



The Must-Have *Legal Communications & Rhetoric: JALWD*

In this column, I often cite to law review articles, blogs, books, or other sources that provide helpful illustrations or ideas to improve your legal writing. This month, I share one of my favorite resources for the latest thought, research, and advice on professional legal writing: the journal *Legal Communication & Rhetoric: JALWD*.¹ If you enjoyed my columns on allusion, best practices in delivering feedback, point of view, and similar topics—and especially if you’re kind of a legal-writing nerd²—you may relish spending quality time with the articles in *LC&R*.

JALWD’s mission is to serve as a resource and forum for conversation between practitioners and scholars.

Published by the Association of Legal Writing Directors, *LC&R: JALWD* is designed for academics, attorneys, judges, and law students alike. Its mission is to serve as a resource and forum for conversation between practitioners and scholars. Each issue takes a deep dive into issues relevant to the mindful legal writer.

The Fall 2015 volume provides an excellent introduction to the value *LC&R* provides. The first three pieces tackle how changes in technology have

affected—or should affect—legal communication in the 21st century. In the first article, Professor Ellie Margolis from Temple University, Beasley School of Law explores how the surge in e-reading, especially among judges, should change how we craft and format briefs. Do you blog for your law practice or for some other outlet? Would you like to use social media more effectively to promote yourself or showcase your expertise? Professor Jennifer Romig discusses how online legal-writing genres like blogging, social-media posting, and tweeting differ from more conventional modes and how to tailor your writing to suit those genres. She

also introduces the reader to two resources she characterizes as “candidates to become the Strunk & White of short online writing”: Christopher Johnson’s *Microstyle* and Roy Peter Clark’s *How to Write Short: Word Craft for Fast Times*. And practitioner R. Laine Wilson Harris provides a snapshot of e-filing across the country, quoting our own Judge Philip Espinosa from Division Two of the Arizona Court of Appeals as an e-filing pioneer. The piece includes a pithy list of tips to make your e-documents more effective, including using hyperlinks and bookmarks, chunking information, using topic sentences (always a good practice), and front-loading your writing.³

Intrigued by how narrative and storytelling affect case outcomes? Professor Kyle C. Velte from Texas Tech University School of Law highlights the power of point of view in her close examinations of the litigants’ strategies in the Colorado case *Lobato v. State of Colorado*, which challenged the Colorado public-school-finance system. Want to read more about applied legal storytelling? Professor J. Christopher Rideout of Seattle University provides a comprehensive bibliography to get you started.

Did my November 2014 column on providing effective

written feedback to junior attorneys make you yearn to find more time to coach and mentor the next generation of lawyers? Professor Mary Trevor from Hamline University School of Law provides a primer on techniques and resources for the practitioner/supervisor. Do you find the plain-language movement—which I explored in my April 2016 column—to be a blunt instrument? English Ph.D. student Soha Turler critically examines the movement’s ideologies and challenges assumptions that such writing makes our legal system more just or accessible.

As a legal educator—and as a moot-court coach who tries to help law students navigate norms of delivery, dress, and demeanor while thinking critically about the sometimes exclusionary values those norms perpetuate—I was particularly intrigued by Professor Karen DaPonte Thornton’s piece “Parsing the Visual Rhetoric of Office Dress Codes: A Two-Step Process to Increase Inclusivity and Professionalism in Legal-Workplace Fashion.”

I’ll warn you, though: *LC&R* is a gateway to even more in-depth reading about writing, rhetoric, persuasion, and other topics near and dear to the thoughtful legal communicator’s heart. The book reviews at the end of the issue will lead you to Steven Pinker’s latest, the newest edition of Ross Guberman’s fantastic *Point Made*, and other useful and interesting texts (any of which makes a nice gift!).

With Volume 13, *LC&R* goes exclusively online. And you can find all past volumes on the website.

If that’s not enough, *LC&R*’s website includes links to other web resources on legal-writing scholarship, including research sites, related organizations, and publications.

Want to join the conversation? You can also find submission guidelines on the website. Happy reading!

endnotes

1. <http://www.alwd.org/lcr/>
2. Like I am.
3. Sound familiar? I wrote a little bit about this in my May 2014 column, “Don’t Bury the Lead.”



Susie Salmon

Susie Salmon is the Director of Legal Writing and Clinical Professor of Law at the University of Arizona, James E. Rogers College of Law. Before joining Arizona Law, she spent nine years as a commercial litigator at large firms in Tucson and Los Angeles.