

ACES Internet Resources

By Telisa T. Owens

The area of law most lawyers historically understood as “sports and entertainment law” or “media law” has evolved into arts, communications, entertainment, and sports law, or ACES. Accordingly, the traditional notion that research in this area of law focused exclusively on contract law has long passed. As its name implies, ACES is a multidisciplinary area of law that includes topics ranging from contracts, labor and employment, income tax law, constitutional law, libel, defamation, privacy, estate planning, intellectual property, piracy, trademarks, copyrights, licensing, consignment, product placement, import/export law, real estate, business planning, securities law, and insurance law. In addition, ACES is subdivided into areas including, but not limited to, cultural art, visual art, film, publishing, music, video game and software development, television, radio, and theater. This article aims to provide an overview of state, federal, and general ACES Internet materials.

Michigan Resources

Statutory material may be found at the Michigan legislature website at <http://www.legislature.mi.gov>. For example, relevant statutes and acts include:

- Museum Disposition of Property Act, 399.601 *et seq.* (governing certain institutions' rights to legally dispose of undocumented art and artifacts or objects on loan)
- Music Royalty Practices Act, MCL 445.2101 *et seq.* (governing performing right societies)
- Uniform Video Services Local Franchise Act, MCL 484.3301 *et seq.* (gov-

erning the regulation of competitive cable service providers)

- MCL 600.5813 (provides a six-year statute of limitations for the recovery of personal property, including stolen art)
- MCL 429.31 *et seq.* (governing the registration of trademarks and service marks)
- MCL 206.114 (governing patent and copyright royalties due to the state)

The State Bar of Michigan ACES Section website at <http://www.michbar.org/arts/> is an excellent Michigan resource. The ACES website provides links to general resource material at <http://www.michbar.org/arts/links.cfm> and links specific to the entertainment industry at <http://www.michbar.org/arts/resources.cfm>. Included are links to the Library of Congress (provides resource material related to “motion pictures, television, music, and other arts”); performing right societies (e.g., The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers and the MCPS-PRS (England)); unions (e.g., Screen Actors' Guild, Directors Guild of America, and the Writers Guild of America); Industry associations (e.g., Recording Industry Association of America and National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences); trade shows (e.g., Midem, South by Southwest, and the Motor City Music Conference); and independent film festivals (e.g., Cannes and Sundance).

The State Bar and the Institute of Continuing legal Education (ICLE) provide a free research service, Michigan Law Online, to State Bar members that includes Michigan Supreme Court and Court of Appeals opinions from 1942. Upon issuance of a password,¹ the service may be accessed

from either the State Bar website, <http://www.michbar.org>, or from the ICLE website, <http://www.icle.org>. Access to trade journals and articles is available from the Michigan eLibrary, or MEL, located at <http://mel.org/index.jsp>.

Other state resources include the Detroit Film Office website at www.ci.detroit.mi.us/culturalaffair/film/default.htm and the Michigan Film Office website, www.michigan.gov/hal/0,1607,7-160-17445_19275---,00.html, which is maintained by the Michigan Department of History, Arts and Libraries (HAL) website at <http://www.michigan.gov/hal/0,1607,7-160-18835---,00.html>. HAL also includes the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs (MCACA). MCACA's website is at http://www.michigan.gov/hal/0,1607,7-160-17445_19272---,00.html. Among its many functions, the MCACA provides grants to encourage, develop, and facilitate artistic, creative, and cultural activity in Michigan.

Federal Resources

Copyright forms and information are available at the U.S. Copyright Office, www.copyright.gov. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, located at www.uspto.com, provides a free searchable database and access to the U.S. Patent Bibliographic Database. The Federal Communications Commission website is at <http://www.fcc.gov/>.

Congressional legislation may be searched at the Thomas website at <http://thomas.loc.gov/>, and the Code of Federal Regulations may be searched at <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/> and <http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/cfr-table-search.html>.

For a nominal fee,² attorneys can search federal case law at Versus.com, an online search service. The introductory plan offers online access to archived and current

opinions of the U.S. Supreme Court, U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeals, federal district courts (current), state appellate courts, tribal courts, and foreign courts.

Free access to U.S. Supreme Court opinions is available at <http://www.supremecourt.us/opinions/opinions.html>. Although a donation is requested, U.S. Supreme Court opinions can be searched for free at <http://supct.law.cornell.edu/supct/index.html>. U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals opinions may be searched at <http://www.law.cornell.edu/usca/search/>, and Sixth Circuit opinions between January 1995 and June 1999 are found at www.law.emory.edu/6circuit/.

General Internet Resources

Attorneys searching for both domestic and international copyright and trademark information should go to <http://www.supnik.com>. This highly regarded website provides information from a global perspective and includes links to treaties, the trademark laws of other countries, and the copyright laws of Australia, Canada, France, Italy, Sweden, and Britain. The website also includes links to congressional acts, selected U.S. Supreme Court copyright cases, industry-specific associations, governmental agencies, and industry organizations.

Another comprehensive and well-regarded website is provided by Mark Litwak at <http://www.marklitwak.com>. Litwak's website includes links to documents, industry directories and indexes, government agencies, entertainment news and trade publications, film schools, insurance and bond companies, and industry guilds and organizations.

To find information related to art and cultural property law, go to HG.org at <http://www.hg.org/art.html>. This website provides links to domestic and international law firms specializing in art and cultural property law, treaties, stolen art recovery resources, and associations. The Washburn University School of Law Library also maintains a website dedicated to art law at <http://www.washlaw.edu/subject/art.html>, and includes links to research guides and art law Internet resources. The Institute of Art and Law, <http://www.ialk.uk.com/links.php>, provides links to art law resources, including in-

formation pertaining to artists' rights, portable antiquities, museums and galleries, arts management, export licensing, illicit trade, taxation, journals, and news.

Information pertaining to all types of sports is located at Findlaw.com, <http://www.findlaw.com/01topics/10cyberspace/other/sites.html>, and a list of major industry law reviews and journals can be found at http://stu.findlaw.com/journal/art_sports.html.

Communication law resources may be found at <http://www.hg.org/communi.html> and <http://www.findlaw.com/01topics/05communications/index.html>. The Washburn University School of Law Library and Cornell University also maintain communications law websites, at <http://www.washlaw.edu/subject/communication.html> and <http://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/index.php/Communications>, respectively.

Attorneys can also join the American Bar Association (ABA) Entertainment & Sports Law Forum, located at <http://www.abanet.org/forums/entsports/home.html>. Forum topics are divided into nine areas: interactive media and new technologies; literary publishing; litigation; merchandising and licensing; motion pictures, television, cable, and radio; music and personal appearances; sports; theater and performing arts; and visual arts. The ABA also provides a forum on

communications law at <http://www.abanet.org/forums/communication/home.html>.

Conclusion

As more institutions, agencies, and courts disseminate information online, practitioners should incorporate online resources into their research strategy. These sources should provide useful information that supplements, at less expense, information obtained from traditional research sources. ■



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FOOTNOTES

1. To receive a password, contact ICLE by phone at (877) 229-4350 or by e-mail at icle@umich.edu.
2. Fees start at \$13.95 a month.