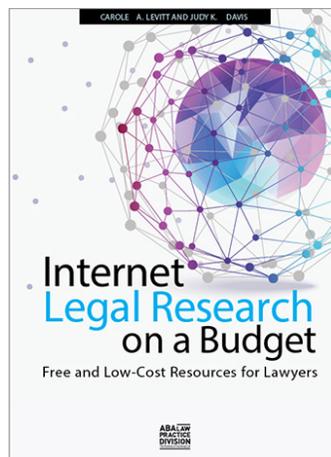




10 Must-Know Tips for Internet Legal Research on the Cheap



To help lawyers find reliable free or low-cost resources online, and to learn to use them effectively, Carole Levitt, a lawyer and former law librarian, collaborated with Judy Davis, a lawyer and current law librarian, to write “**Internet Legal Research on a Budget**” (ABA, 2014). They tested and evaluated the best legal research sites — describing how to actually use each site, often step by step, and with plenty of screen shots to illustrate. Since saving money is always worth investigating, we asked Carole for a few quickly digestible nuggets to get you started. She came through with links to the go-to spots for resolving legal quandaries on the cheap — and you’ll find a special offer at the end of this tip sheet, too.

— *Attorney at Work*

BY CAROLE A. LEVITT | Legal research and the Internet clearly go hand in hand — 96 percent of lawyers in the 2013 ABA Legal Technology Survey said they conduct legal research online. But despite the abundant free resources available on the Internet, most new lawyers spend their research hours piling up database charges. A 2012 Research Intelligence Group survey found that new associates (in practice five years or less) did an average of 14.5 hours of legal research per week — but *only four* of those hours were spent using free or low-cost online resources.

The same is likely true for a lot of experienced lawyers — sometimes it’s just easier to stick with the tools you’ve used over the years. Yet with cost-conscious clients scrutinizing your legal bills, how can you afford to keep depending on fee-based resources when free alternatives are available? Here are 10 tips on how to get to what you need without that old-fashioned expense.



SPECIAL

OFFER:

Save money — and avoid writing off database charges — by learning how to conduct legal research using free or low-cost resources.

Get “[Internet Legal Research on a Budget](#),” by Carole A. Levitt and Judy K. Davis today!

ORDER YOUR COPY HERE & GET THE BEST PRICE — 37% DISCOUNT!

1. Full-Text Law Review and Journal Articles. When conducting legal research, lawyers are usually searching for primary law, such as court opinions, statutes and regulations. But sometimes it is easier and quicker to begin with secondary law — i.e., articles that explain and analyze primary law and also point you to it. The ABA Legal Technology Resource Center provides a [Google-powered search engine](#) to keyword search — for free — full-text articles from 400 online law reviews and law journals.

2. Apps for General Legal Research. There are a healthy number of mobile apps for general legal research, but you usually have to know the exact name of an app when you want to get one from an app webstore. Luckily, there are resources available to help you narrow your choices. A good one is the UCLA Law Library’s free [Mobile Applications for Law Students and Lawyers](#), an annotated list of law apps organized alphabetically by title.

3. Federal Statutory Research. You may know you can research the U.S. Code at three different websites: [FDsys](#), the [Office of the Law Revision Counsel’s United States Code Online](#) and [Cornell’s Legal Information Institute](#). Cornell’s site, though, also serves as a bridge between the U.S. Code and the Code of Federal Regulations, making your combined statutory and administrative research a snap.

4. Federal Legislative and Congressional Materials. If you research federal legislative and congressional materials (such as public laws, bills, resolutions, hearings, congressional reports and committee reports), one of the primary sites you have probably been relying on is [THOMAS.gov](#). It launched in 1995, but by the end of 2014, it will be replaced by [Congress.gov](#) — which is now live in beta [here](#), so you can start learning the ins-and outs.

5. Federal Executive and Administrative Law. Need to locate and research executive (also known as administrative) law? Then begin with [FDsys](#). It is a useful starting point because it allows you to access all the executive branch’s [Collections](#) in one place — from regulations found in the Federal Register to presidential materials found in the [Compilation of Presidential Documents](#).

**PSSST ...**

Did you know Attorney at Work publishes law practice management tips daily? [Browse Attorney at Work's archives for more really good ideas!](#)

6. Foreign and International Law Resources. The Law Library of Congress' [Guide to Law Online](#) is a well-known and frequently used website for legal research generally. But it's not just U.S. law. Within this guide are some specific sections that are helpful for researching foreign and international law, too. From the guide's homepage, you can link to specific sections for foreign law, international law and multinational law, as well as several how-to guides for researching law in specific countries.

7. State, Local, Territorial and Tribal Law. In a similar "Did you know?" vein: Several directory sites link to each state, local, territorial and tribal government's homepage, but here's one that might surprise you. Although USA.gov sounds like it would provide a searchable database of federal documents and links to federal sites only, it also allows you to keyword search state, territorial, local and tribal government documents and [provides links to those governments' websites](#). These links will help you determine if the jurisdiction you are researching makes its statutes, ordinances, court materials, opinions and other resources available on the Internet. In addition, you can access an [advanced keyword search menu](#) powered by Bing.

8. Background Information on Legal Professionals. To find background information about attorneys, judges and other legal professionals, you can turn to the free "traditional" lawyer directories, of course: [LexisNexis Martindale-Hubbell Law Directory](#), the [FindLaw Lawyer Directory](#) and the [Justia Lawyer Directory](#). But there are also "non-traditional" lawyer directories, such as the ones from [Avvo](#) and [Nolo](#). Avvo's includes a rating system for lawyers that employs "a mathematical model that considers elements such as years of experience, board certification, education, disciplinary history, professional achievement and industry recognition." Users can also leave reviews for attorneys with whom they have worked. Nolo's Lawyer Directory allows users to browse by location or practice area. Results include attorney and firm profiles and may also include licensing and disciplinary history information. Plus, it is useful to know how to find articles, blogs and tweets by or about judges or attorneys. Speaking of which ...

9. Social Media Content. A nearly effortless way to keep up to date with your area of law is by subscribing to free blogs and Twitter accounts that provide useful and current content. For an annotated, topically arranged index of legal blogs, see



Justia's [BlawgSearch](#). And for a directory of legal “twitterers,” arranged by category/practice area, see the [Justia LegalBirds](#) page.

10. Dockets. A last tip: For docket searching and reviewing the case documents, we have the perennial go-to, [PACER](#) (Public Access to Court Electronic Records), the government's pay federal docket database. However, there is also the docket site [RECAP](#), which offers access to millions of federal case dockets (some include the case documents) for the U.S. District Courts (civil and criminal) and the Bankruptcy Courts — and it's free.

***Carole Levitt** is a nationally recognized author and speaker on Internet legal research. She has over 30 years of extensive experience in the legal field as a law librarian, legal researcher and writing professor, Internet trainer and California attorney. In addition to her new book with Judy K. Davis, she is the co-author, with Mark Rosch, of several books on using the Internet more effectively in the practice of law, including “The Cybersleuth's Guide to the Internet,” “Find Info Like a Pro, Volumes 1 and 2,” “Google for Lawyers” and “Google Gmail and Calendar in One Hour for Lawyers.”*

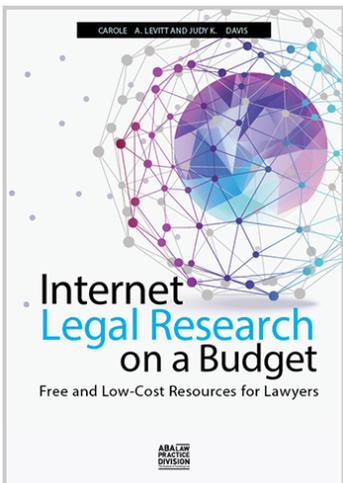
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SPECIAL DISCOUNT FOR ATTORNEY AT WORK READERS

GREAT PRICE!



Get the best price on **Internet Legal Research on a Budget** — \$56.47 (a 37% discount) plus only \$5 shipping! *
Simply visit <http://linkon.in/ababookatwork> and use the discount code: **atwork**



If you want to save money — and avoid writing off database charges — by conducting legal research using free (or low-cost) resources, then check out **Internet Legal Research on a Budget** by Carole A. Levitt and Judy K. Davis.

In a recent review, Judith Gaskell, retired Librarian of the Court at the Supreme Court of the United States, says on Slaw.ca,

“The book is filled with clearly written and helpful descriptive text and most parts are illustrated with screen shots annotated to show the specific features of each site. ... Whether you do a little or a lot of United States legal research, you will find this book to be extremely useful and informative.”

The book covers top websites, apps, blogs, Twitter feeds and crowdsourced resources that will save you time, money and frustration during the legal research process.

Its 325 pages dig deep into:

- Legal portals and directories (government, academic and commercial)
- Case law databases (government and commercial)
- Casemaker and Fastcase
- Cite-checking cases
- Federal statutory research
- Federal, legislative and congressional materials
- Dockets
- Starting points for state, local, territorial and tribal law
- Practice area research using websites, blogs, Twitter and more
- Background information about attorneys, judges and other legal professionals
- Foreign, international and comparative law resources

“Think of ‘Internet Legal Research on a Budget’ as a roadmap to the best of what is out there. It will guide you to what you need, and save you a buck along the way.”

— Robert J. Ambrogi in his Foreword to the book

Quickly find the best Internet research tools for your needs — [click here](#) to order the book from the authors today!

