

# **Cite-Checking Research Guide for USC Law Students**

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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. The new edition of *The Bluebook* permits citing to PDF versions of sources that are exact copies of the print versions (see Rule 18.2.1(a)(iii)). At USC, you have access to a wide variety of electronic resources that provide documents in PDF; many of these resources are discussed in this guide.

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 Bluebook*, you may wish to consult:

- *Prince's Dictionary of Legal Citations: A Reference Guide for Attorneys, Legal Secretaries, Paralegals, and Law Students* (8th ed., 2011) [call number: KF245 B45 2011]

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

- *Bieber's Dictionary of Legal Abbreviations: A Reference Guide for Attorneys, Legal Secretaries, Paralegals, and Law Students* (6th ed., 2009) [call number: KF246 B46 2009]
- *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. 202; braphael@law.usc.edu) or Pauline Aranas, Acting Dean of Library and Information Technology (Rm. 202; paranas@law.usc.edu), and one of us 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. Many catalogs offer a “journal title” search option, which often can be helpful when searching for a particular periodical title.

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 be found electronically (in PDF) on the websites of the agencies and organizations that published them.

#### 1. **USC Catalogs**

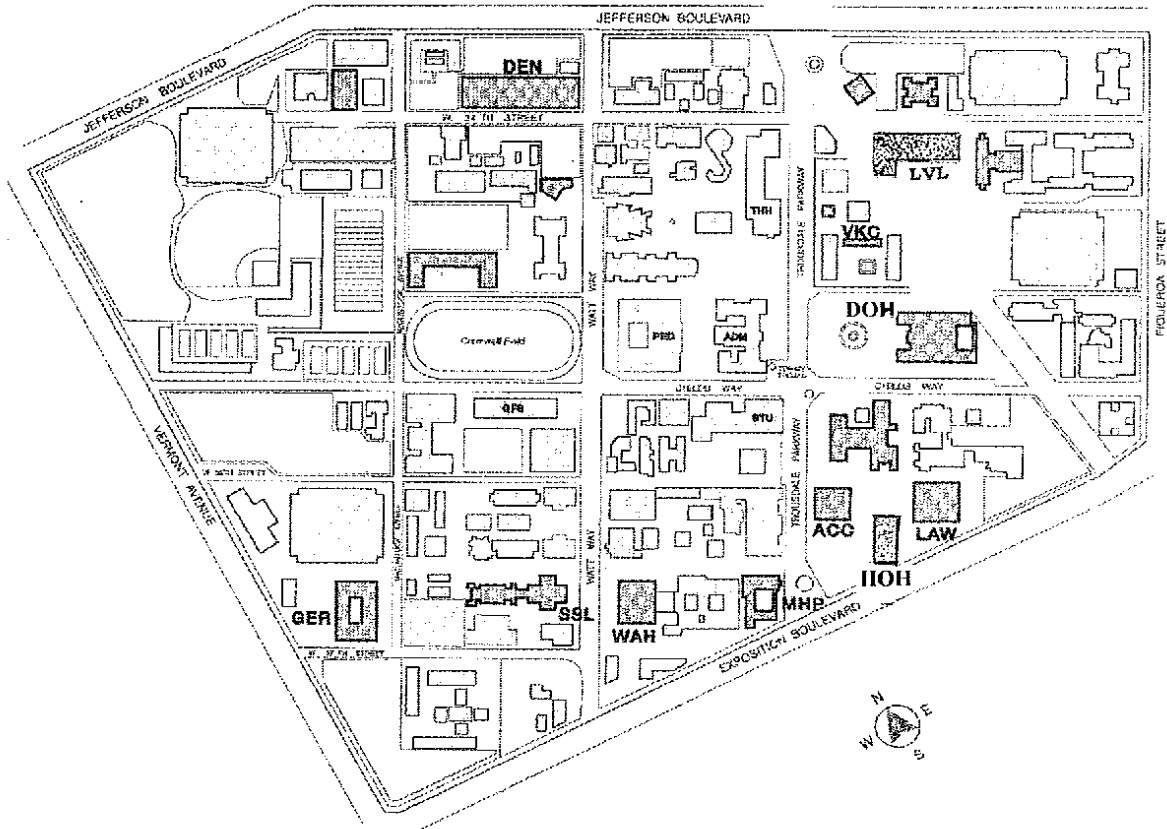
USC has three different catalogs for finding books and periodicals:

- **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 “Library 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.

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



LIBRARY	BLDG.	LIBRARY	BLDG.	LIBRARY	BLDG.
Accounting	ACC	Gerontology	GER	Music	DOH
Architecture Fine Arts	WAH	Hancock	SSL	Philosophy	MHP
Business	HOH	Hebrew Union	(off-campus)	Science & Engineering	SSL
Cinema	DOH	Law	LAW	Special Collections	DOH
Dental	DEN	Levey	LVL	Von KleinSmid	VKC
Doherty Memorial Library	DOH	Medical	(off-campus) - 2025 Zonal Ave.		

## 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:

L.A. Law Library	213-785-2529 (213-78-LALAW) 213-785-2513 (Reference)	<a href="http://www.lalawlibrary.org">http://www.lalawlibrary.org</a>
Loyola Law Library	213-736-1117 (Circulation) 213-736-1177 (Reference)	<a href="http://library.lls.edu/">http://library.lls.edu/</a>
Southwestern University Law Library	213-738-5771 (Circulation) 213-738-6725 (Reference)	<a href="http://www.swlaw.edu/library">http://www.swlaw.edu/library</a>
UCLA Law Library	310-825-4743 (Circulation) 310-825-6414 (Reference)	<a href="http://www.law.ucla.edu/library">http://www.law.ucla.edu/library</a>
UCLA University Libraries	various libraries; 310-825-4732 (Young Research Library)	<a href="http://www2.library.ucla.edu/">http://www2.library.ucla.edu/</a>
Los Angeles Public Library	various libraries; 213-228-7000 (Central Branch)	<a href="http://www.lapl.org/">http://www.lapl.org/</a>
County of Los Angeles Public Libraries	various libraries	<a href="http://colapublib.org/">http://colapublib.org/</a>

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, located just above the yellow search box.

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. You can also access these resources remotely through one of the following methods:

- 1) Go to <<https://libproxy.usc.edu/login>> and then enter your USC ID and password (the same ones you use to access Blackboard); OR
- 2) First select a resource from the law library or USC Libraries website and then enter your USC ID and password on the login page that pops up; OR
- 3) Use the VPN (Virtual Private Network) software (for instructions on setting this up, go to: <<http://www.usc.edu/its/vpn/>>).

If you have any questions or problems with remote access, please contact Jane Chang, Assistant Director for Student Computing Services (213-740-2630; [jchang@law.usc.edu](mailto:jchang@law.usc.edu)) or the law school's 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 Books <[books.google.com](http://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. 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 texts contained in 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 the law library does not own in print.

## 2. Electronic Periodicals

You can access a wide range of periodicals electronically through the USC Libraries' "E-Journals" page. Click on "USC Electronic Resources," which is listed under "Law Library Quicklinks" on the main Law Library webpage. From here, choose the "E-Journals" tab near the top of the screen, and enter the journal title information.

In the search box, you can enter the name or part of the name of the periodical (NOT the article title). 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 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.

The screenshot shows the USC Libraries website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the USC logo and links for Research Support, How to, Library Services, Inside the Libraries, Quick Search, Catalog, E-Resources, E-Journals, and Ask a Librarian. Below the navigation bar is a search box with a dropdown menu for "Choose a quick link", a "Go" button, and a language selector set to "English".

The main search area is titled "Find e-resources by title or identifying number:" and includes checkboxes for "All", "Books", "Journals", and "Other". The search criteria are set to "Title contains all words" and the search button is labeled "Search".

The search results show 15 records retrieved for the search: "Title contains all words 'criminal justice journal'". Three sample entries are displayed:

- American journal of criminal justice (1066-2316)**: Look up Article More full text options. from 01/01/1997 to present in SpringerLINK. from 04/01/1999 to present in ProQuest Research Library.
- Canadian journal of criminology and criminal justice (1707-7753)**: Look up Article More full text options. from 01/01/2003 to present in Academic OneFile. from 2003 to 2007 in HeinOnline Law Journal Library. from 01/01/2003 to 10/31/2006 in ProQuest Research Library. from 01/01/2003 to 10/31/2006 in ProQuest Research Library (Legacy Platform). from 01/01/2006 to present in Project MUSE - Premium Collection.
- Criminal justice journal (0145-4226)**: Look up Article More full text options. from 1976 to 1992 in HeinOnline Law Journal Library.

You can also use the publicly-accessible Google Scholar search engine <[scholar.google.com](http://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 and aims to rank articles by their relevance and probable value to researchers. Search results on Google Scholar will include both freely available articles on the web as well as links to articles from USC subscription databases. Additionally, for articles only available in print form at USC, Google Scholar will link you to the USC library catalogs to help you find the articles on campus.

## **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 Books 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 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. You can link to the Law Library's databases from the Law Library webpage (click first on "Online Resources & Research Links"). The USC Libraries' databases can be accessed by clicking on "E-Resources" 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 and full-text (in PDF and/or non-PDF).

### **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,

it generally takes a little time (usually a year or two) for new journal articles 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 from 1995 to the present and abstracts from 1990 to the present, 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, and 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 (i.e., it does not include any full-text material).

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

Below are the some of the major databases recommended for verifying cites to non-law journal articles. They are all accessible from the USC Libraries’ “E-Resources”

page. Resources can be found on this page through any one of the “Browse” tabs and for many of the databases, through the “Quick links” box as well. In many of the databases, 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 available database) or to a USC library catalog record for the journal containing that article (if it is only available at USC in print form).

- **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 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.

There are two ProQuest platforms available through the USC Libraries webpage, one just referred to as “ProQuest” and the other referred to as “ProQuest (Legacy Platform).” Both are accessible through the USC Libraries’ “Quick links” box. Proquest is the newer platform and provides a greater amount of content than the Legacy

Platform. Included in the newer platform are a variety of fairly comprehensive periodical databases covering specific areas. For a list of these databases, click on either the link for the subject area you are interested in or the “List view” link for the complete list (as shown below).

The screenshot displays the ProQuest website interface. At the top, there are navigation links: "Search | **Advanced** | Publications" on the left and "Preferences | English | Help" on the right. Below this is a search bar with the ProQuest logo on the left, a search input field in the center, and a magnifying glass icon on the right. Above the search bar are links for "Advanced search" and "Recent searches". Below the search bar are two checkboxes: "Full text" and "Peer reviewed". To the right of the search bar is a "Search tips" link. In the top right corner, there is a "USC Libraries" link. Below the search bar is a section titled "Search subject areas" with a "List view" link. This section contains ten subject area categories, each with a representative image and a label: "The Arts" (violin), "Business" (office), "Dissertations & Theses" (student), "Health & Medicine" (surgeon), "History" (manuscript), "Literature & Language" (books), "News & Newspapers" (newspaper), "Science & Technology" (wind turbines), and "Social Sciences" (group of people).

### **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 the federal and California primary materials are located on the library's main floor, while the cases and codes for the other states (including the West regional reporters) are located on the third floor.<sup>1</sup> Also on the third floor are some primary law sources for other countries, international law sources, including treaties, as well as additional copies of some of the major federal and California law sources. 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. You may also be able to find a PDF version of a primary 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.

- **FDsys** <[www.fdsys.gov/](http://www.fdsys.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.

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<sup>1</sup> This year, the Law Library cancelled its subscriptions to the statutory codes for most states. While they are still in the library collection, any sets that have not been updated recently should be used with particular caution.

- **Westlaw**

PDF versions of all federal and state cases from the West federal and regional case reporters are available on Westlaw.

	<b>HEIN ONLINE</b>	<b>FDsys</b>	<b>LLMC DIGITAL</b>
<i>U.S. Reports (U.S.)</i>	1754-2008		1790-2007
<i>United States Code (U.S.C.)</i>	1925/26-2006 editions	1994-2010*	
<b>Federal Public Laws - <i>U.S. Statutes at Large (Stat.)</i></b>	1789-2008	1951-present**	1789-2008
<i>Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.)</i>	1938-present	1996-present	
<i>Federal Register</i>	1936-present	1994-present	
<b>Federal Agency Decisions (for select agencies)</b>	Varies by agency		Varies by agency
<b>U.S. Attorney General Opinions</b>	1791-1982		
<i>U.S. Treaties (U.S.T.)</i>	1950-1984		1950-1984
<i>Treaties and Other International Acts Series (T.I.A.S.)</i>	1982-2006		
<i>English Reports</i>	1220-1867		1378-1865 (Reprint)

\*The FDsys and print versions of the official *U.S.C.* are updated differently. On FDsys, the code titles are revised each year to reflect the “current” version of the law (current through 2010 for some titles and 2009 for others). The print editions, in contrast, are only reissued every six years and updated through yearly supplements. The 2009 Supplement is the latest supplement to the current 2006 print edition.

\*\* FDsys includes recent public laws not yet published in *U.S. Statutes at Large*. These laws appear in the exact same form in which they will eventually appear in *Statutes at Large* (with the permanent Stat. volume and page numbers included as well).

## **IV. FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE HISTORY DOCUMENTS**

Legislative history documents (e.g., bills, 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, electronically, and on microfiche.

### **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 just H.R. or S., this signifies that it is a House of Representatives 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. Bluebook Rule 13.4(a) states that when possible, you should include a parallel citation to *U.S.C.C.A.N.* when citing to Congressional committee reports. *U.S.C.C.A.N.* is located in the Law Library's Federal Sections 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.

A more complete set for Congressional committee reports is the *United States Congressional Serial Set*, which is available electronically (see page 17).

#### **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.

The Law Library plans to eventually 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. Many of the USC Libraries' hearings are stored off-site but can be paged through the HOMER catalog.

#### **B. DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE ELECTRONICALLY**

Listed on the next few pages are descriptions of five 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 on page 18 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 in which it was published.

- **THOMAS**

The Thomas website <[thomas.loc.gov](http://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.

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 on the following page).

**THOMAS**  
In the spirit of Thomas Jefferson, legislative information from the Library of Congress

Print Subscribe Share/Save

**Legislation in Current Congress**

**Search Bill Summary & Status**

Word/Phrase Bill Number

SEARCH

Try the Advanced Search  
More Search Options

**Browse Bills by Sponsor**

Select a Representative GO

Select a Senator GO

More Browse Options

**More Legislative Information**

Search Bill Text for Multiple Congresses  
Appropriations Bills  
Public Laws  
Roll Call Votes  
Contact Members of Congress

**Current Activity**

House Floor Now (video)  
Senate Floor Now  
Passed Congress, Sent to President  
Yesterday in Congress  
Congressional Record Latest Daily Digest  
Schedules, Calendars

**Weekly Top Five**

H.R. 1586  
H.R. 3590  
H.R. 4173  
H.R. 4213  
H.R. 4899

View Top Ten

**Tip of the Week**

The THOMAS home page, in the Search Bill Summary and Status area, now includes the [More Search Options](#) link which displays a list of

[-] FEEDBACK

The Thomas website offers a variety of ways to search for documents, including by document number and by key word or phrase. 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. If you search a full-text database on Thomas, your results will be sorted into a few different categories and ranked, based on various relevancy factors.

- **FDsys**

FDsys <[www.fdsys.gov](http://www.fdsys.gov)>, noted on page 12 for its federal primary law material, also provides access to the various types of legislative history documents discussed above (bills, reports, debates in the *Congressional Record*, and hearings). As indicated on the chart on page 18, FDsys does not go back as far as the Thomas site for bills and debates. All of the documents however are available in PDF.

- **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 debates of Congress going back to 1789, including all 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).

The screenshot shows the HEINONLINE interface. At the top, it says "HEINONLINE" and "Provided By: USC Law Library". There are navigation tabs for "Resources", "Search", "Citation Navigator", "Title Lookup", and "MyHein". The "Citation Navigator" tab is active, showing a search interface with fields for "Vol.", "Abbreviation", and "Page". The "Abbreviation" dropdown menu is set to "Cong. Rec.". Below this, there are options to "open in new tab/window" and a "Get Citation" button. The "U.S. Congressional Documents" section is displayed, listing various documents such as "Debates of Congress", "Annals of the Congress of the United States", "Register of Debates in Congress", "Congressional Globe", "Congressional Record", "Congressional Record Daily", "GPO Best Sellers", "Biographical Directory of the United States Congress", "Congressional Pictorial Directory", and "House Ethics Manual".

- **United States Congressional Serial Set**

This online version of the *United States Congressional Serial Set* (referenced on page 14) can be accessed from the USC Libraries’ E-Resources 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 publication number.

- **Proquest Congressional**

This database includes a digital hearings collection consisting of PDF versions of both published and unpublished U.S. Congressional hearings. The database is accessible from the USC Libraries’ E-Resources page (under “Proquest Congressional”).

## 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 in which your document was published. In addition to providing these resources' years of coverage for the different types of legislative history documents, the chart indicates if the resources provide access to PDF images for each type of document.

	THOMAS	FDsys	HEIN ONLINE	SERIAL SET	PROQUEST CONGRESSIONAL
Bills	1989 (101 <sup>st</sup> Congress) – present	1993 (103 <sup>rd</sup> Congress) – present (PDF)			
Reports	1995 (104 <sup>th</sup> Congress) – present (PDF)	1995 (104 <sup>th</sup> Congress) – present (PDF)		1817 (15 <sup>th</sup> Congress) – 1994 (103 <sup>rd</sup> Congress) (PDF)	
Debates	1989 (101 <sup>st</sup> Congress) – present (PDF)*	1994 (103 <sup>rd</sup> Congress, 2d Sess.) – present (PDF)	1789 (1 <sup>st</sup> Congress) – present (PDF)		
Hearings		1995 (104 <sup>th</sup> Congress) – present (selective coverage) (PDF)			1824 (18 <sup>th</sup> Congress) – 2003 (108 <sup>th</sup> Congress) (PDF)

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

## C. 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 Proquest Congressional database discussed above. This database provides a number of ways to search, including by document number (e.g., report number) or by keyword. 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/printer to read, scan, and/or print 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.

## **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 on the LexisNexis Legal “Sources” 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, there is a link to “Court Records, Briefs, and Filings.” 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.

- **U.S. Supreme Court Records and Briefs, 1832-1978**

This database, available through the law library’s “Online Resources and Research Links” page, contains PDF images of briefs and other documents submitted to the U.S. Supreme Court between 1832 and 1978. Documents can be searched in this database by keyword, author, case name, as well as reporter citation. More recent Supreme Court briefs can be found in a variety of other databases, including Westlaw and LexisNexis, as well as the law library’s microfiche collection.

- **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 <[www.pacer.gov](http://www.pacer.gov)> is an online service that provides (for a modest fee) access to court documents from certain federal courts (including the U.S. District Courts, Bankruptcy Courts, and Courts of Appeals). Our Research Librarians can assist you in using this service and even run docket searches for you for specific cases through the library's PACER account. However, if you wish to view or download individual documents contained in the dockets, you will need to set up your own PACER account or have your journal set up an account.

The cost of accessing documents through PACER is currently \$.08 per page (though you won't be billed for PACER searches unless you have incurred at least \$10 per quarter). 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, for older cases, the attorneys who were involved in the case may no longer be available or 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 cite checking and ask him or her for a copy of the court document you need.