

Fordham University School of Law

From the Selected Works of Hon. Gerald Lebovits

September 1, 2001

Legal Research: Riding the Landlord-Tenant Super-Highway

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/gerald_lebovits/62/

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Takings Clause: Landlords' Challenge to FCC Satellite Rule Rebuffed

In 1996, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) promulgated a broad rule prohibiting restrictions on the installation, maintenance or use of home satellite dishes and similar over-the-air reception devices located on property within the exclusive use or control of the antenna user.¹ This prohibition applied only to property in which the user of satellite services had a direct or indirect ownership interest, such as a homeowner. In 1998, the FCC extended the prohibition to lease provisions where the antenna user has a "leasehold interest in the property."² The 1998 amended rule permits tenants, subject to enumerated safety-related restrictions, to install antennas "wherever they rent space outside of a building, such as balcony railings, patios, yards, gardens, or any other similar area" and, in some instances, inside rental units,³ notwithstanding lease provisions to the contrary. The rule does not, however, permit tenants to place antennas on common property such as outside walls (where tenants may have access but not possession and exclusive rights of use or control) or restricted access areas such as rooftops (continued on page 12)

Legal Research: Riding the Landlord-Tenant Super-Highway

by Gerald Lebovits and Daniel J. Curtin, Jr.

You practice landlord-tenant law but don't know the difference between Charlotte's Web and the World Wide Web? Can't tell a motherboard from Mother Hubbard? Think that a weak link is a phrase on the TV show The Weakest Link or that "links" means "left" in German? Or maybe you're a surfer—the sort who'd rather surf the waves at Brighton Beach than surf the Net to find good, free landlord-tenant resources? If so, this article will help you race along the information super-highway without driving yourself crazy or causing your computer—and your free time surfing at the beach—to crash and burn.

The World Wide Web, the Internet's largest and most popular component, or the Internet,¹ contains a vast fountain of information on a plethora of topics, including landlord-tenant law in New York. [or, New York landlord-tenant law.] Navigating through the useless to find the worthwhile is mind numbing and frustrating. Try sitting down and typing "Landlord Tenant Law New York City" into a search engine such as Yahoo.com and then (continued on page 2)

Legal Research (continued from page 1)

navigate through the 4,830 "web-page matches"² that appear—after you bypass the initial nine sites listing law firms that specialize in landlord-tenant law. We sat down and did this—or a modified version of it—for you. Below is our attempt to aid you in separating the useful from the useless, the out-of-date, and the less-than objective. Each of the Websites was last accessed on August 5, 2001, and is subject to change any day. Depending on the ease of navigability of the various sites, some information was easier to access on one site than on another. Just because we have not written that a particular site contains a particular resource does not mean it is not there. But if you spend some time exploring the major sites listed in this article, you will see that the Web is an invaluable tool—so long as you do not get tangled in it.

Let us skip the basics on how to navigate the Internet³ and surf⁴ over to one of the most useful Websites. Cornell Law School has perhaps the Internet's best general "law" Website, called the Legal Information Institute. It even has information on landlord-tenant law.⁵ It was the first site that appears in our Yahoo search. That makes the Cornell address love at first site. At the Cornell site the practitioner can find an "overview" of landlord-tenant law and, more important, a "menu of sources" that includes hyperlinks, or links,⁶ to other Websites, where

more information can be found. Federal, State, and even international material, including statutes, cases, and treaties relating to landlord-tenant law, can be accessed from Cornell's website. This site offers the chance to explore 18 other Websites—and to buy subscriptions to non-Internet (*i.e.*, print) materials. Here are some of these links and what they offer.

Tenant Resources

One link on the Cornell site is TenantNet, the Net's most cited and cross-referenced tool on residential landlord-tenant law in New York.⁷ As its name implies, the site is pro-tenant. It begins by giving a definition of "landlord" from Chaz Bufe's *The Devil's Dictionaries*: "LANDLORD, n. A pillar of society as necessary to its existence as a tick is to a hound." TenantNet is not designed to be the most objective Website,⁸ but it is relatively easy to navigate and has vast amounts of information, not only for tenants, but also for practitioners—landlord's attorneys, tenant's attorneys, and neutrals. As one exceptionally lucid and authoritative source for landlords advises, "Check out TenantNet—Not Just for Tenants."⁹

For example, from the main TenantNet Webpage, you can access the Division of Housing and Community Re-

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newal's (DHCR) Rent Stabilization Code of December 20, 2000, and the New York City Rent Guidelines Board's (RGB) 2001-2002 rent increases. There is also a link to "This Week in Housing Court Decisions,"¹⁰ which lists major landlord-tenant decisions and decisions from the past week's *New York Law Journal*, each with a brief summary and a tenant advocate's perspective, and an archive to 1996 of past landlord-tenant decisions. TenantNet does not offer the full text of decisions, but it has a Keyword search function that enables a visitor to find opinions quickly. Also helpful is the Keyword search function to the site's more-than 6,000 DHCR administrative decisions from 1990 to 1994.

Helpful, too, at least for the novice, is the text on the New York City Housing Court¹¹ and the About Housing Court Decisions¹² link, both accessible from the "This Week in Housing Court Decisions" link. These two links explain the basics of holdover proceedings and nonpayment proceedings, and within each of these links are yet more links that explain what each of these proceedings entails and what parties to these proceedings request.

Both practitioner and client may be interested in joining the TenantNet NYTenants' mailing list to receive e-mail updates from TenantNet. You can join the e-mail service from the TenantNet main Webpage.

Issues of objectivity aside, TenantNet is an exceptional resource for landlord-tenant practitioners. But sometimes it is not current. The "Rent Laws" link offers a few out-of-date statutes, codes, and rules. Similarly, the "Other Laws" link offers an outdated Housing Maintenance Code. It lists members of the Housing Court Advisory Council, but none of the listed members currently serves. And no careful practitioner should cite its decision summaries without reading the case in full elsewhere.

Two other good sources for landlord-tenant law can be accessed through Law.com.¹³ The Tenants' Rights Guide, prepared by the Office of the Secretary of New York State,¹⁴ and the Rights of Residential Owners and Renters, prepared by the New York State Bar Association.¹⁵ Each source offers a general guide, in plain English, to tenant rights and responsibilities. The State Bar Association's site also gives brief definitions and explanations of nonpayment proceedings, holdover proceedings, and HP proceedings, mostly for the self-represented. Practitioners who have a good understanding of landlord-tenant law can still use these resources as a reference for clients. A number of other links through Law.com—more on this later—go into specific landlord-tenant topics, such as the New York City Loft Board¹⁶

and "pets" from the Association of the Bar of the City of New York.¹⁷ You can even link back to TenantNet from Law.com. Such is the power of the Internet.

The Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation (NMIC) is an organization dedicated to providing "services that form a critical link in the overall stability of a rapidly growing and changing low-income community," with "housing programs minimize evictions and maximize improvements to the housing stock" in Washington Heights/Inwood. Its site¹⁸ is accessible in English and Spanish and offers users information about tenant organizing and housing development. NMIC Legal Services offers free "[l]egal representation of tenants and tenant associations to secure stable and safe housing accommodations and avoid eviction." From its main page, NMIC has a link to NYCCELP¹⁹ on lead-paint laws and a password-only link for serious students of the Spiegel Statute.²⁰ The Webpage of The New York City Legal Aid Society²¹ offers no information or resources for the landlord-tenant practitioner or aficionado. Neither does Legal Services New York.²²

Landlord Resources

On the landlord side of the equation are sites that offer information and resources as well. One such site is the Rent Stabilization Association (RSA) Website.²³ Membership in the association is offered to "all owners and managers of residential housing and commercial buildings. Professional membership is available to those in allied fields such as attorneys, real estate brokers and vendors of real estate related services."²⁴ RSA boasts 25,000 property owners and agents who represent over a million housing units. On its main page is a link to Legal Updates.²⁵ Here you can find information on "RSA's challenge to a City Council law reducing the level of MBR [maximum base rent] increases for rent controlled apartments" and recent Appellate Division, First Department, rulings on preferential rents and lead paint. The RSA site also gives "advisories," or warnings to owners in using and implementing the various court rulings it posts on this site. The RSA site is very helpful, not only to owners but also to practitioners.

The RSA Webpage has links through its main-page resource link to Local Law 12, Local Law 38, Federal Lead Paint Rules, the 1999 Rent Guidelines, Housing Court decisions (through TenantNet), New York housing laws, including the New York City Housing Maintenance Code, the Multiple Dwelling Law, and the Real Property Actions and Proceedings Law. A select group of govern-

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mental agency and industry Webpages can be accessed through the "links" link on RSA's main page. Also from its main page, RSA offers a set of links to "News Flashes" that offer some of the latest on landlord-tenant issues. For example, you can read Rent Guidelines Order No. 33, the RGB approval of 4% and 6% increases, and a story about legislation absolving owners from interest payments on past due rent-stabilization fees from 1984 to 1998. RSA offers additional links regarding its services and has an e-mail list to which users can subscribe. And, once again, TenantNet can be accessed from the links menu on RSA's site.

Another resource for landlords is the Real Estate Board of New York's (REBNY) Webpage.²⁶ This is another organization that offers membership to "residential property owners and builders, brokers and managers; banks, financial service companies, utilities, attorneys, architects, contractors and other individuals and institutions professionally interested in Manhattan real estate." The site's introduction explains REBNY's operations and organization. Visitors can also learn about educational opportunities to obtain broker's licenses and how to conduct negotiations ethically. REBNY has a code of ethics that "applies to all Board members, clarifies licensees' responsibilities to their colleagues and to the public." Through a link on the main REBNY Webpage, visitors can conduct up-to-date searches of state legislation, including court acts such as the New York City Civil Court Act. This feature is a link to the New York State Legislature Webpage, discussed below. Users can also buy leasing forms and other publications on REBNY's Webpage.

The Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP) is another property-owners' organization with its own Webpage.²⁷ In addition to finding a description of the organization, its operations, and its members, visitors can find links to the DHCR's webpage, the RGB's webpage, and the latest in "Real Estate Headlines" as provided by Yahoo.com or Excite.com.²⁸

The New York Association of Realty Managers (NYARM), which also has a Webpage,²⁹ is a similar organization for realty managers. One interesting feature here is an e-mail list that visitors can join to get the latest news and updates of interest to NYARM members.

Small Property Owners of New York (SPONY) also has a Webpage³⁰ that offers some of the same resources as the other Websites geared toward property owners. Many of the previously mentioned links can be accessed through its "Annotated Links" link. SPONY also offers a traditional print quarterly newsletter to which readers can

subscribe.

The Web has not forgotten those who practice cooperative and condominium law. The Council of New York Cooperatives and Condominiums Webpage,³¹ through its "links" link, offers much of the above, with a few specialty items in the "Organizations" link on the links page.

A site that has information for both landlords and tenants is Rentlaw.com. Its information about New York City landlord-tenant law comes from the Office of the Attorney General's Website and TenantNet.³² What Rentlaw.com uniquely offers are options that allow the visitor to order books on landlord-tenant law. This is accomplished by a series of links connected to Amazon.com, the on-line book provider. The texts are broken into categories of landlord, tenant, real-estate investment, and home buying. This convenient feature saves you from doing additional searching through Amazon.com's extensive inventory.

Government Agencies

What affects much of landlord-tenant law are the various agencies, both Federal and State, that are either directly or indirectly related to the landlord-tenant relationship. At the Federal level, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Office of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) all have Websites. At the bottom of the EPA's site, the country is divided into regions, New York being in Region 2. After accessing that portion of the site, practitioners can find a subject index that includes everything from air compliance to the watershed protection program for New York City to [and?] everything in between. HUD's site contains a link to renting and gives a renter's guide. Geared toward the consumer looking to rent a house, it includes information on fair housing rights. The bottom of the page lists information about renting apartments. Here one can obtain basic information on landlord-tenant law—provided by none other than Cornell's webpage. EPA, HUD, OSHA can be accessed by adding the suffix ".gov" after their respective acronyms.

At the New York State level, a good site to know about is the main New York State Webpage.³³ From here you can access every state agency, from the Adirondack Park Agency to the Worker's Compensation Board. For example you can view the Website for the New York State Division of Human Rights (DHR),³⁴ which offers much information about anti-discrimination law and other human-rights issues. This is a great source to find out how

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New York State deals with sensitive and socially important issues. There is also the New York State Department of Labor (DOL) Website.³⁵ This site contains much of what you or your client, as an employer in New York, needs to know. There is an "Employment in New York State" newsletter to which you can subscribe and even a resume bank where you can search for potential employees after you register.

The DHCR's Website³⁶ is a treasure-trove of information. The agency describes its mission "[t]o make New York State a better place to live by supporting community efforts to preserve and expand affordable housing, home ownership and economic opportunities, and by providing equal access to safe, decent and affordable housing." The site offers links for frequently asked questions (FAQ) and answers, information on finding affordable housing, and a special section for senior citizens. Additionally, at the bottom of DHCR's main page is a set of "Helpful Links," including the New York State Homepage, the Office of the Governor's Webpage,³⁷ and a link to HUD. A useful link from the "Helpful Links" area is the "Links to Other Housing Sites" link. This provides a set of Federal, State, Municipal sites, as well as links to Fannie May, Freddie Mac, and the RGB. The DHCR site, however, does not provide forms or a compendium of its administrative decisions.

And then there is the important New York State Assembly website.³⁸ Here you can search for Bills by number or keyword³⁹ and read legislative reports. The Assembly site is an invaluable resource for the savvy practitioner who must be on top of developments and pending changes in New York State law. The State Assembly page even has a link to a "Kid's Page" for future practitioners who want to get into the habit of using the Internet site unseen to learn about the State Assembly and landlord-tenant law.

At the local level, New York City's many agencies can be accessed through the main New York City Website.⁴⁰ The main page contains a link that allows visitors to access information on every city agency, including the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), and the RGB.⁴¹ The RGB website has a particularly useful feature that allows visitors to access, through the resource link on its main page, the Housing Maintenance Code, "The Tenant's Guide to Housing Court," and "A Guide to Small Claims Court."⁴² The RGB site also has a link through its resources link on its main page to a downloadable Vacancy Lease Calculator.

Each agency listed on the City's Webpage provides voluminous amounts of information. Not only are all the City's agencies represented, but all give detailed information about their operations and how to contact them. On the City's main page is a link for "housing," which takes the viewer to a second page that gives landlord resources such as a block and lot search feature and tax credit information. Also to be found is a link for tenant resources, including, again, the pro se guide prepared by the Office of the New York State Attorney General's Office.

Court, Caselaw, and Statutory Resources

Most lawyers have heard of Lexis,⁴³ Westlaw,⁴⁴ and Lois-Law.⁴⁵ These more "traditional" searchable databases are cost-prohibitive for the small or new practitioner. But a few options will still let you access the latest in caselaw. One technique is to contact your local law school to see whether it has an internship program. Bringing a student intern into your office offers you the chance to use the student's almost unlimited access to expensive search tools. Westlaw and Lexis generally allow students to use their products on the job if the student earns academic credit while working. The student gets practical experience while earning academic credit toward graduation; you get great help, for free or at a reasonable cost.

Not your cup of tea? Then access the courts directly through their Websites. For example, the Federal Judiciary Home Page⁴⁶ has a "links" link. Once you access the page, simply choose your circuit, and you are off and running, with the proviso that the court you are looking for has a Webpage and, if it does, that it posts its decisions on it. At the state level, the New York State Unified Court System Webpage⁴⁷ allows you to access decisions of the Court of Appeals, the Court of Claims, and the Appellate Division, Fourth Department, to name a few, through its decisions link at the top of the main page. Also on this site, through the "Legal Research" link, a multitude of resources for general legal research can be accessed. These include the New York Courts and Law Guide,⁴⁸ State Courts On-Line,⁴⁹ and our old friend, Cornell's Legal Information Institute. Another great link that can be found on this page is Hieros Gamos.⁵⁰ Hieros Gamos advertises that it offers "information from about 6,000 legal organizations, and self-listing user modifiable databases of various legal entities. This site also has a unique feature allowing the user to display data in foreign languages." You really should check out this site and all the other links provided through the Legal Research

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link on the New York Unified Court System Webpage. And court employees with passwords may use the "LION" link to find written materials on landlord-tenant law from the summer judicial seminars. The materials are in "pdf," or Acrobat, format.

Attorneys are always looking up other attorneys, and even the best lawyers need to advertise in a dignified, professional way. The New York Court System Webpage has a link that allows users to find attorneys' addresses and telephone numbers. The site is mostly up-to-date; when information is not current, often it is because the attorney did not tell the OCA Attorney Registration Unit of the new address. Authorized court employees can get nonpublic information about attorneys through the court system's Intranet, including law schools attended, dates of birth, and disciplinary records. Many lawyers and law firms have their own Webpages. You do not have to know each site. Instead, use Lawyers.com.⁵¹ Simply choose "landlord and tenant" as the practice area and enter New York City and New York State, and you are on your way to learning about an attorney. Our search of New York City, New York, yielded 126 landlord-tenant and corporate real-estate attorneys with their own Webpages or biographical listings, including e-mail addresses. Martindale-Hubbell also has a Website⁵² from which you can learn about attorneys. Most attorneys are listed, not merely those who pay to advertise. You can look for attorneys by name, firm name, location, and specialty. An interesting feature is an attorney's ethical and skills "rating information," which Martindale-Hubbell gleans from confidential peer-review sources.

A general search through a search engine for a specific court is a quick way to see whether you can get a court's decisions online without going through a subscription service. One good place to use this technique is at Findlaw.com.⁵³ This search engine, geared for the legal profession, has the look and feel of Yahoo.com. If you are looking specifically for landlord-tenant law you can find it from the main Webpage. Just scroll down to the portion of the page entitled "Public" and find the subsection entitled "Housing." Under that you can select landlord-tenant, then New York State, and you are off and running—or surfing, in keeping with our theme.

If you are looking for the *New York Law Journal*, you are not going to find its own, independent Webpage. But you can find Web content from the *NYLJ* at Law.com.⁵⁴ On the left side of the main page you can select "New York Courts and law Guide." That will offer you links to the New York State Unified Court System (discussed above), links to other courts, and a legal topic index that

covers adoption to zoning—and includes some good "housing" law links. The main page—content provided by the *NYLJ*—gives the user the latest in legal news on everything from recent decisions of interest to national topics. This is one of the Web's better law-based Websites and a definite destination for the learned researcher.

The Housing Court itself has a Web page, but surfers beware. It is difficult to find it if you do not know the correct address. Our initial attempts at accessing it through the New York State Unified Court System Webpage were imperfect. We stopped counting after we found three seemingly official Webpages, all different in significant ways, for the Housing Court.⁵⁵ In an already confusing area of law, having a confusing series of Webpages is likely to cause a wreck on the Information Super-Highway. Once you have surfed to the best of the bunch—see the endnote below—you are on your way to learning the ins and outs of the New York City Housing Court. From its main page you can access the court's hours, directions to the court, profiles of the judges (not current), part rules, and video presentations on the Resolution Part, the Bronx court facility and services and, for tenants and landlords, videos on getting repairs and services and collecting rent. From the main Housing Court Webpage is a link for tenants explaining what to do when faced with a petition for eviction and how to correct violations with court assistance, or what to do if your case was settled by stipulation you need to re-open it. For landlords, the site gives explanations on nonpayment and holdover proceedings and what to do if you have served a petition and notice of petition and now need a judgment and warrant. The landlord is also offered information on settled cases that need to be re-opened.

Statutes are also available outside subscription-based services. As mentioned above, there is the New York State Assembly Website.⁵⁶ Moreover, the New York State Legislature can be accessed on the Web. Aside from its direct site,⁵⁷ the Legislature can be accessed through the Assembly's "Laws of New York" link, or through RSA's Webpage. Once at the Legislature's site, you can visit all of New York's consolidated and unconsolidated laws as well as court acts, assembly and senate rules, and the New York State Constitution. You can also find the New York State Senate on the Web.⁵⁸ The "Bills and Laws" link takes you right back to the State Legislature site, so if that is what you are looking for, save the step and start there. There is also a link to Senate Reports on the main page and links to New York State agencies and select Federal governmental entities through the "links" link on the main page.

Unraveling the Web: Internet Resources for Landlord-Tenant Practitioners

Tenant Resources

Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation:
www.nmic.org

TenantNet: www.tenant.net

Landlord Resources

Community Housing Improvement Program: www.chip-nyc.org

Council of New York Cooperatives and Condominiums:
www.cnyc.org

New York Association of Realty Managers:
www.nyarm.com

Real Estate Board of New York: www.rebny.com

Rent Stabilization Association: www.rsanyc.com

Small Property Owners of New York: www.spony.org

Government Agencies

New York City: www.nyc.gov

New York City Rent Guidelines Board: www.housingnyc.com

New York State: www.state.ny.us

New York State Assembly: www.assembly.state.ny.us

New York State Division of Human Rights:
www.nysdhr.com

New York State Department of Labor: www.labor.state.ny.us

New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal: www.dhcr.state.ny.us

New York State Governor: www.state.ny.us/governor

New York State Legislature: www.leginfo.state.ny.us

New York State Senate: www.senate.state.ny.us

Office of the New York Attorney General:
www.oag.state.ny.us

Courts

Federal Judiciary Home Page: www.uscourts.gov

New York City Civil Court: www.courts.state.ny.us/NYC-HousingCt/index.htm

New York City Housing Court:
www.courts.state.ny.us/NYCHousingCt/Housing_Court_Home_Page.htm

New York State Unified Court System:
www.courts.state.ny.us

General Resources

Association of the Bar of the City of New York:
www.abcny.org

About.com's Internet Basics: www.learnthenet.com/english/section/www.html

CataLaw.com: www.catalaw.com

Cornell University's Legal Information Institute:
www.law.cornell.edu

Excite.com: www.excite.com

Findlaw.com: www.findlaw.com

Google: www.google.com

Hieros Gamos: www.hg.org

Ixquick: www.ixquick.com

Law.com New York Housing Guide:
www6.law.com/ny/guide/#housing

Law Journal Extra: www.ljextra.com

Lawyers.com: lawyers.com

Lexis/Nexis: www.lexis.com

LoisLaw: www.loislaw.com

Martindale Hubbell: www.martindale.com

New York Public Library: www.nypl.org

New York State Bar Association: www.nysba.org

New York University Law School Library:
www.law.nyu.edu/library

Rentlaw.com: www.rentlaw.com/newyorkrentlaw.htm

Thomas Legislative Service: www.thomas.loc.gov

VersusLaw.com: www.versuslaw.com

Westlaw: www.westlaw.com

Yahoo.com: www.yahoo.com ♦

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General Legal Internet Resources

To conduct legal research, some good places to start are Catalaw⁵⁹ and Versuslaw.⁶⁰ Each of these databases offers you the chance to get cases quickly and easily. Catalaw asks you to select your topic or region, and then it gives you a series of popular links—many of them listed here—that you can access from Catalaw. Versuslaw allows you to search in a similar fashion to the subscription services. From its main page, select “search now.” Then pick the jurisdiction you need and click on “continue search.” Once you have done this you can define the parameters of your search by searching for particular words and phrases, limiting the number of results that

Legal Research (continued from p. 7)

appear, and by selecting dates of the materials you seek (i.e., cases from last year). Another good tool if you are looking for texts—such as Finklestein & Ferrara's Landlord-Tenant practice guide—is either the New York University law Library⁶¹ or the New York Public Library⁶² sites. This is great for making sure the local library has the text you need before you send your intern—or worse yet, you—all the way to the library to photocopy the all-important two pages. Remember, we are trying to save valuable surfing (i.e., actually at the beach, in the waves) time here.

A warning about online legal research. You cannot shepardize cases on the Webpages of organizations or individual courts. The practitioner must be careful when citing any case as reported on a general Website. A good project for the student interns in your office is to send them to their school library armed with the cases you have found on the Internet and have the students shepardize the cases. Ensuring up-to-date information is possible with a little due diligence. Just remember: be careful not to cite reversed cases.

Conclusion

As one court explained as long ago as 1978, a lifetime ago in the Internet's lifespan, "the technology revolution has overtaken our profession, and terms such as 'The Web,' HTML and Telnet have assumed a place in the lawyer's lexicon, alongside the venerable pronouncements of Justinian, Coke and Blackstone."⁶³ The Justinian of yesteryear is the Net surfer of today.

Surfing for landlord-tenant law on the Internet need not be as difficult as learning to hang-ten. Now that you have saved some time accessing needed and relevant items, you can wax your board and head to Brighton Beach for those surfing lessons you have been meaning to take. Forget the information super-highway. You can get to Brighton Beach on the "old-fashioned" highway—or just take the subway as far as it will take you. If you have forgotten your surf board, use the free time saved through Internet research by going sightseeing instead of site seeing.

Gerald Lebovits is a principal court attorney in State Supreme Court and an adjunct professor of law and the Moot Court Faculty Advisor at New York Law School. Daniel J. Curtin, Jr., New York Law School '01, won awards for best Moot Court Team and Brief and was chair of the Moot Court Board.

Endnotes:

1. For a good but brief history of the Internet, including an explanation of Internet basics, see *Reno v. ACLU*, 521 U.S. 844, 849-53 (1997). For basic lesson on Internet technology written as the Internet was exploding into the legal researcher's consciousness, see Gerald Lebovits & Ian M. Singer, *Litigators Who Untangle the Web Will Find Scores of Valuable Sites*, N.Y.L.J., May 20, 1997, at 5, col. 5.
2. www.yahoo.com. Not every site contains information on landlord-tenant law in New York City. Some simply contain each of those words in some order. For instance, our search yielded a link to www.outlinebank.com, where the visitor is invited to purchase outlines of legal courses prepared by law students from various law schools. That is not likely to be the best source of current law for practitioners, although the outlines probably offer many interesting takes on the Rule in Shelly's Case, the Rule Against Perpetuities, and our friends Greenacre and Blackacre.
3. See *Reno*, 521 U.S. at 852-53; see also www.learnthenet.com/english/section/www.html (explaining how to navigate the Internet).
4. Surfing, or "Internet surfing," is "[u]sed by analogy to describe the ease with which an expert user can use the waves of information flowing around the Internet to get where he wants. The term became popular in the early 1990s as access to the Internet became more widespread and tools such as World-Wide Web browsers made its use simpler and more pleasant." Free On-Line Dictionary of Computing, www.foldoc.doc.ic.ac.uk/foldoc/index.html.
5. www.law.cornell.edu/topics/landlord_tenant.html.
6. See *A & H Sportswear Co. v. Victoria's Secret Stores, Inc.*, 134 F. Supp. 2d 668, 675 n.16 (E.D. Pa. 2001) (defining "link").
7. www.tenant.net.
8. On TenantNet's home page, visited August 4, 2001, are such references as "Kids with Lead Poisoning—Courtesy of Peter Vallone"; "Is the New York City Housing Authority as Corrupt as DHCR?" and "Judge —, Landlord."
9. Mary Ann Hallenborg, *The New York Landlord's Law Book* 17/11 (2000).
10. www.tenant.net/Court/Hcourt. The authors of this resource explain that "[o]ne of the best ways to learn issues of landlord/tenant law is to read cases. . . . You may have to consult Kafka or Lewis Carroll, but eventually it may make sense."
11. www.tenant.net/Court/Howcourt/contents.html. This link contains an html hypertexted copy of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York Committee on the Housing Court's 1996 "A Tenant's Guide to Housing Court," Brooklyn South Legal Services' 1993 manual by the same name, "A Tenant's Guide to Housing Court," and advice for the self-represented from the City-Wide Task Force on Housing Court, such as "Things to Consider when Negotiating a Stipulation."

Legal Research (continued from p. 7)

12. www.tenant.net/Court/Hcourt/#about.
13. www6.law.com/ny/guide/#housing.
14. www.oag.state.ny.us/realstate/tenants_rights_guide.html.
15. www.nysba.org/public/pamphlets/tenants.html.
16. www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/loft/html/faq.html.
17. www.abcnyc.org/pethouse.html.
18. www.nmic.org/index.htm.
19. New York City Coalition to End Lead Poisoning. At its Website, www.nmic.org/nycclp.htm, users can find resources pertaining to lead poisoning prevention, including information on Local Law 38.
20. See Social Services Law § 143-b.
21. www.legal-aid.org.
22. www.nylegalservices.org.
23. www.rsanyc.com.
24. www.rsanyc.com/membership.phtml.
25. www.rsanyc.com/articles/rsa010709150100.phtml.
26. www.rebnyc.com.
27. www.chipnyc.org.
28. Excite.com is an Internet search engine analogous to Yahoo.com. It can be found at www.excite.com. Other good search engines are Google at www.google.com and Ixquick at www.ixquick.com.
29. www.nyarm.com.
30. www.spony.org.
31. www.cnyc.org.
32. www.rentlaw.com/newyorkrentlaw.htm.
33. www.state.ny.us.
34. www.nysdhr.com.
35. www.labor.state.ny.us/html.
36. www.dhcr.state.ny.us.
37. www.state.ny.us/governor.
38. www.assembly.state.ny.us.
39. A keyword is "2. A small set of words designed to convey the subject of a technical article. Some publications specify a fixed set of keywords from which those for a particular article should be chosen." Free On-Line Dictionary of Computing, www.foldoc.doc.ic.ac.uk/foldoc/index.html.
40. www.home.nyc.gov/portal/index.jsp?pageID=nyc_home.
41. The RGB can also be accessed directly at www.housingnyc.com.
42. Actions in the New York City Civil Court, Small Claims Part, are relevant to landlord-tenant practitioners. The court hears landlord-tenant money matters that do not exceed \$3000 and which do not seek eviction or orders to correct as possible remedies. See Civ. Ct. Act art. 18.
43. www.lexis.com.
44. www.westlaw.com.
45. www.loislaw.com.
46. www.uscourts.gov.
47. www.courts.state.ny.us. Many links are offered through this site's Legal Research link—too many to list in this short piece. Be sure to check out the ones we list, as well as Thomas at www.thomas.loc.gov, which provides legislative information from the Library of Congress.
48. www.nylj.com/guide.
49. www.ljextra.com/courthouse/statelinks.html.
50. www.hg.org.
51. www.lawyers.com. Among the firms at this site are Belkin, Burden, Wenig & Goldman, LLP; Borah Goldstein, Altschuler & Schwartz & Nahins, P.C.; Horing, Welikson & Rosen, P.C.; Kucker & Bruh, LLP; and Rosenberg & Estis, P.C.
52. www.martindale.com.
53. www.findlaw.com.
54. www6.law.com/ny.
55. www.courts.state.ny.us/hctprg.htm is an out-of-date though still-living site—and today a fascinating historical oddity. It outlines in detail the "Housing Court Program," the original name of the "Housing Court Initiative," and details a constitutional amendment submitted to the Legislature to restructure the New York State Court system and turn the Housing Court into a part of a proposed New York City District Court. Technologically, that site was cutting edge at its inception, but no longer. And those who visit this site-impaired site probably leave it among the more confused consumers of the Internet. <http://www.courts.state.ny.us/nyc-housingct/~1st-default.htm> is more current, both in terms of information and technologically, but much of it is "under construction," and all of it is seemingly abandoned. The best Housing Court Webpage we can find is at www.courts.state.ny.us/NYCHousingCt/Housing_Court_Home_Page.htm, accessible independently or through the New York City Civil Court home page, www.courts.state.ny.us/NYCHousingCt/index.htm.
56. assembly.state.ny.us.
57. leginfo.state.ny.us:82/INDEX1.html.
58. www.senate.state.ny.us.
59. www.catalaw.com.
60. www.versuslaw.com.
61. www.law.nyu.edu/library.
62. www.nypl.org.
63. *Peterson v. Melchiona*, N.Y.L.J., Dec 18, 1998 (Sup. Ct., Suffolk Co.) (citing *Lebovits & Singer*, supra note 1). ♦