



Librarian's Report

Kirsten Clement

Happy New Year! All of us here at the Hamilton Law Association hope you had a very happy holiday with your families and are starting 2017 off on a high note. At the HLA Library, we are excited to be ringing in the new! I am eager to tell you about a significant new electronic acquisition we have made, with applications for lawyers in a number of practice areas.

In the spring of 2016, we conducted a collection use study within the HLA library to gain some insight into which areas of our collection were in highest use. We kept track of books borrowed and those reshelved by area of law and were able to glean a picture of which areas of law were best represented in terms of HLA material use.

Part of the rationale for the study was to guide future collection development decisions, in the area of print resources, but also electronic products. It was partly with a mind to this study that we acquired criminal sentencing database Rangefindr in 2016, in addition to substantially improving our Divorcemate software package. While criminal and family law were the two biggest areas of collection use, according to our study, we felt it important to look to the group of practice areas that also comprised above average library resource use – practice areas such as estates and trusts law, personal injury law, and corporate and commercial law. As of the beginning of 2017, the HLA is pleased to be able

to say that we have been able to improve our electronic offerings in these practice areas as well through the acquisition of Lexis Practice Advisor.

Our Practice Advisor package is a suite of eight modules, each one corresponding to an area of legal practice: Commercial Law, Corporate Law, Employment Law, Family Law, Insolvency & Restructuring, Intellectual Property and Technology, Personal Injury, and Wills, Trusts & Estates. The modules are designed to leverage the collective practical wisdom of leading lawyers in each of the practice areas. Each module is home to a huge amount of high-quality content! The home page for each module contains featured news stories, essential resource links, new content and legislative updates, biographies of contributors and more. Under the “Browse topics” drop-down menu, there is a treasure trove of information, well-organized under headings and sub-headings. As an example, under the heading “Will Drafting” are subheadings including “Will Clauses and Particular Drafting Considerations,” “Considerations to Specific Dependents,” “Charities and Non-Charitable Bodies,” “Executors and Trustees,” “Gifts, Bequests and Legacies” and more! Each subheading is a link, which, if clicked, will take you to a page of different types of documents and tools pertaining to matters related to that specific subject.

For any given task or topic within that area of law, the Practice Advisor user can access practice notes (which provide high level how-to guidance and direction on specific tasks or issues), forms and precedents, checklists, tables and flowcharts to provide step-by-step processes for tasks and specific situations. Every document is maintained and kept current by leading lawyers in Canada in that area of practice, as well as an internal team of lawyers at LexisNexis.

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Surveys distributed at some of our major events in the fourth quarter of 2016, including the Advocacy Conference and the Members Appreciation Lunch, indicate that one of our members' identified priorities for the HLA is providing increased practice management support. With the number of solo practitioners and small firms in our community, making available tools that support the actual on-the-ground operation of a law practice is of considerable importance. Practice Advisor is equipped to help with that as well! Practice Advisor, as noted, is, by its very design, designed to consolidate and leverage *practical* legal advice, providing step by step guidance for lawyers for a plethora of tasks in addition to providing easy access to relevant legislation, forms and precedents, sample clauses, and much more. In addition, some modules, including Estates and Trusts, Family Law, and Employment Law and Personal Injury include a 'Skills Centre' with in-depth information on topics including opening a law practice, file management, client communication, marketing and promotion, and business etiquette and professionalism. A click on any of these links within the Skills Centre provides access to checklists, templates, flow charts, tips and tools. As an example, the Skills Centre content under "Marketing and Business Development" includes notes on forming business plans, creating an effective website or blog, best practice tips, legal marketing on a budget, and more, while also linking the user to precedents for a quarterly marketing plan and a business development action plan, as well as a template for rating clients. I believe that the acquisition of Practice Advisor is a step toward addressing the identified need for more HLA practice management support.

Practice Advisor is now available on every computer within the HLA library and I encourage you to come and check it out! We have acquired this resource on a pilot project basis for the first year, and library staff, along with the Collections and Library Excellence Subcommittee, are looking forward to feedback on this resource to determine its ongoing value to our membership! Additionally, to better-acquaint our membership with this new resource, a training session for Practice Advisor will be taking place at the HLA on Wednesday, March 1, in conjunction with one of our biannual Quicklaw training sessions. This training will be free, eligible for 1.75 substantive CPD hours, and open to all members. A free pizza lunch will also be provided. Please sign up in advance by contacting the library at 905-522-1563 or emailing kclement@hamiltonlaw.on.ca to reserve your spot! We are looking forward to another year of serving our membership and

are always trying to improve the resources and services we are able to offer. Come by, say hi, and see what's new at the HLA library! ■

GET SOCIAL WITH THE HLA

HLA Winter Social
Thursday, February 23rd, 2017



Serve Ping Pong
105-115 King Street East
(2nd Floor) Hamilton

No RSVP Needed - All Welcome



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