

LYON COUNTY LAW LIBRARY

LCLL News

March 2009 Vol. 4 No. 3

What Do You Do When Westlaw Is Down?

While researching an article on cheap or free legal websites, a flurry of emails on the law-lib listserv quickly spread the news: Westlaw took March 2 off. System upgrades rendered the entire Westlaw network inoperable, much to the annoyance of legal research instructors and law librarians across the US. What would you do if your Westlaw (or Lexis) account didn't work, and the law librarian was not available to help?

We would hope you would visit the law library's legal resources page, www.lyoncounty.org/legallinks.html. Among the links under "Library Tools" are websites that could provide temporary Lexis/Westlaw replacement. These are: public.resource.org, altlaw.org and justia.com.

public.resource.org provides free access to government documents, including "recycled" PACER documents. However, it has minimal search tools. It's ideal if you want a free resource for a specific federal case but frustrating if you want to search a broader area of law.

By contrast, altlaw.org and justia.com are much easier to navigate. [Altlaw](http://altlaw.org) provides full-text searching of Supreme Court and Federal Appellate case reports. Its database holdings are limited; coverage is limited to the last 40-50 years and it does not cover state or district court cases. [Justia.com](http://justia.com) provides access to free case law, codes, regulations, legal articles and legal blog databases, as well as community resources. The company also offers Web site and online marketing services.

These websites can only temporarily replace Lexis or Westlaw. Free websites don't have Shepard's or Key Cite to quickly determine if the law you've found is still good law. Searching on Lexis or Westlaw is much faster than the free sites, which leads us to conclude, "you get what you pay for."



Sunshine Week March 15-21

The Sunshine Week webcast, "Opening Doors: Finding the Keys to Open Government," will be broadcast **Friday, March 20 at 12 pm**. Invited speakers are directly involved in President Obama's Open Government Directive. The law library is signed up as a (mini) host site, so grab your lunch and join us. For more information, see [open-thegovernment.org](http://thegovernment.org) or sunshineweek.org.

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ Upcoming CLEs

Ethics - May

We have applied for 2 credits of the Ethics CLE, to be delivered by Stanton A. Hazlett of the Kansas Disciplinary Administrator's Office on **May 13 at the Emporia Country Club from 11 to 1:30 pm**. Cost is \$15 for lunch, which is a choice of a steak sandwich or vegetarian pasta and dessert. Registration forms will be available soon for this event.

Civil Procedure - June

Scott Nehrbass, Partner at Foulston & Siefkin of Overland Park and co-author of the KBA Annual Survey Civil Procedure chapter (2001 - 2009) will provide a 2-hour CLE on Kansas Civil Procedure on **Wed, June 24 from 11 to 1:30 pm at the Emporia Country Club**.

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ Limited Hours in March

Due to an extended travel schedule, including the SWALL Conference in Albuquerque, there will be no public hours on **Thurs, March 12** or **Thurs, March 26**.