Empirical Legal Research Guide

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Empirical Legal Research and Statistics: Home

Includes sources about empirical legal research, and places to locate all types of statistics.

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Home
### Introduction

At its most basic, empirical legal research is legal research that uses statistical techniques and analysis.

John Baldwin and Gwynn Davis in Chapter 39 of the *Oxford Handbook of Legal Studies* state, "...empirical research in law involves the study, through direct methods rather than secondary sources, of the institutions, rules, procedures, and personnel of the law, with a view to understanding how they operate and what effects they have."

Shari Seidman Diamond in her article *Empirical Marine Life in Legal Waters: Clams, Dolphins, and Plankton*, 2002 U. Ill. L. Rev. 803, 805 (2002) further states, "What makes research empirical is that it is based on observations of the world. These facts may be historical or contemporary, based on legislation or case law, the results of interviews or surveys, or the outcomes of secondary archival research or primary data collections."

### Places to Start

- **Statistical Abstract of the United States**
  The U.S. Census Bureau's comprehensive summary of statistics on the social, political, and economic organization of the United States.

- **Wolfram Alpha**
  Wolfram Alpha helps you get knowledge and answers— not by searching the web, but by doing dynamic computations based on a vast collection of built-in data, algorithms, and methods.

- **The World Wide Web Virtual Library - Statistics**
  Great one stop shop for starting your empirical research.

- **Statistics Resources and Big Data on the Internet**
  A comprehensive listing of statistics and big data resources and sites on the Internet, arranged alphabetically.

### Recommended

- The *Oxford Handbook of Empirical Legal Research*
  K235 .O938 2010

- Books, Journals and Articles
  More resources from our library are listed here.

### Search the Library Catalog

Try a keyword search for your desired topic along with the term "statistics" (e.g., housing statistics or criminal statistics) or try a subject search.

- Title
- Author
- Keyword
- Subject
- Call Number

[Search] [Advanced Search]
Blogs

- Empirical Legal Studies Blog
  Covers current scholarship, events, grants, and general discussions of issues.
- Legal Scholarship Blog
  From the University of Pittsburgh School of Law and the University of Washington School of Law.

Other Research Guides

- Oklahoma City University Law Empirical Legal Research Guide
- Fordham University Law Library Empirical Legal Research Libguide
- University of Pittsburgh Law Library Empirical Research in the Law Bibliography
- Empirical Research Guide University of North Carolina
- Georgetown Law Library Statistics & Empirical Legal Studies Research Guide

Books & Articles

Empirical Legal Research Training and Resources

- University of North Carolina's Odum Institute
  Provides a data archive, as well as classes on statistical software, and statistical analysis.
- Empirical Legal Scholarship Bibliography
  From UCLA and Cornell, this bibliography has publication on empirical legal research dating back to 2005.
- Berkeley Law Empirical Legal Scholarship Conferences and Workshops
- Society for Empirical Legal Studies--Annual Conferences
  The Society for Empirical Legal Studies at Cornell University supports an annual conference at a different school each year on empirical legal research. In 2013 the conference will be held at University of Pennsylvania Law School, and in 2014 at University of California at Berkeley, Boalt Hall Law School.

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Contact a Law Librarian:
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Books

- Analyzing Law's Reach: Empirical Research on Law and Society
  Edited by John Heinz
  KF389 .A45 2007

- The Blackwell Companion to Law and Society
  Edited by Austin Sarat
  K370 .B554 2004

- Conducting Law and Society Research: Reflections on Methods and Practices
  Simon Halliday, Patrick Schmidt
  K85 .H35 2009

- Empirical Methods in Law
  Robert M. Lawless, Jennifer K. Robbennolt, Thomas S. Ulen
  K212 .L394 2010

- The Oxford Handbook of Empirical Legal Research
  K235 .O938 2010

- Real World Research Skills: An Introduction to Factual, International, Judicial, Legislative, and Regulatory Research
  Peggy Garvin
  ZA5110 .G37 2009

- Introduction to Empirical Legal Research

Empirical Research Journals

- Historical Methods (Online)
  Articles on statistical methodology, data collection and sampling procedures.
  more...

- International Statistical Review (Online)
  Text in English or French, summaries in the same languages.
  From the International Statistical Institute.

- Journal of Empirical Legal Studies
  The interdisciplinary journal of The Society for Empirical Legal Scholarship that publishes peer-reviewed, empirically-oriented articles in a range of law and law-related fields, including civil justice, corporate law, criminal justice, domestic relations, economics, finance, health care, political science, psychology, public policy, securities regulation, and sociology.

- Journal of Legal Studies
  Search this on WestlawNext for research on the law and legal institutions from a social science approach.

- Survey Research Methods
  European Survey Research Association's Journal—a peer-reviewed journal aimed at researchers in all disciplines involved in the design, implementation, and analysis of surveys.
Articles

- The Relevance of the Social Sciences for Legal Education
  By Timothy J. Berard, 19 Legal Education Review 189 (2009)
- Taking Empirical Research Seriously
  By Susan Saab Fortney, 22 Georgetown Journal of Legal Ethics 1473 (2009)
- An Empirical Study of Empirical Legal Scholarship: The Top Law Schools
  By Tracey E. George, 81 Indiana Law Journal 141 (2006)
- The Importance of Being Empirical
- Past, Present, and Future of Empirical Legal Scholarship:
  Judicial Decision Making and the New Empiricism
- Why Do Empirical Legal Scholarship?
- Contributions of Empirical Data to Legal Research
Statistics from the U.S. Government

- Bureau of Economic Analysis
  National economic data, as well as regional and industry-specific information. more...
- Bureau of Labor Statistics
  Information on inflation, employment projections, pay, prices, productivity, unemployment, and more. See especially, BLS Data Finder, which searches unemployment statistics, labor force demographics, weekly and hourly earnings, and union affiliation. more...
- Census Bureau Data
  Information on topics such as education, housing, income, occupations, population, poverty, and many more. Searchable by topic, geography, sector, or survey. more...
- Economic Research Service
  Browse by topics such as animal products, crops, diet, health and safety, farm practices and management, food and nutrition assistance research

General Statistics

- American Community Survey
  The U.S. Census Bureau's ongoing survey compiling data that helps determine how federal and state funds are distributed. Statistical information regarding age, sex, race, income and benefits, health insurance, education, disabilities, and more.
- American Fact Finder
  Searchable by topic, geographical area, ethnic group or industry code for data on population, housing, economic, and other information.
- Historical Statistics of the United States
  HA202 .H57 (Online)
- Proquest Statistical Insight
  more...
- ProQuest Statistical Datasets
  Create your own statistical tables. Select geographic region, time period and variables you want to display.
- Statistical Abstract of the United States
  The U.S. Census Bureau's comprehensive summary of statistics on the social, political, and economic organization of the United States.
- Statistical Sites on the World Wide Web
  Links to U.S. federal statistical agencies and national statistical agencies of many countries and international organizations.
- Statista
  Statistics, studies and reports from over 18,000 sources. Data from businesses, government departments, market research concerns or associations.

U.S. Public Opinion

- Gallup.com
  One of the most trusted sources for public opinion polling and data.
- Pew Research Center
  The Pew Research Center for The People & The Press offers free access (with registration) to its data archive. Datasets are currently available dating back to January 1997.
- Quinnipiac University Polling Institute
  Quinnipiac University Poll regularly surveys residents in Connecticut, Florida, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and nationwide about political races, state and national elections, and issues of public concern, such as schools, taxes, transportation, municipal services, and the environment.
- Statista
  Statistics, studies and reports from over 18,000 sources. Data from businesses, government departments, market research concerns or associations.
Election and Presidential Data

- The American Presidency Project
  An extensive document archive, as well as information on relations with Congress, speeches, popularity, and voting.

- National Election Surveys
  Data from the American National Election Surveys on voting, public opinion, and political participation.

- Office of the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives
  Since 1920, the Clerk of the House has collected and published the official vote counts for federal elections from the official sources among the various states and territories. These documents have been collected and scanned in a format to make them available to researchers and students.

Search the Library Catalog

Books

- The Blackwell Companion to Law and Society
  Edited by Austin Sarat
  K370 .B554 2004

- Industry Research Using the Economic Census: How to Find It, How to Use It
  Jennifer C. Boettcher and Leonard M. Gaines
  HC101 .B594 2004

- National Healthcare Disparities Report
  From the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

World / International Statistics

Criminal Justice and Crime

For international criminal justice and crime statistics, see the Criminal Justice and Crime tab.

Court Statistics

For international court statistics, see the Court Statistics tab.
Health Statistics

To find international health statistics, see the International Resources box under the Health and Medical statistics tab.

International Statistics

- United Nations Data
  32 databases offering worldwide statistics.
- United Nations Demographic Yearbook
  The Demographic Yearbook disseminates statistics on population size and composition, births, deaths, marriage, and divorce on an annual basis. Demographic Yearbook special topics issues cover a wide range of additional topics including economic activity, educational attainment, household characteristics, housing, ethnicity, language, and more.
- Monthly Bulletin of Statistics Online (United Nations)
  Produced by the United Nations contains 55 tables, comprising over 100 indicators, of monthly, quarterly, and annual data on a variety of subjects illustrating important economic trends and developments.
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Statistics
  UNCTAD compiles, validates, and processes a wide range of data collected from national and international sources. Provides access to comprehensive statistical time series and indicators essential for the analysis of world trade, investment, international financial flows, and development.
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Statistics
  Information from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization including: agriculture, water, fisheries, and forestry.
- Human Development Report
  From the United Nations Development Programme.
- World Bank Data
  Includes more than 2,000 economic and data indicators from countries around the world. Historical data goes back to the early 1960's.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Statistics
  Statistics by topic, through OECD.Stat Extracts. Also, look up statistical categories A-Z.

Public Opinion

- Afrobarometer
  The Afrobarometer is an independent, nonpartisan research project that measures the social, political, and economic atmosphere in Africa.
- Latin American Public Opinion Project
  Contains political perspectives from Latin America and the Caribbean going back to the 1970's.
- Euro barometer
  From the European Commission, surveys major topics concerning European citizenship: enlargement, social situation, health, culture, information technology, environment, the Euro, defense, etc.
- Arab Barometer
  Empirical research on public opinion in the Arab world.
- Statista
  Statistics, studies and reports from over 18,000 sources. Data from businesses, government departments, market research concerns or associations.
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<td>• International Historical Statistics:</td>
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<td>• International Historical Statistics:</td>
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Health and Medical Statistics
National Statistics

- ChildStats
  Published by The Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, a collection of 22 Federal government agencies involved in research and activities related to children and families.
- Data Resource Center for Child & Adolescent Health
  Browse the data by survey and topic, or trends, get state snapshots and U.S. data maps.
- Health Data Interactive
  Tables of national health statistics for infants, children, adolescents, and adults that can be customized by age, gender, race/ethnicity, and geographic location to explore different trends and patterns.
  more...
- MEDLINE (with full text)
  Includes all of the content available in MEDLINE as well as cover-to-cover full text for 1,014 journals indexed as cover-to-cover in MEDLINE, including hundreds of journals not available as full text in any other EBSCO database.
- National Center for Health Statistics
  Publications, surveys, and data downloads for public use from the nation's principal health statistics agency.
  more...
- National Health Interview Survey
  Questionnaires, datasets, and related documentation from one of the major data collection programs of the National Center for Health Statistics.
- OSHA's Statistics and Data
  From the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration
- Vital Statistics Online
  Data available to download for research and analysis of infant birth and death rates.
  more...

Ohio

- Department of Health Data and Statistics
  Searchable index and information on vital statistics, diseases and conditions, health surveys and more.
- Health Policy Institute of Ohio
  Policy review and statistics with links to many different subject areas.
- Ohio FactSheet
  Vital statistics from the CDC, including a link to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.
- statehealthfacts.org
  Information about health care budgets, costs, coverage, and status with population and government data as well.

Reference Materials & Journals

- Center for Health Law and Policy Research Guide
  Extensive information on legislation, regulation, treatises and practice guides, current awareness, databases, and web sites.
- Annals of Health Law
  1992-2011 From HeinOnline
- Journal of Contemporary Health Law and Policy
  1985-2011 From HeinOnline
- Journal of Law and Health
  1985-2011 From HeinOnline
  A publication of Cleveland State University
Global Health Observatory
The Global Health Observatory theme pages provide data on global health priorities. Each theme page provides information on global situation and trends highlights, using core indicators, database views, major publications, and links to relevant web pages on the theme.

Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research
Data from over 600 national and international studies of health care services, medical care, and illnesses.

World Health Organization
Statistics on topics such as health care workers, immunization, mortality rates, and tuberculosis, as well as the Global Health Observatory, WHO's portal providing access to data and analysis for monitoring the global health situation.

Criminal Justice and Crime
United States

- Bureau of Justice Statistics
  Information available on crime, criminal offenders, victims of crime, and the operation of justice systems at all levels of government in the United States.

- Uniform Crime Statistics
  FBI Crime Statistics. A series of statistical crime reports and publications from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, detailing specific offenses and outlining trends both nationally and locally. Includes hate crime statistics.

- Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics
  This publication contains six sections of statistics:
  1. Characteristics of the criminal justice systems,
  2. Public attitudes toward crime and criminal justice-related topics,
  3. Nature and distribution of known offenses,
  4. Characteristics and distribution of persons arrested,
  5. Judicial processing of defendants, and
  6. Persons under correctional supervision.

- Death Penalty Information Center
  Large amount of statistical information on the use of capital punishment in the United States from 1608 through the present.

- United States Sentencing Commission Data and Statistics
  Sentencing Statistics from the United States Sentencing Commission.

International

- United Nations Statistics Division
  Gateway to statistical information from databases of the UN and member states.

- United Nations Surveys on Crime Trends and the Operations of Criminal Justice Systems
  Provides data on the incidence of reported crime and the operations of criminal justice systems.

- International Homicide Rates
  Intentional homicide rate per 100,000 population. From United Nations Data.

- Specific Countries
  - United Kingdom Home Office Crime Statistics
    Research and statistics on Home Office responsibilities such as crime, counter-terrorism, the justice system, and immigration.
  - Statistics Canada: Crime and Justice
    Statistics available on: civil courts and family law, correctional services, crimes and offenses, criminal courts, family violence, justice system spending, legal aid, and victims and victimization.
  - Australian Bureau of Statistics--Crime and Justice
    Includes information on: courts, crime, crime prevention, crime victims, drugs, indigenous crime and justice, offenders, police, prisons, and violence.

Books

- Understanding Crime Statistics : Revisiting the Divergence of the NCVS and UCR
  Exploration of the issues surrounding divergence in the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) and the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). Call Number: HV6787 .U52 2007. more...

- Crime, Prisons, and Jails [electronic resource]
  Statistics on many aspects of crime, as well as important positions and ideas.

- Handbook of Crime Correlates
  How various factors correlate to a committing a crime including economic, family and peer, personality, and behavioral factors.
Ohio Department of Public Safety Crime Statistics
Ohio specific statistics taken from FBI statistics, and also reports and statistics put together using the Ohio Incident Based Reporting System.

State of Crime and Justice in Ohio
Ohio Dept. of Public Safety 2007

Court Statistics

Ohio Supreme Court and Ohio Judicial System Publications
Ohio State Courts statistical reports

State Court Caseload Statistics
Various statistics on state courts available. Choose a category and scroll down to find Ohio.
more...

Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Reports
Annual report and statistical report.
Courts outside the United States

- International Courts Data
  This web site provides a portal for the empirical study of international courts. The site includes data on compliance, judicial dissents, biographical information on judges, case law citations, background information on judgments, sentencing by criminal courts, and reservations made by states to the jurisdiction of courts.
- The Judicial Research Initiative--National High Courts Database
  Information on decisions by the high courts of eleven countries over different periods of time. Countries included: Australia, Canada, India, Namibia, Philippines, South Africa, Tanzania, United Kingdom, United States, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.
- European Court of Human Rights Statistics
  Reports and statistics of the European Court of Human Rights including the annual surveys of activity and activity reports.
- The Court of Justice of the European Union Website provides a synopsis of the case law of the Court of

U.S. Supreme Court

- The Supreme Court Database
  Useful for scholarly and empirical research on the Supreme Court. Provides links for Supreme Court opinions from 1953-2008. Has an easy pulldown menu and check box search capability to find cases on particular topics.
- Stat Pack from SCOTUSblog
  Supreme Court statistics by term.
- The Supreme Court Amicus Curie Database
  This collection of datasets from Paul M. Collins, Jr. covers various aspects of amicus curie activity and the Supreme Court.
- The Judicial Research Initiative--U.S. Supreme Court Database
  Includes a number of datasets on the U.S. Supreme Court. Information contained includes five sets of variables that bear on the vote and opinion data that the specific dataset contains: identification, background, chronological, substantive, and outcome.
- Legal Language Explorer
  Create graphs showing the number of U.S. Supreme Court cases which used a certain word or phrase over time.

All States

- National Center for State Courts--Court Statistics Project
  The court statistics project collects and analyzes data relating to the work of state courts in the United States.
- State Supreme Court Data Project
  The State Supreme Court Data Project created a data base containing information on State Supreme Court decisions in all fifty states during their 1995 through 1998 sessions. This archive contains 21,000 decisions reached by over 400 state supreme court justices seated during those years.
- State Court Organization
  This collection from the Bureau of Justice Statistics serves as the primary source for detailed information on the structure and framework of the nation’s state trial and appellate courts.
- The Judicial Elections Data Initiative
  A collection of data on elections to state courts of last resort from 1990 to 2010.
U.S. Courts of Appeals, District and Bankruptcy Courts

- Federal Court Statistics
  Provides statistical data on the federal appellate, district, and bankruptcy courts; the probation and pretrial services systems; and other components of the U.S. courts.

- The Judicial Research Initiative—U.S. Appeals Courts Database
  Contains electronic datasets of court cases, measures of judicially relevant phenomena, working papers on important topics, and links to other websites containing law and judicial politics information on the U.S. Courts of Appeals.
  more...

- Bankruptcy Statistics
  Statistics on bankruptcy petition filings are available for 12-month and 3-month periods ending September 30 (the fiscal year), December 31 (the calendar year), March 31, and June 30. Tables dating back to 1990s—and sometimes earlier are available.

Law Schools and the Legal Profession
About the Profession

- Law Firm Economic and Technology Surveys
- ABA Technology Survey
- The Small Law Firm Economic Survey
  Annual. Conducted by Altman & Weil, Inc. KF301 .S53. Includes data on billable hours and attorney compensation.
- The Survey of Law Firm Economics
  Annual. Conducted by Altman & Weil, Inc. Includes data on billable hours and attorney compensation.
- The Small Law Firm Economic Survey
  Annual. Conducted by Altman & Weil, Inc. KF301 .S85
- Also see Altman Weil Economic Surveys, above

Salary Information

- The Association for Legal Career Professionals
  Information on legal employment and recruiting, salaries, and professional development.
- National Compensation Survey
  Narrow search by geographical area, type of occupation and work level to see data about average salaries.
- Occupational Outlook Handbook
  Job outlook, projection, and earnings data.
- Salary.com
  Salaries by job title, zip code, and company size.
- Law Firm Rankings and Surveys
- Avery Index
  Firm rankings by city, popularity, practice area, and lists such as best hours, most family friendly and others.
- Crain's Cleveland Business Book of Lists
  See the last issue of each year. A list of Cleveland law firms ranked by number of local attorneys. Print: HF3163.C6 B66
- LawFirmStats.com
  View data and rankings for firms by name or region. "We provide complete reports and rankings of over 700 major law firms based on profitability, practice areas, salaries, summer associate programs, employment, pro bono activity, and much more."
  Job listings included
- Law.com
  Surveys, lists and rankings of law firm performance and legal technology including AmLaw 100, the National Law Journal 250, the Summer Associate Survey, and MidLevel Associates Score...