



NOVA SCOTIA
BARRISTERS' SOCIETY

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RESEARCH GUIDE FOR ONLINE DATABASES

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Introduction

Nova Scotia Barristers' Society Web Site

The Nova Scotia Barristers' Society's web site is designed to provide members and the public with easy access to information about the Society, its departments, services, and publications. The web site includes links to important documents, such as the *Legal Profession Act* and its accompanying regulations, the Trust Accounts Manual, and information about upcoming Continuing Professional Development conferences. To access decisions from Nova Scotia courts, click on the link entitled, "Nova Scotian Case Law", which is located on the right side of the web site.

Navigating the Site

Users can navigate the web site via the navigation bars located on either side of the page. To access the Library section of the web site, click on the link entitled, "Library", on the left side of the web site.

Library

The Library section of the web site provides access to the databases developed and maintained by the staff of the Library & Information Services department of the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society. The databases are called Law News Online, Textbooks/Treatises Catalogue, Serials Holdings Catalogue, Legal Links, Secondary Sources, and Best Practices. These databases provide access to a variety of information, including Nova Scotia decisions, the holdings of the Barristers' Library in Halifax and county barristers' libraries, links to useful web sites, secondary source material, an online version of *Legal Ethics and Professional Conduct: A Handbook for Lawyers in Nova Scotia*, as well as other material on the topic of professional responsibility.

Boolean Searching

Boolean searching involves combining search terms with Boolean connectors to produce more relevant results. Terms and phrases are combined with the connectors AND, OR, and NOT.

Using the connector AND means that all requirements must be met for the desired result. The search terms **legal AND ethics** will return all documents containing the words **legal** and **ethics**, whether as a phrase or as separate words in a document.

A wider search, producing more documents, will result by using the connector OR. The search terms **legal OR ethics** will retrieve documents containing either term, as well as documents containing both terms.

Excluding a phrase or term is done by using the connector NOT. The search terms **legal NOT ethics** will retrieve documents which contain the term **legal**, but not the term **ethics**. The NOT connector should be used very carefully since potentially relevant documents containing the preferred term will be excluded if they also include the non-preferred term.

Boolean connectors are available in DB/Text (the application used to create Library & Information Services' databases) in two different ways. To the left of each field is a drop down box with selections for AND, OR, and NOT. The default selection is AND. These Boolean connectors allow the combination of search terms in various fields. For example, to search for textbooks written by Sopinka, but to exclude those on the topic of evidence, enter **Sopinka** in the author field, **evidence** in the subject field, and select **NOT** from the drop down box that appears before the subject field. This search will yield the books by Sopinka on the trial of an action and the conduct of an appeal, but not those books on evidence.

Boolean connectors can also be used *within* a search field in DB/Text. Use **&** to represent AND, use **/** to represent OR, use **!** to represent NOT.

DB/Text Software

DB/Text is the software application used by Library & Information Services to create its databases.

Definitions

Fields

Databases are composed of fields, such as author, title, and subject. These fields appear as blank search boxes on the query screen. To execute a search, enter one or more terms in one or more fields, being careful to follow the precautions mentioned on the previous page in the discussion of Boolean connectors.

Reports

When a search has been executed, the search results will appear in what is called a report. In some databases, there is the ability to change the report format, which will alter how the search results appear (see the section below, entitled, “Changing the Reports”).

Index

To the right of some of the fields is a button called Index. Clicking on this button will display a list of every word or term used in that particular field in the database (see the section below, entitled, “Searching Using the Index Button”).

Functions

AND/OR/NOT

To change the Boolean connectors between fields, simply click on the black arrow ▼ of the drop-down box to the left of any given field, and select the appropriate Boolean connector (see the section on the previous page, entitled “Boolean Searching”, for more information). It is also possible to use Boolean connectors within an individual field.

Searching

To search a database, simply insert search term(s) in any given field, being careful to follow the precautions noted in the discussion of Boolean connectors on the previous page. There is no need to capitalize search terms. If the complete spelling of a word is unknown, try truncating the term with an asterisk. For example, the search term **macd*** in the author field will yield a list of all of the authors whose last names begin with **macd** (e.g., MacDonald, MacDougall, MacDonnell, etc.).

Searching Using the Index Button

To ensure that a search term can be used in a given field, click on the Index button to the right of that field. In doing so, a list will appear. Type the search term in the Find field and click on the Go To button to go to that search term or the nearest matching term. Select the appropriate term(s) from the list, click on the Paste button, and then click on the Close button. The selected terms now appear in the corresponding field in the query screen. Please note that the Index button is not available for all fields (i.e., full text field).

Searching More than One Word in a Field

Every database has a default method of reading search terms. In the case of DB/Text, it automatically assumes a phrase. For example, the search terms **legal ethics** will retrieve documents with the phrase **legal ethics**.

Search terms, however, can be combined *within* a given field, using the appropriate connectors, such as **&** to represent AND, **/** to represent OR, **!** to represent NOT. For example, the search terms **legal & ethics** will retrieve documents containing both **legal** and **ethics**. The search terms **legal / ethics** will retrieve documents containing either **legal** or **ethics**, as well as documents containing both **legal** and **ethics**. The search terms **legal ! ethics** will retrieve documents containing **legal** but not **ethics**.

Truncation

Parentheses and truncation add flexibility where a word could have more than one ending. In DB/Text, the truncation symbol is the asterisk, and is placed after the root of a word. For example, the search term **object*** will find documents containing **objected**, **objectors**, **objecting**, **objection**, **objectives**, **objectively**, etc.

Submitting the Query

After entering search term(s) in one or more fields, click on the Submit Query button to execute the search.

Changing the Reports

When a search has been executed, the database will return the results in the default report. The format of the report can be changed in some databases. For example, the default report format in Law News Online is Digest, which displays the digests of the cases found in a search. This default format, however, can be changed to Style of Cause or Fulltext. To change the report format, simply click on the small black arrow ▼ of the drop-down box at the top left corner of the screen, and select the desired format.

Search Results

In both Netscape Navigator and Internet Explorer, the number of results from a search appears in the title bar located at the very top of the browser.

Reset

After completing one search and before beginning another, the screen should be reset. This will remove information in any of the fields and prepare the screen for the next search. The Reset button is at the bottom of the query screen next to the Submit Query button.

Law News Online

(<http://nsbs.org/librarydatabases.php?page=LNBQBE>)

Law News Online provides access to the full text of decisions from Nova Scotia (primarily the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court), as well as access to the digests of decisions that appear in the *Nova Scotia Law News*. Please read the “Coverage of Database” note on the query screen to Law News Online for the correct coverage information. Decisions are loaded into the database as they are received from the courts.

Hints for Searching

Basic Search: The basic search is for Google-type searching.

Search Decisions for All of these Words / Search Decisions by Exact Phrase / Search Decisions for at Least One of these Words / Search Decisions Without these Word(s): Use these Google-type search boxes to search the full text of material in the database.

New Decisions (week ending): It is best to use the Index button to pull up decisions in this field.

Decisions by Main Subject: When searching for decisions by main subject, use the Index button to ensure an established main subject is used.

Advanced Search: The advanced search is for Boolean searching. Using this query screen allows for more flexibility when searching.

Case Name: The style of cause for appellate decisions will appear the same as it did at the trial level, even if the names are reversed in the appellate decision.

New Decisions (week ending): See Basic Search above.

Keywords: The keyword field searches the subject and the digest of each decision. It is important to use the appropriate connectors within a search field. See the section, Searching More than One Word in a Field, on page 5 of this guide for further information on using the appropriate connectors.

Full Text: Searches in the full text field search the full text of decisions. Banned decisions (those decisions where the names of the parties have been reduced to initials) always appear with a note to contact Library & Information Services for the full text. If a decision has this note, and it is not a banned decision, it may be that the courts did not provide an electronic copy to be loaded into the database.

N.S. Statutes & Rules Considered / Federal Statutes Considered: When searching for decisions that consider a specific section of a statute, it is advisable to use the Index button to ensure the correct search terms are used. When searching for decisions that consider a

statute in general, and not a specific section, enter one or more words from the title of the statute separated by an ampersand (e.g., motor & vehicle). It is also possible to search for decisions that consider the civil procedure rules by using the Nova Scotia Statutes & Rules Considered field.

Judge: In the Judge field, the judge's last name is listed first, followed by the initials indicating at which court level the judge sits (e.g., Hall P C J, Haliburton J C C, Hallett J A). This is important to remember when using the Index button. As an alternative to the Index button, enter only the last name of the judge followed by an asterisk (e.g., Hal* will retrieve decisions by Hallett, J.A., Hallett, J., Haliburton, J., Haliburton, L.J.S.C., Haliburton, J.C.C., Hall, L.J.S.C., Hall, J., Hall, J.C.C., etc.).

Date: Use the Index button if searching in this field.

Neutral Citation: When searching for a decision using this field, enter the date, a space, the tribunal identifier, a space, and then the ordinal number (e.g., 2006 NSSC 132). Alternatively, use the Index button to ensure the correct format of the citation is used.

Reported Citation(s): When searching for a decision using the Reported Citation(s) field, use the Index button to ensure the correct format of the citation is used.

Report Format: When a search has been executed, the database will return the results in a report. The default report format in Law News Online is Digest, which displays the digests of the cases found in a search. This default format, however, can be changed to Style of Cause format or Fulltext format. To change the report format, simply click on the small black arrow of the drop-down box at the top left corner of the screen, and select the desired format.

Printing: To print the full text of a single decision, click on the blue link in the report to a printable version of the decision and then proceed to print the PDF version of the document from Adobe Acrobat Reader.

Library Catalogues

(<http://nsbs.org/librarydatabases.php?page=CATQBE>)

Textbooks/Treatises Catalogue

The Textbooks/Treatises Catalogue lists all texts available at the Barristers' Library in Halifax, as well as at county barristers' libraries. Look for the "Available in these Libraries" statement in each record to determine in which libraries a book is located.

The Textbooks/Treatises Catalogue is designed to allow searching by keyword, author, title, subject, date of publication, publisher, and library.

Hints for searching

Keyword: The keyword field searches the title and subject(s) of each textbook or treatise. It is important to use the appropriate connectors within a search field. See the section, Searching More than One Word in a Field, on page 5 for further information on using the appropriate connectors.

Author: The author's last name is listed first, followed by the first name. This is important to remember when using the Index button. As an alternative to the Index button, enter only the last name of the person with an asterisk (e.g., Walker*).

Title: Unless the exact title of the book is known, it is best to execute a search with terms from the title joined with an ampersand (e.g., law & evidence). See the section, Searching More than One Word in a Field, on page 5 of this guide for further information on using the appropriate connectors.

Subject: When conducting a subject search, use the Index button or enter a single word that best describes the subject of interest (e.g., ethics). For better results, use the single form of a word followed by an asterisk. The Index button is very useful when conducting a subject search and its use is recommended in the Library Catalogues database.

Report Format: When a search has been executed, the database will return the results in a report. The report format for the Textbooks/Treatises Catalogue provides a complete citation of the text, including the author (if available), title, publisher, place of publication, and date. This information is followed by the call number (e.g., KB 130 C542 2007). At the end of each record is a statement indicating in which libraries that text can be found (e.g., Available in these Libraries: Halifax; Yarmouth; Antigonish).

Serials Holdings Catalogues

The Barristers' Library in Halifax, as well as the county barristers' libraries, each have their own Serials Holdings Catalogue, which lists the various reference works (e.g., dictionaries, directories, etc.), report series, and periodicals that are held in a particular library. This database permits searching by title or subject.

Legal Links

(<http://nsbs.org/librarydatabases.php?page=LLQBE>)

The Legal Links database, a co-operative venture of the four Atlantic law society libraries, provides access to legal information on the World Wide Web. Access to the legal links is provided through a list of general search topics, as well as by subject and keyword searching. Please note that not all of the web sites included in the database are accessible through the list of general search topics; some links can only be accessed via subject and keyword searching.

Please remember that online versions of statutory material may be provided for reference only, and as a result, may not have any official sanction. For all purposes of interpreting and applying the law, consult the original documents.

Hints for Searching

Subject: When conducting a subject search, use the Index button or enter a single word that best describes the subject of interest (e.g., statutes). For better results, use the single form of a word followed by an asterisk (e.g., statute*). Search terms can be combined to increase the relevancy of the search results (e.g., statute* & nova scotia). The Index button is very useful when conducting a subject search and its use is recommended in the Legal Links database.

Keyword: The keyword field searches the title, the subject, and the brief summary or description of each web site. Use caution when conducting a keyword search, as it may result in too much information. It is important to use the appropriate connectors within a search field. See the section, Searching More than One Word in a Field, on page 5 of this guide for further information on using the appropriate connectors.

Report Format: The results of a search in this database will include the title of each web site, an active link to the web site, and in most cases, a brief summary or description of the site.

Secondary Sources

(<http://nsbs.org/librarydatabases.php?page=2dSourcesBQBE>)

Secondary Sources provides access to a wide range of secondary sources, including papers presented at Continuing Professional Development and Continuing Legal Education Society of Nova Scotia conferences, articles published in *Nova Scotia Law News* and *The Society Record*, as well as other useful unpublished articles written by members of the profession. Each paper is available in PDF format for ease of reading and printing.

Hints for Searching

Basic Search: The basic search is for Google-type searching.

Search Papers for All of these Words / Search Papers by Exact Phrase / Search Papers for at Least One of these Words / Search Papers Without these Word(s): Use these Google-type search boxes to search the full text of material in the database.

Date of Publication: It is possible to search for material by date of publication. This is especially useful when searching for a paper presented in a particular year.

Source of Material: This database permits searching by source of material (e.g., Continuing Legal Education Society of Nova Scotia publications, Nova Scotia Barristers' Society Professional Development publications, Nova Scotia Law News articles, *The Society Record* articles, and unpublished materials). Use the Index button to select one or more sources.

Program: Use this field to search for material by conference or program title. It is important to use the appropriate connectors within a search field. See the section, Searching More than One Word in a Field, on page 5 of this guide for further information on using the appropriate connectors.

Advanced Search: The advanced search is for Boolean searching. Using this query screen allows for more flexibility when searching.

Author: The author's last name is listed first, followed by the first name. This is important to remember when using the Index button. It is just as simple to enter the last name of the author with an asterisk (e.g., Walker*), than it is to use the Index button.

Title: Use this field to search by the title of a paper presented at a Society-sponsored conference or appearing in a Society publication, such as *The Society Record* or the Nova Scotia Law News.

Subject: When conducting a subject search, use the Index button or enter a single word that best describes the subject of interest (e.g., breathalyzers). For better results, use the single form of a word followed by an asterisk. The Index button is very useful when conducting a subject search and its use is recommended in the Secondary Sources database.

Date of Publication: See Basic Search above.

Program: See Basic Search above.

Source of Material: See Basic Search above.

Search Papers Using Boolean Operators: Use search terms connected with Boolean operators to search the full text of material in the database. See the section, Searching More than One Word in a Field, on page 5 of this guide for further information on using the appropriate connectors.

Report Format: When a search has been executed, the database will return the results in a report. The default report format in Secondary Sources is AuthorWeb, which arranges the results of a search by source of material and then alphabetically by author. This default format, however, can be changed to Conference format or TitleWeb format. To change the report format, simply click on the small black arrow of the drop-down box at the top left corner of the screen, and select the desired format.

Printing: To print the full text of a single paper or article, click on the blue link in the report to a printable version of the paper or article and then proceed to print the PDF version of the document from Adobe Acrobat Reader.