

Lexis Advance v. Westlaw Edge

I'm considering a switch to West. I'm a solid researcher w/ good search skills, currently using Lexis Advance and happy with it--but West is much cheaper (probably to try to lure me away.)

How well does Edge handle the West equivalent of Shepardizing?

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Be sure to check out Casetext: <https://casetext.com/>

They offer a free trial to see if it works for you.

Dave Rakowski, Pennsylvania

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My bread and butter is research and writing for other lawyers, and I use Casemaker which comes with my membership in the Vermont Bar Association. Is it as good as Westlaw? No because it doesn't have Key Numbers or ALR, both of which I find abundantly useful. BUT I get all fifty states, all opinions and all statutes, and it does the equivalent of Shepardizing so I know when a holding has been overruled. And my voluntary bar membership is something like \$225 annually, whereas both Westlaw and Lexis want a small fortune from me every month, at least they did when last I checked. Now when their representatives want to pitch to me, I just ignore the emails.

L. Maxwell Taylor, Vermont

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At this point I don't need Westlaw on a consistent enough basis to subscribe like I used to, but it happens to be available for free at a nearby public library so I still have access to it. Agreed it is still the gold standard... and they know it. That's why it costs more.

Amy A. Breyer. California

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I use WestlawNext (not the latest). I find that the case history information is as good as Shepards. Headnotes, key numbers (digest topics), and a ton of other non-case resources (e.g., restatements, ALRs, etc.) are vital to my practice.

David Masters, Colorado

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I think I also get Casemaker through Mass. Bar Association, but I haven't been inclined to try it.

I think I'm probably going to stay with Westis/Lexlaw. I'm working on some big cases and I just want the tools which will make it easier to win them.

This is also why I have things like Acrobat DC and Office 365 even though I am perfectly capable of trying to learn some sort of OpenOffice or other similar tool.

Erik Hammarlund, Massachusetts

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I'm with you, Dave.

I tried not having anything for years, relying on Google Scholar and the free Case law (?) With Fla Bar membership, plus trips to law library.

Having WL Next, even though I pay a small fortune for it (to me it's a small fortune) is well worth it. I wish I could afford to get more secondary sources, though.

Barry Kaufman, Florida

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Barry nailed one of my 2 biggest gripes about Westlaw Next -- need more secondary sources. I recently made the jump from West -> Lexis after being a subscriber to West for about 5 years. We had a pretty bare-bones plan -- KY state and fed + 6th Cir. + SCOTUS + KY Secondary. I really wish I could sort of pick-and-choose certain other non-jdx-specific secondary sources though, like form books or treatises etc. but (according to my account rep anyway) that wasn't an option. I wish I could at least preview some of the other secondary stuff, then I might be more inclined to pay more to add it to a subscription.

The other HUGE gripe I have with Westlaw is that whenever I run a keyword search for something and I get to the results page, there is no way to filter the results to show only those items that are within your subscription. Instead, you get the whole shebang -- my guess is West hopes you'll see something enticing and either impulse-buy out-of-plan or be willing to pay more per month to get it. Like if I search for "joint tenancy" my results will include everything under the sun e.g. what the Univ. of Wisconsin Law Review has published about that subject --- thanks, I'm sure it's good information and all, just not relevant to a matter governed by Kentucky law is all. No idea the rationale, but I communicated this gripe to my Lexis rep and he advised me that is one if not the most frequent complaint that they get from people about West. Fortunately, Lexis allows this type of filtering which is super helpful IMO.

Seth Combs, Kentucky

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No argument. My plan is bare bones: Florida and Fla secondary. I have many Fla books (Fla civil Practice, Fla. Construction, Fla DUI, etc. etc.) in secondary sources, so no complaint there. But as you alluded, a search for X may yield an appellate brief on X in a Fla court of appeal, or a cite on ALR for X, or a cite to a Kentucky case on X.

I'd like to be able to get the appellate brief as part of my subscription.

The other stuff I can get elsewhere, but now I know where to look. Fla fed district court and 11th Dir would be nice at times, but I don't use federal law enough to pay on subscription. A one-time download of a federal case I wanted last week was over \$125. Screw that, I googled...

Barry Kaufman