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Preface

The purpose of this book is to provide law students, attorneys, and others doing legal research a simple step-by-step guide to the basic hard copy research processes. The book is not designed as a textbook to give an in-depth explanation of the law and its sources. Rather, this guide should be used when the research processes are unfamiliar to the researcher either through inexperience or insecurity.

To underscore the common patterns in print form legal research, as well as to simplify comprehension of each research process, checklists appear throughout the text and are separately indexed to allow the reader instant access to particular procedures. Specific problems illustrate each process, enabling the reader to relate better to each step or to follow the process through by using the problem for actual research. Because legal issues are rarely so straightforward as to involve only one research process, some sample problems are used in more than one chapter to demonstrate the interrelationships between research procedures. An appendix provides additional practice problems, accompanied by a brief outline of the research sources.

Although the databases for computer assisted legal research have expanded dramatically since publication of the third edition, unlimited access to material online may not be affordable or available to all researchers. Consequently, many day-to-day research tasks are still more efficiently completed by traditional research methods. The focus of this book, therefore, remains the efficient use of the manual research processes. In this edition, however, there are sections on print, electronic, and Internet versions. The electronic version focuses primarily on Lexis Advance and WestlawNext. The Internet version is limited to Internet sites that we consider to be reliable and stable addresses that are not likely to change.
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