

IALS Library Survey of UK Researchers, November 2008



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Gerard Power, March 2009

1 Summary of findings and of ways in which IALS can respond

Findings:

The survey of researchers in November 2008 yielded 151 returns from a good spread of institutions across the UK. The format of a national web-based survey, distributed to students, academics and librarians via e-mail, has been successful. It was useful publicity for IALS and some respondents explicitly noted that the survey demonstrated IALS commitment to its national constituency of researchers. Most respondents answered most questions, and a good number offered comments and suggestions.

In general, the comments in the returns were very complimentary of IALS Library and were very supportive. However, it was clear that some people were not sufficiently aware of the purpose of the Institute or the extent of its activities or its availability to them. It was also clear that, although not sufficient by itself, the website is the main channel of communication and information for them.

Many respondents often read web newsletters and websites, and rely a lot on e-mail for keeping up-to-date with developments in legal information. About one third of respondents need access to law materials in languages other than English, and many of them find it difficult to get access to foreign-language material. Respondents listed over 40 libraries which they use in addition to their own library, with the most mentioned being the British Library, IALS Library, LSE Library, the Bodleian Law Library, the Squire Law Library and SOAS Library.

Established web methods and resources, including opacs, Lexis, Westlaw, Intute, and Google, are often used by respondents as resource discovery tools.

Just under 50% of respondents have used the IALS website before. Many respondents sometime or often use BAILII, the IALS Library catalogue, and the Intute Law Gateway.

Ways in which IALS Library can respond:

- Regular communication with researchers by e-mail is both desirable and effective. IALS can continue to develop its capacity to send e-mails to its registered users, occasional users and potential users, throughout the UK. Newsletters and the website are also important communication tools, and will be developed in various ways.
- Development of the IALS Library website. We will endeavour to:
 - Keep users informed of the development of the IALS online repository in SAS Space, and of repositories in general as important research resources
 - Publish regularly a list of new books available and a possible web equivalent of a new books display

- Investigate how some resources and features of the website can be tagged for social networking
 - Develop some collections and slide-shows of images
 - Develop a databank of short, useful and topical messages of the format “did you know that ...?” or “tip of the day” or answers to FAQ. This information can be changed and rotated regularly on the website. Short and pertinent messages which vary over the week and month.
 - Make some of the existing content of the website more visible, through picklists, site-map entry and linking (“surfacing” information)
- We will aim to create new content for the IALS website as follows:
 - Research guide to the law of Scandinavian countries
 - Research guides to tax law, legislative studies, and corporate governance, i.e. the subjects of IALS LLM courses
 - International law timeline (HM)
 - More information files about the databases on the IALS and ULRIS websites, e.g. Jstor, Early English Books Online, RLIN database, etc.
 - We will also promote and make accessible in different ways the IALS collection development policy, already published on the website.
 - Highlight the new digital content on maritime law.

Outreach: we will organise some open meetings for law librarians from universities and from the commercial sector, to inform them of developments at IALS Library and to offer them tours and a networking event.

Partnerships: we will develop an online tutorial to BAILII, and we will promote more the IALS partnership with LLMC and the useful resources available in this way.

2 Aims of survey

The survey aimed to collect researchers’ views on a range of issues:

- Effective ways of keeping up-to-date with developments in legal information
- Access to a range of legal research material
- Researchers’ use of resource discovery tools to find legal information
- Researchers’ suggestions on improving and developing IALS outreach

The questionnaire was designed as a web form on the IALS website, and e-mails were sent to individuals in law schools and law libraries in the UK, as well as to the Lis-Law and the BIALL e-mailing lists. The option to complete the form in hard copy was also available.

See Appendix for the full survey questionnaire.

3 List of tables

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4 Respondents

A total of 151 valid returns were received. Some returns were also received from lawyers or other practitioners, and these have been omitted from the following analyses. Not all respondents have replied to every question, therefore totals do not add up to 151 for every answer.

Many respondents put “y” to both student and teacher, which is quite understandable as many PhD students also teach. Where respondents have put more than one “y” to this question, the first-mentioned category only has been included in the table below.

Table 1: category of respondents

Category	
Student	61
Teacher	58
Librarian / Information Officer	26
Postdoctoral researcher	5
Administrator	0
Other (visiting professor)	1
Total	151

Table 2: affiliation of respondents

University / College	<i>Number of respondents</i>
Affiliation of respondent not evident	16
University College London	16
King's College London	9
Nottingham	9
Cambridge	8
Warwick	7
Glasgow	6
Kent	5
Queen Mary, University of London	5
Dundee	4
Southampton	4
Birmingham City	3
Bournemouth	3

Brunel	3
Glamorgan	3
Sheffield	3
Birkbeck, University of London	2
Birmingham	2
Derby	2
Huddersfield	2
Lancaster	2
Leicester	2
Manchester Metropolitan	2
Middlesex	2
Northampton	2
Oxford	2
Portsmouth	2
Queen's Univeristy Belfast	2
Aston	1
Bedfordshire	1
Buckingham	1
Cardiff	1
Central Lancashire	1
City University, London	1
College of Law, UK	1
Coventry	1
De Montfort	1
Exeter	1
Greenwich	1
Kingston	1
Limerick, Ireland	1
Liverpool, John Moores	1
London School of Economics	1
Manchester	1
Northumbria	1
Reading	1
Salford	1
SOAS, University of London	1
Surrey	1
University of East Anglia	1
Wolverhampton	1
Total	151

5 Communication and current awareness

Table 3: Communication and Current Awareness Methods

<i>Method used</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>
Talking to colleagues / supervisors	9	78	59
Talking to librarians	68	50	22
Reading print newsletters	26	89	29
Reading web newsletters	17	55	70
Viewing websites	6	38	99
E-mail discussion lists, e.g. Jiscmail	54	47	40
Repositories	37	70	36
Other web methods, e.g. blogs etc.	58	64	16
Others (specified individually):			
Attendance at courses / conferences		3	
Google			1
Talking to academic staff		1	
Westclip			1
Lawtel			1
Law Reports			1
Current Law		1	
Current Law Statutes			1
Journal alerts and table of contents		1	1
Acquisitions lists		1	
Indexes		1	
Subscription databases			1
E-journals			1
Browsing journals			1
Newspapers			1
Textbooks		1	

Comments: the reason for asking this question is to ensure that the Access Librarian is using all effective ways of communicating with researchers in UK and to see if there are any gaps or areas to improve communications. It is clear that sending e-mails to heads of research, librarians and administrators in law schools continues to be a good way of communicating with researchers, because the librarians and heads of research are good at copying on e-mails from IALS Library to their research students.

Many respondents like web newsletters and websites, so we can continue to create and develop this content at IALS. There are suggestions later in the survey for new content.

Jiscmail lists such as Lis-Law continue to be a useful way to keep in contact with librarians. Perhaps this question was misunderstood by some respondents who may have never heard of, or remember, Jiscmail but who may well subscribe to one or more lists from Jiscmail or other providers. The question for the Access Librarian is are we using all appropriate lists on Jiscmail and are there any lists targetted in particular at heads of law schools or heads of research or law school administrators?

The use of repositories is a burgeoning area of interest to many researchers. So it will be useful to continue to promote the IALS repository and to highlight the repository finding tool on Intute in future newsletters and communications. Maybe it will be possible to ask some repository developers at law schools to write about their work for the newsletter.

Respondents do not seem as keen on other web methods such as blogs, although quite a few people sometimes use them. But it would be useful for IALS and for our users to start some new web services, such as a blog, to respond in some way to the 64 respondents who sometimes use them.

6 Access to material in other languages

Table 4: Do you need access to material in languages other than English?

Yes	No
49	80

Please list the languages and/or jurisdictions you need (table sorted by most frequently mentioned languages or jurisdictions by those who answered yes to question 4.a):

Table 5

<i>Language / Jurisdiction</i>	
French	29
German	18
Chinese	7
Dutch	7
Spanish	7
Italian	5
Norwegian	3
Danish	2
Greek	2
Quebec	2
Russian	2
Africa	1
Anglo-Saxon	1
Arabic	1
Australia	1
Austria	1
Belgium	1
Bosnia / Serbia / Croatia	1
Brunei	1
Byzantine Greek	1
EU	1
EU member states	1
Japan	1
Latin	1
Latin America	1
Malay	1
Nigeria	1
Portuguese	1
Scandinavian languages	1
South Africa	1
Swedish	1
Switzerland	1
Thai	1
Turkish	1
UK	1
United States	1
Vietnamese	1
World Bank	1

Table 6: Ease of access to foreign language material

Easy to find and access	9
Sometimes difficult to find and access	20
Often difficult to find and access	19

Comments: it is clear from this small survey that we need to continue to take every opportunity to remind users and potential users of the IALS' strengths in languages other than English:

- Collections in many different languages and for many different jurisdictions
- The key finding tools (indexes, databases etc.) for finding foreign-language material, and Flag and Flare

The fact that the Scandinavian languages are fairly high on the list indicates that a research guide or profile of IALS holdings for Scandinavian countries would be a useful new piece of content to develop.

Access to material in languages other than English is a concern for researchers across all disciplines, as highlighted by some of the surveys of RIN, the Research Information Network.

The *IALS Collection Development and Retention Policy* is a key document in explaining the languages and jurisdictions included in IALS collections. We will help researchers and librarians by reminding them of this document and the many questions it answers.

7 Libraries used in addition to own library

Table 7: Respondents listed over 40 libraries which they use in addition to their own library, and the most frequently mentioned are:

<i>Library</i>	<i>Number of respondents who use it in addition to their own library</i>
British Library	43
IALS Library	31
LSE Library	14
Bodleian Law Library	13
Squire Law Library	8
SOAS Library	7
Senate House Library	6
Law Society Library	5

The purpose for asking this question was to ensure that the Access Librarian is communicating often with the other libraries which respondents use regularly. It is clear from some of the comments at the end of the questionnaire that there are other ways we can reach out to other law libraries, and that academic law librarians can benefit from a better understanding of the aims and objectives of the IALS Library.

8 Use of resource discovery tools

Table 8: use of resource discovery tools

<i>Tool</i>	<i>Never use</i>	<i>Sometimes use</i>	<i>Often use</i>
Library catalogues on the web	8	35	101
Web gateways e.g. Intute	33	60	52
Law databases e.g. Lexis or Westlaw	1	16	125
Other databases on the web	46	61	36
Web search engines, Google etc.	6	29	109
Indexes to periodicals	12	73	56
Information about completed theses	76	54	9
Information about theses in progress	107	32	5
Social networks to support research e.g. Facebook	108	26	7
Others specified include: CPD courses			1
Indexes via Lexis and Westlaw			1
Periodicals			1
Book reviews e.g. TLS and NYRB			1
Government websites			1
EU websites			1
BAILII			1
Hein		1	
Jstor			1

Comment: it is no surprise that established web methods such as opacs, Intute, Lexis and Westlaw, and Google get high scores here. We can continue to highlight the various journals indexes available at IALS in the newsletter, and by poster when the LLM students start doing their dissertations in the summer. Some of the databases which we now have access to because we are members of ULRLS, e.g. Early English Books Online and FRANCIS, to name but two, may to a certain extent be hidden to our onsite academic users and we might do a list of the most useful ones for information.

9 Use of IALS website

Table 9: Have you used IALS website?

Yes	71
No	74
No reply	6
Total	151

Which of the following do you use and how often?

Table 10

<i>Resource</i>	<i>Never use</i>	<i>Sometimes use</i>	<i>Often use</i>
BAILII	11	40	27
IALS Library catalogue	18	30	30
Intute Law Gateway	42	25	11
FLAG - Foreign Law Guide	48	26	5
FLARE - Foreign Law Research	54	18	5
Eagle-I Gateway	62	11	4
Current Legal Research Topics	48	24	6
CALIM - Current Awareness	62	10	3

Comment: this gives a useful indicator of what we need to promote more, and to whom, e.g. CALIM could be promoted more to library and information staff. Some respondents made the valid point that some of these resources are available independent of the IALS website and it is not necessary to use all of them via the IALS site.

10 New content suggestions for the IALS website

In no particular order, and in some cases summarised or paraphrased, the following suggestions were received from respondents:

- More research guides, e.g. Scandinavian countries, plus guides to the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man
- I.P. is a very fast-moving area. Colleagues in practice, and their resultant e-mail discussion lists, are vital. Otherwise, prime tools are Westlaw etc.
- More primary and out-of-copyright material made available electronically.
- Preview some latest published law books.
- Seems to be OK.
- A link to Jstor would be helpful. As an interdisciplinary researcher, I use it a lot (note: GP e-mailed this respondent to tell him that there is a link to Jstor from the Electronic Law Library and from individual catalogue records).
- More info on civil law jurisdictions.
- Sociology of (public) international law.
- IBFD journals in electronic format.
- Public procurement.
- I think it is already excellent. The links to e-versions of print journals direct from the catalogue is often incredibly helpful.
- A list of all your available publications and a tool to search them all.
- Full-text theses.
- Online Max Planck Encyclopedia of International Law (OUP)

GP's comment: some useful pointers and suggestions to new or updated content. Would be useful to do profiles or lists or reviews of new law books, but this could require considerable time and resources.

11 Suggestions for IALS website

Suggestions, in no particular order, offered by respondents:

- Smart CILP, for example, a subject-based e-mail alert system. This is subject-based, unlike BL's which is journals based.
- I think I could better learn to use its existing resources.
- I don't need a single gateway for my research – more valuable are readily searchable online library catalogues and other similar tools that give a concrete pointer to where physical resources such as books may be found – I emphasise physical resources because journals are often available on Hein and Lexis etc.
- In general, I find it a very useful site.
- A section on the website allowing users to sign up to an electronic mailing-list with details of latest publications / legal news in a chosen field would be very useful. I currently subscribe to the likes of ASIL Int'l law list, and Bridges Weekly Trade News Digest. Both save me a lot of time. It would be good if something similar was available for the IALS and BAILII (perhaps it is and I have missed it).
- Useful survey – reminded me of what you have on your website!
- Used IALS for the first time today to consult English Reports. Customer service by e-mail and in person was excellent. Will be back.
- Survey is useful and shows that IALS, as a research library, is concerned with the needs of its users.
- More new books.
- Never heard of IALS – what is it?
- More books on immigration.
- How to get hold of foreign legal material e.g. by international ILL.
- I think that sites like this are hugely important for researchers, so the more funding for update the better.
- More online electronic journals.
- "should be more update" (sic)
- No, I am satisfied.
- Could the IALS website make the existence of the guides and indexes in Question 8 more obvious, and explain what they are for?
- I would be interested in using electronic resources that I don't have available via my institution and will investigate this.

- Comment from a teacher that IALS is a key law library and the desirability to save resources across the University by concentrating new law resources in IALS.

12 Any further comments on the issues raised in this survey

In no particular order, the following were noted by respondents:

- Would be extremely valuable if IALS could make their e-resources available to public even for a charge.
- I think the survey has raised my awareness of a number of services I am not using enough.
- Maybe it would be a good idea if IALS would make some of its materials available in digitised form.
- I am not very clued up on electronic resources, but don't have time to attend courses on them. Is there any description available of what the different electronic resources available through IALS cover?
- I'm new to legal research, as my Masters was psychology-based and I am still finding my feet. I am sure that I will eventually make better use of the IALS website.
- Glad that you raised these issues. It makes me think how I acquire and update legal information. Thanks.
- Language: I had originally planned to use Italy as one jurisdiction, but as I could only find materials in Italian (which were scarce anyway), I decided not to pursue that avenue.
- IALS website very helpful and easy to navigate. I particularly like (and recommend to my students) the research guides.
- On question 6, it does not get at whether these tools are useful or easy to use. I guess that, as a researcher, one uses every trick one can to find material, though my first port of call would be Google Scholar, and my last would be Lexis and Westlaw.
- IALS staff are constructive, flexible and courteous.
- I have looked at your catalogue and found very little material relevant to my particular field (social security law). Such material as is available is outdated.
- Would be great to have access to Chinese legal databases. I have problems finding Chinese materials in the UK (student).
- I use the resources listed in Q.8 by linking directly or through own subject page rather than via IALS [GP's comment: this point was made by more than one respondent]
- When I was a PhD student, the IALS was invaluable. It has a great range of stuff.

- It might be useful to have an afternoon for librarians, to be held at IALS, to outline the strengths of the collections for those not familiar with them – to help me to advise students and academic staff at my own institution.
- There are blogs out there which are particularly useful, e.g. ipkat.com
- “how does IALS fit in with other collections available in other libraries” – needs to know for herself and for her students.
- “Without anybody’s fault, it is becoming more and more difficult to trace all the available literature related to a given research area”.
- Thanks to IALS staff for wonderful work....!



Appendix: survey questionnaire

Institute of Advanced Legal Studies Library Survey of Legal Researchers, November 2008

The IALS Library is a valued national and international resource for legal research. During March each year, we conduct a reader satisfaction survey to help us improve our library and information services. In addition, this year, we are doing another survey, which you have before you. This survey aims to elicit researchers' views on a range of issues:

- Effective ways of keeping up-to-date with developments in legal information
- Your access to a range of legal research material
- Your use of resource discovery tools to find legal information
- Your suggestions on improving and developing IALS outreach to the national research community

We welcome a response from **anybody involved in the legal research process**, in a higher education institution in the UK: from students, teachers, librarians, administrators, and from post-doctoral researchers. If you have used the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies Library before, or have heard of IALS, we would like to hear from you. Equally, we would like to hear from if you have not used the IALS Library before or not heard of IALS.

We value all responses, and will compile and publish a report on the findings. Your answers will help us to provide an improved service in the longer term. You can complete the survey anonymously, if you wish, but if you would like to be included in a prize draw to win **£50 in book tokens**, we need your name and contact details.

All responses will be treated in the strictest of confidence and anonymity of respondents will be preserved in the research report.

This short survey will take between five and ten minutes to complete. Please submit your completed questionnaire by 5th December 2008.

About you:

1. Please indicate the category which most closely describes what you do
(please tick one)

- a postgraduate student?
- a university teacher?
- a librarian / information officer?
- a postdoctoral researcher

- an administrator
- other.....

2. Your name and contact details

You can complete the survey anonymously if you wish, but please give your name and contact details if you want to be included in the **prize draw for £50 in book tokens** and if you want us to send you a report of the survey findings in 2009.

Name:

E-mail address:

Phone number:

- Please tick this box if you would like to receive e-mail updates from IALS Library in the future.

Communications and Current Awareness:

3. What, in your experience, are the effective ways to keep up-to-date with developments in legal research / legal information (for each, choose one of: never use, sometimes use, often use)

	1) Never	2) Sometimes	3) Often
Talking to Colleagues or Supervisor			
Talking to Librarians			
Reading Print Newsletters			
Reading Web Newsletters			
Viewing Websites			
E-Mail Discussion Lists, e.g. Jiscmail			
Institutional Repositories			
Other Web Methods, e.g. Blogs			
Other: please specify			

Access to Legal Information:

4 (a). Do you need legal materials in languages other than English, for your research?

- Yes If Yes, please continue with question 4(b) onwards
- No. If No, please proceed to question 5.

4. (b) If yes, please indicate the language(s) and/or jurisdictions you need:

.....

.....

4 (c) Please indicate also your experience of finding and accessing materials in languages other than English (tick one of three):

- easy to find and access
- sometimes difficult to find and access
- often difficult to find and access

5. In addition to your own university or college library, which other libraries do you use to help with your research?

Please list them here

.....

Your use of resource discovery tools:

6. Against each "resource discovery tool" in the list below, please enter the value which most closely reflects how often you use it:

Do you use it often, sometimes, or never?

	1) Never	2) Sometimes	3) Often
Library catalogues on the web			
Web gateways to freely available material, e.g. Intute			
Legal databases on the web (Lexis Nexis Butterworths, Westlaw UK, etc.)			
Other databases on the web (e.g. Web of Knowledge)			
Web search engines (Google etc.)			
Indexes to periodicals / journals			
Information about completed theses			
Information about theses in progress			
Social networks to support research, e.g. Facebook, YouTube			
Other: please specify			

7. Have you used the IALS website www.ials.sas.ac.uk before?

- Yes If yes, please go to question 8.
- No If no, please go to question 11.

8. Which of the following resources available via the IALS website do you use and how often do you use them? Please enter the value which most closely reflects how often you use it. (See <http://ials.sas.ac.uk/library/eservice/elibrary.htm> to refresh your memory)

	1) Never	2)	3) Often
--	----------	----	----------

		Sometimes	
BAILII – The British and Irish Legal Information Institute			
IALS Library Catalogue			
Intute Law Gateway			
FLAG – Foreign Law Guide			
FLARE – Foreign Law Research			
EAGLE-I gateway			
Current Legal Research Topics			
CALIM Current Awareness			

New content for the IALS website:

9. Please list any new content you would like to see added to the IALS website, which would assist you in your research:

10. Are there ways in which the IALS website could help you more in your research?

To conclude:

11. Finally, do you have any further comments on the issues raised in this survey?

Thank you very much for completing the survey. We will publish the results on the IALS website early in 2009, and will publicise the findings via e-mail and Jiscmail

If you have any queries regarding the completion of the survey, please contact Gerard Power (gerard.power@sas.ac.uk)

Please send completed form to Gerard Power, Access Librarian, Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, Charles Clore House, 17 Russell Square, London, WC1B 5DR. Forms can also be emailed to Gerard.Power@sas.ac.uk