The United States Supreme Court: Visualizations and Metrics (60 Years of Data)

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SLIS Research Forum

September 18, 2004

Overall Goals

• Gain insight into the work of the Supreme Court.

• Implement visualization tools for legal scholars to evaluate the work of the Court.

• Create visually rich teaching aids for legal instruction. (Concept Maps)
Origin of the Data

- All Supreme Court Opinions with West Topic headings
- 1944 term through the 2003 term
- Harvested and cleaned by hand
- From the Westlaw proprietary database

WEST Topics
Data Elements

- Case Name
- Date of Issue
- Chief Justice at Date of Issuance
- Topics Assigned by West Publishing
- Categories of topics (from West)
- Sub-Categories of Topics (from West)

360 States Adderley v. State of Fla., 11/14/1966 Warren 7. GOVERNMENT A. Political Bodies and Divisions

TEMPORAL INSIGHTS

TIMESEARCHER SOFTWARE: Human Computer Interaction Laboratory at the University of Maryland.

TimeSearcher Reveals a Spike

The Explosion of Civil Rights Litigation
COMPARATIVE AREA INSIGHTS

**TREEMAP SOFTWARE:** Human Computer Interaction Laboratory at the University of Maryland.


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### West Category by Court

(Normalized by Percentage of Overall Topics Issued by that Court)

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Rehnquist Court Distribution of Topics
INSIGHTS FROM NETWORK GRAPHING TECHNIQUES

PAJEK SOFTWARE: University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.


Co-Occurrence Objectives

• To map the work of the Supreme Court based on the co-occurrence of West, top-level topics.

• To evaluate whether the categories and sub-categories of West’s Outline of the Law suggest the manner in which topics co-occur in cases.
Degree of Connectivity

- Total Nodes -- 289
- Range (Degree of Connectivity) – 1 to 250
- Mean (Degree of Connectivity) -- 26
- Median (Degree of Connectivity) -- 14
- Mode (Degree of Connectivity) -- 13
- Total Connections between Nodes - 3717
Node Size = Number of times topic appears in the dataset

Node Color = West Category

Color Code:
1. Persons
2. Property
3. Contracts
4. Torts
5. Crimes
6. Remedies
7. Government

Color Code:
1. Persons
2. Property
3. Contracts
4. Torts
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6. Remedies
7. Government
Conceptual Schemas

CRIMINAL PROCEDURE
AN ANALYSIS
OF
CONSTITUTIONAL CASES
AND CONCEPTS

By
CHARLES H. WHITEBREAD
Professor of Law, University of Virginia

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Acknowledgments

- Professor Katy Börner
- Ketan Mane
- Weimao Ke
- Rongke Gao
- Keith Buckley
- Ralph Gaebler