



The official member publication of the Association of Independent Information Professionals

# connections

## In This Issue

- 2** Inside Connections - From the Editor
- 3** President's Message
- 4** 2017 AIIP Annual Conference, Pivoting for Success
- 7** Who Says Librarians Don't Play Rough?
- 10** Starting a Local Group
- 12** AIIP Webinars: 24/7 Education and inspiration that lead to action
- 13** AllPeer Review: HeinOnline
- 15** Algorithmic Surveillance and Surveillance of Algorithms  
Part 1—The Problems
- 18** Coach's Corner

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# AllPeer Review: HeinOnline

by Dan Odenwald, Capstone Information Services & Consulting

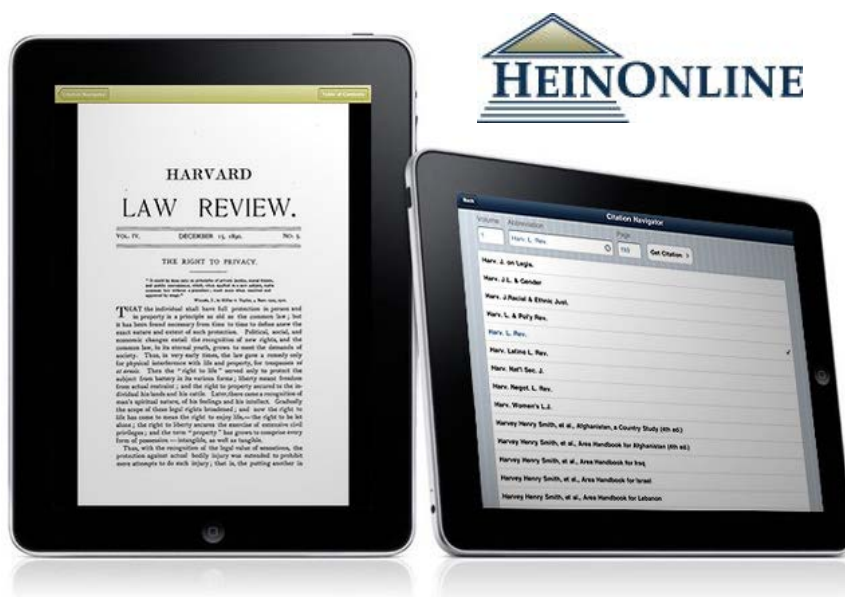
*Having you recently purchased access to a new resource that has changed your working life? Have you been using a product for years that has really supported your business? Is there another great Conference (in addition to AllP of course) that you are willing to spend your hard earned cash on because it pays for itself in information and/or connections? Have you read a really inspirational book?*

*Would you like to share your enthusiasm with your colleagues through the AllPeer Review Column?*

*Reviews can be 500 to 1000 words long and should reflect your own experiences. Why was the tool valuable to your business and how did using it help you achieve your own business goals?*

*AllPeer Review is not intended to promote or rate one resource over any other. Reviews are for information purposes only.*

*If you have ideas for future AllPeer Reviews, contact Denise Carter at [denise.carter@dcisionconsult.com](mailto:denise.carter@dcisionconsult.com).*



A familiar gripe among legal researchers is the exorbitant and mystifying subscription prices for the two leading vendors in the field, **LexisNexis** and **Westlaw**.

Not so familiar perhaps is the powerful answer to these complaints: **HeinOnline**

A staple in law firms, government agencies and academia, Hein is a cornucopia of legal research treasures. Principally known for its library of law reviews—with coverage dating back to

most titles' inception—researchers will also find statutes; regulations; case law; Congressional documents; foreign legal materials; and more.

Boasting more than 140 million pages of legal content, Hein is an online, image-based, fully searchable research tool with thousands of subscribers in more than 180 countries. With material dating to 13th century English Law Reports through contemporary American statutes and commentary, Hein is an indispensable tool in many research arsenals,

providing access to current must-haves as well as historical obscurities.

Fun finds for your inner history geek include: the Pentagon Papers, 19<sup>th</sup> century abolitionist newspapers, even a 1603 Act of Parliament against "conjuring witchcraft and dealings with evil and wicked Spirits."

According to Director of Marketing Tim Hooge, what sets Hein apart in a competitive marketplace are the high-

*continued on page 14*

quality scanned images of legal texts in their native forms. While info pros may find much of the Hein collection freely available through Google, the added metadata, rare finds, and bona fide depictions of valid authorities distinguish the service.

Markedly less expensive than LexisNexis, Westlaw, and Bloomberg BNA, Hein regularly proves irresistible to research shops with tight budgets.

Content grows every day, Hooge says, with more than one million new documents added every month. Additions in January, for example, included Israeli law reports, world treaties, and documents from Scottish legal history.

Searching Hein is both familiar and straightforward. A menu-driven interface enables customers to select libraries, drill down to individual titles, and browse tables of content. Advanced search permits dynamic field searching unique to specific databases (e.g., title, author, date, citation).

Search help and history are easily located; document printing and downloading are simple; and customer supports – training guides, webinars, live chat and toll-free hotlines – are ubiquitous. Primarily accessed on a PC with ID and password, Hein has also developed apps for the iPhone, iPad and Android devices.

An oft-repeated drawback to Hein is the lack of editorial enhancements like those on LexisNexis and Westlaw. Indeed, Hein offers neither annotated codes, case law summaries nor formal legal citation services (such as Shepard's), but it doesn't aim to either.

Additionally, Hein's keyword search precision is occasionally hampered by computer-generated translations of document images to text, but only for older artifacts. A nifty remedy, the "text of this page" button, allows searchers to verify accuracy by toggling between rendered text and corresponding images.

For the punch it packs, Hein is a tiny outfit. About 70 employees run the production from its Buffalo headquarters, Hooge says. Founded in 1961 by bookseller William S. Hein, the company moved online in 2000 and earns about \$33 million a year.

Comparatively, LexisNexis employs 10,000 people worldwide, says parent company RELX, and reported \$1.8 billion in revenue in 2015. Westlaw has as many employees, if not more, and reported \$3.4 billion revenue in 2015, says parent company Thomson Reuters.

Happily, Hein's pricing regime is free of gimmicks and tricks. \$600 a year grants a solo practitioner unlimited access – no usage caps or hidden fees. A la carte databases may be

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# 14

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Limited subscriptions for selected libraries are also available: one day for \$30, two days for \$50 and one week for \$70. Users of the limited subscriptions are capped at five document downloads per day for due to publishers' licensing restrictions.

Hein also believes in corporate citizenship: In October 2016, it released its collection, *Slavery in America and the World: History, Culture & Law*. Freely available to anyone with Internet access, editors say, the library "includes every statute passed by every colony and state on slavery, every federal statute dealing with slavery, and all reported state and federal cases on slavery." Scholars and researchers also have access to "hundreds of pamphlets and books written about slavery" and "every English-language legal commentary on slavery published before 1920."

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