

# ORALL NEWSLETTER

OHIO REGIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LAW LIBRARIES

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## ***President's Column – Lisa Wernke***

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I hope that everyone is doing well and had a wonderful Thanksgiving. To say that 2020 has been an unexpected whirlwind is an understatement. In the blink of an eye many of us were sent home and did not have access to any physical materials in our libraries. I am sure that there are quite a few of our members who are still working remotely or are hybrid, like myself. It is comforting to know that we have access to so many people who are willing to help in any way possible with just a few keystrokes in an email to our listserv or a colleague.

I know that I personally missed the face-to-face camaraderie of our traditional annual meeting, but I am glad that we were still able to offer great education programs virtually this year. When I became Vice-President/President Elect last year I never imagined that planning our meeting would take so many twists

and turns! I would like to thank all our speakers who volunteered to present this year. Our topics ran the gamut from remote learning technology to technical services during a pandemic. If you were not able to attend one of the programs but would like to listen in and benefit from the expertise of our colleagues, you can access the recorded sessions from our [2020 Annual Meeting](#) page.

*...continued on page 3*

### **In This Issue...**

<b>President's Column</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>AI Tools Enhance Legal Research Capabilities</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>A Note From Your Newsletter Editor</b>	<b>7</b>

# ORALL

## Ohio Regional Association of Law Libraries

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### Membership

**Members: 285**  
**Dues: \$20 per year**

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### Newsletter

**The ORALL Newsletter is the official publication of the Ohio Regional Association of Law Libraries. Published quarterly in March, June, September, and December.**

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### **Profile**

ORALL is a 3-state chapter of the American Association of Law Libraries [Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky]. It was formed in 1949 "to further the development and usefulness of law libraries and to stimulate a spirit of mutual helpfulness among law libraries of this region." An annual conference is held each fall. ORALL publishes or sponsors the following publications: *Core Legal Collection* [bibliographies for Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan], ORALL Membership Directory, ORALL Newsletter, Ohio Legal Resources Annotated Bibliography & Guide 3rd.

## **President's Column *continued***

From my discussions over the past nine months with colleagues, faculty, students, and even friends, one thing has been abundantly clear to me: libraries and librarians are valuable. Whether it is an academic, county, court, firm, public, or special library, we have been here through it all. We have handled multiple requests, taught classes and workshops, answered complex research questions, and so much more. Libraries have been a saving grace during this pandemic. This is not a surprise to our profession, though. We have known our value all along.

As I look forward to a new year, I can't help but think of how much promise 2021 holds and the lessons I learned in 2020. In so many ways COVID made us all slow down and appreciate what we have. If you are like me, I spent a lot of free time reading, playing board games with my family, doing jigsaw puzzles, trying new recipes, and walking/hiking. Perhaps I am being optimistic and looking at the future with rose colored glasses, but I do hope that we are able to meet in person next year and share stories and laughter like we always do. Until we meet again (in person), stay healthy and take care of you and yours.

\* \* \*

## ***AI Tools Enhance Legal Research Capabilities***

**by Kathleen M. Dugan, Esq., MLS, Librarian and Chief Administrator,  
Cleveland Law Library**

*Introduction:* Whether we realize it or not, artificial intelligence (AI) has gradually become a part of our everyday lives. Because AI tools attempt to duplicate human intelligence, only more quickly, they have streamlined many of our regular activities and automated some of our less favored chores. I started a mental list of AI tools I use or know about, and it astounded me. Although I do not own an automated vacuum cleaner (aka cat toy), pilot a drone, or drive a self-driving car, I use mobile banking, email spam filters, news aggregation products, voice and speech recognition software, virtual assistants, facial recognition programs, text translation services, the occasional chatbot, and many others. Lest I forget, I am pretty sure that most of us are regularly distracted and/or annoyed by the countless shopping, book, music, and movie recommendations that pop up on our computer screens.

Although lawyers are generally slow to adopt new technologies, many of our patrons are also using AI innovations in their legal practices. The products they employ range from simple tools, such as proofreading software, to more sophisticated systems for: document management; practice management (i.e., calendaring, client maintenance and billing); due diligence reviews; document review and predictive coding; document creation; and litigation strategy. There are even Access to Justice (A2J) initiatives that provide AI tools for self-

represented litigants. In addition to offering free information and forms, sites such as Ohio Legal Help.org (<https://www.ohiolegalhelp.org/>) allow *pro se* litigants to create selected legal documents.

AI is no less prolific in our work environment at law libraries, and I was recently surprised to learn how much of the legal research I perform on a regular basis is enhanced by AI tools. Although I am aware of possible ethical conundrums in using AI technologies, I still thought it might be helpful to initially share the fruits of my investigation into AI products that attempt to simplify and enhance the legal research we conduct.

*Types of AI in Legal Research:* Although there are many types of AI products, the most common forms in legal research include natural language processing (NLP), semantic searching, algorithms, data visualization, and litigation analytics. Some of these technologies have been around so long that people do not really think of them as AI, and some are considered cutting-edge. With chatbots arriving in legal research, I have to remember that existing state-of-the-art AI techniques will only be new until the next invention arrives.

Natural language processing (NLP), which has been around for over ten years, enables computers and software to process and analyze speech and text from human communications. Semantic searching is the ability of a computer or software to understand the intent and meaning of phrases in the contexts in which they were used. Algorithms are step-by-step instructions which find patterns in large pools of data and then make predictions and rankings based on relevancy and other factors (e.g., date, jurisdiction). Algorithms, which can involve 15+ steps, seem to be the most common types of AI, and all of the major legal research vendors use them. Although most vendors' algorithms are proprietary "trade secrets," I have found that the search tips contained in the help menus of online databases provide some valuable clues. Typical components of algorithms include: keyword searching; pattern recognition; term or phrase frequency; proximity of terms or phrases; advanced search commands such as Boolean operators, wildcards, or quoted phrases; term and phrase equivalents or synonyms for search terms or phrases; citation activity: i.e., the frequency that a case or citation is cited by other authorities; context-specific enhancements (e.g., subject) to help determine relevancy; recency or date; and the aggregate history of searches in a database.

In contrast, data visualization tools provide graphical representations of patterns and relationships in data for non-verbal learners. The hottest innovations in legal research right now, however, have to be litigation analytics. Through a variety of methods, litigation analytics tools extract, compile, and organize data on judges, attorneys, law firms, experts, and case types into aggregate reports and charts. Lawyers are already using this data to prepare, present and argue their cases, and some are using it to attempt to predict litigation outcomes.

*AI from Lexis:* Together with the companies it has recently acquired, Lexis Advance® and/or Lexis+™ feature natural language answers to selected legal research questions, such as black letter law, elements of actions, statutes of limitation, burdens of proof, and definitions. Although Shepard's® is an AI utility itself, it has been enhanced with a new citation feature called Shepard's At-Risk, as well as graphical and grid views which provide visual representations of citation reports. This vendor also provides search trees and multi-color search term maps in the form of colored bars on a spectrum showing where search terms are located, together with their frequency. For a different perspective, the newer Ravel view offers visual cluster diagrams or charts to show relationships between cases in search results. The enhancements continue with: research trails that track select passages from cases; a brief checker; practice-specific tools containing forms, clauses, checklists, articles and practice notes; a new search feature called "Missing and Must;" and two new legislative tools that compare code sections and attempt to predict whether bills will pass. Finally, I have read that Lexis is currently working on a chatbot or legal research assistant to make legal research more like a conversation with the database.

*AI from Westlaw:* In addition to offering natural language answers to common legal research questions such as black letter law, elements of actions, statutes of limitation, burdens of proof, and definitions, Westlaw also suggests searches based on West Key Numbers and makes predictive suggestions and recommendations of additional resources to review. This vendor's search box recognizes natural language, Boolean, and terms and connectors searching, and KeyCite results, which have been enhanced with a new signal for Overruling Risk, can alternatively be displayed in list or graphical format. Westlaw also allows researchers the ability to compare the versions of two statutes or regulations. Keeping up with its counterparts in the legal research industry, Westlaw provides litigation analytics on state and federal courts, judges, attorneys and law firms, experts, and case types. It also offers brief analysis tools that suggest relevant authorities lawyers may have missed, update older authorities with newer results, analyze opponent's materials, and compare documents to determine what authorities do and do not overlap.

*AI from Bloomberg:* Although our Law Library does not purchase this vendor's products, I understand that Bloomberg offers an AI product which identifies legal principles and related leading cases in any jurisdiction. In addition to providing a code utility that locates cases which interpret specific provisions of state and federal codes, rules, and regulations, this vendor maintains a proprietary docket search tool. Bloomberg also provides expert guidance for practitioners on best practices for certain topics, its own product for analyzing briefs, and litigation analytics that not only cover attorneys, law firms, and judges, but companies as well.

*AI from Fastcase:* Fastcase offers its own citation checking feature, which includes a bot that locates negative citation history and provides links to relevant

cases. This vendor's latest 'claim to fame' is its "AI Sandbox" which allows law firms to use AI securely to analyze and compare their own data. A new add-on docket service contains a searchable database of briefs, pleadings, and judgments, as well as analytics tools that can produce trends about discovery, motions, and trial procedures.

*AI from Casetext:* Although our Law Library does not purchase this vendor's product, from reading and demonstrations I have learned that Casetext provides an AI search tool called CARA that employs semantic searching. To Casetext's credit, other vendors have been imitating this vendor's pioneering efforts to allow users to drag and drop a complaint or brief into a brief checker. CARA allows users to add search terms or issues that will then produce a list of authorities, including cases, statutes, regulations, blog posts and briefs, that contain the same facts and legal issues. The key to CARA's algorithm captures parentheticals, citations, fact patterns, and other items from cases and integrates them into searches.

*AI from Casemaker:* Finally, Casemaker has begun rolling out an AI tool called Vincent, a legal research assistant from vLex that adds contextual searching to keyword and Boolean options. The Kentucky Bar went live with Vincent in April of 2020 as part of a new Casemaker4 platform. Although the Ohio State Bar Association (OSBA) recently launched the Casemaker4 platform, Vincent was not free to members last I checked. However, OSBA members can either obtain a week-long trial subscription or purchase it themselves.

Learning about all of these tools showed me how fast online legal research is evolving. It can definitely be hard to keep up, but it helped me to understand how my search results are derived and how I can enhance the research I perform. No doubt, vendor showcases will wow us with even newer innovations when AALL comes to Cleveland in 2021.



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## ***A Note from Your Newsletter Editor***

Thanks to all who contributed once again this quarter. I appreciate everybody taking the time to contribute in these odd times where we are all still figuring things out about our semesters and how we are going to offer services to our patrons. While we had a sparse collection of contributions this quarter, I am hoping we can pick up the contributions come March.

We are always open to new ideas for the newsletter. Anything you think will make it more readable, fun, inviting or just plain better.

I hope you all have a wonderful Holiday, no matter what you celebrate.

Our next newsletter will be published March, 2021

If you ever have any questions, concerns or ideas, please e-mail me at [pvenard1@udayton.edu](mailto:pvenard1@udayton.edu).