





# e Web

## Internet resources for Michigan appellate lawyers

by Barbara H. Goldman

**T**he Internet has led to an explosion of information now readily available to the appellate attorney. This article is intended only as a jumping-off point for the average practitioner. Note: many sites store documents in PDF format, which requires Adobe Acrobat Reader. If you don't have this program already, it's available free from [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com).

### Nuts and Bolts

Be sure to bookmark the court of appeals website ([www.courtappeals.mijud.net](http://www.courtappeals.mijud.net)) before you do anything else. This site offers access to the current and next month's case call, the court's Internal Operating Procedures, and directions to the court. You can also find the *Michigan Appellate Digest* here. And it houses all court of appeals and supreme court opinions released since July 1996, searchable by name, docket number, or full text. New opinions from both courts are posted within 24 hours.

The Michigan Supreme Court's website ([www.supremecourt.state.mi.us](http://www.supremecourt.state.mi.us)) includes the current Michigan Court Rules and oral argument schedules (with case summaries). It is also the place to

look for administrative orders, rules changes, and notices of the supreme court's public hearings.

If you do any federal appeals, you'll also want to know about [www.ca6.uscourts.gov](http://www.ca6.uscourts.gov) (Sixth Circuit opinions since 1994, text searchable, PDF, and HTML formats). Case call information is posted two weeks before oral argument and opinions are available online. The site also has a section on filing requirements. For docket entries, however, you will need to sign up for a PACER (Public Access to Court Electronic Records) account at <http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov>. The process is simple and the charges are quite modest, but it does take several days to have an account number assigned. Once you have a PACER

account, you can obtain docket information from any federal court in the country.



*The Internet has led to an explosion of information now readily available to the appellate attorney.*

## Michigan Law

If you are not already receiving the State Bar of Michigan's daily *e-Journal*, go to [www.michbar.org](http://www.michbar.org) and sign up at once. This is the best way to keep up with new decisions (published and unpublished) from both Michigan and federal courts. Case summaries appear two or three days after the opinions are released; if you subscribe to the HTML version of the *e-Journal*, you can link directly to the full text of an opinion (PDF for Michigan, text-only for federal cases). In addition, the State Bar's home page has a link to opinions summarized in old *e-Journals* and ethics opinions since 1998. It is text-searchable (even though the dialogue box says "Enter litigant's name," it will search the body of the case as well), and some opinions can be downloaded in Microsoft Word, although most are in PDF or text format.

*Michigan Lawyers Weekly* is also online, at [www.milawyersweekly.com](http://www.milawyersweekly.com). It offers Michigan and Sixth Circuit opinions since 1996; subscribers can retrieve opinions and archive materials back to 1993. This site is the only place you can find supreme court orders denying leave to appeal (although, oddly enough, not those granting leave) and notices from the Attorney Discipline Board.

## Other Michigan Material

In addition to case law, there is plenty of other useful material in electronic form. Michigan statutes are accessible, but not annotated, at [www.michiganlegislature.org](http://www.michiganlegislature.org), as well as several other sites. A major innovation is the online availability of the Michigan Administrative Code. The most direct route is through the Office of Regulatory Reform's site ([www.state.mi.us/ort](http://www.state.mi.us/ort)); you can search by department, rule number, or text (text format). The legislature's website has also made actions in Lansing infinitely easier to follow. You can find bills and track them through the legislative process, and you can link to legislative analyses and committee reports on pending and recent bills.

If you need archival material, however, you will have to go to the Library of Michigan, which has its own website ([www.libofmich.lib.mi.us](http://www.libofmich.lib.mi.us)). The University of Michigan ([www.law.umich.edu/library](http://www.law.umich.edu/library)), University of Detroit Mercy Law School (<http://murphy.law.udmercy.edu>), Michigan State University—Detroit College of

Law ([www.dcl.edu/library/index.html](http://www.dcl.edu/library/index.html)), Wayne State University ([www.lib.wayne.edu/lawlibrary](http://www.lib.wayne.edu/lawlibrary)), Thomas M. Cooley Law School ([www.cooley.edu](http://www.cooley.edu)), and Ave Maria Law School ([www.avemarialaw.edu/library](http://www.avemarialaw.edu/library)) law libraries all maintain websites with searchable catalogues, although the amount of material actually accessible varies. The directory issue of the *Michigan Bar Journal* also contains a complete list of law libraries in Michigan, including those with Internet addresses.

## Outside Michigan

If your research takes you into law outside the state of Michigan, the places to look increase exponentially. The great-uncle of legal websites is [www.findlaw.com](http://www.findlaw.com), which offers links to most federal and state law-related sites. The Legal Information Institute ([www.law.cornell.edu](http://www.law.cornell.edu)) is also an excellent source. Often, of course, the same information will be stored at more than one site. But the following sites are good places to start a more directed search.

For federal circuit court opinions, go to the appropriate website [www.ca\[insert circuit number\].uscourts.gov](http://www.ca[insert circuit number].uscourts.gov) and see what's available. You can also link to all federal court websites via [www.uscourts.gov](http://www.uscourts.gov). The United States Supreme Court has its own site ([www.supremecourt.us](http://www.supremecourt.us)), as do the tax court ([www.ustaxcourt.gov](http://www.ustaxcourt.gov)) and many other specialized tribunals.

Federal statutes appear in many places. One is [uscode.house.gov/usc.htm](http://uscode.house.gov/usc.htm). The drawback of this search engine, however, is that it retrieves code sections without titles. Findlaw.com has USC on it, but suffers from the same problem. The Legal Information Institute site is somewhat more user-friendly.

Other federal law sites abound. For example, the Library of Congress is bursting with information. At [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov), there is an index to the library's enormous catalogue as well as links to legislative information, including the Congressional Record. The Code of Federal Regulations appears at [www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr](http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr), and the Federal Register is at <http://fr.cos.com>. If you don't know what to look for, you may want to start with the Government Printing Office's portal, [www.access.gpo.gov/su\\_docs](http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs). Most federal agencies have individual websites that you can locate using any typical search engine.

Out-of-state law would be a topic on its own. Findlaw.com can get you to the statutes and court rules, but does not offer case law online. Increasingly, however, state appellate courts are establishing their own home pages and posting at least their more recent decisions in slip opinion form.

A final reminder: if you need more details on electronic searching, your law librarian will be glad to assist you. ◆

*Barbara H. Goldman is an appellate attorney at Lopatin, Miller, Freedman, Bluestone, Herskovic & Domol in Southfield and a member of the State Bar of Michigan Committee on Libraries, Legal Research, and Publications.*

### Law Links:

Michigan Supreme Court [www.supremecourt.state.mi.us](http://www.supremecourt.state.mi.us)  
 Michigan Court of Appeals [www.courtsofappeals.mijud.net](http://www.courtsofappeals.mijud.net)  
 United States Sixth Circuit Court [www.ca6.uscourts.gov](http://www.ca6.uscourts.gov)  
 State Bar of Michigan [www.michbar.org](http://www.michbar.org)  
 Michigan Lawyers Weekly [www.milawyersweekly.com](http://www.milawyersweekly.com)