

PRACTICE POINTERS

Fastcase Constantly Evolving to Democratize Law

By Sheri Long, State Bar of Nevada Practice Management Director

The State Bar of Nevada provides access to Fastcase legal research as a benefit for all members. Sheri Long, the state bar's practice management director, had the opportunity to speak with Ed Walters, Fastcase's chief executive officer, about all things Fastcase.

Sheri Long: Fastcase is easily one of our bar's most popular member benefits. Thousands of our members use Fastcase at least occasionally, which speaks highly of what you have created in terms of access to the law with the aid of creative analytics tools. What made you decide to partner with bar associations to provide access in this way?

Ed Walters: Our dual mission from the very start was to democratize the law and to make legal research smarter. So, bar associations were a natural partner. When we work with a state bar association, every lawyer in the state gets free access to our service, which really democratizes the law. And although we don't get paid like a duopolist, Fastcase makes enough money to invest in continuous improvement, which makes our tools smarter all the time. Today, 34 state bar associations offer Fastcase to their members as a free benefit.

Long: I always hear about Fastcase and the new things you are working on, from the acquisition of Docket Alarm, NextChapter and Judicata, to your merging with Casemaker in January 2021. What's next for Fastcase, any clues that you can give us?

Walters: Our combination with Casemaker is pretty exciting. I mentioned before that Fastcase is a member benefit for 34 state bar associations – Casemaker is a benefit for every state bar that doesn't offer Fastcase. So together, we serve all 50 state bar associations. It's a powerful way for us to democratize the law.

Just this fall, we opened Docket Alarm's library of more than 400 million state and federal briefs, motions and pleadings for research in Fastcase. That means that nobody starts with a blank page anymore – you can always find a form template for a motion or a pleading before a court.

We're also rolling out more than 400 expert treatises in Fastcase, and our NextChapter team is rolling out a new tool to help you easily automate repetitive documents that you file. People love Fastcase now, but they're going to love it even more later this year.

Long: Bad Law Bot is an amazing feature of Fastcase, a citator with zero human editorial that relies on well-built analytics technology. Is it possible to improve or expand its capabilities?



Walters: We're working right now on making Bad Law Bot the best citator in the business. In 2020, the team from legal tech pioneer Judicata joined the Fastcase team, and we're working together on a new mix of algorithmic and human work that will make Bad Law Bot the most accurate and useful citator in the world.

Software and bots are great at some work, but for something as important as a citator, we think it's important to add human judgment too. A world-class citator is one of the last remaining reasons that people use legacy legal research services, so if you feel trapped because of your citator, we're about to post your bail.

Long: Fastcase has changed in a big way over the past six months with Fastcase 7. What can we expect to put in front of Nevada attorneys during the next year?

Walters: People love Fastcase 7 – it's easy to read, you can search all libraries at the same time and it's easy to understand. We're pioneering some new analytics products from Docket Alarm that have been called the most powerful in the business.

Fastcase has launched a legal news service called Law Street Media (www.lawstreetmedia.com), focused on the business of law. We're publishing original books like Joshua Walker's *On Legal AI*, and *The Global #MeToo Movement* from Berkeley Center for Comparative Equality and Anti-Discrimination Law. And now, with our recently announced acquisition of bankruptcy forms tool NextChapter, we're looking forward to expanding into more forms and workflow tools.

We're growing all the time, and there's a lot more to Fastcase than just legal research.

Long: If you had to leave our members with just one thing. Why Fastcase; why should they use your service over another provider?

Walters: I don't think Fastcase is all things to all people, but one thing that's unique is that people can try Fastcase for free through the State Bar of Nevada anytime they like, for as long as they like. You just go to the state bar website at www.nvbar.org, log in with your State Bar of Nevada username and password, and you're off and searching.

The free benefit also includes unlimited free reference attorney support by phone or live chat, so if you're ever stuck on research, Fastcase has put a team of reference attorneys on call to help you. It's one of the reasons Fastcase has added 100,000 subscribers a year for each of the last six years – it's a great legal research that is constantly getting even better, and at a price that works for everyone – free with your bar membership.