Dockets: Lifecycle of a lawsuit

Court dockets contain all materials filed by the court or by any party in a court proceeding.

Courts usually maintain a docket sheet for each action; this is a chronological list noting the date and caption or description of each paper filed in the action, examples:

Order

Memorandum decision ruling

Motions

Briefs

Supporting affidavits

Transcripts

Exhibits

Dockets are maintained throughout the pendency of an action and after final disposition of the action. However, not all docket materials are available online.

Identify as much information about the case as possible.

 The full names of the parties.

 The docket or case numbers of the original case as well as any appeals.

 The location of the court in which the case was filed as well as any appeals.

 The date (exact or approximate) of the case and any appeals.

 The names of judges and/or attorneys involved in the case.

Where dockets may be found:

Federal Courts:

 Pacer

 Bloomberg

 Westlaw

 Lexis

High profile cases may be on the court’s website or an involved organization like the ACLU.

State Courts:

 Bloomberg

 Westlaw

 Lexis

 <http://legaldockets.com/>

 <https://iapps.courts.state.ny.us/webcivil/ecourtsMain>