NOCALL News

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

EDITOR'S NOTE

The newsletter committee is pleased to bring you this issue of the *NOCALL News*. In addition to many of your favorite columns, this issue includes the candidate biographies for the upcoming NOCALL election.

Please remember, the *NOCALL News* needs your news! If you or your staff members have attended a seminar, published an article, received an award, been elected to an office, or done anything else interesting, please let us know! We'd love for you to share information about special projects you're working on, new or exciting services your library is offering, or anything else you think would be of interest to NOCALL members. Upcoming deadlines are March 7, 2025, and May 9, 2025. Please contact mpjohnson@saclaw.org if you are interested in contributing to the newsletter!

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PROFESSIONAL READING IN REVIEW

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

"Law Firm Library and Research Roles, Long Endangered, Are Making a Comeback," by Andrew Maloney, *American Lawyer* (October 4, 2024)

This article highlights how law firms are making a big shift by investing more in library and research roles, reversing a years-long trend of cutting librarian and research staff. The article references a recent report from Thomson Reuters, which shows that knowledge management and library and research management roles experienced the highest growth in both pay and headcount among all law firm staff positions in 2023. The report suggests that the surge in these roles could be a response to the anticipated rise in the use of generative AI tools, as firms gear up for more advanced AI workflows. The report also notes that, despite this recent boost, library and research roles still make up a small portion of the overall law firm staff compared to other groups. While there's still a lot of uncertainty about how AI will play out within firms, it's encouraging to see the growing demand for library and research roles.

"In-person and online library usage: an examination of factors that hinder and promote library usage among college students," by Nancy Da Silva, *Journal of Library Administration* (December 30, 2024).

What keeps students from using libraries? This study examined library usage of undergraduate business students at a large public university. The authors found that physical library space was a major draw for students. Students who did not have a quiet place to study or participated in student clubs were more likely to visit the library in person. Students with a quiet place to study were more likely to use the library online. Love of learning encouraged students to use the library online and in person. Overall, students reported higher usage of library physical space than library websites. The findings suggest the continuing importance of library spaces to attract students.

"Medium Matters in Preparing for Law Practice: Critical e-Reading," by Amanda L. Sholtis (September 30, 2024). *Duquesne Law Review*, Vol. 63 (forthcoming 2025)

Those who have gone to law school know that learning how to read complex legal materials, like case law, is no easy task. Despite the prevalence of e-reading in legal education, many students and law faculty are unaware of the difficulties involved in reading from a screen compared to print. Many students struggle to engage with digital text as deeply as they do with print. Yet, with proper support, students can become effective critical e-readers. The author proposes that law schools should incorporate e-reading skills throughout the curriculum to ensure students are equipped to pass the NextGen bar exam, which will be fully digital by 2026, and are prepared to practice law in an increasingly digital world. There are several strategies that can help improve digital reading comprehension, such as using print-based techniques, slowing down the reading pace, anchoring to a page, minimizing distractions, using digital tools like notes and comments, and taking regular breaks. By implementing these strategies, law schools can help students develop the e-reading skills needed for modern legal practice.

"Job control, library instruction, and burnout: a quantitative analysis of academic instruction librarians' experiences of job control while teaching," by Matthew Weirick Johnson, *College & Research Libraries*, vol. 86, no. 1 (2025).

Librarians often teach one-shot or standalone research sessions, which may impact their perceptions of job control. As Baharak Yousefi put it, "no physicist, historian, or geographer on our campus teaches this way: going around begging for the right to teach in a one-off manner." A previous study found that academic librarians with low job control may experience higher levels of burnout. In this small study, the author explored contributors to perceptions of job control, including instructional responsibilities. The author found two predictors of job control: experience in the field and training in instruction. These findings suggest that libraries can help newer librarians achieve more job control by providing instructional training opportunities, mentoring, and building communities of practice.

LEGAL TECH RECAP

Kristie Chamorro, UC Berkeley Law Library

Once again, AI seems to be everywhere, and legal tech is no exception! As usual, I've started with spotlighting the latest updates from legal tech tools and platforms. I've then zoomed out in the last section for a look at some big-picture GenAI news.

As always, please let me know if there are any new topics/trends/tools that you would like to see included in future updates.

Bloomberg Law

In January, Bloomberg Law launched two new GenAI tools (in beta): Bloomberg Law Answers and AI Assistant. Bloomberg Law Answers creates brief responses directly in search results with specific citations to different components of each answer, pulling from court opinions, practical guidance, and other key sources. AI Assistant is a chat-based, document-specific tool that appears in a side panel when viewing sources, allowing users to generate summaries and ask targeted questions about the documents they are viewing.

Bob Ambrogi highlighted that both tools prioritize source attribution by incorporating footnotes within their answers, specifying the origin of each part of the response. On a recent episode of *The Geek in Review* podcast, Bloomberg Law's Chief Product Officer emphasized that these new tools represent a broader application of GenAI within their platform.

ContractPod AI

In fall 2024, ContractPod AI introduced Leah Intelligence, a contract review solution that leverages GenAI to enhance contract assessment and risk mitigation and to allow users to tailor specific contract language, use cases, and industry-specific regulations. Discussing the new features on a recent *The Geek in Review* podcast episode, Atena Reyhani, Chief Product Officer, explained that Leah Intelligence not only positions ContractPodAI as a leader in generative AI for contract lifecycle management but also extends its capabilities

to broader enterprise applications, including compliance, obligation management, and entity analysis.

Hercules AI

HerculesAI (formerly ZERO) has launched Verify, an AI-powered legal billing compliance tool designed to help law firms detect and correct billing issues. A standout feature of *Verify* is its ability to process outside counsel guidelines and firm billing policies without requiring manual rule creation. Ambrogi covered the launch of Verify, noting that it helps firms stay on top of compliance at multiple stages—when time is recorded, after it's submitted, and during the pre-bill review process.

Lexis

Lexis made legal tech headlines with the launch of Protégé, its new "personalized AI assistant." Protégé is a big step up in LexisNexis's AI tools, allowing users to draft full transactional documents and litigation filings, analyze complex contracts, and even generate visual case timelines. It plugs in with document management systems like iManage and NetDocuments, so it can personalize output based on a lawyer's role, writing style, and preferred jurisdictions and can link citations back to source materials for verification.

Ambrogi pointed out that "[a]t the core of the Protégé release is its use of 'agentic AI' – technology that can autonomously complete tasks based on user goals, including reviewing its own work and identifying areas for improvement. The launch was also covered in Artificial Lawyer, the *Geek in Review podcast*, and Law.com.

NeosAI

On February 5, Assembly Software unveiled enhancements to NeosAI, the GenAI-powered features within its Neos case management platform. Ambrogi reported on the updates, including a How It Works video demonstration that offers a hands-on look at the new capabilities.

Trellis

In November 2024, Trellis introduced Trellis AI, a suite of GenAI tools that leverages its state trial court database. The new tools include motion drafting, case assessment, and legal research. Ambrogi reported on the launch, noting that "Trellis AI is drawing from an extensive database of court filings, which seems to have the potential to be particularly powerful." Legal Tech Hub also covered the Trellis AI news in its January Legal Tech briefing.

Wolters Kluwer

In the last newsletter, I covered the new GenAI features added to VitalLaw. VitalLaw was also the focus of the January CRIV semiannual call with Wolters Kluwer, which focused on its core features, including the Practical Content platform, new support resources, and recently introduced Hot Topics, available on selected practice area dashboards.

THINGS YOU SHOULD CHECK OUT

DeepResearch

On February 2, OpenAI introduced Deep Research, a tool for generating complex, detailed reports with up-to-date information. Initially available only to Pro users, it is set to expand to Pro and Team users in the future. The launch made headlines, from the New York Times to Bloomberg. Many commentators have been testing the tool, including experiments by Ambrogi, who used it to compile a compendium of legal ethics opinions on GenAI and to identify the best small firm law practice management tools. A detailed review on *The Verge* examined how it handled a legal query, highlighting its ability to generate structured legal summaries with real cases, while noting its limitations, such as missing key recent developments and requiring human oversight to ensure accuracy. For a comparison of how it performed against three other AI research tools, check out the Digital Digging blog.

DeepSeek & Local AI

Another headline grabbing launch that made waves in the stock market was the January 29 release of DeepSeek R1, an open-source GenAI model from Chinese AI research company DeepSeek. It captured widespread interest for delivering performance comparable to leading AI models at a fraction of the cost. Greg Lambert discussed its potential impact on legal tech in a recent *3 Geeks and a Law Blog* post, noting that DeepSeek R1 can run locally–on individual computers or in secure on-premises environments–giving the potential for secure, on-premises AI in law firms and corporate legal departments. He also flagged concerns about the model's Chinese origins, potential security risks, and regulatory issues, leaving it up to legal tech professionals to decide whether it's a "game-changer or just another flash in the pan."

Josh Kubiki underscored the growing importance of local AI in a recent *Brainyacts* post, explaining that locally run AI can keep data private and allow for customization without relying on cloud-based services. He stressed the need to understand its potential for enhancing efficiency on legal tasks while also addressing security, compliance, and ethical concerns.

Leah Granger

Legal Librarian & Liaison for Special Projects

Office of San Francisco City Attorney

How did you choose law librarianship as a career?
I'm a first generation professional. I didn't know any lawyers growing up and I definitely didn't know about law librarianship as a career option. So I went to law school with the vague notion that I wanted to work in environmental law and on access to clean water, but I didn't really know what that would look like on a daily basis. My first year of law school was brutal and I realized in my first summer litigation internship that I didn't want to work as an environmental lawyer. I entered my second year in a bit of a crisis and found myself in Advanced Legal Research with Bob Berring, Kathleen Vanden Heuvel, and Mike Levy. They reminded me what I loved about the law. After taking International & Foreign Legal Research with Marci Hoffman – I was sold on Law librarianship as my career path!

Who or what has had the greatest impact on your law librarian career?
Marci Hoffman was instrumental in my early career. She found a spot for me at Berkeley Law, training me in all things foreign and international law, giving me stewardship of the UN Legal collection at Berkeley after Wiltrud Harms retired, and inviting me to work on the transformation of Foreign Law Guide when it was purchased by Brill. The FLG project was pivotal in my career – establishing a pattern of working with products/organizations through transformational moments.

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

I have a fiction and non-fiction book to highlight here.

In fiction, I just finished *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig. The premise of the story is that a suicidal person on the edge of death, visits a library of all their potential alternative lives. The story was clever, the writing good, and as both the mother of a teenager and a person of middle-age, I enjoyed spending some time thinking about the books I chose not to write and all the branching unwritten books available to my daughter.

For non-fiction, I just finished re-reading *Anthro-Vision: A New Way to See in Business and Life* by Gillian Tett. Tett is a journalist working for the US editorial desk of the *Financial Times*, but started her career as an anthropologist. In this book she lays out an argument for the value of cultural anthropology in a business world dominated by technology and data analysis. As a profession, we are frequently asked to explain our continued value, and I appreciate her framing and terminology. The law librarian's reference interview bears a lot of resemblance to the rich narrative of the participant observer anthropologist.

Candidate for Member at Large

Stephanie Grace

Research Librarian
Mabie Law Library, UC Davis School of Law
April 2024-Present

Education:

J.D., Capital University Law School
MLIS, University of Washington
Master of Sports Administration, Ohio University
B.S., Exercise Science and Sport Studies, University of Tampa

Previous Employment:

Organization: Gallagher Law Library, University of Washington
Title: Law Librarianship Intern
Years Employed: October 2023-June 2024

Candidate Statement: I'm a first-year Research Librarian at UC Davis School of Law, and I'm excited about the potential to serve as a Member at Large for NOCALL. After 20 years in intercollegiate athletics administration and undergraduate instruction, I transitioned to academic law librarianship to combine my love for teaching, research, and connecting people and resources. I'm particularly interested in using inclusive practices like universal design and trauma-informed education to make library services accessible and engaging for all, as well as exploring how emerging technologies can enhance our work. If elected, I'd bring my curiosity, creativity, and collaborative spirit to the board.

NOCALL Committees, Offices, and Activities:

While I'm new to NOCALL, I'm eager to get more involved and contribute to the organization's goals. In 2024, I was glad to begin connecting with NOCALL colleagues at AALL in Chicago and to attend the Spring Institute and Legal Research Instruction Roundtable.

Other Professional Activities:

Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect, Baseball Caucus, AALL

Member, Chancellor's Committee for LGBTQIA+ Communities, UC Davis

Refugio Acker-Ramirez

Law Librarian
Mabie Law Library at UC Davis School of Law
Davis, CA
Jan 2023-present

Education:

BA (Sociology and Ethnic Studies), University of San Diego
MLIS, UCLA

Previous Employment:

Organization: Akin Gump
Title: Research Specialist
Years Employed: 2010-2022

Candidate Statement

I'm currently serving on the NOCALL board as a Member-at-Large, and I'm excited about the chance to apply what I've learned and contribute to our organization. With the support of my colleagues, I've gained valuable insights and am eager to take on more responsibility and deepen my involvement.

As I prepare to run for the VP/President-Elect position, I look forward to continuing my growth and collaborating with others. I'm especially enthusiastic about the opportunity to help organize the Spring Institute, which I believe plays a key role in supporting professional development and building connections.

I'm committed to using my skills to advance NOCALL's mission and assist our members in achieving their goals. I am eager to make a meaningful impact and contribute to shaping NOCALL's future.

NOCALL Committees, Offices and Activities

NOCALL, Member-at-Large 2024-2025

NOCALL-Spring Institute 2023, Attendee

Other Professional Activities

AALL member 2009-present

SCALL member 2010-2022

Candidate for Secretary

Amreet Sandhu

Law Librarian
Sacramento, CA

Education:
J.D., MLIS Candidate

Previous Employment:
Organization: Sacramento County Public Law Library
Title: Outreach & Training Librarian
Years Employed: 1 year, 10 months

Candidate Statement:

Esteemed NOCALL Members & Colleagues: It warms my heart to learn I was nominated for the secretary role. I would enthusiastically accept should membership elect me to lead.

 Some of my current and past boards/committees include, in relevant part:

- **Member**, American Association of Law Libraries Governmental Law Libraries Advocacy & Legislative Committee, 2024 – 2025;

- **Member**, California Library Association Ursula Meyer Advocacy Fund Board, 2023 – 2025;

- **Member**, California Council of County Law Librarians Legislative Committee, 2023 – 2024;

- **Member**, California Library Association Legislative Committee, 2023 – 2024;

- **Treasurer**, National Lawyers Guild (NLG)/NLG Foundation, New York, NY, 2019 – 2021; **Regional Vice President**, 2018 – 2019; **Queer Caucus Chair**, 2018; **Founding President/Sacramento Chapter**, 2016 – 2018;

- **President**, Elmhurst Neighborhood Association, 2015 – 2016;

- **Secretary**, Elmhurst Neighborhood Association, 2014 – 2015;

- **Vice President**, Lewis & Clark Law School Student Bar Association, 2007 – 2008; and

- **Law School Representative**, Lewis Clark Law School Diversity Committee 2007 – 2008.

I would be delighted to contribute my time and talent to the NOCALL board as I complete the final leg of my MLIS program at San Jose State University. I am happy to answer any questions and provide samples of my work at: Amreet.Sandhu@gmail.com. I hope to earn your vote in this election!

With appreciation, Amreet Sandhu, J.D., MLIS Candidate

NOCALL Committees, Offices and Activities

Host, NOCALL 4 Corners Event, Sacramento/Davis, 2023, 2024

Attendee, NOCALL Spring Institute, 2023, 2024

Other Professional Activities

Panelist, California Library Association Annual Convention: Balancing Act, Self Care & Shelf Care, Advocacy 101: A Committed, Caring, and Balanced Approach, 2024

Panelist, California Library Association Annual Convention: Balancing Act, Self Care & Shelf Care, Public Law Libraries as Community Self Care, 2024

Panelist, California Library Association Ursula Meyer Advocacy Training, Day in the District 2024: Connecting With Our Legislators, 2024

Presenter, California Library Association Ursula Meyer Advocacy Training, Read Me: Writing Your Way to Success in Library Advocacy, 2024

Presenter, Sacramento County Bar Association, Wiley Manual Bar Association, & California Association of Black Lawyers, The Legacy of Nathaniel Sexus Colley, 2023

Writer, Sacramento Lawyer Magazine, Nathaniel Colley's Legacy: Bringing the Civil Rights Movement's Legal Arm to Sacramento, 2023

Curator, Constitution Day Civil Rights Display, The Justice Anthony M. Kennedy Library & Learning Center Federal Courthouse Library, 2024

Recipient, American Association of Law Libraries, LexisNexis/John R. Johnson Memorial Grant, 2023

Recipient, American Association of Law Libraries, George A. Straight Minority Scholarship & Fellowship, 2023

Curator, Sacramento Public Library Archives, This Is Our Home: The Save New Helvetia Collection, 2021

Holly Herndon

Research and Instruction Librarian
UC College of the Law, San Francisco (formerly UC Hastings)
San Francisco
2019 - present

Education:
JD, Boston College Law School
MLIS, University of Washington

Previous Employment:
California Department of Justice, Attorney General's Office
Title: Librarian
Years Employed: 2018-2019

Candidate Statement

 NOCALL is an important organization that provides professional growth and networking opportunities to our members. It's been a privilege to serve on the Board as secretary for the past 4 years. I would like to offer continuity and some institutional memory by continuing to serve on the Board.

NOCALL Committees, Offices and Activities

 Secretary, 2020-2024

Government Relations Committee, 2024

Spring Institute volunteer, 2023

Other Professional Activities

 ACRL IS Committee, 2019-2021

2024-2025 NOCALL Officers and Committees

OFFICE	NAME	EMAIL
President	Bianca Randall, Orrick	president@nocall.org
VP/President Elect	Laura Moorer, DC Court of Appeals	vicepresident@nocall.org
Secretary	Holly Herndon, UC Hastings School of Law	secretary@nocall.org
Treasurer	Andrew Gurthet, Santa Clara University	treasurer@nocall.org
Past President	Tony Pelczynski, UC Law San Francisco	pastpresident@nocall.org
Member at Large	Refugio Acker-Ramirez, UC Davis School of Law	memberatlarge@nocall.org
Member at Large	Megan Books, Alameda County Law Librarian	memberatlarge@nocall.org
COMMITTEE CLUSTERS		
ADMINISTRATION		
AALL Liaison	Holly Riccio, California Judicial Center Library	aallliaison@nocall.org
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Audit and Budget	Tina Dumas, Nossaman LLP	auditandbudget@nocall.org
Constitution & Bylaws	David McFadden, Southwestern Law School	constitutionbylaws@nocall.org
Nominations	Taryn Marks, Stanford Law School	nominations@nocall.org
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Spring Institute	Laura Moorer, DC Court of Appeals	springinstitute@nocall.org
MEMBERSHIP		
Academic Relations	Kristina Chamorro, UC Berkeley School of Law	academicrelations@nocall.org
Membership	Jessica Brasch, California Judicial Center Library	membership@nocall.org
Placement	Robyn M. Moltzen, Sacramento County Public Law Library	placement@nocall.org
OUTREACH		
Government Relations	Diane Rodriguez, San Francisco Law Library	govrelations@nocall.org
Access to Legal Information	Seeking a new chair	access@nocall.org
Public Relations	Seeking a new chair	publicrelations@nocall.org
RECOGNITION		
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