CHAPTER 11: COMPUTER-ASSISTED LEGAL RESEARCH AND CD-ROM LEGAL DATABASES

CHAPTER OUTLINE

   A. Manual legal research
   B. Computer-Assisted Legal Research online legal databases
      1. Computer-Assisted Legal Research searches the words of cases, statutes, and comments
      2. Computer-Assisted Legal Research has several advantages, including finding cases manual methods may not have found, being faster than manual methods in cases, and being available 24 hours a day; the disadvantage to Computer-Assisted Legal Research is that it is expensive

II. Fee-Based Computer-Assisted Legal Research Services
   A. Fee-based services
      1. WESTLAW
      2. LexisNexis
      3. LoisLaw
      4. Itislaw
      5. Fastcase
      6. Versuslaw
         a. Determine which Computer-Assisted Legal Research service will be used
         b. Know what databases you want to access
         c. Know the name of the client the research is for
         d. Know the facts and issues of the case
         e. Know how you want the information delivered

III. WESTLAW
   A. WESTLAW is a legal full-text retrieval information service; WESTLAW has thousands of databases (17,000 currently) available for its users
   B. Accessing WESTLAW
   C. Welcome to WESTLAW screen
   D. Tabs and the Paralegal tab
   E. Find by citation
   F. Find a case by party name
   G. WESTLAW databases
   H. Creating and refining search queries in WESTLAW
      a. Identify keywords to be searched and any synonyms
      b. Identify the type of search to be performed
i. Natural language
ii. Terms and Connectors
iii. Common WESTLAW connectors include (see Exhibit 11-11)
   - OR (spacebar)
   - AND (&)
   - Paragraph (/p)
   - Sentence (/s)
   - Words (/n)
   - Phrase (“ “)
   - Precedes within the same sentence (+s)
   - Precedes within a number of words (+n)
   - BUT NOT (%)
iv. Expanders
   - Root expander (! – compan!)
   - Universal character (* - kn*w)

I. The synopsis
J. Searching terms and moving to additional cases (term command and best)
K. Distribution options
L. Locate in result
M. ResultsPlus
N. Headnotes and key numbers
O. KeySearch
P. KeyCite
Q. CourtDockets/document searching
R. Public records search
S. WESTLAW training

IV. LexisNexis
A. LexisNexis was the first online full-text legal information service; it includes thousands of databases for users to search in
B. Accessing LexisNexis
C. LexisNexis Research System tabs
D. Get by citation
E. Get by party name
F. LexisNexis Databases: LexisNexis has 19,000 databases to search in
G. Search queries in LexisNexis
   1. Natural language (LexisNexis sometimes refers to this as Freestyle)
   2. Terms and connectors: terms and connectors search LexisNexis by using
      Boolean logic and operators/connectors to connect terms to describe ideas
      (connectors show a relationship between keywords in a search query [see Exhibit 11-32])
      a. Common Lexis connectors include (see Exhibit 11-31) the following:
         i. OR (OR)
         ii. AND (AND)
         iii. Paragraph (w/p or /p)
         iv. Sentence (w/s or /s)
         v. Words (w/n or /n)
vi. Phrase (" ")

vii. Precedes by words (pre/n)

viii. AND NOT (AND NOT)

b. Expanders
   i. Root Expander
   ii. Root expander (! – Compan!)
   iii. Universal character (* - kn*w)

H. Easy Search
I. Suggest Terms for My Search
J. Display formats
   1. Cite
   2. KWIC
   3. Full
K. FOCUS
L. Headnotes
M. Search Advisor
N. Shepard’s Citations
O. CourtLink
P. Public records search
Q. Business information searches
R. LexisNexis training

V. Increased Productivity on Computer-Assisted Legal Research Systems
A. Do not read cases that you find online
B. Make sure you do not make typos when entering a search query, or the search will have to be redone, and you will waste time on the system
C. Always carefully plan the search so that you keep your online time to a minimum
D. Use the Computer-Assisted Legal Research’s attorneys
E. Do not consider alternative search queries while online

VI. CD-ROM Legal Databases
A. CD-ROM legal databases are databases such as WESTLAW and LexisNexis, but they are packaged on one or more CD-ROMs
B. It is much cheaper to purchase a CD-ROM database than it is to research online with WESTLAW and LexisNexis
C. Hundreds of CD-ROM databases are available for nearly all statutes, case law, and so forth
D. Most CD-ROM libraries use either the Premise or Folio Views search engine

VII. Ethical Considerations
A. When performing any kind of legal research, it is required that it be done competently so as to not compromise a client’s case
B. Attorneys have an ethical duty to inform the court of a legal authority that is detrimental to a client
C. Legal assistants should always cite their sources and not plagiarize other people’s work
### WEB LINKS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>PRODUCT/SERVICE</th>
<th>WORLD WIDE WEB ADDRESS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fastcase, Inc.</td>
<td>Fastcase, CALR (Computer-Assisted Legal Research) provider</td>
<td><a href="http://www.fastcase.com">http://www.fastcase.com</a></td>
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<td>Loislaw.com, Inc.</td>
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<td>VersusLaw, CALR provider</td>
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