



DATE DOWNLOADED: Thu Jan 20 11:15:39 2022

SOURCE: Content Downloaded from [HeinOnline](#)

Citations:

Bluebook 21st ed.

Teresa Miguel-Stearns, A World without Email: Reimagining Work in an Age of Communication Overload, 113 LAW LIBR. J. 224 (2021).

ALWD 7th ed.

Teresa Miguel-Stearns, A World without Email: Reimagining Work in an Age of Communication Overload, 113 Law Libr. J. 224 (2021).

APA 7th ed.

Miguel-Stearns, T. (2021). World without Email: Reimagining Work in an Age of Communication Overload. Law Library Journal, 113(3), 224-226.

Chicago 17th ed.

Teresa Miguel-Stearns, "A World without Email: Reimagining Work in an Age of Communication Overload," Law Library Journal 113, no. 3 (Summer 2021): 224-226

McGill Guide 9th ed.

Teresa Miguel-Stearns, "A World without Email: Reimagining Work in an Age of Communication Overload" (2021) 113:3 Law Libr J 224.

AGLC 4th ed.

Teresa Miguel-Stearns, 'A World without Email: Reimagining Work in an Age of Communication Overload' (2021) 113 Law Library Journal 224.

MLA 8th ed.

Miguel-Stearns, Teresa. "A World without Email: Reimagining Work in an Age of Communication Overload." Law Library Journal, vol. 113, no. 3, Summer 2021, p. 224-226. HeinOnline.

OSCOLA 4th ed.

Teresa Miguel-Stearns, 'A World without Email: Reimagining Work in an Age of Communication Overload' (2021) 113 Law Libr J 224

Provided by:

Daniel F. Cracchiolo Law Library

-- Your use of this HeinOnline PDF indicates your acceptance of HeinOnline's Terms and Conditions of the license agreement available at

<https://heinonline.org/HOL/License>

-- The search text of this PDF is generated from uncorrected OCR text.

-- To obtain permission to use this article beyond the scope of your license, please use:

[Copyright Information](#)

¶25 *Lyrics in the Law* is a fun and easy book to browse through, and there are so many ways to read it: cover to cover, skipping to your favorite genres, or browsing for your favorite artists. For each quotation, Klingensmith provides a brief background of the case and explains where the musical quotation comes into play. I was pleased to see at least one judge had quoted a song by my favorite artist, Tom Waits. The line, “What the large print giveth, the small print taketh away” from “Step Right Up” appears in a products liability case involving insurance coverage.

¶26 I am always on the lookout for any pop culture references in case law to sprinkle into my lesson plans, and *Lyrics in the Law* will offer me some fun examples to draw from for future classes. Even though the book is lengthy, I was surprised by the dearth of cases under some of the chapter headings. The hip hop chapter, for instance, was disappointingly short. I hope judges continue to refer to song lyrics, giving Klingensmith material for a second edition. And, if they skew away from the familiar, well-trodden bands and songs that Baby Boomers and Generation Xers know best in favor of more modern artists, that would be fine with me, too.

¶27 One thing I would change about this book would be to place the case citations and additional comments in footnotes rather than endnotes after each chapter. Nevertheless, this entertaining book would make an excellent addition to academic law library and university library collections. I hope other music, pop culture, and legal researchers discover and enjoy this meticulously researched labor of love as much as I did.

Newport, Cal. *A World Without Email: Reimagining Work in an Age of Communication Overload*. New York: Portfolio/Penguin, 2021. 296p. \$27.

*Reviewed by Teresa Miguel-Stearns\**

¶28 Cal Newport has been writing about how we work for several years. His books, articles, and op-eds push us to find ways to engage in *Deep Work* (2016) and embrace *Digital Minimalism* (2019). His latest book, *A World Without Email*, expounds on several pieces he has written for the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the *New York Times*, and the *New Yorker*, in which he explains why the way we work today is counterproductive and needs to change. As the title of his new book suggests, Newport, a data science professor at Georgetown University, takes aim at email—that once-beloved miracle that reconnected us with distant relatives and grammar school pals turned indispensable tool we love to hate.

¶29 Newport coined the phrase “hyperactive hive mind” to describe one’s mental state while constantly checking email, engaging in chat, and bouncing from one technology-based activity to another. The inability to engage in deep work while the hyperactive hive mind is working overtime is not earth-shattering news. We have witnessed the transition in the last 20 years from a workplace culture that afforded large blocks of

\* © Teresa Miguel-Stearns, 2021. Associate Dean, Legal Information Innovation; Director, Law Library; and Professor of Law, Daniel F. Cracchiolo Law Library, James E. Rogers College of Law, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona.

uninterrupted time to a place where one is fortunate to have a single block of time during the week, much less every day. We have seen, as Newport so poignantly observes, our “workdays devolve into Sisyphean battles against [our] inboxes” (p.xv).

¶30 As a result, many of us rely on early mornings, late evenings, and weekends for those significant blocks of uninterrupted time to engage in meaningful writing and reflection away from technological interruptions. At the same time, and even more so during the pandemic, we spend much of our “free time” simply catching up on email so that we start the next day, week, or month without a nagging bold number next to Inbox.

¶31 We have heard this before. We have even implemented some of Newport’s ideas in our libraries with varying degrees of success. We know we are working in a hyperactive hive mind environment; we just haven’t figured out how to manage it. Disappointingly, Newport does not give us solutions, not for *our* kind of work.

¶32 Newport sorts knowledge sector workers into two discrete categories: (1) high-level specialists and (2) support staff. High-level specialists are, for example and for the benefit of this audience, faculty whose output is paramount to the success of the institution as well as their own. Support staff make up administrative units such as faculty assistants, human resources, and marketing.

¶33 With these two types of knowledge workers in mind, Newport invokes mid-20th century management theorist Peter Drucker, who coined the term “knowledge work” (p.89). Drucker advocated for knowledge workers’ autonomy over how to accomplish their tasks, with managers providing only the objectives and goals. Newport argues that managers have taken autonomy too far in allowing employees to determine *how to organize* their work. According to Newport, leaving the workflows entirely to the individual causes employees to fall into the hyperactive hive mind trap.

¶34 Newport is clearly onto something, but he fails to acknowledge an entire class of workers I call “hybrid knowledge workers.” Hybrid knowledge workers, such as librarians, provide intellectually demanding support to faculty and other patrons while teaching and pursuing their own research agendas. A library’s core mission is service, but an academic librarian’s career depends on knowledge work and output as well.

¶35 Libraries do not fit squarely within Newport’s examples of workplaces that will thrive once employees are freed of their inboxes. Newport’s knowledge workers are either individual contributors or members of project teams with a singular task. They can and should rely on project boards such as Trello rather than email to track their work. Just-in-time service to faculty, students, administrators, and other library patrons is what drives daily work in an academic library—and often the hyperactive hive mind.

¶36 I submit that we are moving in the right direction and must continue to experiment with workflows, as Newport suggests. Many libraries already implement some of Newport’s ideas. For example, we employ ticketing systems for reference questions and research support, use project boards for collaborative project and committee work, schedule “focus time” to free up blocks of time for deep work, and follow email best practices. But these measures have not reduced email to a manageable level, especially in this time of COVID and especially from our patrons and constituents outside our immediate library colleagues. We need to do more and be more creative.

¶37 Here's one idea: Daimler AG, the German company that makes Mercedes-Benz, implemented a unique strategy for vacationing employees: an out-of-office reply telling the sender the intended recipient is on holiday and the email will not reach the inbox. The vacationing worker's inbox auto-deletes all incoming emails, and the sender is instructed to resend at a later date or contact another employee. The worker returns from vacation to the same inbox they left. Ingenious—for those on vacation.

¶38 What about day to day? I don't have a ready solution, and neither does Newport. Fully remote work due to COVID has only fueled the hyperactive hive mind environment, and the likely continuation of remote work in some form will require library managers to think strategically about the role of email in our workdays.

¶39 Librarians might be the most perfect example of hybrid knowledge workers—and this may be a self-serving, naïve, even ignorant declaration. But, I cannot think of another group of knowledge workers who, like academic librarians, are so evenly split between service as their core mission and scholarly output as a necessary career requirement. These dueling demands require a different approach to solving the hyperactive hive mind problem generally, and email inundation specifically, so that we can meet both demands superbly. As a result, this book is best suited to collections with a focus on interdisciplinary business titles.

Palmer, Vernon Valentine. *The Lost Translators of 1808 and the Birth of Civil Law in Louisiana*. Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 2021. 139p. \$54.95.

*Reviewed by Susan Gaultier\**

¶40 The Digest of Orleans, drafted in French, was the first civil code of the territory of Louisiana. Its translation, the first such civil code written in English, gave birth to a vocabulary of the civil law in English still used today. In *The Lost Translators of 1808 and the Birth of Civil Law in Louisiana*, Vernon Palmer sets out two goals: first, to identify the two unknown translators of the Digest of Orleans of 1808; and second, to place their translation in the legal and historical context of the birth of Louisiana's legal system. The result is an entertaining tale of two unique personalities, paired with an insightful evaluation of the long-criticized, yet tremendously important, translation of the Digest.

¶41 The translators' names have, until now, remained unknown. Palmer's search for them centers on a list of contributors printed in a statute on April 14, 1807. Marshalling evidence such as the timing of the statute, the amounts paid, and the circumstances surrounding their careers and connections, Palmer identifies the translators as Henry Paul Nugent and Auguste Davezac de Castera. He then shares brief biographies of Nugent, a mercurial teacher, dancer, translator, and satirical writer, and Davezac, a highly respected lawyer, translator, and politician. Palmer makes available to curious readers selected writings of both translators in an appendix.

¶42 The second half of the book evaluates the translation in the context of the birth of the Louisiana civil law. The translation was harshly criticized almost from its

---

\* © Susan Gaultier, 2021. Reference and FCIL Librarian, University of Pennsylvania Carey School of Law, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.