



Looking Good in Hollywood Has Never Been So Easy

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The best argument should prevail, but appearances matter – and this truism extends to your Table of Authorities (TOA). TOA creation can be a lengthy process that involves going through a legal brief, finding, then marking and formatting each citation – a tedious process that can take hours to complete – tedious and unproductive hours. Judges look at the overall format of your brief. If your TOA looks like you put little effort into it and you weren't giving due diligence to the formalities required by law, then why should the judge be impressed with the brief as a whole? If the TOA looks good, it helps the brief – and you – look good. Whether they realize it or not, judges are affected by the appearance of the brief as well as its substantive content.

And guess who else likes to look good? My clients. I should know; I've been in entertainment law for 17 years, and the clients are picky about appearances.

Recently, my Los Angeles law firm, The Law Offices of Max J. Sprecher (www.sprecherlaw.com), was searching for a better way to generate TOAs, and reviewed Best Authority by Levit & James (www.levitjames.com). My practice includes entertainment and business litigation in State Court, Federal Court, and before the California Labor Commissioner. I needed the right TOA-creation software that would keep my briefs looking professional while simultaneously saving billable hours as well as hours of frustration from working with the built-in table process available in a global word-processing program.

I have what one might term a long and personal history with TOA cre-

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After I graduated from Southwestern University School of Law in 1993, I joined the firm of Lavelly & Singer P.C., one of the nation's preeminent entertainment litigation firms. By 1994, I discovered that LexisNexis was producing FullAuthority TOA creation software in a relatively early incarnation. I persuaded the firm to buy it to create professional-looking TOAs, to save time, and to save the firm from word processing nightmares created by using the native TOA capability in WordPerfect. FullAuthority reduced the never-ending process of producing an accurate TOA down from hours to minutes. Unfortunately, LexisNexis upgraded and support for FullAuthority ultimately terminated.

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ation. My family had a word-processing business in the early 1980s that provided typing services for attorneys. I did some of the typing personally, but didn't create the Tables of Authorities. Later, I tried to use WordPerfect to create the TOAs, but this was cumbersome. Basically, if you have ever tried to use a word-processing program for TOA creation, it's a nightmare. I don't like nightmares; I like solutions.

In September 2005, I decided to launch my own firm. Never was the importance of the right TOA creation software as important as when I made the decision to go solo. I wanted to look professional, but I also wanted to save time and not get bogged down in the tedium of TOAs.

When I opened my office, I implemented West's program – Cite Check – an add-on for Word. It

was free; it would create a TOA. There weren't a lot of choices to customize what it was doing, however. Overall, Cite Check was limited, and formatting and corrections had to be made using Word.

When I went looking for an alternative to Cite Check, I reviewed Best Authority (and several other competitive products) online and it really looked like the proper fit. I called sales support at Levit & James and was told that I could not buy Best Authority until I watched the training video (something I tend to avoid). However, they were insistent, and I took the time to watch the video. Once I watched how it worked, I was sold.

Here's the beauty of Best Authority. With Best Authority, there is no need to spend an hour or more to go through and individually identify and mark each and every citation. Instead, with Best Authority, I can build a TOA that is accurate and looks professional in 3-5 minutes. It has a highly accurate scan engine that identifies the citations in a legal brief—more accurate than any other product I've used in the past. Also, it has two unique reviewing tools, including a split-screen "Draft Review Mode" where you can compare the entries in your TOA with the original citations in context in the body of your document, all the while identifying the types of citations with temporary color highlighting. With Best Authority, I 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. More importantly, I could make corrections during the review process.

If something looks strange or if there are mistakes in the document that result in "broken" citations, Best Authority makes it easy to track down these "suspects" and per-

manently correct them. It's simple to just jump to that position in your brief and make that correction as you're viewing the draft of the table.

The best thing is that Best Authority TOA creation software eliminates the stress of finalizing a document. As long as I have 30 minutes to get something out the door, I have plenty of time to use Best Authority, because it only takes a few minutes. This takes a lot of the pressure off the finalization of the brief. I have the confidence and trust that I only need a few minutes and my TOAs will turn out perfectly. It is simply a given now, in my day-to-day operations, that making a TOA is going to be quick and reliable.

The icing on the cake? The integration of the software was seamless. The Levit & James support staff are wonderful. I was so pleased with Best Authority, that I called Ian Levit personally just to compliment him on the program and tell him how happy I was. There's a real need for this product among small and solo firms. The product is that good – and it makes me and my clients look good, too.

This is basically a no-brainer. If you can do in 3-5 minutes what used to take hours, look better, and be more accurate, how can you not purchase Best Authority? It would be like trying to be a lawyer without a Smartphone; it is quite simply a must-have for any lawyer and an absolute for lawyers who have to do it themselves. Every time I talk to a colleague, I refer them to the Best Authority page of Levit & James' website (<http://www.bestauthority.com>).

I strongly recommend that all solo or small-firm attorneys go on the website, watch the short training video, and dive in. You won't regret the time.

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