TRAVEL LAW QUARTERLY – CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROFESSIONAL LITERATURE OVER SIX YEARS

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A thematic content analysis of the six years (187 authored articles) of Travel Law Quarterly was conducted to explore the journal’s contribution to the professional literature.

The Travel Law Quarterly (hereafter TLQ) is published four times a year in March, June, September and December by Oakhurst Academic Press in conjunction with Nova Southeastern University, Florida. Commencing in 2009 TLQ filled a gap left in the professional literature with the closing after 15 years of the International Travel Law Journal, a publication also led by the current TLQ Editor-in-Chief Professor David Grant.

The TLQ’s synopsis appearing on the website describes it as:

... aimed at a diverse readership: travel industry professionals, travel lawyers, regulators, academics and students of travel law – both in the UK and abroad. It covers all aspects of travel law: travel agency, tour operations, cruise law, air law, timeshare, hotel law, as well as the regulation and licensing of the travel industry (accessed 11 October 2014 from http://www.travellawquarterly.co.uk/).

The stated aim of the TLQ is to publish articles written in plain English on the whole range of travel law topics from the widest perspective. Guidance is provided on the scope of the field:

“Travel law is about the relationship that exists between the consumer of travel products, i.e., tourists or travellers and the suppliers of those products ....... Essentially travel law is an aspect of consumer law, encompassing primarily the law of contract but also some tort and some regulatory aspects of criminal law. There are also EU directives and international treaties which have a direct impact on travel law such as the Package Travel Directive, the Montreal Convention and the Athens Convention. Articles on all these aspects of travel law will be welcome.”

The TLQ employs a review process for manuscripts, charges no publication fees, and has an editorial board comprising which has comprised up to 18 lawyers, including: 12 from the United Kingdom, 4 from the United States, 1 from Australia and 1 from Germany. The editorial board includes 7 academics and 11 practitioners.

In addition to publishing travel law articles over a 6 year period (2009-2014) the TLQ acts as a resource for practitioners. It is the journal of the International Bar Association (IBA) Leisure Industries Section and publishes their Newsletter. TLQ also publishes a Digest in each issue, a compilation of news and recent developments in law and practice in the travel industry from around the world. From time to time the TLQ also publishes ABTA Guidance – important
information for operators from the UK’s leading travel association. Finally, the website stores legislation, cases from various jurisdictions, commission decisions and government reports that are all available free of charge. In 2013 TLQ Online was launched, publishing free articles that complement those found in the hard copy of the TLQ.

A consideration of the contextual information on the website reveals that the TLQ has a number of values and priorities related to travel law, including:

- Publishing topics of interest and relevance to a wide readership
- Providing detailed analysis and commentary of current issues in the field
- Reporting on recent court decisions across jurisdictions
- Case studies
- Advocating for consumers
- Contributing to the continuous improvement of legislation and regulations, and
- Providing interdisciplinary perspectives on travel law topics.

For this study we conducted a content analysis of the publication to date, in order to reflect on the success of the TLQ in meeting these values and priorities. We present the findings as a visual folksonomy¹, in the form of a tag cloud.

Method

This analysis of the TLQ is based on an inductive research methodology using computer-aided analysis of the content of all authored articles, examining themes and concepts and their relationships. The generation of a tag cloud provides insights into the contents of the journal and its contribution to the professional literature.

TLQ articles were accessed in October 2014. At this time there were five complete volumes (1–5), each with four issues per year, and three issues of volume 6 had been published. In

Table 1: Articles in Travel Law Quarterly

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Volume</th>
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<th>Issue 2</th>
<th>Issue 3</th>
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* With one letter words removed
* The difference in the word counts between Word & Excel depends on the slightly different algorithms used.
* With two letter words removed
* With the remaining 100 OED most common words removed

1. A folksonomy is a classification system derived from user-generated electronic tags or keywords that annotate and describe online content. This practice is also known as collaborative tagging, social classification or social indexing.
total, 187 authored articles were included in this analysis. Not included were the editorials, Digests, IBA Leisure Industries Newsletters, ABTA Guidance, TLQ Online articles or other reports that were not from contributing authors (e.g. reproductions of government reports or advisories). Table 1 shows the distribution of articles and word counts for the 23 volumes.

The 187 articles had a total of 222 authors, with 34 articles having two authors and one article with three authors (see Table 2). Articles from the United Kingdom predominated, followed by the United States, Australia and Canada. Thirteen countries were represented.

All 187 articles were converted from PDF format to Microsoft Word to allow for the removal of headers (including the title of the journal), footers, references and other formatting graphics (rules), figures, author details, acknowledgments and notes. The contents of each volume were then converted to plain text, and entered into a word frequency counter (http://www.writewords.org.uk/word_count.asp). These results were returned to Microsoft Excel for analysis and comparison, and at this point, the results of all the volumes were combined.

The first stage of this research was the generation of a tag cloud, which is a visualization of word frequencies. Essentially, the most common terms are presented in a format that allows frequency to be depicted by the size and other features of the font, rather than the typical graphic presentations that occur in frequency tables and charts of varying types. This style of presentation has been widely used in computer graphics as a way of providing a picture of the contents of a resource or website.

Tag clouds also enable readers to scan the relational values presented to determine if the site content is of relevance and interest. This is the focal aspect of the tag cloud in this study. Here the tag cloud is used to reflect on how well the TLQ has achieved its aims and contributed to the professional literature. The technique has been used successfully in recent investigations of historical documents from a professional association\(^2\) and assessing the content and reach of an educational journal.\(^3\) Finally, the same textual data set was investi-

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Tag cloud

After removing the 100 most common OED words⁴, words of particularly low semantic value and auxiliary verbs (was, are, had, were, has, been, should, must, did, does) were also removed. Where words appeared as a singular (airline) and a plural (airlines), or different tenses of a verb cause, caused, they were combined. In order to create a visual representation, the frequency of each of 100 most common remaining words were divided by the total number of most common words (46065) and then multiplied by 1500 to give a point size large enough to see. Thus, the most common term, court(s), has a frequency of 1862 (out of the 46065, 100 most common words) giving a point size of \( \frac{1862}{46065} \times 1500 = 61 \text{ pt.} \)

Therefore court is displayed at 61 pt, and might (frequency of 252) at 8 pt.

Figure 1 presents the tag cloud of the most frequent words appearing in the TLQ. Of immediate note for a journal that promotes consumer law is the frequency of the words ‘consumer’, ‘passenger’, ‘case’ and ‘claim’, though overall the word ‘court’ is the most common. Elements of tort law are apparent in the tag cloud, with ‘injury’, ‘damage’ and ‘liability’ appearing with mid level frequency. ‘Air’, ‘airline’, ‘aircraft’, ‘flight’, ‘ship’ and

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⁴ The Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford University Press, 2014) http://www.oed.com/ provides a list of the 100 most common words used in the English language.
‘cruise’ appear frequently but not ‘car’, ‘bus’ or ‘train’ – perhaps reflecting on the more prominent modes of transport where travel law is involved. ‘Regulation’ is also highlighted, again reflecting the journal’s interest in the regulation and licensing of the travel industry.

Figure 2: Heat map of countries appearing in TLQ

Countries appearing in TLQ

The data set was then searched for appearance of country names, using the United Nations’ list of 193 member states. To be counted, the country term had to appear at least once in an article text in a volume (not footnotes, editorial, news digest, author information or advertisements).

While editorial board members’ countries seemed over-represented, they were not necessarily responsible for the appearance of their country in a volume. When a country is mentioned in an article, it can be for a small incident relevant to the article, rather than the article being about that place. A total of 91 countries were mentioned in the TLQ. The information is presented as a Heat Map in Figure 2, where the colour of the shaded area depicts the number of volumes where the country is mentioned.

Contribution to the professional literature

This report provides a snapshot of the *Travel Law Quarterly* based on a thematic content analysis of the 6 issues (187 authored articles) to date. The tag cloud generated from frequently appearing words confirms the journal’s predominant focus on consumer law, with ‘passenger’ and ‘consumer’ the fifth and sixth most mentioned words. A strong professional focus on the work of the ‘courts’ is also apparent, with ‘cases’ and ‘claims’ reflecting the TLQ priority of reporting on recent court decisions across jurisdictions. Other values and priorities of contributing to improvement of regulations and providing detailed analysis and commentary on current issues in the field are reflected in the tag cloud. For example, aviation as the dominant form of transport is highlighted. An interest in tort law is also apparent with ‘claim’ and ‘injury’ and to a lesser extent ‘damage’ and ‘liability’ being frequently mentioned. Finally, a current interest in ‘hotels’ and the importance of ‘service’ within the travel industry are captured in the tag cloud.

In terms of outreach, the TLQ published articles by 222 authors in the study period. A total of 91 countries were mentioned. Together the tag cloud and the heat map analysis show the TLQ has admirably achieved its objectives of catering to a diverse readership and covering all aspects of travel law.

Acknowledgment

We would like to thank Joy Reynolds for the data analysis.

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