

NOCALL News

Northern California Association of Law Libraries
A chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Bianca Randall

Hello NOCALL,

Thank you to everyone who attended the recent business meeting and made it a success! Among other updates, the Networking Committee shared that they are searching for volunteers to organize the Holiday Four Corners event. Also, the Spring Institute Committee shared that the upcoming conference will be presented in hybrid format to accommodate both virtual and in-person attendees.

I mentioned in the meeting that if anyone has a personal interest project related to law librarianship, please don't hesitate to bring your ideas to the business meetings. [We have our pre-set committees](#) who continuously work on projects, but it's not a restriction on what we can do. If you have an idea and need a team, come to a business meeting and let us know! We'll be having two more meetings within the next 6 months, so please keep an eye out for invites.

Holidays in California can be tough. So many emotional options! There's pressure to give proper reverence to important events. Also joy at having time to spend on things that personally matter. Then fighting off seasonal depression from the dark cold weather. My lucky retired father is currently in the middle of a solo motorcycle trip from Northern California to the tip of South America. He says it's to see new places, but I'm pretty sure it's to escape the winter weather. Anyways, whether it's a motorcycle adventure or a relaxed time at home, I hope everyone gets the chance to appreciate the change in season.

Best,

Bianca

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PROFESSIONAL READING IN REVIEW

Refugio Acker-Ramirez and Kristin Brandt
U.C. Davis Law Library

“AI Assistance in Legal Analysis: An Empirical Study,” by Jonathan H. Choi and Daniel Schwarcz, 73 *Journal of Legal Education* (forthcoming, 2024). Available at https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4539836.

Does Generative AI help or hinder a law student’s ability to analyze the law? In this study, the authors compared the performance of law students on exams with and without the assistance of GPT-4. Students from two different law school classes completed exams on their own. After training and practice in usage of GPT-4, the students took a second different exam for the same course with the help of GPT-4. Overall, GPT-4 improved student performance on more straightforward multiple-choice questions. However, performance on complex essay questions varied by student skill level. Lower-performing students did better on essay questions when assisted by GPT-4, with scores improving about 45%. On the other hand, higher performing students did worse when helped by generative AI. Their scores declined by approximately 20%. The researchers theorized that generative AI might stifle creativity in higher performing students, allowing them to settle for easy answers rather than challenging themselves to think through issues. This study has important implications for the future of generative AI use, both in law schools and in practice.

“The Death of Search,” by Matteo Wong, *The Atlantic* (November 8, 2024). Available at <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2024/11/ai-search-engines-curiosity/680594/>

Google, OpenAI, Perplexity, and other platforms have been rolling out new AI-powered “search.” Rather than return lists of search results, these platforms provide overviews. The footnotes, or linked sources, are not especially easy to locate or click on. The author suggests that not clicking on sources is in fact the

goal: the platforms seek to keep users from clicking away, encouraging them to stay in the platform’s ecosystem, or more ominously, controlling not just how we access information, but how we think. Where this is going appears to be the end of hyperlinks and traditional search. This article is an essential read not only for those of us in the search profession, but also those who value exploration, mediating information for ourselves, unknown unknowns, and possibly even the internet itself.

“Copyright’s Labyrinth: Navigating Copyright Liability in Law Librarianship,” by Eric J. H. Chapman, *Legal Reference Services Quarterly* (July 2024), vol. 43, no. 3, pp. 177-203

Copyright law can be tricky, especially as libraries shift from print to digital collections. Section 108 of the Copyright Act allows libraries to make limited copies and distribute copyrighted works, but this doesn’t always apply to digital materials, especially when they’re licensed. A recent ruling in *Hachette Book Group v. Internet Archive*, 115 F.4th 163 (2d Cir. 2024) highlights the complexities, as the court ruled that mass distribution of copyrighted e-books wasn’t transformative and didn’t qualify as fair use. The article covers several important topics, including the lack of a clear definition of “library” in the Copyright Act, law librarians’ potential personal liability for infringement, and how to avoid statutory damages. Librarians are safer from these risks if they act within the scope of their job and have reasonable grounds to believe their use of copyrighted works constitutes fair use. However, most librarians don’t receive formal training in copyright law and often rely on self-study. Law librarians may face a higher standard due to their legal background. To address these challenges, the author recommends proactive measures such as reviewing library policies and procedures, consulting with legal counsel to address ambiguities, and advocating for mandatory copyright training—both on the job and within organizations like the American Association of Law Libraries and the American Library Association.

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“First Contact: Law Librarianship, the Triple Helix Dilemma, and the Overlooked Foundation of CRT in LIS,” by Nicholas Mignanelli and Grace Lo, *The Library Quarterly* (October 2024), vol. 94, no. 4, pp. 366-81.

This article provides a thorough overview of how law librarians have used critical race theory (CRT) since the 1980s to examine and critique legal research and information. It highlights Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic’s 1989 article, “Why Do We Tell the Same Stories? Law Reform, Critical Librarianship, and the Triple Helix Dilemma.” Delgado and Stefancic theorized that the three main legal classification systems at the time—the Library of Congress subject headings, Index

to Legal Periodicals, and the West Digest System—had major limitations. While these systems were useful, they also inhibited creativity and perpetuated existing ideas. In 2007, Delgado and Stefancic revisited the triple helix dilemma with a focus on computer-assisted legal research. They pointed out that computers can overwhelm users with results, giving them the impression of better search capabilities, when in fact, it limits their control and creativity. Since then, other law librarians have built on their work. The authors suggest that the triple helix dilemma could be applied more broadly across all types of libraries to explore how various information structures shape the experiences of marginalized individuals and communities.

INTRODUCING A NEW EXHIBITION AT THE CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT

Marie Silva, California Judicial Center Library

A new exhibition, organized by the California Judicial Center Library, is on display now in the Archives Room on the first floor of the Ronald M. George State Office Complex. Titled *Resolute and Resilient: Celebrating 175 Years of California Women and the Law*, the exhibition features illustrated panels and primary source materials celebrating California women’s contributions to the law and honoring the state’s pioneering women attorneys, judges, and justices. The materials highlight extraordinary women who challenged discrimination, broke professional barriers, and advanced equal justice in California and nationwide, including the former and current women justices of the California Supreme Court. An accompanying exhibition booklet is available online [here](#).



A segment of the new exhibition, Resolute and Resilient: Celebrating 175 Years of California Women and the Law

Although women in early California lacked basic legal and political rights—including the right to vote—they contributed to the development of the law as litigants and activists. The exhibition casts a spotlight on nineteenth-century women like the Mexican American novelist María Ruiz de Burton, who fought to defend her land holdings in Baja California and San Diego County in Mexican and U.S. courts for over two decades. Also featured are the early civil rights activists Mary Ellen Pleasant and Emma Jane Turner. These African American women courageously pressed lawsuits against San Francisco transit companies in the 1860s, asserting their right to ride on the city’s streetcars.

Members of California’s legal community are familiar with Clara Foltz, the state’s first woman attorney and the founder of California’s public defender system. The exhibition also celebrates less well-known female attorneys who achieved notable “firsts,” including Christine La Barraque (California’s first blind woman attorney), Annie Virginia Stephens Coker (California’s first African American woman attorney), Chiyoko Sakamoto (California’s first Asian American woman attorney), and Abby Abinanti (California’s first Native American woman attorney, now Chief Judge of the Yurok Tribal Court).

The women’s liberation movement challenged longstanding gender roles and propelled women into traditionally male professions, including the law. During the 1960s and ‘70s, new barriers were broken: future Second District Court of Appeal Presiding Justice Vaino Spencer became California’s first African American woman judge and Judge Frances Muñoz became the first Latina to ascend to the state judiciary. In 1977, Governor Jerry Brown appointed Rose Bird, then-40-years-old, as the 25th Chief Justice of



Chief Justice Rose E. Bird Court, circa 1984–1985, California Judicial Center Library, Special Collections & Archives

from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on the first floor of the Ronald M. George State Office Complex. Please direct inquiries to Archivist and Special Collections Librarian Marie Silva at marie.silva@jud.ca.gov.



Chiyoko Sakamoto, October 25, 1938, Los Angeles Times Photographic Collection, UCLA Library, Special Collections

California, making her the first woman to serve on the state Supreme Court. The exhibition includes materials related to her historic tenure and the contentious retention election of 1986 that brought it to an end.

Eight women have served on the California Supreme Court since Chief Justice Bird lost her retention election almost 40 years ago. Today, Chief Justice Patricia Guerrero presides over a female-majority court on which Associate Justices Carol A. Corrigan, Leondra R. Kruger, and Kelli M. Evans sit. The exhibition includes a section devoted to each of the nine women justices of the California Supreme Court, past and present. Photographs, artifacts, and manuscript materials highlight their extraordinary achievements and service.

The exhibition is open Monday through Friday

Timothy Sanzi

Dorraine Zief Law Library

University of San Francisco School of Law

How did you choose law librarianship as a career?

Libraries have been a part of my life for as long as I can remember, and I've always felt at home in library spaces. During law school, I worked part-time at the circulation desk, which introduced me to the unique role of law librarians. I was drawn to how they balance research expertise, teaching, and service to help others succeed. I realized that law librarianship combines my passions for education, research, and fostering learning environments, making it a perfect fit.

If you were not working as a law librarian, what would you most likely be doing?

If I weren't working in a law library or the legal field, I could see myself immersed in a historical archive or teaching English literature.

Who has had the greatest impact on your law librarian career?

Nicole Dyszlewski, Associate Dean for Curricular Innovation and Professor at Roger Williams University School of Law, has been a major influence. She's an incredible mentor who encouraged me to explore law librarianship as a career path after graduating with my J.D. and has always been a champion of my growth in legal education more broadly.

I'd also like to shout out Suzanne Mawhinney, who hired me at USF and trusted me with this incredible opportunity. Her confidence in me has been instrumental in my journey as a young professional in our field.

Is there anything obscure that you know more than the average bear about?

I have a deep knowledge of several eclectic topics, including Irish history, the unique past of Block Island, Rhode Island, the life and work of Johann Sebastian Bach, and the legacy of Aretha Franklin. I'm also passionate about film photography and longboard surfing. When I'm not diving into these interests, you can often find me running along Ocean Beach or through the City of San Francisco, training for my next road race!

What was the last book you read that you really enjoyed and why?

After reading her debut novel, *Love Me Tender*, I discovered *Playboy* after attending a reading by the author, Constance Debré. What captivated me about her writing was her sharp, unapologetic exploration of identity, freedom, and societal norms. Debré's fearless and introspective style made *Playboy* a compelling, provocative, and liberating read.

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