

1. *Going in circles.* If the researcher begins to see references to the same authorities he or she has already found, that indicates that researcher has most likely found the most relevant research trail.
2. *Time limitations.* Your attorney will most likely set a time limit on your project. Research is typically not allowed to be unlimited. Thus, if your allotted time is up, your project, for practical and financial purposes, is finished.

§ 8.2

Using Filters Online

Further Focus Your Search Results

Filters, which are databases or groups of connected databases, are the online legal research equivalent of hardbound books. This *must* be understood by the researcher. Thus, any possibility of expanding narrowing your choice of filters is equivalent to expanding or limiting your choice of legal publications within which to research. In both *Westlaw* and *Lexis*, the easiest way to expand or limit your research results, and to make your online research more efficient, is to select different or additional filters.

ADDING AND REMOVING FILTERS IN WESTLAW

This is a simple process. Click on the Jurisdiction *drop-down menu* to the right of the *Search Query Text Box* and check any databases that you want to add as Filters. Click Save.

You are also able to add filters after you have conducted a search and are viewing the *Results Page*. This has the effect of focusing the search results. In the “*Filters*” column at the left of the screen, select any filters that seem promising. Your results will be filtered to show only those documents that are found in the selected databases.

The *Filters* column also allows you to focus your query by letting you look for terms only within the results of your initial search. For example, if your results included hundreds of cases, you could use the “Search within results” box to type any terms, such as “malpractice.” This instructs the system to search for any of the results that also include the term “malpractice,” removing any cases without the new term. In other words, it narrows the results. A nice trick.

The screenshot shows the Thomson Reuters Westlaw Edge interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'ICD', 'History', 'Folders', 'Favorites', 'Notifications', and 'Sign out'. Below this is a search bar with the query '"day care center" liability for injured child' and a dropdown menu set to 'CA (State & Fed.)'. The main content area is divided into 'Content types' and 'Filters' tabs, with 'Cases (12)' selected. A 'Search within results' dialog box is open, showing a search for 'supervision' within the current results. The main results area displays a list of cases, including 'People v. Karimpour' and 'North Valley Baptist Church v. McMahon'. Red arrows point to the 'Filters' tab and the 'Search within results' dialog box.

ADDING AND REMOVING FILTERS IN LEXIS

After clicking on the Jurisdiction *drop down* on the initial search page, check the boxes next to any desired filters.

You are also able to easily add filters once you are in the *Results Page*. In the left *Filters* window, click on any filter to add it. (You can also remove filters by clicking on the X to the left of any active filter.)

You can even type terms or phrases to search within the current results. For example, if you wanted to add the term "license" to a search, type it within the *Search Within Results* text box. You will now find the results have been narrowed from your original results to show only documents that also contain that term.

The screenshot displays the Lexis+ search interface. At the top, the search results are for "day care center liability for injured child". The left-hand menu is titled "FILTERS" and includes sections for "Select Category" (Cases, 799), "Search within results", "Court", "Timeline", "Published Status", "Sources", "Practice Area & Topics" (Education Law, Family Law, Insurance Law), "Attorney", "Law Firm", "Most Cited", "Keyword", "Judge", and "Publisher". An orange arrow points to the "FILTERS" label. The search results list two cases: 1. "Nationwide Affnity Ins. Co. v. Gillham" (United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, May 31, 2011) and 2. "United States Fidelity & Guaranty Co. v. State Farm Mut. Auto. Ins. Co." (Appellate Court of Illinois, First District, Third Division, Jan 21, 1987). The text of the cases is partially visible, showing details about a child being injured in a station wagon operated by a day-care center.

§ 8.3

Researching Case Law

Interactive Study

Case law is one of the most powerful forms of authority because it applies law (other cases, statutes, regulations, etc.) to an actual set of facts. In addition, within the case the paralegal will find references to other authority that can expand the research effort.

Reports and *reporters* are the major publications that contain case law. As a general (but not universal) rule, *reports* are official publications (published by the government), and *reporters* are unofficial publications (published by a private company, usually *West Publishing*).

When researching for cases in reports or reporters in the law library, it is not as simple as going straight to that set of books. This is because reports and reporters do not have indexes. Instead, *West Publishing* has created corresponding books called *Digests*. *Digests* have two critical attributes:

- *Digests collect case headnotes in topical order*
- *Digests act as an index to cases*

With the advent of online research, the need for digests has greatly diminished. While most law library