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BEGINNERS The Supreme Court

With the nation's eyes focused on Roberts, Miers and the Supreme Court, this month's column will be devoted to some of the best sources for Supreme Court news and actions.

First, of course, is the Court's own website at <http://www.supremecourtus.gov/> with links to the docket, oral arguments, merits briefs, court rules, case handling guides, opinions, orders and journal.

Another excellent resource is the LII's (Legal Information Institute) Supreme Court Collection at <http://straylight.law.cornell.edu/supct/index.html> which is sponsored by the Cornell University Law School. The LII's plus is its extensive archives of decisions for researchers.

One Supreme Court resource which is still in beta is the U.S. Supreme Court Center at <http://www.justia.us/>. It is a joint venture by Justia, Oyez, and US Court Forms. It has tremendous potential as a resource for Supreme Court researchers. [1] Oyez <http://www.oyez.org/oyez/frontpage> should not be overlooked as it is also a very good source of information on the Supremes.

The ScotusBlog, <http://www.scotusblog.com/movabletype/> How Appealing, <http://legalaffairs.org/howappealing/> and The Volokh Conspiracy, <http://www.volokh.com/> are all blogs that keep up on the news and commentary about the Supremes.

For a more philosophical approach to the Court try - "The Supreme Court of the United States: Highest Court in the Land."

> This online journal from April 2005 presents 'a collection of essays... that explain how the Court functions ... [with] contributions by a number of the nation's premier legal scholars.' Topics include a 'historical perspective on the nomination, confirmation, and appointment of justices' and summaries of landmark decisions. Also includes a bibliography and links to related sites." [2]

From the U.S. Department of State. URL: <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itdhr/0405/ijde/ijde0405.htm>.

INTERMEDIATE PowerPoint Alternatives

Just for fun, take a look at the Gettysburg Address in PowerPoint format.

Cindy Chick of LawLibTech fame used her blog <http://www.lawlibtech.com> to present two alternatives to using PowerPoint presentations - HTML configured websites and blogs.

The first alternative is only viable for those of you who are comfortable with HTML, which is one of it's drawbacks. Plus, even for the experienced user, generating HTML web pages is more time consuming than creating a PowerPoint presentation. Also, it can be somewhat difficult to incorporate screenshots and/or downloaded web pages to your presentation. You also need a live, *reliable* Internet connection.

But, that said, the advantages of using HTML are many:

- It is a simple matter to distribute presentation materials, complete with live links for participant viewing after the session.
- The web pages supplement or replace handouts. You don't have to mess with paper or worry about how many copies to bring.
- You can go back in after the presentation and add information on questions that came up during the session or add new resources.
- You can tweak to your heart's content even up to the last minute.
- You can easily save your screen-shots to PowerPoint as a backup to allay your worries of Internet problems. [3]

Another alternative to PowerPoint presentations is the use of blogs, which will be discussed in next month's column.

P.S. Just for fun, take a look at the Gettysburg Address in PowerPoint format <http://www.norvig.com/Gettysburg/>. This garish presentation by Peter Norvig, a computer scientist with a sense of humor, is replete with meaningless graphs, mind-numbing bullet points, and a list of "Key Objectives."

There are also links to The Making of the Presentation <http://www.norvig.com/Gettysburg/making.html> and a related essay <http://www.norvig.com/lancet.html>. [4]

ADVANCED Podcasting—Just Do It

What to do, and how to do it!

Over 22 million adults in the US own iPods or MP3 players and 29% of them download podcasts. [5]

To make your own podcasts, you will need to:

1. Plug a USB headset with earphones and microphone into your computer.
2. Install the free Audacity MP3 <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/> recorder for Windows, Mac or Linux.
3. Make a recording, then save it as an MP3 file.
4. Upload the MP3 file to your website or blog.
5. And if you don't already have one, follow the instructions at ipodder.org <http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/tech/directory/5/howtosarticles> to create an RSS feed on your site. [6]

Most of the above steps are pretty self-explanatory, except number three - that needs a little, well, maybe a lot more explanation! First of all podcasts are totally free-form. As the following paragraph shows, anything goes:

> Everything counts as content: from lovingly recorded sneezes to serious consumer reports. Shows are broadcast daily, weekly, and at random; some last for three minutes and others, three hours. "I have iPodder set to download random podcasts, and one day I got a 10-minute show of somebody just screaming," Torrone says. "It was great." [7]

The following is a short set of guidelines for making a 10 minute podcast. Keep in mind that there are NO rules in podcasting. It is all free-form. This is just to help you get your feet wet. Feel free to change and adapt to your heart's content!

- First 10 seconds - date/promo/tease/banter/ad (practice this part over and over so there are no "um's" or "ah's" here!!!) Try "Hello, my name is ___, and welcome to ___, the show about ___ and ___."
- 20 seconds - theme music/introduction (consistency makes your audience feel at home)
- 1 minute - preview (tell them what you're going to tell them)
- 30 seconds - ad/promo (if you have an advertiser or sponsor this is their time)
- 5 minutes - small stories/top story
- 30 seconds - identify (take a break, you deserve one!) identify who you are, what the show is, give e-mail and phone numbers and breathe a little
- 2 minutes - feedback/secondary stories (comments from listeners, promo for future shows, etc.)
- 15 seconds - thank sponsor (if you have one, DO IT)
- 15 seconds - outro (whether by voice or theme song, consistently close each show. [8]

FOOTNOTES

[1] Mighell, Tom, "Supreme Court Resource in Beta." Inter Alia. 4 October 2005. pMachine Powered. 11 October 2005. <http://www.inter-alia.net/comments.php?id=P3059_0_1_0>.

[2] Brandt, Maria. "The Supreme Court of the United States: Highest Court in the Land." Librarians' Internet Index. 4 October 2005. Librarians' Internet Index, LII. 12 October 2005. <http://lii.org/cs/lii/view/item/19248>.

[3] Chick, Cindy L. "PowerPoint Alternatives - From Browsers to Blogs, Part I." LawLibTech. 11 September 2005. Movable Type 3.17. 5 October 2005. <http://www.lawlibtech.com/archives/000512.html>.

[4] "The Gettysburg PowerPoint Presentation 11/19/1863." Librarians' Internet Index. 8 July 2004. Librarians' Internet Index, LII. 12 October 2005. <http://lii.org/pub/htdocs/search?action=show;search=gettysburg%20address%20%2B%20PowerPoint;searchtype=keywords>.

[5] Price, Gary. "Blogcasting - Survey." The ResourceShelf. 3 April 2005. Gary Price Library & Internet Research Consulting. 13 October 2005. <http://www.resourceshelf.com/2005/04/pew-releases-data-about-podcasting.html>.

[6] Newitz, Annalee. "Adam Curry Wants to Make You an iPod Radio Star: Podcasting at a Glance." Wired Magazine. March 2005. The Condé Nast Publications Inc. 13 October 2005. <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/13.03/curry.html?pg=3>.

[7] Newitz, Annalee. "Adam Curry Wants to Make You an iPod Radio Star." Wired Magazine. March 2005. The Condé Nast Publications Inc. 13 October 2005. <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/13.03/curry.html?pg=2&topic=curry&topic_set=>

[8] Rice, Eric. "How to Build a 10 Minute Podcast." EMZ. 4 June 2005. Technorati. 17 October 2005. <http://blog.ericrice.com/blog/_archives/2005/6/4/909411.html>.

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