



Institute of Advanced Legal Studies

School of Advanced Study, University of London

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Leading Legal Research Facilitation

Institute of Advanced Legal Studies
Charles Clore House
17 Russell Square
London, WC1B 5DR
United Kingdom

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Email: ials@sas.ac.uk
Telephone: +44 (0)20 7862 5800
Library Enquiries:
Telephone: +44 (0) 20 7862 5790

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The Institute of Advanced Legal Studies was established in 1947, as an academic institution attached to the University of London, but with a national role. It promotes and facilitates advanced study and research in law for the benefit of persons and institutions in the UK and abroad. The Institute's library has particular strengths in foreign, comparative and international law, reflected in the resources offered by the website. IALS, including its Global Law Library, is a leading national research facilitation institute, based in the School of Advanced Study, University of London. It serves as a national resource for legal research in the UK and welcomes researchers from around the world.

Since the advent of the web, IALS has been actively involved in innovative legal information delivery - developing and promoting public access to materials capable of supporting legal research on the Internet. Through the ongoing work of IALS Information Projects, the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, is committed to extending the reach of digital provision of legal information by delivering specialist legal research tools and niche web services - maximising access to key or hard to find information to facilitate legal research, public understanding, and promote justice and the rule of law.

The Institute of Advanced Legal Studies website, www.ials.sas.ac.uk, has been in operation and continuous development since 1995. Initiatives undertaken by IALS Information Projects include a range of established national services and new publicly available web resources. Each project is designed to best meet the needs of a distinct legal information purpose and address the requirements of legal researchers. The IALS website includes the Library catalogue and a portfolio of national online services for law and research tools such as:

- Current Legal Research Topics database <http://ials.sas.ac.uk/library/clrt/clrt.htm>
- Eagle-i Internet Portal for Law www.ials.sas.ac.uk/eagle-i.htm
- FLAG Foreign Law Guide <http://ials.sas.ac.uk/flag.htm>
- Flare Index to Treaties <http://ials.sas.ac.uk/library/flag/introtreaties.htm> ,
- IALS SKiLLS database <http://ials.sas.ac.uk/library/skills/skills.htm> ;
- A series of legal subject and research guides <http://ials.sas.ac.uk/library/guides/guides.htm>
- IALS Digital Collections <http://ials.sas.ac.uk/library/digital/digital.htm> – full text digital copies of rare and unusual historic works.

IALS works to further open access to legal information. The Institute is a leading contributor to SAS-space <http://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/view/divisions/ials.html>, the School of Advanced Study's institutional repository. We are currently completing a project to make the IALS journal *Amicus Curiae* freely available online via an Open Journal System interface linked to SAS-Space through a national project funded by JISC <http://sasojs.da.ulcc.ac.uk/index.php/test>.

Collaborative experience and contacts

The IALS has a well-developed network of colleagues and partners in legal information provision in the UK and overseas. The IALS is a recently elected member of the Free Access to Law Movement and has participated in the work of FALM for some years through assisting in the foundation of the British and Irish Legal Information Institute (BAILII) <http://www.bailii.org/>, and acting as the host institution for BAILII since its establishment in London. IALS is represented on the Board of Trustees of BAILII and is involved in the management, administration and promotion of the service. IALS is the London contact point for the Commonwealth Legal Information Institute (CommonLII) and hosts a CommonLII Fellowship. The IALS is chair of the Flare (Foreign Law Research) group, a collaboration of the major libraries collecting law in the UK <http://ials.sas.ac.uk/flare/flare.htm>, which includes the British Library, Bodleian Law Library - Oxford, IALS Global Law Library, Squire Law Library - Cambridge and School of Oriental and African Studies Library.

IALS has input ideas and content to several UK and international legal information initiatives, including work with the ILRT at the University of Bristol on interactive user guidance and online training resources. In addition, the Institute has experience of successful EC funded projects – such as our Jean Monnet Course on Legislating for EU Membership and Accession. IALS, through the School of Advanced Study (SAS) and/or its Flare group partners, is eligible to apply for JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee of the Higher Education Funding Council for England) project funding as opportunities arise. Additionally SAS has some modest digital development funds.

Realising EuroLII

IALS is keen to undertake an effective and appropriate role in helping to take the project forward and make the EuroLII service a reality. IALS has large legal research collections from the EU and from member states; potential for digitisation projects; and existing research skills training in EU law. If the core project funds allow, IALS could provide a potential host or mirror site for the evolving EuroLII service, building on its considerable relevant experience. IALS can assist in gathering primary materials and participation in content building and delivery. In addition, IALS is well-placed to lead a possible strand of development and project bid in the area of value added user guidance – drawing on expertise in legal education and public information. The complexity of EU law and member state laws and a lack of public familiarity with relevant materials may benefit from a series of interactive explanatory notes and guidance tutorials to engage and inform EuroLII users – setting the context of the legal systems and for the application of materials contained in EuroLII. IALS has proven relevant experience in this area. We look forward to exploring and discussing all the possibilities raised by this important initiative.



Steven Whittle, BA, MA is the Information Systems Manager at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, School of Advanced Study, University of London. He is web editor for the IALS web site (www.ials.sas.ac.uk/) and helped to develop a number of national online services for law on the IALS site including Eagle-i Internet Portal for Law, FLAG - the Foreign Law Guide, Flare Index to Treaties and IALS SKILLS (Source + know-how in Legal Literacy Skills) web database.

He has more than 28 years experience working with UK, EU, foreign, comparative and international legal materials in the UK Higher Education environment and has been actively involved in the planning and introduction of automated systems and services.

He has also been project manager for IALS participation in the UK's Intute service and the joint System Manager of the University of London Research Library Services' Innovative Millennium Library management system. He has written for a number of professional journals. He authored the 2009 edition and 2011 update of the Internet for Law online interactive tutorial for the UK's Virtual Training Suite (<http://www.vts.intute.ac.uk/tutorial/law>). In 2010 he received the Wallace Broom Award from the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians (BIALL). Email: steven.whittle@sas.ac.uk