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## **I heard it through the grapevine : what do we really know about how lawyers research?**

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In the nineties there was a range of articles predicting uncertainty and instability in law as a result of online access to research resources. The ability to retrieve materials unmediated by editorial processes would undermine the hierarchical organisation of legal information leading to a 'collapse of the legal universe'. However history reveals the challenge of unstructured access to law and overabundance of authority has been a concern for generations. It is an issue which has recently been thrown into relief by Internet research but this is not necessarily a novel situation. While there has been a rapid change in information technology the profession has demonstrated resilience now, as it has in the past. It seems that information transactions amongst the profession exist one step removed from the medium. This is not to say that texts aren't important. They're an essential element of the professional information armoury. But the relationship





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between texts and the profession is more subtle and complex than we might assume. This presentation will refer to the history of law reporting, specific judgments, recent literature and field research.

