VENDOR VOICE

The Inside Scoop on the New LexisNexis Digital Library

The legal eBooks resource will debut a number of new features this year, in addition to a fresh, new look.

Before 2011, in order to access LexisNexis's legal eBooks materials, users within an organization needed to circulate shared tablets that contained preloaded versions of the content. In 2011, after law librarians expressed concern about the practicality involved in passing devices from person to person, the information and analytics provider decided to build an eBook solution specifically designed for organizational use.
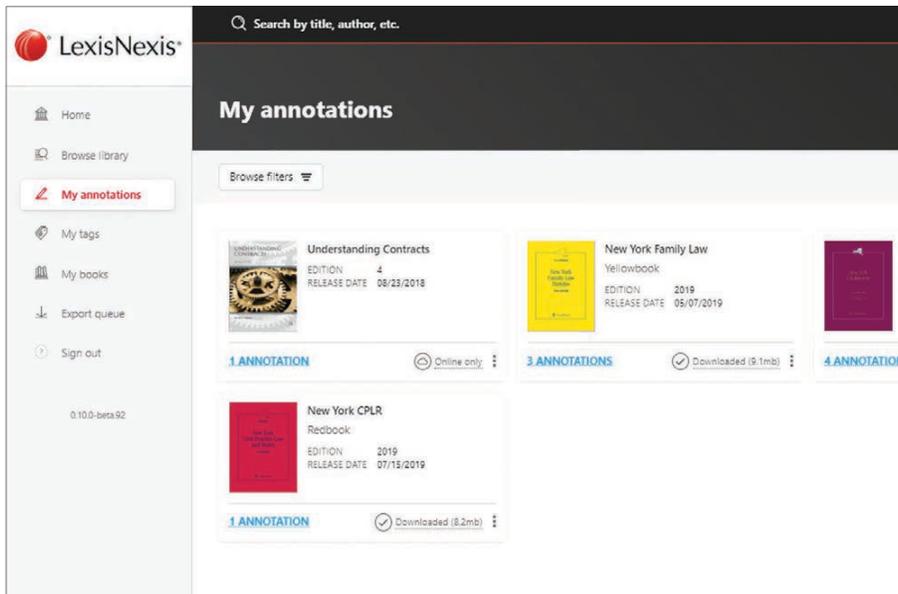
LexisNexis felt digital content distributor OverDrive—whose platform delivers publications to more than 43,000 libraries and schools in 75 countries—would be the ideal partner for the project, according to Deana Sparling, LexisNexis senior director for digital solutions.

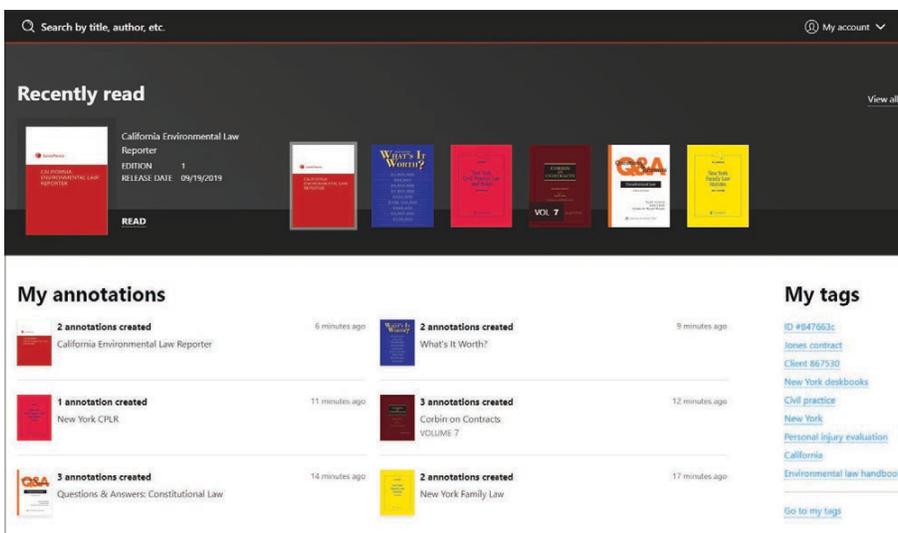"OverDrive has been a global leader of digital eBooks, audiobooks, and magazine distribution for libraries and schools since 1986," Sparling says. "Its understanding of library content distribution requirements is unmatched, and the company shares our strong commitment to understanding and delivering on reader imperatives."

Since LexisNexis Digital Library launched in 2012, the collection of LexisNexis titles subscribers can purchase has grown to more than 3,800. The product also provides eBooks from other legal publishers and titles from OverDrive's Marketplace that can aid in professional development on subjects such as management expertise and technology.

In 2020, to offer subscribers an enhanced Digital Library experience, LexisNexis plans to release a completely new interface and a number of beneficial features, including easier access to offline reading and personalized workspace capabilities.

With new e-reader capabilities, legal research professionals will be able to add to and access annotations when offline.

The LexisNexis Digital Library home page will feature a more customized feel.

AALL Spectrum recently spoke with Sparling and OverDrive CEO Steve Potash about what to expect from the new platform, law librarians' contribution, and a few intriguing tech elements Digital Library may incorporate in the future.

How did you develop the new version of LexisNexis Digital Library?

Sparling: We spent more than six months conducting customer discovery before kicking off our development work—including surveys, phone interviews, and discussion groups. User journey mapping was really key—we watched and recorded users as we gave them real-life tasks to conduct. As OverDrive developed the new platform, workflow solutions were continually created and tested for confirmation that we were delivering on expectations. That process started in 2018 and has been continuing for a year now.

How much input did law librarians provide during development?

Sparling: Law librarians have been critical to our development process at every step. As seasoned information service professionals, our law librarian contributors offer unmatched feedback. They have unique expertise in anticipating potential usability and support pitfalls, as well as unique needs. Law librarians are also in the most knowledgeable position to evaluate and recommend how our solutions should complement and support their dynamic collection of other information resources.

With a large number of librarians from different types of libraries around the country attending, the AALL Annual Meeting is a great opportunity for us to schedule special events to invite their feedback. We previewed the new LexisNexis Digital Library in Washington, DC in July 2019, where we conducted hundreds of demonstrations and answered questions from librarians who stopped by our booth. We also conducted two discussion groups and previewed the new improvements in an Exhibitor Showcase presentation.

What are some of the most significant enhancements users will see in the new release?

Sparling: The relaunch will deliver a completely new interface that features a few key advancements subscribers have been asking for. One is easier access to offline reading. We have had offline reading capabilities throughout the period we've offered the LexisNexis Digital Library, but we were reliant on a third-party software application. We've now developed our own proprietary application with OverDrive, enabling us to deliver an offline e-reader that is highly customized for legal research professionals.

Now, whether you are in a federal court building where wireless access is poor, or on a plane or the subway and want to research an issue, your eBooks will be accessible. By having offline access, you'll be more productive in situations where online access is a challenge.

Another improvement is a more personalized home page. Previously, when

you logged in, your entire organization's books were available for selection and reading. While it's nice to see the broad collection available to you, some titles aren't going to be relevant—for example, if you're a corporate securities attorney, you're probably not going to have an interest in domestic relations publications. You probably want to see a list of go-to titles you'd return to time and again; and if you have taken notes in those titles, you want easy access to them. Now the tool offers a personalized front-and-center workspace that enables you to quickly resume work where you last left off.

Are there any other enhancements planned that can help with legal research?

Sparling: The capabilities we're delivering for managing note-taking—inside your eBook, you can more easily color-code and highlight passages with embedded citations and add your own notes. Inside the LexisNexis Digital Library itself, you can sort, filter, organize, and download any or all of your notes and highlights from all of

DIGITAL LIBRARY BY THE NUMBERS

Launched: 2012

Users: Attorneys, law students, law librarians, judges, library patrons, and other legal researchers at federal and state court libraries, large law firms, law schools, federal and state agencies, and public law libraries.

Available content: More than 3,800 LexisNexis titles; books from other legal publishers, such as the *Questions & Answers* law school reference series from Carolina Academic Press; and titles from OverDrive's Marketplace database, including audiobooks, digital titles, and videos from thousands of publishers.

your eBooks for faster consolidation with other documents you're writing. Another enhancement is the way we facilitate easy selection of the right volume within a title set through easy access to tables of contents, indexes, and search capabilities.

Potash: The new updates allow you to carry your rule books, textbooks, practice guides, or treatises on the mobile device of your choice to always be with you, and research or extract a component to attach and share through email.

LexisNexis and OverDrive have worked together to leverage all the best practices OverDrive has seen from the education market, where students are constantly using digital books for academic reading, as well as all the best features from our eBook platform—and combine them with legal market insights to rebuild LexisNexis Digital Library from the ground up.

Will any of the features assist with library administration?

Sparling: Two of our favorite features are the ability to curate special collections and to distribute eBooks. We know libraries like to showcase certain books when you walk in the door; librarians told us they would like to replicate that experience in LexisNexis Digital Library, so we are making that easier. To describe a use case, a lot of law schools subscribe to study guides or other titles from LexisNexis and OverDrive that we call student success titles, and law school librarians will be able to select from those titles and showcase those collections in a visually prominent way—the way a public library might display collections of seasonal materials.

With respect to distributing eBooks, firm librarians told us it would be great if we could solve the challenge of the annual ritual of distributing new deskbooks. I'm sure law firm librarians are all too familiar with receiving hundreds of books in boxes that they have to check in, stamp, and then go around to everyone's offices to make sure each attorney gets a new edition. Sometimes those deskbooks are misplaced, pages are ripped out—law librarians are continually replacing books in a firm. We're

creating capabilities to push eBooks out to particular attorneys or practice groups. Those new eBooks will display in a special section of the new home page, as if to say, "The 2020 edition of *New York Civil Practice Law & Rules*, known as 'the *Redbook*,' is here." All that researchers will have to do is click on it, and it will download for offline reading in the background while they are using it. It's automatically in their own personal library from that point forward.

What's next for Digital Library—and the industry?

Potash: OverDrive has created a new product that includes a variety of artificial intelligence components to help recommend the right book, based on the one you're looking at. It's building baked-in, deep learning as a user uses the product more; as someone would select and utilize particular titles for practice areas and jurisdictions, for example.

Similar to that, right now we're looking at changing to all responsive design; in the future, titles would be able to be used on any device with a screen—the app could be viewed through mobile browsers on any device.

A Google Assistant-type of voice command is also going to be incorporated into LexisNexis Digital Library because of the partnership. In future updates, you'll be able to just talk to Digital Library, and it will answer with a local rule or open to the page. It's all about having access to content. LexisNexis Digital Library will be at the forefront of utilizing all of these voice command and smart technologies.

With the newest release, it is really delightful how books are presented—from the visual depiction of a title by volume or series, to enabling curation of virtual shelves, or permitting custom tags of book lists. Once you're in the material itself, the readability is outstanding. We all love print books; they're very valuable resources. With the new features, LexisNexis Digital Library proves that book-based research can be an even more useful experience.

R+A Research + Analytics

IM Information Management