

Chapter 7 - Managing Litigation Information Using Technology

Full Text Document Search Considerations.

Before one retrieves documents for reports, there are some important methods to increase the precision of the documents that you wish to retrieve.

- Understand the legal issues and factual propositions of your case and the source of the documents. This will provide you with a background of what documents are available and how they relate to your case.
- Limit your full text document population as much as possible. All documents in your full text document database should be relevant and important to your case. Marginal relevant documents should be coded into a database as a “file of documents” or as individual documents. If their value increases as the case progresses, then additional electronic control can be implemented. If a large document population is needed, separate the documents into smaller controllable groups. For example, if the documents ca



n be separated by departments in a company, then treat them as separate document populations. If the documents come from a specific organization, try to keep them in that organizational structure.

- Standardize the witness names, liability terms and other commonly used informational terms in the case.
- Review the vocabulary report of your full text document to determine what terms have been used and the number of times that they occur in your document. It may seem odd at first to review a vocabulary index of all the words in your case, but it will give you significant insight on what and how many times certain words were used in your case. This will provide guidance for the patient and persevering researcher.
- Review the full text material and insert issue codes, cross-reference codes and notes or annotations reflecting the key points in your case. In effect, one is creating a mini “database” within a full text document to ensure increased accuracy for your searches. For example, in any location where Mary Smith is referred to as the “mother”, type in Smith, M. in the text itself or in a pop-up screen, which some programs have to enter an enhancement. Then when you search for the term Smith, M., it will locate the area of the full text where she is referred to as the

“mother”.

- Legal documents, such as depositions, are much easier to search and have a larger number of relevant hits than nonlegal documents.