Cite-Checking
Research Guide for
USC Law Students

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FALL 2009
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I. INTRODUCTION

This guide identifies some research sources and methods that are particularly useful when you are checking citations. It is not designed to be a comprehensive guide to research or legal research; nor does it attempt to cover all types of publications that may be cited in the articles you are cite-checking. Rather, the focus is on the types of sources that are most commonly cited in U.S. legal and law-related journals and some of the best resources we have available at USC to find these types of items. The guide is divided into four parts, with each part focusing on one or more types of publications. For each publication you need to locate, always try to first determine what kind of item it is (book, article, case, statute, regulation, legislative history document, etc.). This will help you choose the right type of finding tool and the correct search terms to use.

If you have any questions related to your cite checking assignments, do not hesitate to stop by the law library’s Reference Office for assistance. Research librarians are generally available Monday-Thursday, 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. and Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

In recent years, more and more sources have been made available online in PDF. At USC, you have access to a wide variety of electronic resources containing PDF documents, many of which are identified in this guide. Because the current edition of The Bluebook is a little ambiguous with regard to the permissibility of citing to PDFs however, check with your editors to make sure you are allowed to use these versions for purposes of cite-checking.

The library has some reference books that are particularly useful for cite checkers. They are located in the library’s Ready Reference section, located behind the library’s Service Counter. You can request these books at the Service Counter.

For help in understanding the The Bluebook, you may wish to consult:


Also, there are two sources that are helpful if you have a legal abbreviation or acronym and want to know what it stands for:


- Index to Legal Citations and Abbreviations (2d ed., 1993) [call number: KD400 R24 1993] (focuses more on British and other foreign/international abbreviations)
In the course of your work, you are likely going to come across sources that are not available to you on the USC campus (either in print or electronically). If that’s the case, you can either request the items through interlibrary loan (ILL) or try to find them at other local libraries (if you or your editor feels that ILL is not going to be quick enough for you). This guide does discuss ways to determine if an item you need is located at other local libraries. However, we always advise that before making the trip to an off-campus library, you call to verify its hours and public access policies. You may also be able to verify over the phone that the item(s) you need are actually on the shelf.

Please note that the UCLA Law Library does not allow non-UCLA law students to use their library. They will however copy pages for our students on a case-by-case basis if they have an item that is not available anywhere else locally. Therefore, if there is an item you need and it is only available locally at the UCLA Law Library, please contact Brian Raphael, Assistant Director of the Law Library (Rm. 210; braphael@law.usc.edu) or Dean Pauline Aranas, Deputy Director of the Law Library (Rm. 202; paranas@law.usc.edu), and we can submit a request for you. Please make sure, however, that you have checked the appropriate catalogs before contacting one of us. (For law titles, you should check the catalogs for the L.A. Law Library, Loyola Law Library, and Southwestern Law Library.) The next section of this guide discusses how to access library catalogs.
II. BOOKS AND ARTICLES

A. FINDING BOOKS AND ARTICLES IN PRINT

To find a print version of a book or article, the best tool to use is the online catalog. One distinguishing feature of article citations is that they include both the article title and the name of the periodical in which the article was published. When using a catalog to locate an article, remember to search for the name of the periodical containing that article rather than the title of the actual article.

Keep in mind that while this section specifically mentions books and articles, catalogs can be used to find any separately published item, including reports and studies published by government agencies and private organizations. These types of publications, however, can often also be found electronically (in PDF) on the websites of the agencies and organizations that published them.

1. USC Catalogs

USC has three different catalogs for finding books and periodicals:

- **ADVOCAT (USC Law Library):** Searches the holdings of the USC Law Library only.

- **HOMER (USC Libraries):** Searches the holdings of all of the USC libraries EXCEPT the law, medical, and dental libraries (the map on the following page shows you where these libraries are located on campus).

- **HELIX (Health Sciences):** Searches the holdings of the USC medical and dental libraries only.

All of these catalogs can be accessed from any of the computers in the library as well as from any other computer connected to the internet. The “Search Library Catalogs” link on the USC Law Library’s webpage provides access to all three of these catalogs. (ADVOCAT can also be searched from the “Quick Search” box located on the same webpage.) The “Search All USC Library Catalogs” option allows you to simultaneously search all three USC catalogs; however, you will have more searching options and may get better results if you search the catalogs separately.

All three USC catalogs provide guidance on how to set up effective searches. It is advisable to spend a few minutes browsing through the search tips or “help” screens before conducting your searches.
When using the Homer catalog, keep in mind that some USC items have been sent to offsite storage facilities (Grand Depository and East) but are available through an electronic paging system. If you need assistance in submitting a paging request through the Homer catalog, feel free to stop by the law library’s Service Counter.

Map of University Park Campus Libraries
2. Off-Campus Libraries

If the book or periodical you are looking for is not at USC and you want to see if it is available at a nearby library, you can select the “Search Other Library Catalogs via WWW” option on the “Search Library Catalogs” page. This will provide you with links to catalogs for a number of non-USC libraries, some of which are located in relatively close proximity to the USC campus and others of which are recognized for their outstanding collections.

You can also usually access a particular library’s catalog by going directly to that library’s website. Below are the phone numbers and website addresses for a number of local libraries that may prove helpful to you in your search for specific publications:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library</th>
<th>Phone Numbers</th>
<th>Website Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loyola Law Library</td>
<td>213-736-1117 (Circulation) 213-736-1177 (Reference)</td>
<td><a href="http://library.lls.edu/">http://library.lls.edu/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwestern University Law Library</td>
<td>213-738-5771 (Circulation) 213-738-6725 (Reference)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.swlaw.edu/library">http://www.swlaw.edu/library</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCLA University Libraries</td>
<td>various libraries; 310-825-7143 (Young Research Library)</td>
<td><a href="http://www2.library.ucla.edu/">http://www2.library.ucla.edu/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Public Library</td>
<td>various libraries; 213-228-7272 (Central Branch)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.lapl.org/">http://www.lapl.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County of Los Angeles Public Libraries</td>
<td>various libraries</td>
<td><a href="http://colapublib.org/">http://colapublib.org/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is also a catalog accessible to all USC users called WorldCat, which allows you to simultaneously search the holdings of thousands of libraries throughout the world, including all of the ones listed above. The main USC Law Library webpage contains a link to WorldCat (under “Law Library Quicklinks”).

When you access WorldCat, you can conduct a Basic Search or an Advanced Search. For guidance on how to search on WorldCat, consult the Help screens by clicking on the “Help” button near the top of the search screen.

After you enter a search on WorldCat, you will retrieve a list of items that satisfy your search parameters. For any item record retrieved on WorldCat, you can click on the “Libraries Worldwide” link to see which libraries own that item. The initial list will be limited to libraries in California. For some of the libraries listed, you can link to their own individual catalogs.
Keep in mind that WorldCat will not typically be as accurate in reflecting what a particular library holds as that library’s own catalog. Also, WorldCat itself will not tell you if a library holds a complete run of a particular journal or whether the item you need is checked out of the library at the present time. Finally, if a library has more than one branch, WorldCat will not indicate which branch owns the title. Therefore, while WorldCat may provide you with some leads, it is important that you search the individual library catalogs as well.

B. FINDING BOOKS AND ARTICLES ELECTRONICALLY

You have access to a number of electronic databases containing books and periodicals in PDF (which provides the same page images found in the print versions). Some are available through the USC Law Library website and some through the website of the university’s central library system (USC Libraries). You can access these resources from any computer on campus as well as remotely (with your username and password). For off-campus use, you can go to the USC Libraries’ Remote Access Portal <https://libproxy.usc.edu/login> and then enter your USC login information (the password you use to access Blackboard). You can also first select a resource from the Law Library or USC Libraries website and then log in. If you have any questions or problems with remote access, please contact the Law School’s Computer Lab Supervisor at 213-740-2630 or the Law School Computing Help Desk at 213-740-2571.

1. Electronic Books

The USC Libraries subscribes to a limited number of electronic books. These can generally be found via the Homer catalog. If you search for a book title on Homer and it is available electronically through the USC Libraries’ subscription, you will see a link to the electronic version.

Google Book Search <books.google.com> is an alternative tool you can use to search for the full text of a book. For a few years now, Google has been scanning the books held at a number of major research libraries throughout the country. It also has set up partnerships with selected publishers. For books still protected by copyright, the number of pages provided will typically be limited. Also, you may be asked to create an account with Google after viewing a certain number of pages.

Finally, the Law Library provides electronic access to a number of older legal texts and treatises through its subscriptions to HeinOnline’s Legal Classics Library (which includes more than 1,200 classic legal texts) and The Making of Modern Law: Legal Treatises 1800-1926 (which includes approximately 22,000 legal texts on both U.S. and British law). To find a text contained in one of these two databases, you can use the Law Library’s catalog, ADVOCAT, which provides links to all of these electronic texts and treatises, even those that the law library does not own in print.
2. Electronic Periodicals

You can access a wide range of periodicals electronically through the USC Libraries’ “eJournals/eBooks” page. You can quickly get to the USC Libraries’ page by clicking on “USC Electronic Resources,” which is listed under “Law Library Quicklinks” on the main Law Library webpage. From here, click on the “eJournals/eBooks” link near the top of the screen.

On this page, you can enter the name or part of the name of the periodical (NOT the article title) in the box next to the Search button. If the periodical is available electronically through a USC subscription, you will see one or more links listed under your periodical title. When you click on a link, you will be taken to a page where you can browse for your article by volume and page number. Keep in mind that a particular electronic subscription may only include certain volumes of a particular journal.

Below is a screen shot showing sample entries for a few journals on criminal justice. Note that the entries include information as to which electronic resources contain the journals and their dates of coverage.
You can also use the publicly-accessible Google Scholar web search engine <scholar.google.com> to search for articles and papers in a variety of disciplines. Google Scholar offers a relatively simple way to broadly search for scholarly literature, including the full text of articles freely available online, and aims to rank articles by their relevance and probable value to researchers. Google Scholar also provides links to the articles and abstracts that are available to USC users through many of the USC subscriptions as well as links to library catalogs to help you find the articles in print form.

C. FINDING ARTICLES WHEN YOU HAVE INCOMPLETE OR INACCURATE INFORMATION

If you have an article citation that is missing certain pieces of information (e.g., an article citation without a volume number and the year of publication) or if it appears your citation has some incorrect information, you can try to do some detective work to obtain a better citation. Both Google Book and Google Scholar discussed above as well as the law journal databases/sources on LexisNexis and Westlaw can be useful tools in these situations. Use as your search terms the key words from the citation that you believe to be accurate to see if you can either pull up the article directly or find a source that has accurately and completely cited that article.

You can also try using one or more of the Law Library’s or USC Libraries’ periodical databases to see if you can obtain a better citation. The Law Library’s databases are accessible by clicking on “Online Resources & Research Links” from the main Law Library webpage. The USC Libraries’ databases can be accessed by clicking on the “Databases” button at the top of the main USC Libraries’ webpage (shown in the screen shot on the previous page). Some of the periodical databases accessible from these sites provide full text coverage in PDF for all articles included in the databases, while others only provide citations or a mix of citations, non-PDF full text, and PDF full text.

1. Useful Databases for Law Journal Articles

Below are the databases recommended for verifying cites to law journal articles. They are all accessible from the Law Library’s “Online Resources and Research Links” page.

• **HeinOnline**

HeinOnline’s Law Journal Library contains the full-text of more than 1,100 law and law-related journals (including some international and non-U.S. journals). Unlike LexisNexis and Westlaw, it includes articles going back to the very first volume of the journals. Also, the articles on HeinOnline are PDF images from the actual print versions, which is not the case on LexisNexis and Westlaw. On the other hand, HeinOnline does not offer as many searching and browsing options as
the other two services. Also, it takes a little time (usually a year or two) for new journal issues to be added to HeinOnline due to licensing restrictions.

- **LegalTrac**

LegalTrac provides citations to articles from 1980 to the present from over 1,400 legal journals, magazines, and newspapers published in the United States and other English speaking countries. This database also includes a limited number of full-text articles.

- **Index to Legal Periodicals (ILP)**

Unlike LegalTrac, which includes legal newspapers and practice oriented periodicals, Index to Legal Periodicals (ILP) is limited to the more scholarly legal periodicals. While ILP covers fewer periodicals than LegalTrac, it goes back earlier in time. ILP really consists of two different databases: a current database that references articles from 1981 to the present (“Legal Periodicals Full Text”) as well as a retrospective database covering the time period 1908-1981 (“Legal Periodicals Retro”). While the full text database does include select full-text articles and/or abstracts (beginning with volumes from 1995 and 1990 respectively), as with LegalTrac, many of the article records only include citation information and subject headings.

- **Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals (IFLP)**

Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals (IFLP) provides citations to articles published since 1985 in journals that focus on international, comparative, or foreign law. Foreign law is defined here as the laws of individual countries other than the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, or New Zealand. Coverage in IFLP is based on type of journal rather than country of publication. Therefore, international and comparative law journals published in the United States and other English-speaking countries are included in this database. Keep in mind though that IFLP provides citations only and does not include any full text material.

2. **Useful Databases for Non-Law Journal Articles**

Below are the databases recommended for verifying cites to non-law journal articles. They are all accessible from the USC Libraries’ Databases page (through the “Quick
Links” box and/or the “Browse Databases A-Z” link). In many of the databases that are not 100% full text, you will often see, near an article citation, a “Find it @ USC” link, which will take you either to the full text of the article (if it is accessible in full from a different database) or to a USC library catalog record for the journal containing that article (if it is only available in print form at one of the USC libraries).

- **JSTOR**

  JSTOR is a database collection of core social science, humanities, and science journals. Among the fields included are economics, education, history, law, philosophy, political science, sociology, and literature. The full text of articles is searchable and can be viewed in PDF. Coverage goes back to the very first volume for most of the journals included in the database. However, due to licensing restrictions, most of the journal issues do not get added to the database until a few years after they have been published. (Depending on the journal, this time period may be shorter or longer.)

- **Project MUSE**

  Project MUSE is another completely full text database, providing access to over 350 humanities and social science journals. Unlike JSTOR, which is particularly useful for finding older journal articles, Project MUSE contains mostly articles published after 1999. Articles in Project MUSE can be viewed in both HTML and PDF.

- **ProQuest Databases**

  ProQuest is a collection of databases that include mostly full text articles (including many in PDF). Although not limited to scholarly journals, ProQuest contains many databases that are very useful for scholarly research, including “ABI/Inform Global” (a database that includes close to 1,800 worldwide business periodicals) as well as the “ProQuest Research Library” (which covers a wide range of disciplines). You have the option of searching individual ProQuest databases or multiple ones at the same time. Dates of coverage on ProQuest vary widely from journal to journal.

- **FirstSearch Databases**

  FirstSearch is a collection of periodical databases covering a variety of scholarly disciplines, with limited full-text material.
Listed below are some of the more commonly used FirstSearch databases, with an indication of the disciplines and years they cover:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Database Name</th>
<th>Discipline(s) Covered</th>
<th>Years of Coverage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABI-Inform</td>
<td>Business and Management</td>
<td>1971-present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ArticleFirst</td>
<td>Multi-disciplinary</td>
<td>1990-present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECO (Electronic Collections Online)</td>
<td>Multi-disciplinary</td>
<td>1995-present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EconLit</td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>1969-present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERIC</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1966-present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medline</td>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>1950-present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAIS Archive</td>
<td>Public Policy and Social Issues</td>
<td>1915-1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAIS International</td>
<td>Public Policy and Social Issues</td>
<td>1972-present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodical Abstracts</td>
<td>Multi-disciplinary</td>
<td>1986-present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson Select Plus</td>
<td>Multi-disciplinary</td>
<td>1994-present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **CSA Illumina**

CSA Illumina is another collection of periodical databases covering a variety of disciplines. Below is a list of some of the CSA databases available in the social science, humanities, and technology disciplines. You will not find “CSA Illumina” listed as a separate database on the USC Libraries’ Databases page, but you will find the individual CSA databases listed. (Note that the ERIC database is included in both the FirstSearch collection and the CSA Illumina collection.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Database Name</th>
<th>Discipline(s) Covered</th>
<th>Years of Coverage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ERIC</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1966-present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LISA-Library and Information</td>
<td>Library and Information Science</td>
<td>1969-present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Abstracts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosopher’s Index</td>
<td>Philosophy and Ethics</td>
<td>1940-present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PsycARTICLES</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>1894-present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PsycINFO</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>1806-present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services Abstracts</td>
<td>Social Work, Social Welfare, Social</td>
<td>1979-present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociological Abstracts</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>1952-present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. PRIMARY LAW SOURCES

As you learned in the first year Legal Research course, the Law Library has a fairly extensive collection of U.S. primary law materials. Most of these materials are located on the library’s main floor, though some sets are located on the third floor, including the West regional reporters, state statutory codes and official case reporters, as well as additional copies of some of the major federal and California primary law sources. The library’s third floor collection also includes some primary law sources for other countries and some international law sources, including treaties. A much more extensive collection of foreign and international sources can be found at the L.A. Law Library, located in downtown Los Angeles.

As with regular books and periodicals, you can use library catalogs to see if a particular primary law source is located at USC or another law library in the L.A. area. If you have difficulty locating a particular primary law source in print, you may be able to find a PDF version of the source using one of the electronic databases listed below. (Note that this is not an all-inclusive list of every resource containing PDF primary law sources.) Following this list is a chart that provides the dates of coverage for various primary law sources available in PDF in the first three databases on the list.

- **HeinOnline**

HeinOnline contains a number of primary law “libraries” in addition to the Law Journal and Legal Classics libraries discussed above. When you select HeinOnline from the Law Library’s “Online Resources and Research Links” page, you will see all of the available HeinOnline libraries listed on the left hand side of the screen. Many of the primary law sources available on HeinOnline can also be accessed through links on the law library’s catalog, ADVOCAT.

- **GPO Access** <www.gpoaccess.gov/>

This official web site for U.S. government documents provides free electronic access to a large number of federal primary law sources in PDF.

- **LLMC Digital**

LLMC (Law Library Microform Consortium) is a non-profit cooperative dedicated to the preservation of legal information. LLMC Digital is their PDF collection of government and legal publications, many of which are primary law sources. This resource is still a work in progress, but it contains many historical publications that may be difficult to find elsewhere. Like HeinOnline, LLMC Digital is accessible through the library’s “Online Resources and Research Links” page as well as through links on the law library’s catalog, ADVOCAT.
PDF versions of all published federal and state cases from the West federal and regional case reporters are available on Westlaw.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>HEIN ONLINE</th>
<th>GPO ACCESS</th>
<th>LLMC DIGITAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>U.S. Reports</strong> (U.S.)</td>
<td>1754-2005</td>
<td></td>
<td>1790-date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Federal Register</strong></td>
<td>1936-2009</td>
<td>1994-2009</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Agency Decisions (for select agencies)</td>
<td>Varies by agency</td>
<td>Varies by agency</td>
<td>Varies by agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>U.S. Attorney General Opinions</strong></td>
<td>1791-1982</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>English Reports</strong></td>
<td>1220-1865</td>
<td></td>
<td>1378-1865 (Reprint)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IV. FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE HISTORY DOCUMENTS

Legislative history documents (e.g., legislative bills, legislative committee reports and hearings, floor debates, etc.) are often cited in law journal articles. Listed below are some of the major federal legislative history resources available to you in print, on microfiche, and electronically.

A. PRINT SOURCES

1. Congressional Committee Reports

Congressional committee report citations can typically be recognized as such by the H. Rep. (House Report) and S. Rep. (Senate Report) abbreviations that precede the report numbers. (If the number is preceded by H.R. or S., this signifies that it is a House or Senate bill as opposed to a report.)

*United States Code Congressional and Administrative News* (U.S.C.C.A.N.) is a publication containing not only all of the public laws enacted by Congress since 1948 but also selected Congressional committee reports related to those public laws. The Bluebook recognizes U.S.C.C.A.N. as an authoritative source of committee reports. It is located in the Law Library’s Federal Section and is organized chronologically. The public laws for each Congressional session are contained in volumes labeled “Laws” on the spines, and the committee reports are contained in accompanying volumes labeled “Legislative History” on the spines.

Another print source for Congressional committee reports is the *United States Congressional Serial Set*. This set is not available in print at the Law Library, but many volumes of the set are located at USC’s Doheny Library. It is also available electronically (see p. 18). If you want to find a report in the print set, it is recommended that you come to the Library Reference Office for assistance.

2. Congressional Floor Debates

The *Congressional Record* (Cong. Rec.) is the standard source for Congressional floor debates since 1873. This publication is currently available in print in the Law Library’s compact shelving section on the third floor (KF35 .U54). The library’s holdings in print go all the way back to the very first volume, though there are gaps starting with volume 131 from 1985.

This academic year, the Law Library plans to remove this publication from its print collection, due to its availability online (see below). However, the library will retain the index volumes in print, since the index is much easier to use in print than online and can be useful if you do not have a correct *Congressional Record* citation.
Congressional debates prior to 1873 can be found in other print publications such as the **Congressional Globe** and the *Register of Debates in Congress*. These publications are also available on the Law Library’s third floor.

3. **Congressional Hearings**

Many libraries catalog individual Congressional hearings that are held in their print collections. USC’s main library catalog HOMER and, to a lesser degree, the Law Library’s catalog ADVOCAT provide records for a substantial number of committee hearings. Therefore, you can search for a hearing by name in one or both of these catalogs to see if it is available in print on the USC campus. Most of the government documents cataloged in HOMER are kept at an off-site storage facility but can be paged by USC students.

B. **LIBRARY’S MICROFICHE COLLECTION**

The USC Law Library has a microfiche collection of U.S. Congressional documents, which includes committee reports and hearings going back to 1970 as well as bills going back to 1975. This collection is located in the library’s Photocopy / Microform Room on the main floor.

In order to access a Congressional committee report or hearing from this collection, you will need either a CIS number (for items from 1970-1980) or a SuDoc classification number (for items from 1980 to the present). These numbers can be obtained by using the database “LexisNexis Congressional,” available to all USC users through the USC Libraries’ Databases page discussed above. This database provides a number of ways to search for legislative history information, including by keyword or by document number (e.g., report number). Once you obtain your CIS and/or SuDoc number for the document in which you are interested, come to the Law Library Reference Office or Service Counter and someone can assist you in retrieving the correct microfiche and using the microfiche reader to read and/or copy the document.

In order to access a Congressional bill from the fiche collection, another special indexing tool must be used. Stop by the Reference Office and one of our research librarians can assist you in finding a bill with this finding tool.

C. **DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE ELECTRONICALLY**

Listed on the next few pages are descriptions of four electronic resources that contain the full text of one or more of the types of legislative history documents discussed above. Each of these resources is limited in the type of information provided and/or the time periods covered. The comparison chart that appears at the end of this section of the guide can help...
you quickly determine which resource(s) you will want to use given the type of document you are looking for and the year it was published.

- **THOMAS**

The Thomas website <thomas.loc.gov> from the Library of Congress provides a wealth of legislative history information and documents. The site provides the full text of public laws, legislative bills, legislative debates, and committee reports. For the debates and reports, links are also provided to the PDF version of these documents.

When you first go to the Thomas site, you need to choose the type of document you wish to search (bills, debates in the Congressional Record, committee reports, etc.). The major document categories are listed on the left side of the screen (as shown below).

The Thomas website offers a variety of ways to search for documents, including by document number and by keyword or phrase. If you are searching by keyword and wish to combine multiple words in the same search, your results will be sorted into a few different categories, based on how near the search words are to each other in the documents. If you are interested in a document from an earlier Congress, make sure you select that Congress (e.g., 104, 105, etc.) before entering your search.
• **GPO Access**

GPO Access <www.gpoaccess.gov> (noted on page 12 for its federal primary law material) also provides links to search pages for all of the various types of legislative history documents discussed above (bills, reports, debates in the *Congressional Record*, and hearings). As noted on the chart on page 18, GPO Access does not go back as far as the Thomas site for bills and debates. All of the documents however are available in PDF. As with THOMAS, you must select the appropriate Congress before entering your search terms.

• **HeinOnline**

In addition to its law journal and primary source libraries (discussed in prior sections of this guide), HeinOnline includes a U.S. Congressional Documents collection, providing access to the vast majority of the debates of Congress going back to 1789, including most of the volumes of the *Congressional Record* published since 1873. If you have a *Congressional Record* citation, click on the “Citation Navigator” tab at the top of the screen, choose “Cong. Rec.” from the Abbreviation pull down menu on the left hand side of the screen, and enter your volume and page numbers in the Vol. and Page boxes (as shown below).
• **United States Congressional Serial Set**

This online version of the *United States Congressional Serial Set* (discussed above) can be accessed from the USC Libraries’ Databases page (under “U.S. Congressional Serial Set”). This online version contains Congressional committee reports in PDF. You can search for reports by keyword, bill number, and/or report number.

**Comparison Chart**

The chart below is designed to help direct you to the most appropriate electronic resource(s) given the type of document you are looking for and the year your document was published. In addition to providing the years of coverage for each source, the chart also indicates if the source provides access to PDF images for each type of legislative history document.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>THOMAS</th>
<th>GPO ACCESS</th>
<th>HEIN ONLINE</th>
<th>SERIAL SET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bills</td>
<td>1989 (101st Congress) – present</td>
<td>1993 (103rd Congress) – present (PDF)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearings</td>
<td>1995 (104th Congress) – present (selective coverage) (PDF)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Some gaps exist from 1989-1992; also, links to PDF images are missing for some of the earlier debates.

** This database is still a work in progress. As of August 2009, it contains documents from 1817-1973. The remaining documents (from 1974-1980) are likely to be added by early 2010.
V. COURT DOCUMENTS

Sometimes, you will come across citations to court documents other than published cases (e.g., court pleadings, briefs, slip opinions, unpublished opinions, etc.). Some of these items can be difficult to obtain. Below are some sources that may prove useful in your search for these types of documents:

• Westlaw and LexisNexis

In recent years, both Westlaw and LexisNexis have added a variety of court documents to their online systems. These include pleadings and other documents filed in trial courts, appellate briefs, docket sheets (i.e., lists of documents filed in a case), and actual trial transcripts. In some instances, these documents are available in PDF. Both Westlaw and LexisNexis are also good sources for recent opinions that have not yet been published, as well as opinions that will never be published. Keep in mind that only selective court documents from selective cases are included on these systems.

Court documents from Westlaw and LexisNexis are typically organized by jurisdiction and by document type in the Westlaw Database Directory and the LexisNexis “Look for a Source” page. For example, on Westlaw, if you go into the California folder in the Directory, you will see lists of different types of documents (e.g., Trial Court Documents, Courtroom Transcripts, Dockets, Briefs, etc.). Similarly, on LexisNexis, under the California tab, there is a link to “Find Briefs, Motions, Pleadings & Jury Verdicts,” which allows you to choose the source containing the particular type of document in which you are interested. Once you choose your database or source on one of these systems, you can search in the same way in which you search for cases.

• Court Websites

More and more courts are making their own court documents (particularly recent opinions) available on their websites. Each site is organized differently, but usually, there will be links on the main page directing you to specific types of documents. Keep in mind that these sites will typically only contain documents from recent cases.

• PACER Service Center

PACER <pacer.uscourts.gov> is an online service that provides (for a fee) access to court documents from certain federal courts (including the District Courts, Bankruptcy Courts, and United States Courts of Appeals). Unfortunately, the Law Library does not have an account you can use. However, your journal can set up their own account (if they have not already done so). The cost of accessing documents
through PACER is currently $.08 per page. The PACER website has information on how to register for the service and search their databases as well as additional information on what is included in their databases and the costs associated with searching them.

- **Contacting the Court or the Attorneys in a Case**

If none of the above options are successful, a final option is to request a copy of a particular court document from the court in which the document was filed or from an attorney who was involved in the case. When requesting from a court, keep in mind that there is often a fee required to obtain the document, and it may take some time to receive it, particularly if it is a document from an older case, which may be located in the court or government archives. If you are trying to contact an attorney who worked on the case, keep in mind that some attorneys are more inclined to assist than others. Also, if the document you are looking for is from an older case, you may have difficulty locating an attorney who was involved in that case. And even if you are successful in making contact with one of the attorneys, he or she may not have ready access to the document you are looking for.

If you’re thinking about one of these last options, it is probably best to discuss with your editor whether it may be better to contact the author of the article you are citing checking and ask him or her for a copy of the court document you need.