Publicly Available Websites For
Information Technology Lawyers

By:

Proprietary Rights Committee
Information Technology Law Section
State Bar of Michigan

Chairman
David R. Syrowik
Brooks Kushman P.C.
Southfield, Michigan

Committee Members
Mitchell A. Goodkin
Junqi Hang
Matthew M. Jakubowski
James N. Kallis
Paul J. Raine
John P. Rondini
Dalpreet S. Saluja
Thomas W. Saur
Mathew R. Syrowik

Information Technology Section Annual Meeting
September 17, 2008
Dearborn, Michigan

I. **INTRODUCTION**

It goes without saying that there is an incredible amount of publicly available information on the Internet. Such information includes a large amount of information useful to lawyers who practice in the Information Technology (IT) law area. Of course, this information is not only accessible to lawyers, but also to their clients. One result of such accessibility is that clients expect their lawyers to be familiar with such information whether the lawyer is a seasoned IT law expert, IT non-specialist, in-house counsel, general practice litigator or lawyer who only occasionally deals in IT law issues.

Clients also expect their lawyers to quickly opine on "basic" IT law issues in response to questions raised in meetings, telephone conferences and e-mails. Such issues may include IT law definitions, concepts, principles, sample contract clauses and summaries of important court decisions.

The purpose of this year's Committee's report is to identify and briefly discuss particularly useful, publicly available websites for the IT lawyer. Some criteria in determining such websites include the following:

1. Up-to-date, reliable and comprehensive information that is useful to lawyers who practice in the IT law area;

2. Relatively easy to search or navigate to obtain the desired information; and

3. Raw data and information are important but such websites should also contain summaries and discussions as well as links to other websites that are also useful.

The following discussion identifies websites which satisfy many of the above-noted criteria. Because many websites come and go, feel free to visit the websites, try them out and let me or any of the other Committee Members know what you think. If we get enough useful feedback, the Committee will devote a future report based on what is reported back. Alternatively, such feedback could be the basis for a regular column in the Section's newsletter. Such feedback, of course, may include additional websites which satisfy the above-noted criteria.

II. GENERAL REFERENCE AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WEBSITES

http://www.webopedia.com - computer and Internet technology definitions

http://www.wikipedia.org

http://whatis.techtarget.com

http://www.dictionary.com

http://www.m-w.com - which is the Merriam-Webster Dictionary and Thesaurus

http://www.techterms.com

http://www.techdictionary.com/index.html - online computer dictionary that contains thousands of technology terms

http://www.highbeam.com - online library where you can find research, facts, and articles. Contains articles from newspapers like THE WASHINGTON POST and THE BOSTON GLOBE, magazines like THE ECONOMIST and NEWSWEEK, and journals like RUTGERS COMPUTER and TECHNOLOGY LAW JOURNAL, MARQUETTE IP LAW REVIEW and MICHIGAN LAW REVIEW.

http://www.accessmylibrary.com - free access to millions of articles from top publications that are available through your local library.

http://books.google.com - online book search engine for many digitized legal, technical, fiction, and non-fiction printed books. Some results include engineering, medical, and legal textbooks.

http://www.scirus.com - comprehensive scientific research tool that contains over 450 million scientific items indexed. Scirus also allows one to search for journal content, scientists' homepages, courseware, pre-print server material, patents and institutional repository and website information.

http://scholar.google.com - simple way to broadly search for scholarly literature. Allow one the ability to search across many disciplines and sources: peer-reviewed papers, theses, books, abstracts and articles, from academic publishers, professional societies, preprint repositories, universities and other scholarly organizations.

http://infomine.ucr.edu - comprehensive scientific research engine

http://nsdl.org - (National Science Digital Library) - Nation's online library for education and research in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

http://www.howstuffworks.com - is a source, similar to an encyclopedia, of credible and simple descriptions of how various things in the world work.

III. ONLINE BUSINESS

http://www.businessdictionary.com - particularly useful for business methods and computer related inventions

http://www.ftc.gov - the Federal Trade Commission website which provides information regarding consumer protection, business guidance and provides opinions regarding current business issues.

http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/pubs/buspubs/dotcom/index.shtml - staff paper "Dot Com Disclosures" to guide parties using the Internet for advertising as to the applicability of product and business specific FTC laws to Internet advertising

http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/menus/consumer/tech.shtm - useful FTC publications which apply numerous FTC rules and guides for Internet transactions

http://www.zoominfo.com - a summarization search engine that delivers fresh, comprehensive information on over 33 million business professionals and 2 million companies across virtually every industry; this is not a public record database; all the matches are from websites in which the person search is mentioned.

http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/com/sol/notices/fr990621.htm - sample Internet Usage Policy which can be tailored to a particular company

http://www.irs.gov - the Internal Revenue Services (IRS) website which provides information relating to employment and taxation

http://www.irs.gov/plain/forms-pubs/pubs/p15204.html - a helpful overview of how to determine whether a worker is an employee or independent contractor

If your clients are doing or are planning to do international business, then there will be export issues. The primary government organizations administering the export rules are the Bureau of Industry and Security in the Commerce Department, the Directorate of Defense Trade Controls in the State Department and the Office of Foreign Assets Control in the Treasury Department. Each of these has a website with access to the relevant regulations and additional information, guidance, forms, etc.

IV. GENERAL LEGAL

A.   Statutes

http://thomas.loc.gov - federal legislative information

http://www.ucitaonline.com or http://www.nccusl.org - software licenses, UCITA and its provisions

http://www.ucita.com - opposition to UCITA.

B.   Case Law

http://www.altlaw.org - free searchable database of Supreme Court and Federal Appellate case reports. Among the searchable are appellate and Supreme Court opinions for the last 40 to 50 years. AltLaw is claimed to be updated daily.

http://www.findlaw.com - you have to start from the Legal Professionals tab, not the Public one.

V. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

A.   General

http://www.wipo.int - is a specialized agency of the United Nations; WIPO (World I.P. Organization) is dedicated to developing a balanced and accessible international intellectual property (IP) system, which rewards creativity, stimulates innovation and contributes to economic development while safeguarding the public interest. One important service that WIPO offers is with regard to PCT (Patent Cooperation Treaty) filings and related documents retrieval. International searches and preliminary novelty reports are also updated and readily available for review and download. In addition, WIPO also covers many other IP related topics including copyright issues and enforcement of IP rights.

http://www.ipmenu.com - IP Menu is a worldwide Internet directory system aimed at users and researchers working in the intellectual property field. The system is designed in hierarchical fashion with indices by country or property type (e.g., patent, trademark, etc.). Each section has access to online websites containing patent, trademark, design, domain names, legislation, company, and business information. IP Menu also links to government and library websites, and lists unique features, such as information and intellectual property conferences.

http://www.ipmall.info - This link is to the Pierce Hall Ipmail. It is a collection of resources and includes links to external sources. There are over 2,700 links under the IP links section.

http://www.managingip.com - ("MIP"), founded in 1990, is an international magazine for IP owners, with more than 8,000 readers across the globe; about two-thirds of the readers are senior in-house counsel in multinational companies. MIP is part of the Euromoney Legal Media Group, with offices in London, Hong Kong, and New York; other magazines in the group include International Financial Law Review and International Tax Review. A list of the searchable topics includes patent, trademark, copyright, Internet and domain names, IP management, licensing, and dispute resolution.

B.   Patents

http://www.patents.com - is a search engine that provides patent information from around the world. Users can search patents in English, Japanese and Korean. The service will slowly add 12 more languages and provide over 450 million patent documents.

http://www.brint.com

http://www.uspto.gov - The U.S. Government provides free access to the United States patent database, which includes full text and images of U.S. patents issued since January 1, 1976. Access to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) PT Patent Gazette is also provided, which allows searching of foreign patent applications filed in accordance with the Patent Cooperation Treaty. The United States Patent and Trademark Office website also provides a wide variety of other information related to the patenting process.

http://www.google.com/advanced_patent_search - Google Patent Search covers the entire collection of patents and published patent applications made available by the USPTO – search issued patents and published patent applications by number, title, the inventor(s) name, assignee name, and U.S. classification.

http://www.pat2pdf.org - this site is a free patent search tool and can be used to print free patent pdfs'.

http://www.pcug.org.au/~rossco/patentsearching.htm - this site indexes many of the notable free patent search databases on the Internet.

http://www.freepatentsonline.com - allows U.S. and foreign patent and published application searching; includes an advanced search function that allows for various syntax constructions (e.g., searching for words that are within 5 words of each other).

http://www.patentstorm.com - occasionally lists different search results with the same search from the USPTO website or Free Patents Online.

http://patentlaw.typepad.com/patent - is a patent law blog and a daily read for patent law professionals from major innovative corporations, IP law firms and world patent offices; a number of patent topics are searchable through the site.

http://www.epo.org/patents/html - provides information for lawyers and applicants to conduct business with the European Patent Office (EPO).

http://www.jpo.go.jp/ - The Japanese Patent Office .

C.   Copyrights

http://www.copyright.gov - the United States Copyright Office.

D.   Trademarks

http://www.uspto.gov - a search opinion regarding a domain name may be obtained by conducting a quick preliminary search on the United States Patent and Trademark Office's Internet search system.

E.   Domain Name Registration

http://www.iana.org/root-whois/index.html - list of the current country code domains and links to their registries

http://www.icann.org/registrars/accredited-list.html - a list of all registrars accredited to register universally recognized domain names

http://www.icann.org/udrp/udrp-policy-24oct99.html - ICANN dispute resolution policy that applies to all domain names

http://www.icann.org/udrp/approvided-providers.html - links to approved dispute resolution providers

http://www.networksolutions.com/whois - NSI's database to determine if a domain name is available

http://www.iana.org/gtld/gtld.htm - list of registry operators for top level domains

http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/tac/domain - a position paper on registering domain names.