

CanLII:  
Demonstration / Training

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# What is CanLII?

- Canadian Legal Information Institute (CanLII)
- A not-for-profit organization
- Goal: to provide free access, via the Internet, to Canadian case law and legislation
- Virtual  law library for primary sources of legal material


# History / Background

- Initiated by the Federation of Law Societies
  - Coordinating body of the 14  law societies
  - Wanted to build its own virtual law library
- CanLII
  - Formed to ensure the continued development of the virtual law library
- LexUM
  - Team of legal and computer science professionals
  - Public Law Research Centre, U. of Montreal

# CanLII's Home Page

- Links in the header and footer of home page
  - About CanLII
  - Conditions of Use
  - Search
  - Help
- Free Access to Law Movement
  - Links to sites of other participants
- Provides broad overview of all collections

# CanLII's Collections

- Statutes and Regulations
  - Available for the territories, all provinces except British Columbia, and federal Canada
- Case Law
  - Supreme Court of , Federal Court, trial and appellate level courts, and some administrative tribunals
- Scope of Coverage
  - Link available on the home page

# CanLII's Citation Standard

- Created its own citation standard for decisions, which is similar to the neutral citation
- When neutral citation exists, just add (CanLII) to end of citation to identify source
  - *R. v. Silva*, 2005 ONCJ 2 (CanLII)
- When neutral citation does not exist, use CanLII's citation standard
  - *Saylor v. Brooks*, 2005 CanLII 248 (ON C.A.)

# RefLex

- Provides links to other case law and legislation available on CanLII from within the citing decision
  - Creates heavily interlinked collections
- Provides parallel citations for decisions not available on CanLII
- Provides a link to a table of Cited Decisions and Legislation

# RefLex (continued)

- Benefits of RefLex
  - Improved browsing and navigation through the CanLII site
  - Parallel citations to assist users in finding decisions outside of CanLII

# Browsing the Collections

- Statutes and Regulations
  - Important information on entry pages
  - Browse the alphabetical index
  - Browse section-by-section (federal leg.) or the whole document
  - Option to search prior versions (prov. leg.)
- Case Law
  - Important information on entry pages
  - Organized alphabetically and chronologically

# Searching the Collections

- There are two main types of search interfaces
  - Simple Search Interface
  - Advanced Search Interface

# Simple Search Interface

- Accessible from the home page
- Best for queries that contain unique or highly specific information
- Searches all of the collections on CanLII, but search can be modified to extend or restrict the scope
- Default search syntax: “all of these words”

# Advanced Search Interface

- The advanced search interface is further subdivided into two more interface types
  - General Advanced Interface
  - Contextual Interface (set against a blue background)

# General Advanced Interface

- Links to this interface are available from the home page and contextual interface
- Best for cross-jurisdictional searches
- Lower-half of interface used to restrict / extend scope of search
- Upper-half of interface used to construct a search strategy or query
- Unable to target a specific collection

# Contextual Interface

- Set against a blue background
- Allows targeting of a single collection
- Accessible from entry pages to:
  - a jurisdiction
  - collections of legislation
  - specific statutes and regulations
  - specific courts

# Advanced Query Syntax

- Wildcard search
  - Use question mark or asterisk
  - Automatic stemming
- Phrase search
  - Use quotation marks
- Proximity search
  - Use “ ”~n
- Boolean search
  - Use OR or a space; AND or +; NOT or –

# CanLII Training: Things to Keep in Mind

*Any Questions?*