

Using Connectors and Boolean Operators with the Main Legal Databases

Grammatical connectors which allow you to search for words and phrases within a specified distance of each other can also help to provide more relevant search results.

The table below illustrates how the connectors work for Justis, Lawtel, Lexis Library and Westlaw.

	Finding words within the same sentence	Finding words within the same paragraph	Finding words within "n" terms of each other (where "n" is a number)	Finding words with variant endings	Finding words with variable characters	Searching for phrases
JUSTIS	near Olympic near bid (for terms within 10 words of one another)	w/x where x is a number of words hearsay w/50 admissibility	w/3 person w/3 jurisdiction	liab* finds liability, liabilities, liable	compl?ment finds compliment and complement But use * for any number of characters in the word Ste*enson will find documents that contain Steavenson, Stephenson or Stevenson	"paternity leave"
LAWTEL	/s Olympic /s bid	/p hearsay /p admissibility	/3 person /3 jurisdiction	employ* finds employed, employee, employer	licen?e will retrieve license or licence	"paternity leave"
LEXIS LIBRARY	w/s Olympic w/s bid	w/p hearsay w/p admissibility	w/3 person w/3 jurisdiction	pollut! finds pollution, pollute, polluted	wom*n would find woman and women int**net would find internet and intranet	Defaults to phrase searching so just enter paternity leave
WESTLAW	/s Olympic /s bid	/p hearsay /p admissibility	/3 person /3 jurisdiction	object! finds objected, objection, objecting	withdr* will find withdraw and withdrew P**rson will find Pearson and Pierson	"paternity leave"



Using AND, OR, NOT

Sometimes when you are carrying out online research you may need to use connectors in order to make your search broader or more specific. The most commonly used connectors are AND, OR, NOT

AND - this will search for all terms in the same document e.g. barrister **and** solicitor. Most databases default to this if a space is used, but Lexis Library needs **and** to search for the terms rather than looking for them as a phrase.

OR - use the OR connector to find documents that contain either or both of the words or to link search words that are synonyms e.g. car **or** automobile

NOT - this will exclude certain words from the search. The various databases will word this search differently:

Justis and Lawtel **NOT** e.g. barrister **not** solicitor

Lexis Library **AND NOT** e.g. barrister **and not** solicitor

Westlaw **BUT NOT** e.g. barrister **but not** solicitor

What to do when your terms do not seem to find anything

If your search terms do not seem to work, try using fewer search terms or try expressing the main term in different ways.

So if you searched for administration, for example, you could also try the following:

Broader words e.g. insolvency

Narrower words e.g. termination

Synonyms e.g. liquidation, restructuring

Antonyms e.g. solvent, credit, profit, cash flow

Closely related words e.g. debts, arrears, assets

Terms of procedure e.g. winding-up, receivership

Terms of remedy e.g. voluntary arrangement, liquidator, administrator