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LexisNexis AI vs. Westlaw AI

A COMPREHENSIVE COMPARISON OF TWO VERY DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO AI INTEGRATION

Artificial intelligence is reshaping the legal industry, and two of the most prominent platforms leading this transformation are LexisNexis and Westlaw. Both offer sophisticated AI-powered tools designed to streamline legal research, automate workflows, and enhance attorney productivity. However, each platform takes a distinctly different approach to AI integration. LexisNexis emphasizes customizable automation, agentic workflows (defined as where an AI system [the agent] autonomously carries out multi-step tasks with minimal human intervention) and predictive legislative insights, while Westlaw prioritizes trusted research content, authoritative sourcing, and integrated drafting tools. This article examines the key AI features of each platform, explores their respective strengths and weaknesses, and offers guidance on which solution may best serve different types of legal professionals.

LexisNexis AI: Features, strengths, and weaknesses

LexisNexis has positioned itself as the platform of choice for firms seeking highly configurable AI workflows. Its suite of AI tools spans several major categories, each addressing a distinct aspect of legal practice.

Protege workflows

Protege is LexisNexis's flagship agentic AI feature, designed to guide junior attorneys and paralegals through complex legal tasks in an interactive, step-by-step manner. Rather than simply retrieving documents, Protege acts as a virtual senior associate, prompting users with the right questions, suggesting next steps in a legal matter, and compiling research into actionable summaries. Firms can configure Protege workflows to reflect their own practice area standards, internal precedents, and client preferences. This personalization capability sets it apart from more one-size-fits-all research tools.

Strength: Protege dramatically reduces onboarding time for new associates and ensures consistent research quality across matters. Its guided approach is particularly valuable for firms with distributed teams or high associate turnover. **Weakness:** The workflow customization, while powerful, requires meaningful upfront investment in configuration. Smaller firms without dedicated IT or knowledge-management staff may find it difficult to fully exploit Protege's capabilities. Kiesel Law did *not* utilize the workflows.

Customizable no-code automation

One of LexisNexis's most distinguishing features is its no-code workflow automation engine. Legal professionals can build custom automation pipelines without writing a single line of code, connecting research tasks, document review steps, and client communication triggers into seamless sequences. Using a visual drag-and-drop interface, firms can automate routine processes such as contract clause extraction, regulatory compliance checks, and matter intake screening. These automations integrate with LexisNexis's broader data ecosystem, including case law, regulatory databases, and news feeds. **Strength:** No-code automation democratizes process improvement, enabling attorneys themselves, rather than IT departments, to design the workflows that match their specific practice needs. This flexibility makes LexisNexis particularly appealing to boutique firms and in-house legal departments seeking operational efficiency. **Weakness:** The breadth of automation options can be overwhelming, and without proper governance, firms may end up with a proliferation of inconsistent, poorly maintained workflows that introduce their own inefficiencies.

Agentic capabilities

Beyond Protege, LexisNexis has built a broader agentic AI framework that enables the platform to autonomously

execute multi-step research and drafting tasks. When a user submits a complex legal query, the agentic system can independently determine the best research path, pull from multiple LexisNexis databases, synthesize findings, and produce a structured memorandum or analysis, all without requiring step-by-step human direction. This is a significant step beyond traditional legal research platforms, which typically require the attorney to formulate each search query manually. **Strength:** Agentic capabilities radically reduce the time required for thorough legal research. Tasks that previously took hours can be completed in minutes, freeing attorneys to focus on strategy and client counseling. **Weakness:** The autonomous nature of agentic AI introduces risks around accuracy and oversight. If the system follows a flawed research path or mischaracterizes a legal precedent, the attorney may not catch the error unless they carefully review every AI-generated output. This requires attorneys to maintain strong analytical oversight even as they delegate more tasks to AI. At Kiesel, we always run each query through a document analysis, maintained, of course, by the web-based provider to ensure the integrity of the search results. And, having used this Lexis feature, we were not impressed by the depth of its analysis or output.

Predictive analytics

LexisNexis offers predictive analytics tools that apply machine learning to historical legal data to generate forecasts about case outcomes, judge behavior, opposing counsel tactics, and litigation trends. Attorneys can use these insights to assess the viability of claims, anticipate judicial tendencies, and make more informed decisions about settlement versus litigation. The system draws on millions of case records, docket filings, and judicial opinions to build its predictive models. **Strength:** Predictive analytics provides a data-driven foundation for strategic legal

decision-making. Litigators can enter a courtroom with a clearer picture of how a particular judge has historically ruled on similar motions or how opposing counsel has structured arguments in comparable cases. Weakness: Predictive models are only as reliable as the underlying data. Courts with sparse docket data (which we ran into more often than not), newer judges with limited track records, or novel legal theories may fall outside the system's predictive capabilities. Attorneys must treat AI predictions as a supplement to, not a replacement for, professional judgment.

Westlaw AI: Features, strengths, and weaknesses

Westlaw, published by Thomson Reuters, has long been recognized as the gold standard for legal research reliability. Its approach to AI emphasizes trustworthy, authoritative content integrated seamlessly into the research and drafting workflow. Where LexisNexis leans into customization and prediction, Westlaw's AI strategy centers on accuracy, citation integrity, and efficiency at the point of need. Westlaw is also traditionally more expensive.

Westlaw Advantage

Westlaw Advantage is Thomson Reuters' subscription tier that bundles the platform's most powerful AI features into an enhanced access package. It includes priority access to AI-generated research summaries, enhanced filtering tools, personalized research dashboards, and integrated links between research findings and drafting tools. Westlaw Advantage is designed to provide a premium, cohesive experience for attorneys who need both depth of research and speed of delivery. Strength: Westlaw Advantage consolidates powerful research capabilities into a single subscription, reducing the need for attorneys to manage multiple separate tools. Its integration of research and drafting in one environment improves workflow continuity and reduces context-switching. Weakness: The premium pricing of Westlaw Advantage places it out of reach for many solo practitioners and small firms. Critics also note that some

features bundled in Advantage overlap with free or lower-cost tools, raising questions about overall value for those who do not need the full feature set.

Deep Research

Westlaw's Deep Research feature represents the platform's most ambitious AI capability, enabling attorneys to submit complex, multi-faceted legal questions and receive a comprehensive, structured research report in return. Deep Research autonomously searches across Westlaw's vast legal database, identifies the most relevant cases, statutes, regulations, and secondary sources, and synthesizes them into a coherent narrative analysis complete with citations. Unlike a simple keyword search, Deep Research interprets the legal context of a question and organizes its findings according to the logical structure of the issue presented. Strength: Deep Research dramatically accelerates the initial research phase on complex matters, providing attorneys with a solid foundation in a fraction of the time traditionally required. The system's emphasis on authoritative citations from Westlaw's carefully curated database ensures that attorneys can rely on the accuracy of source material. Weakness: Deep Research, like all AI-generated content, carries the risk of hallucination, where the system confidently presents incorrect information. While Westlaw's editorial controls reduce this risk, attorneys must still independently verify the AI's conclusions, particularly on nuanced or unsettled points of law. Kiesel Law's experience with this is that while it does not make up citations or cases out of whole cloth, it sometimes pushed the boundaries of a case beyond which we would have felt comfortable arguing – meaning, that a case stood for a proposition which we felt was beyond what it actually held.

Litigation Document Analyzer

Westlaw's Litigation Document Analyzer applies AI to the review of litigation documents such as briefs, motions, contracts, and discovery materials. When an attorney uploads a document, the system identifies key legal arguments, pinpoints relevant precedents cited within the document, flags potential weaknesses in

the legal analysis, and suggests additional cases or statutes that may strengthen the position. The Litigation Document Analyzer functions as an AI-powered peer reviewer, providing instant feedback that would otherwise require consultation with a senior colleague. Strength: The Litigation Document Analyzer streamlines document review and quality control, catching gaps in legal argumentation that busy attorneys might overlook. It is particularly valuable for appellate work and complex commercial litigation where citation accuracy and comprehensive precedent coverage are critical. Weakness: The system's effectiveness is contingent on the quality of the uploaded documents. Poorly structured or informally drafted documents may produce less useful analysis. Additionally, the tool reviews existing arguments but does not fully replace the creative legal thinking required to construct a compelling brief from scratch. This is truly one of my favorite features of the Westlaw AI product.

Claims Explorer

Claims Explorer is a Westlaw tool designed specifically for insurance, personal injury, and commercial litigation practitioners. It uses AI to analyze claims data, identify patterns in how similar claims have been litigated and resolved, and provide benchmarking insights on settlement values, damage awards, and liability determinations across comparable cases. By aggregating anonymized claims data alongside traditional case law, Claims Explorer helps attorneys and their clients set realistic expectations and develop evidence-based litigation strategies. Strength: Claims Explorer brings a level of quantitative rigor to litigation strategy that was previously accessible only to large firms with dedicated analytics teams. Its data-driven insights on damages and settlement ranges are particularly valuable for insurance defense counsel and personal injury practitioners. Weakness: Claims Explorer's utility is concentrated in specific practice areas. Attorneys in transactional, regulatory, or estate planning work will find little direct value in this tool. Additionally, the quality of insights depends on the completeness

of the underlying claims database, which may have gaps in coverage for specialized or niche claim types.

Agentic AI: Trusted content and faster drafting

Westlaw's agentic AI capabilities are designed to combine the platform's hallmark editorial rigor with autonomous task execution. When tasked with drafting a legal document or brief section, Westlaw's agentic AI draws exclusively from Westlaw's curated, editorially reviewed content, dramatically reducing the risk of fabricated citations or legally inaccurate statements. The system can autonomously research a legal issue, outline a responsive argument, and generate a draft brief section, all while maintaining clear sourcing back to verified Westlaw authorities. This positions Westlaw's agentic AI as a more conservative but more reliable alternative to broader large language model tools. Strength: By grounding agentic AI outputs in Westlaw's authoritative content database, Thomson Reuters addresses one of the most significant concerns about AI in legal practice: the risk of citation hallucination. Attorneys can move faster through drafting tasks with greater confidence that the underlying research is sound. Weakness: Westlaw's content-grounded approach means that the agentic AI's outputs are limited by the breadth and currency of the Westlaw database. Emerging areas of law, recent unreported decisions, or jurisdictions with limited Westlaw coverage may not be well served by this approach. Again, care must be taken as to arguments taken beyond which the attorney might feel comfortable.

Comparative analysis: Divergent philosophies, distinct strengths

A comparison of LexisNexis and Westlaw AI reveals two fundamentally different philosophies about where AI value should be concentrated in legal practice.

LexisNexis: The customization and prediction platform

LexisNexis's AI strategy is fundamentally about empowerment through customization. The platform trusts legal professionals to configure their own

intelligent workflows, build their own automation pipelines, and leverage predictive data to make informed strategic decisions. This approach rewards firms that invest in technology governance and knowledge management, delivering a compounding return on that investment over time. The platform's emphasis on no-code tools and agentic capabilities also reflects a belief that AI should be accessible to all attorneys, not just those with technical backgrounds.

Its State Net generative AI capabilities in particular occupy a unique niche, addressing the legislative monitoring needs of government relations and regulatory compliance professionals in a way that Westlaw does not closely replicate. However, the LexisNexis approach carries risks. The flexibility that makes it powerful also makes it easy to misuse. Without disciplined workflow governance, firms can end up with fragmented automation environments that create more complexity than they resolve. Additionally, LexisNexis's predictive analytics tools, while innovative, are only as useful as the attorneys who know how to interpret and apply predictive data responsibly.

Westlaw: The trust and integration platform

Westlaw's AI strategy is built on the principle that speed is only valuable when it does not come at the cost of accuracy. Thomson Reuters has made a deliberate choice to constrain its AI outputs to verified, editorially reviewed content, accepting some limitations in breadth in exchange for a higher degree of reliability. This approach is particularly well suited to high-stakes litigation and regulatory practice, where a single incorrect citation can have serious professional and reputational consequences.

Westlaw's deep integration between research and drafting tools, as evidenced by the Litigation Document Analyzer and its agentic drafting features, reflects a commitment to supporting attorneys not just in finding the law, but in using it effectively. Westlaw's Claims Explorer further demonstrates the platform's ability to combine AI with specialized datasets to deliver insights that are immediately

actionable in the context of a specific practice area.

However, Westlaw's conservative approach can feel limiting to attorneys who want to explore cutting-edge AI capabilities. The platform's relative lack of emphasis on customizable automation and workflow building means that firms seeking to redesign their internal processes around AI will find LexisNexis more accommodating. Additionally, Westlaw's premium pricing structure can be a barrier for smaller firms and solo practitioners.

Conclusion: Choosing the right platform

Neither LexisNexis nor Westlaw is universally superior. The right choice depends on the specific needs, priorities, and practice profile of the legal professional or organization evaluating these platforms. We are living in extraordinary times as it relates to legal research, validation of cited cases in the practice of law. There are, to be clear, several alternative AI options, Claude, ChatGPT, Perplexity, just to name a few. Who knows, 12 months from now, what offerings may even exist.

LexisNexis is the better choice for:

Large law firms and in-house legal departments with the resources and commitment to implement and govern complex AI workflows. Regulatory compliance professionals and government relations attorneys who need deep, AI-powered legislative tracking through State Net. Firms that want to empower attorneys and staff with configurable, no-code automation tools tailored to their specific practice areas. Litigation teams that want predictive analytics to inform settlement and trial strategy based on historical data about courts, judges, and opposing counsel.

Westlaw is the better choice for:

Litigators and appellate attorneys who prioritize citation accuracy and the reliability of AI-generated legal analysis above all else. Attorneys engaged in commercial litigation, insurance defense, or personal injury work who can benefit from the Deep Research feature and Claims

Explorer. Firms that want a tightly integrated research-to-drafting environment, where the Litigation Document Analyzer and agentic drafting tools can improve brief quality and reduce revision cycles. Attorneys at firms of all sizes who want the assurance that AI outputs are grounded in authoritative, editorially reviewed content rather than the open web.

Both platforms are moving rapidly, and the competitive gap between their respective AI offerings is likely to narrow as both companies continue to invest in the space. Legal professionals would be wise to conduct thorough demonstrations of both platforms, assess each against the

specific workflows and practice needs of their organizations, and consider piloting both before committing to a long-term subscription.

In the rapidly evolving legal AI landscape, the best platform is ultimately the one that delivers the right capabilities at the point of need, for the right attorney, at the right time. As of today, LexisNexis offers more flexibility and customization for the technology-forward firm, while Westlaw offers greater reliability and integration for the accuracy-first practitioner. Neither choice is wrong; they simply reflect different theories of how AI can best serve the legal profession. 

Paul Kiesel's practice is devoted to representing consumers in personal injury, class action, pharmaceutical and environmental tort litigation. He is a Past President of the Los Angeles County Bar Association. He writes and speaks on technology-related subjects and is a co-author of two legal treatises for Lexis Nexis, "California Pretrial Civil Procedure" and "California Civil Discovery."