



Unlimited Nationwide
Legal Research Program
Continues as a
Free Service for
LSBA Members

By Shawn L. Holahan

n June 15, the Louisiana Bar Association State (LSBA) renewed its contract with Fastcase to provide nationwide legal research as a free service to every LSBA member in good standing. In June 2005, the LSBA became the first state bar association in the nation to sign up for Fastcase, but, for many lawyers, the launch of that member benefit was lost in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita later that summer. With the recent contract renewal, the LSBA is now "relaunching" this benefit.

Fastcase is simple to use. If one can search the web, one can search Fastcase. Even though Fastcase is easy to use, it's a very sophisticated research tool. A June 2010 Vendor Satisfaction Survey in *Law Technology News* ranked Fastcase #1 in legal research customer satisfaction. Fastcase ranked highest in seven out of 10 categories, including being the clear winner in "price for value" and topping the ease of installation, customer service responsiveness, ease of integration into firm workflow, and features and functions areas

"We work hard to make the most important cases jump off the page," company Cofounder and President Phil Rosenthal said. "You can sort the best results to the top, create visual maps of your search results, or even see in your results list how many times each case has been cited. The most important cases have never been easier to find than they are on Fastcase," he added.

The LSBA purchases a bulk subscription on behalf of the more than 21,000 lawyers licensed in Louisiana, allowing the service to be offered free to LSBA members in good standing.

"The most powerful price in the world," Fastcase CEO Ed Walters said. "We've built a beautiful, elegant, wonderful way for lawyers to access the law," Walters said. "Bar Members try Fastcase because it's free — but they stay because they can find better answers faster every time."



Comprehensive, Nationwide Legal Research

Fastcase is a fully nationwide system. Logging onto Fastcase, LSBA members have instant access to case law from all states, including Louisiana, at least back to 1950 (some states as far back as the 1700s). Fastcase also provides federal case law from the U.S. Supreme Court from 1 U.S. 1 (1754), all circuit courts from 1 F.2d 1 (1924), all district courts from 1 F.Supp. 1 (1914), and all bankruptcy courts from 1 B.R. 1 (1979). The cases show digest pagination for correct citation. New opinions are posted within 24 to 48 hours of issuance.

Additionally, Fastcase offers all state and federal statutes, administrative regulations and court rules. All state constitutions can be researched as well.

LSBA members are also able to access without fee several new *á la carte* resources, such as Louisiana legal forms, a nationwide newspaper search, a unified PACER search system, a people-finder application, and business intelligence tools.

Fastcase is a major benefit of membership to the LSBA. Included in the regular cost of Bar dues, members get complete access to Fastcase, which normally costs \$995 per user per year. The benefit is gaining traction, too. Today, 18 state bar associations (and several major international law firms with thousands of lawyers) subscribe to Fastcase for their members — more than 400,000 users strong and growing all the time.

Local Roots and Created by Lawyers for Lawyers

Fastcase is headquartered in Washington, D.C., but Walters, one of its cofounders, grew up in Baton Rouge, where his father is an attorney. "We love working with state bar associations, but it's even more special to work with my home state bar association," he said.

The company was established in 1999 when Walters and Rosenthal were lawyers in the Washington, D.C., office of Covington & Burling. "One of our larger clients needed legal research for a project, but asked us not to use the expensive,



traditional services our firm was using," Walters said. "When we couldn't find an affordable alternative, we decided to leave and build one ourselves." A few months after that project, Walters and Rosenthal left to start Fastcase.

"Fastcase levels the playing field between small firms and large firms, providing everyone the kind of access to the law that only the largest firms have enjoyed," Rosenthal said. "Now all lawyers, from the biggest firms to the most remote solo practitioner, will have the entire national law library right on their desktops," he added.

Did You Know That...

- ► Fastcase is **FREE** to all LSBA members in good standing?
- ► Fastcase gives every LSBA member in good standing unlimited, nationwide legal research?
- ➤ Fastcase provides case law and statutes from all 50 states and federal jurisdictions?
- ► Fastcase is accessible instantly from your iPhone, iPad or iPod?
- Fastcase uploads new opinions within 24 to 48 hours of issuance?

"We have launched similar benefits in bar associations across the country, and the response is similar everywhere," Walters said. "Making sure that everyone has access to the law improves the administration of justice, makes lawyers better informed for their clients, and lowers the costs for lawyers to do more *pro bono* and nonbillable work," he said.

"Part of our mission is to promote and maintain access to justice," LSBA President Michael A. Patterson said. "By making one of the core tools of the practice available to all of our lawyers, the LSBA and Fastcase are guaranteeing that all clients and all lawyers can find the law that affects them. It makes our system more just, and it makes us all better lawyers."

"We were the first bar to offer Fastcase to our members," LSBA Executive Director Loretta Larsen said. "We are very excited to renew this valuable member service and will be expanding the training opportunities through CLE seminars around the state, free webinars and online tutorials," she said.

Using the Fastcase Benefit

To log in to Fastcase, go to the LSBA website's home page at www.lsba.org,

and either click on the "Fastcase" logo on the right or on the word "Fastcase" on the left. Members' usernames and passwords remain the same as their current login for other LSBA website features. Members who may have forgotten their usernames and/or passwords can get reminders with a link on the login screen.

Fastcase supports terms and connectors (or "Boolean") searching, natural language searching, and searching by citation. Searches use the same syntax as most commercial legal research, so users of other legal research services will find the system familiar. In addition, there are video tutorials, user guides and training materials available on the site — offering a good introduction to Fastcase and a good brush-up course on legal research. Find them at www.fastcase.com/support.

Smarter Research Tools

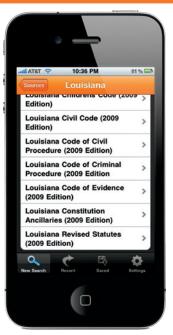
Fastcase is designed specifically to be a smarter approach to finding the law, not just a more affordable one. One example of this smarter approach is that search results come back "best case first," just like searching on the web. Instead of a one-size-fits-all approach, users can re-sort search results a dozen different ways, customizing the list to fit the precise research task. Fastcase displays information about the cases in the results list, including the citation and either the most relevant paragraph or the first paragraph of the case. "These features help people find the needle in the haystack," Walters said, "by sorting the haystack to put needles first."

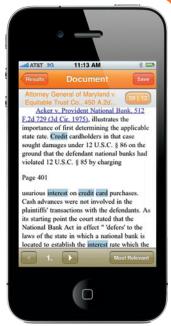
A new, interesting feature unique to Fastcase is its Interactive Timeline which creates visual maps of results, so users can see all of the search results at a glance, how they fall over time, and which are most relevant, most cited and most recent. "For visual learners, this is a revolution. Often, the best case literally jumps off the page at you," Rosenthal said.

Additionally, Fastcase offers Foresite which augments search results with other relevant cases, which cite to cases in search results but which do not contain all of the search terms. It is especially useful when attempting to trace the origins of a









particular legal precept.

Unlike most other web-based utilities, Fastcase offers dual-column printing of cases, in Microsoft Word, PDF or WordPerfect-compatible Rich Text Format.

Free Fastcase App Download for iPhone, iPad, iPod

On the run or in court, and need a case cite or statute quickly? Fastcase has an app for that. Download and use the *free* Fastcase app for iPhones, iPads and iPods to get material instantly. Users can access anything in the Fastcase database with the app.

The Fastcase iPhone app was launched in February 2010. The app has already won the prestigious American Association of Law Libraries New Product of the Year Award. Describing the iPhone app as a "must-have for any lawyer with an iPhone," Robert Ambrogi, the lawyer author of the LawSites blog, said that it was "easy to use and produced lightningfast results."

"The future of legal research is mobile devices — ubiquitous computing and access anywhere," Walters said. "The mobile platform is what's next for legal research, and Fastcase plans to be a big player in that market."

To download the free app for the iPhone or iPod, visit *www.fastcase.com/iPhone* (the same app works for both devices). To download the free app for the iPad, visit *www.fastcase.com/iPad*.

Put Your Dues to Work

The LSBA and Fastcase have worked together since 2005 to put the American law library on the desktop of every lawyer

in the state. The service has grown both in its coverage and its users every year. The legal challenges are perhaps greater than ever, but so are the resources offered by the Bar to deal with them. "We're very excited for what's next with the LSBA," Walters said.

Even if LSBA members are using other legal research services, Fastcase (and the Fastcase iPhone/iPad/iPod app) is worth a look. Remember, it's *free*!

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LSBA Offers Statewide Technology-Related "Lunch and Learn" CLEs

The Louisiana State Bar Association is offering two-hour technology-related "Lunch and Learn" CLE seminars throughout the state.

- ► Fastcase Training: Nuts and Bolts, CEO Ed Walters or Christina Steinbrecker.
- Law Office Management: Essential Law Office Technology, Craig Bayer of Law Office Technology and/or Thomas O'Connor of Gulf Coast Legal Technology Center.
- ► Low-cost CLE seminars and lunch.

- ▶ In these locations: Sept. 9, 2010, Otter's Chicken, 1845 W. Pinhook Rd., Lafayette; Sept. 10, 2010, Reeve's Uptown Catering, 1639 Ryan St., Lake Charles; seminars in Shreveport, Monroe, Covington, Baton Rouge, Alexandria, New Orleans and Houma will be announced. To register for the Sept. 9 and 10 seminars, call Kristy Nunez, (504)619-0138.
- Check future LSBA print and online publications for further details.