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## § 2.6

# Publishers

## *A Game of Musical Chairs*

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There are two major research systems, each created over a century ago:

### *West Publishing Company*

*West*, the largest publisher of legal materials, is renowned for its *Key Number System*, a remarkably user-friendly system that allows the researcher to expand his or her research by cross-referencing multiple digests. *West's* research system is designed to give the researcher efficient access to the law.

### *Lawyers Cooperative Publishing Company*

*Lawyers Cooperative* created the *Total Client-Service Library* (TCSL) research system. Unlike *West's* system, which was primarily designed to lead the researcher to the law, the TCSL focused on litigation practice aids to help the attorney win the case. To accomplish this, the TCSL leads the researcher to additional materials, usually published by *Lawyers Cooperative*. However, both *Westlaw* and *Lexis* now crossover those boundaries, each providing access to the law and litigation aids.

In the late 1990s, *West Publishing* reorganized as *WestGroup*, retaining *West Publishing* as a subsidiary and purchasing *Lawyers Cooperative Publishing Company* as a separate subsidiary. In the early 21st century, *WestGroup* was acquired by *Thomson Publishing Company*, which was in turn later purchased by *Reuters*. Believe it or not, the above is the simple version of the story. As a paralegal, you do not need to memorize all of the above. The reason it is being discussed here is two-fold.

First, to train the researcher in the two major legal research systems, this manual will generally refer to the original publishers (*West* and *Lawyer's Cooperative*).

Second, as publishers change, so do the materials offered within the online research websites. A few years ago, for example, *American Law Reports* was offered on *Lexis* only, then both *Westlaw* and *Lexis*, then *Westlaw* only, and then both *Westlaw* and *Lexis* again. Of course, there are other publishers such as *Bender's*, *Commerce Clearing House* (CCH), and *Bureau of National Affairs* (BNA), among others. These publishers come to licensing agreements with *Westlaw* or *Lexis* to make their publications available on those sites. Those agreements are also subject to change. If any material covered in this book is unavailable on one site or the other, don't panic. It is part of the ongoing competition between *Westlaw* and *Lexis*.