

“Oh what a tangled web we weave...”

Internet Research Sites for ‘practise’ in the new millenium

Mexican American Bar Association
General Practice Seminar

Las Vegas, Nevada

July 23-24, 2004

Mark I. Unger, Esq.
Law Offices of Jack A. Efron, Inc.
10010 San Pedro, Ste. 660
San Antonio, Tx. 78216
T: 210.366.9676
F: 210.366.0412
EM: miunger@aol.com
www.texaslawyers.com/unger

**To request a downloadable version of this document with ‘live’ links, please email the author at the above listed email address; this web version has been updated*

*“Isn’t it strange
That Princes & Kings and Clowns
Who scamper in sawdust rings
And common people like you and me,
Are builders for eternity
For to each is given a sack of tools,
A shapeless mass & a book of rules
And he must make,
Ere life has flown,
A stumbling block or a stepping stone.”
Anon (quote courtesy of Stewart Gagnon)*

- I. Introduction
- II. Search Engines/All topics
- III. People
 - a. Phone/Address Finders
 - b. Data Searches on People
- IV. Property Searches
 - a. Real Property
 - b. Corporation Tax Search
 - c. Bexar County Practice
 - d. Personal Property and Corporate Filings
- V. Texas Government Sites
- VI. Texas Legislature
- VII. Texas Courts
- VIII. Legal Research Sites
 - a. Texas Statutes Online: Texas Rules and Codes
 - b. Texas Constitution
 - c. Texas Rules of Civil Procedure (revisions):
 - d. Texas Rules of Criminal Procedure
 - e. Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure
 - f. Texas Codes
 - g. Texas Case law
 - h. Private Legal Sites for Texas Attorneys
- IX. Issue Specific/Practice Area Specific Websites
- X. Miscellaneous

I. Introduction

This paper is a basic introduction to conducting research on the internet, primarily focusing on some of the most basic and widely used websites for locating people, places, and things, as well as pursuing legal research and information. Most of these sites are free and easily accessible to the public, however some have been restricted and are intended to conform to recent movements in privacy law and the legitimate purposes for such research. Many of the search engines and websites listed herein contain a certain amount of crossover or overlapping of topics or information. Although I have tried to limit the number of sites in this paper, only trying them out will result in which one best suits your practice and personal taste.

II. Search Engines/All topics

These sites are generically based and are intended to search for keywords that are registered as “metatags” with the particular search engine/website, returning a list of sites that match as closely as possible the words for which you searched.

- A. Google: www.google.com
--my personal favorite; download the toolbar directly to your computer for 24/7 searching capability without having to go to the website; toolbar also includes automatic ‘popup’ blocker
- B. Dogpile: www.dogpile.com
- C. AltaVista: www.altavista.com
- D. Excite: www.excite.com
- E. Yahoo: www.yahoo.com
- F. www.searchengines.com -- Outstanding resource site listing all major search engines, and listings for search engines by topic (including legal), area of interest or region

III. People:

A. Phone/Address Finders:

- 1. State Bar of Texas Attorney Search
(includes disciplinary records):
<http://www.texasbar.com/>
- 2. Martindale-Hubbell:
<http://www.martindale.com/xp/Martindale/home.xml>
- 3. Anywho: <http://www.anywho.com/>
Finds businesses or people by name, Yellow Pages, White Pages, Reverse Lookup, Toll-free numbers, and International pages.
- 4. Smart Pages: <http://www.smartpages.com/>
SBC/Ameritech’s comprehensive version of nationwide searches for businesses and a whole lot more; consumer oriented.

5. US Search: <http://www.ussearch.com/wlcs/index.jsp>
Search backgrounds of people, criminal histories, identity theft and various court records, for a fee.

4. Switchboard.com: www.switchboard.com
Outstanding and comprehensive free way to find a lot of people.

5. Area Code Listings
Searchable Database, which lists cities, and State covered
www.areacodes.org

6. ATT reverse phone lookup
<http://www.att.com/directory/>

7. Yahoo People Search: <http://people.yahoo.com/>
This pay site, merely repackages and utilizes USSearch.com but offers three different packages depending on how much information you want on the person.

8. AnyWho: Internet Directory Assistance; Yellow Pages, White Pages, Toll-Free Numbers, Maps and Directions
<http://www.anywho.com/index.html>

B. Data Searches on People

1. Birthdays: <http://anybirthday.com/search.htm>

2. Search Systems: <http://www.searchsystems.net/>
Public Records locator by State.

3. Virtual Gumshoe: <http://www.virtualgumshoe.com/>

Great list of investigative tools, extremely comprehensive portal for investigators and investigation.

4. PublicData.com: www.publicdata.com

Outstanding portal for locating driver's license and criminal records; fee-based, but not that expensive.

User friendly, as reprinted below--

PUBLICDATA.com

Criminal

[Alaska](#) [Arizona](#) [Arkansas](#)
[California](#) [Connecticut](#) [Florida](#)
[Georgia](#) [Idaho](#) [Illinois](#) [Indiana](#)
[Kansas](#) [Kentucky](#) [Michigan](#)

Driver's License

[Florida](#) [Idaho](#) [Iowa](#) [Minnesota](#)
[Mississippi](#) [Ohio](#) [Texas](#)
[Wisconsin](#) [DOB](#) [DL Number](#)

Member Services

- [Terms and Conditions](#)
- [How to Contact Us](#)

[Minnesota](#) [Mississippi](#) [Missouri](#)
[Nebraska](#) [New Jersey](#) [New York](#)
[North Carolina](#) [Ohio](#) [Oklahoma](#)
[Oregon](#) [Pennsylvania](#)
[Rhode Island](#) [South Carolina](#)
[Tennessee](#) [Texas](#) [Utah](#)
[Wisconsin](#) [DOB](#)


[Sex Offenders](#)

[Alabama](#) [Alaska](#) [Arizona](#)
[Colorado](#) [Delaware](#)
[District of Columbia](#) [Florida](#)
[Georgia](#) [Illinois](#) [Iowa](#) [Kansas](#)
[Kentucky](#) [Louisiana](#) [Maryland](#)
[Minnesota](#) [Nebraska](#)
[New Mexico](#) [New York](#)
[North Carolina](#) [South Carolina](#)
[Tennessee](#) [Texas](#) [Virginia](#)
[West Virginia](#) [Wyoming](#) [DOB](#)
[ZIP code](#)

[DMV - License Plate](#)

[Florida](#) [Idaho](#) [Maine](#) [Mississippi](#)
[Missouri](#) [Ohio](#) [Oregon](#)
[South Dakota](#) [Texas](#) [Utah](#)
[Wisconsin](#)

[DMV - Vehicle Id \(VIN\)](#)


[Florida](#) [Idaho](#) [Maine](#) [Mississippi](#)
[Missouri](#) [Ohio](#) [Oregon](#) [Texas](#)
[Utah](#) [Wisconsin](#) [Wyoming](#)

[Civil Court](#)

[Alaska](#) [California](#)
[TX Dallas Cnty Civil](#)
[TX Dallas Cnty Eviction](#)

[Voter](#)

[Texas](#) [TX Dallas Cnty](#)
[TX Harris Cnty](#) [TX Tarrant Cnty](#)
[DOB](#)

- [Plans and Pricing](#)
- [Update Account](#)
- [Billing History](#)
- [Print an Invoice](#)
- [Usage History](#)
- [Bonus Summary](#)
- [Earn More Free Look-ups](#)
- [Renew My Subscription](#)

[Professional](#)

[TX Alcoholic Bev](#)
[TX Med Examiner](#) [TX Misc](#)
[TX Real Estate](#) [DOB](#) [License](#)

[FAA](#)

[Civil Aircraft](#) [Dealer](#) [Reserved N](#)
[Serial No](#) [Air Model](#)
[Engine Model](#) [N number](#) [N Res.](#)

[Federal](#)

[Firearms](#) [SSA Deaths by Name](#)
[SSN](#)

5. Accurint: www accurint.com

Boasting the lowly price of 25 cents per search, this is my favorite for locating people and information about them. Other search examples include Banking, Insurance, child support agencies, collections, landlord/management companies, and media; now includes batch processing with partner 'SmartJury,' allowing for mass searching for potential juror information.

6. KnowX.com: www knowx.com

Slightly more expensive, but all searches can be ordered in a self-contained format on a pay-as-you-go way (app. 6.95 per search).

7. Web Detective: <http://www web-detective.com/>

\$29.95 initial membership fee to join; claims as comprehensive as anyone's

IV. Property Searches:

A. Real Property:

1. Craig Ball's County Property Links
<http://www.craigball.com/appraisal.html>

Thanks to council member Craig Ball, who along with Howard Nations has arguably the two best private research sites for attorneys in Texas, this page boasts a compilation of all the County Appraisal Districts online.

2. Texas County Data Website: *Billed as the Texas' largest online property records database; Searchable by name, address or property ID number.*

<http://www.txcountydata.com/>

B. Corporation Tax Search:

<http://ecpa.cpa.state.tx.us/coa/Index.html>.

C. Bexar County Practice: I would be remiss in not providing some of the sites that provide attorneys in and around Bexar County, Texas and the information that is available if you ever practice in this area.

1. Bexar County Appraisal District: www.bcad.org

2. Bexar County District Clerk:

<http://www.co.bexar.tx.us/dclerk/>

Lists information and postings on a full range of practice issues in the Bexar County Courts, including: Fax Filing, E-Filing, Fees, Civil and Criminal Courts, Local Rules, Passports, Attorney Vacation submissions and Tax Suits.

3. Bexar County Clerk: <http://www.co.bexar.tx.us/cclerk/>

Searchable database of Deed Recordings, Marriage Licenses, Assumed Names, UCC filings, and Foreclosure Notices.

4. San Antonio Municipal Court – pay or lookup pending traffic tickets/records: <http://www.sanantonio.gov/court/>

5. San Antonio Police Reports

<http://www.ci.sat.tx.us/sapd/Reports.asp>

D. Personal Property and Corporate Filings:

1. Secretary of State (SOS):

If you do not want to pay for the same service on Lexis, you can Search the SOS site, and even file other business documents and articles, for a small fee.

<http://www.sos.state.tx.us/corp/sosda/index.shtml>

V. Texas Government Sites:

1. Office of the Attorney General, Child Support database; with client information, you can look up recent payments by Non-Custodial Parents.

<http://www.oag.state.tx.us/child/index.shtml>

2. Texas Online, E-Government Services; Texas Government site and partner for Electronic Filing of Court Documents (now available in Bexar County):

<http://www.TexasOnline.com>

3. Texas Department of Public Safety:
<http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/onserv.htm>

Search Tx.DPS for any of the following (some with slight fee)

 [Driver License Renewal](#)

 [Conviction Records](#)

Log in to search statewide criminal records database; similar to PublicData and KnowX's but probable more up to date.

 [Sex Offender](#)

 [Concealed Handgun](#)

 [Downloadable Forms](#)

A full range of forms provided by Tx.DPS.

4. First Gov – US Government Portal/gateway to US Government web pages: <http://www.1stgov.com/>
5. Comprehensive State Government Links; Links to virtually all state agencies, as well as statutes: <http://www.texasatty.com/texgov.html>
6. Comprehensive Federal Government Links <http://www.texasatty.com/fedgov.html>
7. Case File Xpress; Electronic Filing Service

VI. Texas Legislature: *search for past and pending legislation, as well as comments and legislative history.*

<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us>

VII. Texas Courts:

A. *Search for opinions, as well as general Court information for all Texas Courts.* (Includes Supreme Court of Texas, all Appellate Courts and all Trial Courts).

<http://www.courts.state.tx.us>

B. Search for Local Rules for Texas County and District Courts, many from Austin to Williamson, including Bankruptcy Court rules

<http://www.texaslocalrules.com/>

C. Texas Municipal Courts Website – Links page to vast majority of Municipal Courts in the State of Texas, including contact information and fine schedules in some jurisdictions.

<http://www.tmcec.com/courts.html>

VIII. Legal Research Sites (Primary)

A. Texas Statutes Online: Texas Rules and Codes

<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/statutes/statutes.html>

B. Texas Constitution:

<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/txconst/toc.html>

C. Texas Rules of Evidence

<http://www.supreme.courts.state.tx.us/rules/tre/>

D. Texas Rules of Civil Procedure (revisions):

<http://www.supreme.courts.state.tx.us/rules/TRCP/>

E. Texas Rules of Criminal Procedure:

<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/statutes/cptoc.html>

F. Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure

<http://www.courts.state.tx.us/publicinfo/Trap/index.asp>

G. Texas Codes (some of the many specific codes listed on the Texas Statutes web page)

1. Texas Family Code:

<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/statutes/fatoc.html>

2. Texas Penal Code:
<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/statutes/petoc.html>
3. Texas Probate Code:
<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/statutes/pbtoc.html>
4. Texas Property Code:
<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/statutes/pptoc.html>
5. Vernon's Civil Statutes (all others not listed on Texas Statutes page)
<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/statutes/vntoc.html>

H. Texas Case law:

1. My Texas Bar: *Utilizes internal 'deep' linking with Findlaw*

<http://www.mytexasbar.com/>

Free to Texas Attorneys, this 'portal' is the pre-eminent gateway to practice management in Texas. A comprehensive site that includes calendaring function, free legal research

2. Findlaw: www.findlaw.com
3. Cornell Law School: Incomparable legal portal, very user friendly for all States laws and other legal research.
<http://www.law.cornell.edu/>
4. Lexis: www.lexis.com

Full service legal research site; various plans available.

5. LexisOne: www.lexisone.com

Limited search capabilities for registered users; free service, includes some recent case law, forms, bookstore, news and site search capability; Marketed towards small firms.

6. Westlaw: www.westlaw.com

Same as Lexis, only different; the two major players in the legal research game, West has aggressively marketed it's website service (for a substantial fee) to tie into other major search engines and gain a

web presence and potential client's for it's member firms; takes a three-tiered approach for various entry levels for firms.

7. My Texas Bar – Legal Search Links

<http://www.texasbar.com/newsinfo/links/searches.asp>

8. Nolo Law Center

<http://www.nolo.com/lawcenter/statute/index.cfm>

I. Private Legal Sites for Texas Attorneys

1. Craig Ball, Esq: <http://www.craigball.com>

2. Howard Nations, Esq.: *Links for Texas Lawyers*

<http://www.howardnations.com/states/texas/texas-index.html>

J. Bar Associations:

A. San Antonio Bar Association:

<http://www.sanantoniobar.org/>

B. Travis County Bar Association:

<http://www.travisbar.com/>

C. Dallas County Bar Association:

<http://www.dallasbar.org/>

D. Houston Bar Association: <http://www.hba.org/>

E. Texas Access To Justice Commission (TAJC) and Texas Equal Access to Justice Foundation (TEAJF) website. www.TexasLawHelp.org

F. My Texas Bar, free to Texas Lawyers from the State Bar of Texas: www.mytexasbar.com

G. Check your MCLE compliance

<http://www.texasbar.com/members/onlinetools/services.asp>

H. Texas Bar CLE

Fee-based searchable archive of State Bar CLE articles from 1998 to present:

<http://www.texasbarcle.com/publications/articles.asp>

I. American Bar Association CLE Programs, online, telephone, live and webcast availability

<http://www.abanet.org/cle/home.html>

J. Online Continuing Legal Education

www.digilearnonline.com

K. West's online, on-demand center for CLE

www.westlegaledcenter.com

L. Process Servers Anywhere:

<http://www.unitedstatesprocessserving.com/>

IX. Issue Specific/Practice Area Specific Websites:

a. Daubert and it's progeny- Everything you always wanted to know but were afraid to ask...

<http://www.daubertontheweb.com/>

b. Practice Management:

i. Communication – Cell phone and Text Paging sites; communicate with anyone with a cell phone via web messaging, just be sure to advise your attorney “Communiquee” to switch ringer in Court.

1. AT&T:

<http://www.mobile.att.net/messagecenter/index.html>

2. Verizon:

http://www.vtext.com/customer_site/jsp/messaging_lo.jsp

3. Cingular:

<http://www.cingular.com/sendamessage>

4. TMobile:

<http://www.t-mobile.com/messaging/default.asp?nav=hm>

5. Sprint:

<http://messaging.sprintpcs.com/sml/guestCompose.do>

6. NextTel: www.nextel.com (see middle right of page)

or directly from

<http://messaging.nextel.com/cgi/iPageExt.dll?cmd=buildInAddressPage>

c. Family Law Links:

1. Online organization providing resources with the intent of promoting the best interests of children in the divorce/courts' process

<http://www.puttingkidsfirst.org>

2. Online subscription website designed to facilitate the communication, planning and scheduling between parents and children in multiple jurisdictions; includes scheduling

function for visitation, posting of school grades and messaging in order to further cooperation among parents.

<http://www.ourfamilywizard.com>

d. Probate Law- Barnes & Karisch's Probate Website

<http://www.texasprobate.com/>

X. Miscellaneous: *Some various consumer sites that I consider the very good for the day-to-day business of living, attorney or not.*

A. Travel:

1. Southwest Airlines: www.iflyswa.com
2. Expedia: www.expedia.com
3. Travelocity: www.travelocity.com
4. Orbitz: www.orbitz.com
5. Enterprise Car Rental:
http://www.enterprise.com/car_rental/home.do
6. Dollar Car Rental: <http://www.dollar.com/>
7. Hertz Car Rental: <http://www.hertz.com/>

B. Currency Exchange websites:

1. www.oanda.com
2. www.fxtop.com
3. www.exchangerate.com
4. www.x-rates.com
5. www.xe.com

D. Mail/Delivery

1. UPS: www.ups.com
2. United States Postal Service: <http://www.usps.com/>
3. Federal Express: <http://www.fedex.com/us/>
- 4.

E. Dictionaries:

1. Dictionary online: <http://www.dictionary.com/>
2. Legal Dictionary online: <http://dictionary.law.com/>
3. Language translation site-- Altavista search engine partnership with Babelfish translation engine; capable of translating documents, articles or phrases almost instantaneously in most major languages.
www.altavista.com/babelfish

4. Google's version of asp-based language translation engine
http://www.translate.google.com/translate_t

- F. Privacy Issues:
 1. Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act
www.ftc.gov/privacy/glbact/index.html
 2. SBC Communications' website initiative to help educate consumers about Internet safety, privacy and security.
www.sbc.com/safety

- G. Maps/Directions:
 1. Mapquest: www.mapquest.com
 2. Expedia: www.expedia.com

- H. Computer Downloads:
 1. CNET--
<http://www.cnet.com/>

 2. ZDNet--
www.zdnet.com

- I. E-filing websites:
 1. Texas Online E-filing: www.texasonline.com
 2. E-filing Service Providers (EFSP's) – The current providers through you may electronically file documents in Bexar County:
 1. Prodoc: <http://www.prodoc.com/efile/index.asp>
 2. Lexis-Nexis: www.lexisnexis.com/fileandserve/
 3. Case File Xpress: <http://www.casefilexpress.com>