Toronto Association of Law Libraries (TALL)

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TALL Blog Editorial Board 2019

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Submission to the TALL Quarterly

We welcome contributions to the TALL Quarterly in the form of an article, opinion piece or a theme for a forthcoming issue. Upcoming themes include:

Vol. 39, no. 2 - Working from Home

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Quarterly Topic Introduction: Teaching and Training

TALL Blog Editors

As we wrap up this quarter of the TALL Blog, we would like to thank all of you who took a moment out of your day to read our posts. We appreciate your feedback and continued readership. One update: we have opened the blog up to non-members, so feel free to share with your colleagues!

Don’t forget about In the Loop! Announcements such as professional opportunities, job changes, retirements, and profiles on new members will be compiled into a quarterly In the Loop blog post. Do you have something you would like to share? Contact us at tall.blog.2019@gmail.com. Note: In the Loop posts will remain accessible only to members.

Each quarter, the TALL Blog will focus on a certain theme relevant to our legal information landscape. Our goal will be to add to your understanding of a certain concept, practice, or field of legal information.

Our focus for 2020 Q1 will be Teaching & Training. We’ll be featuring a number of tips and tricks from the trenches of legal research training, straight from our membership; as well as some interesting profiles of teachers in our community; and finally, a summary of a legal research and writing workshop hosted by Osgoode Law School this past December. Stay tuned over the next few months for more!

Want to contribute a short piece on this topic? Please email us! Blog posts should be short and succinct: 250-500 words.

Happy holidays!
TALL Blog Editors

2020, CALL/ABCD Conference

TALL Blog Editors

This Spring! The 2020 CALL/ACBD Conference in Hamilton, ON

The 2020 CALL/ACBD Conference is taking place from May 24th – May 27th, 2020 at the Hamilton Convention Centre. The Annual CALL/ACBD Conference brings together over 250 legal information professionals from across Canada and beyond for a four-day professional development and networking experience. Our conference is highlighted by our exhibitor showcase of leading legal vendors eager to connect with library professionals. Learn about innovative products and solutions applicable to all legal information libraries: private, law society, government, academic and corporate.

Four tips for impactful video tutorials

Lauren Orav, Web-Services Librarian, Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General

Video tutorials are a great way to demonstrate how to use a research tool or to explain a research concept. But what makes them effective? In this blog, Lauren Orav shares four best practices she developed while making video tutorials for Ontario's Ministry of the Attorney General.

1. Avoid vague language

In your video's narration, avoid using phrases like "Click here" or "look at this section." Vague directions increase the viewer's mental load and can impede their learning. They can also create problems for viewers with small screens or viewers with vision impairments.

Write a video script that is clear and concise so your viewer can concentrate on learning! Replace vague terms like "here" "this" and "that" with more descriptive ones that tell your viewer exactly what you mean.

Instead of...

- Click here.
- Look at this section.
- Hover over this one.

Try saying...

- Click on the search icon
- Look at the section titled "Case Law"
- Hover your mouse over the word "Options"

2. Keep it short and to the point

Videos that are short and sweet are more appealing to busy clients. Ask yourself: if you have an urgent problem that needs fixing, are you more likely to watch a two minute video or ten minute video for help?

While drafting your script and storyboard, decide on your desired video length. While there are differing views on the best tutorial length, most best practices currently recommend videos that are between one and two minutes long.

3. Make a series instead of a long video

Some topics are too big to describe in just two minutes. If your tutorial idea requires a longer video, consider breaking it down into smaller videos that address specific parts of the larger idea.

Consider a viewer who needs help downloading a case. They will not want to sit through ten minutes on other database functions to find the one part they need! Creating a series of short tutorials instead of one long video makes it easier for your clients to locate information about specific tasks and ideas.

4. Plan it out - and then rehearse!

Before you record anything, create a script and storyboard. Creating the script and storyboard together makes you consider how the audio and visual elements will work together to communicate information to the viewer.

Once you think your script and storyboard are finished, rehearse with a colleague. One of you will read the script aloud while the other handles visuals. Time how long it takes for you to rehearse. You may discover that your video will be longer than you were expecting, or that the script is missing information needed to explain your visuals.

After your first rehearsal, you will probably need to make revisions. But that’s okay! It’s easier to make changes during the planning process.

Training Students vs. Lawyers

Danielle Chiang, Research Librarian, Norton Rose Fulbright Canada

Being thrust into the world of articling student training in the first few months of your law librarianship career is perhaps the most effective way to understand the struggles of new students entering a large corporate firm. Although it sometimes felt like the "blind-leading-the-blind", having little to no previous knowledge offered me insight into the perspective of new students and new lawyers. Now two years in, I've noticed some key distinctions to be made between the needs and expectations of both groups when it comes to training.

Articling Students

For the most part, the thing to keep in mind about summer students, and articling students alike, is that they usually have limited understanding of the demands of lawyers and specific practice areas, as well as the types and volume of requests they can expect to encounter. In that respect, it's best to keep the following in mind:

- Present a broad overview of resources rather than being too narrow in scope.
- For orientation training, stick to the main major resources like Lexis Advance Quicklaw, Westlaw, CanLII, Proview and key practice group texts.
- You don't have to train on everything! Remember, you can book Quicklaw and Westlaw trainers individually. They will typically have a deeper understanding of what will or won't be of interest.
- Don't be exhaustive—they won't remember much because they have little to no context for when or how they'll use each resource.
- Prepare examples of questions that they'll most likely encounter and the types of solutions they'd be expected to provide. E.g. Questions about case law, corporate filings, specific situations that might require Proview or specific resources, etc.
- Reassure students that lawyers will not receive feedback about the students from librarians.
- Encourage students to ask clarifying questions of lawyers when asked for something. Oftentimes, lawyers will forget that students are new to legal jargon and concepts.

Lawyers

When hiring new lawyers, they'll most often than not be entering the firm with a specific practice group. This means, unlike the new articling/summer students, the training should be more tailored to their specific needs. The more senior a lawyer is, the more they'll have a better understanding of the types of material they need for their practice.

- Lawyers will have their own assistants to take care of pulling case law, precedents, forms, etc. Therefore, have a structure to the training, but conduct it as a discussion. Generally, lawyers have much greater knowledge within a particular area than you. They may offer certain suggestions on what they'd like to be shown.
- Catering to the lawyer's practice area means that training sessions can be compressed to 30-45 minutes.
- Show specific resources catered to the lawyer's practice group.
- Offer any extra services provided by the library like: media monitoring, legislation tracking, current awareness, account setup for specific resources, etc.
- Ask what texts they're used to having at their desk. If budget permits, offer to acquire those texts for them. At NRFC, we have a specific set of desk copies that we get for practice group lawyers, with the approval of practice group heads.

These are just some main differences that I've noticed over the past couple years at NRFC that truly differentiate between the needs of students and lawyers. This is not exhaustive, by any means. But I find that these slight differences help to cater the training sessions to the appropriate audience. Hopefully this insight will be helpful for any new librarians preparing for their own foray into training!

Final Thoughts

Interested in contributing to the TALL Quarterly Newsletter? Have questions or concerns about the content you've seen here?

Feel free to contact us anytime! Email us at tall.blog.2019@gmail.com

COMING UP NEXT QUARTER: WORKING FROM HOME