

WEST ACADEMIC PUBLISHING'S LAW SCHOOL ADVISORY BOARD

JESSE H. CHOPER

Professor of Law and Dean Emeritus,
University of California, Berkeley

JOSHUA DRESSLER

Distinguished University Professor, Frank R. Strong Chair in Law
Michael E. Moritz College of Law, The Ohio State University

YALE KAMISAR

Professor of Law Emeritus, University of San Diego
Professor of Law Emeritus, University of Michigan

MARY KAY KANE

Professor of Law, Chancellor and Dean Emeritus,
University of California, Hastings College of the Law

LARRY D. KRAMER

President, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

JONATHAN R. MACEY

Professor of Law, Yale Law School

ARTHUR R. MILLER

University Professor, New York University
Formerly Bruce Bromley Professor of Law, Harvard University

GRANT S. NELSON

Professor of Law, Pepperdine University
Professor of Law Emeritus, University of California, Los Angeles

A. BENJAMIN SPENCER

Earle K. Shawe Professor of Law,
University of Virginia School of Law

JAMES J. WHITE

Robert A. Sullivan Professor of Law Emeritus,
University of Michigan

INTERNATIONAL LEGAL RESEARCH IN A NUTSHELL®

SECOND EDITION

MARCI B. HOFFMAN

Lecturer in Residence and Associate Director,
Law Library
University of California, Berkeley School of Law

ROBERT C. BERRING, JR.

Walter Perry Johnson Professor of Law
University of California, Berkeley School of Law

 **WEST
ACADEMIC
PUBLISHING**

The publisher is not engaged in rendering legal or other professional advice, and this publication is not a substitute for the advice of an attorney. If you require legal or other expert advice, you should seek the services of a competent attorney or other professional.

Nutshell Series, *In a Nutshell* and the Nutshell Logo are trademarks registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

© 2008 Thomson/West
© 2017 LEG, Inc. d/b/a West Academic
444 Cedar Street, Suite 700
St. Paul, MN 55101
1-877-888-1330

West, West Academic Publishing, and West Academic are trademarks of West Publishing Corporation, used under license.

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN: 978-1-63460-521-2

APPENDIX D

PLANNING YOUR RESEARCH AND ORGANIZATIONAL TOOLS

A. RESEARCH PLAN

If you have reached this appendix, hopefully you have already reviewed (maybe even read) Chapter 11 on general research strategies. As noted in this chapter, it's always a good idea to take a few minutes before you begin your research and create a research plan. This is even more important for tight time deadlines, although it may not seem like you have the time. A few minutes spent on a research plan can actually save you time and keep you on track.

Your research plan should identify the question(s) you are trying to answer and sets out a strategy of where to look.

- What is my question?
- What are my keywords and concepts?
- What do I need?
- Where should I look?
- Turn off distractions (texting, email, cat videos, etc.).
- Have organizational tools ready.

A research plan can take many forms. It could be scribbled notes on a piece of paper or sticky note, or more a formal approach using Word or Excel. A research plan can also be the basis of a research log.

A research log is a record of your research process and it can be used to take notes about how and where you found useful materials and how you plan to use them in your research. A log is also a good place to note useful sources to go back to later as you refine your project with additional research and analysis. And here's a bonus, creating a log can also help you build your overall research expertise. Here is a list of lists that can be included in your log:

A More Complete List of Lists Every Researcher Should Keep:¹

1. **Keywords** from thinking, brainstorming, background reading, or a thesaurus.
2. **Relevant call numbers**, to use for both shelf and online browsing purposes.
3. **Subject headings** from the full display in an online catalog *and* subject descriptions from every relevant article database.
4. **Authors and scholars** whose work is repeatedly mentioned by others.
5. **Titles of peer-reviewed journals** and popular journals.
6. **Titles of relevant reference tools** related to the research project.
7. **Publishers** that seem to specialize in the field.

¹ Mary W. George, *The Elements of Library Research* 61 (2008).

8. **Institutions, associations, societies, or government agencies** that focus on the area of interest.

9. **Dates**, such as the life span of key people, the exact date of a major event, or the publication year of primary sources.

10. **Order of the steps** taken to obtain background information and discover sources, including the navigation path leading to electronic resources and the address of useful web pages.

A research log should also contain the following elements:

- Dates when you did your searching. This is very useful if you need to come back to a project later on.
- Where you searched (search tools and sources).
- Search strategies that were useful (and even those that were not productive so you don't repeat those same useless strategies).
- Ideas to pursue during the next research session.
- Any other notes that will help you be more productive.

B. ORGANIZATIONAL TOOLS

These tools can help you create your research log and help you organize the information you find.

- Note-taking tools
 - Evernote
<https://evernote.com/>.
 - Index cards
 - OneNote (Microsoft)
<https://www.onenote.com/>.
 - Research notebook
- Tools to help collect, manage, organize, and create citations.

For a comparison of some of these tools, see <https://www.mendeley.com/compare-mendeley/>. See also *Manage Your Citations*, a research guide from UC Berkeley Library.²

- EndNote (subscription)
<http://endnote.com>.
- Evernote
<https://evernote.com/>.
- Mendeley
<https://www.mendeley.com/>.
- Refworks (subscription)
<http://proquest.libguides.com/newrefworks>.

² <http://guides.lib.berkeley.edu/publichealth/citations>.
Compares Endnote, Refworks, Zotero and Mendeley.

- Zotero

A very powerful tool, so take some time to learn how to use it effectively.

<https://www.zotero.org/>.

Zotero Research Guide

<http://lawguides.bc.edu/zotero>.

Zotero is a very powerful research tool, so you may want to read more about it in order to take full advantage of its features.

How Do I Use Zotero with HeinOnline?

<http://help.heinonline.org/how-do-i-use-zotero-with-heinonline/>.

Multilingual Zotero

<http://citationstylist.org/tools/>.

For more assistance with Zotero, check out the many research guides available on the web or review this piece, Caldwell, Julia and Prebble QC, John, *Zotero—A Manual for Electronic Legal Referencing* (May 1, 2013). Victoria University of Wellington Legal Research Paper No. 18/2012. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2033476>.

- Storing files and documents

These tools are all free (at least the basic versions) and provide secure storage available from anywhere and good for collaborative projects.

- Box

<https://www.box.com/home>.

- Dropbox
<https://www.dropbox.com/>.
- Google Drive
<https://www.google.com/drive/>.