Question: How are you preparing legal information professionals to incorporate data analytics into their research work product? Are there any best practices you can share?

Data Analytics (DA), also known as “Predictive Analytics,” is used in nearly every context, whether we know it or not. As one of our library’s vendors told us several years ago, it gained widespread recognition with Moneyball, the 2011 Brad Pitt film that exposed a baseball team’s use of analytics to create a winning franchise. I’m not sure whether that colorful legend is true, but DA is certainly here to stay. How is it applicable to law libraries? Here are a few ways that we have been introducing DA in our law firm library over the past few years. Note: We are a multi-office firm of about 400 lawyers, currently in eight cities.

**Litigation:** Researching parties, adversaries, lawyers, law firms, and judges. There are analytics available on current dockets as well as on decisions, depending on the subscriptions you have. You can learn how many matters a specific party or company is involved in, and which law firms represent them, and discover patterns in representation, strategy, and disposition by...
looking at documents filed and listed on the docket. You can also research judges and outcomes, specifically for rulings on motions (when using dockets) and orders/decisions (when using dockets or case law analytics). Lawyers and pricing administrators like to use this data for setting budgets and predicting how long a matter may take to resolution.

**Expert witness research:** Searches for background information on experts yield analytics related to appearances and persuasiveness by looking at favorable (or unfavorable) granting or denial of motions, orders, and decisions.

**Nature of suit (NOS):** See a number of cases by party, lawyer, and judge based on NOS. This can help lawyers in setting case strategy.

Analytics will probably be available soon in other practice areas as well. There is already a tax analytics subscription available for tax controversies, and existing DA products are already in use in firms for areas other than litigation, including intellectual property, marketing, pricing, and recruiting.

As to library workflow, we have adopted a few procedures. We find that some lawyers are savvy to at least one of these types of products, largely due to the announcements and training the library conducted upon introducing our first analytics subscription a few years ago. These lawyers often specifically request analytics reports. Additionally, I have asked all of our research librarians to assess every question they receive and consider whether an analytics component would augment the result. It can be something as simple as saying we found that “X type of lawsuit is currently showing up on the docket of X court X number of times in the past year.”

This just means that another resource is on all the librarians’ checklist if they are handling a specific type of question (i.e., expert witness research, judge background research, lateral background information, motion practice, frequency of type of case in a specific court, etc.). In doing this, the library is being proactive on the research side and, at the same time, educating lawyers about the availability and use of analytics, in case they were not already aware of it.

---

In an academic law library setting, the librarian’s research work product often consists of performing faculty research and teaching students to perform research.

**Performing faculty research.** It is not uncommon for librarians to be asked questions that involve an analysis of court data, such as how many cases were pending in a time period and how cases on a specified topic were resolved. Historically, answers to these questions were cumbersome and time-consuming to produce, which is problematic given that many academic law libraries have seen reduced budgets and staffing, with most of us having to do more with less, including performing detailed faculty research. It has been quite a relief that the legal analytics sector has exploded in the past few years with so many more companies entering the market and providing resources to assist with pulling actionable information from large-scale data. With the recent advances in legal data analytics, there is likely a tool that can help answer these types of questions in a fraction of the time, leaving law librarians to use their precious time in other ways.

For example, Ravel Law’s Court Analytics tool allows users to search a jurisdiction, filtering over 90 types of motions and topics. The tool analyzes case outcomes, language patterns, and citation history to give insight as to how courts and judges have ruled on certain types of motions or cases.

Law librarians performing faculty research should have an understanding of the data analytics tools at their disposal and how those tools can be used to answer common faculty questions.

**Teaching students to perform research.** According to the American Association of Law Libraries recent *State of the Profession 2019* report, librarians at over 96 percent of organizations surveyed teach for-credit courses. This generally comes in the form of training students to effectively and efficiently perform legal research in a world that is increasingly data driven.

Daniel Martin Katz and Michael J. Bommarito, the co-instructors of a newer Legal Analytics course, specifically mention the goal of “imbu[ing] … students with the capability to understand the process of extracting actionable knowledge from data, to distinguish themselves in legal proceedings involving data or analysis, and assist in firm and in-house management, including billing, case forecasting, process improvement, resource management, and financial operations.” (Learn more about the course at bit.ly/ND19Analytics.)

For any law librarian teaching the next set of new associates, these skills should absolutely be on their radar to incorporate into various classroom instruction opportunities and simulation activities.