



A JOINT VENTURE BETWEEN  
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AMERICA'S OPERATING SYSTEM

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## **1.8 Million Pages of U.S. Case Law Available Now for Developers**

### **No Restrictions on Reuse**

FEBRUARY 11, 2008—Creative Commons and Public.Resource.Org announced today that the first revision of a substantial corpus of U.S. federal case law is available for download by developers. The files are all clearly marked with the new Creative Commons CCØ label, indicating that the contents are Works of the United States Government and are thus free of copyright or other restrictions for their dissemination and reuse.

Developers may access this information at the following URL:

<http://bulk.resource.org/courts.gov/>

Today's release covers all U.S. Supreme Court decisions and all Courts of Appeals decisions from 1950 on. The release is equivalent to 1,858 volumes of case law in book form, a stack of books 348 feet tall.

The files have all been converted to the XHTML standard and make extensive use of CSS style sheets to allow developers to build new search engines and user interfaces. Since the U.S. Courts do not yet digitally sign their documents, a SHA1 hash is provided on their behalf.

The source of this case law is a transaction previously announced with Fastcase, Inc., a leading provider of American legal research tools. Public.Resource.Org and Creative Commons were represented by the Electronic Frontier Foundation in this transaction.

Purchase of this valuable data was made possible by generous donations from a group that includes the Omidyar Network and several individuals including David Boies, the Elbaz Family Foundation, and John Gilmore.

David Boies, whose distinguished career includes service as Special Trial Counsel for the US Department of Justice in its antitrust suit against Microsoft, and who represented former Vice President Al Gore in connection with litigation relating to the Florida vote count in the 2000 election, had this to say:

Practical access for all Americans to legal cases and material is essential to the rule of law. The Legal Commons is an important step in reducing the barriers to effective representation of average citizens and public interest advocates.

The data from Fastcase is one of several sources emerging for unrestricted case law. William S. Hein & Co. has contributed high-quality scans of the 30 volumes of the Federal Cases, which are the earliest records of the courts before the Federal Reporter was created. Justia, Inc. has contributed over 50,000 "PACER" documents, which include the current decisions of district courts.

The cases made available to developers today will be used throughout the Internet. For example, the AltLaw service from Columbia and Colorado Law Schools has announced they will incorporate the information in their free service. Creative Commons and Public.Resource.Org are donating a copy of the data to the U.S. Courts and the Government Printing Office for their archives. A number of commercial legal research providers have announced they will also incorporate this data in their services.

Creation of an unencumbered repository of federal case law is a goal announced jointly by Public.Resource.Org and Creative Commons as part of an effort to build a Legal Commons. The Fastcase transaction is the first of a series of initiatives to be announced in the upcoming months with a goal of creating a distributed, sustainable, unencumbered system for accessing the law.

According to Lawrence Lessig, a professor of law at Stanford University and the CEO of Creative Commons:

Just as markets are premised on the free flow of information, so is our democratic system of government. Creative Commons is proud to be working with Public.Resource.Org to deliver this important governmental and judicial material back into the public domain.

This initial release of the data will undergo a 30-day Request for Comment period, during which the XML format, the CSS markup, the SHA1 signatures, and other aspects of the formatting and packaging will be discussed and tested. Additional enhancements scheduled for subsequent releases including citation identification and resolution and pagination.

According to Carl Malamud of Public.Resource.Org:

Developers and interested members of the public are invited to join our open discussion group which will evaluate the format of this public domain data. These cases and codes are America's operating system and for the first time Americans can use them with freedom.

MEDIA CONTACTS	
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#### **About Creative Commons**

Creative Commons is a not-for-profit organization, founded in 2001, that promotes the creative re-use of intellectual and artistic works, whether owned or in the public domain. Through its free copyright licenses, Creative Commons offers authors, artists, scientists, and educators the choice of a flexible range of protections and freedoms that build upon the "all rights reserved" concept of traditional copyright to enable a voluntary "some rights reserved" approach. Creative Commons was built with and is sustained by the generous support of organizations including the Center for the Public Domain, the Omidyar Network, The Rockefeller Foundation, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, as well as members of the public. For more information about Creative Commons, visit <http://creativecommons.org>.

#### **About Public.Resource.Org**

Public.Resource.Org is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded in 2007 to create public works projects for the Internet.

#### **About Fastcase, Inc.**

Fastcase is the leading American provider of next-generation legal research, making the law accessible to more people by providing the national law library at a fraction of the cost of traditional companies. Using patented software that combines the best of legal research with the best of Web search, Fastcase helps busy legal professionals sift through the clutter, ranking the best cases first and enabling users to re-sort results to find answers fast. Founded in 1999, Fastcase has more than 275,000 paid subscribers from around the world. It is an American company based in Washington, D.C. For more information, visit [www.fastcase.com](http://www.fastcase.com).

#### **About Justia, Inc.**

Justia Inc. is a legal media and technology company focused on making legal information, resources and services easy to find on the Internet. Justia provides Internet users with free case law, codes, regulations, legal articles and legal blog databases, as well as community resources. The company also provides legal blog and Web development services for law firms, educational, public interest and other socially-focused organizations.

#### **About William S. Hein & Co.**

William S. Hein & Co., Inc. has been serving the library community for more than 80 years as a legal publisher, reprinter, subscription agent, and secondhand book dealer. As the world's largest distributor of legal periodicals, combined with our extensive reprint publishing program which provides access to previously unavailable legal classics and United States Government and United Nations documents, researchers regularly turn to Hein for their secondary legal research needs.

#### **About EFF**

The Electronic Frontier Foundation is the leading civil liberties organization working to protect rights in the digital world. Founded in 1990, EFF actively encourages and challenges industry and government to support free expression and privacy online. EFF is a member-supported organization and maintains one of the most linked-to websites in the world at <http://www.eff.org/>