Chapter 4 - The Internet and Telecommunications

Searching the Internet

There is a voluminous amount of information on the web, but how do you find it? In order to locate information on the web, one generally uses an on-line search engine such as Google, Yahoo, etc. One types in keywords and the on-line search engine searches its index of WWW pages and returns with appropriate hits. However, the returned number of web sites can be staggering.

One main directory of links for litigation can be found at Litigation Intelligence Links on eLawExchange (
 www.elawexchange.com
) where the web links are divided by the following categories:

- Business Research
- Associations
- Law Firms and Attorneys Search
- News
- People Search
- Standards
- Medical
- Automobiles
- Reference
- Time & Weather
- Maps
- Statistics
- Demographics
- Country Profiles
- Web Resources
- Damages & Settlements
- Court Rules & Dockets
- Government Agencies & Research
- Legislature
- Law Enforcement, Proc. Servers & Ct. Reptrs.
- Expert Witnesses (Other then E-Discovery)
- Legal Forms
- Legal Research
- Motions & Briefs
- Presentation, Speech & Writing

Below are some suggested steps to conducting research over the Web and limit the number of hits.

Other search engine tools:

GuruNet software analyzes the words surrounding a word in an e-mail, word processor, or spreadsheet

Autonomy enables one to access knowledge without stopping whatever else you are doing to add to or

When you activate Nano, it takes a snapshot of what's on your screen. Whether you're reading e-mail, a

-    Obtain as accurate and as much data about your subject as possible before beginning your search. What names/names of the individual, business, etc., are you going to search? Remember, you may want to enter more than one name such as Michael Smith, M. Smith, Mike Smith, J. Michael Smith, and so on. Check addresses as well as names.

-        You can start your search at a:
-         Metasite that focuses on information in one specific area – ethics (www.legalethics.com);   legal directory (www.hg.org)
, or law (
www.law.cornell.edu)
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-               Portal that is intended to be your home page when you start your browser. They generally offer significant content and numerous links and search engines and sometimes you can customize it to your needs. See iGoogle (http://www.google.com/ig   ).

-         Check the coverage limitations of the database and check out as many sources as possible. Select a few search engines and thoroughly understand their search protocols. Learn it well and check for changes. For example, one should always capitalize Boolean connectors like "AND" or "OR". To compare search engines, check out   www.searchenginewatch

[.com](#) . Some search
engines search across multiple engines and run consecutively, like
[www.dogpile.com](#)
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- Whatever you find, save the screen, printout, etc..

Some of the more popular WWW Search Engines.

- Google - [www.google.com](#)
- Yahoo - [www.yahoo.com](#)

Tips on searching

- Speed up access - turn off the automatic downloading of graphics in your browser.

- Use the find command on your browser to find information buried in a document you have found.
- The wider the bandwidth connection, the faster the search.
- Try to search at non-peak Internet usage time.
- Use bookmarks and keep them organized.
- Start with an specific engine directory search, like [eLawExchange](#) , unless you have an unusual word or phrase.

- Password protected sites, such as the Washington Post, are not indexed by search engines.
- PDF documents may not be indexed on the web.
- A successful complicated search request can be saved as a bookmark for future use.

- Don't search if you do not have to - sit back and subscribe to newsletters (free or fee based) to get the latest information in an area.
- Search engines like Lycos, AltaVista, and Infoseek let you limit your search to images on web sites.
- There are other specialized search engines, like www.dejanews.com that specializes in Usenet newsgroups, iSleuth.com has access to over 2000 searchable databases, and www.legalminds.com archives legal listserv discussions.
- Organizing bookmarks - Delicious (http://delicious.com/).

Agents or Bots

Agents or bots (short for "robots") is software that allows one to program an "agent" to do specific tasks. For example, if you wish the "agent" to check for all new 9th Circuit federal decisions that mention a specific statute, the agent will go everyday to the 9th circuit site or a different one to check if any new cases are available mentioning the statute and alert you if a new case is there. These same agents can be programmed to troll the Internet looking for relevant information in commercial on-line databases, news sources and Web sites and harvest information according to profiles set up by the user. They also can roam networks performing complex tasks for people such as filtering messages, scheduling meetings, retrieving news, shopping on-line, searching files and trading messages with another person's agent.

Notification to the users can be done via e-mail, alphanumeric page, or personalized web pages. For example, when the search is complete the agent can distribute the information on an Intranet that is then updated with the latest information including web pages, press releases about the firm's clients, and court decisions relating to a particular industry, etc. They have taken over the some of the work of paralegals and interns.