

# NOCALL News

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

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Laura Moorner

Librarian Robert D. Wedgeworth once noted that “[l]ibraries are the nerve centers of our communities.” And communities are all around us! We work as law librarians, but we are members of so many different communities—family, school, social, professional, medical, alumni, childhood, pet, hobby, book club, volunteer, religious, and the list of communities goes on and on! These communities became so important to all of us during and after the pandemic, when we all adjusted and adapted to these same communities and for many of us, new community realities.

For our family, in 2021, this new reality included my husband accepting a job as a park ranger at Pinnacles National Park. At the time, we had been living in Rockville, MD for over 20 years, raising our two children, and I had just started a new job as the law librarian for the DC Court of Appeals (a solo role). We were very set in our communities and comfortable, and when he accepted this new job, our communities were thrown into chaos, and the challenge of leaving behind everything we knew became a scary ordeal. Although challenging, I am infinitely grateful that we took that leap of faith and decided to embrace new communities and thankful for how those new communities embraced our family back.

I am so pleased to serve as NOCALL's next President. Almost two weeks after we had moved to Hollister, I joined NOCALL (I was already a member of LLSDC) and introduced myself on the listserv. Within minutes, I had the kindest responses from members who didn't know me at all—many of you welcoming me, asking me how in the world could a solo-librarian from D.C. work remotely, offering me trip ideas, and becoming a new community for me right away. I am so thankful to be part of this professional community and have learned so much from all of you!

If I could lay out one goal for NOCALL for the next year it would be to re-discover our community—our NOCALL community! In the hustle and bustle of surviving the pandemic and new routines in life, it's time to re-connect again, look at NOCALL with a new lens, and celebrate this wonderful community.

With that focus, my challenge to you is to share your community with us! Starting in July, I want to highlight a NOCALL community member—you and your libraries! It doesn't have to be fancy but a short note about you, your collection/services, a photo or two of your library or workspace, or even a fun “Did you know...” tidbit that allows us to learn more about this community.



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I will be sending around a sign-up sheet for the next year and I truly hope you will share your libraries with us—as NOCALL is a vibrant, rich, strong community, and we have some amazing libraries and librarians to highlight and celebrate!

In addition to summer being almost here, it's time again for AALL's annual conference and I hope to see many of you there as we take part in enjoying another remarkable community.

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your President for the next year. And if you are ever in Washington, D.C., please let me know and if I am there, I can give you a tour of our beautiful historic courthouse. And if you ever want a ranger lead tour of Pinnacles NP, that can be arranged as well. Thank you again for being a part of our wonderful NOCALL community—our members are simply the best!

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## PROFESSIONAL READING IN REVIEW

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

**“Effectiveness Of Research Plans: A Case Study,”**  
by Savanna L. Nolan & Thomas Striepe, *University of Georgia Law School, Legal Studies* (2025)

Ask any law librarian and they will tell you that planning your research strategy is an important part of the legal research process. Although research plans are introduced in legal research courses, students often overlook them in summer jobs, clinics, and post-graduate work. To explore whether

research plans improve research outcomes, the authors were awarded the AALL LexisNexis Research Grant. While the findings did not offer strong statistical proof, they indicated that students who used research plans identified more legal issues, performed better overall, and felt more confident and organized. Research plans can help researchers stay focused, reduce time and costs when using premium databases, and create a record of work that can be shared with supervisors. The authors hope their findings will encourage further research in this area.

**“One Site for All: Using Universal Design Principles to Create an Inclusive Law Library Website for Neurodivergent Students,”** by Jingwei Zhang, *Legal Reference Services Quarterly* (April 2025)

This article explores how academic law library websites can better support neurodivergent students by applying universal design principles to create more accessible and inclusive digital spaces. As the number of neurodivergent students in higher education continues to grow, it is essential for library websites to address their unique cognitive needs and information-seeking behaviors. The article highlights common barriers these users face such as information overload, complex navigation menus, and inconsistent layouts. To help address these challenges, the author recommends clear organization, plain language, visual aids, and user control over multimedia elements. Drawing from examples across various law library websites, it outlines best practices and demonstrates how thoughtful design enhances usability for all patrons.

## NOCALL News

The NOCALL News is published five times a year by the Northern California Association of Law Libraries, a chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries, and is a benefit of membership.

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**“AI Tools in Society: Impacts on Cognitive Thinking and the Future of Critical Thinking,”** by Michael Gerlich, *Societies*, vol. 15, no. 1 (2025)

This study explored the impact of AI tools on critical thinking, with an emphasis on cognitive offloading, or the delegation of cognitive tasks to AI. Participants were 666 United Kingdom residents, from a range of age groups, professions, and educational attainment. The study found that higher usage of AI led to decreased critical thinking and cognitive engagement. This was more pronounced in younger participants. Higher levels of education correlated to stronger critical thinking, even with AI usage. The author warns that while AI may create efficiencies, it encourages individuals to offload thinking, leading to diminished ability to evaluate information, detect biases, and engage in deeper analysis.

**“Quiet Catalogers and Loud Liaisons: The Big Five Personality Traits in Public Services and Technical Services Library Job Advertisements,”** by Rayla E. Tokarz, *Journal of Library Administration* (May 27, 2025).

Librarians are often subject to stereotypes. Public services librarians may be perceived as extroverted or customer-service oriented, while technical services librarians may be detail-oriented, analytical, or quiet. This study examined the extent to which libraries refer to Big Five personality traits in job advertisements and whether sought-after traits differ by type of position. The authors found that Agreeableness was the most referenced personality trait for both public services and technical services positions, with the descriptor “collaborative” most used in this category. For public services positions, Conscientiousness was the next highest trait, with the descriptor “independent,” most referenced. The second highest trait for technical services positions was Openness to Experience, described most frequently by the terms “analytical” and “creative.” The author cautions library search committees to take a hard look at job advertisements, especially generic descriptors like “works independently and collaboratively,” and include only personality traits that are specifically required for the position.

## LEGAL TECH RECAP

Kristie Chamorro, UC Berkeley Law Library

AI continues to dominate the legal tech headlines, with updates from major platforms and scrappy startups alike. This month’s column follows the usual format with updates and new products, and also highlights several cautionary tales of attorneys running into trouble with hallucinated citations – a trend that shows no signs of slowing down! As always, please let me know if there are any topics, trends, or tools you’d like to see in future columns.

### Aderant

[Aderant](#), a business and financial platform for larger and mid-sized law firms founded in 1978, has been focusing its development on the cloud over the last decade. In May, Aderant announced a number of new cloud products and expanded capabilities for askMADDI, its AI-powered chat assistant. At the company’s Momentum Global Conference, Bob Ambrogi [reported](#) that Aderant emphasized a strategic push toward AI-enabled cloud innovation while reassuring users that their popular on-premises software isn’t going away anytime soon.

### Billables AI

In May, [Billables.ai](#), a timekeeping tool that uses AI to passively track lawyer activity, [announced](#) an integration with [MyCase](#), a popular practice management platform to automate timekeeping for law firms. With this integration, Billables AI users can automatically convert emails, meetings, and document work into draft time entries, which now flow directly into MyCase for review and billing.

### Definely

On a recent *The Geek in Review* podcast episode, [Definely](#) co-founders Feargus MacDaeid and Nnamdi Emelifeonwu shared how the platform began as an accessibility tool for MacDaeid, who is blind, and evolved into a suite of AI-powered contract drafting tools. Its three core components—Vault, Draft, and Proof—help surface relevant clauses, preview linked terms without scrolling, and run checks on citations and formatting. In early June, Definely [launched Enhance](#), an agentic-driven AI tool for contract navigation. Built directly into Microsoft Word, Enhance allows lawyers to ask questions, generate clauses, and analyze contracts without switching tools or uploading files.

## Libra

In April, [Libra](#), a legal AI workspace that describes itself as a “Swiss army knife for lawyers,” [launched](#) “Libra v2,” an upgraded version of its AI-powered platform that uses a custom large language model to support legal research, document review, and team collaboration.

## LexSelect

[LexSelect](#), which builds tools aimed at attorneys who deal with large volumes of data, [unveiled](#) a next-generation parsing engine in late May that uses AI to extract structured data from unstructured legal documents (like scanned PDFs). Ambrogi [covered](#) the launch, reporting that early users say it reduces document review time by up to 60% and eliminates manual data extraction errors.

## Lighthouse

In May, [Lighthouse](#), an e-discovery services provider, launched [Lighthouse AI Search](#), an AI tool allowing litigators to query full document collections in plain English. This search engine surfaces evidence and narrative insights without requiring complex search syntax and is designed to work with millions of documents.

## Midpage

Legal research startup [Midpage](#) recently announced a \$4 million seed funding round and unveiled [Proposition Search](#), a new feature inspired by Casetext’s Parallel Search. The new tool was covered by [Artificial Lawyer](#), [Ambrogi](#) and [Law360 Pulse](#). Users can enter a full legal proposition and view direct matches in a separate column next to traditional results.

## Syllo

[Syllo](#), an AI-powered litigation workspace that is being used by firms such as [Quinn Emanuel](#), recently made the legal tech news when it [partnered with](#) Ballard Spahr to win the International Legal Technology’s (ILTA) 2025 Trailblazers Award for automating first-stage document review. A [March 2025 white paper](#) co-authored by Syllo and litigators from seven law firms details how Syllo’s agentic AI review system outperforms traditional tech-assisted review in complex litigation settings.

## Thomson Reuters

In early June, Thomson Reuters [announced](#) a next-generation version of its CoCounsel AI platform, describing it as a shift from chat assistants to an agentic system capable of planning and executing multi-step legal workflows. Ambrogi [noted](#) that the rollout will integrate guided workflows into Westlaw, Practical Law, and CoCounsel, enabling capabilities like drafting demand letters, analyzing depositions, and reviewing licensing agreements. A recent [Maginative post](#) also covered the launch.

## Trellis

[Trellis](#), a state court litigation platform, has partnered with the law firm [Fisher Phillips](#) to integrate its AI-generated case strategy reports directly into the daily case alerts received by the firm’s attorneys whenever their clients are named in a state court case. This new partnership is covered in [Law360](#), [LawNext](#), and [Investors Hangout](#).

## Wordsmith

Scotland-based legal intelligence startup [Wordsmith](#) [announced](#) a \$25 million Series A funding round to expand its AI-powered legal agent platform. Founded by lawyer-turned-engineer Ross McNairn, Wordsmith builds fleets of AI agents to support in-house legal teams with tasks like contract review, risk checks, and policy guidance. Law360 [reported](#) that the funding will allow the company to deepen its AI capabilities and launch a “legal enablement academy” to train a new generation of legal engineers.

**Attorney blunders with AI continue:** Since the last newsletter, more cases involving AI-generated hallucinations have landed lawyers in hot water. [Ambrogi](#) reported on a California judge sanctioning Ellis George and K&L Gates \$31,000 after they submitted a brief with nine faulty citations — even after the errors were flagged. He also covered a Toronto case in which a judge threatened contempt after a lawyer submitted a brief citing fictitious cases generated by AI tools including Westlaw Precision. These followed an [April incident](#) where the attorney for MyPillow CEO Mike Lindell filed a motion with nearly 30 AI-generated citations. [Legal Tech Insider](#) highlighted two additional cases: in Alabama, four lawyers were ordered to show cause for using ChatGPT in court filings, and in Florida, a judge struck a motion to dismiss filled with inaccurate AI-generated citations.



## Amanda Burton

Goodwin Procter LLC

### ***Career***

- Law Librarianship as a career: I was actually a public librarian for many years before coming to law librarianship. I had moved with my husband to Dallas and thought a change would be nice. The director at Locke Lord took a chance on me even though I had very little experience. Once I got situated, I knew it's what I wanted to do.
- Keeping vital? One of the most important things I can think we can do is broadcast that law librarians are at the forefront of new technologies. Instead of waiting for someone to ask if we have something, when I see a perfect use case among any new features or product for a "frequent flyer", I like to send a quick email letting them know about it. It generally creates usage and interest from other attorneys. Meet them where they are, you could say.
- If I weren't a law librarian, I would have liked to have been in politics. More think tank, less kissing babies. Another way to get my research and current events fix.

### ***Personal***

- I lost on Jeopardy during the Alex Trebek era.
- My favorite meal of all time is ajiaco, which is a hearty soup from Colombia.
- 5 books that impacted me. Each of these stayed with me, making me think harder about myself and helped me put empathy at the center of my beliefs.
  - Evicted, Matthew Desmond
  - The Toilers of the Sea, Victor Hugo
  - The Emperor of All Maladies, Siddhartha Mukherjee
  - A Wrinkle in Time, Madeline L'Engel
  - The Lazarus Project, Aleksander Hemon

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