

Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering

Engineering in Society (ELEC 2803)

Recommended Texts

Law Made Simple by D. Barker

Learning Legal Rules by James A. Holland & Julian S. Webb

The English Legal System by Gary Slapper & David Kelly

Legal Research: A Guide for Hong Kong Students by Jill Cottrell

Davies on Contract by Robert Upex & Geoffrey Bennett

Criminal Law by Smith & Hogan

Legal Information: Electronic Sources

Whether for the purpose of learning or for completing your coursework/assignment, you are encouraged not only to study cases and legal principles in textbooks but also to equip yourself with some basic skills in legal research.

The following provides a very simple guide for you to search for legal information on the Internet.

A. Useful Websites

1. ***Bilingual Laws Information System (BLIS)***: for access to Laws of Hong Kong (i.e. Hong Kong ordinances). English-Chinese / Chinese-English glossaries of legal terms also available.

www.justice.gov.hk or www.legislation.gov.hk

2. **The Judiciary**: for access to reported and unreported Hong Kong cases.

<http://www.judiciary.gov.hk/en/index/index.htm>

3. **Hong Kong Legal Information Institute (HKLII)**: for access to both Hong Kong cases and ordinances

<http://www.hklii.org>

4. **Department of Justice**: contains useful information regarding the Hong Kong legal system.

<http://www.doj.gov.hk/eng/laws>

5. **Lexis**: for access to international legal information, e.g. cases, statutes and journal articles from various countries, including Hong Kong.

<http://www.lexis.com>

6. **Westlaw International**: for access to international legal information, e.g. cases, statutes and journal articles from various countries, including Hong Kong.

<http://www.westlaw.com>

B. Searching for Hong Kong Ordinances via BLIS

I. Search by Chapter Number of Ordinance

- (1) Go to <http://www.legislation.gov.hk/eng/index.htm> and click on “Legislation Database”.
- (2) If you know the exact chapter number of the ordinance you want, you may simply fill in is number in the “go to Chapter row” box on the left hand side, and click “Enter”. For example, Chapter 336 of the Laws of Hong Kong is the District Court Ordinance.
- (3) Remember to select “Ord. & Sub. Leg.” if you want to search for both ordinances and subsidiary legislation.
- (4) If you do not know the exact chapter number of the ordinance, you may follow steps in (II) or (III) below.

II. Search by Subject Index

- (1) Go to <http://www.legislation.gov.hk/eng/index.htm> and click on “English Subject Index to Ordinances”.
- (2) The Index classifies different ordinances in accordance with their general subject matter. For example, the District Court Ordinance is categorized under the heading of “Courts”. Many ordinances are listed under more than one subject-heading.
- (3) After having checked the exact chapter of the ordinance you need, you may return to “Legislation Database” and follow the steps in (I) above.

III. Search by Keywords

- (1) Go to <http://www.legislation.gov.hk/eng/index.htm> and click on “Legislation Database”.
- (2) Click on “Simple Search” and search by keywords. Boolean searches are permitted (and, or, near, in same sentence, in same paragraph, etc). For example, if you want to search for ordinances in relation to computer software, you may try keywords such as “computer software” or simply “software”.
- (3) In the alternative, click on “Advanced Search”. You may then search for specific section(s) in a piece of legislation; word(s) in definition(s); law as at a specified date or between a range of dates, etc.
- (4) A list of ordinances with the sections containing the keywords will then appear.

C. Searching for Hong Kong Cases Via the Judiciary Website

- (1) Go to <http://www.judiciary.gov.hk>
- (2) Click on “Judgments”.
- (3) Do a simple search or advanced search by case number, name of party to the litigation, keywords, etc.
- (4) The newest judgments can also be found in this database.

D. Searching for Hong Kong Cases and/or Ordinances via HKLII

- (1) Go to <http://www.hklii.org>
- (2) While conducting a search by keyword, select either the HKLII database for local legal information or in the World Law database for international legal information.
- (3) Select “find this Boolean query” before conducting a Boolean search.
- (4) After obtaining a list of relevant results, you have the option of repeating the search using the same keywords in the World Legal Information Institute (WorldLII) databases or in Google.

E. Searching for Legal Information Using Legal Services Providers

Full cases (sometimes with summaries), legislation, journal articles and legal texts on various legal topics are available through either Lexis (www.lexis.com) or Westlaw International (www.westlaw.com).

These databases are particular useful in searching for international legal information. The jurisdictions covered by Lexis and Westlaw include, among others, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, the United States, Australia and Hong Kong.

To search for information on Lexis or Westlaw International:

- (1) You can conduct such legal searches on any computer on campus, not only those in the law library. In the alternative, you can have remote access to these databases off campus through HKUVPN or EZProxy.
- (2) Go to the website of the HKU Library: <http://lib.hku.hk>
- (3) Click on “Electronic Resources”.
- (4) In “Browse by Subject”, select “Law – General”.
- (5) Then click on either “Lexis.com” or “Westlaw International” to begin search.
- (6) Searches using Lexis or Westlaw International are slightly more sophisticated. Workshops on research skills in relation to Lexis or Westlaw International are available at the Law Library from time to time.

In conducting any kind of legal research, remember to be creative about the keywords you use. Non-legal search engines, such as Google or Yahoo, are often very useful as well.