

# FINDING THE LAW ONLINE: PRIMARY & SECONDARY SOURCES

Cheryl Nyberg  
University of Washington  
Gallagher Law Library

Introduction to Environmental Law & Process (SMA 476)  
October 12, 2011

# PARALLEL SYSTEMS

## Federal

- ⊙ Legislative = US Congress
- ⊙ Executive
  - ⊙ President
  - ⊙ Executive branch & independent agencies
- ⊙ Judicial
  - ⊙ US Supreme Court
  - ⊙ US Courts of Appeals
  - ⊙ US District Courts
  - ⊙ Specialized courts

## State

- ⊙ Legislative = WA State Legislature
- ⊙ Executive
  - ⊙ Governor
  - ⊙ Executive branch & independent agencies
- ⊙ Judicial
  - ⊙ WA Supreme Court
  - ⊙ WA Court of Appeals
  - ⊙ Superior, district, county & municipal courts

# PRIMARY & SECONDARY AUTHORITY

- ◎ **Primary**

- ◎ Statement of "the law" from bodies with law-making authority
- ◎ Examples: laws, regulations, and court opinions

- ◎ **Secondary**

- ◎ Analyze, criticize, explain, interpret, and/or refer to primary law
- ◎ Examples: books, government reports, law review articles, and legal encyclopedias

# PRIMARY SOURCES ONLINE

- ⊙ Government vs. commercial
  - ⊙ Updating frequency
  - ⊙ Citations to related sources
  - ⊙ Ease of use
  - ⊙ Free vs. fee

# FREE SOURCES

## Gallagher guide on Free Law Online

- ⦿ Organization
- ⦿ Links



GALLAGHER LAW LIBRARY

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

School of Law

[LIBRARY HOURS](#) | [DIRECTIONS](#) | [CONTACT US](#) | [UW LAW](#) | [UW](#) | [MY UW](#)

Search Library site & blog

GO

Leaders for the Global Common Good

[Home + Library Catalogs](#)

[Databases](#)

[Research Guides](#)

[Free Law Online](#)

[Blog](#)

Ask  
Us!

[Off-Campus Access](#)

# COMMERCIAL SOURCES

## 🎯 Off-Campus Access

LIBRARY HOURS | DIRECTIONS | CONTACT US | UW LAW | UW | MY UW



GALLAGHER LAW LIBRARY

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

School of Law

Search Library site & blog

GO

Leaders for the Global Common Good

Ask  
Us!

Home + Library Catalogs

Databases

Research Guides

Free Law Online

Blog

🔒 Off-Campus Access

🎯 UW Libraries > Subject Guides > [Law](#)

🎯 U.S. Federal Law

# FINDING LAWS ONLINE

## U.S. Code

- © [Cornell Legal Information Institute](#) (free)
- © [FDsys](#) (free)
- © [LexisNexis Academic](#) (\$)

# FINDING REGULATIONS ONLINE

## Code of Federal Regulations

- © [Cornell Legal Information Institute](#) (free)
- © [FDsys](#) (free)
- © [LexisNexis Academic](#) (\$)



# AGENCY WEBSITES

- ◎ [USA.gov](#)
- ◎ [Google advanced search](#)
  - ◎ Search within a site or domain =  
.gov
- ◎ Laws, regulations, and policies

# WEB 2.0

- © RSS feeds

- © [Regulations.gov](#)

# FINDING COURT DECISIONS ONLINE

## U.S. Supreme Court

- © Free Law Online (free)
- © HeinOnline (\$)
- © LexisNexis Academic (\$)

# OTHER COURT OPINIONS

- ⊙ Court websites
  - ⊙ [Federal courts](#)
  - ⊙ [State courts](#)
- ⊙ [LexisOne](#) (free)
  - ⊙ Last 10 years for most courts
- ⊙ [LexisNexis Academic](#) (\$)
  - ⊙ Federal and state courts
  - ⊙ All dates

# FINDING ARTICLES ONLINE

- ◎ LexisNexis Academic > US Legal > Law Reviews
  - ◎ Search full-text articles
- ◎ HeinOnline > Law Journal Library
  - ◎ Retrieve PDF images of known articles
- ◎ UW Libraries > [Articles & Research Databases](#)
- ◎ UW Libraries > [Subject Guides](#)

# FINDING BOOKS ONLINE

- ◎ WorldCat
  - ◎ Books, government reports, and selected articles
- ◎ Google Books
  - ◎ Selected previews

# REMINDERS

- ◎ Use Free Law Online to sources of primary law
- ◎ Use LexisNexis Academic to find laws, regulations, cases, and articles
- ◎ Ask a Reference Librarian!
  - ◎ 543-6794
  - ◎ Ask Us link on Law Library homepage