

caLIM: current awareness for legal information managers web database

by David Gee and Steven Whittle



David Gee and Steven Whittle

This paper provides a brief introduction to caLIM, the Current Awareness for Legal Information Managers (<http://193.62.18.223/dbtw-wpd/textbase/cadquery.htm>) web database developed at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies in London and made freely available on the IALS Web site.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Idea of the caLIM database

BIALL and its journal

History of the Current Awareness column

Involvement of library staff from the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies

List of sources scanned regularly for the column

Journals

Law library association web sites

Internet services

Monographs in series

Publishers' catalogues

Selection and scope of material included in the column

Subject categories used in the column

Recent improvements to the column

The next step: from Current Awareness column to caLIM database

Using the caLIM database

Search form

Further search options

Results table

Record entry

Future

Contacts

IDEA OF THE CALIM DATABASE

The database (<http://193.62.18.223/dbtw-wpd/textbase/cadquery.htm>) contains bibliographic records for articles and books relevant to legal information professionals. Records are derived from entries in the quarterly Current Awareness column produced for the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians' journal the *Law Librarian* now called *Legal Information Management*. The original entries were created at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (<http://ials.sas.ac.uk>) in London by David Gee, Jill Newell and June Tomlinson all experienced law librarians. At present the database contains bibliographic records from December 1994 onwards to date, with plans to add earlier years as the project develops. The database can be searched by author, title, subject category, keyword or date added.

BIALL AND ITS JOURNAL

The British and Irish Association of Law Librarians (<http://www.biall.org.uk/>), usually known by the acronym BIALL, is the independent professional association for law librarians and legal information professionals in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. It was

established in 1969 and currently has over 800 members (both personal and institutional). It has had a presence on the web since 1995. The *Law Librarian*, was the official journal of BIALL, and was first published in April 1970. It was published three times a year until 1992 when it was decided to publish on a quarterly basis. This increase in the number of issues was an important decision as the journal could then include far more articles during the year and was in a better position to reflect more quickly and easily the current issues and concerns of its readers. In 2001 the *Law Librarian* was completely revamped and the format and design considerably modernised. At the same time, after considerable consultation, it was decided to change its name to *Legal Information Management* to reflect more accurately the changing job titles and job descriptions of its diverse readership.

HISTORY OF THE CURRENT AWARENESS COLUMN

The Current Awareness column first appeared in the *Law Librarian* in April 1977 and rapidly became a regular and popular feature. It was originally edited by Barbara Tearle, then Law Librarian at University College, London, now Librarian of the Bodleian Law Library, Oxford (<http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/law/>) and President of BIALL. Barbara developed the column into the logical structure that is still being used today. Many of the same journal titles are still being regularly scanned and most of the original subject categories are still being used, with additions in response to developments in information technology. The very high standard of accuracy established in the early issues is also something that later editors have sought to maintain.

The column's primary aim was to help law librarians and legal information specialists keep up-to-date with the publication of relevant books and journal articles on law librarianship. The column did not seek to cover librarianship as a whole or indeed to cover, necessarily, books and articles on law subject areas. However successive editors have always had the discretion to include general articles on librarianship or specific law books if they feel the material is especially relevant and useful to law librarians. Also the editors have always seen it as part of their "law Librarianship" remit to list new legal bibliographies, new legal dictionaries, new legal directories, newly published sets of law reports and new law journal titles in the column.

INVOLVEMENT OF LIBRARY STAFF FROM THE INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED LEGAL STUDIES

Christine Miskin, a very experienced legal information specialist, took over the editing of the Current Awareness column from Barbara Tearle in the early 1980s and this began what has become a very close and successful association between senior staff at the Institute of

Advanced Legal Studies Library and the column. Jill Newell was the next column editor and she brought her considerable collection development experience and legal reference knowledge to the column. The increase in the number of published issues of the *Law Librarian* from three to four a year in 1992 meant that the number of Current Awareness columns also increased. This was a very welcome development as the column became even more current for its readers, but it also involved much more work. To help Jill Newell with the increased workload David Gee (then Reader Services Librarian at IALS) joined the column as joint editor in 1994. Between them over the next six years Jill Newell and David Gee sought to expand the coverage and relevance of the column by increasing the number of journals scanned, including articles contained in Internet services, and developing and revising the subject categories to reflect changes in the law librarianship profession. Jill Newell's sterling work was justly recognised in 1996 when BIALL awarded her the prestigious Wallace Broom Memorial Award 'in recognition of the Current Awareness section of the *Law Librarian* which she has researched and produced to exceptionally high standards for over a decade'. On Jill Newell's retirement from IALS in 2000, June Tomlinson (Head of Cataloguing and Book Acquisitions at IALS) joined David Gee in compiling the quarterly column. The scanning of titles, the reading of the articles, the compiling of bibliographic records and the final creation of the column has always been done voluntarily by successive editors.

Access to the rich collections of law librarianship material at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies Library has always been an enormous asset for successive editors of the Current Awareness column. IALS currently subscribes to all of the journal titles scanned for the column. In addition IALS purchases much of the book material included in the column as well. The Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (<http://ials.sas.ac.uk/>) was founded in 1946 and is one of the ten Institutes which constitute the School of Advanced Study of the University of London and which function as open environments for research and study by scholars and other specialists. IALS is a postgraduate legal research institute with a core of researchers, research students and legal information professionals, drawing its primary membership from academic researchers and postgraduate research students from other institutions throughout the United Kingdom and beyond.

The Institute of Advanced Legal Studies Library is a highly valued national and international resource for legal research and has over 260,000 volumes all housed at the Institute site on Russell Square in Bloomsbury. The Library's primary function is to serve the national academic research community but it has other significant and diverse communities to which it provides services including Europe's largest taught course master's degree

programme, large numbers of subscribing practising lawyers, and a small community of researchers and PhD students at the Institute itself. The Library seeks to support law librarians in other universities and organisations to provide specialist library and information services in law, particularly in foreign, comparative and international law.

LIST OF SOURCES SCANNED REGULARLY FOR THE COLUMN

When compiling a Current Awareness column the first stage is to scan all the new book and serial acquisitions in IALS Library for relevant new book titles, new sets of law reports, new law journal titles and other law librarianship material. Secondly the following journals, web sites, Internet services, monographs in series and publishers' catalogues are all scanned systematically for relevant articles, references to new books, new sets of law reports and new law journal titles:

JOURNALS

- AALL Spectrum
(http://www.aallnet.org/products/pub_spectrum.asp)
- American Journal of Comparative Law
(<http://comparativelaw.org/journal.html>)
- American Journal of Jurisprudence
(<http://www.nd.edu/~ndlaw/ajj/>)
- American Journal of Legal History
- African Research and Documentation (<http://www2.h-net.msu.edu/~africa/toc/ard/>)
- Amicus Curiae, Journal of the Society for Advanced Legal Studies
(<http://ials.sas.ac.uk/publish/amicus/amicus.htm>)
- Aslib Proceedings (<http://www.aslib.co.uk/proceedings/>)
- Australian Law Librarian
(http://www.allg.asn.au/default_all.htm)
- BIALL Newsletter
- British Journal of Criminology
(<http://www3.oup.co.uk/crimin/>)
- Cambridge Law Journal
(<http://uk.cambridge.org/journals/clj/>)
- Canadian Law Libraries
(<http://www.callacbd.ca/ip0a006e.html#2>)
- City Legal Information Group Newsletter
(http://www.clig.org/newsletter/newsletter_dex.htm)
- Computers & Law
- Counsel. The Journal of the Bar of England & Wales
(<http://elj.warwick.ac.uk/juk/journals/jbew.html>)
- Current Law Index
- (De) Juridische Bibliothecaris
- EIA Update (<http://www.eia.org.uk/eiaorg/newsletr.htm>)
- European Access
- European Information. The Journal of the European Information Association.
- European Legal Journals Index,
- FCIL Newsletter (AALL Foreign Comparative and International Law Section Newsletter)
(<http://www.aallnet.org/sis/fcilsis/fcilsis.html>)
- Harvard Law Review (<http://www.harvardlawreview.org/>)
- Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals (<http://boalt363-1.law.berkeley.edu/library/iflp/>)
- Index to Legal Periodicals
(<http://www.silverplatter.com/catalog/wilp.htm>)
- Industrial Law Journal (<http://www3.oup.co.uk/indlaw/>)
- International and Comparative Law Quarterly
(<http://www3.oup.co.uk/iclqaj/>)
- International Financial Law Review
(<http://elj.warwick.ac.uk/juk/journals/iflr.html>)
- International Journal of Legal Information
(<http://www.iall.org/journal.htm>)
- Journal of Information, Law & Technology (JILT)
(<http://elj.warwick.ac.uk/jilt/>)
- Law Library Journal
(http://www.aallnet.org/products/pub_journal.asp)
- Law Quarterly Review
(<http://www.smlawpub.co.uk/products/cat/mydetails.cfm?title=4264&detail=4264>)
- Law Society's Gazette
(<http://www.lawgazette.co.uk/homeframe.asp>)
- Legal Information Management
- Legal Information Management Index
- Legal Journals Index
- Legal Reference Services Quarterly
(<http://www.haworthpressinc.com/store/product.asp?sku=J113>)
- Library and Information Update
(<http://www.cilip.org.uk/update/>)
- Library Association Record (<http://www.lahq.org.uk/directory/record.html>)
- Managing Information
(<http://www.managinginformation.com>)
- Modern Law Review
(<http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/law/mlr.htm#INDEX>)
- NAG news
(http://www.nag.org.uk/publications_advertising_rates_publications.html)
- New Law Journal
(<http://elj.warwick.ac.uk/juk/journals/nlj.html>)

New Zealand Law Librarian
(<http://www.nzllg.org.nz/publications.cfm?folderid=24>)

Oceana's Law Library Newsletter
(<http://www.oceanalaw.com/default.asp?contentpage=/fr/eestuff/learning.htm>)

OSALL: Newsletter for South African Law Libraries
(<http://sunsite.wits.ac.za/osall/#NEWSLETTER>)

Recht, Bibliothek, Dokumentation (AJD)
(<http://www.ajbd.de/veroeff.htm>)

Solicitor's Journal
(<http://www.smlawpub.co.uk/products/cat/mydetails.cfm?title=6189&detail=6189>)

LAW LIBRARY ASSOCIATION WEB SITES

American Association of Law Libraries (AALL)
(<http://www.aallnet.org/products/publications.asp>)

Association for Information Management (Aslib)
(<http://www.aslib.co.uk/>)

British and Irish Association of Law Librarians (BIALL)
(<http://www.biall.org.uk/>)

British and Irish Law, Education and Technology Association (BILETA)
(<http://www.bileta.ac.uk/>)

Canadian Association of Law Libraries (CALL)
(<http://www.callacbd.ca/call.html>)

European Council for Information Associations (ECIA)
(<http://www.aslib.co.uk/ecia/>)
(<http://www.aslib.co.uk/ecia/views/current/index.html>)

International Association of Law Libraries (IALL)
(<http://www.iall.org/>) and
(<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/~llou/iall.html>)

Library Association (LA)
(<http://www.la-hq.org.uk/directory/publications.html>)

Organisation of SA Law Libraries (OSALL)
(<http://sunsite.wits.ac.za/osall/>)

Special Libraries Association (SLA)
(<http://www.sla.org/>)

INTERNET SERVICES

Australasian Legal Information Institute (AustLII)
(<http://www.austlii.edu.au/austlii/publications.html>)

British and Irish Legal Information institute (BAILII)
(<http://www.bailii.org/>)

Electronic Access to Global Legal Information (Eagle-i)
(<http://ials.sas.ac.uk/links/eagle-i.htm>)

Journal of Information Technology (JILT)
(<http://elj.warwick.ac.uk/jilt/default.htm>)

Law Library Resource Xchange (LLRX)
(<http://www.llrx.com/>)

Social Science Information Gateway Law (SOSIG Law)
(<http://www.sosig.ac.uk/law>)

MONOGRAPHS IN SERIES:

AALL publications series

AALL resource guides

EIA quick guides

Essential legal skills series

International foreign and comparative research guides

Legal research guides (Hein)

PUBLISHERS' CATALOGUES

Butterworths
(<http://rimer.butterworths.co.uk/webcat/enquiry/index.htm>)

European Information Association
(<http://www.eia.org.uk/>)

Haworth Library and Information
(<http://www.haworthpressinc.com/>)

Library and Information Commission
(<http://www.lic.gov.uk/>)

Re: source HM Govt Online
(<http://www.resource.gov.uk/>)

Sweet & Maxwell (<http://www.smlawpub.co.uk/>)

This is not an exhaustive list of sources that are scanned by the editors. Indeed we often receive (and welcome) contributions and suggestions for the column from other law librarians from around the world.

SELECTION AND SCOPE OF MATERIAL INCLUDED IN THE COLUMN

Once an article or book has been identified by an editor as being of professional interest to law librarians and legal information specialists, the quality of the article or book is then assessed. Editors are looking to include bibliographic entries for as many high quality articles or books as possible. Brief, superficial articles of little long-term value are generally excluded at this stage. Promotional articles discussing specific products might be included if they are considered to be of some value, although editors would normally try to warn readers of possible bias in the notes field of the bibliographic record. For example readers would be told if the sales director of a company is writing about one of the company products in an article.

Incidentally if the title of an article or book does not fully explain the content, editors have often used brief notes at the end of a bibliographical entry to help make things clearer for the reader.

SUBJECT CATEGORIES USED IN THE COLUMN

Once the editors have decided to include a bibliographic entry for a particular article or book in the column they need to choose a subject category under which to list it. Over the years a few subject categories have been discontinued and some new ones included. This process of change is important to keep the subject categories accurate and relevant, although the consistency and familiarity of the column is also important to our readers and we always think very carefully before deciding to revise the list of subject categories. The current subject categories used in compiling the Current Awareness column are:

Bibliographical Guides; Bibliographies; Cataloguing and Classification; Conservation; Copyright; Dictionaries; Directories; European Union; Information Policy; Information Technology; Judiciary; Law Books; Law Librarians; Law Libraries; Law Library Administration; Law Library Associations; Law Reports; Legal Biography; Legal Citations; Legal Education; Legal Profession; Legal Records; Legal Research and Method; Legal Systems; Legislation; Library Training; Official Publications; Periodicals; Publishing; Statistics; Treaties

Each bibliographic entry is only listed under one subject category. At times this can be frustrating for editors as often articles and books can be said to cover more than one subject area. However editors read many of the articles and books listed to get the essence of the material. This reading of the material enables them to make suitable and consistent judgments.

RECENT IMPROVEMENTS TO THE COLUMN

The Current Awareness column is now in its 25th year and is still a regular and popular feature in each printed issue of *Legal Information Management*. As in 1977 when it started, each column seeks to reflect the current varied professional interests of academic, government and law firm legal information specialists. Successive editors have tried to be consistent and accurate when compiling the bibliographic entries, but when necessary (as with the revised list of subject categories) they have been prepared to be flexible with the development of the column. The column has also been greatly improved throughout the last twenty-five years by widening the range of sources that are scanned regularly. In particular from the nineties onwards entries for electronic articles posted on web sites such as LLRX and JILT have been regularly included.

Since 1998, an HTML version of the latest column has

been created from the proof text by Steven Whittle and posted on the IALS web site. This electronic version is published on the IALS web site shortly after compilation and is therefore available for readers to consult for a few months ahead of official publication in the next printed issue of *Legal Information Management*.

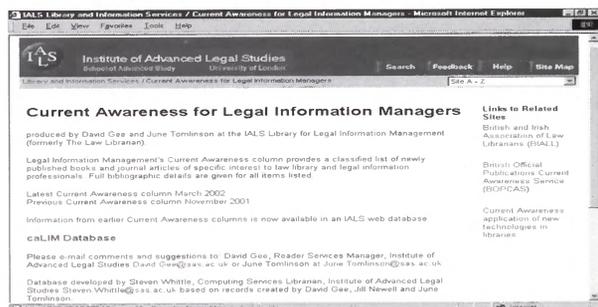
See <http://ials.sas.ac.uk/library/caware/caware.htm> for the web version of the latest column. In effect modern technology is facilitating free access to an even more up-to-date Current Awareness column.

THE NEXT STEP: FROM CURRENT AWARENESS COLUMN TO CALIM DATABASE

Early in 2001 Steven Whittle and David Gee decided to take the next logical step and use the quality bibliographical information available in successive Current Awareness columns to create a new freely available and fully searchable web database. The new web database was called caLIM (Current Awareness for Legal Information Managers) and made its first appearance live on the Internet in February 2001.

USING THE CALIM DATABASE

The IALS website is hosted locally by the Institute on a Windows NT 4.0 server running Microsoft Internet Information Server (IIS). The current awareness database has been created and made publicly available on the Internet using Inmagic's (<http://www.inmagic.com/>) DB/Textworks and Webpublisher software (currently versions 5.2). The products are marketed in the UK by Esprit Soutron (<http://www.espritsoutronpartnership.com/>) with annual software update and telephone support options. DB/Textworks is installed on the IALS web server and networked to workstation PCs to provide database design and creation facilities. A single server copy of Web publisher is installed on the same server to publish caLIM and other IALS created databases to the web via a virtual directory.



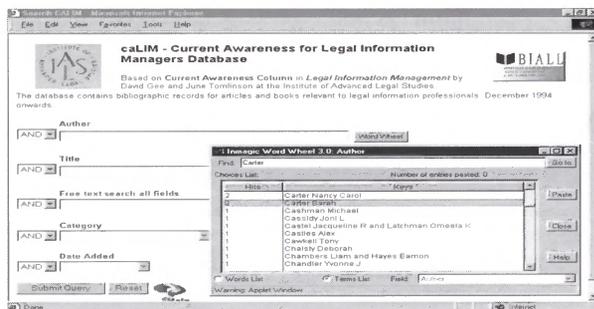
The caLIM database (<http://193.62.18.223/dbtwpd/textbase/cadquery.htm>) can be freely accessed from any networked PC using a web browser supporting Java applets – normally Internet Explorer 5.0 and Netscape 4.7 or higher, more recent versions. The main database components include: a search screen, results table and individual record display.

SEARCH FORM

The search screen provides a simple form enabling users to construct a full range of queries and gain different approaches to the data. Users can search for materials by: Author, Title, Subject Category and Date Added to the database. There is also a free text search option covering all fields in the database.



You can type any word, combinations of words or phrase in the author and/or title fields to perform a search. In addition a Word Wheel is provided beside these fields to help eliminate trial-and-error searching. Clicking on the Word Wheel button opens a dialog box with a Choices List displaying all words or terms that have been included in that field, effectively allowing you to view the index of all authors and titles contained in the database. Within the Word Wheel dialogue box users can “Find” and “Go to” a particular author or title. You can browse or search for words in each index and paste their selection into the search box to conduct a search. It is also possible to scroll through the Choices List to see the number of hits listed for each key. The view can be switched to display either a Words list with each word in the index listed and scored individually or a Terms list (the default setting) to show full index terms or phrases such as author names, joint authors or the full titles of articles.



The Category and Date Added fields in the search form employ Drop Lists again allowing users to select search terms from a controlled list of options. A free text search box means that you can also try a search based on any keyword, subject heading or name of your own.

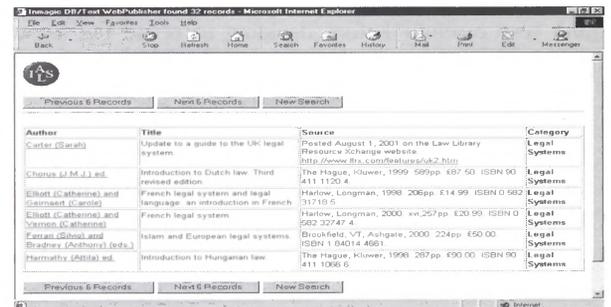
FURTHER SEARCH OPTIONS

Boolean search functionality is also provided to support more complex searches across the database field structure. Dropdown menus ahead of each field enable

users to select the basic logic connectors AND, OR or NOT and combine searches involving several fields. In addition, Boolean logic, truncation and proximity searching can be employed in a search string within each field search. A Help option at the foot of the form has been customised to provide detailed examples of online search strategies and explain the functionality of the caLIM database.

Once you have prepared a query, you just click on the Submit Query button or in current browsers hit the Return/Enter key to perform that search. A Reset button clears the form to start a fresh search.

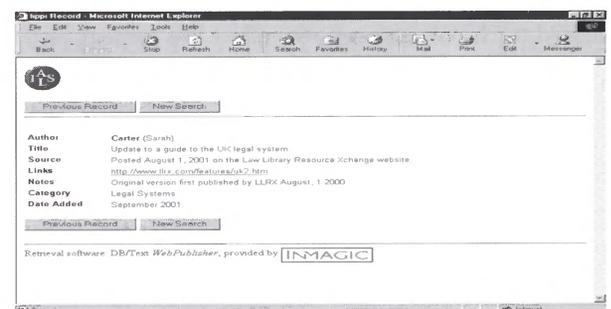
RESULTS TABLE



The results of a successful search are presented in a table displaying author(s), title, source information and subject category for relevant records, batched in groups of six entries. The records are listed alphabetically by author name with the occurrence of the search term(s) highlighted in bold text in each of the records presented. Buttons to aid navigation between the next and previous set of records are displayed at the top and bottom of the table. Similarly a new search button features at the top and bottom of the table to return to the initial blank search form. Use of the browser Back button allows modification of an existing search.

The Results Table offers a link from the author(s) name to the full bibliographic record entry for each item.

RECORD ENTRY



A full index entry shows the Author, Title, Source, hypertext link to a web-based resource, Notes, Subject Category and Date Added to the database. The Notes field is used to expand abbreviations quoted in the title or indicate the area of coverage where the author's artistic licence has resulted in an interesting but cryptic title.

Where the item is available on the Internet, the records have embedded links to the live source. Again navigation buttons above and below the bibliographic record enable users to move to the next or previous record in the set or initiate a completely new search. Search results can be printed from either the Results Table or Full Record Entry by using standard browser printing options.

The latest versions of the software offer features to address accessibility issues for users with visual impairment. Webtrends (<http://www.webtrends.com/>) statistical monitoring software on the IALS web server is used to keep track of usage. There has been encouraging interest in the database to date, which we believe will increase as the service becomes better known and extends its coverage.

FUTURE

As the database develops we hope that it will fulfil both a current awareness role and an archive index role. Historic coverage has been extended with generous assistance from Louise Tsang, Reference Librarian at York University Law Library, Toronto, Canada making very helpful and welcome use of her time in London. Past issues of the journal column exist in digital format back to 1990 providing a source for further retrospective database entries in due course. In the era of the hybrid law library, handling materials in a mix of traditional print and electronic formats and balancing user needs for information currency and historical preservation, caLIM should provide a useful reference source. The database aims to help colleagues retrace and share professional

skills and concerns and look ahead to future information initiatives. Suggestions on potential additional sources and scope for service development are very welcome.

CONTACTS

David Gee, Reader Services Manager, Institute of Advanced Legal Studies

e-mail David.Gee@sas.ac.uk (mailto:David.Gee@sas.ac.uk)

Steve Whittle, Information Systems Manager, Institute of Advanced Legal Studies

e-mail Steven.Whittle@sas.ac.uk (mailto:Steven.Whittle@sas.ac.uk) 

David Gee

Reader Services Manager at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London. A senior member of the Editorial Board of the Law Librarian and then Legal Information Management between 1992 and 2002, he was also joint editor of the Current Awareness column between 1994 and 2002.

Steven Whittle

Information Systems Manager at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London. He and David Gee have both written for a number of journals including Amicus Curiae, Directions in Legal Education, International Journal of Legal Information, Journal of Information Law and Technology, the Law Librarian, and Legal Information Management and have contributed significantly to the development of the Law Section of SOSIG, the Social Science Information Gateway