Back to the Future of Legal Research

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Goals for 1st Year Legal Research

- Multiple sources for finding answers
- No “Best” source <u>ever</u>
- What is a “better” source will change

So they have to adapt and be very conscious of where (and how) they are searching.

We Stress Intentionality by:

- Requiring them to use sources other than Westlaw or Lexis
- Requiring them to justify their database and search string selections w/in WL and Lexis
- Use of reflection questions in assignments.

In Lectures we make a point to:

- Build in timely student focused issues / cases / events / to discussions (and again in the drills and assignments)
- Emphasize that more efficient research leads to helping greater numbers of clients
- Discuss potential lack of WL and Lexis in social justice jobs.
- Point out that not all information is on wexis

We Teach:

- Segments / fields, early and often. (using them creates intentionality)
- Database selection - often overlooked but creates better researchers.
- That outside sources often more efficient (and how to gauge that)

In assignments we:

- Require that they recommend one system over the other based on a specific type of material.
- Require that they compare hardcopy and online researching in a thoughtful way.
- Require that they chose and support choice of secondary sources

Conscious Choice

- Each step along the research path requires choices
- Well thought out choices lead to better research, which leads to:
- Good practice - good lawyering skills
- **<u>Not</u> research by rote**