

Influencing data privacy practices through a global online research resource: *WorldLII's International Privacy Law Library*

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Abstract: This paper explores how one group of organisations, legal information institutes (LIIs) can use shared resources to assist other global and regional groupings of organisations involved in data privacy to achieve their objectives. Bodies established by legislation to protect privacy (DPAs, PEAs etc), now in nearly 100 countries, wish to be able to better access and compare decisions on similar issues, data privacy legislation, and commentary on same. Civil society bodies and academics want effective access to the same material.

The World Legal Information Institute (WorldLII) provides free access, via cooperation between seventeen LIIs, to a considerable amount of this information, sometimes as distinct databases, but just as often buried in very large generic databases of case law, legislation or scholarship. The challenge in building the International Privacy Law Library is to pre-select material potentially relevant to privacy issues to create a high value searchable global collection, but to do so on a low and sustainable budget.

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The resulting International Privacy Law Library is a combination of two main elements: (i) pre-selected databases, some maintained by active provision of data by DPAs/PEAs; and (ii) a set of ‘virtual’ databases (one each for case law, legislation, scholarship etc) drawn from all other content found on the LIIs, which, once they are built, are self-maintaining (updated daily) and expand as relevant new content is added to any collaborating LII. The paper explains the method used to build ‘virtual’ databases, the content of the Library, and its usage.

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1 Objective: Making LII content more useful to data privacy user groups

This paper explores how one group of organisations, legal information institutes (LIIs) can use shared resources to assist other global and regional groupings of organisations involved in data privacy to achieve their objectives – both authorities and the civil society bodies who interact with them and critique their work.

Data privacy authorities, cooperation, and civil society

Legislatively-established privacy authorities, variously called Data Protection Authorities (DPAs) Privacy Enforcement Agencies (PEAs), or Commission (nationale) informatique et libertés in francophone countries, now existing in nearly 100 countries, are increasingly recognising the need for cooperating and exchanging experiences. Associations of privacy authorities have been established for such purposes, and international privacy agreements are increasingly stressing such cooperation, greater consistency in their actions, and transparency of their enforcement activities. There are at least eleven such associations, variously global, regional or language based.¹

In relation to cooperation in investigation and enforcement of data privacy disputes, particularly those with international elements, the Global Privacy Enforcement Network (GPEN) originated in a 2007 OECD Recommendation² which called for the establishment of an informal network of privacy enforcement authorities.³ GPEN has considerable geographical diversity, with 51 members from thirty eight countries (plus various legally-separate territories and the EU), all of which have data privacy laws of one form or other.⁴ APEC's Cross-border Privacy Enforcement Arrangement (CPEA),⁵ has as members⁶ (PEAs) from nine of the 17 APEC economies which have data privacy laws.⁷ The OECD's 2013 revisions to their privacy Guidelines⁸ recommends more national transparency of privacy implementation and

¹ Graham Greenleaf 'Sheherazade and the 101 data privacy laws: Origins, significance and global trajectories' (on SSRN) (2014) 23(1) *Journal of Law, Information & Science* <<http://ssrn.com/abstract=2280877>>, section 'Data protection authorities (DPAs) and their associations'. Global associations include the International Conference of Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners (ICDPPC) and Global Privacy Enforcement Network (GPEN). Regional associations include the EU's Article 29 Working Party, the Conference of European Data Protection Authorities (EDPA), the Central and Eastern Europe Data Protection Authorities (CEEDPA), the Nordic Data Protection Authorities (NDPA), the Asia-Pacific Privacy Authorities (APPA) and the APEC Cross-border Privacy Enforcement Arrangement (CPEA). Associations with more of a linguistic affinity include the Association of Francophone Data Protection Authorities (AFAPDP), La Red Iberoamericana de Protección de Datos (RedIPD) and the British, Irish and Islands Data Protection Authorities (BIIDPA).

² OECD *Recommendation on Cross-border Cooperation in the Enforcement of Laws Protecting Privacy* <http://www.oecd.org/document/60/0,3343,en_2649_34255_38771516_1_1_1_1,00.html>.

³ Global Privacy Enforcement Network, *Action Plan for the Global Privacy Enforcement Network (GPEN)* (GPEN, adopted 15 June 2012; Part E amended 22 January 2013) <<https://www.privacyenforcement.net/public/activities>>. GPEN membership is 'open to any public privacy enforcement authority that: (1) is responsible for enforcing laws or regulations the enforcement of which has the effect of protecting personal data; and (2) has powers to conduct investigations or pursue enforcement proceedings.'

⁴ Global Privacy Enforcement Network (GPEN) <https://www.privacyenforcement.net/about_the_network>.

⁵ Cross-border Privacy Enforcement Arrangement (APEC, 2010) <http://aimp.apec.org/Documents/2010/ECSSG/DPS1/10_ecsg_dps1_013.pdf> accessed 15 January 2014; See also *CPEA Fact Sheet* (APEC, 2013) <<http://www.apec.org/About-Us/About-APEC/Fact-Sheets/APEC-Cross-border-Privacy-Enforcement-Arrangement.aspx>> accessed 15 January 2014.

⁶ Created in 2010, CPEA is a 'framework for regional cooperation' in which '[a]ny Privacy Enforcement Authority in an APEC economy may participate in cross-border co-operation, enforcement and information sharing'; APEC CPEA website <<http://www.apec.org/Groups/Committee-on-Trade-and-Investment/Electronic-Commerce-Steering-Group/Cross-border-Privacy-Enforcement-Arrangement.aspx>> accessed 15 January 2014.

⁷ DPAs from Australia, NZ, USA, Canada, Hong Kong Mexico and Singapore, plus government departments from Korea (but not their independent DPAs) and from Japan (15 government agencies)

⁸ 2013 OECD *Privacy Guidelines and Supplementary Explanatory Memorandum* (OECD, 2013) <<http://www.oecd.org/sti/ieconomy/2013-oecd-privacy-guidelines.pdf>>. The 2013 Guidelines and the 'OECD Cross-border privacy law enforcement cooperation' have also been re-badged as the 'OECD Privacy Framework': *The OECD Privacy Framework* (OECD, 2013) <http://www.oecd.org/sti/ieconomy/oecd_privacy_framework.pdf>

enforcement, but does not explicitly state that this includes details of individual complaint resolutions.⁹ Ongoing revisions of the data protection instruments of the Council of Europe and the European Union may do likewise.

However, these DPAs and PEA, whatever their forms and objectives of association, have limited knowledge of each other's decisions, or the many national laws on which those decisions are based. This limits the likely effectiveness of the desired cooperation between such authorities, and also limits the potential development of a more consistent international data privacy jurisprudence.

External analysts and critics of the work of DPAs and PEAs, including privacy and civil liberties civil society organisations, and academic experts in the field, also have difficulties in finding and comparing relevant legal materials, particularly the decisions of DPAs and PEAs. Organisations of 'privacy advocates' operate at global and national levels,¹⁰ with a constant need for information to support their advocacy, as do data privacy academic researchers, journalists and publishers. There are strong arguments to support the view that publication of case law by DPAs is essential to effective and 'responsive' regulation of privacy abuses.¹¹ There is therefore a large potential constituency for better information about data privacy. Civil society bodies also produce large bodies of research which is very relevant to the effective operation of data privacy laws, but which is also usually very scattered.

LIIs and their shared resources

Free access Legal Information Institutes (LIIs) hold very large collections of documents relevant to the work of DPAs and PEAs, including databases of the decisions of some (but far from all) of them, and of courts and tribunals making privacy-related decisions, legislation, international agreements, and journal articles. However, this relevant content is often 'buried' within more general databases which are not privacy subject-specific, and as well are located on various different LIIs.

The Australasian Legal Information Institute (AustLII), in cooperation with other LIIs that collaborate on the development of the World Legal Information Institute (WorldLII), with input from experts on data privacy, and encouragement and support from a number of DPAs and PEAs, is attempting to find ways to develop cooperation between these three groups of institutions – privacy authorities, civil society privacy bodies, and legal information institutes.

There are existing commercial collections of privacy materials online, but they are usually out of the financial reach of most privacy authorities and most NGOs and academics, particularly those in developing countries, so they are no substitute for a free-access facility.

This paper examines three related questions:

- (i) What is the extent of publication and accessibility of DPA / PEA decisions globally?
- (ii) What is an effective way to build a sustainable free-access international online 'Library' of these decisions, and related materials (legislation, international

⁹ The 2013 Guidelines recommended that countries should 'make public the details of their observance' of the Guidelines and 'encourage the development of internationally comparable metrics', and the explanatory materials clarify that this includes publication of complaint statistics and similar matters than can improve policy-making, particularly if done in internationally consistent fashion: see pt. 5 'National Implementation' and pt. 6 'International Co-operation and Interoperability'.

¹⁰ See Colin Bennett *The Privacy Advocates: Resisting the Spread of Surveillance* (MIT Press, 2008) for an account of the global variety and actions of privacy advocacy groups.

¹¹ For an early version, see Graham Greenleaf 'Reforming Reporting of Privacy Cases: A Proposal for Improving Accountability of Asia-Pacific Privacy Commissioners' (2004, on SSRN) <<http://ssrn.com/abstract=512782>>. For theories of responsive regulation in relation to data privacy, see Chapter 3 'Standards for assessing data privacy laws' in Graham Greenleaf *Asian Data Privacy Laws: Trade and Human Rights Perspectives* (OUP, 2014).

agreements etc), utilising cooperation between legal information institutes (LIIs) to do so?

- (iii) How can DPAs / PEAs, as well as other potential users such as civil society bodies and researchers, be engaged to make use of such a resource?

The International Privacy Law Library <<http://www.worldlii.org/int/special/privacy/>> on WorldLII is being developed and expanded with these questions in mind.

2 Starting points: Available content

An initial question must be what materials are available to build a privacy research Library?

Publication of decisions by privacy authorities

If one of main purposes of a Library is to enable comparison of decisions by different DPAs/PEAs, then obviously a major factor is how many such authorities publish decisions.¹² Of the 106 countries now with data privacy laws,¹³ 96 are supposed to have established DPAs according to legislation, whereas 10 have no such central enforcement body.¹⁴ No authoritative lists of DPAs which publish decisions are available.¹⁵ From an initial analysis of the websites of DPAs/PEAs, in at least 32 countries it is clear that privacy authorities systematically publish their decisions or decision summaries online,¹⁶ but the position with many others requires further checking with the assistance of more multi-lingual expertise,¹⁷ or for various reasons it is not yet realistic to expect such publication.¹⁸ So, in principle, sets of decisions from at least 32 countries may be available (including many of the largest and longest-established DPAs), and the final number after checking is likely to be substantially higher. Whether permission of the DPA is required to republish the decisions in the Library is required, or they are exempt from copyright protection and may be republished without permission, varies between countries. For the purpose of this project, it is sufficient that reports of a large part of the global experience in enforcing data privacy laws may be available.

¹² Deciding what counts as a report of a 'decision' is quite complex. Decisions on sanctions following complaints, or reports of mediated complaints are obvious categories, but other categories like reports on 'own motion' investigations, and reports on 'authorisation' applications required under some laws. All such forms of publication are relevant to effective data privacy regulation. Some DPAs may periodically publish details of particularly important cases by way of press releases and the like, but not do so systematically (as needed for this project). Also, in some of the countries where DPAs do not publish, courts or appeal tribunals may systematically publish privacy decisions.

¹³ See Greenleaf 'Sheherezade and the 101 data privacy laws'; to the 99 listed there in mid-2013 is added the Dominican Republic; Kazakhstan, South Africa, Brazil, Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, and Lesotho to give the total of 106.

¹⁴ No DPA established: Armenia; Chile; Dominican Republic; India; Japan; Kyrgyz Republic; Paraguay; St Vincent & Grenadines; Taiwan; Vietnam.

¹⁵ For example, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights in its report *Access to data protection remedies in EU Member States* (EU FRA, 2013) refers to only one country – Portugal – as systematically publishing its decisions online, and so did not seem to consider this a significant factor in enforcement.

¹⁶ DPA systematically publishes decisions online (* indicates those already included in Library): Argentina; Australia*; Belgium; Bosnia & Herzegovina; Bulgaria; Canada*; Burkina Faso; France; Greece; Hong Kong SAR*; Hungary; Ireland*; Isle of Man; Luxembourg; Macao SAR*; Mauritius*; Mexico; Nepal; New Zealand*; Monaco; Morocco; Norway; Poland; Portugal; Senegal; Slovenia; South Korea*; Spain; Switzerland; United Kingdom*; United States*; Uruguay.

¹⁷ Further research needed to confirm whether DPA does systematically publish decisions online, and of which types: Andorra; Austria; Bahamas; Benin; Colombia; Costa Rica; Croatia; Czech Republic; Cyprus; Denmark; Dubai IFC; Estonia; Faroe Islands; Finland; Georgia; Germany; Ghana; Gibraltar; Greenland; Guernsey; Iceland; Israel; Jersey; Kosovo; Latvia; Liechtenstein; Lithuania; Macedonia (FYROM); Malta; Moldova; Montenegro; Netherlands; Nicaragua; Paraguay; Peru; Qatar FC; Romania; Russia; San Marino; Slovakia; St Lucia; Sweden; Thailand; Trinidad & Tobago; Tunisia; Ukraine; Yemen; Zimbabwe. Confirmation of such publication, and/or details of availability for inclusion in the Library, to author Greenleaf <<mailto:graham@austlii.edu.au>>, is welcome and will be reflected in the published version of this article.

¹⁸ In 8 jurisdictions, DPAs have only been established by very recent legislation: Brazil; Gabon; Malaysia; Singapore; South Africa; Lesotho; Mali; Cote d'Ivoire. In 5 jurisdictions DPAs are supposed to have been established by legislation but this does not seem to have yet occurred: Azerbaijan; Angola; Cape Verde; The Philippines, Seychelles.

Of relevance here, and an early example of cooperation between DPA/PEAs and LIIs, is that the Asia-Pacific Privacy Authorities (APPA) grouping of DPAs/PEAs, agreed in 2006 to adopt a common citation method for reporting their case summaries which was consistent with the citation standard used since 1998 by the LIIs involved in WorldLII.¹⁹

Legislation, international agreements etc

Data privacy legislation, and international agreements concerning data privacy, pose fewer collection issues, but they are still significant. The principal legislation from almost all of the 105 countries currently with data privacy laws is available online from government websites, with no copyright problems concerning republication, and similar considerations apply to international agreements. Greater difficulties will arise if attempts are made to include (i) ancillary legislation, amending legislation, and delegated legislation; or (ii) translations into English for comparative purposes (though these are often available for current principal Acts). While a great deal of such legislative material can be obtained for valuable global comparative purposes, it is unrealistic to attempt (or purport) to be comprehensive.

Resources available from cooperating LIIs – Finding needles in haystacks

The legal information institutes (LIIs) that collaborate in providing the databases searchable via WorldLII²⁰ provide between them just over 1,600 databases, with one or more databases from 142 countries, plus international law materials (including decisions of international courts and tribunals, and multilateral treaties).²¹ These materials include the full texts of in excess of two million court and tribunal decisions, 100,000 journal articles or other items of legal scholarship, a similar number of law reform documents, and millions of searchable items of legislation.

While these LIIs hold a few privacy-specific databases (discussed later), by-and-large their content is generic across all legal subject areas (criminal law, environmental law, tax law etc). The content is also not classified into those subject areas, whether by structural segregation, metadata or other means. Problems of precision of research therefore arise when users try to find material on specific subject matter (such as issues of data privacy) over such large and rich bodies of data. The sheer number of results retrieved for many subject-oriented searches makes it very difficult and time-consuming for a user to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant results. Relevance ranking of search results can't solve all of the problems in making searches precise enough. With such large numbers of databases now available browsing through tables of contents is also not a feasible option.

The diversity and richness of content on LIIs requires something more than simply a good search engine. Commercial publishers respond to this problem with editorially-controlled subject collections of primary materials, plus commentaries on particular legal subjects (sometimes linked to primary legal materials). Users can then search within the constraints of that collection. Free access LIIs can't afford constant editorial interventions, nor commission

¹⁹ APPA 'Case Note Citation' and 'Case Note Dissemination' on 'Common administrative practices' page <http://www.appaforum.org/resources/common_practice.html>. This 'neutral citation' method, as it is often called, involves a citation which includes, in APPA's words, 'A descriptor of the case; The year of publication; A standard abbreviation for the privacy authority ; [and] A sequential number.' Examples given were 'J v Superannuation Provider [2005] PrivCmrA 7)' and 'Mobile telecom company provided the details of telephone conversation of a customer to a third party without her consent [2004] KRPIDMC 4'.

²⁰ There are 17, but the main ones relevant to this Library are AustLII (Australia), BAILII (UK and Ireland), NZLII (New Zealand), HKLII (Hong Kong), SAFLII (Southern and Eastern Africa), and the databases on WorldLII itself.

²¹ As at 30 December 2013: *AustLII Annual Report 2013* <http://www.austlii.edu.au/austlii/reports/2013/AustLII_YiR_2013.pdf>.

commentary/doctrine. So the research issue is: *How can LIIs create and maintain subject-oriented resources economically?*

3 Methodology: Building a global subject-oriented Library

This section explains the general approach to building a subject-oriented research Library, either by utilising the resources on a single LII, or in this case using the shared resources of multiple LIIs using WorldLII.

Elements of a subject Library

A Library on any legal subject can be created from two main types of components. The first is simply the **aggregation of existing specialised databases** limited to the desired subject (typically decisions of Courts or Tribunals, or Law Journals). The more subject-specialised databases are available, the easier it is to start the development of a useful Library. This aggregation alone is not a significant task, despite its considerable value. In addition, databases may be created specifically for the Library, from materials not otherwise present on the LII, as has occurred with the Privacy Library (see ‘Selected databases’ in 4 following).

The second, more technically significant, component is the **creation of ‘virtual databases’** by extracting / selecting content from existing more general databases (those not limited to the desired subject-matter). A ‘virtual’ database of the selected materials is then created and becomes part of what is searched as part of the Library. Three general methods of selection are possible:

(a) *Editorial selection and editorial updating* – Reliance on editorial selection re-introduces the same resources issues: LIIs are unlikely to have the editorial staff resources to maintain complex Libraries solely by editorial means, and the editorial burden can rarely be outsourced at no cost.²² Commercial publishers create valuable subject-oriented collections by editorial means, but it is unlikely that LIIs can successfully do so.

(b) *Search-based selection and automated updating based on repetition of the search* – The alternative method of development of sustainable Libraries is to develop virtual databases by search selection so that the costs of development and maintenance can be minimised. This is the method on which we are concentrating, and is the focus of this paper.

(c) *A combination of editorial and search-based methods* – Some combination of automated (search-based) and editorial methods may be possible, but we have not yet identified them..

A third component of a subject Library is the creation of facilities to **extend the scope** of the subject-oriented research beyond the content of the LII(s), toward the goal of the most comprehensive possible research on the subject (the ‘one stop shop’ approach). This can include such elements as: (a) a catalog of links to non-LII sites on the subject; and (b) robot-based searching of the content of those web sites only (or as many of them as are searchable). The editorial overheads, technical difficulties, and resulting costs are impossible to sustain on a large scale, and we now limit this in Libraries to a small catalog of links to key sites.²³ A

²² If the editorial burden can be ‘outsourced’ by reliance on the editorial efforts of third parties who are willing to donate them (such as academics who develop teaching resources in an area and thus develop and periodically update lists of key resources), this may make creation of such resources economically feasible. However, there will still be questions about whether collections controlled solely by editorial means are comprehensive enough, and whether they can be updated frequently enough. Crowdsourcing is another possibility, but it is not clear how it can be used to reliably add key documents to databases without there still being a significant editorial burden at the LII end.

²³ We previously attempted to maintain such search facilities: see Greenleaf G, Chung P, and Mowbray A ‘Emerging Global Networks for Free Access to Law: WorldLII’s Strategies 2002-05’ (2007) 4(4): 319-366 *SCRIPT-ed*, <<http://www.law.ed.ac.uk/ahrc/script-ed/vol4-4/greenleaf.asp>>

maintainable alternative is, however, a ‘Law on Google’ search which converts a search using AustLII’s Sino search engine into the correct syntax for Google search, with search terms limiting results to law-related items, and further expert-selected search terms to limit results to those concerning the subject matter and the country/countries involved. Users then add their own additional search terms, or (more likely) re-use searches over the Library. This is almost always gives a worthwhile result, and requires no maintenance.

Search-based virtual databases

The following steps allow searches to be used to create and maintain a virtual database, as in (b) above, based on the assumption that editorial selection of individual items of the contents of the database is impractical and not maintainable:

1. All relevant specialist databases are excluded from the search (they are already included in Library by the aggregation step).
2. An editor with subject expertise (sometimes working in conjunction with experts on searching) develops a search of the remaining databases (all of them, or a sub-set such as ‘all other case database’ or ‘all other law journals’), to find all materials relevant to the Library’s subject-matter (the ‘subject search’). The search should tend toward being comprehensive of the subject, in other words tends toward high recall rather than high precision.²⁴
3. The editor inspects the relevance-ranked search results and decides what percentage of results are sufficiently relevant to be worth including in the database (the ‘retained percentage’), and the complementary percentage to be excluded (the ‘excluded percentage’). In other words, precision is restored through editorial exclusion.
4. A concordance (word occurrence index or search index) is created of the documents identified by that percentage of the results (the ‘reduced results list’). In other words, the documents identified in the reduced results list comprise a virtual database to be included in the Library.
5. The subject search is re-run periodically (as frequently as daily) to update the virtual database, with the same percentage of results being retained and used to created the new concordance. This process is automated. Thus the virtual database can be updated frequently, to include relevant new content which has been added to the whole LII (or cooperating LIIs), without continuing editorial input. The assumption which underlies this step is that even though new content is constantly added to the LII, the percentage of content relevant to the Library will remain substantially constant over time.
6. The subject search and the retained percentage are tested and revised periodically (perhaps annually). This allows for changes to composition of the data in the whole LII, which may occur incrementally, or may occur rapidly if large bodies of new data are added to the system.

The result is that a large subject database (or set of databases) can be maintained with relatively low editorial input. There are of course editorial inputs here, and they are crucial: the development of the subject search, the determination of the retained percentage, and the periodic revision of both steps. However, these are one-off tasks with periodic revisions,

²⁴ For the Privacy Library, the search used for all five virtual databases is ‘privacy or breach of confidence or surveillance or telecommunication interception or data protection or personal information or personal data’. There is no need to use the same search for all, and this is likely to be changed in the next periodic review.

involving a relatively low amount of (preferably high quality) editorial input from subject experts.

Testing search-based methods

Step 2 is the most problematic element in the above procedure. The main issue is whether it is possible to have sufficient confidence that the subject search is well-enough constructed that it finds all potentially relevant items which should be included in the Library (ie is comprehensive, or gives maximum recall). Positive validation of the comprehensiveness of a search would require all items which are excluded by the search to be checked for potential relevance, but the content of LIIs is too large for this to be feasible.

Two methods can increase confidence in comprehensiveness, either of which can falsify the comprehensiveness of the search, but neither of which can prove it:

- (1) A useful test is the subjective opinions of the subject experts as to whether all items that they would expect to find have in fact been found by the subject search. If the search does not find all relevant documents that they expect to find (provided they are in the LII), something is wrong with the search. While this is an essential element in development and does give some reassurance, expert opinion has in past studies been shown to be inadequate by itself.²⁵ The opinion of an expert on the Library's advisory committee indicates that the current search used for law reform reports is not comprehensive enough.
- (2) The 'subject-specialised' (or 'selected') databases included in their entirety in the Library, and therefore excluded from the data used to create the virtual databases, can be used as data over which the subject searches may be tested. Their entire content is subject-specific and should be found by the subject search. If the subject search does not retrieve close to 100% of all items in such a database, this indicates that the search may be inadequate. Even 100% retrieval does not prove that a search is comprehensive, because what might work over one database might not be comprehensive in searches over all databases. However, successful testing increases confidence. For the Privacy Library such tests are encouraging, but are compromised by too many of the search terms also being in the titles of the databases searched and therefore always found.²⁶

A second issue is relating to step 2 is whether the subject search, combined with the relevance ranking algorithm, then ranks the found items in an order such that important items are not wrongly classified as of low relevance and then excluded from the database because they fall in the excluded percentage. This can be dealt with by sufficiently careful checking of items in the proposed excluded percentage by the subject experts.

4 Result: The International Privacy Law Library

The International Privacy Law Library <<http://www.worldlii.org/int/special/privacy/>> is located on the World Legal Information Institute, and is accessible for free access. The

²⁵ Blair, DC and Maron ME 'An evaluation of retrieval effectiveness for a full-text document-retrieval system' *Communications of the ACM*, Volume 28, Issue 3 (March 1985), pgs 289 – 299.

²⁶ There are 6970 documents in the 'selected' databases in the Library (as at 11/9/2014). The search used to build the virtual databases in the Privacy Library is 'privacy or breach of confidence or surveillance or telecommunication interception or data protection or personal information or personal data'. If that search is run against the whole Library minus the 5 virtual databases, it gives 6801 results, or 97.5% of the 6970 documents. This is artificially inflated by 'privacy' being a term in the title of databases, but if privacy by itself is excluded as a search term a result of 91% is still achieved. This is done by using '(information or data or personal) privacy' instead. However, other databases have 'data protection' or 'personal information' in their titles, and it is not possible to substitute for these.

Library's **37 databases** (as at 11 September 2014) include over 4,500 decisions of 13 privacy and data protection authorities, plus many hundreds of decisions by appeal tribunals and courts in many more countries. These decisions are located on AustLII, NZLII, BAILII, HKLII, AsianLII and WorldLII. The whole Library includes over 15,000 searchable items, including these Court and tribunal decisions, policy documents and decisions of international data protection bodies, law journal articles, law reform publications, legislation and international agreements concerning privacy.

The Library also contains other facilities to make finding privacy law easier, primarily a Catalog of websites related to privacy law, and a 'Law on Google' search facility which assists users to more easily find legal materials from a particular jurisdiction, or on a particular topic, using the Google search engine (see Appendix 2 'Other features of the Library'). Cases, legal scholarship and law reform documents found by searches are also linked to the LawCite citator.²⁷

The Library's selected databases

From the more than 1,600 databases located on the LIIs collaborating in providing WorldLII, only 32 are sufficiently relevant to be included in the Library in their entirety, and about half of these have been built specially for the Library (including those built on request by BAILII, HKLII and NZLII). The selected databases are of the following types:

- (i) The 23 **national case law** databases originate from DPAs/PEAs in eleven jurisdictions from four continents (Australia, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, Korea, Macau, Mauritius, Canada, and the United States).²⁸ So there is at present coverage of nine of the 24 countries whose DPAs publish decisions.
- (ii) The selected databases from **international data protection bodies** include the European Commission Article 29 Working Party (Opinions and Recommendations); European Union 'adequacy' decisions; International Conference of Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners (ICDPPC) Resolutions and Declarations 2000-; and APEC Privacy Law Resources 2005-.
- (iii) The selected databases of **commentary** include *EPIC Alert* 1994- (USA); *EPIC's Privacy and Human Rights Report* 2006 (US / global contributions); *Privacy Law and Policy Reporter* 1994-2006 (Australia); *Privacy Laws and Business International Newsletter/Report* 1988-2000 (UK); and *Privacy Journal's Compilation of State and Federal Privacy Legislation*, 2012 Edition (USA). The content has been generously provided by the respective publishers. Some of these databases have considerable historical depth of nearly 20 years coverage of data privacy developments, as well as some of the broadest coverage of any privacy-related publications.

²⁷ AustLII's LawCite citator <<http://www.lawcite.org>>. For examples, search for 'breach of confidence', and follow 'LawCite' buttons on the right of search result items.

²⁸ The Case Law databases [with numbers of cases as at 11/9/14 provided in brackets] originate from the **Australian** Privacy Commissioner (Case Notes and Determinations – also from the previous Australian Information Commissioner) [358]; **Canadian** Privacy Commissioner (combined Privacy Act and PIPEDA database); **Irish** Data Protection Commission (Case Studies and Decisions); **Korean** Personal Information Dispute Mediation Committee (Case summaries) [61]; **Macau** Office for Personal Data Protection (Case Notes; Opinions, Decisions and Authorisations) [300]; **Mauritius** Data Protection Office (Decisions) [15]; **New South Wales** Privacy Commissioner (Case notes) and other Australian Case Summaries [209]; **New Zealand** Privacy Commissioner Cases (Case notes) [293]; Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data, **Canadian** Privacy Commissioner (Findings) [587]; **Hong Kong** (Case Notes, Investigation Reports and Inspection Reports, and Administrative Appeal Board privacy decisions) [461]; **United Kingdom** Information Commissioner's Office (Enforcement Notices, Undertakings and Decision Notices)*; United Kingdom Information Tribunal (Decisions)*; **Victorian** Privacy Commissioner (Case Notes) [47]; and **United States** Federal Trade Commission (Privacy Case Summaries) [147]; United States Department of Health & Human Services (Health Information Privacy Resolution Agreements and Case Summaries) [75]. *Numbers for Irish and UK cases are not given because they also include FOI cases.

- (iv) There are also custom-built databases of **data privacy legislation**,²⁹ and of **international data privacy agreements**.³⁰ It is intended that the legislation database will contain legislation from all 105 countries which have data privacy laws by the end of 2014, including some historical versions of legislation. By ‘custom built’ is meant that items of legislation are individual sourced, formatted and added to the database – one of the few ‘editorial’ elements in the Library, but justified by the high value of the content, and obtaining international breadth in this key element.
- (v) There are two ‘**miscellaneous resources**’ custom-built databases, one for international materials and one for Australian materials (because there is also an Australian Privacy Law Library on AustLII). Items such as government reports of particular value are placed in these databases.

The Library’s virtual databases

In addition to these selected databases, the Library consists of five virtual databases of case law, legislation, law reform, international agreements and commentary (in each case titled ‘Other ... Concerning Privacy and Surveillance Issues’). These virtual databases draw on materials from all of the 1,600+ databases accessible via WorldLII, other than the 33 ‘selected’ databases which are included in full in the Library. Each one needs a brief comment:

- (i) The *virtual case law database* includes many decisions by courts on appeal from the decisions in the case law databases of privacy authorities included in the Library. It also includes many privacy-related decisions by tribunals whose jurisdiction includes data privacy issues but many other areas of law as well, such as Australian administrative law tribunals, and the New Zealand human rights tribunal. In addition, there are many decisions of national and international courts concerning privacy that have arisen under other areas of law such as the law of breach of confidence, criminal or constitutional law, or civil codes.
- (ii) The *virtual legislation database* of nearly 2,000 documents includes many forms of privacy legislation from those countries where participating LIIs have comprehensive legislation, not only the key data privacy Acts as are found in the select legislation database.
- (iii) The *virtual law reform database* is the only explicit law reform database in the Library, and draws on the extensive law reform holdings of the participating LIIs to include over 50 law reform reports.
- (iv) The *virtual treaties database* contains only a small set of treaties (about 20) clearly concerning privacy (eg passenger name records or financial messaging data).
- (v) The *virtual journal articles database* includes about 3,000 articles drawn from over 100 generalist law journals and scholarship repositories located on LIIs.

These databases are rebuilt daily, as described in ‘Search-based virtual databases’, step 5.

5 Use: Strategies, usage and user engagement

While individual users will have different ways of making a Library such as this effective for their needs, there are some general strategies for effective use. The *User Guide* to the Library in Appendix 2 sets out the details of how such strategies can be employed.

²⁹ National Data Privacy Legislation <<http://www.worldlii.org/int/other/NDPrivLegis/>>.

³⁰ International Data Privacy Agreements <<http://www.worldlii.org/int/other/IDPrivAgmt/>>.

Strategies for effective use

Other than for the simple use of browsing the item to find a known document, the best strategy for using it is in most cases to search the whole Library, and then display its contents in various ways to narrow down the desired information. For example, the By Database display allows results to be displayed from individual countries, or DPAs, or from individual journals. The By Date display allows the most recent results to be displayed in date order. In default, all results are displayed in likely order of relevance. See 'Display options in Database search results in the User Guide'. Alternatively, the search scopes available from the drop-down menu can be used to limit the scope of searches may be useful, particular to the option to limit results to 'All privacy cases and decisions databases'.

A valuable strategy is to first search the databases in the Library, and then to simply choose the 'Law on Google' radio button to find complementary materials from the web generally. See 'Other features of the database search results' in the *User Guide* in Appendix 2.

Examples of useful search types

Some illustrative examples of useful searches (as at 11/9/14) follow. Single quotes are not part of search terms, but double quotes must be included in the search terms.

- Concrete single terms or phrases will often produce valuable results. 'Google' (298 results) includes DPA decisions from NZ, Macau, Canada, the US FTC and the UK, as well as the ECJ. 'TRUSTe' (66 results) finds APEC-CBPR and Safe Harbor documents.
- 'cctv or "closed circuit television"' (305 results) includes DPA decisions from HK, NSW, NZ, Macau and Ireland, decisions or administrative tribunals, and law reform reports.
- 'mental health near disclosure', even if limited to 'All Privacy Cases and Decisions Databases', will still give 92 DPA, court and tribunal cases. Improving the search as '(mental health or mental illness or psychiatric) near disclos*' increases the results over 40% to 150 – both synonyms and truncation always need to be considered.
- A simple search for a country name ('Malaysia', 'Mexico' etc) is likely to produce a broad introduction to privacy in that country, including key legislation, APEC documents (where relevant), Commissioners' resolutions, EU adequacy decisions or Article 29 Committee resolutions, journal articles, EPIC PHR reports, and DPA and court cases.
- "'digital rights ireland" or "data retention"' (235) gives comprehensive results.

Usage and user engagement with the Library

Where a resource is as decentralised as are the databases in the Privacy Library, particularly when located across multiple LIIs, comprehensive access statistics are not possible. In particular, none can be provided for the virtual databases. However, there is ample evidence that the Library's resources obtain substantial use. For the first eight months of 2014, the Library home page was accessed over 10,000 times. In that time, case databases of some DPAs had thousand of accesses (over 15,000 for Australia's Federal Commissioner; over 2,000 for New Zealand's DPA and that of Victoria Australia; and over 1,000 for authorities in Mauritius, the US FTC and US HIPAA) even though some have only been available for a few months. Statistics from other LIIs are not available. Some of the highest usage in that time was of the large journal databases (nearly 100,000 accesses each for *EPIC Alert* and *EPIC's Privacy & Human Rights Report 2006*; and over 40,000 accesses for *Privacy Law & Policy Reporter* and for *Privacy Laws & Business International Report*). Many of these accesses have not come via the Library home page, but via searches over the whole of WorldLII or AustLII. We conservatively estimate the annual accesses to materials available from the Library at over one million accesses per year. Who uses the Library is not logged except by IP address and is therefore in practice not known.

The Library has been demonstrated in a teleconference with about 30 staff of GPEN members. and will be demonstrated when GPEN meets in Mauritius in October. GPEN has been encouraging usage by its members through providing a search facility from the GPEN website, as has the New Zealand Privacy Commissioner. WorldLII offers to all data protection authorities and privacy enforcement authorities to include their decisions/case notes in the Library.³¹ Suggestions for additional databases, or content, are welcome.³² GPEN members have been asked to provide feedback on uses they have made of the Library.

Civil society advocacy and academic bodies, and their members, are also being invited to provide feedback about the Library, including desired improvements.

6 Conclusions and future work

We consider that the International Privacy Law Library demonstrates that the goal of building a valuable, global, subject-specific law Library that is sustainable by a free-access LII has been achieved, to an extent that makes this and similar exercises worthwhile through the use of the WorldLII collaborative platform. While far from perfect either in comprehensiveness or functions, it is valuable to its intended audiences in both privacy authorities and civil society.

Sustainability and expertise

The Library can maintain a reasonably high level of utility, and continue to expand, even if no specific funding is available for its further development, because (i) many of its selected databases are part of the normal work-flow of the LIIs on which they are located, and are in effect maintained by DPAs, that activity update their own databases, sometimes daily; (ii) its virtual databases are updated daily by automated means, and the underlying databases from which they extract data (eg databases of court and tribunal decisions, legislation and generalist law journals) are part of the normal work-low of the LIIs on which they are located. Periodic updating of heuristics on which the virtual databases are based, and development of addition selected databases that become available, can be done at modest annual cost.

Sustainability does not require only modest financial resources to fund part of the time of a LII technical staff member to build and update databases, and periodic input of LII directors to resolve significant design issues. The other ‘vital ingredient’ is one or more subject domain experts who are actively involved in both the initial development of the Library, and continue involvement in overseeing that it continues to function effectively, as well as having the contacts (and interest) necessary for content expansion.³³ Developing subject libraries is a branch of what was once called ‘knowledge engineering’ – a rather more mundane cousin of writing knowledgebases/expert systems, but an exercise of subject expertise to build information systems nevertheless.

Desirable future content development

Subject to the future availability of a modest level of funding, it would be desirable to include the remaining known sets of DPA decisions available in English,³⁴ and to include as many

³¹ Offer by AustLII to publish decisions of data protection and privacy authorities <<http://www.worldlil.org/int/special/privacy/offer.html>>

³² Enquiries or suggestions may be sent to feedback@worldlil.org, or may be addressed directly to Graham Greenleaf at WorldLII (graham@austlil.edu.au) or (by DPAs or PEAs) to New Zealand Assistant Privacy Commissioner Blair Stewart.

³³ For the Privacy Library, co-author Graham Greenleaf is a subject expert in data privacy law (as well as a LII Co-director), and additional subject expertise comes from the advisory committee of Blair Stewart, a data protection official, Dan Svantesson an academic expert, and Nigel Waters, a NGO expert and former DPA official. Technical input is from AustLII/WorldLII Co-Directors Philip Chung (technical design), and Andrew Mowbray (search engine and citator issues), and staff (database construction).

³⁴ Including Bosnia & Herzegovina; Canadian Provincial DPAs; Greece; Isle of Man; Switzerland (selected).

available sets as possible in other languages, although their utility for comparative purposes is less without significant technical developments (discussed further below).³⁵ Of course, new sets of decisions may become available and desirable to include. DPAs may also decide to expand the types of individual cases that they provide, to include matter such as ‘DPA-initiated’ enquiries (as in Australia and New Zealand), cases reported in old Annual Reports (NZ) or press releases (US FTA), authorizations and other approvals (Macao). The case reports of accountability agents (eg under APEC-CBPR) and similar bodies could also be included. More databases of key documents from important international bodies such as the Council of Europe, GPEN, OECD, and the EU’s Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) are needed. Where significant collections of commentary are available from publishers (including historical sets), they should be included, but commentary cannot be comprehensive and should not be a main objective.

It would also be desirable to include all known national (and if possible, regional) key data privacy Acts, though it will never be possible to include all historical versions. Key official reports in the history of the development of privacy regulation (eg those from Sweden, the USA, the UK, Canada and Germany prior to 1980) would be valuable inclusions, so that subsequent legislative developments can be more readily traced back to their origins. A resource such as the Privacy Library should not only be a current awareness tool, but also a historical archive. While some policy selected documents are being included by editorial means, the volume and unsystematic formats of DPA policy documents will usually preclude systematic inclusion of such documents.

Language issues and globalisation

A significant longer-term limit on the comparative uses of a global privacy law Library – as in other subject areas – is the diversity of languages in which the relevant documents may be found. At this stage, the majority of key documents are available in English either from origin or in translation (as with the key national legislation from most countries; also case reports from some jurisdictions such as Macau). Inclusion of legislation and collections of reported DPA cases in other languages, where necessary, will facilitate multi-lingual searching,³⁶ will be of value for those with multi-lingual capacity, and is sustainable for a free access facility. Translation costs are not sustainable, and nor is large-scale provision of the same documents in multiple languages. Some development of multi-lingual synonyms to assist searching is also feasible.³⁷ By finding a case summary or item of legislation in another language, users who do not speak that language do at least become aware of the document, and can obtain some idea of its content by using online translation facilities. This is not a complete or satisfactory solution, but with a research facility that has a global objective but limited resources for sustainability, it is probably the best solution achievable. It is necessary to find some solution, otherwise the content of the Library will be too biased toward English-speaking jurisdictions.

³⁵ Including Argentina; Belgium; Bulgaria; Burkina Faso; France; Hungary; France, Luxembourg; Mexico; Monaco; Nepal; Poland; Portugal; Senegal; Slovenia; Switzerland; Uruguay.

³⁶ Language and script format does not in general present an insuperable problem, even for a free-access facility: see Philip Chung, Andrew Mowbray and Graham Greenleaf ‘[Searching Legal Information in Multiple Asian Languages](#)’ *Legal Information Management*, Vol. 13, 2012, <<http://ssrn.com/abstract=2104022>>.

³⁷ With the Sino search engine used by WorldLII, a .sino_synonym file can be created with comma (or space) separated entries denoting translations of the term in different languages. The EuroVoc Thesaurus <<http://eurovoc.europa.eu/>> could be used to assist development of synonyms lists for privacy-related topics for any European languages for which there were documents in the Library, for Sino to implement.

Appendix 1: Home page – International Privacy Law Library (extract)

Next page: Home page as at 11 September 2014 – full Catalog headings not included.



[\[Home\]](#) [\[Databases\]](#) [\[Search\]](#) [\[WorldLII\]](#) [\[Feedback\]](#) [\[Help\]](#) [\[Translate\]](#)

International Privacy Law Library

You are here: [WorldLII](#) >> [Special](#) >> International Privacy Law Library

On this page: [About this Library](#) | [Databases](#) | [Catalog & Websearch](#) | [Acknowledgements](#)

News & Announcements

- [Offer](#) to publish decisions of data protection and privacy authorities in WorldLII's International Privacy Law Library
- [User guide to WorldLII's International Privacy Law Library](#) (2 July 2014)

[\[Search Help\]](#) [\[Advanced Search\]](#)

Search: Databases Catalog & Websearch Law on Google

Last updated: 11 September 2014

Databases

Select Database Groupings

Case Law

- [Australian Information Commissioner Case Notes 2011-](#) (AustLII)
- [Australian Privacy Case Summaries 2004-](#) (AustLII)
- [European Commission Article 29 Working Party Opinions and Recommendations 1997-](#) (WorldLII)
- [Federal Privacy Commissioner of Australia Cases 2002-](#) (AustLII)
- [Federal Privacy Commissioner of Australia Complaint Determinations 2002-](#) (AustLII)
- [Irish Data Protection Commission Case Studies 2005-](#) (BAILII)
- [Irish Information Commissioner's Decisions 1998-](#) (BAILII)
- [Korean Personal Information Dispute Mediation Committee Cases 2002-](#) (WorldLII)
- [Macau Office for Personal Data Protection Case Notes 2007-](#) (WorldLII)
- [Macau Office for Personal Data Protection Opinions, Decisions and Authorisations 2007-](#) (WorldLII)
- [Mauritius Data Protection Office 2011-](#) (WorldLII)
- [New South Wales Privacy Commissioner 2001-](#) (AustLII)
- [New Zealand Privacy Commissioner Cases 1996-](#) (NZLII)
- [Office of the Canadian Privacy Commissioner Findings 2001-](#) (WorldLII)
- [Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data, Hong Kong Case Notes 1997-](#) (HKLII)
- [Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data, Hong Kong - Administrative Appeal Board Case Notes 1997-](#) (HKLII)
- [Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data, Hong Kong - Investigation Report / Inspection Report 1997-](#) (HKLII)
- [United Kingdom Information Commissioner's Office 2011-](#) (BAILII)
- [United Kingdom Information Tribunal 1990-](#) (BAILII)
- [Victorian Privacy Commissioner Case Notes 2003-](#) (AustLII)
- [United States Federal Trade Commission Privacy Case Summaries 1998-](#) (WorldLII)
- [United States Health Information Privacy Resolution Agreements and Case Summaries 2008-](#) (WorldLII)
- [Other Cases Concerning Privacy and Surveillance Issues](#) (WorldLII)

Law Journals, Commentary and Resources

- [Australian Privacy Law Resources](#) (AustLII)
- [EPIC Alert 1994-](#) (WorldLII)
- [EPIC Privacy and Human Rights Report 2006-](#) (WorldLII)
- [International Privacy Law Resources](#) (WorldLII)
- [Privacy Law and Policy Reporter 1994-](#) (AustLII)
- [Privacy Laws and Business International Report 1987-](#) (WorldLII)
- [Other Law Journal Articles Concerning Privacy and Surveillance Issues - \[\\[View All Results\\]\]\(#\)](#) (WorldLII)

Law Reform Publications

- [Law Reform Publications Concerning Privacy and Surveillance Issues - \[\\[View All Results\\]\]\(#\)](#) (WorldLII)

Legislation

- [National Data Privacy Legislation](#) (WorldLII)
- [National Privacy Legislation Concerning Privacy and Surveillance Issues - \[\\[View All Results\\]\]\(#\)](#) (WorldLII)

Treaties and International Agreement

- [APEC Privacy Law Resources](#) (WorldLII)
- [International Conference of Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners Resolutions and Declarations 2000-](#) (WorldLII)
- [International Data Privacy Agreements-](#) (WorldLII)
- [Treaties Concerning Privacy and Surveillance Issues - \[\\[View All Results\\]\]\(#\)](#) (WorldLII)

Catalog and Websearch

▪ [Advocacy Organisations](#)

▪ [Business Organisations](#)

Appendix 2: User Guide – International Privacy Law Library (Extracts)

Browsing the databases

To browse the content of any database in the Library, simply select and click on the title of the database. For most databases, the alphabetic or by-year tables of contents can be used to browse further.

Browsing virtual databases

Some databases (those with ‘Concerning Privacy and Surveillance Issues’ in their titles) are ‘virtual databases’, which means that they are automatically constructed (and updated regularly) by searches over much larger sets of databases on WorldLII. Selection of the title of these virtual databases will display all the contents of the database, sorted by relevance. The number of items in the database is displayed at the top of the search results, together with the search that has been used to construct the virtual database. To see which databases the contents are drawn from, select the ‘By Databases’ option. Only a small percentage of all possible results from the search are included in the virtual database (the most relevant items to privacy issues, usually only 5-20%). To see all results from a search over the whole of WorldLII, select the ‘[View All Results]’ option from the Library home page.

Use the back button to get back to the Library home page

After browsing a database, or completion of a search, the only way to get back to the Library home page is to use the browser’s ‘back’ button, repeatedly if necessary.

Searching the Databases

The ‘Databases’ button is selected by default, so the default search option is to search all the databases in the Library. To search for privacy law on the Internet generally, choose the ‘Law on Google’ button instead (see below).

Connectors – How to construct searches

A search can be for a single word (eg ‘CCTV’), or for a phrase in double quotes (eg ‘“closed circuit television” ’), or for more complex searches constructed using connectors (eg ‘CCTV or “closed circuit television” ’).

The connectors which may be used are as follows:

Operator	Meaning	Example
and	page contains both terms	negligen* and defam*
or	page contains either of two terms	weapon or gun or firearm or pistol
not	page contains 1st term but not 2nd	trust not family
near	1st term is within 50 words of 2nd	disclos* near offence
w/n or /n/	1st term is within <i>n</i> words of 2nd	court w/5 jurisdiction
pre/n	1st term must precede 2nd term by less than <i>n</i> words	contempt pre/3 court
()	Always use parentheses to group related terms if search includes two types of connectors	contempt near (radio or television)
n *	Use * for truncation	‘negligen*’ finds negligent, negligence, negligently etc
“phrase”	Put phrases in double quotes	“information privacy principle”
	Regular plurals, and singulars, are searched automatically	‘firearm’ = ‘firearms’ and vice-versa ‘treaty’ = ‘treaties’ and vice-versa
title ()	Search term must be in title of document	title (cctv)

Search terms the same as connectors – If a phrase is searched for which contains a connector, the whole phrase should be put in double quotes (eg “fit and proper person”).

Suggestion: One of the most useful connectors is ‘near’ (within 50 words). Try using both ‘near’ and ‘and’ to see which gives the most useful results.

Choosing the search scope

In default, a search is over all databases in the Library (they are all shown with a tick ✓ in the left-hand check-box). To limit a search to pre-selected groupings of databases, use the 'Select database groupings' drop-down box to select from one of the following groupings of databases. The ticks in the check-boxes will then change, to indicate which databases are in the grouping. To go back to searching all databases in the Library, choose the 'All Privacy Law Databases' option in the drop-down box, or use the 'Select All' button.

Select Database Groupings

All Privacy Cases and Decisions Databases

All Privacy Law Journals and Commentary Databases

All Privacy Law Reform Publications Databases

All Privacy Legislation Databases

All Privacy Treaties and International Agreements Databases

All Asian Privacy Law Databases

All Australasian Privacy Law Databases

All European Privacy Law Databases

All North American Privacy Law Databases

Another way to limit a search to only selected databases is to un-check the tick boxes next to the databases which should not be searched.

Display options in Database search results

Where Databases are searched, five options allow different displays of search results. The default display option is 'By Relevance'.

By Citation Frequency
By Database
By Date
By Relevance
By Title

[Collapse Multi-sections](#)
Show All Sections

By Relevance

The **default** results display is by order of likely relevance to the search request, most relevant first. The percentage ranking ('relevance ranking') next to each document shows 100% for the first document if it contains all search terms. All others are ranked pro-rata to that document according to number, frequency and location of search terms they contained. The '**Collapse Multi-sections** | Show All Sections' option makes search results which contain numerous references to legislation more readable by reducing the number of sections visible.

By Database

The search results are displayed grouped into the databases on which they are located, and is used to identify the range of databases from which any search results are found. The databases are displayed in the order in which they appear in WorldLII's menu structure (not by number of results found in each). To view the results from only one database, click on the number of documents next to the name of the database (Note: to see the results from all databases again, it is necessary to use the 'back' button). The '**Collapse Listing** | **Expand Listing**' option is only available with the 'By Database' display, and is valuable as a means of grouping all search results from the same country (or sub-jurisdiction) together.

By Date

Results are sorted by date order, most recent date displayed first (ie reverse chronological order). Legislation is displayed by the date the Act was passed or the Regulation made, not by the date on which a particular section or clause was amended. An 'Earliest First' option displays the results with the earliest date that satisfy the search. The 'Collapse Multi-sections' option is also available.

By Citation Frequency

Results are displayed with the cases or journal articles that have been most frequently cited by later cases or journal articles displayed first. This is valuable for identifying particularly important items which satisfy the search.

By Title

The results are sorted alphabetically by the title of the document, and displayed from a-z. The 'Collapse Multi-sections' option is available. The 'Collapse Title' option groups the results together based on the first alphanumeric character in the title, that is, 'A' to 'Z' and then '0-9'.

Other features of database search results

'Context' - going to the occurrences of search terms

The 'Context' button [\[Context\]](#) appears at the top of most documents found in a search. Click on the red arrow to go to the first search term, then forward (or back) on further red arrows to go from one occurrence of search terms to the next. **Wait until the whole document has loaded** before using the 'context' button ie when the status line at the bottom of the screen says 'Document done'.

Repeating searches over the whole of WorldLII

The 'Repeat search over:' box on the right side of each display of Database search results, includes an option 'All WorldLII databases' which repeats the previous search over all of the 1500+ databases available via WorldLII.

Modifying searches

The Search Results page always displays your current search at the top of the page of search results, allowing it to be modified and another search run.

Other features of the Library

The Law on Google option

If the 'Law on Google' option is chosen and search terms inserted, then the search is sent to the Google search engine to be carried out, but it is first transformed as follows:

- The search syntax used by the WorldLII search engine is translated into that required by Google's search engine (for example, 'or' is translated into 'OR'; phrases are put into double quotes); and
- A list of privacy-related search terms is added to reduce the likelihood of sites unrelated to law being found or ranked highly. The current list is: privacy OR surveillance OR "breach of confidence" OR "data protection" OR "personal information" OR "personal data" OR "telecommunications interception" (law OR legal OR legislation OR regulation OR judgment OR treaty)

This may sound complicated, but is automated and generally produces good results.

Browsing the Catalog of privacy-related websites

A Catalog of privacy-related websites may be browsed from the categories listed at the bottom of the Library home page, under the heading 'Catalog and Websearch'. Suggestions for additional links may be sent to [<feedback@worldlii.org>](mailto:feedback@worldlii.org). Use the browser's 'back' button to get back to the Library home page.