

New Realities for Developing Global Collections

Annual Meeting Program Highlights Quality Foreign Law Sources

During the past two years, patrons' requests for foreign laws at the Brooklyn Law School Library have roughly doubled. The program on "New Realities for Developing Global Collections: New Approaches and Cooperative Projects" at AALL's 2001 Annual Meeting in Minneapolis was made to order for anyone interested in identifying quality foreign law sources.

Rubens Medina, law librarian of the U.S. Library of Congress, highlighted developments in the Global Legal Information Network, a cooperative, nonprofit group of government agencies and government designees that provide national legal material to the GLIN database of statutes, regulations and secondary legal sources from jurisdictions in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America and South America. Document texts appear in official languages; summaries and subject terms are in English; and users can conduct English search queries for documents. The GLIN site now includes material from 47 jurisdictions. Any researcher who has Internet access and the freely available Adobe Acrobat Reader can review summaries of, and cites to, GLIN materials. Victoria Szymczak and I have been teaching Brooklyn Law School students to review the annotated, linked *Guide to Law On-line* and to search the valuable legislative and legal writing summaries of GLIN materials available through <http://www.loc.gov/glin> for years.

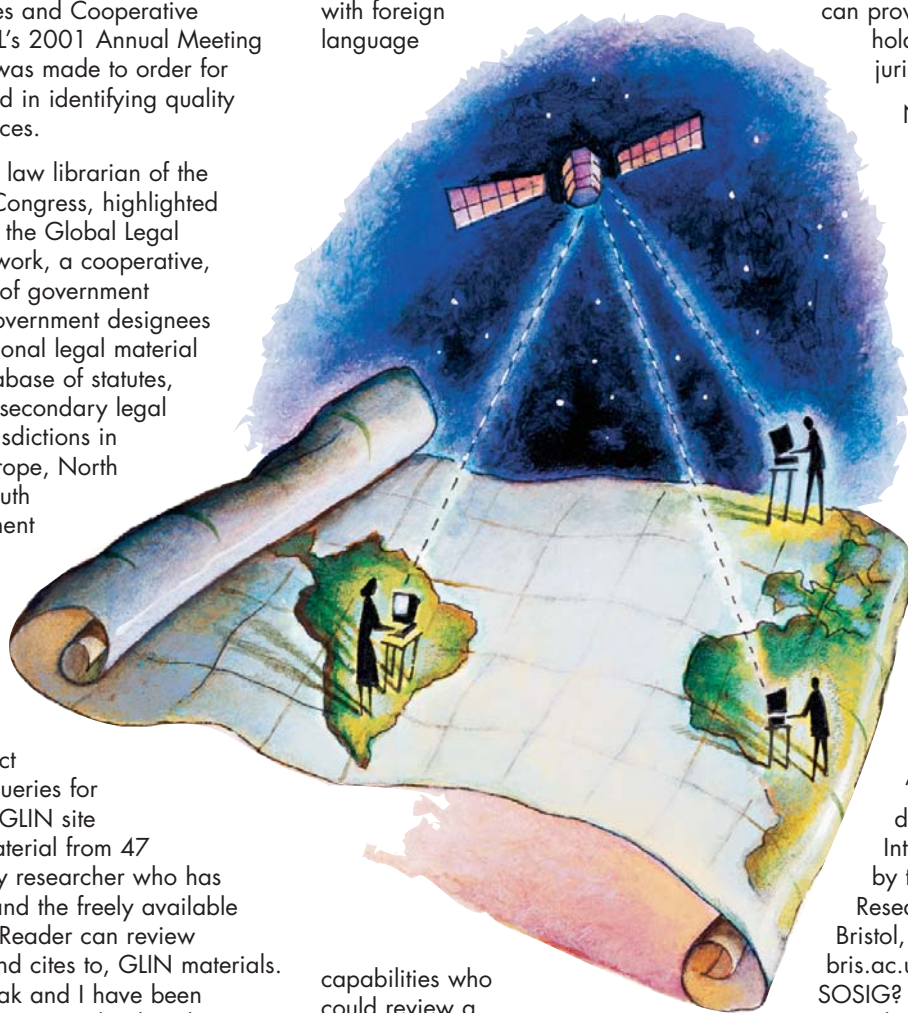
Medina outlined a variety of opportunities to become a contributor to the GLIN network. GLIN participants have access to the full text of laws and legal writings in the database. Its participants now include law libraries and firms that contribute information to GLIN or that financially

support GLIN developments. Medina and GLIN Program Officer Janice Hyde are actively recruiting such participants. *Carpe diem bibliothecarie, [librarians]!* Does your library have staff with foreign language

She describes the history of and future plans for GLIN in "Building the Global Legal Information Network" in *Legal Reference Services Quarterly*, vol. 19, no. 3/4, 2001, pp. 157-173. She also can provide a chart of GLIN database holdings for each participating jurisdiction.

Next, Steven Whittle, computing services librarian at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies of the University of London, developed the audience's taste for "sausage," or SOSIG, short for the Social Science Information Gateway, available at <http://www.sosig.ac.uk>. SOSIG is a free Internet source of selected, reliable Web sites concerning the social sciences, business and law. It includes the SOSIG Internet Catalogue — a browsable and searchable collection of Internet sources chosen and annotated by librarians or academics — and the Social Science Search Engine, which lists more than 100,000 social science Web pages identified by a software "harvester." These pages are derivatives of the main SOSIG Internet Catalogue. SOSIG is run by the Institute for Learning and Research Technology at University of Bristol, available at <http://www.ilt.bris.ac.uk>. Why do Szymczak and I value SOSIG? Well, as Whittle pointed out, general search engines index only 500 million of 550 billion Web pages!

Whittle, project manager of the highly useful SOSIG Law Gateway at <http://www.sosig.ac.uk/law>, described the SOSIG Law Gateway's annotated links to quality sources of laws, cases and treaties; government Web sites; professional organizations' Web sites; electronic journals and news services; company data; and learning and teaching materials. In our international and foreign law research seminar, Szymczak and I emphasize the



capabilities who could review a country's laws and the corresponding GLIN summaries? Does your institution include students with law degrees from foreign jurisdictions who might wish to develop the GLIN database for course credit? Does your employer have a relationship with a potential GLIN member nation? Might you wish to obtain associate member status through a financial contribution to GLIN? If you have a suggestion for contributing information or funds to GLIN, I encourage you to contact Janice Hyde at jhyde@loc.gov.

SOSIG Law Gateway's options to search for legal sources by subject or jurisdiction — with worldwide coverage. Since U.S. law students often have difficulty locating European Union materials, we show our class that detailed descriptions accompany the SOSIG Law Gateway's entries under the subject European Union law. The students like the Law Gateway's subclassification of European Union law Web sites by resource type.

To learn about the selection and classification criteria for SOSIG, consult Steven Whittle's "Pathfinding and Prospecting: Discovering Law on the Web with the Social Science Information Gateway," in AALL Educational Program Handout Materials, July 17, 2001, pp. 72–79, or go to the SOSIG Site Map at http://www.sosig.ac.uk/about_us/sitemap.html.

Then Peter Clinch, FLAG project manager at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies of the University of London, added a Magnum to my collection development arsenal: the Foreign Law Guide Project, at <http://ials.sas.ac.uk/library/flag/flag.htm>. FLAG is an evolving Web directory of foreign, comparative and international law materials in many of the United Kingdom's academic law libraries. Due to copyright issues, FLAG does not include electronic sources. It focuses on primary law in serials in print or microform. Top guns of the FLAG project are the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies Library, the Bodleian Law Library, the University of Oxford, the British Library, the Squire Law Library at the University of Cambridge, and the School of Oriental and African Studies Library in the University of London. Clinch will follow up a June 2001 library survey with site visits to many academic law libraries. FLAG's public debut is scheduled for summer 2002.

Clinch encouraged the audience to review the FLAG prototype and to fire back comments through the site's feedback page, <http://ials.sas.ac.uk/about/feedback.htm>. The collection search screens and word wheels are easy to use. Search results appear in a chart with links. The detail of the search results — including a source description, date range and language of publication plus library contacts — make FLAG a powerful collection development tool! For more information about FLAG's methodology and future, see Peter Clinch's text of his slide presentation in the AALL Educational Program and Handout Materials, July 17, 2001, pp. 67–71.

As law firms develop transnational practices and law schools increase international and foreign law course offerings, the Global Legal Information Network, the SOSIG Law Gateway and the Foreign Law Guide Project will help meet patrons' needs!

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