



BY TOM MIGHELL

## WEBLINKS



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this fall. Read her blog at [www.techlawgeek.com](http://www.techlawgeek.com).

### Internet Archive

[www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org)

The "Wayback" machine has archived pages from the Internet that may have since been removed. You can dig a lot up here that is not cached by Google or Yahoo.

### NewsGator WebEdition

[www.newsgator.com](http://www.newsgator.com)

One of the more flexible news aggregators I've found, this site lets me review my favorite news feeds in one place, for free. There is an optional Outlook Edition which allows users to download feeds for later off-line review.

### The Volokh Conspiracy

[www.volokh.com](http://www.volokh.com)

UCLA Law Professor Eugene Volokh and friends discuss all kinds of interesting issues in recent cases and current events. Volokh is also the author of "Academic Legal Writing," an essential reference not only for students, but also for practitioners looking to polish their writing skills. He is a lawgeek's lawgeek.

### Houston's Clear Thinkers

<http://blog.kir.com>

Houston attorney Tom Kirkendall has a great blog on local newsmakers and sports. He has particularly insightful reports on the ongoing Enron cases.

### The Leiter Reports

[www.leiterreports.com](http://www.leiterreports.com)

Check out UT Law and Philosophy Professor Brian Leiter's blog, where he opines on various issues in the news (and occasionally what his students should know for class). If you can't take a class of his, this is the next best thing.

### Yahoo! Groups

<http://groups.yahoo.com>

I've been using Yahoo! Groups for several years to keep in touch with old classmates and coworkers, as well as set up temporary virtual workspaces with other telecommuters. It's a backup RSS feed for my blog posts and has a useful calendar reminder feature, too. All that and more for free!

## Taking Control of Your Internet Research:

# New Tools Help Manage the Chaos

**B**ack in 2000 when I started writing about using the Internet for legal research, most users were still using the Internet to "surf"—gliding from site to site, seeing all the wonderful things offered by the Web. How things have changed. The Internet has definitely evolved from a recreational outlet to a comprehensive research tool, a resource for finding specific information to help us at work or in our personal lives. The trouble is, the more resources available on the 'Net, the harder it is for a legal researcher to keep track of them.

Although the bookmarks or favorites features of your Web browser are able to save and categorize the valuable sites you find, albeit in a somewhat primitive way, it's often hard to remember where you filed that site, or that you filed it at all. Fortunately, we now have several interesting tools that can help lawyers and other legal professionals make sense of the overwhelming volume of great information found on the Web. Before you suffer from a bookmark avalanche, check out these solutions.

### Save Your Searches

In April, both Google and Yahoo! introduced improvements to their search services, which allow users to keep track of

searches made through those search engines. Google was first on the scene, and its offering is the more basic of the two. To use **Google's My Search History** ([www.google.com/searchhistory](http://www.google.com/searchhistory)), you have to register for a free account and be logged in when you search Google. Every time you conduct a search, those search terms are saved to your Search History for future reference. The Search History will display a link to your search, as well as any results you clicked. Whenever you need to locate something you found in a previous search, you can simply query your Search History — or you can use the helpful Calendar, which shows your daily search activity. If for some reason you don't want your Search History saved, you can always hit the Pause button, and Google will temporarily stop the saving process. And when you no longer want a search or site included in your Search History, you can easily delete it.

**Yahoo!'s My Web** (<http://myweb.search.yahoo.com>) is similar to Google's product, but with some interesting enhancements. In addition to being able to save your search history, you can share it by email, instant message, or by making your search folder public on the Web. Yahoo! also wants you to use My Web as your personal bookmarks folder,

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so there's a way to import your bookmarks directly into your search history. And it's a snap to add pages to your My Web page; if you use the Yahoo! Toolbar (<http://toolbar.yahoo.com>) there's a button you can click to add a site. If you don't use the toolbar, you can add a "bookmarklet" to your browser toolbar, which has the same function (a bookmarklet is basically a button you add to your browser toolbar). Each item in your search history has a link to "How I Found It," which shows the specific search you used to find that site. Yahoo! further outpaces the Google program by allowing you to maintain a list of blocked sites, as well as save an actual copy of the original Web page you found, so you can easily refer to it if the page changes or is deleted in the future. Like Google, you have to sign up for a free account to take advantage of the My Web service.

A note about privacy: shortly after these products were released, certain privacy concerns were raised. It is undeniable that both the Google and Yahoo! products store information about your search history on their computers. Although they have detailed privacy policies promising to keep your data safe, they cannot protect you against yourself, especially if you use a shared computer. If you forget to log off (which must be done by clicking a link; you cannot log off these services simply by closing the browser), any other person who uses that computer has access to your entire search history. Also, some have raised the concern that your Internet search history may be discoverable in criminal or family law matters. So if you're using a shared computer, or if you're worried your computer documents might be subject to subpoena, maybe these tools aren't for you. Otherwise, they are a terrific way to keep track of your Web searches.

### Share Your Bookmarks

One of the hot new trends on the Internet is called "social bookmarking." It means exactly what it says — it's a way to share links you like with anyone else who has access to the Web. In addition, you can see the sites that others have col-

lected in your particular area of interest. **del.icio.us** (<http://del.icio.us>) is one such site, and it's ridiculously easy to use. Just set up your free account and begin to add websites through a "bookmarklet" or pop-up window. But here's where social bookmarking becomes really useful. To keep track of your bookmarks, del.icio.us uses "tagging," literally assigning keywords to describe the site. You choose the tags that you believe best describe that particular site; each tag becomes its own category, to help you and others navigate through the bookmarks. For example, if I decided to bookmark Google Maps (<http://maps.google.com>), I might use the tags "Maps," "Directions," "Cool," and "Search." You can assign any number of tags to a particular site. A list of your tags appears down the right side of your screen in del.icio.us. I haven't been using tags very long, but I see them as a great way to quickly locate your bookmarks through easy-to-remember tags. You can also view the tags of others, which may lead you to sites similar to the ones you have bookmarked. You can check out my public bookmarks at <http://del.icio.us/tmighell>.

### Collect Your Content

The above sites are great for saving and organizing your research online, but what if you don't have access to the Internet, or want to save a more permanent copy of your research? Enter **Net Snippets** ([www.netsnippets.com](http://www.netsnippets.com)) and **OnFolio** ([www.onfolio.com](http://www.onfolio.com)). These programs allow you to capture all or any part of a Web page and save it to your computer; whole pages, images, documents (Word, PDF, etc.) or just snippets of text can be collected and organized in folders. Both programs also allow you to annotate and make notes about the content you are collecting, helping you find items later and remember why you saved them. You can even share the content with others, by creating professional-looking reports or just using the share-by-email feature. The programs are easy to use, and they operate as a toolbar within your existing web browser. Free trial versions of each program are available, but you'll have to pay

(\$29.95-\$70 for OnFolio, \$79.95-\$129.95 for Net Snippets) to keep using them.

### Desktop Search Products

Once you have saved your research to your computer, you'll need a tool to keep track of it all. Several desktop search products have been released over the past year to help you quickly locate nearly anything worth finding on your computer — email, music files, pictures, videos, contacts, favorites, search history, and various types of documents, including Word, WordPerfect, Excel, PowerPoint, PDF, and text. Most of the major search engines have free versions of this tool — Google, Yahoo!, MSN, and Ask Jeeves all offer similar products. Of these, the **Google** (<http://desktop.google.com/>) and **Yahoo!** (<http://desktop.yahoo.com>) products have received the most positive comments. But I prefer the free **Copernic Desktop Search** ([www.copernic.com/en/products/desktop-search/index.html](http://www.copernic.com/en/products/desktop-search/index.html)). Like the other products, it indexes all the files on your computer and makes them available literally "as fast as you type." Just begin typing in the letters of your search, and results begin to appear immediately. If you're willing to pay for your desktop searching, check out **X1** ([www.x1.com](http://www.x1.com)), which will set you back \$74.95. It's an excellent product, but Copernic is still the better choice.

### Conclusion

Research on the Internet is a paradox; it is vastly more complicated than in the past few years due to the overwhelming amount of information available. At the same time, keeping track of your research is easier than ever, thanks to the tools discussed here. To sort through the virtual haystack of resources on the Internet, subscribe to my free newsletter, the Internet Legal Research Weekly (<http://lists.inter-alia.net/mailman/listinfo/inter-alia>), and I'll help you find that needle.