



Librarian's Report

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The recent Areas of Improvement survey conducted at The Hamilton Law Association yielded results indicating that a large proportion of respondents considered the enhancement of library collections to be among their top priorities. Rather than view this as evidence that there is a perceived deficit of some sort, I personally find the interest in and prioritization of a robust library collection heartening! Much time and attention went into improving the HLA library's offerings in our print and electronic resources in 2016, and I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of those improvements now, as well as welcome suggestions for further enhancements!

From March to May 2016, the HLA library embarked on a period of in-house data collection to provide us with some additional insight into collection use trends at the Anthony Pepe Memorial Law Library. Over a period of eight weeks, we recorded the number of books reshelfed in different areas of law to see which areas of the collection were being most frequently and extensively accessed. This pie chart summarizes our findings, noting the books re-shelfed in different areas of law as a percentage of the total number of items re-shelfed by library staff during that period.

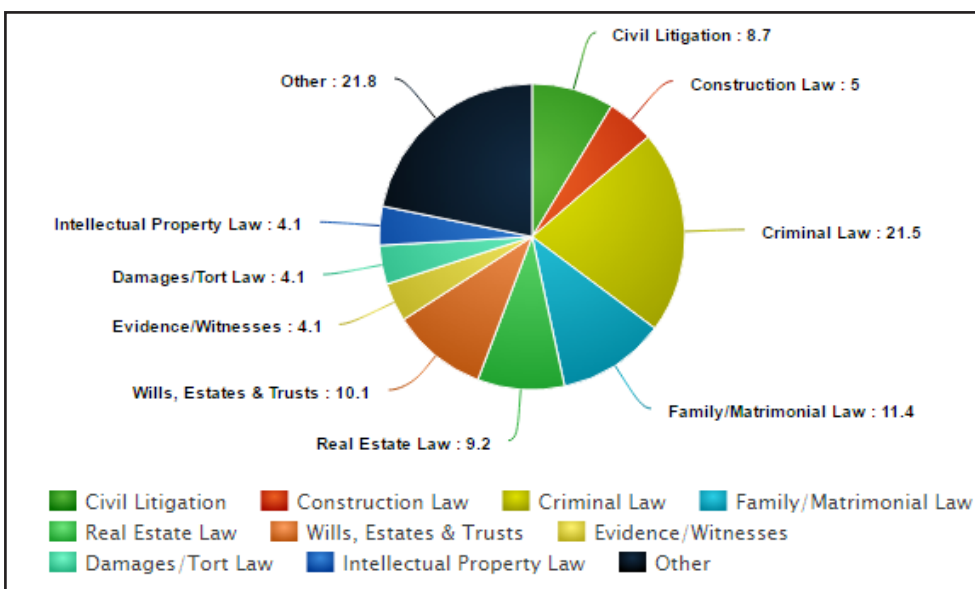
The findings of this study helped to inform some significant decisions with

regard to electronic resource purchasing in 2016. The highest area of collection use we observed was in criminal law, and with this in mind, we sought to purchase a new e-resource specifically targeted to lawyers in that practice area. At the suggestion of several members, we acquired Range-findr, a criminal sentencing database, on a one-year subscription with the possibility to extend if it was found to be worthwhile.

Another area of the collection that was well-represented in our use study was family law. We sought to ameliorate our electronic offerings in this area of law by expanding our Divorcemate software package at Family Court to include not only the Tools package but also Forms and Precedents. This also was informed by member feedback, including from the Collections and Library Excellence Subcommittee.

A number of areas of law were represented in our study to the tune of 4-10% of the total collection use. Among these were wills, trusts and estates law, damages/tort law, and intellectual property law. We were able to put in place some valuable electronic resources for these and other areas of law through the purchase of a one-year renewable subscription to Lexis Practice Advisor near the end of 2016, after consultation with the Chair of the Collections and Library Excellence Subcommittee, Kathleen Bingham. Practice Advisor consists of eight modules corresponding to eight areas of law:

- commercial
- corporate
- employment
- family
- insolvency and restructuring
- intellectual property
- personal injury
- wills, trusts and estates



For each of these practice areas, Practice Advisor is designed to leverage collective practical wisdom on all manner of topics and tasks through extensive practice notes, forms and precedents, legislation, flowcharts and checklists, and practice management resources. In March, we offered training in this new resource, and those in attendance expressed significant enthusiasm about its content and user-friendliness! If you did not have an opportunity to attend this training session, rest assured we will offer another in the fall, and in the meantime, feel free and encouraged to drop into the library at your convenience and staff can give you an introduction to the resource!

In terms of our print collection, 2016 was also a year of measurable efforts to improve what we are able to offer members. For the first time in several years, LibraryCo, greatly aided by an OCLA committee created for the express purpose of offering input in this regard, approved new Core and Essential print collection lists for Ontario Courthouse Libraries. As a regional law library in Ontario, the HLA should conform to both lists, and this was accomplished in 2016. The library budget was monitored carefully to ensure that all titles on the lists were in our collection and current to 2016. This included the ‘contents only’ purchasing of some loose-leaves that had been cancelled years earlier to bring the materials up to date without the ongoing expense of remaining perpetually on subscription. The Collections and Library Excellence Subcommittee was extremely valuable in suggesting other important, previously-cancelled loose-leaves for which this contents only model might also be used, and we were able to update the currency of nearly twenty lapsed loose-leaf resources in various areas of the collection including both the *Federal* and

Ontario Limitations Manuals, Brown on Defamation, and Tarnopolosky’s Discrimination and the Law.

Last year, we actively sought to increase member input into collection decisions. We implemented an electronic form embedded on the library page of our website allowing members to send their suggestions for purchase to the librarian with a few mouse clicks. I am hopeful that more members will make use of this avenue of communication to make known what new resources they would like to see in the library collection! It is worth noting that, although there were a limited number of suggestions made by members in 2016, 100% of materials that were suggested for purchase by members in 2016 were acquired by the HLA library, including *Oosterhoff on Trusts, Prosecuting and Defending Youth Criminal Justice Cases* by Jones

et al., and a subscription to *For the Defense*, the newsletter of the Criminal Lawyers’ Association.

Outside the realm of collections, we have also recently sought to cultivate a richer quality of experience for our members in the library space by upgrading our seating throughout the library, including new Obusforme chairs at all computer workstations. We have also lowered our photocopy and printing rate for members to \$0.25/page

I am delighted to hear that the membership feels a vested interest in maintaining a high quality library; this is, indeed a priority echoed by HLA staff! We will continue to work to enhance the experience of our members, and always welcome feedback and suggestions on our collections, service and library environment! ■

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