

Innovations in Teaching Boundary Research

by

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Boundary law is a foundation course for a surveying program. As part of a boundary law course, the procedure for researching public records is taught. Traditionally, this has involved teaching the procedure using notes and pictures in the classroom. Students practice the procedure taught in the classroom by traveling to a town office and county registry of deeds.

Recent trends have municipalities and registries making all or part of their records accessible using the web. Web access has provided new opportunities for bringing relevant property records into the classroom. Now it is possible to show students real-time tax assessor maps, tax information, and registry information within the classroom at the same time the research procedure is being explained.

Using an LCD projector and computer, the instructor can begin with the name and property address of a landowner to represent a fictitious client. All the landowners in the municipality are available to the students. Students can see how the landowner's deed book, page number, and tax parcel number are found using on-line tax records. Next the tax assessor's maps (or GIS database) can be displayed and the landowner's parcel located. Adjoining tax parcel numbers are identified from the map. Finally, the tax parcel numbers can be used to get the names, addresses, deed books, and page numbers pertinent to the adjoining properties.

With a couple of key strokes, the registry of deeds can be revealed on the web. Grantor/grantee indices can be accessed using all or part of the current or former landowners' name. Deeds can be viewed on-line by employing either the book and page, document number, or landowner's name.

The ease and availability of public records on-line provide new opportunities to bring realistic examples into the classroom and help students understand the procedures for record research.

For those readers interested in viewing examples of on-line information, examine one of the following:

Tax Information	Assessor Maps	Registry Information	Town	County, NH
http://www.ci.durham.nh.us/DEPARTMENTS/assessing_office/assessing.html	http://www.ci.durham.nh.us/	http://www.nhdeeds.com/stfd/web/start.htm	Durham	Stafford, NH
http://data.visionappraisal.com/SacoME/	http://www.sacomaine.org/departments/assessor/graphic_menu_main.shtml	http://www.york.me.us.landata.com/	Saco	York, ME
http://data.visionappraisal.com/barharborme/	http://www.ci.bar-harbor.me.us/assessment/	http://24.198.44.126:1234/ROD_2003/tab_pages/tabframes.html	Bar Harbor	Hancock, ME

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