2002

ROI’s Can Validate Your Library’s Value

Robert H. Hu

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How does a library calculate and prove its worth? Information professionals know by heart that libraries and librarians are good values to the organizations and clients they serve. A private law firm library saves attorneys time by quickly providing the information they need to win cases. A corporate library conducts market research to help develop a new product or service ahead of the competition. A court library provides judges with the data and analysis necessary for the delivery of justice. A county library helps citizens access market and financial data, so businesses can launch successfully. An academic library contributes to the success of legal education.

Staff recognize these benefits or values created by their library, tangible or not. But what about their value in terms of dollars and cents? That knowledge may be the key to proving the worth of the library.

Economic Justification: An Increasing Necessity
Many libraries today face a daunting challenge of having to prove their worth in the face of electronic information and access. Increasingly, libraries must demonstrate to their parent organizations or governing boards that their sheer existence (let alone growth) is justifiable in simple terms of economics. The challenge becomes even tougher in the world of private law firm or corporate libraries and in times of economic hardship. Corporate downsizing, law firm layoffs, University budget cuts, Revenue shortfall in state legislative houses. All these factors affect how governing bodies and constituents perceive the importance of their libraries. Does the library help the bottom line? Or does its existence hurt the financial health of the company? To many libraries, it has become a matter of survival to justify the economic worth of their existence to their organizations.

Return-on-Investment Rate: A Powerful Marketing Tool
Although there are many ways to prove the value of a library, the most straightforward and decisive approach is to conduct a "return-on-investment" assessment. Simply stated, ROI is a cost-and-benefit analysis that determines whether money spent on the library produces a positive return. Using this measurement, the library calculates its expenditures — i.e., costs for book acquisitions, database subscriptions, computer and equipment maintenance, and staff time and compensation — versus its financial benefits — i.e., savings in user time, consolidated licensing, market research and analysis, shortened product development cycle and reduction of wasted time.

The sum of the expenditure and the sum of the financial benefits are compared to calculate the ROI rate. If the sum of the financial benefits outweighs the total expenditure, a positive ROI rate is achieved; if the sum of the expenditure outweighs the sum of the financial benefits, a negative ROI rate is achieved. For instance, when the total of a library's financial benefits equals $150, and the total of the library's expenditure amounts to $100, the library receives a ROI rate of 1.5. If the numbers of the library's financial benefits and its expenditure in the above example are reversed, then the library gets a ROI rate of 0.67. From an investor's perspective, the ROI rate is easy to understand: a $1 investment in a library that returns $1.50 is an investment that paid off; by contrast, investing $1 and receiving only 67 cents in return is a failed investment.


What can the ROI rate do for libraries? In the for-profit setting, corporate executives and managing partners of law firms generally view libraries as overhead expenses, which can be cut or reduced to improve the balance sheet, especially during times of economic retraction. Even in the nonprofit setting, government agencies and state officials do not always consider public libraries as valuable and essential to their missions and will therefore look for ways to cut library budgets. If the libraries can show a positive ROI rate, they will have an effective marketing tool at their disposal when it comes time to prove their value to the parent organizations or clients.

As a recent ROI study by the BNA library staff demonstrated, a $1.26 ROI (continued on page 27)
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W.H. Everett & Son Ltd.
W.H. Everett & Son Ltd., located in London, England, is a book vendor specializing in the international market. Established in 1793 with the mission to serve overseas customers, Everetts (the name used on its logo) began as a news agency and added its book business in 1819. The company remained a family business until 1946. In recent years, Everetts has acquired other booksellers in the United Kingdom. The company is proud of its high standard of service and understands the librarian’s need for responsiveness.

Everetts serves its library customers through three units: Books, Subscriptions and Standing Orders. Although a library may have a different customer service representative in each unit, this arrangement remains convenient overall because all units are at one location, thus facilitating regular communication among the units.

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In addition to providing traditional subscription services, Everetts also offers end-processing known as “consolidation service.” Everetts can handle automatic claiming, ownership labels and bar codes for a fee. It maintains a sizeable inventory of back issues of periodicals and serials in various fields, including law, politics and government.

Materials on standing orders are supplied directly by Everetts. The company receives the materials first and then sends them by airfreight to its customers. This system allows Everetts’ personnel to place an immediate claim for missing items. As a result, its customers do not need to claim missing items separately.

In 1998, Everetts established the position of a North American sales manager. Bob Schatz served as the first North American sales manager until August 2002. Everetts will be replacing him with someone who is equally experienced at serving the library market. Among other things, the manager serves as a sales representative, attends library conferences and visits some American library accounts regularly.

Everetts is willing to work with its customers to ensure that the best service is provided, and its library customers appreciate this effort. Several large research law libraries, including the University of Chicago, use Everetts as a vendor for legal materials from the U.K. and other Commonwealth countries, and they are generally pleased with Everetts’ services.

Like most booksellers and publishers, Everetts now has an interactive Web site. Its customers can place new orders, claim and check their existing orders online via the home page, or e-mail services. Everetts can also send out electronic invoices for users of the III and Endeavor systems.

More information about W.H. Everetts can be found on its Web site at http://www.everett.co.uk.

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For more information on Proffessional Development activities, see http://www.aallnet.org/prodev or contact Mary Jaugiel, AALL education manager, at 312/939-4764, extension 24, or mjaugiel@aall.org.
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A
t the 2002 Annual Meeting in July in Orlando, Fla., the Executive Board meeting and the AALL Business Meeting covered several pertinent issues that will affect the future direction of the Association.

July Board Meeting
At the Executive Board meeting, the board welcomed its newly elected members: Vice President/President-Elect Janis L. Johnston, Secretary Catherine Lemann, and board members Ann Fessenden and Nina Platt. The board said farewell to outgoing board members Maryruth Storer and Cossette Sun, Secretary Karl T. Gruben and Past President Bob Oakley. The continuing members for 2002-2003 are President Carol Avery Nicholson; Immediate Past President Barbara Bintliff; Treasurer Anne Mathewman; and board members James Duggan, Sally Holterhoff and Al Podboy Jr.

During the Executive Board meetings, the board tackles action business, where the board votes on particular motions, and report business, in which the board receives and reacts to reports prepared by entities of the Association, such as committees and Special Interest Sections.

Action Business
Adoption of the current District of Columbia Nonprofit Corporation Act. Earlier this year, the Bylaws Committee discovered that the Association was operating under an older version of the District of Columbia Nonprofit Corporation Act. Henry Schaffer, AALL’s legal counsel, advised the board that the Association would have to adopt the current version of the act in order for AALL to implement electronic voting. Amended in 1962, the current statute is peculiar because it bases the voting requirements on the Articles of Incorporation, rather than the bylaws of an association; AALL has been incorporated under the 1935 Articles of Incorporation, which do not mention voting at all. As a result, an alternative provision of the D.C. statute came into play, requiring only the vote of the Executive Board to adopt the new statute. The Executive Board unanimously passed it. AALL will file the necessary documents and its current Bylaws with the appropriate agency in Washington, D.C., reflecting its adoption of the current District of Columbia Nonprofit Corporations Act.

Election schedule bylaw change. After adopting the current D.C. statute, the board approved a proposed bylaws amendment that would shorten the Executive Board nominations and elections schedule. Currently, the Nominations Committee is appointed about 16 months prior to the election in which they select the Executive Board candidates. For example, the 2002-2003 Nominations Committee was appointed in November 2001. The committee will announce the candidates for the 2003 Executive Board elections this fall. And the elections will take place in April 2003. The proposal cuts about four months off the nominations and election process. The board accepted the amendments and will submit the proposed changes to the membership for approval at the Business Meeting during the 2003 Annual Meeting in Seattle. If approved, the change would become effective immediately thereafter and affect the nominations and elections in 2004 for the officers and board members who will take office at the Annual Meeting in July 2005. The board also approved the use of electronic balloting in the same election. A schedule detailing the nominations and election process was incorporated as part of this proposal.

Proposed budget. The board unanimously approved the 2003 budget, as prepared by the Finance and Budget Committee. The budget for the General Fund (operating) will result in a small surplus, which will be deposited into the Current Reserve Fund at the end of 2003. Money from the General Fund will not be transferred to the Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals Reserve Fund nor will they be transferred from the Professional Development Fund. The budget also increased funding to that Headquarters can employ a full-time webmaster. AALL’s current webmaster is a part-time employee. Additional money has also been budgeted for hardware and software upgrades. The Investment Fund was budgeted for a very small earnings increase, while the Current Reserve fund is below target. Any generated income will be used to bring the Current Reserve Fund back up to guideline specifications.

Fund raising for the George A. Strait Minority Scholarship Endowment. The board approved a statement about the Strait scholarship and the fund-raising methods AALL will use to raise $100,000 for the endowment. This statement will be used in promotional efforts to raise money for the scholarship.

Reports from Committees
Future of Law Libraries in the Digital Age Special Committee. The final report of this special committee, formed by former AALL President Bob Oakley to ponder the future of law libraries and digital media, describes several possible scenarios for academic, firm and government law libraries considering law libraries in the digital age. A discussion of these scenarios took place on a listserv discussion in May under the name “Law Libraries of the Future” (now archived on AALLNET at http://aallnet.org/pipermail/programs/Week-of-Mon-20020513/thread.html). The board accepted the report and the committee’s recommendatons for creation of special committees and other follow-up methods.

Promote Law Librarians as Legal Research Trainers Special Committee. Charged with planning how to actively promote law librarians to the legal community as the premier legal research educators and teachers of legal research and a promotional plan to market instructional programs to the legal community, the board accepted the report and forwarded it to the board’s Strategic Planning Committee to discuss the feasibility of funding and where to prioritize these initiatives among other AALL projects.

Annual Meeting Educational Programming Special Committee. Over the years, AAL members and entities, particularly Special Interest Sections and chapters, have criticized the programming at the Annual Meeting as nonresponsive to their needs. Other criticisms have included scheduling conflicts between programs and an excessive quantity of 7 a.m. meetings. The Annual Meeting Educational Programming Special Committee was formed to address
those and other considerations. Its final report contained four recommendations: Permit business meetings of the AALL entities, such as committees, roundtables and SISs, during educational programming, but not at “no-conflict” times. Change the composition of the Annual Meeting Program Committee to more closely reflect the makeup of the Association. Continue allocating about two-thirds of all programs to those proposed by the SIS education and program committees. And create guidelines to better measure whether proposed programs meet criteria for presentation. Though this report came to the board as an action item, the board did not treat it as such. Because the report encompasses and recommends changing a great deal of the Annual Meeting’s structure, the board deemed it necessary to treat this report as an information item and forward it to various units of the Association for their comments and feedback.

Statement on the value of law librarians. President Barbara Bintliff requested that the Public Relations Committee develop a statement on the value of law libraries for employers and potential employers. The committee drafted such a statement, outlining what law librarians can do and how they assist their employing organizations. AALL members will see more of this statement as the PR committee begins to use it in its work and disseminates it to other Association units.

In addition, the board heard reports from the president, vice president, executive director, Washington Affairs representative, SIS Council chair and Council of Chapter Presidents chair about their activities since the last board meeting. In closed session, the Executive Director Search Committee updated the board on the interview process to select a new executive director to fill the position of retiring Executive Director Roger Parent. The new executive director will be announced after the Annual Meeting.

Dues Increase
The dues increase proposal took center stage at this year’s Business Meetings.

In November 2001, the Executive Board approved a dues increase proposal that would phase in a $45 increase over three years, at $15 per year. (At its discretion, the board can also marginally increase dues to keep pace with annual inflation.)

At the Business Meeting, Treasurer Anne Matthewman emphasized that member expectations and services cannot be met without a dues increase. Because membership dues are the steadiest and most predictable source of income, the dues increase would provide a stronger base of support for the Association and its activities, according to Matthewman. AALL membership dues currently generate only 22 percent of the Association’s yearly income; in 1982, dues comprised 33 percent of AALL’s income. About one-third of AALL’s annual revenue — almost a million dollars a year — is derived from vendors and other outside entities, which is not a guaranteed source of income each year. In addition, AALL cannot continue to rely on the stock market or risk depleting its investment funds, Matthewman said. She also explained that the phased-in dues increase will allow institutions to budget for the increase.

During the 20-minute informal discussion that followed, several members spoke in favor of the increase, including past presidents Roger Jacobs, Judy Meadows, Albert Brecht, Carol Billings, Mark Estes, Kay Todd and Margie Axtmann. They explained that the dues increase would allow AALL to remain

(continued on page 31)

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From the 2002–2003 SIS Council Chair
I am pleased to have the honor this year of representing the Special Interest Sections as chair of the SIS Council. The SIS Council is made up of the chairs of each of AALL’s 13 sections. The council meets yearly at the Annual Meeting and is active during the year through our listserv.

The first task for the SIS Council is to respond to a report of the Annual Meeting Educational Programming Committee. The AALL Executive Board is interested in council members’ reactions to recommendations of the report, especially Recommendation #1, which states: “Permit meetings, roundtables, etc. during AMPC selected educational programs.”

The council had a lively discussion about the report at its business meeting in Orlando, Fla., and the dialog continues on the SIS Council listserv. I will report our reactions and describe models that address how the recommendation could be implemented in the future.

This fall, I will be coordinating the schedule of SIS meetings and events for the Annual Meeting in Seattle. I encourage all SISs to begin that planning process early in hopes of eliminating as many conflicts as possible.

At its business meeting, the council recommended that its listserv include all vice chairs as well as current chairs. That change is being implemented.

There are a number of other recommendations for the SIS chairs in the coming year:

• Review and amend bylaws to specify Sturgis Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure as the parliamentary authority.
• Review and edit SIS histories in the SIS Handbook.
• Review and edit SIS profiles on AALLNET.

During the year, I will also be reviewing the SIS Handbook and related Web pages on AALLNET for possible revisions. One suggestion for the handbook is to develop guidelines for SIS Web sites specifying what basic information should be included. Please contact me if you have other ideas.

The Executive Board Strategic Planning Committee monitors the current AALL Strategic Plan. Committee members will contact SIS chairs throughout the year to discuss how their SIS activities are supporting specific initiatives of the plan. Each chair should review the plan to see how his or her SIS can contribute positively in reaching the Association’s goals.

I look forward to working with this terrific group of leaders and expect to learn a great deal from each you. Thank you for this opportunity to represent our active and vibrant groups.

Submitted by Anita Anderson.

SR SIS Updates Directory of Libraries Serving Prisoners
It’s here: an updated online version of the directory of Law Libraries Serving Prisoners. Last updated in 1993, this resource is intended to help prisoners gain access to legal materials.

In April, the Standing Committee on Law Library Services to Institution Residents began updating the directory and providing the information on a free Web site at http://weblaw.barry.edu/llsp, which can be searched by library name or location — city, county or state. To be added to the directory, please use the online form at the Web site or e-mail Rebecca Trammell at stramm@wku.edu or Ann Hemmens at hemmens@uwashington.edu.

Submitted by Ann Hemmens.

Amy Eaton, an independent law librarian who consults for various law firms, can be reached at lawlibraryservices@yahoo.com.
are recognized as knowledgeable experts in their field, and they often speak for the whole library community. That reflects positively on AALL and on law librarians. It's a very good example of where we've had impact beyond our own community by working collaboratively with other associations.

I feel most excited about my role in the four-year effort to sponsor the international conference in Boston of the International Federation of Library Associations. Not only was that conference a huge success in attracting people from all over the world to Boston, it raised AALL’s visibility among librarians internationally. As an outcome of the IFLA conference, AALL and the International Association of Law Libraries are creating the first discussion group for law librarians at IFLA. They will meet for the first time in Glasgow, Scotland, this year. It raises our visibility internationally at a time when it's very important for us to do that.

Q. What are some of the challenges AALL will face in the next 10 years?

A. There's really one thing that comes to my mind: the Professional Development Program. Providing continuing education for our members is extraordinarily important and has a very high priority. However, we haven't really got that program on solid ground yet despite wonderful support from BNA Inc. We still face some challenges in terms of how we deliver programs. Are workshops at the local level the best approach long term? Are the program topics and the way we go about selecting program topics working as well as they should? How do we pay for and support this program on an ongoing basis? There's a tremendous amount of price resistance from our members to paying registration fees over $200. The next executive director is going to have to bring some creativity to that effort.

Q. Clearly the Association’s investment fund fluctuates somewhat, but the Association’s investment manager seems to have been successful in keeping the fund on an even keel.

A. AALL has used the same investment strategy for a long time (with two different investment managers). Funds are invested conservatively. We minimize the risks that we’re willing to take. We’re probably never going to out-perform the market, but at the same time, the losses will never exceed dramatically the stock market either. We have knowledgeable people at Chevy Chase Trust managing the portfolio, which has grown to almost $2 million today. Our current treasurer, Anne C. Mathewson, continues the commitment to this philosophy about the permanent investment fund that her predecessors put into place. So there's no danger of our beginning to chip away at the value of that fund.

Q. Are there any particular aspects of the job that you enjoyed, that you particularly looked forward to?

A. Member interaction, without any question whatsoever. That's the part I love the best because I find working with the people intellectually challenging. I am always working with different groups of people, and there’s an almost unlimited range of issues that people are interested in and concerned about. It really is a way of keeping in touch with what’s happening in the field. I love the fun of interacting with members socially and in business meetings as well. I think we have had some of the most fun at meetings where people are really engaged in what they are doing but at the same time not taking themselves too seriously. When working with Association leaders, I work with the best and the brightest in the field. They are the people who are also successful at home. They tend to be the leaders of their libraries, leaders of their chapters and leaders at the national level. It's really quite wonderful to have a chance to work with people like that continually as I have for over 20 years.

Q. Has this been a personally rewarding job? Are you pleased you took the job?

A. Yes, this experience in AALL has been the best. It’s terrific to end a career in librarianship and association management on such a high note. I feel good about what I have contributed. I feel that my contributions have been recognized and appreciated by the leaders and the members. It’s wonderful to end a career and to leave a position where people respect you and express so much support.

Kay Todd (kaytodd@paulhastings.com) is the senior legal researcher at Paul Hastings, Janofsky & Walker LLP in Atlanta.
New Officers Elected

Congratulations to the newly elected board members for the following chapters:

Law Librarians' Society of Washington, D.C., Inc. elected Scott Larson of Beveridge & Diamond as vice president/president-elect; Barbara Folenbee-Moore of Morgan Lewis & Boskius as recording secretary; Frances Brillante of Catholic University of America Law Library as assistant treasurer; Ellen Feldman of Williams & Connolly as a board member; and Judith Leon of Shea & Gardner as a board member.

Returning board members are Lisa Harrington of Holland & Knight as president; Susan Ryan of Georgetown University Law Library as corresponding secretary; Stephen Mellin of Jenner & Block as treasurer; and Scott Pagel of George Washington University Law Library as a board member.

The San Diego Area Law Libraries' officers were sworn in at the annual business meeting in June: President Tracey Pardo of Cooley Godward LLP; Vice President/Program Chair Sushila Selness of the University of San Diego School of Law; Secretary Sheila Corman, an independent librarian; and Treasurer Owen Smith of the University of San Diego School of Law.

The Southwestern Association of Law Libraries announced its Executive Board for 2002-2003: President Kathryn C. Fitzhugh of the University of Arizona at Little Rock William H. Bowen School of Law; Immediate Past President Beth Youngdale of the University of Texas at Austin Jamail Center for Legal Research; Vice President/President-Elect Sharon Wayland of the Tarrant County Law Library; Secretary Susan Spillman of the South Texas College of Law Library; and Treasurer Joan O'Mara of McGinnis Lochridge & Kilgore LLP.

MALL Receives LSTA Grant for Outreach Programming

The Minnesota Association of Law Libraries was awarded a Library Services and Technology Act federal grant to offer four workshops called "Legal Reference @ Your Library." They will be presented in Minnesota for public and county library staff working with patrons who need legal reference help and will include discussion groups, role-playing and Internet training. The day-long workshops will also educate staff on how to avoid unauthorized legal practice/advice and when or how to refer a patron to another legal agency. Paul Healey, from the law library at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, will assist with the workshop curriculum.

CoALL Presents "Bridge the Gap" for Summer Associates

On June 6, the Colorado Association of Law Libraries held its first "Bridge the Gap" program for summer associates. More than 70 summer associates from law firms in Denver attended this legal research institute. The program goals were to "bridge the gap" between law school and legal practice by introducing law students to the differences between academic and practice-oriented research and to Colorado-specific legal materials. More information is available on the CoALL Web site at http://www.aallnet.org/chapter/coall.

SCALL Presents Chapter Service Award

The Southern California Association of Law Libraries presented the 2002 William B. Rohan Chapter Service Award to Albert O. Brecht, associate dean, chief information officer and John Stauffer Professor of Law at the University of Southern California law library, at its business meeting in June. This award for outstanding service to the chapter honored Brecht for his contributions to SCALL as an active member and as a mentor to many newer law librarians.

VALL Again Provides Content for State Bar's Virginia Lawyer

The Virginia Association of Law Libraries will be providing content for a full issue of the Virginia Lawyer, the official publication of the Virginia State Bar. The issue, slated for publication in December, will feature articles by VALL members that not only offer attorneys practical research advice but also serve to increase the bar's awareness of the wide-ranging expertise of Virginia's law library community. This is the third theme issue for which VALL has been responsible. Links to articles that appeared in earlier issues can be found on the VALL Web site at http://law.richmond.edu/vall.

ORALL Meeting Responds to Librarians' Daily Work Needs

The members of the Ohio Regional Association of Law Libraries eagerly anticipate its annual meeting Oct. 16-18 in Akron, Ohio. The program is exciting and is highly responsive to the concerns that all law librarians face daily at work. Networking and social opportunities include a reception at the Inventor's Hall of Fame and a performance by the University of Akron Steel Drum Band.

The program highlights will include many well-known and professional speakers. Dick Blake of Dick Blake Training & Development in Beachwood, Ohio, will discuss business etiquette. Janis L. Johnston, director of the law library at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, will present the program "Now You're the Boss: Making the Transition." Sandra Yancey of the Yancey Consulting Group in Dallas will speak on "Effective Listening: Moving from Simply Hearing to Really Listening. " "Lies Would Be Easier If It Werent for Other People" and "Business as Usual: Managing the Challenge of Change."

Other programs include "A Law Librarian's Approach to Accounting Research," by Tracy Fitzpatrick, a certified public accountant with Brockman Coats Gedelin & Co; "Foreign Law Resources for the Non-Specialist," by Andrew Dorchak of Case Western University School of Law Library; and "Planning Ahead — Investment and Retirement Options," by Bruce Jentner and Martin Weisberg of Jentner Financial Group.

SANDALL Concentrates on Long-Range Planning

The San Diego Area Law Libraries held its annual business meeting and installation of new officers on June 7. Washington Affairs Representative Bob Oakley updated members on AALL issues and the AALL Annual Meeting in Orlando, Fla., as well as the legislative efforts of the Washington Affairs Office in Washington, D.C.

Because SANDALL is a fairly new chapter, the Long-Range Planning Committee and chapter board surveyed the members to determine the chapter's future needs. The first meeting to discuss results of the survey, including the direction and goals of members, how to achieve them and monetary issues, was held on Aug. 8. Other survey meetings will take place throughout the year.

LLNE Redesigns Web Site

Librarians as teachers and trainers will be the topic of the Law Librarians of New England's Fall Meeting on Nov. 15 at the Tremont Hotel in Boston. The meeting will be hosted by Northeastern University School of Law Library.

For more information about the meeting, visit LLNE's Web site at www.aallnet.org/chapterline, which has been redesigned to conform with AALLNET guidelines.
SWALL's Annual Meeting Offers
Variety in Programs
The Southwestern Association of Law Libraries held its 44th Annual Meeting April 18-20 in Fort Worth, Texas. The lineup of outstanding speakers included Justice Ed Kinkeade of the Texas Court of Appeals, who served as the opening lunch speaker, and SWALL's own Barbara Bintliff, then-AALL president, who spoke at the Friday breakfast meeting. Professor Bob Berring, author and director of the law library at the University of California School of Law Library, served as the plenary speaker.


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published in the Diario Oficial before they go into effect. But the Diario Oficial is purely chronological and not well indexed. So how does one research the current state of Mexican law?

There are three solutions. First, a searchable electronic version of the Diario Oficial is available for a hefty fee. (Go to www.gobernacion.gob.mx for free access to the 2001-2002 issues.) Second, stand-alone commercial editions of the most significant federal laws are available. Reliable commercial editions of legislation are published by Editorial Porrua, porrua.com, the leading law publisher in Mexico. Last, the Web site of the Chamber of Deputies, www.ccdhcu.gob.mx for free access to searchable electronic version of the Mexican law?

Challenges, Cautions and Strategies

Researching legal materials and government documents in different countries, such as China, France and Mexico, each comes with specific challenges unique to each country. But there are some common strategies for foreign legal research that pertain to any country.

The first challenge in accessing legal materials of foreign jurisdictions is language. Topical looseleaf services in English, recent databases with English versions, or selected materials translated into English can help. Special software is needed to access foreign, non-Roman-script databases. For example, special software may be required to search and read Chinese databases. Another challenge is censorship: Governments do not disclose all primary materials.

Before researchers begin their search for documents of a foreign jurisdiction, they have to understand its legal system. The second step is to narrow the research question. What country’s law is needed? What is the specific subject area at issue?

Even researchers who can read the language of the jurisdiction must still identify the title of the required legal publication in the local vernacular. A legal foreign-language dictionary may be required to find the legal equivalents from one language to another. Use such guides to foreign jurisdictions as the Reynolds and Flores text mentioned earlier; indexes; and online guides, such as LLRX.com’s Foreign and Comparative Law, available at http://www.llrx.com/comparative_and_foreign_law.html.

Web site of the Supreme Court has a free database for the jurisprudencia at www.scjn.gob.mx.

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Think topical when trying to find foreign laws in English. Remember that primary sources of a foreign jurisdiction will never be officially translated into English, just as U.S. statutes and cases will not be officially translated into other languages.

For those who do not know how to begin accessing foreign legal materials and do not have a citation to the foreign law but are researching, use secondary sources: commentaries, treatises, legal encyclopedias and articles.

Despite the language barriers and differences in legal systems that are inherent to foreign legal research, accessing government documents from around the world is more convenient and accessible now than even five years ago. The rise of the Internet has prompted nations to place their documents, policies and statutes in cyberspace for all to see. Once reserved for political insiders, these legal materials and government documents are now not only available to the masses but to legal information professionals too.

Wei Luo (law@uwlaw.wustl.edu) is director of technical services and lecturer of law at Washington University School of Law Library in St. Louis, Mo. Pascal Petitcollot, (pascal.petitcollot@sg.pm.gouv.fr) manager of the French Prime Minister Legal Information and Documentation Office, is responsible for the official legal Web site Legifrance and works with the general secretariat of the French government.

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AALL Spectrum Magazine | October 2002
a vital organization and continue its advocacy efforts, such as those offered by the Washington Affairs Office.

Members voted on the dues increase proposal by mail ballot in September. As of this writing, the results had not been announced.

**Presidential Certificates of Merit**

President Barbara Bintliff issued Presidential Certificates of Merit to the following people and institutions:

- **Dick Danner** was honored for his legacy to the Association. He was instrumental in the AALL Strategic Planning process, which is an organizing force for our Association today. Danner is also responsible for the development of the first APLL Research Agenda, which encourages research for the betterment of all law librarians.

- **Julius Marke** and **Morris Cohen**, two giants among law librarians, were celebrated for their leadership and dedication to the profession of law librarianship.

- **Alan Holoch**, a former AALL treasurer, ensured that his dedication to the profession would endure by establishing an education fund, which is administered by the Standing Committee on Lesbian and Gay Issues of the Social Responsibilities Special Interest Section. Carole Hinchcliff of the Ohio State University Law Library, where the award will be displayed, accepted this award.

- **Steve Ligda**, AALL director of finance and administration, has provided valuable expertise in the development of our financial policies and budgetary infrastructure. His careful and exacting oversight of AALL's accounts has kept the Association on an even keel during unsound fiscal times.

  The **Academic Law Libraries Special Interest Section** has completed a project that implements an initiative of the AALL Strategic Plan: "actively promoting law librarians to the legal community as the premier legal research trainers." The ALL SIS produced a series of CD-based lessons on legal research for the Center for Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction. Tony Trotta and Kirt Krellick accepted the award on behalf of the ALL SIS.

- **The Professional Development Committees for 1998–1999, 1999–2000 and 2000–2001** were recognized for achieving one of the goals of the AALL Strategic Plan: development of basic and advanced core competencies for law librarians. This plan took several years and three PDCs to complete. Michael Saint-Onge, Mary Hochkiss and Judy Meadows accepted the awards on behalf of their respective committees.

President Bintliff presented a Presidential Certificate of Merit to the **Law Library Association of Greater New York** for the chapter's support of New York City's law librarians in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. Christina Rattiner, 2001–2002 LLAGNY president, accepted on behalf of her chapter.

AALL devoted a moment of silence in memory of the deaths of members and friends of the Association during the past year: Harry Bitner, Maria Cap, Kay Iverson, Joseph Levstik, Beverly Ann Liptron, Donna Mansheim, Mildred Mason, Betty Moys, Rhonda Oziel, Beverley Pooley, Barbara Stapp, Dick Sloan, Jacqueline Paul and Kathleen Farnham.

A transcript of the Business Meeting's proceedings will appear in the fall issue of the **Law Library Journal**. This transcript will also contain the full reports of the president, vice president, treasurer, executive director and Washington Affairs representative, which are not summarized here.

If you have any questions about any of these matters, please contact me or any member of the Executive Board.

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