



Victor Valley College Library

LexisNexis Academic Search Tips

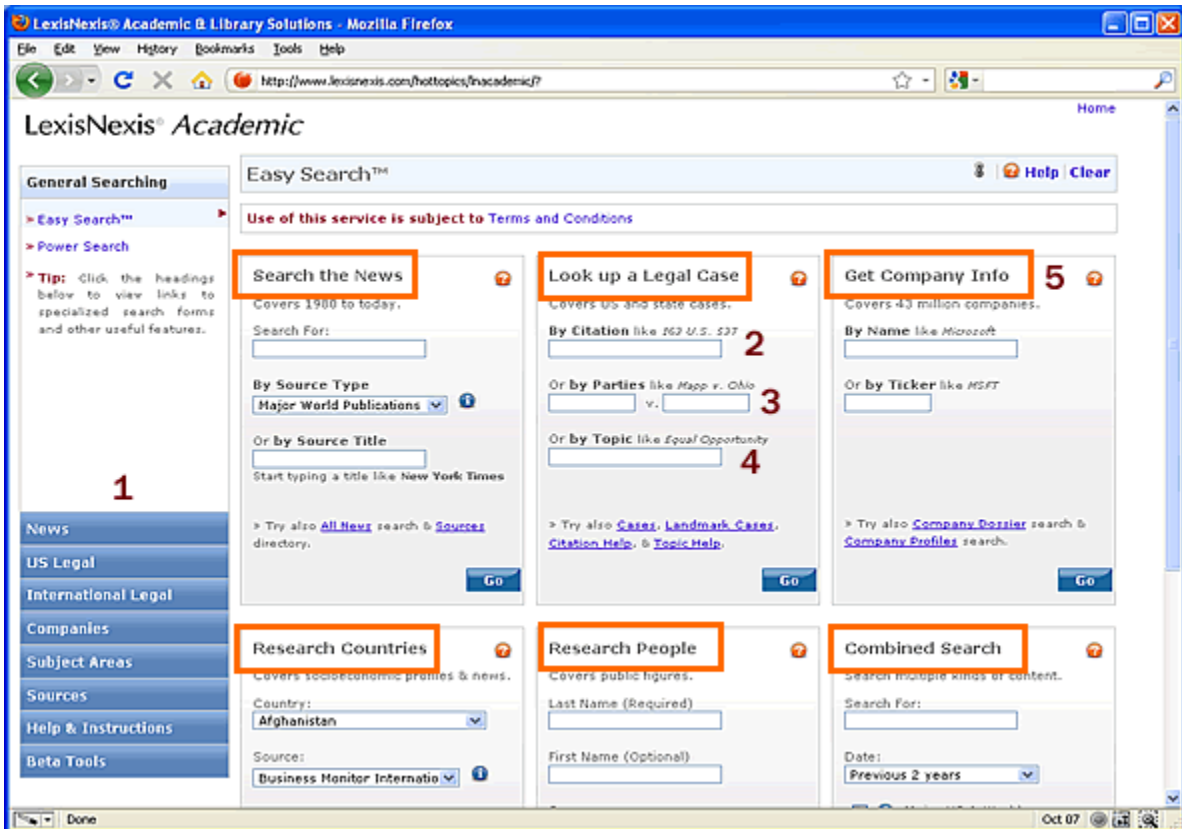
Preface

Although LexisNexis is a powerful research database, it is NOT always the best place to begin your research. Keep in mind that it is primarily a legal database with an added news and business emphasis. If you are looking for magazine and academic journal articles for subjects in English, Sociology, History, etc., *Academic Onefile* or one of the library subject databases will often provide better results. (Note: To illustrate this point, click on the “Sources” link under “Search the News” in LexisNexis and type the word “Journal.” You will see that the journal titles listed cover a very specific range of subjects.)

Searching LexisNexis Academic Database

The default search page, **Easy Search**, (Fig.1) is divided into six search categories: *Search the News*, *Look up a Legal Case*, *Get Company Info*, *Research Countries*, *Research People*, and *Combined Search*. The first three categories offer expanded search options that can be valuable for in-depth research as well as locating more relevant sources.

Figure 1: “Easy Search” Screen



“Search the News”

- The main search box uses “natural language” searching, meaning there is no need to include connectors such as “and” or “or” between words. (Example: Obama health care costs). The search will automatically include the plural forms of a word (cost, costs).
- Use the *News* link in the left column of the **Easy Search** page (Fig.1-1) to expand search options. For example, clicking on “**TV & Radio Transcripts**” (Fig. 2-1) will allow you to select transcripts from a specific news agency (ABC News, CNN, NPR, etc.).
- When searching under “**All News**” (Fig.2), the maximum number of search results in a natural language search is 1,000. To limit the number, use the expanded search options to refine your results (Fig.2-2). The default for where a search term appears is “**Everywhere.**” Some useful search options include:
 - Limit the search term to only the “**Headline and Lead**” of an article. Having the search term appear in the headline or lead paragraph will return fewer and more relevant results
 - The “**At Least 5 Occurrences**” option retrieves articles where a search term appears 5 or more times. When an article is opened, an indicator (Hits) at the bottom right corner displays the number of times the term appears and includes navigation arrows to quickly locate each occurrence.
 - To find more in-depth articles, limit a search by article length. Add “**length**” followed by the symbol for greater than (>) (or less than (<) for shorter articles) and the number of words. Example: length>1500. Leave the location setting as “**Everywhere.**”

Figure 2: Expanded Search – “All News”

The screenshot shows the LexisNexis Academic search interface in a Mozilla Firefox browser. The search bar contains the text "All News". The search criteria are defined as follows:

Search Term	Location	Frequency	Length
Obama	in Headline & Lead		
health care	in Headline & Lead		
costs	in At Least 5 Occurrences		
length>1500	in Everywhere		

The interface also shows a sidebar with navigation options like "News", "TV & Radio Transcripts", and "All News". The search results section is currently empty, with a "1" indicating the number of results. The "Article Location" is set to "US State".

“Look Up a Legal Case”

Note: The “media circus” cases, such as O.J. Simpson, Casey Anthony, Dr. Conrad Murray, etc., are trial court cases decided by a jury verdict and not a judicial decision. The transcripts to these cases can often be found online but the cases are not officially published in legal reporters. To better understand the structure of the U.S. Federal and State court system, see the *United States Courts* website (<http://www.uscourts.gov/EducationalResources/FederalCourtBasics/CourtStructure.aspx>).

- When you are certain of a case citation, use the “**By Citation**” (Fig.1-2) search in **Easy Search**. The standard citation format is Volume number/Reporter abbreviation/Page number. Example: 153 Cal. App. 4th 1546 (capitalization is not necessary but punctuation is required).
- When the names of the parties (Plaintiff and Defendants) are known, use the “**By Parties**” (Fig.1-3) search. In a case with multiple plaintiffs or defendants, the name of any party involved can be searched but the results list will only show the name of the official citation. For example, in *Optimum Power Solutions LLC v. Apple Inc.*, additional defendants include Dell Inc., Hewlett-Packard, and Lenovo Inc. Searching Dell Inc. in place of Apple Inc. will retrieve the case though it will still be listed as *Optimum Power Solutions LLC v. Apple Inc.*
- The “**By Topic**” search under **Easy Search** (Fig.1-4) applies to only the “Headnotes” and “Core Terms” used in summarizing the key points of law in each case. For expanded search options, click *US Legal* in the left column of the page (Fig.3-1). Under “**Federal and State Cases**,” there are numerous search options available including limiting a party search by date and jurisdiction (Fig.3-2). This is useful for searching common names that may appear in more than one jurisdiction.
- Also under *US Legal* is a link to “**Landmark Cases**” listing precedent setting cases for legal decisions affecting abortion, civil rights, freedom of speech, right to die, etc.

Figure 3: US Legal – “US Federal & State Cases”

The screenshot shows the LexisNexis Academic website interface. The main heading is "US Federal & State Cases". The search form includes the following fields and options:

- Search For:** A text input field containing "people v. johnson".
- Search Options:** A dropdown menu is open, showing options: "Party Names" (selected), "Everywhere", "Citation", "Party Names", "Legal Topics", "Summary", "Judges", "Attorneys", and "At Least 5 Occurrences".
- Specify Date:** A dropdown menu set to "Previous 2 years".
- Jurisdiction:** A dropdown menu set to "California".
- Search Button:** A red button labeled "Search".

A tip at the bottom of the search form reads: "Tip: As a shortcut, you can search by case name by simply entering the two party names separated by a 'v.' (like: *Mapp v. Ohio*) and click Search. To retrieve a specific case, enter a valid citation (like: 263 U.S. 537) and choose Citation from the drop-down box. For more options, try **Edit in Power Search**."

“Get Company Info” (Company Reports)

- In **Easy Search** under “**Get Company Info**” (Fig.1-5), enter the name of the company or the stock ticker symbol. Company profiles include information from a variety of business sources, including Hoover's Company Records, LexisNexis Corporate Affiliations, Standard & Poors Corporate Descriptions, and Nelson's Analyst Company Coverage.
- Company reports are divided into five categories: *Snapshot*, *In the News*, *Financials*, *Legal*, and *Intellectual Property*. The “**Company Hierarchy**” link under *Snapshot* is useful for identifying the parent company structure and subsidiaries.
- For more in-depth company research, click *Companies* in the left column of the **Easy Search** page (Fig.1-1). Under “**Company Dossier**,” a tab labeled “**Create a Company List**” is available to create a list of companies based on selected criteria: type, sales, employees, geographic location, etc. (Fig.4). An additional tab, “**Compare Companies**,” enables a search of up to five companies and produces comparative data based on assets, liabilities, and income. (Note: A link for each tab is also listed under *Companies* from the **Easy Search** page.)

Figure 4: Companies – “Company Dossier / Create a Company List”

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the LexisNexis Academic interface. The browser title is "LexisNexis Academic & Library Solutions - Mozilla Firefox". The address bar shows the URL "http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/inacademic?". The page header includes "LexisNexis Academic" and a "Home" link. Below the header, there are three tabs: "Find a Company", "Create a Company List", and "Compare Companies". The "Create a Company List" tab is active and highlighted with a red box. The form below the tabs is titled "Specify the attributes of the companies you are looking for, then click Create to see a list of companies that match your criteria." and includes a "Clear Form" link and a "Currency Conversion" dropdown set to "US Dollars (USD)". The form fields are: "Company Type" (dropdown menu set to "All Companies" with a checkbox for "Only show headquarters locations"), "Sales/Revenue" (fields for "Above" and "Below"), "Employees" (fields for "From" and "To"), "SIC Code" (input field with a "SIC Lookup" link and radio buttons for "Search Primary SIC Codes" and "Search Primary and Secondary SIC Codes"), "NAICS Code" (input field with a "NAICS Lookup" link and radio buttons for "Search Primary NAICS Codes" and "Search Primary and Secondary NAICS Codes"), "Search" (dropdown menu set to "Business Description" with a "For" field), "Company Name" (input field), "Ticker Symbol" (input field with an "Upload a list" link), and "Dossier ID" (input field). A tip at the bottom reads: "Tip: Use commas to search for multiple tickers, e.g., goog, ibm." The browser status bar at the bottom shows "Done" and the date "Oct 12".

“Printing, Emailing, etc.”

- Once a document has been opened to view, printing and other options are available near the top right corner of the page (Fig.5-1). These options include: Print Document, Email Documents, Download Documents (to save), Export Bibliographic References, and Copy Document Link.
- When documents are lengthy, especially legal cases, it is often more efficient to email or download and save an article. This will allow you to cut and paste text and use other word processing options that are not available from a printed copy.

Figure 5: Print Options

