AALL Committee Activities and Action Plan

Name: Anne Burnett  
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Committee Name: Digital Access to Legal Information Committee

Committee Charge: The Committee shall use principles of the law library profession to identify web site characteristics and citation rules that represent best practices, and to encourage all branches of government to apply these principles in the creation and maintenance of electronic legal information. These principles include permanent public access, authenticity, citizen usability, uniformity of citation consistent with AALL policy, comprehensiveness and suitability for legal research, and they reflect the special concerns and unique competencies of law librarians.

The Committee will monitor and promote judicial, legislative and executive branch web sites at all levels of government to apply best practices in the creation and maintenance of electronic legal information. The committee will develop and maintain a web-based framework to categorize the various principles being successfully addressed by those sites.

In addition, the Committee shall monitor and promote citation initiatives and activities undertaken by the judiciary, the bar, the ABA, the Bluebook editors and other groups. The Committee will also serve as a resource for jurisdictions and other groups considering citation issues.

The Committee shall be responsible for advising the Association and its membership about issues relating to electronic legal information access and citation, and may be called upon to collaborate with other committees, including the Government Relations Committee.

Major Activities for 2013-2014: The major activities of the Digital Access to Legal Information Committee involve advocating for no-fee, permanent public access to official and authentic online legal information in the public domain. The work of the committee strongly supports the strategic directions of Education and Advocacy.

General Activities

• Participated in Public Policy Program at 2014 AALL Annual Meeting
• Participated in the Advocacy Workshop at 2014 AALL Annual Meeting Proposed program on advocacy for SEAALL chapter meeting in 2014 (accepted)
• Participated, via AALL Board liaison Ken Hirsh, in the formation of the OASIS Legal Citation Markup (LegalCiteM) Committee and received regular updates from Ken
• Worked with Government Relations Office and AALL Board liaison to provide commentary to the D.C. Council regarding the UELMA prototype
• The Chair, along with Government Relations Director Emily Feltren served as ex officio members of the Digital Library Initiatives Special Committee.
• Conducted a review of the committee’s materials on AALLNET

Universal Citation

• Worked with Hein to complete publication of 3rd Edition of the AALL Universal Citation Guide

Uniform Electronic Legal Material Act

• Drafted Best Practices for implementing authentication of official state documents as required by UELMA for approval by the Executive Board
• Proposed program on UELMA authentication for the 2014 AALL Annual Meeting
• Proposed program on global authentication efforts for 2014 Annual Meeting
• Submitted budget request to the AALL Board to obtain funding for attendance and possible presentation on UELMA and authentication at a National Center for State Courts conference. Reached out to AALL NCSC representative.

National Inventory of Legal Materials and Preservation

• Implemented a method of updating the summary of key findings for each state in the National Inventory of Legal Materials (http://community.aallnet.org/DigitalAccessToLegalInformationCommittee/StateOnlineLegalInformation)
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• Published articles and blog posts on the summary of key findings in the National Inventory of Legal Materials in various publications aimed at audiences outside law librarianship, including the Georgia Library Quarterly and Louisiana Libraries.

Proposed Activities for 2014-2015:

• Promote Best Practices for implementing authentication of official legal documents as required by UELMA
• Verify and update key contacts in each state as part of ongoing project to update and promote the summary of key findings for each state in the National Inventory of Legal Materials
• Provide assistance and advocacy in enacting UELMA in state legislatures
• Plan and provide programming on authentication, preservation, universal citation, and public policy for the AALL 2015 Annual Meeting
• Publicize 3rd Edition of AALL Universal Citation Guide
• Propose programs at chapter level to educate and advocate for UELMA, adoption of universal citation, and/or copyright reform to ensure unrestricted public access to legal materials.
• Provide input on universal citation to the editors of new edition of Bluebook.