

Notes on NOCALL Roundtable Discussion of WestlawNext

Ron Wheeler recommended reading his article “Does WestlawNext Really Change Everything: The Implications of WestlawNext on Legal Research” which will appear in the Summer 2011 issue of Law Library Journal. It is currently available on SSRN at http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1773767

Wheeler stressed that his purpose for the article was not to disparage WestlawNext, but to provoke discussion and to examine how best to use and to teach this resource.

The consensus was that WestlawNext is a powerful and useful tool that is here to stay. Librarians had better get with the program, continue to learn to use it, and teach effective use to their patrons.

Law firm librarians discussed the fact that law firm associates love WestlawNext. They seem to be getting good results using it.

The group discussed of academic uses versus use in legal practice. There seemed to be some agreement that perhaps WestlawNext is best for practical use in legal practice. That underscores that need for academic librarians to teach WestlawNext as a viable resource and to learn its pros and cons.

Pricing issues were discussed.

Law firm users observed that in WestlawNext, the indication that the user is about to go “out of contract” is clearer. That feature is being lauded by librarians and attorney users.

The ability to file research in folders and to share those folders was hailed by all as the greatest development ever.

People had questions about content and the availability of Classic Westlaw content in WestlawNext. When will all of the content be there?

People were encouraged to do blog searches and read the various blogs commentary of WestlawNext.