Articles & Book Chapters

Faculty Scholarship

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# HeinOnline's World Constitutions Illustrated in Top 5 FCIL Sources

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## UN Treaty Collection *continued from page 5*

be omitted, if alternative access is provided by the registering party. The purpose of this partial omission of information is to ensure cost-effective translation of material and to expedite publication in the UNTS.

### HOW EASY-TO-USE (USER-FRIENDLY) IS IT?

Neither the MTDSG nor the UNTS search interfaces can be described as user-friendly. Although the entire website was recently overhauled, the search pages are still idiosyncratic and difficult to use.

The MTDSG interface, located under the Depositary tab, is easier to navigate if you know the general topic of the treaty so you can browse to the specific treaty by clicking on the correct Chapter. Here are some things that the user needs to be aware of, when searching this database:

- You may not use Boolean operators (OR/AND/"") in the title/Keyword search.
- In the full-text search, the drop down menu provides a workaround for the inability to use Boolean operators; you can enter keywords and then use the dropdown menu to specify that you want to find "All" keywords, the "Exact" phrase, or "Any" key words.

The UNTS interface, located under the Registration & Publication tab, has similar restrictions to the MTDSG search interface.

- The UNTS full-text search interface is identical to that of the MTDSG.
- The UNTS Title search has Boolean functionality, but instead of a drop-down menu like the MTDSG, you have radio buttons under the search box that you can toggle to specify that you wish to "Match this phrase", "Match all these words" or "Match any of these words."
- The UNTS Participant search allows the user to find treaties based on the participant country or organization, and you can use the radio buttons to specify that you wish to "Match all of these participants" or "Match any of these participants." This essentially provides Boolean AND and OR functionality.
- UNTS also has an Advanced Search, which is not intuitive to use. It's important to read the directions carefully. First you select the document type that you want; then you add search fields one at a time; and they appear in the box at the bottom of the page. You toggle the radio buttons under the search values to indicate if you want to "Match all these values" or "Match any of

these values," which allows you to have Boolean functionality, AND and OR respectively.

### HOW USEFUL IS IT IN TERMS OF ITS ABILITY TO ANSWER BOTH COMMON AND RARE (DIFFICULT-TO-FIND) QUESTIONS?

When an authentic document is needed for a non-U.S. international agreement, this is a uniquely useful source because of the ease with which you can find the most up-to-date version of an instrument; any related treaty actions; and the text of related declarations, reservations, objections and communications.

However, when seeking merely the authentic text, HeinOnline may be just as useful and somewhat easier to navigate, given that the search fields are similar to those found in the HeinOnline treaty library, but the HeinOnline search interface is slightly less challenging to use.

### HOW CURRENT (UP-TO-DATE) IS IT?

The MTDSG is updated on a daily basis. However, the latest volume of the United Nations Treaty Series, often covers a registration period that is at least five years in the past. So in February 2017, the most recent volume of the treaty series covered the registration period of January 2012.

# Resource Reviews: HeinOnline's World Constitutions Illustrated

**Part of series of reviews prepared by the Electronic Research Interest Group**

**Yemisi Dina**

### INTRODUCTION

World Constitutions Illustrated provides access to constitutions of various jurisdictions. There is a current constitution in the original language, one English language translation for each country, and amending laws for each constitution.

The database provides access to constitutional development documents, which is very important and critical, especially when researching smaller economies and jurisdictions. It serves as a one- stop shop for materials that may not necessarily be easily available anywhere else.

## World Const. Illustrated *continued from page 6*

One of the database's time-saving features is the links to scholarly articles and commentaries in HeinOnline's other databases. Use Hein's current awareness tool to send you alerts when newer materials are added.

The following features give secondary scholarly support for the constitutions themselves:

- Bibliography of select constitutional books outside of HeinOnline;
- Links to external websites on constitutional law (for example, Globalex), official government websites and country profiles;
- News Feeds can be generated for selected countries.

This database is an outstanding addition to the researcher's list of foreign, comparative and international materials!

### HOW WELL-KNOWN IS THE SOURCE?
While there is no statistical evidence, this database is available through HeinOnline, which is a popular subscription service provider of foreign, comparative and international law materials. It is well known among FCIL librarians in North America and beyond.

### HOW ACCESSIBLE IS IT?
World Constitutions Illustrated is available through HeinOnline, which has a very good reputation for sustaining its products and services. The database is a subscription based service so it is available to most institutions that can afford it.

### HOW COMPREHENSIVE & AUTHORITATIVE IS IT, IN TERMS OF ITS CONTENTS?
This resource contains the current and historical constitutions of 197 countries in the original languages, as well as their English translations. There is a link to historical constitutions, amending laws and consolidated texts, as well as scholarly articles and commentary. The contents are mostly from official government sources.

### HOW EASY-TO-USE (USER-FRIENDLY) IS IT?
The database is very user-friendly. The screen expands to all versions of the constitution so you can work with multiple versions at the same time. The drop-down menu option allows you to browse the list of countries alphabetically.

### HOW USEFUL IS IT IN TERMS OF ITS ABILITY TO ANSWER BOTH COMMON AND RARE (DIFFICULT-TO-FIND) QUESTIONS?
It is extremely useful for answering both common and rare questions, which is one of the unique characteristics of this

database. Some of the constitutions are only available in their original languages. In this case Hein makes the English translation available in World Constitutions Illustrated.

### HOW CURRENT (UP-TO-DATE) IS IT?
World Constitutions Illustrated is constantly being updated with constitutional amendments and historical materials.

# European Law IG: Legal Resource Lists

**Erin Gow**

A short survey was recently completed to gauge interest in future programming & services from the European Law IG. One of the top choices that appeared in the survey was a desire for European legal resource lists, which are now slowly being compiled. If you have any ideas for strong resources that should be included in this list, or if you're feeling very keen and want to volunteer to complete a resource list on a particular topic (sources of European national case law, or access to government information anyone??) please email me (erin.gow@louisville.edu) with your suggestions and ideas. Remember, whether you're a European expert or just a curious dabbler in the field, you're always welcome to join our group through the AALL My Communities page (http://community.aallnet.org/home).

# FCIL Newsletter

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