

# **Whither Law Student Information Literacy?**

Learning Information Literacy across the Globe  
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# What is Law Student Information Literacy?

Top-Level Principles: “A successful legal researcher...

1. ...*possesses foundational knowledge* of the legal system and legal information sources;
2. ...*gathers information* through effective and efficient research strategies;
3. ...*critically evaluates information*;
4. ...*applies information effectively* to resolve a specific issue or need;
5. ...*distinguishes between ethical and unethical uses* of information, and understands the legal issues associated with the discovery, use, or application of information.”

<https://www.aallnet.org/advocacy/legal-research-competency/>

## Differing Jurisdictions: Different Law



## Differing Jurisdictions: Different Presumptions

<b><i>Civilian</i></b>	<b><i>Common Law</i></b>
Law develops from codification	Law develops through application to cases
Decisions anticipate disputes	No advisory decisions
Argues principles toward facts	Argues facts toward principles
Defers to legal principles and logical syllogisms	Defers to judicial review and precedent
Privileges the systematic	Skeptical of generalizations

## Differing Jurisdictions: Different Training & Different Practice

	<b><i>Civilian</i></b>	<b><i>Common Law</i></b>
<b><i>Source of Law</i></b>	Code	Statute & Judiciary
<b><i>Role of Judiciary</i></b>	Factfinding	Arbitral
<b><i>Procedure</i></b>	Inquisitorial	Adversarial
<b><i>Training</i></b>	Baccalaureate	Graduate

# **The Future of Law Student Information Literacy?**

Differences in jurisdictional traditions  
+  
Differences in systems of legal training  
=  
Differing informational needs  
from jurisdiction to jurisdiction

# Differing answers for different needs

- Jurisdictional practice needs determine the practitioner's informational needs
- Law Student Information Literacy across the globe must apprehend practice differences across jurisdictions
- Legal research instructors in each jurisdiction must articulate Law Student Information Literacy as their jurisdictional needs require

## Conclusion

- Law student information literacy is focused upon foundational legal information; benchmarks for law student information literacy therefore depend upon the foundations of legal training and practice in any jurisdiction.
- While a standards-based approach has been accepted in the US and the UK, this approach may not be suitable for Civil Law, Religious Law, or Customary Legal traditions; only legal research instructors from these jurisdictions can make this determination.