

# Law School Libraries 2007

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## Introduction

Law librarians work in various legal settings, including law schools, private law firms, and public law libraries of a variety of types. The profession is bound together by law librarians' expertise in working with legal materials, and for many law librarians by their work in direct support of legal professionals or students training to become lawyers. Many law librarians, especially in law school libraries, hold graduate degrees in law as well as in library science; some have graduated from library schools with specialized programs in law librarianship.

Law is a profession that is heavily dependent on ready access to the current texts of primary source legal materials—statutes, court decisions, and administrative regulations and decisions—issued by a variety of law-making authorities. The job of the law librarian has always been to obtain and organize the primary source materials, as well as published commentary on the law, and the indexes and other finding tools needed to use them. Because the primary sources of law have long been available in full-text electronic formats, law librarians are also highly skilled in working with electronic sources and in choosing appropriate information formats to meet the needs of users at specific types of libraries.

The primary mission of the law school library is to meet the information needs of the faculty and students of the institution it supports. In addition to their role in educating future lawyers, law schools are the major producers of scholarly literature in law and rely on academic law libraries to provide the resources and support needed for research and publication. Beyond support for the core functions of legal education and research, the specific missions of law school libraries vary depending on the size and missions of law schools of different types. Differences among law schools result in differences among their libraries in collection size and composition, staffing and services offered, and additional clienteles served. In the United States, libraries at publicly-supported law schools are likely to provide a fuller range of services to local or state attorneys than are libraries at privately-funded law schools, while libraries at urban law schools are more likely than others to provide services to the general public. The range of services an academic law library provides to others than its own students and faculty depends also on its proximity to law firm libraries or public law libraries, established to meet the needs of firms, courts, practicing attorneys, or the public. The presence of large numbers of a law school's own graduates in the area also normally results in greater library services for the local bar.

## Organization and Administration

In the United States, the professional degree in law, the Juris Doctor, is attained after three years of study and training beyond the baccalaureate degree. Lawyers are educated in separate schools or colleges within the university, rather than in departments of graduate

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schools or other units. Law schools are normally housed in their own physical facilities and a law school's control over its physical plant is among the factors considered by the American Bar Association (ABA) in its accreditation processes. (1)

These factors, in addition to the specialized nature of legal collections, have contributed to U.S. law school libraries' traditional administrative autonomy from the larger library systems at their universities. (2, 3) Only a handful of the libraries at the nearly 200 law schools accredited by the ABA are administered directly through their university library systems. The ABA standards require that the law library have sufficient autonomy to direct the growth and development of the library collections and that the dean of the law school and the library director determine law library policies in consultation with the faculty. (1) In practice, therefore, the budgets of most academic law libraries are administered as part of the law school's budget rather than as part of the overall budget of the university library. If the law library budget must be justified to a higher authority than the law school dean, it is typically the dean or the dean and law library director together who defend the budget at the university level. Similarly, the law library director normally hires and supervises law library staff without involvement by the university library and is responsible for all typical library operations and services, including selection, ordering, cataloging, and processing of library materials.

Although there are a number of variations in internal administrative structure among law school libraries, most U.S. law school libraries are organized traditionally in some form of division between technical and public services, with an administrative unit, often consisting of the law library director, an associate director, and administrative staff to provide support for the library's operations.(4) Variations on the basic organizational model depend on the size of the law school, the number of library staff, and the ratio of professional librarians to support staff members. Increasingly, organizational structures also depend on the role played by the library in supporting the law school's use of information technology and other media. Some law schools place significant overall responsibility for technology within the library's jurisdiction; others maintain separate units for law school technology, which may support the specialized needs of the library as well. (5)

As a practical matter, the traditional autonomous administration of academic law libraries at U.S. universities is affected by a number of factors, including the wide-spread implementation of university-wide library information systems, and the need to develop new structures to share costs and access to common databases and other forms of networked information on university campuses.(6) As space tightens, law libraries also increasingly share remote storage facilities for less-used materials with other campus libraries. Law librarians at some universities are included in the shared ranking and job security systems for librarians at all campus libraries. As the forms of legal publication move from print to electronic formats, requiring less in the way of manual filing and other labor-intensive means to be kept current, some of the long-standing justifications for separate law library processing staffs are called into question.

In a number of countries outside the United States, law is taught as an undergraduate subject, and law libraries are likely to be less autonomous than in the U.S. In the United Kingdom,

for example, less than a third of law libraries are housed in locations separate from collections in other subjects, and the law faculty typically does not have direct control over budget and policy.(7)

### **History and Development**

The history of academic law libraries is closely tied to the history of the development of formal legal education within the university setting. In the United States, the College of William and Mary lays claim to founding of the first professorship in law and the beginnings of a small collection of law books within the confines of the college library in 1779.(8) The Harvard Law Library, now the largest academic law library in the United States, was established in 1817. Yet, until the primary locus for legal education moved in the late nineteenth century to the university from the law office, where aspiring lawyers clerked and read the law under the tutelage of established practitioners, few law school libraries (other than Harvard's) compared in size and breadth of collections with bar association libraries or membership libraries developed to meet the needs of the practicing bar. (9, 10)

With the changes in legal education that followed the appointment of Christopher C. Langdell (a former student librarian) as dean of the Harvard Law School in 1870, the perceived role and importance of the academic law library changed significantly. Under Langdell's case method of instruction (which was adopted at law schools throughout the United States), reading, analysis, and application of the law found in selected court opinions became the focus of the law school classroom, and the books containing the opinions took on new prominence as the sources of legal knowledge.(11) Langdell's focus on the importance of the judge-made law in published cases may have initially limited the breadth of academic law library collections, but in the twentieth-century the importance of other sources of domestic, foreign, and international legal authority (statutes, administrative regulations and rulings, treaties, and other international agreements) broadened the scope of the law library's collections of primary source research materials. The entry of commercial publishers such as the West Publishing Company into the legal publishing market increased the amount of primary source material available for lawyers to use and for law libraries to collect, as well as the variety of finding tools needed to enable lawyers and other researchers to locate sources of legal authority and to evaluate their usefulness. The solidification of the university law school's role in educating lawyers also contributed to an expansion of the secondary literature in law. Spurred by the establishment of the *Harvard Law Review* in 1887, law professors and law students began writing and editing articles for publication in reviews and journals typically published at the law schools themselves. Although initially consisting primarily of doctrinal articles aimed in large part at the needs of practicing lawyers, the early law reviews became the locus of the most important scholarly literature in law, which would grow to be a significant component of academic law library collections. The increasingly scholarly emphasis of law school faculty writing (in journals, monographs, and treatises) also led to pressures on law school libraries to collect domestic materials beyond the strictly legal and to make at least selective forays into collecting materials of foreign jurisdictions.

The history of academic law libraries in the twentieth century was characterized by: growth in numbers of law schools (and law libraries) as the value of a legal education was seen to extend beyond traditional legal practice; the challenges posed in collecting and preserving growing amounts of primary source materials; the expansion of the scope of collections to include nonlegal materials; the effects of globalization on the need for access to foreign and international legal materials, and staff skilled in using them; the dramatic impacts of information technology on collections and services in the last quarter of the century; and the development of academic law librarianship as a professional specialty. These and other topics are treated briefly in the following sections of this article and more exhaustively in the literature of the field. In addition, articles about the history and development of individual law school libraries can be found in the journals of law librarianship, which are noted below.

### **Standards and Statistics**

The collections and services offered by the modern academic library, as well as other aspects of its Operation, are influenced by the standards developed by legal education's external accrediting bodies and other agencies. In the United States, nearly 200 law schools are accredited by the American Bar Association through its Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar. In nearly all states, graduation from an ABA-approved law school is a prerequisite for taking the bar examination and qualifying for a license to practice law. As part of its approval and ongoing review processes, the ABA promulgates standards for law school libraries and gathers extensive statistical data about libraries at approved schools. The law library standards speak to such matters as administrative structures, personnel and services, and collections. (1) Each approved law school (and its library) is visited and reevaluated at seven-year intervals. Library data from the ABA's annual questionnaires for law schools are compiled annually into comparative tables and made available to law school deans and library directors. Although distribution of the compiled questionnaire data is limited, some data appear in the annual *ABA/LSAC Official Guide to ABA -Approved Law Schools*. (2) Selected comparative data about law school libraries also appear in unofficial guides to law schools(13, 14) and are available from 1990-1999 to date through the Association of Research Libraries.(15) Comparative data from the ABA questionnaires for the years 1969-1993 can be found in the 1970-1994 annual volumes of *Law Library Journal*.

The Association of American Law Schools (AALS) is a membership organization for law schools, which promulgates standards in the forms of bylaws and associated regulations for its members' libraries. The AALS library regulations are similar in coverage to the ABA standards. (16) The AALS reviews its member schools in conjunction with re-accreditation visits by the ABA. Standards for university law libraries in the United Kingdom have been promulgated by the Society of Legal Scholars. (17)

### **Law School Library Collections**

The core collections of all law school libraries include the primary sources of legal authority produced by the major branches of government: reported court opinions (or cases), statutes enacted by legislatures, and executive or administrative materials (regulations and quasi-

judicial rulings). Academic law libraries in the United States typically include comprehensive collections of primary materials from the federal government and from each of the 50 states. Although the states each have their own legal systems, each is a "common law" legal system in which much of the law has developed historically through judicial decisions and written opinions. Under the common law, decisions from courts outside the jurisdiction where a case is being heard will not control the results in the case but can be cited and used as the basis for lawyers' arguments and can influence the court's decision. As a result, U.S. law school libraries often collect materials from common law jurisdictions outside the United States, such as England, Canada, and Australia, even if they do not generally collect foreign law materials. Because controlling judicial precedents for a current case may be found in cases as old as the jurisdiction itself, law school library collections of primary source materials are usually deep in their coverage, as well as broad.

Reported decisions, as well as legislation and administrative law materials (each of which grew in importance during the twentieth century) provide the raw materials for legal research and make the law library into the lawyer's laboratory that Dean Langdell emphasized at Harvard. (18) Finding the law applicable to a research problem, however, becomes increasingly difficult as the body of potential useful material grows in volume and complexity. In addition to primary materials, therefore, law library collections include large holdings of secondary materials--treatises, journals, encyclopedias, and a number of specialized publications written to guide the researcher through the law on a topic, as well as indexes, digests, and other more typical finding tools. Some secondary sources are designed primarily for practicing lawyers and serve primarily to organize and provide access to the body of primary authorities on a topic, providing little in the way of detailed analysis or evaluation; others, including the journal articles and monographs produced by law professors and other legal scholars are more analytical, critical, and prescriptive in their approaches.

Because the legal researcher usually needs to have the most up-to-date version of the law, as well as to be certain that an apparently applicable case has not been overturned by a higher court, or that a statute has not been amended, repealed, or found to be unconstitutional, legal publications rely on a variety of means for regular supplementation and updating. Historically, new court opinions and statutes have been published as quickly as possible in pamphlets that are eventually compiled into bound volumes. Some materials have been published in loose-leaf formats so that pages with new information could be easily added as those with older information were replaced and discarded; other sets that require less frequent updating may provide supplemental materials in "pocket parts" inserted inside the back covers of the volumes. Although the bodies with the authority to make law (courts, legislatures, and agencies) have themselves published the materials they issue in official versions, official publication has always been slow and usually lacking in sophisticated finding tools. From at least the late 1800s, commercial publishers in the United States competed for lawyers' (and law libraries') dollars with their own versions of primary source materials, which were likely to be published before the official versions and linked to the publisher's own finding tools and other products. As a result, academic law libraries have typically offered several commercially published versions of court reports and other

important publications, as well as the official versions. Most U.S. law school libraries also have depository status for federal documents and maintain substantial selective collections of government documents, some of which also are duplicated in commercial publications. (19)

While the common image of a large library reading room surrounded by rows of book stacks packed with neatly-arranged volumes is still accurate for most law school libraries, the impact of electronic databases and the Internet on legal research and the law library has transformed the ways in which lawyers and law students conduct research. As one observer noted in 2007: “The debate about whether print or electronic resources are better for legal research ended essentially because the consumers of the resources made a decision. ... Faculty, attorneys, and law students voted with their feet, and their feet led them to the computer terminal.” (20) The advantages of full-text electronic access to the materials of law for research are apparent, and large databases of primary source materials have long been commercially available to lawyers and law. (21) The potential size of the law market created significant competition between the two major database suppliers, which led to rapid expansion of the databases to the point where retrospective coverage of important U.S. primary sources is essentially complete. The major database vendors have also viewed law schools as important areas of competition for future users of their services, and have generally provided low-cost access to the databases for law school faculty and students, as well as training in the use of the products for research. The two major databases, LexisNexis and Westlaw, now provide law students and faculty 24-hour access using personal equipment within the law school building or from home. In addition, the World Wide Web has increased the direct availability of primary source U.S. legal materials over the Internet, both through new web-based commercial services, on official sites offered by courts and government agencies, and through open access sites, such as Cornell Law School’s Legal Information Institute. (22)

The growth in sources for accessible online legal information first allowed many law school libraries to reduce their holdings of duplicate copies of court reports and other heavily-used sets of primary source materials in their print collections. Secondary legal materials, including large retrospective journal and treatise collections, and finding tools are also available in electronic formats, leaving law school librarians with ongoing decisions about choices of appropriate formats for their user communities and whether to bear the costs of providing information in multiple formats. (23)

As increasing accessibility of legal information in networked electronic formats continues to make local availability of large print collections less important to legal researchers, the distinctiveness of individual academic law library collections is increasingly dependent on their current and retrospective collections of secondary sources and foreign law materials. (24, 25) Collection development in academic law libraries is normally based on a written plan, required by the American Bar Association (1), that must take into account the importance of electronic formats, the needs of faculty researchers for specialized non-legal materials, the extent to which the library serves constituencies beyond its own faculty and students, and the library's proximity to and ongoing relationships with other libraries on its

campus and beyond. (26, 27) Academic law libraries' interests in cooperative collection development have been major factors in the development of regional consortia of law libraries. (28)

Historically, major foreign and international law collections were developed only at the largest academic law libraries and were supported by lawyer-librarians who immigrated to the United States from foreign countries.(29) During the latter half of the twentieth century, U.S. legal scholars' increased interest in foreign and international law and the law schools' efforts to recruit visiting scholars and students from outside the United States led a broader range of law schools to devote significant resources to their foreign and international law collections. As interest in foreign and international law expanded, academic law libraries faced major challenges finding qualified staff to manage and support growing collections, and obtaining the financial resources to develop and maintain them. (30, 31, 32) In foreign and international law, as for domestic law, academic law librarians produced major bibliographic works and research texts to support the efforts of scholars. (33, 34) To support research in foreign law, the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) publishes the *Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals* (1960- ). Greater access to legal information worldwide on the Internet has also been enhanced by the Free Access to Law Movement and the activities of legal information institutes throughout the world operating in collaboration as the World Legal Information Institute (WorldLII) (35,36)

Many academic libraries maintain at least small rare books collections both to support research and to demonstrate the importance of the historical record to the development of the law. Morris L. Cohen is the major figure in American rare law books librarianship and is the author of the *Bibliography of Early American Law* (37) and other works in the field. (38, 39) In most law school library collections, materials old enough to suggest their classification as rare books are shelved in open stacks, leading to academic law librarians' ongoing concerns with preservation of print materials. (40) As more primary legal research materials are issued primarily or exclusively in electronic formats, academic law libraries have been challenged to define their roles in both preserving and authenticating digital legal information. (41, 42)

Because many of the core primary source materials of the law library (court reports, volumes of statutes, journals, etc.) have been published as serials, and are to some extent self-organizing by numbered volume and date, organization by subject classification was a relatively late development for law library collections. Subject organization became increasingly important with the growth of a significant secondary literature for law and the growing need to organize foreign and international legal materials. The first fully-developed Library of Congress (LC) schedule for legal materials (KF for U.S. law) was published in 1969. Since that time, schedules have been completed for all foreign jurisdictions and international law. While many academic law libraries still do not classify all U.S. primary source materials, most use the LC schedules to organize their treatise and monograph collections, and collections in foreign law. (43) Because of the need for frequent supplementation and updating, as well as the nature of the materials themselves, primary sources, finding tools, and many secondary sources are non-circulating in most academic law

libraries. The need for ready access to information housed in large, complicated collections makes sophisticated collection management systems essential to the successful Operation of the academic law library.

### **Law School Librarians**

Nearly all academic law librarians in the United States hold master's degrees in library or information sciences; reference librarians and administrators typically hold law degrees in addition to their credentials in librarianship. The ABA standards for law schools and the membership requirements of the AALS state that the law library director should have both law and library degrees, and the ABA standards require that the director hold an appointment on the law school faculty. (1, 16) Depending on practices at individual law schools and, in part, on whether they teach in the law school, other law librarians may also have some kind of faculty status. (44)

Within the law school curriculum, law-trained librarians typically provide formal or informal instruction in legal research techniques and the literature of the law. Legal research courses take a variety of forms: most programs focus on introducing the sources of law and legal research to first-year law students; some law schools offer advanced legal research courses in either U.S. or foreign and international law as electives in the upperclass curriculum. (45) Law school librarians have also figured prominently in the writing of the standard legal research textbooks, a number of which have gone through several editions. (46-49) A listing of the major law librarian textbook writers--Robert C. Berring, Harry Bitner, Morris Cohen, Frederick C. Hicks, J. Myron Jacobstein, Roy M. Mersky, Miles O. Price, and William R. Roalfe--serves as well as a list of some of the major figures in modern academic law librarianship in the United States.

In part because of law library directors' usual status as members of law school faculties, academic law librarians as a group have been major contributors to the professional and scholarly literature of law librarianship. (50) Most of that literature is published in such specialized journals as *Law Library Journal* (1908-) and *Legal References Services Quarterly* (1981-) in the United States; *Legal Information Management* (1970-) and *Australian Law Librarian*(1993-); *Canadian Law Library Review / Revue canadienne des bibliothèques de droit* (1970-) published abroad; and the *International Journal of Legal Information* (1973-), as well as in publications sponsored by the AALL and other law library organizations outside the United States. Some law library literature is published in more general journals of library and information science; and some is also published in scholarly journals of law, bar association journals, or other specialized legal periodicals. LLRX.com is a web journal focusing on online legal information. (51)

The importance of the law degree as a credential, the faculty status accorded to academic law library directors and other librarians, and the tendency to write for legal audiences all provide evidence of the strength and durability of the academic law librarian's connections with the legal profession. The history of the development of academic law librarianship in the twentieth century indicates that, through the 1950s, many head librarians at U.S. law schools did not hold library degrees and those who did have both law and library degrees

thought of themselves first as lawyers and secondarily as librarians. Because of the positions of influence that academic law librarians have traditionally held within the profession, it is possible that the emphasis on "law" in law librarianship hindered the overall development of law librarianship as a profession. (10, 52) As noted above, however, the law school accreditation standards now emphasize the desirability for library directors to hold both degrees and the need for qualified staff in all positions; there are now few directors who do not hold advanced degrees in law and librarianship and few law librarians who are not professionally educated in library and information science.

A number of U.S. schools of library and information science offer specialized courses for prospective law librarians in legal research, law library administration, and information policy. In recognition of the need for specialized law library training within the context of graduate education in librarianship, the AALL has established Guidelines for Graduate Programs in Law Librarianship (53) and maintains an online list of accredited graduate programs in library science that offer law library courses. (54) The University of Washington Information School has offered a specialized program in law librarianship since 1939. (55)

Like librarianship generally, both law librarianship and the academic law library specialty are overwhelmingly female in composition. Studies of the role and status of women in the profession have noted historical disparities in salaries between male and female law librarians, as well as the disproportionate numbers of males in academic library directorships. (56, 57) Some studies have indicated a continuing trend toward gender balance between males and females in academic law library directorships but not a distribution proportionate to the numbers of women working in academic law libraries. (58, 59)

### **Professional Associations**

The primary professional association for U.S. law librarians is the American Association of Law Libraries, which was founded in 1906 at the annual meeting of the American Library Association. (60, 61, 62, 63) AALL's stated purpose is to promote and enhance the value of law libraries to the legal and public communities, to foster the profession of law librarianship, and to provide leadership in the field of legal information. Its current membership of over 5,000 includes law librarians and related professionals affiliated with law firms, corporate legal departments, courts, and government agencies, as well as with law schools. (64,65) The AALL provides law librarians opportunities for professional development through its annual meeting programs, educational workshops, and institutes; provides scholarships and grants for members requiring assistance to further their formal education or to attend AALL educational programs; supports an active publications program; and provides placement services.

Throughout its history, AALL and its members have been involved in public policy activities, focusing on issues of national information policy, copyright, and public access to legal information. (66) Since 1990, the association's Washington Affairs Office has monitored legislative, judicial, and regulatory activities, and represents the views of AALL through congressional testimony and legal briefs, frequently working in concert with other library associations and information policy groups.

Since 1976, AALL has encouraged the creation of special interest sections (SISs), organized by subject matter or professional specialty (e.g., foreign, comparative and international law, technical services), or by type of library. The Academic Law Libraries SIS was established in 1979 and serves as an umbrella organization for all law school librarians, sponsoring educational programs, providing discussion forums and workshops for directors and middle managers, and publishing a newsletter. The AALL also has a number of local and regional chapters in which academic law librarians are active participants. (67)

Academic law librarians have played significant roles in the development and activities of AALL. Over half of AALL's presidents were affiliated with law school libraries at the time they served, and all of the major figures in academic law librarianship in the United States have been heavily involved in AALL activities. Many prominent and historically significant academic law librarians have been profiled in AALL publications. (68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73) Biographical information about academic law librarians can also be found in occasional directories published by AALL (74); information about academic law library directors can be found in the annual *Directory of Law Teachers* published by the AALS. (75) Memorials for deceased law librarians, which normally include biographical information and personal reminiscences, are published in *Law Library Journal*, (76, 77) as well as in the publications of other law library organizations.

The International Association of Law Libraries (IALL) (78) was founded in 1959 through the efforts of a special committee of the AALL led by former AALL president William R. Roalfe, who became IALL's first president. Since its founding, IALL has provided a significant focus of professional activity for academic law librarians interested in substantive areas of international and comparative law and research, and a forum for cooperation among academic law schools and their libraries. (79, 80) The IALL publishes the *International Journal of Legal Information* and sponsors annual educational conferences.

U.S. academic law librarians are also active in national legal organizations. The AALS includes a section on law libraries and maintains a standing committee on libraries and technology. The law libraries committee of the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admission to the Bar is charged with periodic review of the accreditation standards relating to law libraries and the law library sections of ABA questionnaires. Law school library directors frequently serve as members of ABA/AALS site evaluation teams established for law school accreditation reviews, and are usually represented on the ABA accreditation committee and on the AALS membership review committee, as well as on the committees devoted primarily to library matters.

Outside the United States, there are a number of other national and regional associations of law librarians, which provide venues for professional activity and continuing education for academic law librarians, as well as for their colleagues in other types of law libraries. (81, 82) A list of known law library organizations (some of which may not be currently active) includes: Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Juristisches Bibliotheks-und Dokumentationswesen/ Association for Law Librarianship and Documentation in German-speaking countries; Association Belge des Bibliothecaires et des Documentalistes Juridiques (Belgium); the

Association of Swiss Law Libraries/Association des bibliothèques juridiques suisses - Vereinigung der juristischen Bibliotheken der Schweiz; the Australian Law Librarians Association; the Bahamas Association of Law Libraries; the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians; the Canadian Association of Law Libraries/Association canadienne des bibliothèques de droit; the Caribbean Association of Law Libraries; the Consortium of Legal Resource Centers and Legal Information Specialists (Central and Eastern Europe); the Law Librarians' Group of Malaysia; the New Zealand Law Librarians' Group; the Nigerian Association of Law Libraries; the Nordic Law Librarians' Group; the Philippine Group of Law Librarians; the Organization of South African Law Libraries/Organisatie van Suid-Afrikaanse Regsbiblioteke; Red de Bibliotecas de Derecho y Ciencias Jurídicas (Argentina); the Russian Association of Law Libraries/Assotsiatsiia Iuridicheskikh Bibliotek; and the Scottish Law Librarians' Group.

### **Twenty-First Century Roles**

In the twenty-first century, like other institutions, the law school library faces a variety of challenges from the impacts of technology and globalization, as well as from the rapid rate of continuous change on all fronts. In many ways, the law library's long-standing mission remains similar to what it has been, while the means to accomplishing that mission have changed. The responses of academic law libraries to a changing environment can be seen both in the increased attention given to building stronger collections in foreign and international law and in non-law materials, and in efforts to improve access to digital information through electronic publication projects (83, 84) In addition, many academic law librarians have taken leadership roles for general technology development and implementation within their law schools. (5)

Yet, because technology-based solutions to information storage and technological advances in information access and retrieval serve to provide ubiquitous access to information, they can be characterized as challenging the future value of the library as a physical place. If books are less important to legal research, and if students (and faculty) prefer to work with on-line information sources, why should law schools devote significant areas of their physical plants to collections of books? If the Internet makes legal information readily available through any wired or wireless network, why should any space at all be used for a library? How important will an institution historically centered on the acquisition and preservation of print information be in an increasingly digital information environment in which less information is acquired in physical formats? Is the role of the law librarian so tied to the law book and to physical library collections that the profession itself is no longer relevant to the information needs of law faculty and students? What kinds of new skills will be needed? (85, 86)

### **Conclusion**

In light of these and similar questions, it will be essential for law librarians to think hard about core values and the services they and the law library itself provide.(87, 88) Is the law library a place only for the storage of books for students to study and perform research, or does the law school library provide an important (or perhaps the only) shared space in the

law school where students can work and learn collaboratively with each other and with faculty, and to work with librarians to develop legal information literacy skills? What must the profession of law librarianship do to continue to and grow, and to foster the new leadership it will need to meet the difficult challenges it faces? (89) It is likely that the future of the academic law library will be shaped in large part by law librarians' answers to questions like these, as well as on the library's ability to reshape its role in a new information environment.

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