Everyone at Fish & Richardson Wins with Best Authority®

By Jennifer Potter, Project Manager/Business Analyst and Linda Vega, Manager, IT Support Services

When LexisNexis® discontinued its FullAuthority® Table of Authorities (TOA)-creation software in 2008, Fish & Richardson knew it was going to have a problem on its hands. TOA-creation is a lengthy process that involves going through a legal brief, marking each citation and then formatting each one – a process that can take many hours to complete. We needed a product that was comparable to Full-Authority to limit the time our litigation support professionals spent creating a TOA.

FullAuthority had reduced the never-ending process of producing an accurate TOA down from three hours to about 45-60 minutes. We needed to find a product that was, at the very least, comparable to FullAuthority. We didn't expect to find a product significantly better than FullAuthority, one that drastically decreased the time it took to create a TOA from 45 minutes to the click of a button. Luckily, we found just that: Best Authority® by Levit & James.

As we began researching our options, Best Authority seemed like the most promising candidate. When we set up a demonstration of the product, we were surprised that it worked better than FullAuthority, which had never had the ability to analyze documents properly. FullAuthority was supposed to completely automate the TOA process, but you still had to manually check the document to make sure there were no errors; you could never trust the automation. With Best Authority, you didn't have to re-check the document after the TOA was created – Best Authority was catching all the citations and automatically formatting them correctly. Occasionally there are mistakes in the document that result in 'broken' citations, or other errors. Best Authority makes it easy to find these (they are called suspects), and permanently correct them. Other than that, the product created an accurate TOA that did not need revising. After the demonstration, we immediately decided to purchase Best Authority.

One of the great things about Best Authority is that it is already customized for different court systems. The only customizations we had to do were internal compliance to meet Fish & Richardson's document standards, and to make sure the schemes worked within Microsoft Word. We ran into a few issues in getting the schemes to format properly, but with the help of Levit & James, we were able to make it all work. After about six months of testing and customizing Best Authority, we rolled out the software to our firm's users.

The integration of the software was seamless, thanks to Levit & James' top-notch support. First, we taught a small group of trainers – our litigation administrators – how to use the software. The trainers saw immediately how well the product worked in comparison to Full-Authority. There were no errors with Best Authority, and no formatting issues to go back and fix after the software ran through the document. Best Authority was truly able to automate the TOA-creation process.

After the trainers were well-versed in the software, all the litigation support staff went through training with Levit & James. They then did hands-on training with the firm's trainers and were required to complete a TOA-challenge. Everyone loved the product from Day One. In fact, we recently migrated to Windows 7 and Office 2010 and many of the secretaries refused to migrate without Best Authority compatibility. That is a true indication of the software's value.

Best Authority dramatically reduces the time it takes for our litigation support team to create accurate TOAs. Best Authority has given our support staff confidence in our technology and peace of mind that their documents are properly cited. Furthermore, our IT staff is not burdened with software that does not work correctly or efficiently .

Best Authority is a quality piece of software that works. There are no kinks or bugs to be worked out – it works straight out of the box. Best Authority is a no-brainer for any firm looking to create TOAs more efficiently and to keep its employees happy. With Best Authority, everyone wins.

Jennifer Potter is a Project Manager/Business Analysis at Fish & Richardson's Minneapolis office. Linda Vega is a Manager, IT Support Services in Fish & Richardson's Boston office.

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