

Enterprise Search for Law Firms

The Problem

As a lawyer, you wade through massive amounts of information. You look through multiple sources of data, such as: correspondence, briefs, pleadings, memoranda, contracts and agreements, databases, emails, attachments, spreadsheets, billing records, time entries text messages, instant messages, digital voice mails and more. The data resides in many distributed systems. You often waste time and money searching for the answers you need.

It is not enough for information to be searchable, it needs to be findable. In a world of billable hours, wasted time results in wasted income. In addition, non-compliance with Federal Rules of Civil Procedure regarding electronically stored information can lead to monetary fines and/or lost lawsuits. Search should be simple, powerful and give you results, fast.

“We lawyers create documents with abandon. But, in any given day, we do far more than search for documents. We confront, categorize and solve problems. We create teams, then manage them. We communicate with team members, with clients, with co-counsel and opposing counsel. Each of these activities spins off information and requires information to pursue effectively. Any search technology a law firm embraces needs to accommodate all such activities. It may be that instead of finding a document, what is needed is to find an expert who can create such a document. It may be that to communicate with a client, one needs to effectively aggregate and review a wide variety of information-financial, matter-related, historical, personnel-related, etc. At the pace of modern business, there is no time to manually compile such an array of information. A good search technology, on the other hand, should be able to do so, and without need for a series of discrete queries. It should be flexible enough to assimilate documents, time entries, database entries, matter descriptions, billing records and much more into a uniform view attuned to whatever problem is sought to be solved.”

Search at the Foundation of the Enterprise
By John I. Alber, August 27, 2007,

<http://www.llrx.com/features/searchenterprise.htm>

Solution

An Enterprise Search solution provides more accurate results fast, reducing research costs and increasing productivity. Lawyers and supporting staff have a central point for finding the information they need – documents from a precedent database, deal documents describing similar scenarios, current news, in firm conversations, topical expertise, billing information, email, and more. The Enterprise Search interface is easy to use, without sacrificing power. Lawyers do not have to be IT experts to find what they need.

Search Features

- Faceted navigation – the ability to “slice and dice” search results based upon filters such as jurisdiction, document type, author, date created, date modified, source, etc.
- Role based search – customized for different searchers to bring up different results
- Results clustering – grouping similar results together
- Multilingual search for international firms
- Results ranked by relevance
- Saved searches and preferences
- Ability to extend search beyond the firm’s internal resources to include legal industry websites such as FindLaw.com, major newspapers, etc.

Administrative Options and Technical Requirements

- Highly configurable - tune results till the system provides searches with the best possible results. Tweak clusters, search options, etc.
- Performance and Scalability – fault tolerances and backup, multi-million document/item repositories, load-balancing
- Security – users can only find items they have access to. Ability to create multiple categories of users with different permission levels.

A case study about a recent implementation of Enterprise Search technology

The law firm of Norton Rose chose *FAST Search* for their Enterprise Search solution.

Read the [case study](#).

http://www.fastsearch.com/NortonRose_Case_Study_FfbYg.pdf.file

Beyond the Law Firm – E-Discovery Solutions for Your Clients

An Enterprise Search system is also an integral part of a successful e-discovery strategy for your clients. In December 2006, new changes were enacted in the FRCP (Federal Rules of Civil Procedure) that have had a significant impact on e-discovery requirements for all companies. The amended FRCP expanded the definition of electronic documents to include all ESI (electronically stored information), including Office files, emails, instant messages, databases, blogs, etc. When this expanded definition is combined with the fact that data can be located across multiple servers and networks, and in a variety of systems such as email, accounting, technical documentation, and business intelligence, companies face new challenges to comply with e-discovery regulations.

E-discovery goes beyond simple storage or archiving solutions. ESI must not only be regularly backed up; it must be searchable and retrievable. Enterprise Search provides the most efficient and thorough foundation for an e-discovery strategy. Companies that succeed in designing and implementing sound e-discovery policies will have lower e-discovery costs and are able to avoid future problems that can lead to fines, lost business, and damage to reputation.

TNR Global is a *Fast Search* partner integrating Enterprise Search solutions. To find out more about Enterprise Search for your law firm or to discuss solutions for your clients, contact TNR Global: 1-413-425-1499.

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