

Resource List

COMPILED BY STACY MOSHER

WEB SITES RELATED TO CHINESE LAW

Following is a source list of Internet Web sites that provide information on Chinese law. The language in which the Web sites are presented and any fees charged are noted. The Internet is a transient medium, and Web sites come and go and change locations without notice. This list was accurate as of May 2003.

The international law resource Web site LLRX.com includes general advice on use of China law Web sites, which is reproduced in an edited version below with permission .

1. COVERAGE OF THE CONTENTS

The majority of commercial databases in Chinese provide quite comprehensive coverage of laws of the PRC from 1949 to present. However, the overall coverage of these databases might differ. For example, although both CEI and ChinaLawInfo have similar content and structure, ChinaLawInfo collects more legal documents than CEI does. Secondary sources such as references, directorial information, legal research articles, and treatises are not yet well developed in online databases. Moreover, online services in English usually have a more limited scope of coverage than their Chinese counterparts.

2. AUTHORITATIVENESS

According to the law of the PRC, legal compilation and electronic publishing should be examined, approved, and then published by a specific governmental agency assigned by the legislature. The sole lawful publisher for China's national laws should be the Legal Affairs Committee of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and the Legislative Affairs Office of the State

Council. However, for the purpose of research and study law compilations are also published by non-official organizations such as research institutions and commercial publishers. Because of the lack of quality control in legal publishing, the accuracy and authority of existing commercial online databases varies. In particular, law databases produced by volunteers or less qualified commercial agencies undermine the reliability and authenticity of online legal sources.

3. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Chinese legal databases are typically produced through modern techniques and standards for organizing information. Even so, some problems can obstruct online access capabilities. The weakness of online law catalogs commonly accessed through law school Web sites is only one example. Lack of professional and financial resources and mechanical deficiencies result in deficient or incomplete cataloging, which becomes more obvious when online catalogs are launched on the Internet.

In addition, limitations imposed by the Web interface often allow retrieval of only a limited number of results, making exhaustive searches difficult through remote access. Finally, Chinese institutions utilize several different subject classification schedules, and only when these are unified will standardized information access and sharing be possible.

The disorganization in the substance of online databases is typically matched by their composition. In an effort to create a "one-stop shopping mall" for Chinese legal information, many legal databases lose their simplicity of layout and take on the appearance of poorly managed warehouses. Because Chinese characters may be difficult to access in an online environment, Web sites often display headings as images. Coupled with other picture files on the Web site, this may result in extremely large files that severely hamper the retrieval process.

4. SEARCHING CAPABILITIES

Primitive searching capabilities may impose considerable limitations on database retrievals. While Chinalawinfo allows text searches, most other online Chinese legal services can only be

searched by the title of the law, the date of promulgation and the promulgation bodies. Few databases allow advanced Boolean search or Nature Language search algorithms, even in the case of services that provide complete searching functions in their CD-ROM products.

5. SEARCHING TOOLS AND CODING

All legal resources in Chinese on the Web can be searched via browsers such as Netscape and Internet Explorer, but require an understanding of Chinese character code configuration. There are several different systems for coding Chinese characters, such as Big5, EACC, GB, HZ and Unicode. Generally, databases based in Taiwan and Hong Kong are coded in traditional Chinese characters using the Big5 system, while databases produced in Mainland China, Singapore and elsewhere adopt simplified Chinese characters using the GB coding system. The HZ code system has the same standard as GB, and is widely used for Web-based electronic journals or newspapers. The EACC and Unicode systems are less commonly used.

Web browsers usually have plug-ins for reading Chinese characters, but it is still necessary to select the right encoding system for a particular Web site. On MS Internet Explorer "Chinese Simplified (GB2312)" is used for Mainland Chinese Web sites, while "Chinese Traditional (Big5)" is used for Hong Kong or Taiwan Web sites. Netscape Navigator designates "Simplified Chinese" as the encoding for Mainland Web sites. Better results, especially on input capability, typically require a Chinese reader interface such as Unionway or the more advanced Cstar, Twinbridge or NJStar.

6. OUTPUT OR DOWNLOADING

Even when downloading from online databases is carried out with a Chinese reader application, garbled characters are sometimes unavoidable due to non-standardized coding. Any change in the Chinese coding configuration has to be accompanied by a reloading or refreshing of the Internet browser. Downloading Chinese directly to a printer requires a big buffer and is usually very time-consuming.

LAW DATABASES AND ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

China Law

<http://www.ceilaw.com.cn/>

Chinese

Partially fee-based

A database of laws, notable legal decisions and Web sites of Chinese law firms, hosted by China's State Information Center. One of the most authoritative and sophisticated sources for Chinese law, but the Web site's Chinese script is not compatible with all software programs.

China Law & Regulation

<http://www.chinalaw114.com/englishlaw/>

Chinese, English

Free

Fujian-based Web site includes English translations of Chinese laws arranged by topic and searchable by title and content.

China Law Reference Service

<http://www.clrsonline.com/>

English

Fee: \$3,100 per year (\$3,385 combined print and online)

Hong Kong-based CCH Asia Pte. Ltd. hosts this Web site for laws and news relating to trade, industry, tax and property. Also provides English translations of Chinese laws (subscribers can request 100 translations free of charge per year).

China Laws

<http://www.lawbase.com.cn/>

Chinese

Usage-based rates

Produced by a Shanghai-based company.

Free material includes law and regulation updates and Supreme Court bulletins.

Greater China Web Law Online

<http://www.gcw.net/lawonline/>

Chinese

Fee: HK\$200 (local) or US\$30 (overseas) per month, unlimited usage; discounts for quarterly or annual subscriptions.

Originally created by the Faculty of Law of the University of Hong Kong, Law Online offers searches of law by category, as well as law-related news. There is no information available free of charge.

isinolaw Research Centre

<http://www.isinolaw.com/index.jsp>

Chinese, English

Fee: Unlimited access \$3,000 per year, \$175 per month

Hong Kong-based company granted rights to publish Chinese and English versions of Chinese court cases, arbitration awards, and laws. Professional team includes Mainland and Hong Kong legal scholars and professionals.

A sister Web site, China Laws Online, <http://www.china-laws-online.com>, provides information in English on business-related laws and relevant news, with a focus on China's accession to the WTO.

Also provides a subscription-based database on updated laws and a legal consulting service in cooperation with the Shanghai WTO Research Institute, the Shenzhen branch of China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission (CIETAC), and the Intellectual Property Research Institute of Peking University.

LawInfoChina (ChinaLawInfo)

<http://www.chnlaw.com/>

<http://www.lawinfochina.com>

<http://211.100.18.62/>

English, Chinese

Fee: Ranges from \$50 (5 cases) to \$1200 for unlimited access for one year. Hosted by Peking University Law School and Orchid Inc., the Chinese and English Web sites are among the largest and most sophisticated databases of Chinese laws, regulations, news and commentary. The Web sites also provide an index of law journals and links to domestic and overseas government departments and legal institutions.

LawTran

<http://www.lawtran.com/#>

English, Chinese

Project-based fees

Legal research and translation by Premier China Law Translation & Information Inc. (LawTran). Free service includes a legal glossary and e-mailing of new regulations in Chinese.

SinoLaw

<http://www.sinolaw.com.cn/sinolaw/>

English, Chinese

Fee: Unlimited \$1499 per year; basic \$499 for 20 credits per year

The first commercial Web site offering information on Chinese law in English,

hosted by a Beijing-based company. The Web site offers English translations of new laws within ten days of enactment, with an emphasis on business-related law. Also offers customized translation service on a fee basis.

CHINESE LAW SCHOOL WEB SITES

Peking University Law School

<http://www.law.pku.edu.cn/>

Chinese

Free

Information on the Peking University Law School, its faculty, courses and library resources.

Chinalawinfo.com

<http://chinalawinfo.com/twzx/index.asp>

Chinese

Free

Further legal information from Peking University, including bulletin boards to request legal advice, and a search function for laws and regulations.

Tsinghua University School of Law

<http://www.tsinghua.edu.cn/docse/yxsz/flx/flx.htm>

English, Chinese

Free

Information on the school as well as links to related useful information.

LEGAL NEWS

China Court

<http://www.rmfb.com/>

<http://en.chinacourt.org/>

English, Chinese

Free

Sponsored by the Supreme Court, Web site includes reports by People's Court Daily on cases, new laws and regulations, and profiles of justices. (English content less comprehensive than Chinese)

China Court

<http://hnfy.chinacourt.org/>

<http://tibet.chinacourt.org/>

<http://bjgy.chinacourt.org/>

<http://dyzy.chinacourt.org/>

<http://lsld.chinacourt.org/main.php>

Chinese

Free

News and cases from the court jurisdictions of Henan, Tibet, Beijing, Shandong and Zhejiang, sponsored by the Supreme People's Court.

China Judge

<http://www.china-judge.com/main.asp>

Chinese

Free

Web site includes commentary about laws and cases by regular contributors who seem to be mostly establishment writers.

China Legal Change

<http://www.chinalegalchange.com/>

English

Usage-based rates

Launched in January 2000, the Hong Kong-based Web site provided English summaries of new laws, regulations, measures, rules, announcements, notices and interpretations promulgated by Chinese government bodies from 2000 to 2002 (mostly business-related). Publication ceased in October 2002, but free briefs on the Web site are still available, and individual detailed summaries can still be purchased for HK\$140 each.

Law-Star.com

<http://www.law-star.com/>

Chinese

Free

Legal news and discussion provided by a Beijing-based company. Includes many links to other Chinese and international Web sites relating to legal and political topics, as well as to Chinese law firms.

Legal Daily

<http://www.legaldaily.com.cn>

Chinese

Free

Web site of the main official publication covering news on legal developments and judicial interpretations. Also has a search function for laws and regulations.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT WEB SITES

China Securities Regulatory Commission

<http://www.csrc.gov.cn/CSRCSite/>

default.htm

English, Chinese

Free

Hosted by the China Securities Regulatory Commission, Web site provides information on Chinese securities law and related news.

Chinalaw Net

<http://www.chinalawnet.com/law/>

index.asp

Chinese

Free

Hosted by a private company under the authority of the Ministry of Justice, Web site provides updated information on Chinese laws.

People's Security Journal

<http://www.cpd.com.cn/>

Chinese

Free

Published by the Public Security Bureau, the Web site provides news and analysis on public security issues.

Sunshine of Law

<http://www.cnlawservice.com/>

English, Chinese

Free

Sponsored by Shenyang municipal authorities and undertaken by Shenyang Judicial Bureau, the Web site provides information on lawyers and cases in Shenyang. Chinese site is not compatible with all software.

Supreme Court of the PRC

<http://www.court.gov.cn/>

study/

Chinese

Free

Official Web site of the Chinese Supreme Court. Includes major judicial decisions on criminal, civil and administrative cases, work reports, case law and profiles of Supreme Court judges.

Supreme People's Procuratorate of China

<http://www.spp.gov.cn/>

laws/

Chinese

Free

Laws (arranged by date and category and searchable), judgments, activities and work reports by the government's prosecutorial arm.

NON-MAINLAND LAW

Hong Kong Dept. of Justice

<http://www.info.gov.hk/justice/index.htm>

English, Chinese

Free

Comprehensive information on Hong Kong laws and prosecutions, with links to related sites.

LawBank

<http://www.lawbank.com.tw/index.php>

Chinese

Full service NT\$12,000 per year, NT\$1,500 per month, NT\$500 per 10 searches

Taiwan's laws, judgments and related news, including upcoming conferences, provided by a private company of Taiwanese legal professionals. Some of the information is free of charge.

Macau Government Gazette

<http://www.imprensa.macau.gov.mo/cn/>

Chinese, Portuguese

Free

Laws and related information for the Macau Special Administrative Region provided by Macau's Government Printing Office.

OVERSEAS LAW SITES

Internet Chinese Legal Research Center

<http://ls.wustl.edu/Chinalaw/>

English

Free

Created by Wei Luo, Director of Technical Services and Lecturer in Law at the Washington University School of Law Library, the Web site provides links for Internet resources relating to laws of the PRC, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Jurist Legal Intelligence

<http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/world/china.htm>

English, Chinese

Free

Information and links relating to Chinese law provided by University of Pittsburgh School of Law.

Law Library Resource Xchange

<http://www.llrx.com/features/china2.htm>

<http://www.llrx.com/features/prc.htm>
English
Free
Launched in November 1996, U.S.-based LLRX.com provides comprehensive and objective reviews of online legal resources. Its guides on Chinese law Web sites, updated to January 2003, include valuable information on the Chinese legal system, assessments of relevant Web sites and tips on how to use them.

O'Melveny & Myers LLP

<http://www.omm.com/webcode/navigation.asp?nodeHandle=403>
English
Free
Weekly bulletins on developments in China law by international law firm with headquarters in Los Angeles and offices in New York, London, Tokyo, Hong Kong and Shanghai.

University of Maryland Chinalaw Web

<http://www.qis.net/chinalaw/>
English
Free
Well-regarded Web site hosted by the China Law Society at the University of Maryland School of Law. Provides in-depth analysis of laws in the PRC, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau, including English translations of some laws.

Yale Law School

<http://chinalaw.law.yale.edu/>
English
Free
Produced by Yale's China Law Center to assist China's legal reform process and increase understanding of China's legal system outside of China.

SPECIALIZED TOPICS

"Bao Gong" People Law

<http://www.people-law.com/>
Chinese
Free
Named after a historical magistrate with a reputation for justice, this Web site has special categories for news relating to corruption and miscarriages of justice.

China Today Law Page

<http://www.chinatoday.com/law/a0.htm>

English
Free
Web site is produced by Kompass China, a joint venture between the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation (MOFTEC) and the Coface credit insurance group. Gives English translations of business-related Chinese laws. Other portions of the site provide further information on China. Note that the Law and Regulation section is not up-to-date.

China315

<http://www.cn315.net/index.htm>
Chinese
Free
News and laws relating to hygiene and consumerism, hosted by a company in Shanghai.

LAW OFFICE DIRECTORIES

All China Lawyers' Association

<http://www.chineselawyer.com.cn/pg/index.php>
Chinese
Free
Law resources and information on lawyers' associations in major Chinese cities.

China Lawyer Group

<http://www.lawyer-group.com/>
English, Chinese
Free
Lawyer directory and news. English site is less comprehensive, but includes lawyer jokes.

Chinese Lawyers' Alliance

<http://www.lawyer.cn.com/index.htm>
Chinese
Free
Produced by an online alliance of Chinese law firms totaling more than 1,000 lawyers. Provides information on those law firms, their lawyers and services, and law-related news.

Lawyer-China.com

<http://www.lawyer-china.com/>
Chinese
Free
Directory of lawyers and law-related news, including law amendments, produced by the Fujian Republican Law Office.

Hieros Gamos legal directory

<http://www.hg.org/firms-china.html>
English
Free
Directory of Chinese law firms by a well-regarded Houston-based legal research organization. Includes sub-divisions by region (including Hong Kong and Macau) and practice areas.

Martindale-Hubbell

http://lawyers.martindale.com/xp/Martindale/Lawyer_Locator/Search_Lawyer_Locator/search_result.xml?PG=0&STYPE=F&FN=&CN=&CTY=&STS=&CRY=46&FSZ=
English
Free
Directory of Chinese law firms by the premier American legal directory.