



Thomson Reuters Unveils WestlawNext, the Next Generation in Legal Research

February 1, 2010 at 9:08 AM EST

Elegant simplicity, powerful technology provide increased productivity and confidence

NEW YORK and EAGAN, Minn., Feb 01, 2010 /PRNewswire via COMTEX/ -- Thomson Reuters, (NYSE: TRI; TSX) the world's leading source of intelligent information for businesses and professionals, has introduced the next generation in legal research: WestlawNext(TM) (<http://www.westlawnext.com>).

WestlawNext is a ground-breaking legal research system that represents the culmination of more than 100 years of West attorney-created editorial analysis and technological innovation. WestlawNext offers a clean, modern interface and powerful new search functionality that makes legal professionals significantly more efficient and gives them the confidence that they've explored every relevant document. The cornerstone of this significant advancement in legal research is WestSearch(TM), a proprietary search engine that automates the best practices of expert legal researchers, delivering more inclusive, better ranked results. WestlawNext also includes powerful new tools to help legal professionals analyze and organize legal information more efficiently than ever before.

Unveiled today at LegalTech New York, the largest legal technology conference in the world, WestlawNext represents the largest product launch from Thomson Reuters, Legal in more than a decade, according to President and CEO Peter Warwick.

"We've combined our 138-year legacy of analyzing and organizing legal information with cutting edge search technology to set a new standard for legal research tools," said Warwick. "This combination of authority and insight, driven by peerless technology and innovation, is the essence of intelligent information and provides a powerful advantage for our customers."

Legal Research Re-imagined

"WestlawNext was five years in the making," said Mike Dahn, vice president of WestlawNext Product Development. "It was designed in close collaboration and partnership with our customers and geared to their unique needs."

After watching hundreds of legal professionals perform research and thousands of hours of Westlaw log analysis, it was clear to the project team that researchers typically start by finding relevant documents, then turn to powerful finding aids that link documents together, such as the West Key Number System, KeyCite and Westlaw's vast collection of authoritative treatises and practice guides, to complete their research. Observing this iterative process, the team wondered if these steps could be replicated by sophisticated search algorithms: could a new search engine find relevant documents and then automate the process of applying Key Numbers, KeyCite, and secondary sources to find additional critical documents, then rank them with the most important documents at the top of the result list?

A team with Ph.Ds in artificial intelligence and computer science - with specialties in machine learning, data mining, and natural language processing - went to work on the problem, and WestSearch was born.

About WestSearch

Professional researchers have a world of information at their fingertips. But what they really need are tools that help them sort and identify relevant information - finding not just answers to their questions, but also the context and nuance of the issue at hand.

WestSearch leverages over 100 years of West's editorial analysis of the law and emulates the best practices of experienced legal researchers. Whether using precise Boolean syntax or simple descriptive terms, WestSearch employs West's editorial assets much like an expert researcher would - only faster - to find the best documents for the research. It also "learns" from the aggregate usage of WestlawNext researchers, so that the great results produced today improve even more over time.

"Combining human expertise with powerful search algorithms allows us to help customers get the most accurate, relevant information as quickly as possible, and it gives them the confidence that the job is done because no stone has been left unturned," said Dahn.

"WestlawNext finds the most relevant information I need, and ranks it, which eliminates the precious time otherwise spent ambling through irrelevant results," added Justine Phillips, an associate with Seltzer Caplan McMahon Vitek in San Diego and co-chair of the New Product Subcommittee of the American Bar Association Section of Litigation Technology for the Litigator Committee. "It allows me to quickly and efficiently conduct the research I need to be prepared to address my clients' legal needs."

Designed for the Way Legal Professionals Work

Working with customers, the WestlawNext team saw that legal professionals could benefit from solutions beyond search. Using current tools, it's cumbersome to annotate, organize and share relevant documents. With WestlawNext, users can highlight relevant sections of text and create notes on a document - all online. Important documents also can be organized in the WestlawNext online foldering system. These folders not only save users time and map to their workflow, they also support an organization's efforts to "go green."

"We've gained a keen understanding about the interaction between our customers and the research interface," said Vin Caraher, president of the U.S. Core Legal group of Thomson Reuters. "With WestlawNext, we've incorporated an intuitive design that anticipates the way a customer searches for information and organizes that information. Ultimately, it's about helping our customers feel in complete command of the process, from the moment they begin accessing our system, whether it's from their desktop or a mobile device."

WestlawNext is available for U.S. practitioners now; Warwick said the ground-breaking capabilities of WestlawNext will be progressively added to Westlaw platforms across the globe.

According to Warwick, WestlawNext reflects generations of authority, expertise and innovation stretching back to 1872 - something that could only come from Thomson Reuters, Legal. "Each search on WestlawNext draws on the collective wisdom and expertise of our attorney editors. And the technology that drives the WestlawNext research system helps to focus this expertise in powerful new ways for our customers, giving them deeper insights into the issue at hand," he said. "Our customers trust that we'll help them explore every source and scenario, and because of this, they can have greater confidence in the result."

For more information about WestlawNext, visit www.westlawnext.com.

About Thomson Reuters

Thomson Reuters (TSX/NYSE: TRI) is the world's leading source of intelligent information for businesses and professionals. We combine industry expertise with innovative technology to deliver critical information to leading decision makers in the financial, legal, tax and accounting, scientific, healthcare and media markets, powered by the world's most trusted news organization. With headquarters in New York and major operations in London and Eagan, Minnesota, Thomson Reuters employs more than 50,000 people in more than 100 countries. For more information, go to thomsonreuters.com.

SOURCE Thomson Reuters