# Welcome to LVI 2012

**Friends:**

Welcome to Ithaca, New York, home of Cornell University, the Cornell Law School, and the Legal Information Institute. It's a great time of year to be here -- no snow yet, and not too hot -- and we hope you'll have a chance to look around the area a bit.

We're delighted that so many of you were able to join us for an exciting few days of learning, sharing, networking and socializing. We've been at work on the conference for over a year, doing our very best to ensure that everybody has a terrific experience here -- and comes away with information you can put to work in your own operations.

*Practical stuff*
This packet contains most of the information you'll need to make the most of your stay with us, including the full conference program, maps, bus schedules, and other information that you should review to help plan your visit. The most up-to-date information - along with links to maps, helpful tips for activities for your companions, and other handy stuff -- is on the website at http://www.lvi2012.org/fyi

*Thank-yous (I know you normally skip over these, but don't -- these folks are important!)*
There are some organizations and individuals I'd like to thank publicly for their support of this event:

- the Track Chairs, Headliners, and Keynote Speakers who gave their time to ensure that the content is intellectually stimulating and professionally enriching;
- our sponsors -- Justia, Fastcase, and Legitech -- whose financial support helped offset fees for attendees;
- Arnold & Porter LLC, and The Morrison and Foerster Foundation. As donors to our scholarship fund, they enabled several students and participants in economic distress to attend this conference.
- the Cornell Law School and Cornell University for their continued financial and intellectual support of the work we do. And finally,
- above all, the LII staff, past and present. Sara, Paul, Dan, Wayne, Dave, Brian, and Mohammad have all contributed enormously to the quality of this gathering. It is the culmination of 20 years' work by literally hundreds of individuals.
- Val Kimber, who has worked above and beyond the call of duty to make this event happen for all of us.
- not least, you! Thanks for coming, and for your participation in what is to come.

*Why we're here, and what we'll do*
I'm going to crib from a blog post I wrote a few months back:

The theme is "good ideas about putting law on the Internet, from all over the world". The main points we were thinking about when we hatched the conference are six:



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- The small group that led the trend toward open access to legal information is now a vanishingly small part of the community that is providing open access to law via the Internet. That community has members who are situated in government, in non-profit organizations, in for-profit organizations that offer legal information freely as a kind of service to their audience, and in every other kind of institutional setting you can imagine.
- Once upon a time, "legal information" meant "judicial opinions". Now we are faced with the much more difficult task of making statutes, regulations, and other materials available in a timely way.
- Technology has not stood still. Linked Data and other Semantic Web techniques offer substantial opportunities and even greater challenges. Developments in digital librarianship in other fields are substantial and useful, but largely unused within the legal-information world.
- The community of people with an interest in legal information as a socio-technical phenomenon is larger than ever. It takes in librarians, information scientists, businesspeople, government officials, policymakers and policy advocates, social and political scientists, and many, many others.
- The sustainability challenges that face open access are substantial. ("Sustainability" is a polite, non-profit phrase that means "business," and, increasingly, "how to buy groceries when your customers don't pay for your service"). It is, let's face it, hard to develop revenue streams when you give away your product. Open-access providers outside of government, and sometimes inside it, are developing innovative models to pay for open access on behalf of those who actually make use of their services.
- The national contexts in which all of these challenges are posed and met are hugely different — in history, in legal context, and in priorities.

There is much that we can learn from each other. LVI2012 is meant to be an opportunity for that. While we have Clay Shirky, Richard Susskind, and an impressive, global crew of experts giving talks and chairing and headlining tracks, the real expertise will be among the attendees. We've paid attention to that in the way we've structured the schedule. This won't just be a parade of people reading papers. There is lots of time for conversation, and we put a premium on exchange. We have allowed a full half hour between hour-long sessions throughout the conference. This is not so you will have enough time to get to your next session, but to encourage you to talk to others and share your experiences. And while the conference has been divided into themed "tracks" we encourage you to move freely between tracks as your interests dictate.

### And in conclusion...
Sure, it's the LII's 20th birthday, and we are excited to be celebrating it. But the real story of change over two decades is a story about an explosively growing community that provides people with information about the law that governs them, without fees. It's about what that community knows and how it knows it and how what it knows makes things better for people. It's about that community getting to know itself and what it can do and talking to itself about what it should do and how.

In other words, it's about you and your work. Thank you for joining us in Ithaca for this crowdsourced event.

All the best,
Tb.