

LegalTrac on the Web

“Cheat Sheet”

This is an overview of the features of LegalTrac on the web. To learn about features not discussed here, and for help and advice specific to your research, call 415.422-6773 or contact a research librarian via <http://legalresearch.usfca.edu/~jeffResearchHelp>.

Coverage and Content

LegalTrac on the web covers 1980 to the present. (For periods between 1908 and 1980, use *Index to Legal Periodicals* on the web (<https://www.usfca.edu/library/legalperiodicals>). For periods before 1908, use *Index to Legal Periodicals* in print at K 33 .I54 LAW REFERENCE.)

LegalTrac contains citations to articles in law journals and other legal periodicals. Some recent articles are available in full text.

Access

LegalTrac on the web is available to researchers using USF campus libraries, and to current USF students, faculty and staff using remote logins.

Log-in

Go to: to <https://www.usfca.edu/library/legaltrac> and select the “Connect to this Database” link.

Search Options

There are three options. The “Advanced Search” template is the default.

Advanced Search	Allows searching by key word, subject, title, author, etc. Allows use of AND, OR, NOT, and “proximity operators” Wn and Nn (<i>e.g.</i> , W3, W25). Allows you to customize your search in a variety of ways.
“Basic Search”	Using the search box at the top of the screen, matches search terms in the article citations or text. Allows use of AND, OR, NOT, and “proximity operators” Wn and Nn.
“Subject Guide”	Lets you find citations using LegalTrac’s list of subject headings (topical labels).

For search tips, select “Help” from the “More” pull-down menu at the top of the page.

LegalTrac has a “Search History” option under the “More” pull-down menu at the top of the page.

You can set up email or RSS alerts for new results by clicking the “Create Search Alert” link on your search results page. You can also sign in with your USF Google account to download results to your Google Drive.

Display of Results

LegalTrac displays 20 citations at a time. Use “Preferences” (under “Tools”) to switch to 5, 10, or 50 citations at a time. The default ranking is by publication date, but you can switch to relevance ranking.

The default display shows article title, journal title, author, volume, pages, and dates. Clicking on the title displays more information about the article. “Full text” and “PDF” links appear when the text is available.

Printing, E-mailing & Downloading

First, “Save” the articles/citations you want. Then, select “My Folder” from the “More” menu. Then choose to download, print or email.

Specific Searches Useful for Legal Research or Preemption Checking

Key Word Search

Select the “Advanced Search” tab.

Enter any key words in the search box(es), *e.g.*,

euthanasia — or —

"trade dress" — or —

internet and jurisdiction

For a more focused result set, select “Keyword” from the pull-down menu next to the search box.

For a broader result set, select “Basic Search” from the pull-down menu.

Use * to retrieve all endings of a word (*e.g.*, **discrim***). Use ? for variant spellings (*e.g.*, **super?ede**).

Use ! to retrieve plurals (*e.g.*, **lawyer!**).

If your search finds useful articles, you can look for more by viewing an article’s full citation and following the “Related Subjects” links on the right-hand side of the screen to find other articles on the same subject.

Subject Search

Use “Subject Guide Search” to learn of useful standardized LegalTrac subject headings (topical labels.)

Start by entering a possible LegalTrac subject heading, *e.g.*, **right to die** in the “Find Subjects” box. The Subject Guide will show you if this is an actual LegalTrac subject heading, or will suggest actual subject headings. One you find a helpful subject heading, click on it to see citations to articles about that subject.

Author Search

Select “Advanced Search,” then select “Author” from the pull-down menu next to the search box.

Enter the author’s name, last name first, *e.g.*,

wildman, stephanie

Case Name Search (by keyword)

The best way to find citations to articles about a case is to search by key word. Select “Advanced Search,” then select “Keyword” from the pull-down menu next to the search box. In the search box, type:

oncale [for one party’s name]

cruzan v. director [for two parties’ names]

"compassion in dying" [for multiple-word parties’ names]

Statute Name Search (by subject)

Select “Subject Guide Search.”

Enter the name of the act in the search box.: *e.g.*,

americans with disabilities act — or —

communications decency act

Limiting by Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction searching on LegalTrac is nowhere near as thorough and effective as on Legal Resource Index on Westlaw, and is not recommended. If you’d like to try a jurisdiction limit anyway, follow these steps.

Select “Advanced Search,” and begin a “Keyword” or “Subject” search. Then, in another search box, enter the jurisdiction (*e.g.*, California or France) and pick “Keyword” from the adjacent pull-down menu.

Filtering Search Results

You can search within results by key word, and you can filter your results by subject, document type, publication, or date.