times between July 2005 and my being honored by Time Magazine as person of the year, I took a peek at the MySpace homepage and some randomly selected MySpaces of strangers. The MySpace homepage isn't terribly fancy and it did not compel me to explore further. And the randomly selected strangers' MySpaces? I was horrified by the glitter text, abuse of animated .gifs, illegibility and complete disorganization of many of the sites. I definitely didn't want to be associated with something like that!

¹ <http://www.myspace.com>

² A search of Lexis' Major Papers database (MAJPAP) shows 36 articles that mention MySpace in 2004 and 122 that did in the first half of 2005.

³ For more information, please see News Corporations 2005 Annual Report at <http://www.newscorp.com/Report2005/AnnualReport/HTML2/default.htm>

⁴ A similar search as in note 2 showed 601 articles mentioning MySpace in the second half of 2005.

⁵ “Virtually Famous” by Amanda Schupak, Forbes.com at http://www.forbes.com/free_forbes/2006/0703/156.html

⁶ “Another Suit in the MySpace Case?” by Hilary Hylton, Time Magazine, June 22, 2006 available at <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1207043,00.html>

⁷ Another search of Lexis' Major Papers database showed 8537 articles mentioning MySpace in 2006, with over 1800 in the last two months of the year.

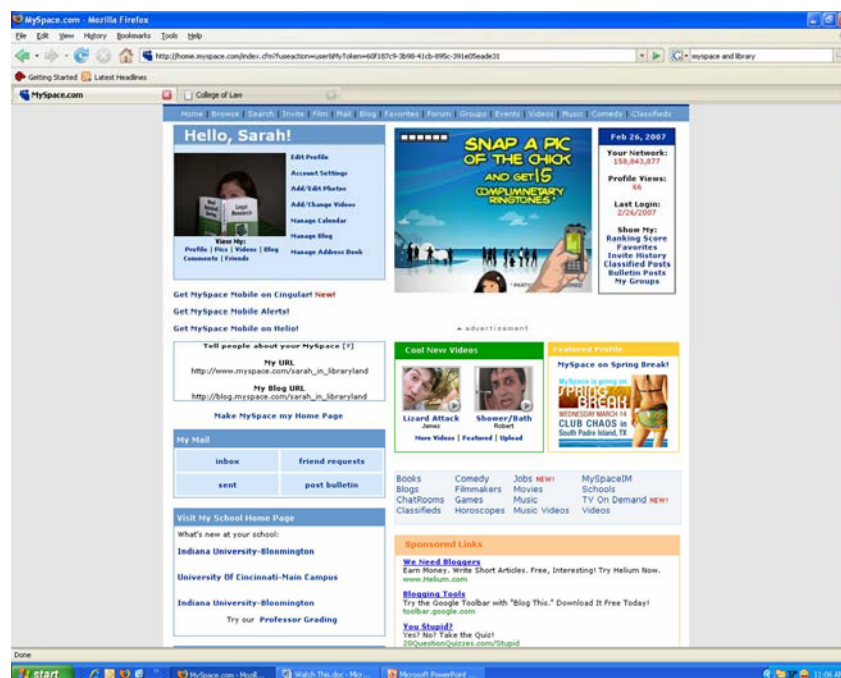
⁸ With an assist from YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com>) and Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)

⁹ Oh, don't be jealous. You're sharing the honor with me.
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1569514,00.html>

During this same period, MySpace had become the third most popular website in the United States and the sixth most popular website on the entire Internet.¹⁰ Clearly there was something to this website that I just wasn't getting and that millions of other people were. It's not as if I'm completely clueless or disinterested in technology trends. I e-mail. I instant message. I read blogs and I've blogged. So why wasn't I understanding the attraction of MySpace? It was getting to be very frustrating!

During this period I had also been having discussions with colleagues about MySpace and whether or not we could or should be using it as librarians. It's hard to judge the usefulness of something if you don't understand it, so drawing on my anthropology background, I decided to do a little participant observation exercise. I wanted to understand MySpace as my students do. Hopefully, after I figure that out, I will be able to see if there are any applications that I could or should use in a professional capacity.

I signed up with MySpace, created a profile¹¹ and....nothing. I suppose I thought that once I was registered I would enter into the magic MySpace land and finally understand what made it special. Nope. I still didn't get it.



Then, as Oprah would say, I had an “ah-ha moment.”

¹⁰ Alexa Internet Rankings Top 500 http://www.alexa.com/site/ds/top_500 and Alex Internet Ranking Top Sites United States http://www.alexa.com/site/ds/top_sites?cc=US&ts_mode=country&lang=none

¹¹ http://www.myspace.com/sarah_in_libraryland

MySpace is categorized as a social networking site. I realized that in order to get the most out of MySpace, I needed to be social. I needed to make some “Friends”! This would not be the first time in the course of this experiment that I felt like I was back in high school.

Before heading out to “make friends”, I decided to jazz up my profile. The basic profile provided by MySpace is nice, but I wanted to show that I have some web know-how and, as I learned from my blogging days, sometimes style does trump substance. It’s possible to hand-code in design changes using HTML or CSS, but there are many companies out there willing to provide either pre-made layouts or layout editors that give you more design control without actual web design knowledge.¹² A Google search for “MySpace layouts” will provide ample selection.

I also filled out the profile sections, including a basic “about me”, my interests, and who I’d like meet. I chose a song to display from a band’s MySpace that visitors to my profile have the option of playing. Finally I took care of what might be the most nerve-wracking part of the profile: my picture. I didn’t want to use my university headshot, because that would automatically label me as “not with it”. Instead, I took a self portrait of myself peeking over a copy of Cohen and Olson’s Legal Research in a Nutshell. I felt this blended in with the pseudo-art and often humorous photos that other people post on their MySpaces. Also, I am horribly un-photogenic and I am much more comfortable with a book covering half of my face.

With all that in place, I finally felt like I was ready to make friends. I sent out e-mails to friends and co-workers with the URL to my MySpace and asking them to either “friend me” or sign up for a MySpace and then “friend me.” Interestingly, three friends over the age of thirty who responded said that they had MySpaces, but they weren’t entirely sure what to do with them, so I guess I wasn’t unique in my bewilderment. It also turns out that my university library has a MySpace¹³ so I friended it as well. Since then, I’ve been friending television shows, fictional characters, presidential candidates, actors and musicians.

Then I started to send out feelers to strangers. There’s an option to join groups on MySpace, so I did a search for “librarian.” There were plenty of options for me to choose from. Lexington Librarians? Great, maybe I’ll make some local friends. Radical Militant Librarian Front? That might be fun. Association of Sexy Librarians? Yeah, not even on my highest self esteem days could I justify joining that one.

So, now what? I’ve decided to actively use MySpace for the next three months (March 2007 – May 2007). During this time I’m going to build content on the site by blogging regularly and using all of the social connection capabilities whenever possible. As I’m still figuring out MySpace and I want to use it as, for lack of a better word, “normal” people do, the content I put up there is not going to be strictly library- or legal-related. (Of course, since fortunately I’m really interested and excited by my professional, there will be a lot of that.) That could be where things get sticky, but I’ve read plenty of other ostensibly professional blogs/blawgs where the

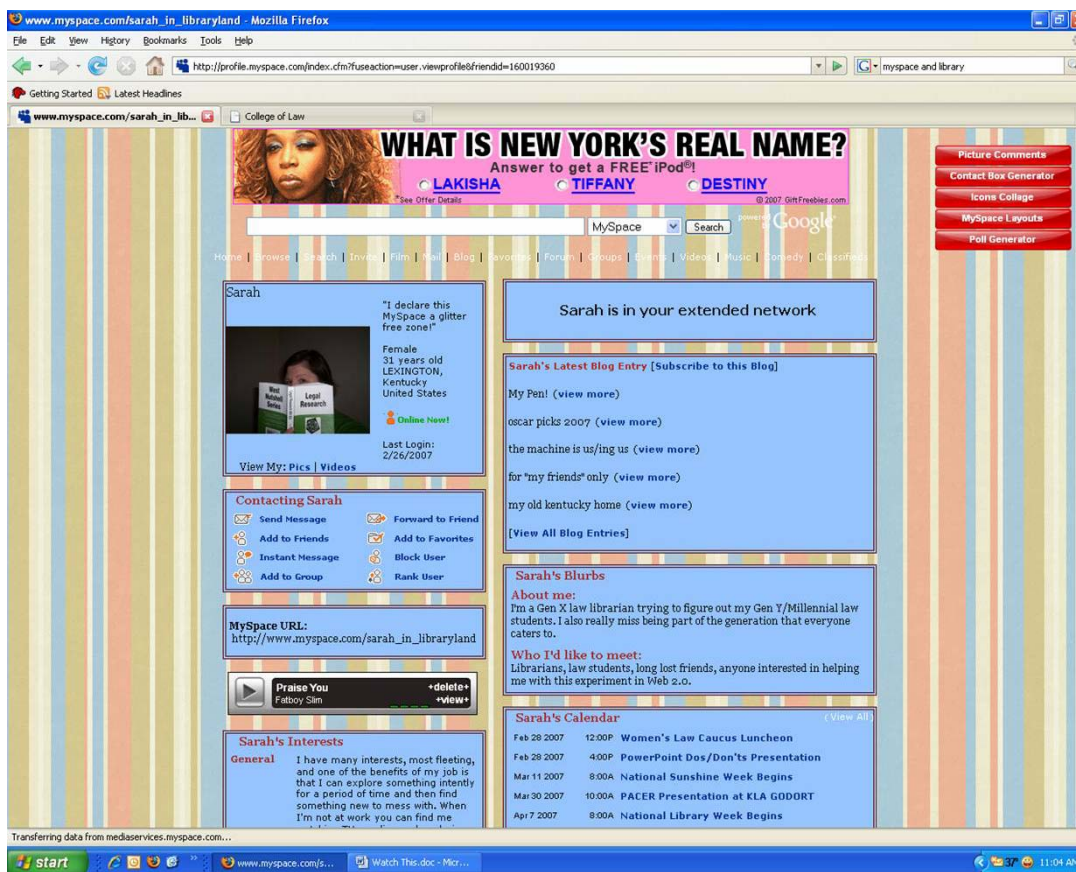
¹² I used the editor at My Wacko Space <http://www.mywackospace.com/myspace-editor/>

¹³ <http://www.myspace.com/uklibraries>

personal gets injected. As a failsafe, I've told my mother about the site. I figure anything that I'm comfortable saying in front of my mother would be okay to say to my professional colleagues.

I'm also considering sending out some messages to library listservs asking for social networking connections. However, I'm worried that there's a fine line between trying to publicize ones' MySpace and turning into the Tila Tequila¹⁴ of library MySpaces and I do not want to cross it. After I get a little more comfortable with the site, I'll start including it in my contact information when I speak to law students. I haven't decided whether or not to actively search for my students and attempt to friend them.

If you've wanted to explore the world of MySpace, this is your chance! Sign-up, visit http://www.myspace.com/sarah_in_libraryland and I'll be your friend!



* * *

¹⁴ Tila Tequila is a MySpace celebrity who had a popular MySpace before she had any demonstrable talent and has since started a musical career. <http://www.myspace.com/tilatequila> Her MySpace is not safe for viewing at the Reference Desk, by those under the age of 18 or the easily offended. She was also featured in the 2006 Person of the Year issue of Time Magazine, available at <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1570728,00.html>

**Errata for 2006-2007
ORALL Directory, part 2**

Please make the following corrections and additions to your copy of the 2006-2007 ORALL Directory:

Page 12: Remove the listing for Day Ketterer LTD and Pamela A. Frame.

Page 16: Remove listing for Leslie A. Pardo under Cleveland State University, Cleveland-Marshall College of Law Library

Page 19: Remove listing for Rose J. Brown under Defiance County Law Library Association

Page 36: Between Britt, Lisa S. and Brown, Vicki Lee, remove listing for Brown, Rose J.

Page 39: Between Ford, Kevin and Francois, Kristin, remove listing for Frame, Pamela A.

Page 44: Between Paczelt, Anna and Pari, Akram, remove listing for Pardo, Leslie A.

Page 49: Between Cuyahoga County Public Library and Dayton Law Library Association, remove listing for Day Ketterer LTD.

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In Memoriam

**Cynthia Aninao – Head of Technical Services
Robert S. Marx Library
University of Cincinnati College of Law**

February 4, 2007