

## Guidelines for Preparing InSITE Annotations

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InSITE URL: <http://library2.lawschool.cornell.edu/insiteasp/>

The following guidelines are used when evaluating a website for inclusion in InSITE. The guidelines are grouped into four categories: content characteristics, presentation characteristics, fee-based availability, and functional availability.

### I. Content characteristics

- A. Who is responsible for the content of the website? Whether an individual or an organization, the party (or parties) responsible for the content of the website should be stated in the annotation.
- B. What is the purpose of the site? The purpose of the site should be included in the annotation and can be paraphrased or quoted from the website. Quoted material is enclosed within quotation marks.
- C. What is the scope of the information? Does the website address a specific topic or is its coverage intended to be broad? Is it limited by language and/or jurisdiction? Is the site available in more than one language?
- D. Does the site contain original content or is it a “meta” site, i.e., a set of pointers to other sites?
- E. Assess the accuracy and currency of the content. Look for dates that say something like: “Last updated on ... “
- F. Does the site have a search engine? The presence of a search engine as well as its degree of efficacy should be noted in the annotation.
- G. Identify and describe any special features associated with the site, such as an e-mail list or a special database.

Optional: Who is the target audience ? Is there an obvious slant toward practitioners, law professors or law students?

### II. Presentation characteristics

- A. How is the site organized? Explain the structure of the site. Is it well-organized? Is the information presented in a logical arrangement?
- B. Is it easy to navigate? Does the site effectively incorporate navigational features such as tables of contents, site maps, back buttons, etc.?
- C. Evaluate the website’s use of graphics. Are graphics used effectively or are they a needless distraction and a drain on bandwidth? Will the page take an inordinately long time to load on machines with slow connections?

- D. Does the provider maintain a separate text-only version? Are there any special features to accommodate users with disabilities?
- E. Do users need specific helper applications to take full advantage of the site? If so, annotators are asked to specify what these are.

Optional: Is the site pleasant to look at stylistically and graphically?

### III. Fee-based availability

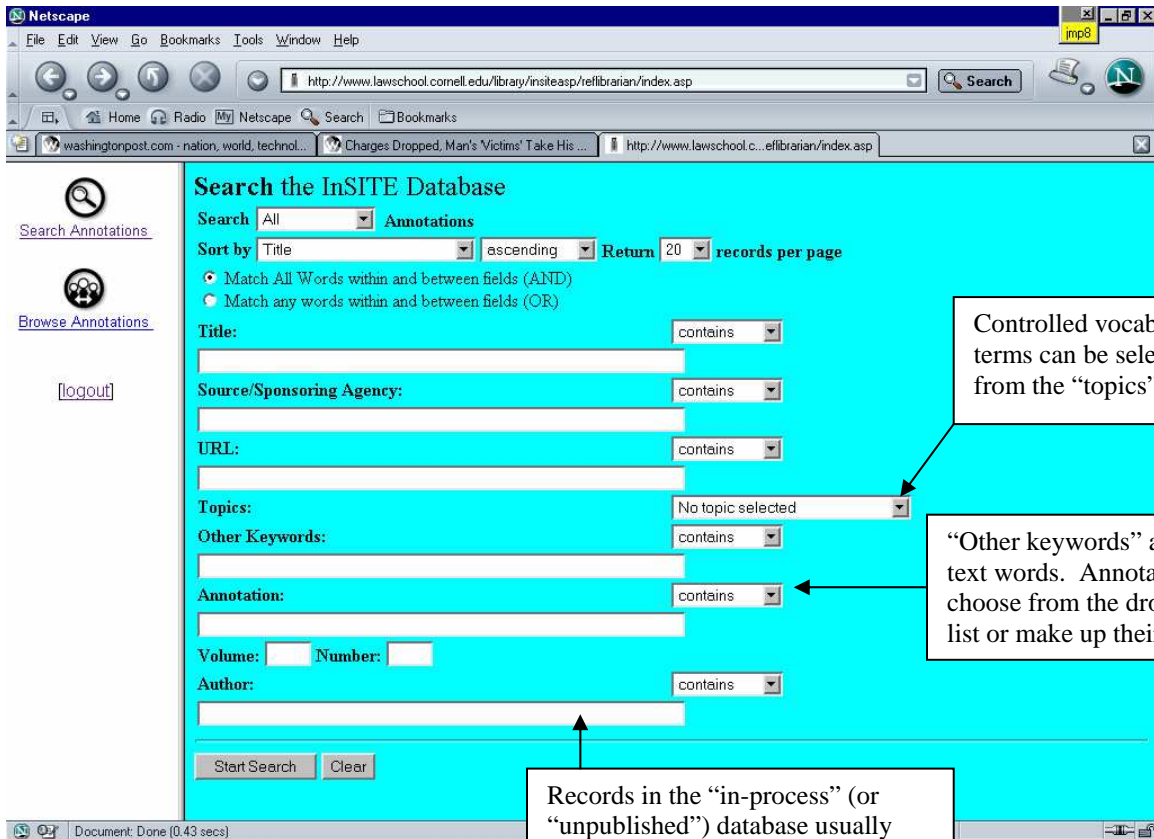
If users are charged for the information provided by a website, be sure to indicate that in your annotation. In general, sites that are solely fee-based are not selected for inclusion in InSITE; however, we do occasionally include sites that are partially fee-based and partially free.

### IV. Functional availability

Check the links at a site to make sure they are functional. If a substantial portion of the links are not functional, bring this to the attention of the InSITE editor.

### **Information about the structure of the InSITE database**

The InSITE database is a Microsoft Access database that is served over the Web. It is divided into two parts, the “published” database, and the “unpublished” database. These are sometimes also referred to as the “production” database and the “in process” database, respectively. InSITE contributors have access to the “administrative” interface to InSITE, which allows them to create and edit annotations, and to see annotations which have not been published. The public, of course, can view only the finished product via the public interface. Access to the administrative interface is password-controlled.



Controlled vocabulary terms can be selected from the "topics" list.

"Other keywords" are free-text words. Annotators may choose from the drop-down list or make up their own.

Records in the "in-process" (or "unpublished") database usually say "proposed" in the author field.