

§ 10.3

Wikipedia? YouTube? Really?

Never cite Wikipedia. Cite the source material instead.

WIKIPEDIA

You are likely by now aware that *Wikipedia* is not a good place to conduct any sort of research. It is open to misinformation, manipulation, and incomplete sourcing.

Well, sort of.

To dismiss *Wikipedia* and never use it, even when desperate, is shortsighted. Why exclude a source that has more references than any other single website on the planet? In fact, *Wikipedia* can be a valuable gateway to authority not otherwise easily found.

HOW NOT TO USE WIKIPEDIA

- Never quote *Wikipedia* as a source of research or investigation.
- Never assume *Wikipedia* is a complete source of reference material.
- Do not rely on any of the commentary on the *Wikipedia* page.

HOW TO PROPERLY USE WIKIPEDIA

- After locating an article, use the references and notes to lead you to distinguished respected publications and articles.
- Cite to the source material, *not* to *Wikipedia*.

The screenshot shows a Wikipedia article titled "Gauze sponge" on the left and a CMAJ-JAMC article titled "The best sponge: patient safety in the operating room" on the right. A red arrow points from the "References" section of the Wikipedia article to the CMAJ-JAMC article. The Wikipedia article includes a definition of gauze sponges, their common sizes, and their use in surgery. The CMAJ-JAMC article is a peer-reviewed journal article discussing the safety of different types of sponges used in operating rooms.

YOUTUBE

YouTube.com is not going to be used as a legal research site, but it is a great source of other information useful to a paralegal or lawyer, especially when it comes to online training for law firm-related skills.

YouTube (as well as other social media such as *Facebook*) should also be used when researching expert witnesses, potential jurors, or even judges and opposing counsel. It is surprising what people post online that may end up being damaging.

Try searching for the following on *YouTube*:

- *Interviewing witnesses in depositions*
- *Initial client interview techniques*
- *Accident scene photography*
- *Legal citation tutorial*
- *Maintaining a law firm client file*

CHAPTER 10

Wrap-Up

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

After reading this chapter you should know the following:

- That alternative online research sites besides *Westlaw* and *Lexis* exist
- The limitations of alternative online research sites
- How to access *Google Scholar*

ASSIGNMENTS

There are no assignments for this chapter.