**Cost-Effective and Efficient New York Legal Research**

**March 10, 2016**

I. Basic Principles

* Determine what you need - is this “quick and dirty” or “boil the ocean” (likely

somewhere in between)

* Do your issue spotting before going on databases that cost $$
* Free can be good - even if you need to “boil the ocean”
* Google is good - to start, just ***DON’T*** stop there
* Lexis/Westlaw - cost big $$ - ***KNOW YOUR CONTRACT***
* There is life beyond Lexis/Westlaw - other flat rate databases
* If you are lucky enough to be in an office with a librarian, then consult

II. Free is best for known citations and very simple concepts (latter are very rare in law)

A. Google searches - look for good Secondary references and research guides (helps

With issue spotting)

B. Secondary Sources in print –See Lexicat; search by key word or subject

C. Primary sources online - best when you have a known citation

For links, see <http://libguides.law.hofstra.edu/statutes_reporters>

**Statutes** – N.Y. Legislature web site -

<http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us/menugetf.cgi?COMMONQUERY=LAWS>

**Regulations** – N.Y. agencies - unofficial

- <http://government.westlaw.com/linkedslice/default.asp?SP=nycrr-1000>

- [http://publicecodes.cyberregs.com/st/ny/st/index.](http://publicecodes.cyberregs.com/st/ny/st/index.htm)htm (“Special codes”)

**Cases** - best with known citation

- [http://www.courts.state.ny.us/](http://www.courts.state.ny.us/%20) - click on Decisions

- [http://www.courts.state.ny.us/reporter/](http://www.courts.state.ny.us/reporter/%20) - note citation services

- Google Scholar - <http://scholar.google.com/>

**Municipal Codes** - local law (for rules governing such areas as parking or snow

removal)

- <http://law.hofstra.edu/library/research/online/index.cfm?conf=38>

Find a favorite Web portal

- Findlaw - <http://lp.findlaw.com/>

- Legal Information Institute - <http://www.law.cornell.edu/>

II. Lexis/Westlaw - as many pricing plans as there are legal organizations

A. ***KNOW YOUR CONTRACT*** (hourly, transactional, flat-fee; what sources are inside/outside of your plan, client limitations; preferences of employer for use)

B. Ways to minimize costs -

1. Be knowledgeable searchers - understand difference between statutes and

regulations; know hierarchy of authority for jurisdictions, circuits, Appellate

Divisions; know Boolean connectors.

Structure of New York Courts: <http://www.nycourts.gov/courts/structure.shtml>

Appellate Divisions: <http://www.nycourts.gov/courts/appellatedivisions.shtml>

1. Be familiar with key resources for your work on both systems and create “favorites” to save time

C. Westlaw

Use available training materials – webinars, tutorials, etc.

Sharpen Your Research Skills: <https://lawschool.westlaw.com/marketing/display/WT/1>

User Guides and Legal Resources: <https://lawschool.westlaw.com/marketing/display/sg/1>

Use pre or post search filters

Save useful docs to folders

Use Search within results - need Boolean connectors

Use TOC, especially if using Secondary Sources (can cost BIG $$$)

Understand annotated code - use TOC

Example: CPLR-Section 503.Venue based on residence

Understand Key Number System (Click on Key Numbers at menu page; type key terms relevant to your issue, landlord duty of care to trespassers; change jurisdiction to New York; then search. Select key number closest to your issue from list. Example: status of plaintiff—tenants or occupants—Results: 9 NY cases with a headnote on this issue.

D. Lexis Advance

* **Be aware of new and cost-saving features**
1. **Explore Content** (similar to Westlaw)—

Example: Secondary sources—New York

Example: Forms—Search terms: lease equipment

1. **New York Practice Page**

See Lexis **handout**

Find by: Lexis Advance > Browse > Practice Pages > By Jurisdiction > New York

Note: Other states have practice pages—listed

Quick route to the **most authoritative treatises and helpful guides** on Lexis Advance

Examples: Treatises: Weinstein, Korn, and Miller (New York Civil Practice: CPLR; Bender’s Forms (Civil Practice; Pleading); AnswerGuides (for those new to a practice area); Bender’s Forms (business and transactional)

**News and Analysis**: Latest news from Law 360, New York Law Journal, or All Legal News—OR, “Add as a search filter” to search on key terms or name of article

**Key topics:** When using Find Documents, be sure to use filters (searches cases in all New York Courts, Regulations, etc.)

Example: Labor and Employment—cases—over 10,000—Use “Search within Results” (can use term in quotes, or use Terms and Connectors (and, or)

Cases: Search within Results: “tip sharing”

Administrative Codes and Regulations: “tip sharing” and restaurant

Use available training materials - videos, etc.

Explore New Content is here (video): <http://tinyurl.com/jstwo45>

At Welcome page: click on “Teaching Tools"

Save useful docs to folders

Use post-search filters

* Use Search within results - need Boolean connectors
* Use TOC, especially if using Secondary Sources (can cost BIG $$$)—Save TOC for favorite treatises and guides to Favorites (star)

Understand annotated code - use TOC; use “Go To”

Understand Headnotes—different from Westlaw headnotes; can Shepardize limiting to headnote

* Topic summaries—find a case on your topic—select the topic summary for New York

III. Life beyond Lexis/Westlaw at work

Know other available databases - especially flat rate subscriptions

Examples are Bloomberg Law, BNA, HeinOnline, RIA, and CCH IntelliConnect

Investigate NY Bar (NYSBA) site - free access to limited Fastcase -

<http://www.nysba.org/CustomTemplates/SecondaryStandard.aspx?id=32125>

IV. Hofstra Law Library Privileges and Resources

* Don’t reinvent the wheel! Use **Hofstra Library research guides** free, from anywhere

Link to these New York research guides, authored by Hofstra Law reference librarians from the [Law Library web site](http://law.hofstra.edu/library/index.html):

Direct links:

New York Statutes and Reporters: A guide to print and online sources for New York statutes and reporters (Shikha Gupta Joseph) <http://libguides.law.hofstra.edu/statutes_reporters>New York Civil Practice Research (Lisa Spar) <http://libguides.law.hofstra.edu/nycivilpractice>

New York Forms: Major Sets: A guide to print and online New York legal forms (Shikha Gupta Joseph) <http://libguides.law.hofstra.edu/newyork_forms>

New York State Legislative History (Patricia Kasting) <http://libguides.law.hofstra.edu/new_york_state_legislative_history>

* -View webcasts of workshops given by librarians here: <http://law.hofstra.edu/library/research/webcasts/index.html>
* Alumni--use the Library for life—during regular posted hours.

**WestPac terminal**—A slice of Westlaw for New York practitioners with some general and federal materials; law review articles; forms; dockets; treatises (including Siegel, New York Practice) KeyCite; also access to LexisNexis Academic for Shepardizing cases.

**Use other databases** from the public PC’s on first floor: HeinOnline, ProQuest Congressional, CCH, and BNA

New York HeinOnline collections include: New York Legal Research Library; New York Court of Appeals Records and Briefs

**Help from the Reference librarians**—locating materials, finding good NY treatises, using WestPAC, other databases; help finding and using microfilm and fiche (example: NYLJ articles from dates before Lexis has them)—can create a scanned PDF and email them to yourself.

Regular Library hours and Reference Desk hours are posted on Law Library website: <http://law.hofstra.edu/library/general/hours/index.html> .