

## Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law Library WestLaw Tutorial

This is a very basic introduction to using Westlaw to find cases about a particular set of facts or issues of law. It also describes briefly how to find a case by name or citation. This tutorial is meant to facilitate the learning of:

- how to sign on,
- choose databases,
- enter a search,
- review search results, and
- find cases by name or citation.

Later training by the Westlaw Representative will build on these skills.

<b>Step 1</b>	Point your browser (Mozilla, Firefox, Internet Explorer) to <a href="http://lawschool.westlaw.com/">http://lawschool.westlaw.com/</a>  (If you haven't already registered your password, click on the "Register password now! under the login boxes <i>You must register your password. If you do not, it will be deactivated.</i> )  Enter your Westlaw <b>username</b> and <b>password</b> .  You will be connected to Westlaw's "Law Student Page." Choose "Westlaw Research" from the top of the screen.
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<b>Step 2</b>	First we need to select a database containing the documents that will answer our research needs. Our first task will be to find case law for North Carolina.  To find the North Carolina Cases database, click on the <b>Directory</b> link at the top of the page. Then choose  <b>U.S. State Materials &gt; North Carolina &gt; Cases &gt; North Carolina Cases (NC-CS)</b>
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A Westlaw database contains a group of related documents. They may be from the same jurisdiction, (e.g. North Carolina or Federal) or grouped by subject (environmental) or by the type of material (law review articles).

NC-CS is the database identifier for all North Carolina. Click on the next to "North Carolina Cases (NC-CS)" for a complete description of this database.

<b>Step 3</b>	<p>The Search page is now displayed. We will first do a <b>Terms and Connectors</b> search, using Boolean logic, which is the default search method. If your search box is not set to Terms and Connectors, click on it now.</p> <p>Enter the following search in the search box:</p> <p><b>dog canine /s sniff! /p drug mari*uana cocaine “controlled substance”</b></p>
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Notice that Westlaw requires phrases to be enclosed in quotation marks. A space between words that are not enclosed in quotation marks is read as an “or” and Westlaw will retrieve all documents containing either one of the words. (Lexis requires an “or” to search for words in the alternative, and reads words with a space between them as a phrase.)

The “/s” and “/p” are connectors that stand for “within the same sentence” and “within the same paragraph.” The root expander ! and the asterisk \* are the same for Lexis and Westlaw. Sniff! will retrieve sniff, sniffing, sniffed or sniffer. The \* in mari\*juana allows for the variant spellings of either marijuana or marihuana.

<b>Step 4</b>	Click on the <b>Search Westlaw</b> button.
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A list of citations to the cases that were retrieved will be displayed with your search terms highlighted in yellow. The cases will be listed in reverse chronological order when you run a "Terms and Connectors" search. Scroll down the list and notice that there are yellow and red flags next to some of the cases. This indicates that the case has some negative history that may affect its precedential value.

On the right side of the screen North Carolina Jurisprudence and *North Carolina Strong's Index* that most closely match your subject are listed as well as references to *CJS*, a legal encyclopedia, briefs, and perhaps West Key Numbers to provide additional sources for finding more cases on your subject.

<b>Step 5</b>	<p>Move forward in your search results until you get to the on the blue hyperlinked <b>case name</b> for, <i>State v. Styles</i> ( as of 10/7/08 it was case number 1).</p> <p>You will now see a split screen with the full text of your first case displayed in the right frame, and links to KeyCite, Case Outline, Table of Authorities and other options on the left side. At the top of the left side is a link, <b>Result List</b>. Click on this link to get the complete list of cases retrieved by your search.</p> <p>At the bottom of the right hand frame, click on the <b>Term</b> arrow to go directly to the part of the case where your search terms appear. Continue to click on the <b>Term</b> arrow to advance to the next place in the document or to the next document where your search terms appear.</p> <p>Clicking on the number in front of each case citation on the left frame will pull up the full text of the retrieved cases in any order you wish.</p>
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<b>Step 6</b>	<p>We are going to do a <b>Natural Language</b> search about sniff dogs in the context of students and school lockers. Most of the relevant cases are from federal courts, so we will change our database to <b>ALLFEDS</b> to look for federal cases.</p> <p>Click on the <b>Westlaw</b> tab on the top of the screen.</p> <p>Since we know the database ID for federal cases is <b>ALLFEDS</b>, bypass the Directory and simply type <b>ALLFEDS</b> into the <b>Search These Databases</b> box on the left frame.</p> <p>Click on <b>GO</b> to the right of the box to go directly to the search page.</p>
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<b>Step 7</b>	<p>Now click on <b>Natural Language</b>.</p> <p>Enter the following natural language search into the search box:</p> <p><b>can sniff dogs or sniffer dogs be used to search students or school lockers</b></p>
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A natural language search allows you to enter a description of the main concepts of an issue in standard English. The retrieved documents are ranked by statistical relevance, with the document most closely matching the description ranked first. All the search terms do not necessarily need to appear in the document, and some terms are weighted more heavily than others, depending on factors such as how frequently the term appears in the database.

<b>Step 8</b>	<p>Click on <b>Search Westlaw</b> to retrieve your search results and highlighted search terms.</p> <p>Now click on the <b>blue hyperlinked title</b> of your first document.</p> <p>Browse through the retrieved documents by either clicking on the <b>Term</b> arrow or the <b>Best</b> arrow at the bottom of the right frame. The <b>Best</b> arrow will take you to the part of the document judged most relevant to your search concepts.</p> <p>To continue browsing through your documents, continue clicking on either the <b>Term</b> arrow or the <b>Best</b> arrow.</p>
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"Natural Language" search results are ordered by the statistical relevance of the document. The number of cases retrieved will depend on the default set in the Options Menu. The current default is set to 100. To change the number of retrieved documents, choose Preferences from the top of the screen and when in Preferences choose Search from the left hand menu to change the default number.

Next we will see if we can find law review articles on this subject, and we will use the same search we just ran in ALLFEDS. The link to the law reviews database is listed as "Journals and Law

Reviews” under “Legal Periodicals & Current Awareness” from the Westlaw Directory. But rather than going to the Law School Page we will assume that you already know that the correct database identifier is **JLR**.

<b>Step 9</b>	At the top of the search results screen, look for the box labeled “Database” and change <b>ALLFEDS</b> to <b>JLR</b> , then click on the <b>Search</b> button immediately to the right of the box.
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Before we sign off, we will run searches to find a case by citation and by the name of the case.

<b>Step 10</b>	Click on <b>Find &amp; Print</b> at the top of the screen.
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We will first look for the case that is published in volume 306 of the United States Reports, beginning at page 451. To find out which case reporters and other publications you can look for in a Find search, click on the "Publications List" link in the left frame. Type United States Reports and click search (Make sure that the “Publication Country” pull-down menu at the bottom of the left frame is set at “**US–United States.**”). This list also gives you the correct abbreviation to use for the case reporter. You do not need to use punctuation in the abbreviation.

<b>Step 11</b>	Enter the following citation in the box labeled "Find this document by citation" that appears in the left frame.  <b>306 US 451</b>  Click on the <b>GO</b> button.
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Your Find search pulls up the case, *Lanzetta v. New Jersey*, decided by the U. S. Supreme Court in 1939.

Our final search will be to find a case by name or title.

<b>Step 12</b>	Click again on <b>Find &amp; Print</b> at the top of the screen.  Click on the " <b>Find a Case by Party Name</b> " link in the left frame. The search screen will have 2 boxes where the names of the parties are to be entered. Only one party name needs to be entered if that is all the information you have.
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<b>Step 13</b>	We are looking for a North Carolina case, <i>Swindell v. Overton</i> .  Type the name <b>Swindell</b> in the first box and <b>Overton</b> in the second box.  Under the “Select A Jurisdiction” option, click on State Courts and then select North Carolina.  Click on the <b>GO</b> button.
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Westlaw retrieves four decisions in this case, two from the North Carolina Courts of Appeal and two from the North Carolina Supreme Court.

<b>Step 14</b>	To end your Westlaw research, click on the <b>Sign Off</b> button at the top right of the screen.
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