



Legal Analytics Takes Center Stage

A challenging environment thrusts legal analytics to the forefront, with innovative products offering critical solutions.

The current health and economic crisis has shifted the legal industry in substantial ways. Firms have been pushed to change their structures, alter business decisions, and scrutinize their contracts like never before.

Understanding clauses that are in contracts and developing creative strategies to win new business has taken precedence, while the need for predictability and transparency is at the forefront, given significant disruptions to typical workdays and workflows. That said, it's critical for firms and corporations to understand the drivers and consequences of their actions. And legal analytics has quickly become the catalyst to accomplishing this.

Embracing legal analytics and technology with open arms will undoubtedly best position firms to meet future challenges head-on and remain as competitive as possible. For example, Lex Machina, a division of LexisNexis that develops legal analytics and data software, has prepared for this scenario and is helping firms gain a competitive advantage by delivering high-value analytics in federal and state court, supporting the way attorneys work. The company had previously expanded its service offerings on a practice-area basis, starting with patent litigation, then widening the net to include many other practice areas, such as securities, employment, and most recently torts, including premises liability and medical malpractice. Its latest product offering, the Enterprise Package, enables access to the entirety of federal district court and all state court litigation modules.

What This Upgrade Means for Attorneys

With Lex Machina's new Enterprise Package, attorneys are able to access an unprecedented data set. Essentially, the database from which Lex Machina draws its insights contains every commercially relevant federal district court civil case since 2009. Additionally, the package offers 15 state court modules, including Los Angeles County Superior Court and New York County Supreme Court, and it plans to have nearly two million state court cases in the system by the end of 2020.

The use cases for having access to that amount of data (and the insights that can be drawn through analytics) are numerous, says Rachel Bailey, data relations manager and legal data expert at Lex Machina. With a few clicks, for example, attorneys can quickly see how many federal cases involving a client — or opponent — have received a summary judgment order. Users can view grant/denial rates for motions across a judge’s entire docket. And keyword searches across all dockets provide certainty that no stone is unturned in the Lex Machina platform.

“I think the term ‘game-changer’ is a good way to describe the Enterprise Package,” says Bailey. “Before this release, the starting point for a user used to be a practice area. Now that starting point is anywhere. That’s what we view as the best offering for our customers.”

Analytical Power Behind Data

This release, explains Bailey, enables attorneys to benefit from the company’s broadest coverage yet. Furthermore, she notes that it’s not just about the sheer volume of cases available — it’s the analytical power behind the data. The product is able to surface the most relevant insights via natural language processing (whereby computers can understand and interpret human language) and machine learning and predictive coding (in which humans teach computer software to identify relevance in documents). Through a simple dashboard interface, the analysis provides actionable insights and meaningful patterns in the data and gives users an edge in their everyday legal practice by helping win cases or landing new clients.

“Now that you can quickly look at all of the arguments that have been in front of a particular judge, for example, you can draft arguments based on what the data is telling you has, and hasn’t, worked,” Bailey explains. “We’re able to layer some predictability into what was once not predictable.” Doing so would otherwise demand enormous human effort — which is what makes analytics so powerful.

As the industry grapples with the uncertainty posed by the pandemic and its associated disruptions to an attorney’s workflow, the visibility that analytics offers brings a sense of stability to the profession.

“It applies to everything you could possibly think of,” Bailey says. “At a granular level, if you’re able to look up your opposing counsel’s record, who they have represented or how your judge has ruled, the bigger picture is suddenly visible.”

This is particularly true as Lex Machina continues to roll out its state court offerings, Bailey says. “State courts are known to be more opaque,” she notes. “Being able to get all the documents in one place really puts the power of data into the hands of the user.”

Quickly understanding that data helps lawyers refocus on what they do best: providing counsel, crafting arguments and bringing in new work based on more successful results.

“It’s why ‘right now’ is the optimal moment for the Enterprise Package,” says Bailey. “Lawyers want to make decisions based on facts, on data-driven information. Having access to in-depth analytics on close to three million civil cases is unprecedented.”

To learn more about the advantages legal analytics can deliver to your practice, regardless of where you are in your journey to discover analytics, visit LexMachina.com.