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## **BEGINNERS**

## **SearchSystems.net**

**The email address,  
info@starklaw  
library.org really  
works! TRY IT!!**

Last month we mentioned SearchSystems.net <<http://www.searchsystems.net/index.php>> as an excellent source to check the credentials and background of potential expert witnesses. But there will be a lot of times that you will find Search Systems useful. We rarely highlight commercial sites, but this one is worth the cost if you need background information on anyone! Dating back to 1997, it now consists of over 43,076 searchable public record databases.<sup>1</sup>

Let's begin with the cost then detail what Search Systems has to offer. There are two ways to pay for their services, by becoming a pay-as-you-go Premium member, with limited databases, or purchasing their DirectPass. The Premium members can search criminal records, bankruptcies, judgments, and tax liens and pay \$9 per statewide search, \$15 per region, or \$29 to search of all of their criminal record databases nationwide."<sup>2</sup> The cost of a DirectPass is \$48.50 per year or \$4.95 a month plus \$7 for each statewide search and \$19 for each nationwide search of the Premium data bases for criminal records and tax liens<sup>3</sup>

Their criminal records data base includes Stark County Common Pleas Court felony records since 1987 and Massillon Municipal Court misdemeanor records since 1987, both are updated monthly. The Bankruptcy, Judgment, and Tax Lien data of Ohio includes all county information except Belmont, Harrison, Jefferson, and Monroe counties. These databases are updated every two weeks.

With DirectPass membership you can access all public records in the following areas: Adoptions, Associations/Directories, Attorneys, Aviation, Banking, Bankruptcies/Judgments/Liens, Birth/ Death/ Marriage, Campaign Contributions, Census, Cities/Counties, Coast Guard, Companies/ Corporations, Copyright/Trademark/Patents, Courts, Criminal Records, Emergency Incidents, Employment,

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## BEGINNER SearchSystems.net (Continued)

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Environmental, Export Control, FCC, FDA, Foreclosures/Properties, General/ Miscellaneous, Health / Medical, Immigration, IRS, Legal, Military, Missing, Most Wanted, Movies, OSHA, Photographs, Political, Postal/Zip, Recalls, Schools/Colleges, Securities, and Vehicles in the USA, or in over 50 foreign nations.

*SearchSystems* is an “up-to-date and reliable directory of public records and a good resource for background checks and criminal records.”<sup>4</sup>

For a free, less comprehensive database, visit Criminal-Searches.com at <<http://criminalsearches.com/>>.

## INTERMEDIATE Zotero

**Zotero is a free, easy-to-use Firefox extension built by researchers, for researchers, which you can use to collect, manage, and cite your research sources while you are online.**

If you are looking for an alternative to *NetSnippets*, the “nifty software tool for saving and organizing content from web pages, which is no longer being supported,”<sup>5</sup> and you are a Firefox user, may I suggest *Zotero*

*Zotero* <<http://www.zotero.org/>> is a free, easy-to-use Firefox extension built by researchers, for researchers, which you can use to collect, manage, and cite your research sources while you are online.

*Zotero* allows you to collect sources (PDFs, files, images, links, and whole web pages) and organizes them into folders in a manner very similar to *iTunes*. Once captured into your folders, you can add as many notes and attachments as you need. You can even put multiple copies of a source into different folders for better organization. These collections can then be filtered by tags, (which are captured from metadata or added manually) or by bibliographic fields. You can also do full-text searches on your collections.

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# zotero

## INTERMEDIATE Zotero (Continued)

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For a brief overview of *Zotero*, watch their demo at <<http://www.zotero.org/documentation/screencasts/intro>> or take their tour at <[http://www.zotero.org/videos/tour/zotero\\_tour.htm](http://www.zotero.org/videos/tour/zotero_tour.htm)>

If you are not a Firefox user, other alternatives to *NetSnippets* include:

- *EasyWebAction* <<http://www.easywebaction.com/en/>>
- *Endnote* <<http://www.endnote.com/>>
- *Evernote* <<http://evernote.com/>>
- *FastStoneEasyWebAction* <<http://www.faststone.org/index.htm>>
- *Furl.net* <<http://www.furl.net/>>
- *Onfolio* <<http://www.onfolio.com/>>
- *Surfulator* <<http://www.surfulater.com/>><sup>6</sup>

***Searchme* is great for us visually oriented researchers!**

## ADVANCED Searchme.com

*Searchme.com* <<http://www.searchme.com/>> is “an engine that displays results not in the usual text-list format (that's *so Google*), but as a slick image gallery of actual Web pages you can flip through”<sup>7</sup> much like a large deck of cards. You can clearly see if the pages offered are on target and the search terms are circled to further help your winnowing. It is great for us visually oriented researchers!

On first arriving at the main page, you will notice the lack of a **search button** on a search engine! This is one of its pluses. As soon as you start to type a search term, *Searchme* starts analyzing your query and suggesting categories of results you may be interested in – hover over the icon and the topic appears. Selecting a category shows clear pictures of web page results.<sup>8</sup> If none of the categories strikes your interest you will then be offered a “search all” button. If you type in the search term “lawyers,” you get the following categories – some relevant, some not:

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## ADVANCED Searchme.com (Continued)

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- Divorce
- Lawyers & Law Firms
- Movies
- Business News
- European Union
- Labor
- Law & Crime News

*Searchme's* default setting is a black background which makes reading some of the text very difficult, for example finding the preferences button in the upper right hand corner. But after you find the preferences button, you have the option to change from night (black screen) to day (light blue screen), filter out adult material, open links in current or new windows or turn on video.

Another great feature of *Searchme* is its “Stacks” feature. Located in the upper right hand corner of the screen, stacks is like a visual “favorites” shortcut.

If you see a web page you want to save and share with others, simply drag it to the “Stacks” link in the upper right corner of the search results page. (And notice the cool animation of the page as you pick it up and drag it over to the stack.) You can build multiple stacks; each has its own name and settings.<sup>9</sup>

For more information on stacks, read their helpful stacks page <<http://www.searchme.com/stacks/>> and be sure to watch the video at the bottom of the page. You can save or email any stack, custom-made or a results stack by simply hitting a button.

## FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> “The SearchSystems.net Public Records Directory.” SearchSystems.net. 2008. Pacific Information Resources, Inc. 21 August 2008. <<http://www.Searchsystems.net/index.php>>.
- <sup>2</sup> & <sup>3</sup> “Criminal Records, Bankruptcies, Judgments, and Tax Liens.” Search Systems Premium. 2006. Pacific Information Resources, Inc. 29 July 2008. <<https://premium.searchsystems.net/>>.
- <sup>4</sup> “SearchSystems.net.” Simple Spark. 2008. Simple Spark Inc. 4 August 2008. <<http://simplespark.com/catalog/searchsystems/>>.
- <sup>5</sup> & <sup>6</sup> Bates, Mary Ellen, “NetSnippets Alternatives.” Librarian of Fortune. 29 July 2008. 4 August 2008. <[http://maryellenbates.typepad.com/librarian\\_of\\_fortune/2008/07/netsnippets-alt.html](http://maryellenbates.typepad.com/librarian_of_fortune/2008/07/netsnippets-alt.html)>.
- <sup>7</sup> “50 Best Websites 2008: Searchme.” Time. 7 August 2008. Time Inc. 7 August 2008. <[http://www.time.com/time/specials/2007/article/0,28804,1809858\\_1809955\\_1811466,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/specials/2007/article/0,28804,1809858_1809955_1811466,00.html)>
- <sup>8</sup> “Searchme, Inc.” Searchme: About. 2008. Searchme, Inc. 19 August 2008. <<http://www.searchme.com/about/>>.
- <sup>9</sup> Bates, Mary Ellen. “July 2008 Info Tip: Searchme.com.” Bates Information Services. July 2008. Bates Information Services, Inc. 20 August 2008. <<http://www.batesinfo.com/july-2008-infotip.html>>.

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