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Updating & Supplementing Casebooks Online

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Casebook Supplement Websites

Emily Barney & Fred Bosselman

November 17, 2011

Emily Barney and the Library Technology Group created a casebook supplement site for Prof. Fred Bosselman's *Energy, Economics, and the Environment* casebook. The site can be found at <http://supplements.kentlaw.edu/energylawcasebook/>.

What is a casebook supplement site?

Casebook publication schedules do not allow faculty to create texts that are up-to-date in areas of the law that constantly change. Cost and format requirements limit most casebook illustrations to simple black and white images. To include more comprehensive materials and updates, casebooks need companion internet sites. Publishers do not offer these sites, so we created a new kind of resource.

The Casebook Supplement site features:



- Updates: links to new cases, legislation, regulations, etc.
- Corrections: replace out of date information or illustrations
- Additions: include color illustrations, videos, and other media

Benefits

Connect with More Students

- Available to any student using the casebook at any school
- Students become more aware of how the law changes
- Students can see how the concepts they learn in the course affect real-world issues
- Students can use the whole site, or focus on updates for only specific topics



Connect with a Broader Audience



A site like this - especially if optimized to show up in search engines like Google - could attract readers who are interested in the topic but are unlikely to use casebooks.

- Practitioners in related fields
- Legal and other academic researchers
- Media professionals & others interested in specialized topics

Highlight faculty expertise

Faculty expertise is often highlighted through their presentations and publications, but this kind of scholarship does not emphasize their reflections on current developments in their area of specialization. Some faculty write personal scholarly blogs, but for those who don't have the time to write regularly, updating a casebook supplement with the recent resources and materials may be a more manageable project.

Reactions

Students love it

Getting input from students on a project like this can be challenging, but when Emily presented the site to Prof. Bosselman's class with an online form to collect student feedback, their responses were uniformly positive.

- *Every casebook should have one of these!*
- *Great website! great way to stay updated on case book materials; great way to find information when doing research*
- *My first impression is that the site is tremendously useful, navigable, and visually appealing and manageable.*



What's Next?

Beyond the Casebook

A site like this could also incorporate more original content or become more interactive:

- Use to host an entire e-Casebook
- Offer space for comments or a way for users to submit updates
- Establish interactive forums for discussing legal issues, etc.



Want your own site?

- Casebook Supplement Sites use WordPress, a common weblog engine.
- The Library Technology Group can set up the site and train you and/or your assistant to update it.
- Note: you should check with your publisher first, to be sure your contract will permit this type of supplement. Also, these sites cannot be used to host copyrighted materials without permission.