

Report on Meeting with West Academic and HeinOnline

Date: November 7, 2025

Attendees:

- Shane Marmion
- Ben Boron
- Pamela Siege Chandler
- Elisabeth Umpleby
- Caroline Walters
- Steve Roses

Overview

Elisabeth Umpleby and Caroline Walters met with representatives from West Academic and HeinOnline to learn about their joint effort to preserve earlier editions of West Academic casebooks. The discussion addressed the origins of the project, the multi-year development process, the rights and permissions work required, and the broader pedagogical and scholarly motivations underlying the collaboration.

Background of the Collaboration

The preservation initiative originated in 2017, although it did not reach a fully viable implementation stage until 2024.

- The foundational agreement was negotiated by **Kevin Marmion** and **Chris Parton**.
- Kevin had initially identified some titles that he wanted to license which was part of the impetus to reach out to West Academic.
- The initial conversations date back to 2013, when West Academic branched off from Thomson Reuters. At that time, Kevin Marmion initiated contact with HeinOnline to explore options for preserving legacy casebook content.
- Before the formal agreement, West Academic had been publishing a bibliography and possessed a selection of out-of-copyright casebooks, which helped set the stage for a more systematic preservation initiative.
- A CRIV Roundtable ultimately helped catalyze and accelerate the final agreement.

Motivations Behind West Academic's Preservation Effort

When asked what inspired the project, West Academic representatives identified several core motivations:

1. Preserving Historical Content and Corporate Legacy

West Academic sought to ensure long-term preservation of its historical publications and editorial contributions to legal education.

- The company had maintained a physical archive in Eagan, Minnesota.
- West Academic was interested in Hein’s experience in digitization and managing archives.
- These materials were later transferred to a climate-controlled facility in Kentucky to support long-term preservation and digitization workflows.

2. Rights, Permissions, and Author Royalties

A substantial component of the project involved verifying and managing rights:

- Confirming copyright ownership
- Securing necessary permissions
- Addressing author royalties

This rights-management process was extensive and represented one of the most labor-intensive aspects of the collaboration.

3. Service to the Academic Community

West Academic staff described themselves as “pedagogy nerds” with a deep interest in the history and evolution of legal teaching. They emphasized that part of their motivation was providing what they explicitly termed a “**service to the academy.**” This reflected:

- Their interest in documenting and making visible changes in law pedagogy over time
- Their close and longstanding working relationships with legal faculty
- Their sense of identity as partners to the academic community rather than conventional vendors

Conclusion

The collaboration between West Academic and HeinOnline represents a significant investment in the preservation of historic casebook materials. It required years of negotiation, complex rights verification, archival transfers, and a sustained commitment to supporting legal education. Both organizations view the project not only as a preservation initiative but as an important scholarly contribution and a “service to the academy.”