



# Getting Started with Online Research

Computer-assisted legal research opens the door to an ever-expanding online library with which you will become familiar once you look beyond your casebooks and hornbooks. The WestlawNext legal research service is comprehensive, easy to use, and up-to-date. It will help you perform accurate and effective legal research.

On WestlawNext, you can quickly search many sources at once and retrieve up-to-date information that might be difficult to find using books. You can also retrieve information that is not yet available in print. For example, U.S. Supreme Court opinions are available on WestlawNext within 30 minutes of their release. Perhaps most important of all, WestlawNext integrates the most essential research tools from West and provides you with easy, online access.

Although no single research technique is right for every situation, you might start with the Westlaw Research Pyramid and the following WestlawNext research tips.

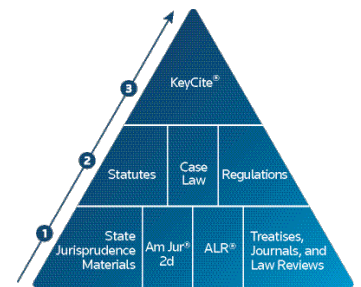
## Westlaw Research Pyramid

- ① Gather background information from secondary sources to understand your issue and to find leads to significant primary law. Recent law review articles and texts like *American Law Reports* (ALR®) and *American Jurisprudence 2d* (Am Jur® 2d) are a good place to start.  
West topic and key numbers also help you to focus your research and retrieve relevant primary law. Each legal issue in a case published by West is identified, summarized, and assigned a topic and key number by West attorney-editors.
- ② Use WestlawNext to gather primary sources, the building blocks of legal research. WestlawNext provides a current, comprehensive collection of primary authority, such as cases, statutes, regulations, and administrative decisions.
- ③ Update your research with KeyCite®, West's citation research service. Check each case or statute you intend to rely on in KeyCite before continuing your research.

WestlawNext is available on the Web at [next.westlaw.com](http://next.westlaw.com).

**Category:**  
Research Fundamentals

For research assistance 24 hours a day, seven days a week, call the West Reference Attorneys at 1-800-850-WEST (1-800-850-9378).



The Westlaw Research Pyramid



## Starting Your Research

Law review articles can serve as an introduction to a new topic, a source of terminology you can use to formulate a search, and a tool to lead you to pertinent primary authority, such as cases and statutes.

Use ALR to find a thorough discussion of case law relating to a particular legal issue. Attorneys who write ALR annotations have already analyzed the available American cases on the issue and have prepared a detailed discussion of the legal principles deduced from the cases. Am Jur 2d is a comprehensive encyclopedia of state and federal law on more than 400 topics.

If you find a useful case, use the topic and key numbers in the case to find other cases on point. You can also use the online West Key Number Digest to search for key numbers on a particular topic.

## Starting a WestlawNext Session

Follow these steps to access WestlawNext:

1. Access [lawschool.westlaw.com](http://lawschool.westlaw.com).
2. At the [lawschool.westlaw.com](http://lawschool.westlaw.com) home page, type your username and password in the *Username* and *Password* text boxes and click **Sign On**.
3. Click **WestlawNext** at the top of the Law School page.

## Using the WestlawNext Home Page

At the home page (Figure 1), you can retrieve a document by citation or a case by party name or search for documents using the text box at the top of the page. You can also browse content using the links in the *Browse* section.

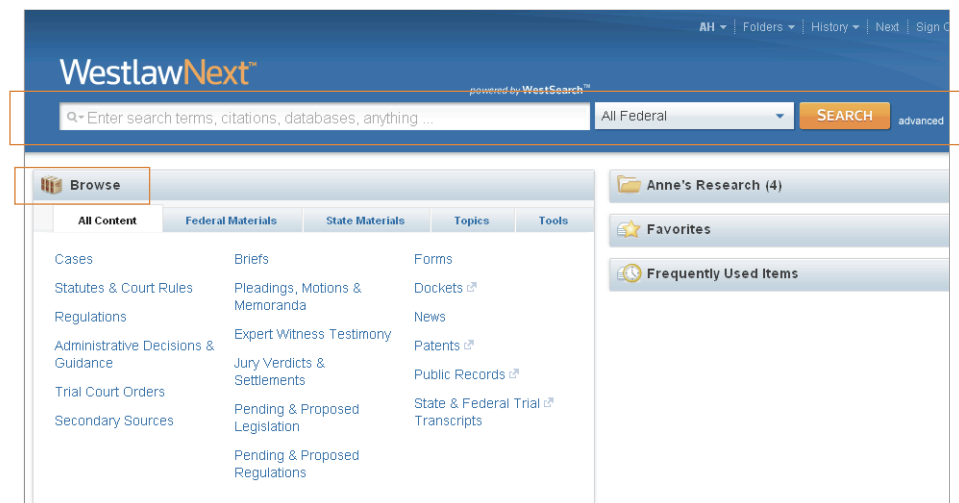


Figure 1. Home page

### Retrieving a Document by Citation

To retrieve documents by citation or name, do one of the following:

- To retrieve a document by citation, type the citation, e.g., **127 sct 2162**, in the text box and click **Search**.
- To retrieve multiple documents by citation, type the citations, separated by semicolons, in the text box and click **Search**.

### Retrieving a Case by Party Name

To retrieve a case by party name, type one or more parties' names, e.g., **rumfeld v. hamdan**, in the text box, change the jurisdiction if necessary, and click **Search**.

### Researching a Legal Issue

When you run a search, you search all of the core legal content on WestlawNext by default. Core content comprises cases, statutes and court rules; regulations; administrative decisions and guidance; trial court orders; secondary sources; briefs; pleadings, motions, and memoranda; expert witness testimony; jury verdicts and settlements; pending and proposed legislation; and pending and proposed regulations.

Complete these steps to search for documents:

1. Type a Terms and Connectors query or terms describing your issue in the text box. WestlawNext recognizes whichever search format you use.
2. Leave the default jurisdiction or click the arrow to display the Jurisdiction selector. Select up to three jurisdictions and click **Save**.
3. Click **Search**.

### Selecting Specific Content to Search

To select specific content to search, click a tab, e.g., **All Content**, in the *Browse* section. Then click a content category, e.g., **Cases**. A corresponding tabbed text box is displayed at the top of the page. Type your search in this text box, change the jurisdiction if necessary, and click **Search**.

## Browsing Content

In addition to running a search, you can use the Browse feature to retrieve documents and to access the table of contents for statutes, regulations, and treatises. Simply click the category links on the tabs in the *Browse* section.

### Browsing Cases

You can retrieve cases in several ways from the *Browse* section:

- Click the **All Content** tab, then click **Cases** to display the Cases page, which organizes cases under *Federal Cases by Court*, *Federal Cases by Circuit*, *Cases by State*, *Cases by U.S. Territory*, and *Cases by Topic* (Figure 2). Click the appropriate links to retrieve the cases you want.
- Click the **Federal Materials** tab to retrieve cases from federal courts in a specific circuit or a specific state.
- Click the **State Materials** tab to view a list of states. Click a state name to retrieve cases from state or federal courts in that state.

When you click a link for a specific court, such as **U.S. Supreme Court**, a list of the 10 most recent cases from that court is displayed. A corresponding tabbed text box is displayed at the top of the page. You can search all cases from the court by typing a search in this text box and clicking **Search**.

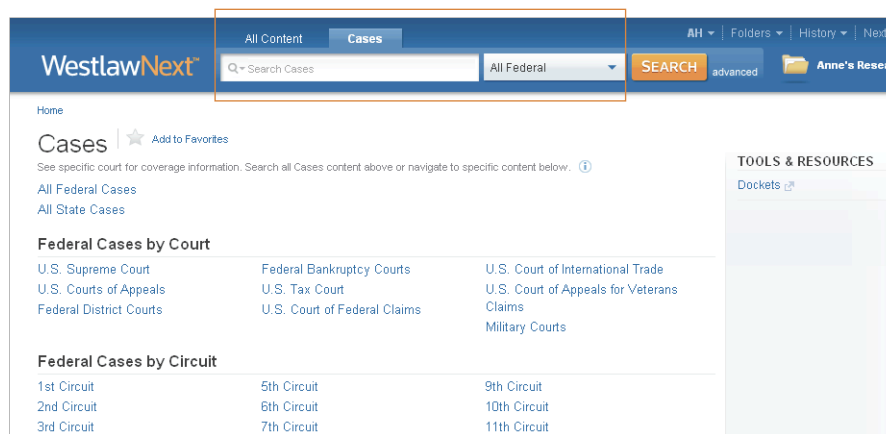


Figure 2. Cases page

## Browsing Statutes

You can retrieve statutes in several ways from the *Browse* section:

- Click the **All Content** tab, then click **Statutes and Court Rules** to display the Statutes and Court Rules page (Figure 3). Click **United States Code Annotated (USCA)** to display the table of contents for the *United States Code Annotated*<sup>®</sup> (USCA<sup>®</sup>), or click a state name to display the table of contents for that state's statutes and court rules.
- Click the **Federal Materials** tab, then click **United States Code Annotated (USCA)** to display the USCA table of contents.
- Click the **State Materials** tab to view a list of states. Click a state name, then click the link to that state's statutes under *Statutes and Court Rules*. The table of contents is displayed.

To browse a table of contents, click the links. To run a search, type your search in the corresponding tabbed text box at the top of the page and click **Search**.

While viewing the text of a statute section, you can click the arrows next to the section symbol ( § ) on the document toolbar to view the next and previous sections. To return to the table of contents, click **Table of Contents** on the document toolbar.

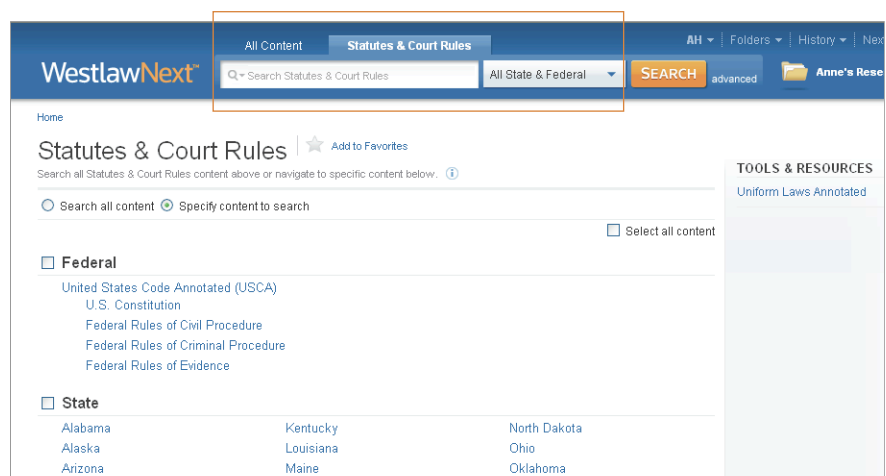


Figure 3. Statutes and Court Rules page

## Viewing a Search Result

### Result Page

After your search is run, the result page is displayed (Figure 4). The result page lists the citations of documents retrieved by your search and enables you to view your highlighted search terms in the context of surrounding terms.

**Note** If an overview of your search result is displayed after your search is run, click a content category in the left column, e.g., **Cases**, to display the result page for that content category.

The result page contains three columns:

- The left column lists the core content categories as well as available filters.
- The center column lists all documents in the category you selected in the left column.
- The right column lists a sampling of related documents from the following content categories: Secondary Sources; Briefs; and Pleadings Motions, and Memoranda.

### Relevancy Ranking

By default, documents are ranked by relevance. To change the default ranking, choose an option from the *Sort by* drop-down list at the top of the center column.

### Result Page Options

- Click the **Details** icon (≡) at the result page to choose from three levels of detail. The type of detail varies by document type and may include the document title and citation, search terms in context, and a document summary.
- To change the number of documents that are displayed at the result page, choose a number from the drop-down list at the bottom of the page.

The screenshot shows the WestlawNext interface. At the top, the search bar contains 'retaliatory discharge for age' and the results are filtered to 'Fed. Ct. App.'. The left sidebar shows a 'VIEW:' menu with 'Cases' selected, showing 391 results. The center column displays 'Cases (391)' with a 'Sort by: Relevance' dropdown and a '1-50' limit selector. The first result is 'Rachid v. Jack In The Box, Inc.', cited as 376 F.3d 305 (5th Cir. 2004). The snippet shows text about age discrimination and retaliation. The right column, titled 'RELATED DOCUMENTS', lists 'Secondary Sources' including '§ 2:35. Retaliation' and 'Proving that discharge was because of age, for purposes of Age Discrimination in Employment Act (29 U.S.C.A. §§ 621 et seq.)'.

Figure 4. Result page

### Related Documents

When you are viewing the result page for a particular content category, e.g., Cases, a list of related documents from the Secondary Sources, Briefs, and Pleadings, Motions, and Memoranda content categories is displayed in the right column. To view the full text of a related document, click its title.

## Narrowing a Search Result

After you select a content category at the result page, you can narrow your search result.

### Searching Within Results

To narrow a search result by searching within the result, type your terms in the *Search within results* text box under *Narrow* in the left column and click **Search**. Both your original search terms and the terms used to narrow your result are highlighted in the documents.


To undo a search within a result, click **Undo search within** in the left column.

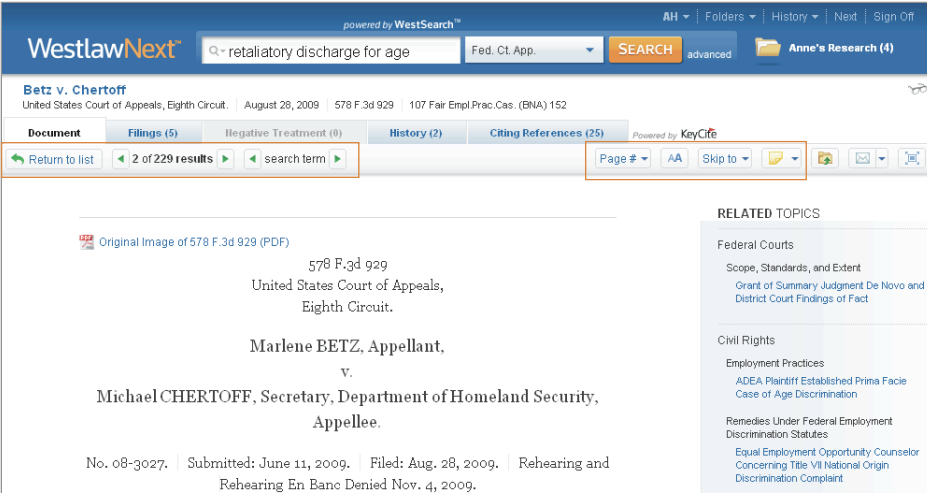
### Filtering Search Results

You can narrow a search result by selecting a filter under *Narrow* in the left column. Filters vary by document type. For example, the filters available for cases include jurisdiction, date, reported status, topic, judge, attorney, law firm, key number, party and docket number. To undo all filters you have added, click **Undo Filters** under *Narrow*.

## Browsing Documents in a Result

To view a document in your search result (Figure 5), click the document's title. Each document in a search result contains highlighted search terms for easy browsing and links to cited documents. On the document toolbar for a case, you can do any of the following:

- To view the result list, click **Return to list**.
- To view the next or previous document in your search result, click the **Results** arrows.
- To view the portions of each document that contain your search terms, click the **Search Term** arrows.
- To view the place in a document where a specific print page begins, click **Page #**, then type a page number in the text box and click **Go**.
- To change display options, such as font and type size, click the **Display Options** icon ( **AA** ).
- To jump to a specific portion of a case, click **Skip to** and choose an option, e.g., **Opinion**, from the menu.
- To add a note to the document, click the **Annotations** icon (  ) and choose **Add Note** from the menu.



powered by WestSearch™

WestlawNext™

Search: retaliatory discharge for age

Fed. Ct. App. SEARCH advanced Anne's Research (4)

**Betz v. Chertoff**  
United States Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit. | August 28, 2009 | 578 F.3d 929 | 107 Fair Empl.Prac.Cas. (BNA) 152

Document Filings (5) Negative Treatment (0) History (2) Citing References (25) Powered by KeyCite

Return to list 2 of 229 results search term Page # AA Skip to Annotations

Original Image of 578 F.3d 929 (PDF)

578 F.3d 929  
United States Court of Appeals,  
Eighth Circuit.

Marlene BETZ, Appellant,  
v.  
Michael CHERTOFF, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security,  
Appellee.

No. 08-3027. Submitted: June 11, 2009. Filed: Aug. 28, 2009. Rehearing and  
Rehearing En Banc Denied Nov. 4, 2009.

**RELATED TOPICS**

Federal Courts  
Scope, Standards, and Extent  
Grant of Summary Judgment De Novo and  
District Court Findings of Fact

Civil Rights  
Employment Practices  
ADEA Plaintiff Established Prima Facie  
Case of Age Discrimination

Remedies Under Federal Employment  
Discrimination Statutes  
Equal Employment Opportunity Counselor  
Concerning Title VII National Origin  
Discrimination Complaint

Figure 5. Case

## Copying and Pasting Text with the Citation

The Copy with Reference feature automatically inserts the correct citation when you copy and paste text from a case, statute, regulation, treatise, law review, or other document on WestlawNext into a brief or other legal document. To use Copy with Reference, select the text you want to copy, then choose **Copy with Reference** from the pop-up menu. A message is displayed confirming that the text has been copied. Click **Close**. Paste the copied text, which includes its citation, into your legal document.

**Note** Bluebook citation format is the default; you can choose other formats by clicking the arrow next to *Copy with Reference* in the pop-up menu.

## Checking Citations in KeyCite

Use KeyCite to determine whether a case, statute, administrative decision, or regulation is good law and to retrieve citing references. For more information about KeyCite, download a free copy of *How to Check Citations* by accessing [west.thomson.com/westlaw/guides](http://west.thomson.com/westlaw/guides) and clicking **Law Students** under *Westlaw for Your Organization*.

### KeyCite for Cases

KeyCite status flags



A red flag warns that the case is no longer good law for at least one of the points of law it contains.



A yellow flag warns that the case has some negative history but has not been reversed or overruled.

### History of a Case

Click the **History** tab to view the direct history of a case and related references (Figure 6). The cases included in the direct history and related references are listed in the left column. Direct history is also displayed in graphical view in the right column. You can restrict direct history by choosing an option from the *View* drop-down list.

### Negative Direct History and Negative Citing References

Click the **Negative Treatment** tab to view negative direct history and negative citing references for a case. Negative citing references are listed in a table format. The depth of treatment bars in the *Depth* column indicate the extent to which the citing cases discuss the cited case.

The screenshot displays the WestlawNext interface for the case **Hamdan v. Rumsfeld**. The top navigation bar includes the WestlawNext logo, a search bar, and navigation links like AH, Folders, History, Next, and Sign Off. The case details show it is from the Supreme Court of the United States, dated June 29, 2006, with citations 548 U.S. 557 and 126 S.Ct. 2749. The tabs at the top are Document, Filings (113), Negative Treatment (9), and History (10). The History tab is selected, showing a graphical history view. On the left, a list of cases is shown, including Hamdan v. Rumsfeld (344 F.Supp.2d 152, D.D.C., Nov. 08, 2004), Hamdan v. Rumsfeld (415 F.3d 33, D.C.Cir., Jul. 15, 2005), and Salim Ahmed Hamdan v. Rumsfeld (546 U.S. 1002, U.S., Nov. 07, 2005). The graphical view on the right shows the case's history, including its reversal by the Supreme Court and its subsequent citation in other cases.

Figure 6. History tab

## KeyCite for Statutes

### KeyCite Status Flags



A red flag indicates that the statute has been amended by a recent session law, repealed, superseded, or held unconstitutional or preempted in whole or in part.



A yellow flag indicates that the statute has been renumbered or transferred by a recent session law; that an uncodified session law or proposed legislation affecting the statute is available; that the statute was limited on constitutional or preemption grounds or its validity was otherwise called into doubt; or that a prior version of the statute received negative treatment from a court.

### History of a Statute

Click the **History** tab to view the history of a displayed statute (Figure 4). Statute history includes cases, recent session laws, and proposed legislation that negatively affects the statute; prior versions of the statute; legislative history notes; bill drafts; and reports and related materials.

### Returning to Prior Research

To return to previous work, point to **History** at the top of any page. A list of the five most recent documents you have viewed and searches you have run is displayed. Click a link to return to a document or search. You can also click **View all** next to *Recent Documents* or *Recent Searches* to display the History page for a list of all the documents you have viewed and searches you have run.

### Printing or Delivering Documents

To print, e-mail, or download a document or a list of documents, complete these steps:

1. Click the **Print**, **Email**, **Download**, or **Send to Amazon Kindle** icon on the toolbar, or click the arrow next to the delivery icon and choose **Print**, **Email**, **Download**, or **Send to Amazon Kindle** from the menu.
2. A dialog box is displayed with two or more tabs. Click each tab and make any necessary selections.
3. Click **Print**, **Email**, **Download**, or **Send**.

If you click **Print** or **Download**, a Preparing for Print or Preparing for Download dialog box is displayed. To continue your research and print or download documents at a later time, click **Minimize and Continue Researching**. Your request will be added to the delivery queue.

For assistance using WestlawNext, call 1-800-850-WEST (1-800-850-9378).

For free reference materials, visit [west.thomson.com/westlaw/guides](http://west.thomson.com/westlaw/guides).