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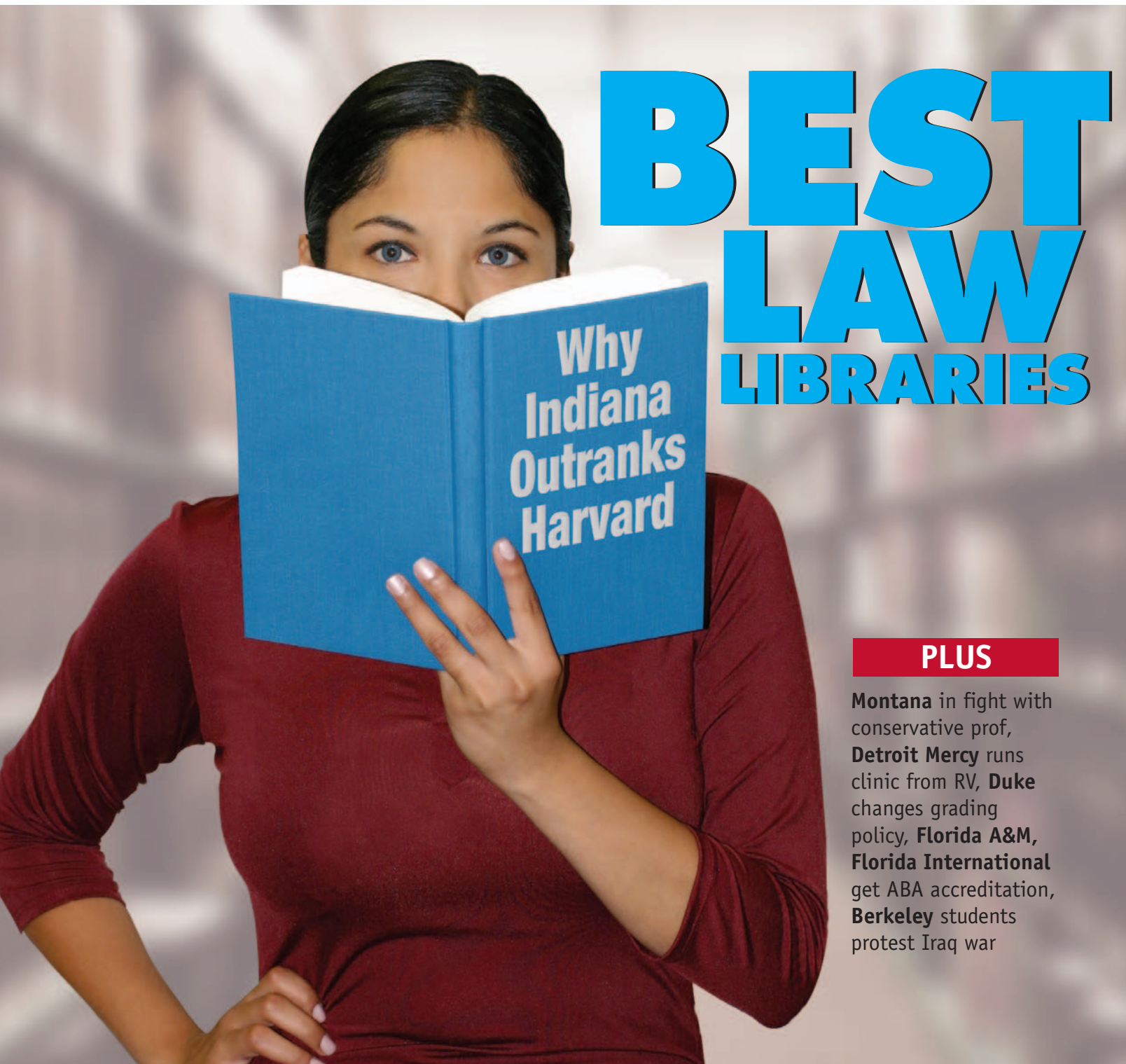


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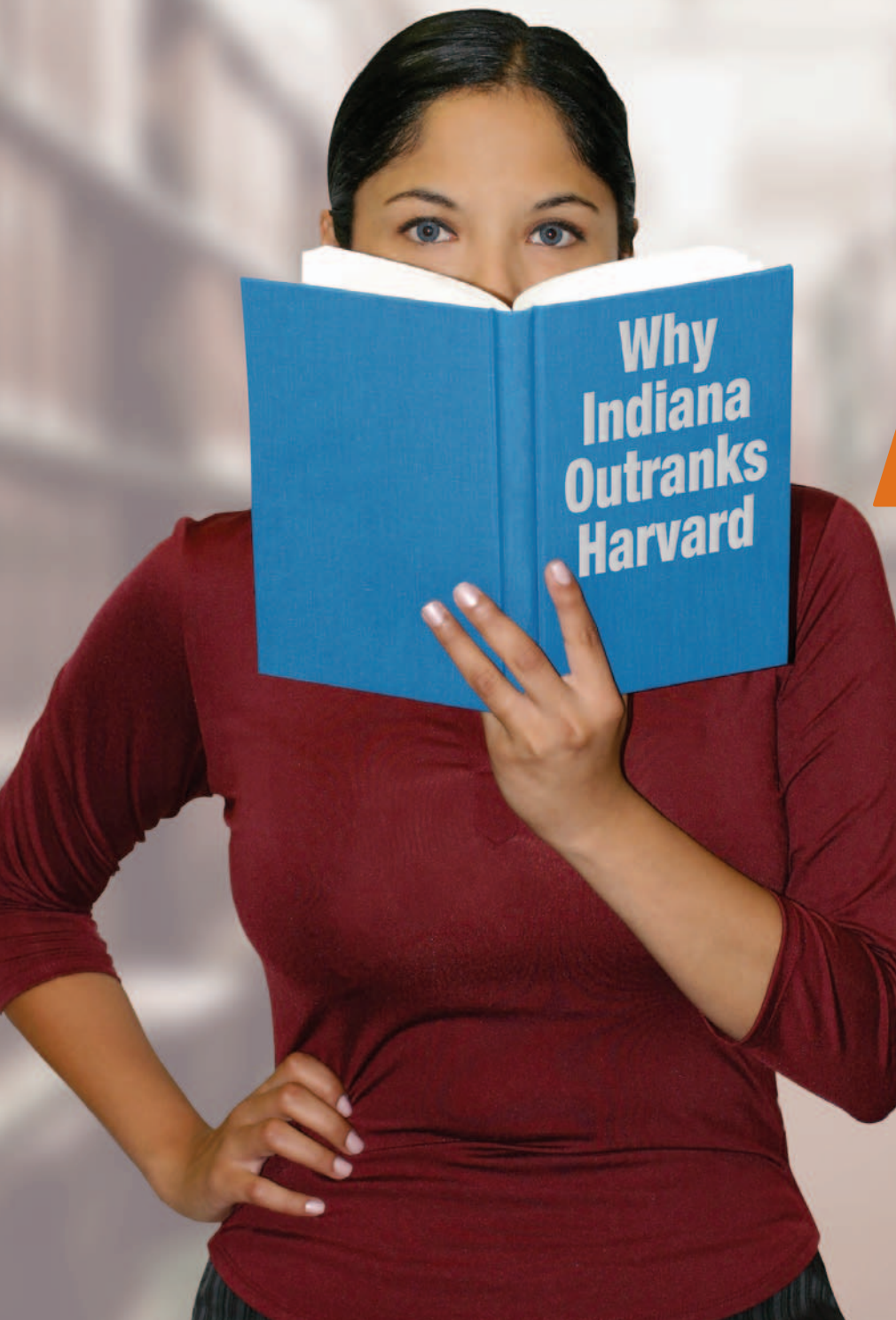


BEST LAW LIBRARIES

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BEST LAW



Today's libraries offer students not only a great selection of resource materials, a well-trained staff and plenty of study space, but the latest information technology. Here are the schools that do the best job of providing what law students need to succeed.

Ask most people to conjure up an image of a law library and they'll come up with some variation on the same theme: looming, floor-to-ceiling shelves of leather-bound books and pitiful Dickensian characters with their noses buried in dusty, dog-eared volumes laid out on wooden tables. But that image of the law library went by the wayside decades ago. Today's law school libraries are sleek, modern, and technologically connected.

But what really makes a good library? Is it how many books are on the shelves, how easy it is to find them, the amount of study space offered or the access provided to online resources?

And which law school really has the best one?

The editorial staff at *National Jurist* decided to find out. Using information from the American Bar Association and the American Association of Law Libraries, we looked at the components that are part of a library and came up with our picks for top law libraries across the country.

The criteria used to determine the rankings included number of volumes, ratio of library seating to student enrollment, number of titles, number of serial subscriptions, ratio of professional librari-

Libraries

ans to student enrollment and the number of hours per week that the library is open (for details on how the numbers were crunched and schools were ranked see the accompanying chart or go to www.nation-aljurist.com).

So who does have the best law library? It's not who you might think. Of all the facilities in the nation, two public schools in the Midwest — University of Iowa Law School Iowa and Indiana University School of Law in Bloomington — were at the top of the heap.

What makes his library great is a source of pride for Arthur Bonfield, associate dean for research and head of the law library at Iowa.

"The single-most important thing for a truly great library is your collection of titles," Bonfield said. "Having 40 copies of the same book isn't helpful. We are proud of having the second-largest collection of unique titles, second only to Harvard."

The Indiana University School of Law Library claims not only a large collection of titles, but is also one of only 11 law school libraries that serve as depositories for the paper records and briefs of the U.S. Supreme Court. But IU-Bloomington law library director Colleen Pauwels says that today, titles alone — whether hard copy or online — are not enough to make a library great.

"A library really is what you provide for your students," she said. "Nowadays having resources alone is not enough. Your users must be able to use them, they must be accessible in really useful ways and you must have a really dedicated library staff who really understands how important it is to make the library a successful place for study and research."

Pauwels says she believes she has one of

the best groups of librarians and assistants in the nation, a group she says is dedicated to providing training and education to help students and faculty find what they need.

Bonfield considers his research and professional staff crucial to his library's success as well.

"Our library attracts students and faculty to our school because they know they can study here," he said. "We have five reference librarians to teach and help users use the library and are opened and staffed 106 hours a week."

But law students don't just go to the library to find reference materials.

Many use it as their main place to study—conveniently located within arm's reach (or modem's reach) of the sources they might need to refer to.

Iowa, for example, boasts enough seating for every law student.

"We have assigned carrels with Internet hook-ups for our second- and third-year students and unassigned seating for our first years," said Bonfield. "All our tables have wireless connections. We support a very writing-oriented law program."

Even beyond the tangibles like of number of seats, number of books or resources and number of librarians, it's the attitude of the library administration and staff that really seems to count in creating a top-ranked library.

Pauwels said she and her staff strive for continuous improvement as well.

"We are always thinking about how we can make the library work better and be better for our students," she said.

Bonfield said his school's top ranking didn't happen by accident either. It took work.

"We made a very conscious effort to create one of the greatest law libraries in the country," he said.

by Colleen Gareau

What students think

So what of the students who make up a large percentage of library users? What do they look for in a library?

Bonnie Grant, a third-year law student at the University of Georgia School of Law in Athens (ranked 33rd), estimates that she used the library once or twice a week during her second year. She considers having resource staff available to her for assistance important.

“A lot of the time I need to find a rare source that I can’t find on the computerized catalog, and the librarians help me,” she said. “Also, they are good at finding lost materials or just giving me tips and pointers as to how to conduct research.”

The main thing that Karl Sevig, a third-year student at the University of St. Thomas School of Law in Minneapolis, Minn., (where the library ranked 180th), looks for in a library is a quiet place to study. He also wants to be able to have access to the Internet and to be able to get a hard copy of whatever he needs, to see it on a shelf so that he can understand where it is placed, why and what it is next to.

“Technology has improved the way I use the library in that I don’t have to come here as much, but at the same time, technology makes me feel as though I’m saving time when in all actuality, the Internet searching takes time because I have to filter so much out,” he said. “It is absolutely necessary to have librarians and other resources staff. They make it possible for students to get their work done without having to be library experts.”

Today’s students were raised in the computer age, and they expect to be able to get a lot of research done electronically. They want libraries to facilitate that task by providing easy access to the Internet.

“I use the computerized library catalogue to find the books I need to do my cite checks,” Grant said. “I use Westlaw for legal research and

How law school libraries stack up

The National Jurist compared 183 law libraries, using a mix of categories measuring the number of materials available, the facility itself and the staff resources offered. Using the most recent ABA data, we calculated scores in six categories: number of volumes, titles and serial subscriptions, ratio of library study capacity and professional librarians to student enrollment, and number of hours per week open. We translated each raw figure or ratio to percentile form on a 1-10 scale. For the composite score, the number of volumes and ratio of study seating was 20 percent of the score. The other four categories were 15 percent each.

School	# volumes	Lib. study seating cap.	# prof. librarians	Hrs./wk open	Total score
U. of Iowa	1,070,108	673	14	105	9.35
Indiana U.-Bloomington	726,520	717	10	115	9.35
Yale LS	1,082,818	414	16	133	9.20
U. of Michigan	941,237	856	17	112	8.95
Northwestern U.	719,620	648	10	105	8.70
U. of Pennsylvania	782,893	512	14	110	8.50
U. of Minnesota	970,743	942	13	81	8.50
Ohio St. U.	765,319	660	8	107	8.45
U. of Tennessee	529,720	437	9	112	8.35
Stanford U.	529,403	623	9	96	8.25
Brigham Young U.	462,215	883	10	105	8.20
U. of Chicago	691,516	445	10	90	8.05
Washington And Lee U.	409,865	540	7	168	8.00
U. of Virginia	860,812	766	10	112	8.00
UCLA	611,966	774	14	97	7.90
Duke U.	591,805	451	9	104	7.80
U. of Wisconsin	537,549	616	10	104	7.65
U. of California, Hastings	672,273	1,295	11	102	7.65
Louisiana St., Paul M Hubert	809,086	461	10	101	7.65
U. of Texas	1,001,662	1321	16	101	7.65
Ave Maria SoL	444,501	285	5	100	7.60
Notre Dame LS	605,919	416	10	95	7.55
U. of Connecticut	519,251	708	12	87	7.50
SMU Deadman SoL	581,267	749	10	102	7.45
Cornell LS	676,660	424	9	80	7.45
Georgetown U.	1,072,789	1075	19	107	7.40
Boston U.	643,045	689	9	102	7.30
Harvard LS	2,135,191	761	43	99	7.30
U. of California, Berkeley	858,192	401	18	100	7.30
U. of Cincinnati	408,510	304	11	110	7.30
U. of Georgia	505,026	404	12	115	7.30
Wake Forest U.	395,244	574	4	108	7.25
U. of Tulsa	368,816	685	8	110	7.20
U. of Richmond	353,579	643	7	106	7.20
U. of Colorado	489,705	349	7	108	7.15
U. of San Diego	511,215	600	8	108	7.10
Columbia U.	1,060,698	417	19	102	7.00
Washington U.	648,784	489	7	120	7.00
U. of New Mexico	419,017	423	9	103	6.95
U. of North Carolina	502,002	481	11	109	6.95
U. of Washington	561,786	389	15	89	6.90
Arizona St. U.	406,853	534	7	111	6.90
George Washington U.	584,890	702	20	110	6.85
Tulane U.	544,280	557	9	113	6.85
Fordham U.	603,247	473	14	119	6.80
U. of Illinois	738,685	398	6	102	6.80
U. at Buffalo (SUNY)	550,341	526	11	99	6.70
Vanderbilt U.	559,132	291	7	111	6.70
U. of Miami	570,357	769	12	111	6.70
Rutgers U.-Newark	510,650	425	10	112	6.60
U. of Alabama	553,023	566	7	102	6.60
William and Mary LS	384,495	430	6	168	6.60
Boston College	430,644	649	11	105	6.55
Washburn U.	363,726	381	7	101	6.50
New York U. LS	1,046,173	799	12	101	6.50
Penn St. U.	482,938	425	7	168	6.45
Chicago-Kent CoL	587,167	612	9	96	6.40
American U.	511,840	677	8	119	6.35
U. of Arizona	415,028	368	9	99	6.35
U. of Louisville	424,773	441	5	89	6.35
Emory U.	392,626	488	6	114	6.30
U. of Utah	322,320	356	7	100	6.30
Texas Southern U.	535,612	378	8	108	6.20
Ohio Northern U.	338,366	320	4	113	6.20
Indiana U.-Indianapolis	556,175	556	8	97	6.20
U. of Florida	615,864	697	10	99	6.20
Loyola Marymount LS	544,767	549	11	108	6.15
Case Western Reserve	392,082	353	12	108	6.10
U. of Pittsburgh	414,661	473	8	103	6.10
Villanova U.	500,277	368	10	168	6.05
Southwestern U.	448,140	610	9	104	6.05
Wayne St. U.	596,385	461	4	97	6.00
Regent U.	374,024	344	8	105	6.00
U. of Kentucky	459,314	345	6	100	6.00
St Louis U.	617,065	420	8	101	6.00
Thomas M Cooley LS	486,348	603	17	124	5.95

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have never voluntarily used books for doing legal research. If I had a computer at home, I would spend much less time in the library. My time there would be limited to cite-checking.”

How wired should the library be?

Technology has had an impact on the world around us and libraries have not been immune.

“Ten years ago, the Web as we know it had barely come into being,” said Michelle Wu, director of the law library at Hofstra University School of Law in Hempstead, N.Y. Her school is ranked 94th. “In academic law libraries, there were essentially only four electronic resources: Lexis, Westlaw, CIS Masterfile, and Legaltrac. Today, there are thousands of legal or legal-related titles including CDs, DVDs and databases.”

This access to vast amounts of information has helped libraries reduce shelf space, but it hasn’t really saved them money.

“It is my belief that no academic law library in the nation needs multiple copies of Reporters Federal or National Report System any more with students and public patrons using Lexis and Westlaw,” said Brian Baker, director of the law library at the University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law, ranked 98th. “Similarly, the need for multiple copies of law reviews has eroded with the advent of Hein On-Line, JStor and other on-line providers of older materials. Where the reduction of materials will never happen is in the area of treatises. All-in-all, the reduction

in need for multiple copies of Reporters and Law Reviews will be met with a demand for more specialized treatises and other materials like database subscriptions.”

What materials to supply electronically versus in print is also an issue of hot debate. Compared to the printed word, electronic information is in its infancy. Only a few years ago, information on CD-ROMs was cutting-edge. That technology has waned as the cost to continuously update materials made permanent electronic information obsolete.

And although many students today might think it, or wish it to be true, not all legal information is available over the Internet. A study done three years ago at the University of Washington found that only 13 per cent of that library's holdings could be accessed over the Internet. Hard-copy information will still be part of law libraries in future.

“It will likely take several years before it becomes clear to librarians which materials are essential to keep and which the library can rely exclusively on legal database providers for,” said Steven Probst, law library professional specialist at Valparaiso University School of Law in Valparaiso, Ind. (ranked 115th). “It is true that law libraries, like libraries in general, are undergoing significant change as we attempt to determine which materials will survive in print and which will be available only online. On list-serves such as LAWLIB, practically on any given day you can find discussions going on between law librarians about this very issue.”

As the Internet becomes more integral in legal research, will the traditional role of the library change? Are research experts necessary in an age of instant access to thousands of sources of information? Yes, but in a different way.

“Rather than eliminate the need for law librarians, technological forces merely continue to shape our role,” said Cindie Leigh, reference librarian at

<i>continued from previous page</i>	#	Lib. study	# prof.	Hrs./wk	Total
School	volumes	seating cap.	librarians	open	score
Drake U.	309,594	705	7	109	5.90
Western New England College	369,671	401	6	103	5.90
U. of North Dakota	309,186	230	6	100	5.90
U. of South Carolina	497,310	606	6	111	5.85
Creighton U.	303,845	418	8	104	5.80
U. of Kansas	371,529	383	6	103	5.80
U. of Southern California	396,474	291	13	100	5.75
U. of Toledo	338,745	471	5	113	5.75
U. of Maryland	439,521	522	11	98	5.70
U. of Nebraska	388,915	372	5	109	5.65
South Texas CoL	443,867	849	10	103	5.65
West Virginia U.	333,765	274	3	106	5.65
U. of California, Davis	432,178	375	8	78	5.55
New York LS	503,391	616	16	98	5.55
Mississippi College SoL	314,651	396	4	103	5.55
Pepperdine U.	355,691	495	6	109	5.55
U. of Oklahoma	339,820	408	6	96	5.50
Hofstra U.	534,840	496	8	99	5.50
Cleveland St. U.	503,131	396	11	88	5.50
U. of South Dakota	199,884	227	6	168	5.45
Lewis & Clark LS	477,288	385	6	113	5.45
U. of District of Columbia	232,575	202	7	104	5.45
Nova Southeastern U.	348,379	553	8	104	5.40
U. of Maine	344,108	216	6	97	5.35
Florida International U.	158,775	196	5	110	5.35
U. of Arkansas-Little Rock	274,935	381	6	99	5.35
Southern Illinois U.	372,845	355	5	78	5.35
Roger Williams U.	275,636	383	7	110	5.35
California Western	306,682	615	9	110	5.35
Howard U.	428,494	374	9	105	5.30
U. of Missouri Columbia	342,755	396	8	73	5.25
Quinnipiac U.	378,365	400	8	98	5.25
Southern U.	453,396	284	6	94	5.25
George Mason U.	423,882	316	7	96	5.20
William Mitchell CoL	325,530	674	7	106	5.20
Albany LS	620,541	472	7	104	5.15
Willamette U.	279,440	492	3	113	5.15
U. of Hawaii at Manoa	315,036	355	5	94	5.15
Brooklyn LS	526,120	665	9	108	5.15
Valparaiso U.	312,170	347	6	113	5.05
Temple U.	552,940	683	10	96	5.05
Pace U.	367,541	346	9	102	5.00
Marquette U.	308,104	371	9	106	4.95
Widener U.-Delaware	386,881	432	11	107	4.95
U. of Denver	341,342	333	14	104	4.90
North Carolina Central U.	316,615	254	7	100	4.90
U. of Nevada Las Vegas	249,094	287	7	106	4.90
Stetson U.	387,116	487	5	103	4.80
U. of Missouri-Kansas City	310,947	515	7	100	4.80
Gonzaga U.	274,172	452	8	110	4.80
U. of Dayton	295,590	501	4	102	4.80
Campbell U.	182,811	411	5	103	4.75
Vermont LS	233,188	360	7	110	4.75
Florida St. U.	454,681	340	8	89	4.75
St John's U.	476,215	571	8	99	4.75
Barry U.	208,662	339	8	93	4.70
Santa Clara U.	324,224	493	8	106	4.70
Michigan St. U.	252,116	455	7	109	4.70
Whittier LS	379,717	386	4	103	4.70
Franklin Pierce LC	237,785	232	6	105	4.65
Western St. U.	184,125	336	6	109	4.60
Texas Wesleyan U.	194,355	254	7	112	4.60
Samford U.	279,437	474	7	107	4.55
Loyola U. New Orleans	325,264	448	8	107	4.55
U. of Oregon	387,059	306	6	108	4.50
Hamline U.	270,003	374	6	110	4.50
Syracuse U.	431,277	444	8	104	4.50
U. of Pacific	457,818	490	5	105	4.50
Touro College LC	429,683	380	8	86	4.40
Texas Tech U.	278,801	539	7	105	4.40
Chapman U.	264,266	322	4	96	4.35
U. of San Francisco	323,450	428	7	98	4.35
Widener U.-Harrisburg	202,698	341	5	106	4.30
U. of Detroit Mercy	338,601	299	5	91	4.30
U. of Houston	355,671	566	9	107	4.30
Duquesne U.	281,301	332	6	102	4.25
John Marshall SoL	374,328	624	9	100	4.25
St. Thomas U. SoL	312,849	443	4	106	4.25
U. of Wyoming	280,678	250	2	107	4.20
U. of Arkansas	273,508	335	0	99	4.20
Benjamin Cardozo	489,443	483	5	88	4.20
U. of Montana	117,633	364	7	84	4.15
Mercer U.	320,609	321	5	68	4.15
Suffolk U.	346,656	880	10	103	4.15
Oklahoma City U.	299,535	354	7	102	4.10
Appalachian SoL	181,550	232	5	78	4.05
U. of Baltimore	339,684	339	10	110	4.00
U. of Idaho	200,322	360	3	92	4.00
St Mary's U.	389,580	395	5	104	4.00
New England SoL	337,782	378	9	104	3.95
Northern Illinois U.	234,609	197	5	99	3.90
Rutgers U.-Camden	428,032	403	6	103	3.90
Seattle U.	343,290	367	8	119	3.85
Baylor U.	213,737	279	6	112	3.85
Seton Hall U.	443,681	540	10	91	3.85
Georgia St. U.	330,727	354	6	105	3.80

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Hofstra University School of Law in Hempstead, N.Y. (ranked 93rd). “Librarians are best suited to translating information into answers. Herein lies the value-added of our profession. Librarians can organize and distill information into a manageable, concise form.”

Trina Tinglum, research librarian at the University of St. Thomas School of Law (179th), believes that the advent of new technologies makes the traditional role of the library more complex. Librarians will have to be more specialized in collection development, cataloguing and indexing and reference and education. Librarians are already dealing with new issues that are a direct result of the Internet.

Issues such as whether a resource is available via the Internet for free, whether it is more effective for research as a print product, whether there is a competing product that is easier to use and what kind of license should be purchased will need to be addressed, Tinglum said.

“Do we get 15 passwords, purchase for the library staff only, or for the whole university?,” she said. “How does the electronic information get disseminated to the patron?”

Law libraries like the one at the University of Texas (ranked 20th) not only helps to find and research information, but creates information resources as well.



Library staff have digitized all of the historical Texas constitutions and convention materials, created an online component to its Law in Popular Culture Collection, developed resources to highlight its rare book collection and will digitize many of the papers of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Tom Clark, one of the few Texans to serve on the high court.

Jeanne Price, director of public services, at the UT law library, law school faculty and students rely on librarians to identify new scholarship like that.

“[Librarians can] support current awareness needs, locate hard-to-find resources and undertake research on and increasingly wide variety of questions,” Price said.

Library of the future

Only 15 years ago, futurists were predicting that physical objects would be electroni-

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School	# volumes	Lib. study seating cap.	# prof. librarians	Hrs./wk open	Total score
Loyola U. Chicago	380,512	380	6	99	3.80
U. of Mississippi	319,733	336	7	102	3.75
Thomas Jefferson Sol	242,241	385	4	115	3.65
DePaul U.	370,565	465	7	94	3.60
U. of Memphis	263,573	306	4	105	3.50
Northeastern U.	263,806	353	8	95	3.45
City U. of New York	271,710	267	9	61	3.25
Golden Gate U.	300,276	347	8	95	3.10
U. of St. Thomas	107,445	379	4	96	3.00
Capital U.	257,105	460	6	94	2.95
Northern Kentucky U.	257,981	224	7	80	2.75
U. of Akron	284,361	302	4	95	2.70
Florida Coastal Sol	213,467	373	5	91	2.65

Source: ABA-LSAC 2005 Official Guide to ABA-Approved Law Schools

cally faxable. At the flip of a switch, an apple or a lamp could be faxed from location to location. That, along with other predictions about forthcoming technologies, has proven overly optimistic. With that caveat in place, and based on what technologies are available today, the experts have their views on the potential of law libraries.

Leigh sees a future where wireless services would allow users to communicate with librarians wherever they might be.

“Via PDA or BlackBerry, an attorney can access an information professional, whether in the heat of negotiation or in the courtroom,” she said. “Technology will allow

some software-based systems.”

But there are pitfalls of too heavy a reliance on technology as well. Probst warns that becoming dependent on database providers means that libraries lose control over which items will be available to its users. The library could also lose control of its expenses.

“No matter what, I believe the law libraries will become the hub of all data processing in the institution,” Baker said. ■

Colleen Gareau is a contributing reporter for the National Jurist

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**Indiana University
School of Law - Bloomington**

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