THURGOOD MARSHALL SCHOOL OF LAW LIBRARY

Pathfinder Series
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LegalTrac

About the Database

Gale's LegalTrac provides *citations* for over 1500 law reviews, legal newspapers and bar association journals from the United States and selected journals from Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and other international sources; of which approximately 250 journals are provided in full-text. Included as well are law-related articles from over 1,000 additional business and general interest titles. LegalTrac also provides interconnection to Gale's other databases like InfoTrac and Gale's Virtual Reference Library. Gale selects each title included in LegalTrac on the basis of criteria provided by a special advisory committee of the American Association of Law Libraries. Searches can be done by author, article name, journal name, subject, or keyword. LegalTrac coverage began in 1980; the database is updated monthly. A list of titles included in each of Gale's various databases can be found here; (look at the listing for LegalTrac): http://solutions.cengage.com/Gale/Database-Title-Lists/

LegalTrac contains tools and features outside the scope of this pathfinder (which discusses the basics of how to use this resource). These features include things like setting up a free account so users can save searches, receive email notification if new items post which relate to a saved search, and maintain saved highlighted copies of materials. To learn more about these features, users should consult Gale's *context sensitive* help pages, locatable through the "More" icon at the right end of the primary search bar. LegalTrac also includes special formatting and tools for users using smaller screen devices like smartphones and tablets. This guide includes the following topics:

- ✓ Logging-on to LegalTrac
- ✓ Searching using the primary search and the advanced search tools
- ✓ Searching using the Subject Guide Search and the Publication Search tools
- ✓ Search results

Logging-On to LegalTrac

LegalTrac can be reached by following the LegalTrac links from the law library's electronic resources web pages at:

- http://www.tsulaw.edu/library/Eresources.html (See Illustration 1.)
- http://texsl.iii.com/screens/database_l.html
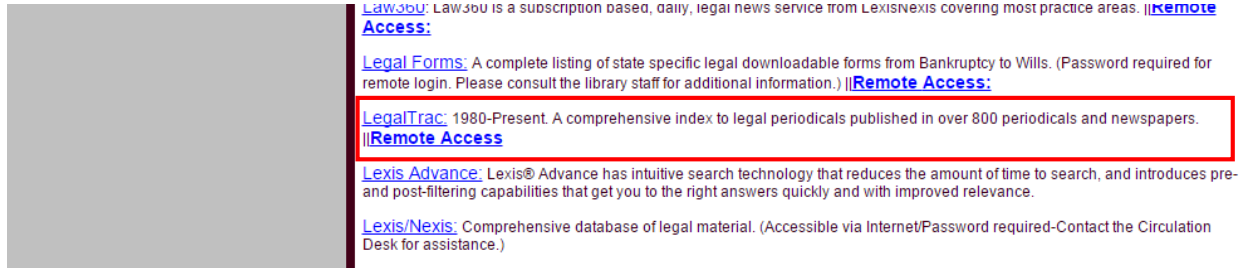
Illustration 1: The LegalTrac Links on the Electronic Resources Page

Students, faculty, staff, and others with library cards can also access LegalTrac from their home computers and other devices by going through the pages listed above and using the "Remote Access" links. However, an additional step will be required to authenticate the user. When accessing LegalTrac from a personal computer, users will be prompted with the authentication screen shown in Illustration 2. Users will need to enter their name (usually surname) and the barcode number of their TMSL library "card" in order to proceed past this page. (These can be obtained from the Circulation Desk in the library.)

Illustration 2: Remote Access Authentication Screen

Search Tools in LegalTrac

LegalTrac offers a several different searches users can perform. Users can:

- ✓ Search for articles using the primary search
- ✓ Search for articles using advanced search
- ✓ Search for related subject terms
- ✓ Search for publications

Before discussing these, however, it helps to discuss general searching strategy, specifically the use of filters and Gale's Boolean search operators. Typically, LegalTrac results include a series of filters in the right-hand column. Since many LegalTrac searches are rather broad to begin with, using the filters to limit the return is often a more time-effective way to find the desired results.

Users should also familiarize themselves with Gale's Boolean operators.
- Boolean operators "and", "or" and "not" are accepted.
- Gale uses these wildcard operators:
  - The asterisk (*) matches any number of characters e.g. manag* (manage, manager, management, etc.).
  - The questions mark (?) matches exact number of characters e.g. gr?y (gray or grey).
  - The exclamation point (!) matches one or no characters e.g. colo!r (color or colour).
  - Multiples question marks or exclamation point match exactly the number of characters they represent.
- Use parentheses to nest logical operators in keyword searches e.g. "(Iraq or Kuwait) and Iran" instead of "Iraq or Kuwait and Iran".

PRIMARY AND ADVANCED SEARCHING
The LegalTrac homepage (see Illustration 3 below) contains two search bars, one in the top banner which this guide calls the "primary search bar" (#1) and the one below the banner used for subject, publication and advanced searches (#2). Immediately to the right of the primary search bar is an icon called "Advanced" which leads to the advanced search screen (#3).

Notice the drop down box in the right part of the primary search bar (#4). After typing their search term(s) in the box (complete with any Boolean operators), use the dropdown box to select the field in which to run the search. **NOTE:** When viewing a page of search results, the dropdown box (shown open in Illustration 3) has a fifth field called "Within" which searches for the terms in the search box **within the results obtained by the first search**. This can be used to create a layered approach by essentially using the search as a customized filter.
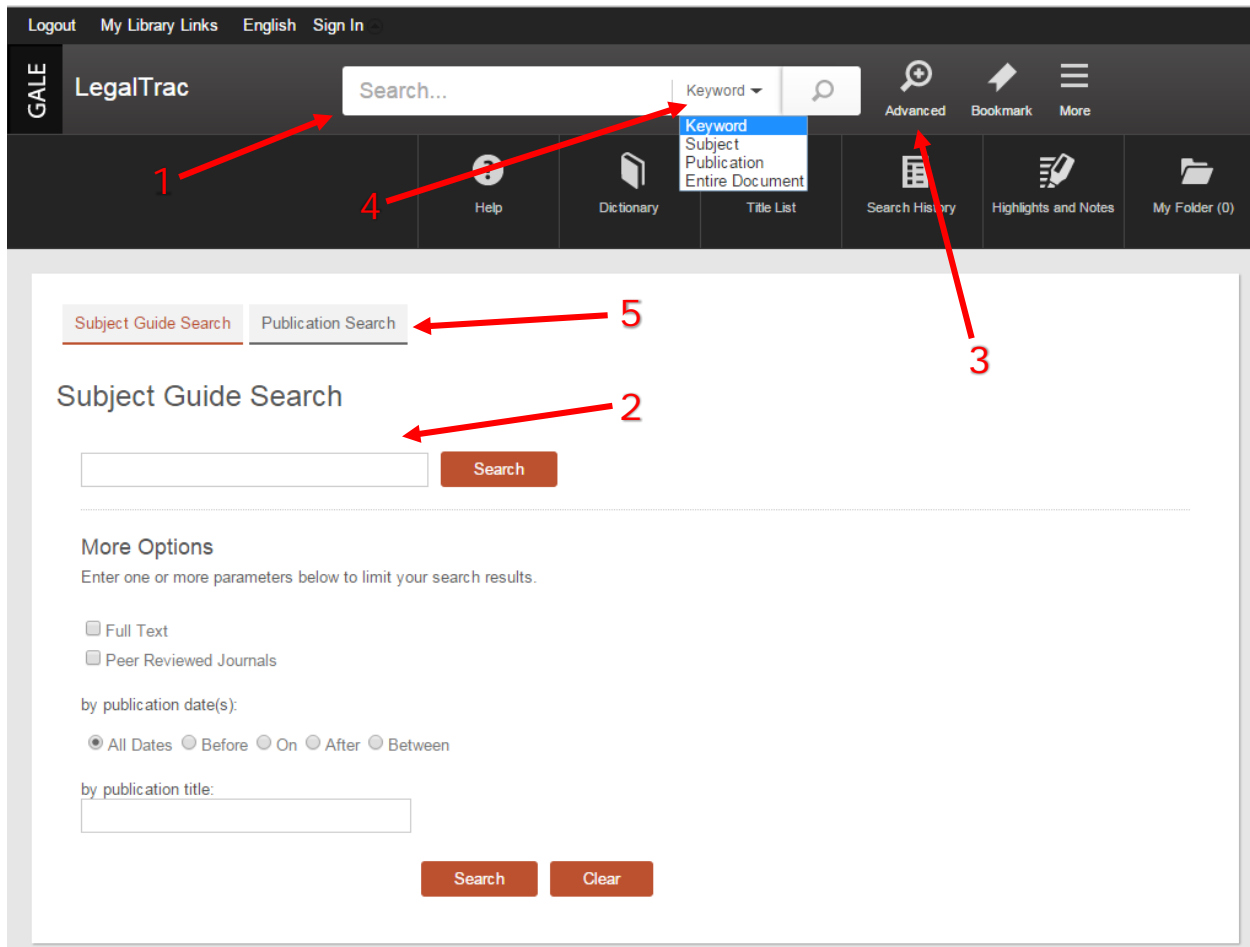
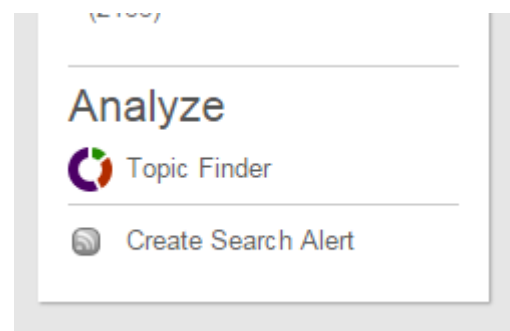*Illustration 3: The LegalTrac Homepage*

(Also note the tabs used to get to the Subject Guide Search and the Publication Search (#5).)

The advanced search page contains the same primary search bar in the banner, but the lower part of the screen now displays the advanced search tool. (See Illustration 4.) The advanced search tool has the same basic functionality and uses the same wildcards in the text box as the primary search tool except it provides Boolean operators in drop down boxes. What makes the advanced search advanced, however, is the number of fields in which the search can be conducted (shown in drop down boxes to the right of each text bar (#1)). Not only are more fields offered, but users can combine searches within different fields, whereas with the primary search bar, the entire search is run in only one field. Also, the advanced search provides a number of limiters (a/k/a filters) below the advanced search tool which can be used to further restrict the results of any searches (#2).
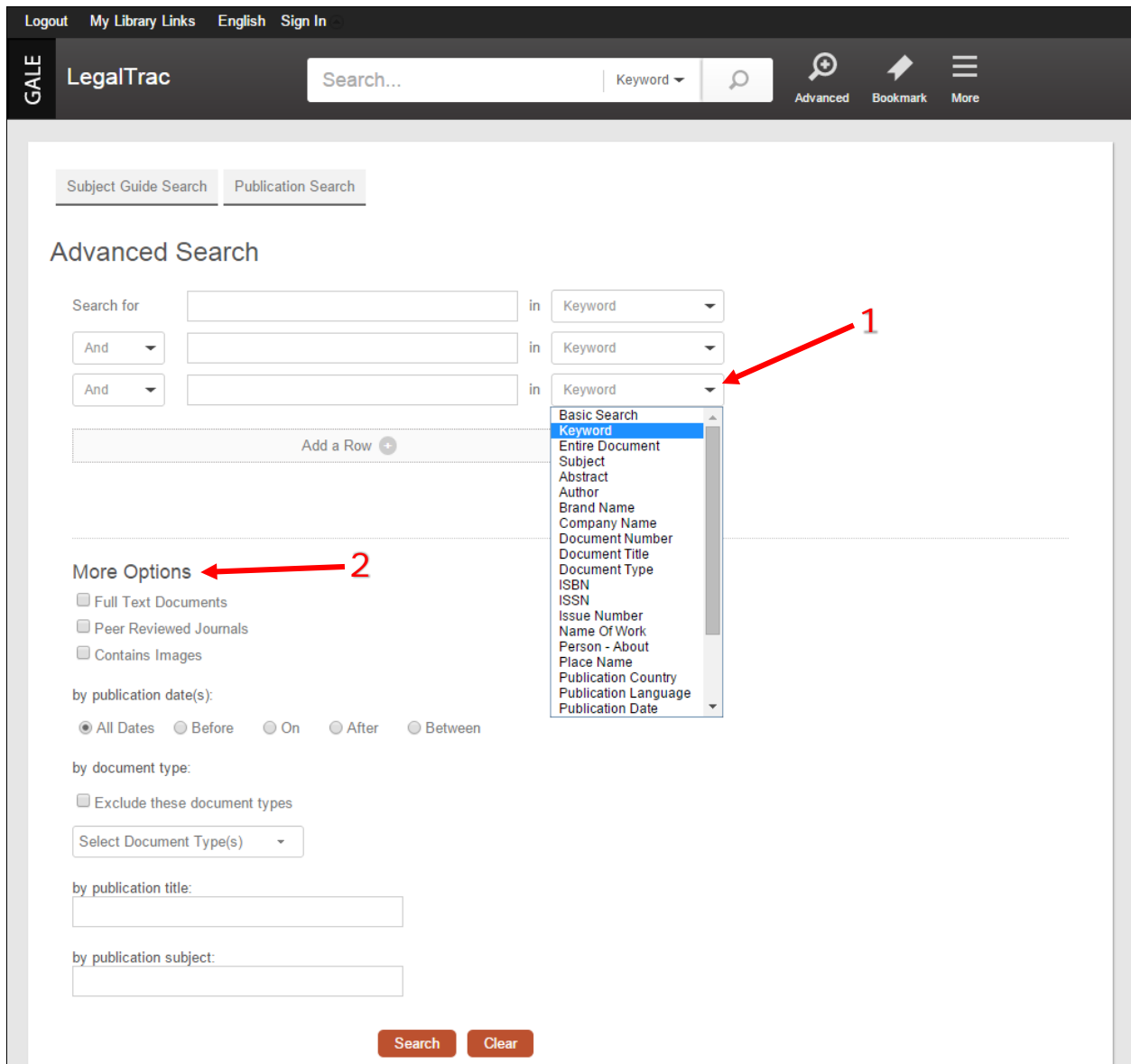
Illustration 4: The Advanced Search Page

A tool worth noting often appears at the bottom of the right-hand column when search results are returned, the Topic Finder. (See Illustration 5.) The topic finder links users to a graphical representation of their search topic which can appear as either tiles or as a wheel. (See Illustration 6.) This allows users to visualize the relationship between various terms connected to the search and is useful for broadening or narrowing the search beyond the initial terms.

Illustration 5: Topic Finder

Illustration 6: The Topic Finder Result

Finally, users should note that, as in the homepage, Gale placed tabs for the Subject Guide Search and the Publications Search at the top of the lower window. At present, the primary search bar tool is **always** present in the banner, no matter what other search tool is put in the lower window. The lower window displays one of the other three search tools, the Subject Guide search, the Publications Search, or the Advanced Search.

SEARCHING USING THE SUBJECT GUIDE SEARCH

The Subject Guide Search is useful to users unsure of the terms to be used for a specific topic, to users who are sure that more must be in the database than is being located with current search terms, or to users who want to locate information **about** the search term instead of results that simply mention the search term. To use the Subject Guide Search, make sure to select the tab called, "Subject Guide Search" from the lower part of the homepage or any other search page. The Subject Guide Search page (see Illustration 3 above) includes a search bar (#2) plus a selection of limiters which can be used to refine the search. The results returned by a Subject Guide Search (see Illustration 7) include possible synonyms (#1) and other search terms. (The example in Illustration 7, "spoliation," only had one synonym.) In addition, each synonym has a "Subdivisions" link (#2) which opens a more detailed view of the kinds of areas in which documents falling under that synonym can be found. Users can select the entire synonym or any

of its subdivision in order to view search results as if the user had used that term in the primary search bar.

Illustration 7: Results of a Subject Guide Search

SEARCHING USING THE PUBLICATIONS SEARCH
The Publications Search allows users to limit the initial search to a specific publication or date range as well as to get information about the dates available for that specific source. To use the Publications Search, make sure to select the tab called, "Publications Search" from the lower part of the homepage or any other search page. The Publications Search page (see Illustration 8) includes a search bar (#1) and then a selection of limiters below it which can be used to refine the search (#2).
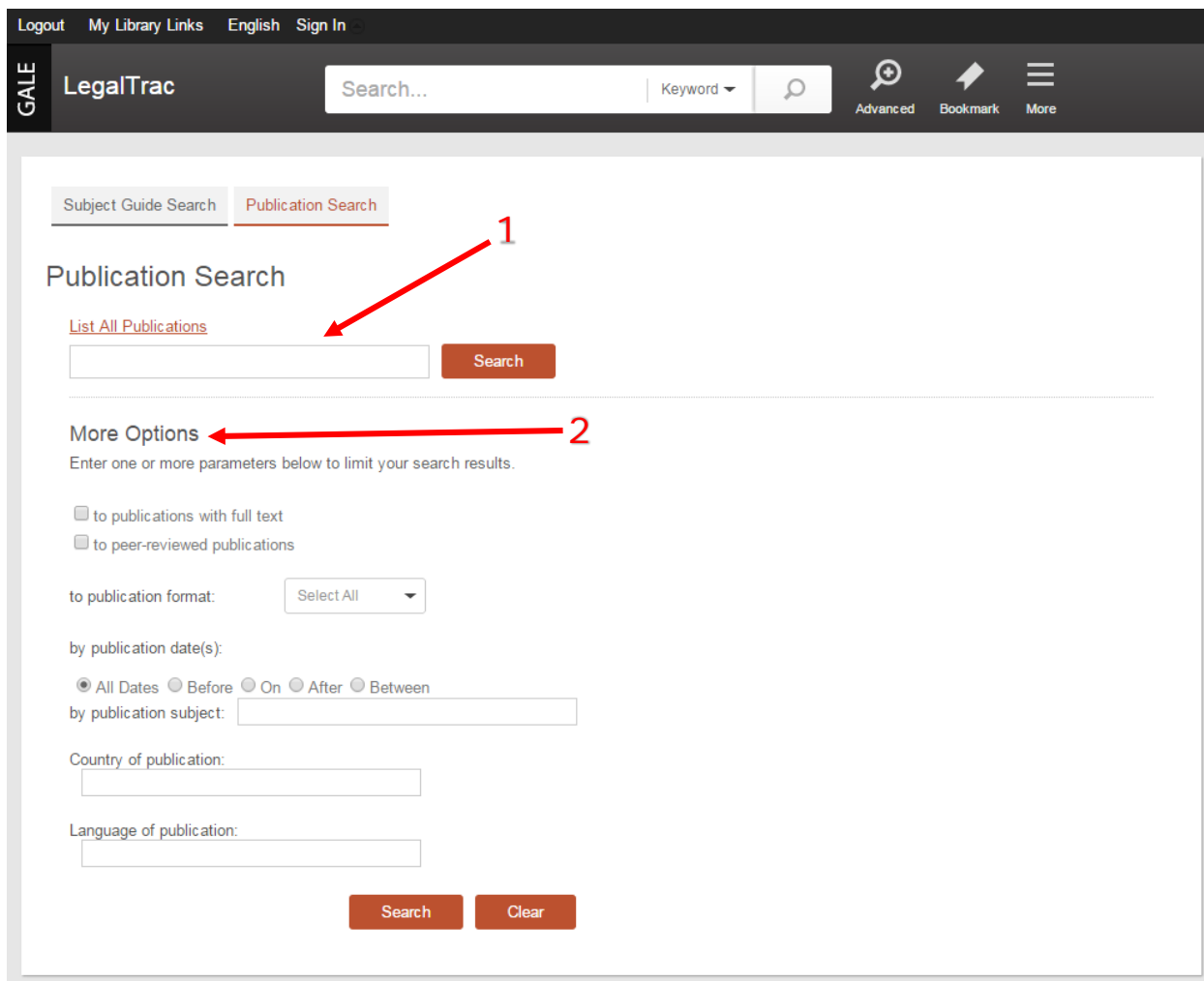
Illustration 8: The Publications Search Page

The results returned by a Publications Search (see Illustration 9) include filters in the right-hand column to refine the results (#1) and a list of the publications which match the search term (#2). Users can hover the cursor over each publication in the list to get additional information about that publication as seen in Illustration 9 (#3). Selecting the name of a publication brings up a page entirely about that publication. (See Illustration 10.) Within the information blurb about the publication is a dropdown box allowing users to select a specific year (#1); if a year is selected then an additional section opens in the page showing specific articles from that publication in that year. This is shown in Illustration 10. If a user then selects an article from this list it opens the article entry, either full-text or citation, both of which are covered in the next section of this guide.

Illustration 9: Publications Search Result

Illustration 10: Individual Publication Data Page

Dealing with Search Results

Essentially two types of results exist at the individual item level, full text results (see Illustration 11) and citation results (see Illustration 12). Both result types also contain a variety of other features and tools worth noting, including links to the "Source" (#1) which will bring users to a publication data page similar to the one shown in Illustration 10. Likewise, the author's name can also be used to create another search (#2). Users will also see that both version contain an orange button titled, "Related Subjects" which opens a list (shown in Illustration 12, #3) which users can then use to perform additional searches.

Illustration 11: Full-Text Item Result

A menu of "Tools" is provided on the right-hand side of the individual item screens (#4) which can be used to save, print, email, download, or manipulate the result. There is also a search bar to search within the publication at the bottom of the Tools menu.

Illustration 12: Citation Item Result

Full-text entries such as that found in Illustration 11, contain the ability to listen to the contents of the article read to the user (#5). Moreover, when the listen option is available, in the column on the right-hand side of the page will be an option to download the article as an MP3 sound file (#6). This can then be utilized like a podcast by users who want the ability to listen to the text when it would be inconvenient to read the article.

Law school users might be excited to see the "Citation Tools" option at the top of the Tools column (#4) on the individual result pages. However, this does not provide Bluebook citations. Rather it leads to APA and MLA citations as shown in Illustration 13. However, what is useful about the citation tool for law school users are the export buttons on the right-hand side of the window. These allow users with research software such as EndNote, ProCite, or RefWorks to capture citations for later use. Obviously, writers working with documents utilizing MLA or APA citation will find this tool even more useful.
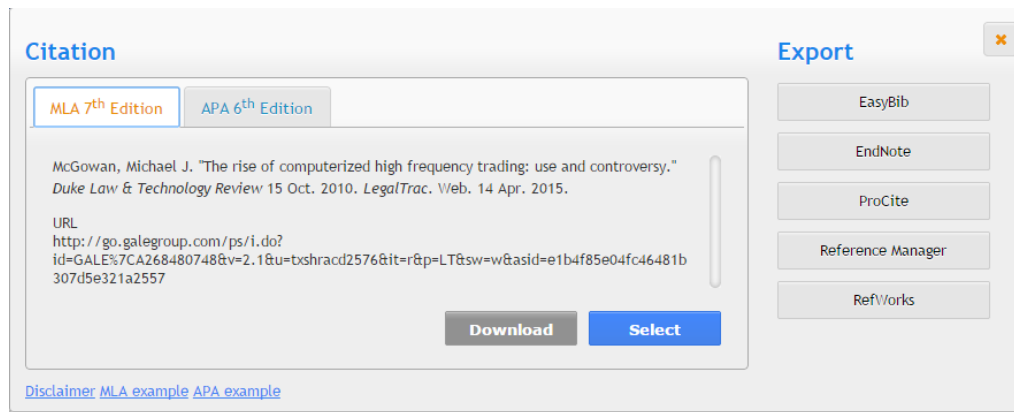
Illustration 13: The Citation Tool