

Legal Research Section Report 2020-2021

The Legal Research Section has been quite active during this past year even though the pandemic has largely dispensed with in-person events and or meetings.

Our first Section CPD meeting occurred on October 1, 2020 and was entitled "Legal Technology and "Innovation" - The Rapidly Changing Practice Of Law". Our guest speaker was a person very familiar with all forms of legal tech software as he works for a large law firm in Toronto. He did a complete overview of what is out there for all practicing lawyers and not just litigation counsel but corporate solicitors as well.

The second CPD meeting took place on October 23, 2020 and was entitled "Open Source Software For Legal Research". Our guest presenter was a law professor who has expertise in open source software and legal issues that go with it. His presentation was at a very high level and from my perspective, gave the attendees a glimpse of the techy side of how open source can be used for legal research.

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 our annual breaking out of a room event did not materialize. I must thank Melanie Bueckert for her tenacity in locating an online version, but we did not have many enthusiasts for this version. Hopefully in December 2021 we can get together in-person again for a fabulous break out session.

The MBA Mid-Winter Conference in January 2021 saw input from our Section in two ways: the Manitoba Law Reform Commission had an interesting CPD; and, our Section sponsored a CPD session entitled "The Rapid Development and Effect of AI In The Practice of Law and Legal Research". Our presenters were law professors from Toronto and from the USA. Cases were made that AI has a place in legal research but, we should not forget the important and significant contributions that lawyers as orators can make in advancing a particular legal topic.

Our Section then had a very interesting CPD session entitled "Legal Research and Indigenous Law". The presenters discussed the unique challenges that lawyers handling Indigenous cases face when preparing their legal arguments. Very topical and was well received by the attendees.

"Legal Research in a Global Pandemic" was a very popular CPD session that our Section hosted with participation from the Faculty of Law at the University of Manitoba. It is trite to say how timely this discussion was and from all appearances, was not only a dynamic topic but was also well received by all attendees.

Most recently our Section spearheaded a CPD session discussing "Legal Research When Appearing Before an Administrative Tribunal". The nuances that come up in more informal tribunal hearings were discussed and it is an area that was timely and well discussed, as there are a lot of individuals who need help before tribunals such as the Workers Compensation Board and Landlord/Tenant matters, so it is important that lawyers are familiar with legal research techniques in these venues.

As we draw near to the end of programming for this year, our usual BBQ party has been replaced by an online CPD event that is scheduled for June 22, 2021, commencing at 5:30pm. Our presenter will be the Honourable Madam Justice K. Antonio from the Court of Queen's Bench - Family Division. She will talk about her experience in the transition from practicing lawyer to a Justice. Although we are not able to meet in person, the staff of the MBA has found a way of distributing some goodies and drink to all attendees using GoodLocal online booking.

The final act of our yearly programming is a big hit for our Section. The ideas of how we will manage this in a Zoom format are going to be a popular substitute. As Section Chair, I am very appreciative of the remarkable work our MBA staff do for our Section. I thank them very much.

The Section newsletter is edited by Melanie Bueckert and contributors in article writing other than myself are: George Roy for the Great Library, Bryton Moen, Shasta Benaim, and Elizabeth McCandless. I thank Mel for her hard work in keeping this going for the past several years. It is always delivered at the end of each month from September to June. Lots of meaty stuff on latest legal issues in various areas such as Criminal and Family law as well as Immigration and Tech law and the Law Reform Commission.

We have sent a Call out to Section members that our Section is interested in having members join the Section Executive. We are interested in ensuring that our Executive grows over time. We hope to see new faces in the coming months.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me at one of my new legal brand email: david@daviscyberlaw.com

Submitted by,
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