

# FROM THE EDITOR

**Susan Nevelow Mart**

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the *Legal Information Review*. This once-a-year journal fills a missing space in the publishing venues available for law librarians and legal information professionals on two levels: the journal uses a blind, peer-review process to approve or reject articles for publication, and the journal welcomes unconventional writing. Any well-written article that fits within the journal's scope will be considered, even if the article does not fit within any of the normally accepted genres of legal writing. Articles that fit within the more typical legal writing genres are also welcome, of course. But short pieces that illuminate new trends and ideas, thought pieces that are more a call to conversation than a definitive review, brief empirical studies, or interactive works will all be considered.

The journal's scope is consistent with the broadest definition of legal informatics, before that term was co-opted by the data analytics crowd. The *Legal Information Review* encourages submissions of applied or theoretical work on the intersection of law, librarianship, and legal information, including:

- ◆ the theoretical framework for teaching legal research (issues such as information literacy theory, adult learning theory, network theory, or other educational, social science, or psychology theories);
- ◆ information retrieval (both manual and automated systems such as artificial intelligence and law);
- ◆ law and policy (issues such as privacy, copyright, and security);
- ◆ information access issues (such as making legal and government information more accessible to the public, both physically and intellectually); and

- ◆ practice issues (analyses or applications which help lawyers in their day-to-day operations).

Part of the philosophy behind starting this journal is that law librarians and legal information professionals need more outlets for scholarship and scholarly conversations, not fewer outlets. At a time when the world of law is in flux and the role of law librarians is being hotly debated, the more fora we have to illustrate the scope of our thought, the better. Whether we work in law firms, corporate offices, law schools, county or government libraries, or for start-ups or vendors, the glow from good writing, new ideas, new paths we discover to support our constituencies and prove our worth illuminates all of us. Writing is still an important way to carry on the conversations we all need to be having. I encourage everyone who has an interest to join the conversation, whether as a writer or a reader.

If you do write, remember that while writing may be a solitary pursuit, good writing is the result of review, discussion, and revision. The conversation starts before the work gets published. This process is institutionalized in academia for faculty as works-in-progress. Law librarians do not usually have an opportunity in their own workplaces to take part in works-in-progress. The law librarian alternative is the annual “Boulder Conference on Legal Information: Scholarship and Teaching,” held each year just prior to the annual meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries. Please consider submitting a work to the Boulder Conference. Or, while at the annual meeting, connect with colleagues through PEGA-SIS, and find a colleague to review and discuss your article with you. The review, discussion, and revision process is critical to good writing.

The articles published in this issue illustrate the scope of the *Legal Information Review*'s subject matter and format. The first article follows the more conventional format of the law review article, and fits within the conversation about theoretical framework for teaching legal research in today's legal research environment. Susan Azyndar's *Work with Me Here: Collaborative Learning in the Legal Research Classroom* addresses how to incorporate

an important soft skill, collaboration, into a rigorous classroom environment. The article looks at legal workplace expectations, the pedagogy of collaborative work, the efficacy of collaboration as a law school skill, and Millennial student needs. This deep dive into collaboration may change the way we use and assess collaborative projects in the classroom.

The next article, *Harvesting and Utilizing Explanatory Parentheticals*, by Pablo D. Arredondo, is a perfect example of a short piece exploring new ways of thinking about old concepts. In the article, Arredondo plucks a venerable legal writing concept—the explanatory parenthetical—from its shroud of rules in the *Bluebook*, and takes the concept seriously as a brief and pithy judicial expression of the meaning of a case. He then performs that modern magic of data harvesting; all of the parentheticals discussing a particular case are harvested and put to use as an automated summary of a case, substituting judicial pronouncements for an editor’s human summary. The results will surprise you with their thoroughness and nuance.

Michelle Wu’s *Food For Thought: Should Libraries Partner with Non-Library Search Engine Providers for their OPACs and Discovery Layers?* is not a traditional law review article—it is a thoughtful provocation. The article is a challenge to begin a wide-ranging conversation about the purpose and utility of the public face of our library systems. Professor Wu suggests that the time has come to dis-integrate the front and back ends of our library catalogs in the interest of opening up library resources to the wider world. The fact that library holdings do not show up in the top results in an online search may prevent potential users from realizing they may have free access to a wide range of resources. Perhaps most controversially, Professor Wu advocates that the best partners for designing a user-friendly public interface to library systems may be for-profit library or search engine technology companies. Read this article and then participate in the debate at the 2016 American Association of Law Libraries annual meeting in Chicago!

While the final article in our inaugural issue is written in a more traditional scholarly mode, its subject matter pushes the

boundaries. In *Beyond Bikram: Stretching the Definition of Choreographic Works*, Jodi L. Collova takes on a portion of copyright law that has been under-investigated and undertheorized: dance. Copyright law has a premier place in defining the boundaries of our access to information generally and most critically in promoting or decreasing the fluidity on the edges of that cultural reuse that fuels and makes possible intellectual, scientific and artistic creation. Ms. Collova's investigation of these issues through the lens of modern dance is thoughtful and insightful, and concludes with normative suggestions that those currently investigating changes to the copyright law should note.

These articles illustrate perfectly the scope of interests that law, libraries, and legal information touch. In the center of the Venn diagram we get the intersection of the legal academy and legal practice, empirical and scientific work that changes the way we interact with legal information, theoretical and practical discussions about the boundaries of the library world, and doctrinal analysis of the legal issues that impact our access to cultural and intellectual information. Thank you for going on this journey with us.