

David In, Goliath Out? Do We Need Larger Libraries to Accommodate More Books?

Planning Law Libraries in a Digital World
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1. Books are not dead yet!
 - A. Overview of Hazelton study - what, why, how, and when
 - B. My assumption going in - 40% of law library collection was online
 - C. Reality - only 13% was online; only 7% if I keep one copy of all print! You only save space if you throw away the print that is duplicated online!
2. Look behind the numbers and the rhetoric
 - A. Not everything is online - most secondary materials; books; treatises; proceedings, government reports, early years of tools like the Federal Register and CFR
 - B. Even if online, is the print a better tool? Compare statutes and hierarchically arranged materials (treatises, looseleaves, legal encyclopedias, ALR) to cases online and in print. Full-text access is a strength and a weakness of electronic tools.
 - C. Even if the material is online, is the online version complete? What does duplicated online really mean? Law review mastheads, indexes, articles without copyright permission from author. Federal Register and CFR.
 - D. If you toss your print, can everyone who uses your library use the electronic databases?
 - E. If LEXIS wins the CALR market and you throw away your national reporter system and the West digests, what other subject access to case law would there be? LEXIS databases of some state court decisions are not complete.
 - F. Which is more economical - printing individual copies of individual court opinions on demand or using a print volume that you can either read or photocopy?
 - G. How much reading do you want to do online? How much printing do you want to encourage?

- H. Is access to primary legal information enough? Do we really have to own it?
- I. WESTLAW and LEXIS were designed and created for practitioners, not for academic law libraries. Over 90% of what they have online, we would never have wanted in our print collections in the first place!

3. You can plead for space for print. In fact, it is your professional duty to do so. Who else will?

- A. Electronic is not always the best tool for the job
- B. Are you willing to say that if it is not online, no one needs access to it?
- C. Will we throw away the effective and efficient features of print tools even if the electronic tool cannot do some of the same things?
- D. Even with budget cuts and space limitations, our print collections continue to grow.
- E. How many times do we have to buy the same information - in print, on CD ROM, in CALR systems, in microfiche?
- F. Are we willing to accept cheap, low-quality research tools?

4. Conclusion

- A. How does all this relate to law firm and corporate law libraries? They have been downsizing for years. What about county/public and state law libraries?
- B. This is a simple question to ask and a complex one to answer. Make them listen to the complexities!