Practical Approaches to Legal Research. K. OLSON, R. BERRING. Haworth Press, New York (1988). 150 pp. $29.95. ISBN 0-86656-253-2.

The authors, two distinguished law librarians, have attempted to produce a manual of legal research for librarians. They argue that the well known works on legal research, written to be used as text-books in law schools, suffer from two major faults: they concentrate on the need to teach legal students how to write a brief, and, their authors are afraid of boring law school students. Rejecting the approach of authors of standard books on legal research such as Jacobstein and Mersky, Cohen, and Price, Bitner, and Bysiewicz, our authors have tried to carve out a new niche. To some extent they have succeeded, but in doing so they have failed to produce a work that can be easily used in classes on legal research in library schools or in law schools.

The text of this work is 143 pages long with thirty pages devoted to a quick summary of the legal resource tools of the fifty states, so that each state has approximately a half page devoted to it. It is questionable whether this is an inordinate amount of space; librarians are certainly interested in the resources of the state in which they serve, but with this small amount of space devoted to each state the usefulness of this work to librarians is severely limited. It would have been better if the authors had supplied references to articles to learn the particular tools that exist to find the case law, statutes and agency regulations of the different states. The inclusion of these thirty pages is doubly troubling since the authors have included no illustrations, probably to cut down on the size of this text, arguing that these can be found in existing research texts. It is the lack of these illustrations that causes the greatest difficulty in using this work, although the authors say that their audience com-prises librarians who do not need to see pictures of indexes; it is difficult to explain or understand the updating of the Code of Federal Regulations, for example, without illustrations, although the authors make a valiant attempt to do so.

In what have the authors succeeded? The back cover of the paperback edition of the book has numerous quotes from law school professors of legal research extolling this work. This reviewer feels that the authors are to be commended for a style of writing that could serve as the model for the standard texts in the field; the writing is clear, light, informative and devoid of the jargon that dis-tinguishes the standard texts in the field. This is best illustrated by the index of almost seven pages which uses language and terminology familiar to the layperson. They are also to be congratulated for the inclusion of many interesting facts about the history of the research tools and for their running introduction of electronic ways of doing legal research (although the inclusion here of a basic "how to" guide may be of only theoretical interest to a reference librarian who does not have access to the specialized legal research data bases introduced in this text).

All in all, the authors have produced a work that will find an audience in librarians wanting a painless introduction to finding the law and not a work for those contemplating a career in law librarianship.

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Find the Law in the Library: A Guide to Legal Research. J. CORBIN. American Library Association, Chicago and London (1989). viii + 327 pp. $58.00. ISBN 0-8389-0502-1.

John Corbin, associate professor of law and library director at the Reynaldo G. Garza School of Law in Edinburgh, Texas (a law school unaccredited by either the American Bar Association or the Association of American Law Schools) has produced a mishmash that lacks nearly all the elements necessary for an effective book on legal research. The audience at which this book is aimed is unclear. The foreword claims that it is directed at "practicing librarians and library school students" as well as to the "intelligent layperson," but throughout the author uses terms (see "secured transactions," p. 235) that are not defined in the glossary, assumes access to, and comprehension of highly special-ized tools (such as the CCH *Pension Plan Guide*, a complicated looseleaf service designed for the practicing lawyer which is recommended at p. 292 in the Bibliography of the Pensions chapter), and provides incomplete and misleading information about the topics he discusses (see the Selective Abbreviations Table, p. 293), where the author notes that 101 A. 265 "stands for" Atlantic Reporter, rather than noting that this is a citation to a case which begins on page 265 of the 101st volume of the Atlantic Reporter First Series. He also fails to provide the date of decision in this particular exam-ple, although he does so in other examples in the same table, again with no explanation of what the date means.)

The book is introduced by a general overview of legal research covering a mere 50 pages. It is followed by 20 chapters on specific topics such as Divorce, Landlord and Tenant, and Copyright, Patent, Trademark and Tradename. These chapters are grouped under general headings such as The Family, The Community and Concerns of the Elderly. Each chapter contains a 2-3 page bibliography at the end.

The schizophrenic nature of a work aimed at different audiences is demonstrated throughout. For instance, the chapter heading of "Final Distribution" is used instead of terms like "Wills" or "Trusts and Estates" that would be familiar to a librarian or layperson. This chapter is grouped under the general heading Concerns of the Elderly, although it is a topic that should be of interest to all adults. The introduction to the research problem on "Final Distribution" begins with this sentence: "The Rule Against Perpetuities gives trusts a limited existence that consists of not more than the stated 'lives in being' at the time the trust is created plus twenty-one years." Five more sentences are devoted to the Rule Against Perpetuities. The Rule Against Perpetuities has baffled generations of lawyers, yet Corbin suggests that an intelligent layperson or librarian can proceed to research the problem based on six sentences, although he does say in the sample problem, "The research project sounded a bit over John's head but he . . . decided to undertake the project so that he would be able to talk intelligently to an attorney should he decide to act upon his thoughts" (p. 262). Proceeding further, Corbin suggests a strategy that, among other things, asks the researcher to utilize *American Jurisprudence 2d* (p. 263). It mentions nothing about using the index to the set or consulting pocket parts to update the information in *AmJur2d*, although both are essential steps in making sure that research is complete and up to date. Later on in this same problem appears this inexplicable note: "Finding no Arizona digest, he starts with the *Seventh Decennial Digest*, a general digest that covers the years 1956-1966" (p. 265). This advance is based on the fact that there is an Arizona statute apparently passed in 1963, although there is no explicit connection made in the text. Why the researcher should use the *Decennial Digest*, which will produce many irrelevant cases, when he wants to find *Arizona* cases is not made clear, since, in fact, an *Arizona Digest* exists (as Mr. Corbin himself has noted on p. 18). Even granting that not every collection will own an *Arizona Digest*, there is no explanation of why one would start in the middle of a run of decennials, and no mention of the fact that there is a Descriptive Word Index. Nor is mention made of the sets that update the *Seventh Decennial Digest*, so that Corbin leaves the impression that the researcher can be content with finding a single 24 year old case. Although the sample card in the text does include updates through the *Eighth Decennial* and the *General Digest 6th series* (1984), a reader would have no idea of the significance of these notes on the card, since they are not mentioned in the text. Corbin then goes on to report that the 24 year old case is irrelevant and skips from Step 6 (p. 266) in his recommended research strategy to Step 9 (p. 267) leaving the confused novice researcher in his wake. Moreover, despite its 1989 publication date, the book is far too dated to deal with such a rapidly changing field as law, for there are no examples in the entire book's sample cards incorporating legal research tools published after 1984, such as the *Ninth Decennial Digest* or the *General Digest, 7th series*.

Thus, Corbin assumes both too much and too little throughout. He assumes too much by expecting that a librarian or intelligent layperson would, for instance, translate the fact "Sally dies on June 10, 1980, and the proceeds of her estate were duly transferred to the Edward and Sally Family Trust" (p. 262) to the statement "John's parents, Edward and Sally, who lived in Mesa, Arizona, made pour-over wills. . . " (p. 263). He imposes an unrealistic research model on nonlawyers and librarians which results in a formal memorandum of the type that a law clerk would write for a partner or judge.

The book has no index, an inexcusable omission in a reference work of this type. A user is forced to rely on an extremely general contents table to locate information. Nor is there any provision for updating the material in the text by pocket part or other supplementation. And one would never know about the existence of the Westlaw or Lexis databases from reading these materials. More generally, word processors and database managers are totally absent from the universe that Corbin discusses. He suggests that researchers organize findings on an elaborate set of 4×6 cards (p. 30), but in his examples of how to record cases, he fails to note consistently the date of the case (p. 31), a crucial piece of information that any legal researcher would want to know and retain in order to update and evaluate the possible precedential value of the case.

Legal research books for the nonlawyer researcher are needed. Nolo Press is producing the most promising titles in this area for the layperson with such titles as *Nolo's Simple Will Book* [1] and *Legal Research: How to Find and Understand the Law* [2]. The abridged versions of the traditional legal research textbooks, such as *Legal Research Illustrated* [3] *Finding the Law: An Abridged Edition of "How to Find the Law 9th ed."* [4] can serve the librarian well. But Corbin's book with its incomplete, badly structured and often deceptive information, does its readers a disservice rather than providing them with an accurate and timely view of the process of legal research. It is also very expensive

($58.00), even by law book standards. It is unfortunate that the American Library Association lent its imprimatur to such a shoddy work. Not recommended.

REFERENCES

1. *Nolo's Simple Will Book*. 2nd ed. Nolo Press, Berkeley, California (1989). 256 pp. $17.95. ISBN 0-87337-088-0.
2. *Legal Research: How to Find and Understand the Law*. 2nd ed. Elias, S. Nolo Press, Berkeley, California (1986). 272 pp. $14.95. ISBN 0-87337-020-1.
3. *Legal Research Illustrated*. 1987 ed. J. M. Jacobstein, R. Mersky. Foundation Press, Mineola, New York (1987). xli, 431 pp. $18.50. ISBN 0-88277-572-3.
4. *Finding the Law: An Abridged Edition of "How to Find the Law 9th ed."*. M. Cohen, R. Berring and K. Olsen. West Publishing Co., St. Paul, Minnesota (1989). xxxviii, 570 pp. $19.95. ISBN 0-314-54587-5.

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The Online Catalogue: Developments and Directions. C. R. HILDRETH (ED.). The Library Association, London (1989). Distributed by the American Library Association, Chicago. x + 212 pp. $40.00. ISBN 0-85365-708-4.

Including a general introduction by the editor Charles R. Hildreth, this work is a collection of nine chapters by 10 contributors. The collection is international in scope, with contributors from Canada, the United States, Sweden, and Great Britain. All of the papers have extensive bibliographies of the most important studies in the area of OPAC research and user-information seeking behavior. Because of the international scope of the work, many of these research studies and references may be unfamiliar, but relevant, to American librarians interested in online catalog research. The book has a three-page index.

Hildreth states in his introduction that the book is a "collection of papers addressing major developments and issues in recent library online catalogue research" (p. 1). The collection is intended for the practicing librarian and library professional. Hildreth stresses the importance of practicing librarians in OPAC (online public access catalog) research since much of that research is conducted in field settings in libraries. He further states that there are at least three important roles open to librarians in the area of OPAC research and development. These include conducting actual research, if only on a part-time basis; keeping informed and helping to disseminate the knowledge gained through research; and impacting commercial system design and development through leverage as system evaluators, selectors, and purchasers.

For several years, it has been apparent that subject access is a problem for users of library catalogs. Experts originally thought that Boolean and keyword searching would solve the problems experienced by users with subject access. When it became apparent to researchers that patrons have problems using Boolean logic, and, even when properly applied, Boolean searching was not a complete panacea, a number of other information retrieval (IR) techniques such as term weighting and ranking, automatic stemming and spelling have been applied in a limited manner to OPACs to try to improve patron success in subject searching. Much of the research described in this work involves the application of these IR and artificial intelligence techniques in the implementing of expert OPAC systems and expert front-ends to improve user success with OPAC searching. One important aspect is an emphasis on better techniques of browsing in an online catalog.

Jean M. Tague advocates more browsing operations in OPACs because she believes that the Boolean system, vocabulary-matching approach that is utilized in most OPACs today is not suited to the variety of user-searching needs and the different retrieval objectives of individual users. Tague states that vocabulary problems in choosing terms to search the OPAC appear to be the major reason for user dissatisfaction with online catalogs. She recommends browsing in online catalogs for two purposes. The first is to determine the correct entry of a subject or author's name, and the second is to find similar items to a document already known to be relevant to the users needs. She describes two approaches to help solve the vocabulary problems recognized through previous research.

Karen Markey discusses the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) online project conducted by a research team at OCLC under her direction. She discusses both general and specific recommendations for subject searching strategies in online catalogs using DDC to enhance the search vocabulary. While this project has been described in other articles in the literature of library and information science, new insights are offered in this clear and well-written essay.