

# NOCALL News

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



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello NOCALL,

It's been an eventful (aka crazy) few months, especially in California. I missed writing for the last newsletter because I live in SoCal and was actively monitoring the Palisades and other Los Angeles fires. My home was safe in the end, but it was eerie to see the effects of a small-scale migration. The highways were clogged, the skies were dark, services were burdened everywhere, and there were generally more people walking around asking for directions. A lot of interesting stories came out of that too - for instance, [pets surrendered at shelters were evacuated to Utah](#), [99 year old Dick Van Dyke was rescued by neighbors from his Malibu home](#), and firefighters from all over came to help LA, including firefighters from [Canada and Mexico](#). Even firefighters from [California prisons](#) were called on to assist. Those weeks were full!

In news more directly related to NOCALL, the board has been working on simplifying the NOCALL constitution and bylaws. We approved a draft where these two items will be condensed into a single document. The draft will be distributed on the NOCALL listserv and we'll request a motion to approve the new document at the upcoming April 10 business meeting. An ongoing issue for NOCALL officers is that we need to be well-versed in the procedures and rules of our organization, and this knowledge is typically gained on-the-job. To make it easier on our future leaders and to keep in sync with the trends among AALL chapters, we've condensed the NOCALL constitution and bylaws into a single reference document. I'm looking forward to the lasting positive impact this will have on the future of NOCALL.

See you at the Spring Institute and the Business Meeting!

Bianca

### NOCALL News

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## PROFESSIONAL READING IN REVIEW

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

**“Examining the impact of COVID-19 on hiring and onboarding practices in academic libraries: A survey of hiring managers,”** by Lauren M. Fletcher, Roslyn Kohlbrecher, Rachel Whitney and Faythe Thurman, *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, Vol. 51 (2025)

COVID-19 ushered in changes in how libraries both recruited and onboarded new employees. The authors of this study surveyed academic library managers to find out which of these changes may be permanent. The survey found that some libraries had already instituted virtual components to their interview process pre-pandemic, while others shifted quickly to virtual and hybrid options. Most respondents viewed virtual hiring as effective and more equitable, but were uncertain as to whether virtual interview options will continue to be offered in the future. Technology problems, including internet connection issues, were common during virtual interviews. One suggestion was to provide practice sessions to allow candidates to test technology. Since the pandemic, academic libraries have shifted away from full-day or multiple-day final interviews, with half-day interviews becoming more prevalent. Survey respondents reported hiring freezes, lost positions, and smaller applicant pools during COVID, resulting in understaffing at libraries, which still persists. Onboarding challenges remain, particularly for remote workers. Suggestions for improving onboarding practices include formal and informal meetings to connect new employees to campus and assigning colleagues to act as mentors.

**“Understanding our students: Reflecting on the academic library’s role in meeting the needs of evolving student populations,”** by María Evelia Emerson, *Journal of Library Administration*, Vol. 65, no. 2, pages 255-266 (2025)

Who is the “traditional” student? The author urges us to reexamine our notions of the students we serve and how they engage with the library, given that nontraditional students now make up 74% of college undergraduates. For example, 23% of undergraduates are over 25 years

old, or adult learners, and nearly half of this group have dependent children. Almost 17% identify as LGBTQA+, and 30% of these students are considering dropping out. Thirty-five percent are students of color. Nearly a third receive Pell grants, which are awarded to low-income students. Fifty-four percent are first-generation college students. Six percent of undergrads and 7% of graduate students are veterans. Twenty-one percent of undergrads have a disability, though this number is likely underreported. The author has several suggestions for making libraries more inclusive. For example, librarians should review policies that may create barriers to library usage. This may include fines, policies excluding children, or signage that emphasizes what is not allowed rather than what is. Librarians can bring the library to students through satellite locations, de-stress events, and workshops at other campus locations. The author suggests collaborating with student organizations – at the author’s library, one student group organized “Neurodivergent Hangouts” – as well as other campus partners, such as athletics departments, dining services, and admissions.

**“Law and Its Discovery: The Roles of Law Librarianship and Legal Information Science in the Age of GenAI,”** by Paul D. Callister, *SSRN* (2025)

This article explores the relationship between law librarianship and legal information science in response to the rapid rise of generative AI. It examines the relationship between these disciplines and argues that law librarianship should adapt by integrating insights from legal information science. For instance, while law librarianship has traditionally depended on established systems like the Library of Congress Subject Headings and Westlaw’s headnote system, the author challenges readers to consider how generative AI might enhance existing classification methods. By investigating new approaches to taxonomies, case classification, and AI testing frameworks, the article offers a forward-looking perspective on how these fields can work together to improve legal research, education, and access to justice in an increasingly AI-driven world.

**“Assessing Information Literacy in the Age of Generative AI: A Call to the National Conference of Bar Examiners,”** by Amy Emerson, **Legal Reference Services Quarterly**, pages 1-56 (2025)

The emergence of generative AI tools in the legal market marks a pivotal moment. Lawyers are transitioning from using technology to assist their work to relying on proprietary AI tools to handle some research tasks. This shift raises ethical concerns about attorneys relying on AI tools for legal research without fully understanding how these tools work. As the National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBE) updates the bar exam, there is a call to include information literacy in the Multistate Professional Responsibility Exam (MPRE) to properly assess the legal research skills of newly licensed lawyers. The author argues that incorporating information literacy is crucial, as lawyers can only fulfill their duty of technological competence in legal research by fully understanding how the AI tools they use function.

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## LEGAL TECH RECAP

Kristie Chamorro, UC Berkeley Law Library

Greetings from the [ABA Tech Show](#) in Chicago! I’m writing this issue amid a whirlwind of demos, panels, and conversations with legal tech folks. There’s a lot to digest, and I’m looking forward to sharing a full roundup of what I’ve learned in the next column.

This issue includes the usual roundup of legal tech tool updates and things you should check out. After including a section on general-purpose GenAI tools in the last issue, I’ve decided to keep it – since many of us are starting to use these tools in our law librarian roles, I want to make sure I’m capturing changes on that front too!

### Law Insider

[Law Insider](#) has launched a new suite of AI-powered contract tools aimed at making contract automation more affordable. On March 25, Bob Ambrogi [explained](#) that the new tools include AI-assisted clause drafting, contract redlining, and customizable AI playbooks. Subscription plans start at \$29/month for individuals and a free version is planned for Law Insider’s 1.2 million users.

### Lexis

At [Legalweek](#) in March, Lexis [announced](#) a major upgrade to [Protégé](#). The new version supports voice commands to ask legal questions, start drafting, and summarize case law. The upgrade also includes agentic AI tools including *Planner Agent* for breaking down complex tasks, an *Interactive Agent* to adjust workflows, and a *Self-Reflection Agent* that improves outputs. Ambrogi, [reporting from Legalweek](#), highlighted the expanded voice functionality and agentic AI features as a major step forward in usability and output quality

### Minerva26

On March 24, eDiscovery Assistant, which has offered curated e-discovery resources, announced its rebrand as [Minerva26](#). The new platform is designed to help litigation teams organize electronic evidence, use custom issue tags, and offers AI-powered insights. Law360 [covered](#) on the rebrand.

### Smokeball

The legal practice management platform [Smokeball](#) launched its [AI Apps Marketplace](#) on Thursday and welcomed [CaseMark](#), an AI tool for litigation, as the marketplace’s first embedded partner. Law360 [reported](#) on the partnership, explaining that CaseMark’s legal workflow “easy buttons” will be available directly inside Smokeball matters to help law firms generate deposition summaries and medical record chronologies.

### Springbok AI

In March, Cleary Gottlieb [announced](#) its acquisition of [Springbok AI](#), a GenAI product development company known for creating custom legal tech solutions. The acquisition includes a team of AI engineers and data scientists who will form Cleary’s new AI Acceleration group. This team will focus on building tailored AI tools to support tasks like summarization, data analysis, and automation across practice areas.

Greg Lambert offered an enthusiastic take on the news in his recent [3 Geeks and a Law Blog post](#), describing it as a rare BigLaw move to own the tech rather than just license it. He noted that this signals a shift toward deeper integration of AI into legal workflows and compared the acquisition to similar strategic moves by other firms, suggesting a broader trend may be emerging.

## vLex

In late February (right after I drafted the last newsletter!) vLex [announced](#) its Winter '25 Release of [Vincent AI](#). This release introduced multimodal AI capabilities for analyzing audio and video, expanded jurisdictional coverage to 17 countries, and added new litigation-focused workflows.

In a [March episode](#) of The Geek in Review podcast, CSO Ed Walters described how these updates enhance everything from deposition review to client intake in a secure environment. Ambrogi offered an [exclusive preview](#), calling the release a “major upgrade to Vincent AI that pushes it further beyond traditional legal research and document analysis, with distinct capabilities and coverage not available in other AI assistants.” Artificial Lawyer also [covered](#) the release in detail, noting that new workflows like “Analyze Judicial Proceedings” offer automated analysis and next-step prompts based on audio and video content. A recent [TechLaw Crossroads](#) blog praised Vincent Studio’s potential to help firms surface and reuse internal work product.

## Verbit

Another announcement at LegalWeek was [Verbit’s](#) launch of [Legal Visor](#), new AI-powered tool for depositions. The tool offers highly accurate real-time transcription tuned for legal language. Key features include spotting inconsistencies between testimony and case documents, smart search with natural language queries, automatic speaker ID, and support for more than 50 languages.

## Xakia

[Xakia](#), a legal matter and contract management solution provider, recently integrated its platform with the contract software giant [DocuSign](#). Law360 [reported](#) on the integration, explaining that it is set up to help legal teams handle the entire contract lifecycle, including drafts and e-signatures, in a single platform.

## GENERAL AI UPDATES

### ChatGPT

This [roundup from TechCrunch](#) offers a comprehensive look at ChatGPT’s evolution since its 2022 debut, highlighting key developments like the GPT-4o model

with real-time voice capabilities and the text-to-video model Sora. The blog also covers OpenAI’s internal leadership changes, legal battles, and ambitions for a massive data center build.

Of particular interest to those of us working with students: OpenAI is currently offering [two free months of ChatGPT Plus to students](#) (unfortunately it looks like this offer does not extend to staff or faculty.)

### Claude

In March 2025, Anthropic added [real-time web search functionality](#) to the paid version of Claude, enabling it to access and process up-to-date information from the internet. This new capability allows Claude to provide citations for sources and positions it as a stronger competitor to OpenAI’s ChatGPT, which has had [real-time internet search](#) since October 2024.

On April 2, Anthropic announced [Claude for Education](#), a version of [Claude](#) tailored for universities. It includes a new *Learning* mode that uses Socratic questioning to guide students’ reasoning rather than simply providing answers, and it outlines partnerships with schools that are providing secure, campus-wide access and exploring how Claude can support teaching, research, and administration. Claude also now includes Career Project and Research Project spaces.

### Gemini

[Gemini](#), Google’s family of advanced AI models, had a number of big announcements. In March, Google released [Gemini 2.5 Pro](#), its most advanced “thinking model” model designed to reason through complex problems—especially in math and coding—before answering. [Gemini Advanced](#) subscribers have access to the new model both on the desktop and app versions.

Another upgrade that was recently rolled out is the [Gemini with personalization](#) model that can tailor responses using your search history (once enabled in settings). [How-To Geek reported](#) that this means more relevant outputs. Recent posts on [TechCrunch](#) and [The Verge](#) previewed new AI features to [Gemini Live](#) that let it “see” your screen or through your smartphone camera and answer questions about either in real-time. These new features are rolling out to Gemini Advanced users on Android later this month.



## MULTIMODAL IMAGE GENERATION

### Next-Level Image Generation

In March, [OpenAI](#) and [Google](#) released upgraded multimodal models with vastly improved image generation. Ethan Mollick explored the leap in a [recent post](#), explaining that this marks a sharp contrast with earlier models, which garbled the words or misunderstood what you were asking for.

Check out this shift with [my own attempts](#) to illustrate Mollick's "jagged frontier" concept. Back in Fall 2024, I had to work around the model's tendency to struggle with generating text in images. But with the new OpenAI model, a single prompt produced a polished infographic – no corrections needed!

I'm still going to be using Canva for most of my graphics and presentations, but these improvements could be a great way to generate original graphics from a prompt before polishing them up in Canva or filling in the gaps when you need a unique visual concept.

### Notebook LM

I've been a fan of Google's [NotebookLM](#) since it first launched in summer 2023, and it's only gotten better since then. While its [podcasting feature](#) made headlines last fall, a [fresh round](#) of updates rolled out in early April have made the news. These new features including a Mind Map tool that creates interactive diagrams to help visualize relationships between concepts, [improved web discovery](#) to streamline background research and improved PDF support that now recognizes images and graphs

## THINGS YOU SHOULD CHECK OUT

### Factor Releases Benchmark Study on GenAI Adoption in Legal Departments

On March 31, Factor released its [GenAI in Legal Benchmarking Report 2025](#), which offers a data-driven look at how corporate legal departments are adopting GenAI. The study of over 120 in-house legal teams reveals a gap between AI access and confident usage: while 61% of departments provide access to most or all team members, more than a third report low confidence in using the tools. Ambrogi [reported](#) that the takeaways from the report include the limitations of "pilot purgatory" (where legal departments restrict AI access to small pilot groups rather than deploying it widely) and the balance between building vs. buying AI tools.

## Sarah Sullivan

Farella Braun & Martel

### ***How did you choose law librarianship as a career?***

A few years after graduating from law school, I realized that I did not want to practice. I was happy that I had the degree, but I had no interest in working as an attorney. I contacted the career counselor at Hastings and was put in touch with the director of the law library. The director told me about this amazing career in which practitioners were able to use research skills they learned from Law School in a profession in which the goal was to research and to teach. She even mentioned that some people got both JD and library degrees at the same time. Once enrolled in library school, I began attending NOCALL social events and found a group of the smartest, kindest, and most helpful professionals I had ever met. So many of the librarians had also practiced law at some point, and I got the sense that we were all “refugees” from the adversarial system. It seemed everyone was as excited about the career as I was. I have not been wrong.

### ***What have you enjoyed the most from being involved with NOCALL?***

The support and camaraderie of this group. There is an energy to the NOCALL community that I rarely see in other professional organizations. The members are supportive of each other and generous with their knowledge. There is no undercurrent of possessiveness or competition, rather I have always gotten the feeling that people are more than happy to share tips and shortcuts. This is the type of professional organization I have always visualized, and I am thrilled to be a part of it.

### ***What’s the best advice you’ve ever received working as a librarian?***

Part of the reason I love being a research librarian is because of the challenges, because I know that whenever I go to work, I will have the opportunity to learn something new and challenging before the day is out. I love this in theory. However, when I am presented with a very complex question my initial feeling is often panic rather than excitement. I fear I won’t know how to tackle the question, that I will not know what it is I do not know, that I will fail and be exposed as a fraud.

While still in library school, I read an article in one of the law library publications about “imposter syndrome” in this profession. The article described this feeling of panic and outlined the steps involved during the process of working through imposter syndrome in legal research. Just knowing that these insecurities had a name and was not just specific to me, has helped me to calm down, take a deep breath, and start my projects regardless of complexity. Once I get through the initial panic and just begin, the process and the questions become clearer.

### ***What is your favorite meal?***

Last meal club. I love all food, especially anything to do with very strong cheese that I can pair with wines. Mexican food, French food, Italian food. However: During these times of uncertainty (ever since COVID), I often distract myself by planning what I would eat if I

knew I only had 48 – 72 hours to live. I would be able to eat anything I wanted without fear of weight-gain or worry about long-term health benefits. Although I would like to think I would eat an amazing Chez Panisse dinner, if I am honest, I know that I wouldn't.

Here is what I would do: I would go to Fenton's in Oakland, order a double burger with Swiss cheese, bleu cheese, and bacon. Onion rings on the side and one of those old-fashioned chocolate milkshakes that is made with so much ice cream that the restaurant has to include the mixing cup with the main cup. I would also order a diet coke, just for the hypocrisy of it all. What started out as a daydream to get me through lockdown has turned into a "last meal" club with my friends. We put our names in a hat, and each month we all get together and have one person's last meal.

### **What is your favorite legal book and why?**

**I. Title: *Reconstructing Reconstruction: The Supreme Court & the Production of Historical Truth*.** Author: Pamela Brandwein

This book examines the development of the definition of slavery in the ten years following the Civil War through the lens of the Supreme Court decisions crafted in the immediate aftermath of the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment. The author delves into the circumstances, assumptions and rhetoric that shaped the "official" story of the definition of how to redress slavery. Was abolition alone sufficient, or did other harms—such as economic and educational—need to be acknowledged such that land or monetary reparations were in order. *Reconstructing Reconstruction* illustrates the power the Supreme Court has not just in interpreting laws, but in shaping historical and philosophical ideals of the country for centuries after the initial decisions were made.

**II. Title: *Shakespeare and the Law*.** Editors: Bradin Cormack, Martha Nussbaum, & Richard Strier.

In law school, during the section on negligent homicide, I started thinking about the apothecary in *Romeo & Juliet*. The apothecary sold Romeo the poison knowing that Romeo was going to use it to kill himself. In our system of law, would the apothecary be deemed responsible for Romeo's death? Could he be arrested or

would there be a civil suit with gross negligence? If he was responsible for Romeo's death, what about Juliet's? But for Romeo taking the poison, Juliet would not have woken up and stabbed herself. While the apothecary could not know that Juliet would kill herself, was the inadvertent death of another a reasonably foreseeable result of the illegal sale? I spoke to my criminal law professor about this. I began to think analyzing legal concepts through Shakespeare would be a great law school elective. Shakespeare—if the rumors are to be believed—studied law at some point before he began writing plays. How fun would a class be interpreting his work through this lens!

Imagine my joy when I found the book *Shakespeare & the Law*, a collection of essays by legal scholars that examines modern legal concepts through Shakespeare. Essay titles include "Law & Commerce in The Merchant of Venice," "Interpreting Statute in Measure for Measure," and "Vengeance, Complicity, and Criminal Law in Othello." The collection ends with transcripts of a debate between Stephen Breyer and Richard Posner in which they speak about everything from the ghost in Hamlet to the nature of judicial discretion. Definitely worth a read.

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