

USING INFOGRAPHICS TO REPORT RESEARCH RESULTS

LOOK AT
WHAT'S HAPPENING
WITH IT ROLES AT
LAW SCHOOL LIBRARIES

BY AYYOUB AJMI

On the following spread, you'll see how we displayed our study in an infographic to quickly report the methodology and results, showing that responsibility for law library IT functions continues to shift from the library to the campus IT department—but the library is not being left out.

Everything I have to report to you is contained in the accompanying infographic. As with every picture, it's worth at least a thousand words. But for those who would like to see the narrative in a traditional scholarly format, I've included the following 1,500 words as well.

Background

In 2015, our newly designed website was hacked. We at the law library (University of Missouri–Kansas City School of Law; UMKC School of Law) were subject to a URL injection, which interfered with our search engine presence (see *Computers in Libraries*, June 2015). Fortunately, the hack was more of a nuisance than anything else. Nevertheless, it made us aware of our vulnerability, which raised the question of whether we, in the library, were still capable of effectively managing our growing and fast-changing technological infrastructure. One of the reasons we got hacked was the lack of collaboration between our law library and the campus IT team in terms of making sure our servers and the CMS were meeting the campus security standards.

After stopping the security breach, we had time to reflect on the issue from a different perspective. The UMKC School of Law, similar to many other law schools in the U.S., operates as a microcosm of the university. We run our own admission department, alumni relations, career services, library services, and—up until recently—our own IT services. When the need to build a new website for the law school arose, it seemed normal for the library and the communication department to take ownership of the project. However, in the aftermath of the hack, we were not sure if this model would be sustainable.

At the same time, our law school started the process of moving our IT personnel to the main campus as part of a new shared services agreement, a systemwide initiative to limit expenses and eliminate redundant administrative tasks. The change meant that our tech support staffers, who had been reporting to the law library's associate director (who also serves as the law school's IT director), would now report to campus IT. Although they are still located in and assigned to the law school, the overall interaction and relationship with campus IT was subject to a major shake-up.

2015 IT STAFFING & SERVICES SURVEY

U.S. Law Schools' annual survey about information technology management and shared services.

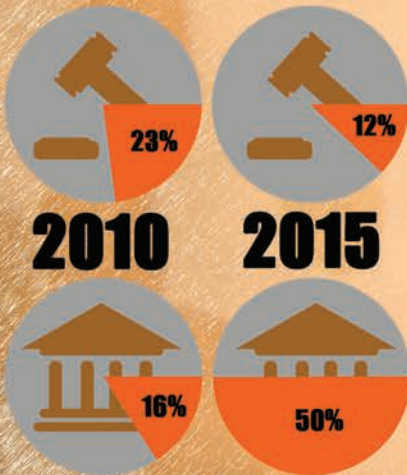
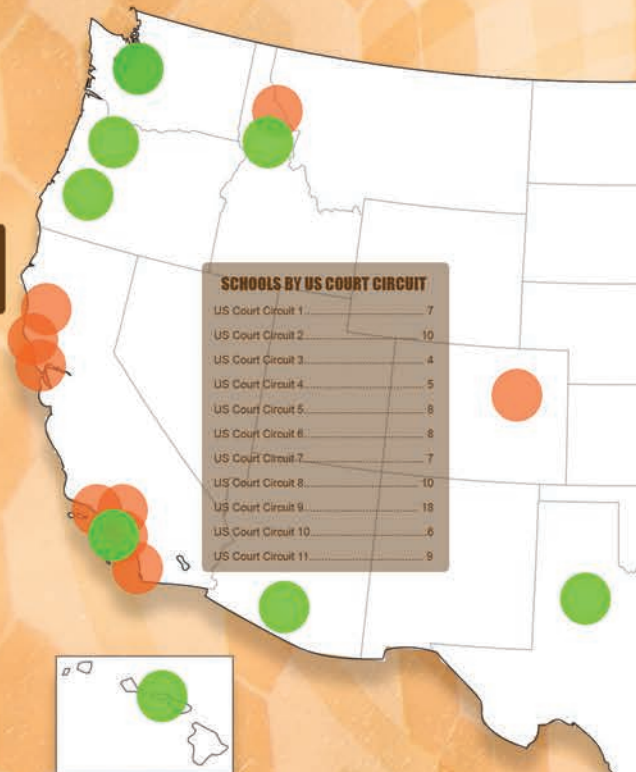
ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS 2015 | DESKTOP COMPUTING | END-USER TRAINING | ENTERPRISE INFRASTRUCTURE PORTALS-EMAIL-REMOTE STORAGE-INTRANET-E-COMMERCE SOLUTIONS | **INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY** CLASSROOM EQUIPMENT - COURSE MANAGEMENT - LECTURE CAPTURE | **IT ADMINISTRATION AND PLANNING** | **IT SECURITY** | **LIBRARY SYSTEMS** | **MULTIMEDIA/AUDIOVISUAL SERVICES** PHOTOGRAPHY-VIDEO-LIVE STREAMING-VIDEO CONFERENCING | **NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES** | **PHOTOCOPIER SERVICES** | **PRINT SERVICES** | **TELEPHONE SERVICES** | **WEB SERVICES** PROGRAMMING-CONTENT DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT-WEB SERVER HOSTING/SUPPORT-SOCIAL MEDIA

1 DOMAINS AND IT FUNCTIONS

In 2015, new specializations have been added to the survey to reflect the technological changes. The IT domains and functions are based on Educare Core Data Services.

2 SCHOOLS DISTRIBUTION

In 2015, 102 law schools from all US Court Circuits participated in the survey. 62 from private schools and 42 from public schools.



3 IT RESPONSIBILITY TREND

In 2015, 12% of law libraries and/or law schools have some responsibility in all IT functions compared to 23% in 2010. University or third-party responsibility in all IT functions increased from 16% in 2010 to 50% in 2015.

The IT Staffing and Services Survey was originally created by Ann E. Puckett, former professor and director of the University of Georgia School of Law Alexander Campbell King Law Library. It was last updated by Professor Carol Watson in 2010. The survey results were published by Professor Watson and Professor Larry Reyes in Law Library Journal, 103.3 pp.441-457.

2016 SURVEY
LAW.UMKC.EDU/ITSURVEY



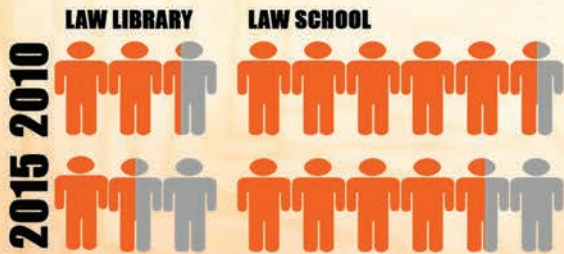
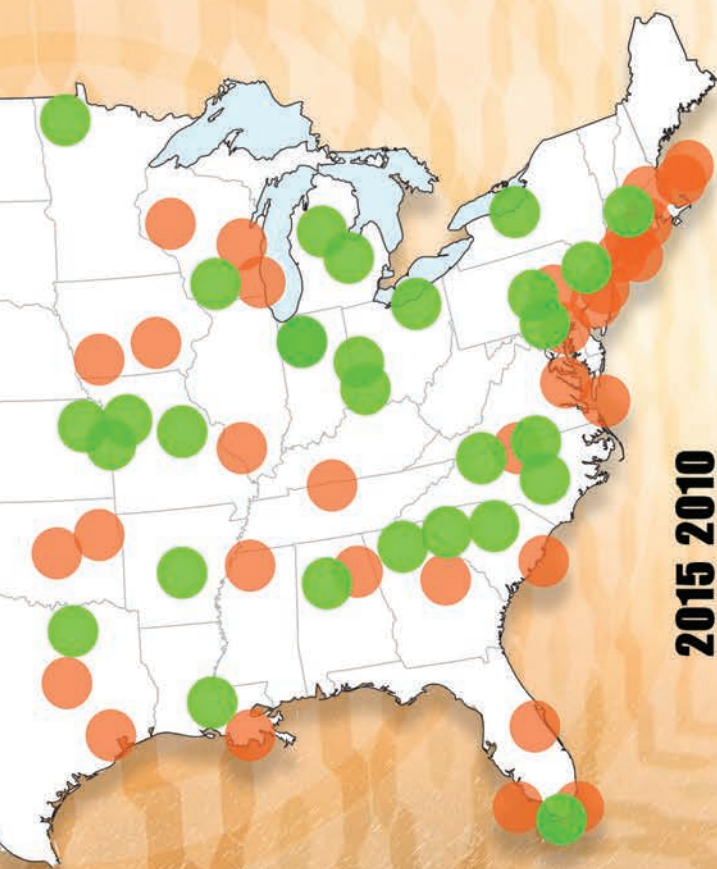
4 DOMAINS OWNERSHIP

In 2015, universities are in charge of maintaining the technology platforms and infrastructures while law libraries are responsible for content and service oriented functions.



5 SHARED SERVICES

In 2015, 48% of law schools are in a shared services agreement with the university IT department. 4% are considering entering an agreement, 12% are open to the possibility of an agreement and 32% are not considering it.



6 FTE SUPPORT

In 2015, the average number of FTEs supporting law libraries and law schools dropped from 2.14 in 2010 to 1.5 and 5.49 to 4.65 respectively.



7 WEB SERVICES

In 2015, law libraries and law schools are largely responsible for their web services. Fifty-three percent of respondent are in charge of web and applications programming, 65% are responsible for content design and management, 39% are responsible for web hosting and support, and 75% are in charge of their social media content.

Lit Search

In an attempt to understand and assess the organization of our IT infrastructure, we started looking at how other libraries manage their IT services and the level of their involvement in the overall structure. The search led us to the law school IT staffing and services survey, which was created by E. Ann Puckett, former director of the University of Georgia School of Law's Alexander Campbell King Law Library, from which she gathered data about full-time employees assigned to law libraries and law schools and their responsibilities on administering various IT-related tasks and services. The survey results show the trends in IT administration from the perspective of law libraries over the years.

Carol A. Watson, current director of the Alexander Campbell King Law Library, updated the survey with specific functions and IT domains based on

EDUCAUSE's "Core Data Services" (2015). The survey asked participants about the administration of 15 different domains and services. The results were published in the law library's journal in 2011 and showed a growing trend of law schools establishing separate information technology departments within the law school. The authors also pointed to the fact that law librarians have historically been early adopters of technology, but as it became more pervasive among other departments, its management structure was adjusted to answer to the particular needs and strategic mission of each institution (Watson and Reeves, 2011).

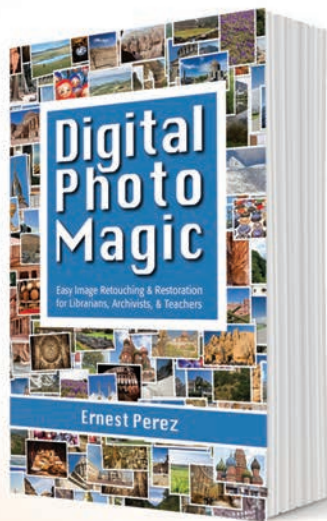
These initial findings answered some of our questions regarding the evolving role of librarians in support of highly specialized information systems within law schools. But we were still looking at their relationship with the main campus,

THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVES IN LIBRARIES IS A CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL COLLABORATION AND OPEN COMMUNICATION BETWEEN LIBRARIANS AND IT PROFESSIONALS.



especially in the situation of a service agreement. With the permission of the authors, we decided to administer the

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same “Law School IT Staffing and Services” survey to further analyze the trends of law school IT management.

Methodology

In the new survey, we asked about more services, since many of them have changed dramatically in recent years. They are more likely to be performed by several entities. Item 1 (in the infographic) shows the full list of domains and services included in the survey.

Another change we made to the survey in 2015 was the addition of “university” and “vendors” as service providers. In 2010, the only options available were “law library,” “law school,” or “other.” We noted that in some services, the responses recorded for “other” were notably high or exceeded those recorded for “law library” and “law school.” Therefore, it was necessary to add more options in order to have a better understanding of who provides those services.

The survey was distributed from July 2015 until mid-October 2015 through the academic law library directors’ listserv as well as the Mid-America Law Library Association’s listserv. In prior years, the survey had a participation of around 150 schools. However, in 2015, we only received responses from 102 law libraries. Nevertheless, our poll is representative and includes libraries from all geographical regions and U.S. court circuits (see item 2 in the infographic).

Survey Results

By analyzing the survey results from 2010, we discovered some discrepancies regarding the administration of IT functions. When asked directly, participants tended to exaggerate the role of law schools in the administration of all IT functions. This conflicted with responses regarding the administration of specific functions. It is perhaps due to the different interpretation of the “administration” versus “performance” among participants.

Therefore, we decided to analyze this question by compiling the answers to the specific IT functions to draw a conclusion. In 2010, 35 out of 148 respondents answered that the library and/or the law school has some responsibility in all IT

functions. In 2015, only 12 out of 102 participants had such involvement (item 3). At the same time, the overall third-party (identified as “other” in 2010 and “university,” “vendor,” or “other” in 2015) involvement in IT functions jumped from 16% in 2010 to 50% in 2015 (item 3).

While the university involvement in the administration of all IT services has increased, it’s important to note that law libraries are still heavily involved in training, instruction, and service-related tasks; the university supports the overall infrastructure and core elements of technology infrastructures such as networks and communication systems, security, and enterprise infrastructure (item 4).

In 2010, the trend was that law libraries were delegating responsibility of IT functions to separate entities within law schools (Watson and Reeves, 2011). In 2015, the trend continued to evolve by delegating more IT responsibilities to the main university. This trend also was evident in the responses to the new question, introduced in 2015, regarding shared services. In 2015, 48% of law schools were in a shared services agreement with the university IT department. Four percent were considering entering an agreement; 12% were open to the possibility of an agreement; and 32% were not considering it (item 5).

The trend registered in 2015 seems to also have influenced the number of full-time employees (FTEs) devoted to IT support in law libraries and in law schools. In 2015, the average number of FTEs supporting law libraries dropped to 1.5 compared to 2.14 in 2010. And for those supporting law schools, it dropped from 5.49 in 2010 to 4.65 in 2015 (item 6).

Conclusions

The “2015 Law School IT Staffing and Services” survey results clearly reflect a continuation of the trend registered in 2010: the delegation of core IT functions—and, in some cases, all IT functions—from the law library to the law school and now from the law school to the main campus. The trend is also accompanied by a constant involvement of libraries in functions and domains directly related to student success and engagement

(such as end-user training, instructional technology, photocopier services, web services, and library systems, which remains the only domain in which the majority of libraries are still managing).

And regarding our first question, whether the library is still capable of effectively managing its web services infrastructures, the answer is: absolutely. The survey results show that when it comes to web services—especially on the content side—most libraries are largely in control (item 7). According to Watson and Reeves (2011), the conflict between library and technology staffs arises from the division of labor among them. However, one cannot exist without the other.

While librarians are proficient and prefer dealing with content organization and its dissemination with close interaction with their users, IT professionals tend to lean toward systems management and maintenance (Watson and Reeves, 2011). The key to successful implementation of technology initiatives in libraries is a cross-departmental collaboration and open communication between librarians and IT professionals. Shared services bring this reality closer by providing access to specialized personnel whom most law libraries and law schools wouldn’t have access to otherwise. 🏛️

References

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- Watson, Carol A. and Reeves, Larry. (2011). “Technology Management Trends in Law Schools.” *Articles, Chapters and Online Publications*. Paper 21. Retrieved from digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/law_lib_artchop/21.

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