



LAW PRACTICE MANAGEMENT SECTION

MARKETING • MANAGEMENT • TECHNOLOGY • FINANCE



**BEST PRACTICE
GUIDELINES
FOR LEGAL
INFORMATION WEB
SITE PROVIDERS**



Best Practice Guidelines

- ◆ **Adoption:** Guidelines were adopted by the ABA House of Delegates in February 2003
- ◆ **Purpose:** To provide users with varying levels of knowledge, sufficient information to make assessments about the accuracy and quality of the content published
- ◆ **Disclaimer:** Compliance with the guidelines does not constitute approval or certification by the ABA



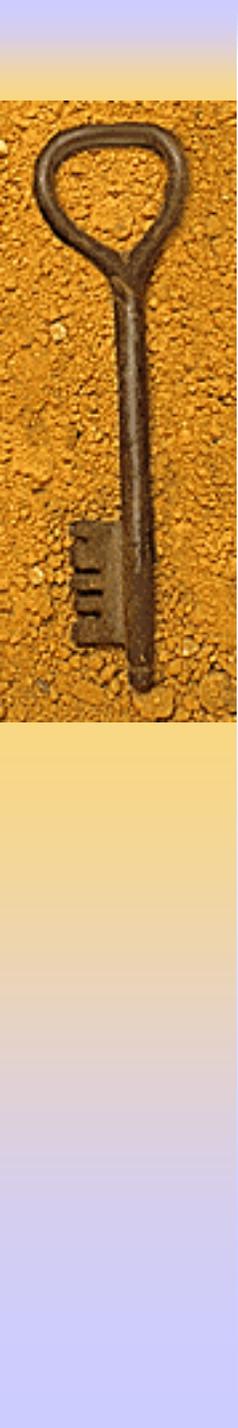
Best Practice Guidelines

1. Contact information
2. Dating of Material
3. Jurisdiction of content
4. Limits of legal information
5. Links to legal resources
6. Citation to case law or legislation
7. Referrals on obtaining legal advice
8. Permission for using content
9. Terms and conditions of website
10. Policies on privacy and security



1. Contact Information

- ◆ **Purpose:** To provide full and accurate info on the identity and contact details of the provider
- ◆ **Good:** Most legal sites have the name, address and phone number on each page of the site
- ◆ **Bad:** Some sites will have only contact information on the first page, not all pages



2. Dating of Materials

- ◆ **Purpose:** To provide dates when substantive content on the site was prepared or reviewed
- ◆ **Good:** Some sites provide substantive info and have dates for legislation or for web pages
- ◆ **Bad:** Few sites have actual substantive info and many of these sites do not date materials



3. Jurisdiction of Content

- ◆ **Purpose:** To provide users information about where the law applies or if it is just general law
- ◆ **Good:** Some sites identify jurisdiction of the content including which states forms apply to
- ◆ **Bad:** Many sites either do not provide legal content or fail to identify where the law applies



4. Limits of Legal Information

- ◆ **Purpose:** Sites that provide legal information should give notice that info is not legal advice
- ◆ **Good:** Majority of sites provide users notice of the limits, it is often tied to the terms of use
- ◆ **Bad:** Some sites only have disclaimer on the first page or make it difficult to locate limits



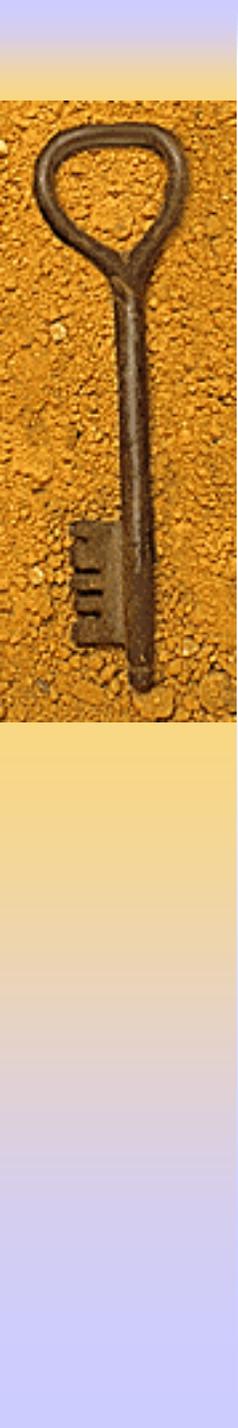
5. Links to Legal Resources

- ◆ **Purpose:** To provide links to legal resources that will assist users with their problems
- ◆ **Good:** Many provide links to relevant sources, better sites also have descriptions for the links
- ◆ **Bad:** Some sites provide no links, make links difficult to find or provide irrelevant links



6. Legal Citations

- ◆ **Purpose:** To provide users links to relevant case law and legislation
- ◆ **Good:** Few legal sites provide links to case law, some will have citations for legislation
- ◆ **Bad:** Majority of sites do not provide any links even if the information is available online



7. Referrals for Legal Advice

- ◆ **Purpose:** To provide users information on how and where to obtain legal advice or further info
- ◆ **Good:** Since many sites are law firms there is a built in referral, some have online forms to accept questions, others provide lawyer links
- ◆ **Bad:** Some sites do not have referrals of any kind and provide no further legal information



8. Permission to Use Content

- ◆ **Purpose:** To show users that providers have permission to use the content on their site
- ◆ **Good:** Most sites provide their own info, some identify the source of the content on each page
- ◆ **Bad:** A few sites either do not provide legal content or fail to identify the source of content



9. Terms and Conditions

- ◆ **Purpose:** To provide users information about the provider's terms of service for website use
- ◆ **Good:** Most sites identify the terms of service or have a link to the appropriate page
- ◆ **Bad:** Some sites either have no terms page or make it difficult to locate the terms page



10. Privacy and Security

- ◆ **Purpose:** To provide users information about the provider's privacy and security policies
- ◆ **Good:** A few sites clearly identify their policies, many do not collect personal info
- ◆ **Bad:** Most sites do not have policies, others make it difficult to locate the appropriate page



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