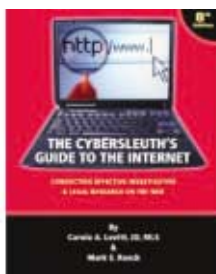


## The Cybersleuth's Guide to the Internet



**The Cybersleuth's Guide to the Internet**  
By Carole A. Levitt and Mark E. Rosch  
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**THOSE WHO USE THE INTERNET** for investigative and legal research should have *The Cybersleuth's Guide to the Internet* at their fingertips. Reflecting the growth in the amount of information available on the

Internet, the book has tripled in size from previous versions. The authors have made it easy for novice and advanced researchers alike to save time and avoid frustration. *The Cybersleuth's Guide to the Internet* includes numerous research examples based on real-world research scenarios and is written in plain English.

Lawyers no longer have the luxury of ignoring the Internet for research, and even lawyers used to Internet research can learn to use resources more effectively. Other attorneys, however, are still not as comfortable with Internet research tools as they should be. Consider the following:

- In a recent Indiana decision, the court was incredulous that the plaintiff failed to try Google to find the missing defendant as part of his due diligence. The court upheld the defendant's claim of insufficient service of process and affirmed the dismissal.<sup>1</sup>
- In another recent case, the Louisiana appeals court upheld a decision in which the trial court nullified a government tax sale because the original tax-delinquent owner would have been "reasonably identifiable" and locatable if the government had run a simple Internet search to "locate the named mortgagee." It was the trial court judge who conducted an Internet search and determined that the owner was "reasonably identifiable." Part of the basis of the appeal was whether or not it was appropriate for the judge to conduct such a search at all to determine this. The appeals court dismissed this argument.<sup>2</sup>
- The ABA's most recent technology survey found that while nearly 90 percent of attorneys used the Internet for activities such as reading news or checking their stock portfolios, less than half were using the public records or company background information that are freely available on the Internet.

The guide is organized with clear headings, hundreds of screen shots of Web pages, Web site names in boldface type, and URLs to make it easy to use. Background information about the sites is provided, so the researcher can easily find target sites before starting a search. The book begins with an overview of the Internet and then delves into specific chapters on how to best use search engines. This section is especially helpful for the novice researcher, because it goes into detail about how to use the advanced search functions to limit queries to particular formats (such as a Microsoft Word Document, PDF, or Power Point presentation) and how to find pages that have been recently updated. Even a more advanced researcher can benefit from

the tips on how to find pages that are similar to a specific page.

The authors go into detail on how to unlock the secrets of the invisible Web—the billions of pages that are not indexed by search engines and are often overlooked by the casual researcher. Using their suggestions, one can find pages in databases and even deleted pages that no longer appear on search engines.

The chapter on how to investigate people and their background is especially eye-opening. The authors illustrate how easy it can be to find phone numbers, addresses, Social Security numbers, one's political persuasion, assets, and the names of one's neighbors on the Internet. Using their suggestions, it is even possible to find photos of individuals and messages that one has posted to discussion groups.

The Internet can be used to research companies as well as people. The book lists several government Web sites that one can use to trace company assets by researching the company's ownership, registered agents, and fictitious business names. One can even conduct a free, full-text search of a company's filings and find bankruptcies, judgments, and liens. It is easy to see the importance of knowing this information when suing or defending a company. In these chapters, the reader is informed of the best sites for a particular topic, along with detailed instructions on how to get the most out of the sites listed.

For those who work in litigation, the book is especially helpful. The authors have provided detailed chapters on where to find and how to research expert witnesses, how to verify licenses of would-be experts (including medical licenses), and where to find and how to use research databases (many of which are not accessible through search engines). In the chapter on using the Internet for legal research, the authors illustrate the value of legal-specific portals and directories. Free commercial legal portals are reviewed, with dozens of screen shots and tips on how to get the most from these resources. *The Cybersleuth's Guide to the Internet* shows its strength by covering the design changes that have recently taken place on these major portals.

Abraham Lincoln once said that if he had six hours to cut down a tree, he would spend the first four hours sharpening his axe. This book operates on the same philosophy. By using the techniques in this book, readers will sharpen the tools necessary to effectively conduct legal research on the Internet before beginning their search. Indeed, given how easy the authors make it to use the Internet to find pertinent information on companies, people, experts, judges, government resources, substantive legal content, and more, it may be malpractice not to use the skills contained in this book. ■

<sup>1</sup> *Munster v. Groce*, 829 N.E. 2d 52 (Ind. App. 2005), available at <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/data2/indianastatecases/app/06080501mpb.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> *Mickey L. Weatherly v. Optimum Asset Mgmt., Inc. & Barbara F. B. Broyles & Stephen Broyles*, 2005 La. App. LEXIS 2602.

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