



WILLIE MELTON LAW LIBRARY NEWS

VOL 32 NUM 1 | FEBRUARY 2024

STAY IN THE LOOP WITH UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS!

AT A GLANCE

- What's going on at the Law Library!
- How you can access resources from your home or office!

HOURS

Mon	8 am - 5 pm
Tue	8 am - 5 pm
Wed	8 am - 5 pm
Thu	8 am - 5 pm
Fri	8 am - 5 pm
Sat	CLOSED
Sun	CLOSED



What's New

UPCOMING PROGRAMS



LONE STAR
LEGAL AID

- LAWYER IN THE LIBRARY
hosted by Lone Star Legal Aid is EVERY MONDAY from 8:30 am to 12:00 pm. [More Information Here](#)
- PRO SE BASICS at 10 am EVERY TUESDAY - Learn about basic court procedures and resources.
- EXPRESS CLASSES at 10 am EVERY THURSDAY - Learn basic legal technology .

UPDATES AND CLOSINGS

- The Virtual Court Kiosk -- available through a grant by Texas Legal Services Center -- can be reserved for virtual court hearings in the mornings from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm, and in the afternoons from 1:30 to 5:00 pm.

[Reserve the Kiosk Here](#)

- Trellis Database is HERE! Use it to access Trial Court Documents in Texas!
- Attorney Lecture Series on Immigration on Wednesday, February 21, at 2 pm. Program will be given by Attorney Eduardo Franco.

TEXAS
LEGAL
SERVICES
CENTER



UPDATED RESOURCES

- Texas Practice Guide - Probate 2023-24 Edition
- Texas Criminal Jury Charges 2024 Edition
- O'Connor's Texas Rules * Civil Trial 2024 Edition
- Texas Pattern Jury Charges Family and Probate 2024 Edition
- Deposition Checklist and Strategies 2024 Edition

THIS MONTH IS LABOR & EMPLOYMENT LAW MONTH!

- We have a variety of resources on this topic this month! Come check it out!

Past Program Recordings

ATTORNEY LECTURE SERIES

- Attorneys and Burnout - Speaker Attorney Cynthia Rendon. Find it [HERE!](#)
- 10 Lessons I Wish I Had Learned Earlier - Speaker Attorney Rocky Pilgrim. Find it [HERE!](#)

Online Resources

REMOTE DATABASES

- Lexis Nexis Digital Library - Collection of Ebooks from publishers LexisNexis, Matthew Bender, and James Publishing
- Gale Legal Forms Library - Collection of Civil Forms on various topics that can be used in Texas and Federal Courts



[Sign up for an eCard here to access](#)

PRO SE HANDBOOK - FORMS AND INFORMATION

- General Civil and Family Law Forms and Information from Texas Law Help, Fort Bend County District and County Courts at Law, Fort Bend County District and County Clerks, the Fort Bend County Law Library, and other Texas Governmental Agencies. [Check it out here.](#)



Useful Articles and Links

STAFF ARTICLES

- Technology Corner
- Featured Resource
- Librarian Musings

Featured Resource - *O'Connor's Texas Probate Law Handbook* By Christine France

The O'Connor's practice guides are an invaluable resource to attorneys, paralegals, and patrons of the Law Library. The *Texas Probate Law Handbook* is one in the O'Connor's series. It provides extensive information on probate law and was recently updated to reflect the 2023 legislation.

A few new changes in this edition include additions to the qualified delivery methods, qualifications to serve as executor, and change in the authority to make end-of-life decisions.

First, under former legislation, practitioners had difficulty meeting the notice requirements in certain probate proceedings. Now, there is new legislation to address this issue.

Another change in this edition is the qualifications to serve as an executor. New legislation has now created an exception for felons to permit them to serve under certain circumstances.

One other update discussed in the Probate Handbook is the change to the authority to make end-of-life healthcare decisions.

For more information on these new changes and probate law, come to the Law Library!



Technology Corner - *Online Immigration Law Resources* By Jonathan Briggs

Westlaw/Thomson Reuters conducted an online training for our patrons and staff earlier this month to provide us a general update on this legal database with a focus on Immigration Law resources. It gave me the idea to make this month's "Technology Corner" about what online resources we have on this important and timely topic. Westlaw and Lexis Plus (our two primary legal databases) have immigration law materials. Both have statutes such as the U.S. Code and the cases from the federal court system. Other categories of materials are where they diverge. Westlaw has the treaties Steel on Immigration Law (which includes some forms) the Immigration Procedures Handbook. As far as forms go, Westlaw has Immigration Official Forms. Also helpful is the Board of Immigration Appeals Practice Manual. Additionally, Lexis Plus has administrative law decisions from the Board of Immigrant Appeals ("Immigrant Precedent Decisions") as wells as briefs, pleadings, and motions filed in immigration cases.

A challenging issue that criminal law attorneys deal with regularly are the immigration consequences for pleas and convictions which is addressed in a substantial body of state and federal case law (including *Padilla v. Kentucky*, 559 U.S. 356, and its progeny and Texas cases such as *Morales v. State*, 872 S.W.2d 753) and statutes (such as what is a "deportable offense" under the U.S. Immigration code) as well as being discussed in Lexis' Texas Criminal Practice Guide. Finally, both online legal databases provide access to law reviews and journals where there are many articles discussing immigration law in general and its tie-in with criminal defense practice, such as "Immigration Consequences: A Primer for Texas Criminal Defense Attorneys in Light of *Padilla v. Kentucky*," 63 Baylor L. Rev. 587. The Law Library's print and online resources are a good start for tackling your immigration law issues!



Librarian Musings - *AI and the Future of Law Libraries*

By Andrew Bennett

Recently, I attended a roundtable discussion on Artificial Intelligence and how it is going to affect us as Librarians. The goal was to look at various areas of our profession and see how we can address potential problems. This included services, collections, and staffing. Coming from a County Law Library, we have not had any real interactions with AI beyond using Westlaw or Lexis Plus (and Google of course!). Yet, I learned very quickly that this will affect us all down the road.

The first area we addressed was Services. Services at a County Law Library include reference and informational services, educational services through our programming, and document retrieval. While there are other services we provide, these are our main bread-and-butter services. AI could affect all of these from both a financial and quantity standpoint. AI is certainly cheaper than hiring a Librarian with at least one graduate degree. AI can also retrieve documents faster and in higher quantity than a Librarian can in the same amount of time. What AI cannot do, however, is pull quality

sources. This is where it is pretty apparent that at least, at the current time, Librarians are superior in the area of services. To find what the patron is looking for, AI has to convert that search into something it understands and tries to find what the patron is looking for. A Librarian does not have to do that step and therefore can find more resources on point albeit in smaller quantities. This brings in to question the accuracy of AI when it comes to Legal Resources. Can it bring to the patron not only the resources they are looking for but is that resource going to be accurate?

Librarians are going to need to advocate for this level of service in the upcoming years.

Second, we looked at our collections. For years now, libraries have been moving more and more of their collections to the digital space. County Law Libraries have had the luxury to keep some of their resources in print, and we try to have overlap in both spaces. Here in Fort Bend, close to 80% of our collection is in both print and digital. AI cannot pull resources solely in print. As we have mentioned earlier, AI is both cheaper and can pull more resources than a Librarian can, but it can only pull from what it has access to. For example, Fort Bend County Law Library has a few resources in print that are not in a digital format. *(cont)*



Librarian Musings - *AI and the Future of Law Libraries (cont.)*

By Andrew Bennett

If we were to remove those resources, or replace a Librarian with AI, those resources could be lost if they are not converted into a digital format. In addition, we do not know where some of the current AI is finding resources and what it has access to. You know what you are getting from a Librarian, and he or she can readily tell you where they pulled that resource from. AI, depending on whether it is open source or not, may not tell you where they pulled that resource from in their digital collection. As our print collections are shrinking, Librarians need to be able to continue to be the ones creating and updating our collections not only for accuracy but for completeness.

Finally, our roundtable looked at staffing -- probably the hardest area to address because this is looking directly at ourselves. AI can perform some level of services and hold a portion of our collections, especially if they are digital. However, can they perform all of the things that librarians do? Are they able to perform some of the administrative tasks, including budgets and policy making?

It's an intriguing question and at the current time, I believe most of us would say no. However, at some point there is going to be the real possibility it could replace us as Librarians in every way. Librarians need to be able to harness AI to make our jobs easier. It can take over some of the more recurring and remedial tasks, find quick access resources, and answer simple procedural questions for patrons. While this might eliminate some staff, it would allow Librarians to do more marketing and have time for things that go beyond the reference desk.

We are going to have to find a way to live with AI in our space. Librarians are going to have to advocate for themselves in all three areas of our profession. We need to show that we provide more quality services, we provide more accurate collections, and we can continue to perform the high-level tasks that take experience and time to be able to do effectively. This Roundtable opened my eyes to the threat AI can pose, but it also can be something we can use to show how important we are to those we serve.