

THE LEGAL RESEARCH LAB

Legal Research & Case Management System

User Manual & Onboarding Guide

Field: Legal Research · \ Offline.Ltd

30+

Tools

8

Tabs

100%

Offline

∞

Free Updates

This manual covers every tool, tab, and feature of The Legal Research Lab — a comprehensive offline legal research and case management platform. It includes setup instructions, tool-by-tool walkthroughs with inputs and outputs, keyboard shortcuts, troubleshooting, and a complete glossary of legal research terms.

Version 1.4 · For use with The_Legal_Research_Lab_V_1_4.html

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1 Getting Started

The Legal Research Lab is a single HTML file that runs entirely in your web browser. No installation, no server, no internet connection required after purchase. All your data stays in your browser's localStorage and IndexedDB.

System Requirements

| Browser | Version | Notes |
|-----------------|---------|-----------------------------------------|
| Google Chrome | 90+ | Recommended. Full Ollama + RAG support. |
| Mozilla Firefox | 90+ | Full support. |
| Microsoft Edge | 90+ | Chromium-based. Full support. |
| Safari | 15+ | Works. Some IndexedDB limits on iOS. |
| Brave / Vivaldi | Latest | Chromium-based. Full support. |

How to Open the File

Double-click `The_Legal_Research_Lab_V_1_4.html` to open it in your default browser. That's it — the lab is ready to use. If you want to use the AI-powered features (RAG, Summarizer, Autopilot), you will also need Ollama running locally on your machine.



PRO TIP

Email the HTML file to yourself for access on any device. It works on phones, tablets, and desktops. For Ollama features, serve via a local HTTP server: `python3 -m http.server 8080`

Ollama Integration

Many of the Lab's most powerful features — the RAG Engine, Case Summarizer, Document Comparator, Holdings Extractor, Autopilot, and Knowledge Nexus — rely on Ollama for local AI inference. Install Ollama from ollama.com, then pull at least two models: `ollama pull llama3.2` for chat and `ollama pull nomic-embed-text` for document embeddings.

2 Interface Overview

The interface is organised into a header, a tab bar, a content area, and a disclaimer footer. Every tool lives in one of eight main tabs plus two system tabs.

The Header

The header shows the red backslash (⌘) brand mark on the left, the product name, and the Ollama connection status indicator on the right. The status dot is green when Ollama is connected, amber when checking, and red when offline. Click the status indicator to refresh the connection check.

The Tab Bar

Eight tool tabs on the left: RESEARCH, CASE LAW, ANALYSIS, CASE MGMT, DRAFTING, UTILITIES, COLLABORATION, and NEXUS. Two system tabs on the right: FILES and HELP. Each tool tab opens a hub of related sub-tools. Click a sub-tool card to enter it; click '← Back to Tools' to return to the hub.

Tooltips

Many field labels have a small ? circle next to them. Hover over it to see a contextual explanation of what the field does.

The Disclaimer Bar

The footer shows a link to the Disclaimer & Terms, keyboard shortcut hints (■S save, ■E export, ■I import), and the version number (v1.4).

3 Saving & File Management

The Lab auto-saves to your browser's localStorage whenever you make changes. For backup, sharing, or migration, use the Files tab.

Exporting Your Lab State

1. Open the **FILES** tab. 2. Click **■ EXPORT FULL LAB**. 3. A JSON file downloads containing your entire lab state. 4. Store this file safely — it is your complete backup.

Importing a Lab State

1. Open the **FILES** tab. 2. Click **■ IMPORT FULL LAB**. 3. Select a previously exported JSON file. 4. The lab reloads with the imported state.

CAUTION

Importing a lab state **overwrites** all current data. Export first if you want to keep your existing work.

Encrypted Export & Import

The Files tab also offers AES-256-GCM encrypted export and import. Enter a password, click **■ EXPORT ENCRYPTED**. The password never leaves your browser. Ideal for matter files containing privileged or confidential information. Per-tool encrypted exports are available for Research, Case Law, Analysis, Case Mgmt, Drafting, and Utilities.

Per-Tool Exports (Unencrypted)

Export individual tool sections (Case Law, Analysis, Case Mgmt, Drafting, Utilities, Research) as separate JSON files. Useful for sharing a specific section without exposing your entire lab state.

PRO TIP

Name your exported files by matter and date — e.g. `smith-v-jones-2025-03.json`. This makes it easy to find the right backup later.

4 Research

Tab: RESEARCH

The Research tab is the core of the Lab. It contains six sub-tools for AI-powered legal research, document analysis, and goal-driven autopilot research.

Document Library / Indexer

Upload .txt and .md files — briefs, statutes, opinions, memos — and index them for RAG retrieval. Documents are assigned to authority tiers: **A** (Binding Authority, 3.0× weight), **B** (Persuasive Authority, 1.5×), or **C** (Secondary Sources, 0.8×).

| Input | Description |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| File Upload | Drag-and-drop or browse for .txt / .md files |
| INDEX ALL DOCUMENTS | Generates embeddings via Ollama nomic-embed-text |
| Authority Tier Dropdown | Assign A / B / C per document (default: C) |

Legal Research / RAG Engine

Full local Retrieval-Augmented Generation engine. Your query is matched against indexed documents; the top 6 relevant chunks (weighted by authority tier) are included as context for the AI. Supports Second Opinion mode (two models) and smart conversation pruning.

| Setting | Description |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Primary Model | Ollama model for main response (default: llama3.2) |
| Second Opinion | Enable a second model for comparison (default: gemma2:9b) |
| RAG Retrieval | Toggle retrieval from indexed documents |
| Authority Weighting | A-tier 3.0×, B-tier 1.5×, C-tier 0.8× scoring |
| Conversation Pruning | Auto-prune old messages — Last 8, Last 24h, or Manual |

Case Summarizer

Paste any legal document and generate a summary. Choose short (50 words), medium (150 words), or long (300 words) in bullet point, paragraph, or technical style.

Multi-Document Comparator

Compare two legal documents side-by-side. Identifies key differences in holdings, reasoning, and application.

Key Holdings Extractor

Paste a case opinion and extract: Holdings / Ratio Decidendi, Material Facts, Conflicts / Dissents, and Open Issues / Obiter Dicta.

| Output | Description |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Holdings / Ratio Decidendi | The binding legal principles established |
| Material Facts | The key facts the court relied upon |
| Conflicts / Dissents | Disagreements, minority opinions, or conflicting authority |
| Open Issues / Obiter Dicta | Non-binding observations and unresolved questions |

Goals & Autopilot

Set a high-level legal research goal and launch agentic autopilot. The system loops through your indexed documents, asking Ollama at each step what to do next — retrieve more evidence, summarize findings, or flag contradictions. Controls: Launch, Pause, Resume, Stop. All actions are logged and findings accumulate in the synthesis panel.



PRO TIP

Start with a focused goal like 'Find all binding authority on duty of care in negligence' rather than 'Research everything about tort law'. Focused goals produce more actionable autopilot runs.

5 Case Law

Tab: CASE LAW

The Case Law tab is your knowledge management hub — five sub-tools for building and organising legal knowledge.

Legal Wiki

Multi-page wiki with [[wikilinks]] and automatic cross-references. Create pages for cases, statutes, and legal principles. Use [[Page Title]] syntax to auto-create links. Preview renders wikilinks as clickable navigation.

Case Notes

Fast capture with comma-separated tagging. Use for bench notes, hearing notes, client notes, and research observations.

Legal Glossary

Build and manage legal terminology and definitions. Add terms and definitions to create a personal legal dictionary.

Matter Log / Journal

Auto-dated journal entries for case progress. Includes a mood/status selector (Focused, Productive, Neutral, Distracted, Tired) for tracking work patterns.

Legal Concept Map

Interactive mind map connecting cases, statutes, and legal principles. First node becomes the central concept. Click a node then another to toggle connections. Drag nodes to reposition.

6 Analysis

Tab: ANALYSIS

Six sub-tools for legal analysis, evidence evaluation, and text examination.

Litigation Timeline

Create detailed timelines with dates, descriptions, and categories (Research, Discovery, Analysis, Other).

| Input | Description |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Event Date | Date picker |
| Event Description | Free text |
| Category | Research / Discovery / Analysis / Other |

Authority Matrix

Structured table of authorities: case/statute name, court/jurisdiction, and key holdings.

| Input | Description |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| Case / Statute Name | Free text |
| Court / Jurisdiction | Free text |
| Key Holdings / Provisions | Free text |

Pros & Cons / Risk Matrix

Evaluate legal strategies by weighing strengths against risks.

| Input | Description |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Legal Strategy | What action are you evaluating? |
| Strengths | Favourable precedent, legal strengths |
| Risks / Weaknesses | Adverse authority, legal risks |

Case Law Tracker

Log cases with citations, court/jurisdiction, and authority status (Good Law, Distinguished, Questioned, Overruled, Not Yet Verified).

| Input | Description |
|---------------|----------------------|
| Case Citation | Full citation string |

| Input | Description |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Court / Jurisdiction | Free text |
| Authority Status | Good Law / Distinguished / Questioned / Overruled / Not Yet Verified |

Legal Text Analytics

Paste text and generate a word cloud showing term frequency and key phrase patterns.

Judicial Language Analyzer

Detect persuasive framing, emotional language, and rhetorical strategies in judicial opinions, briefs, and your own drafts.

7 Case Management

Tab: CASE MGMT

Five sub-tools for organising cases, tracking tasks, and structuring arguments.

Task Tracker

Kanban board with three columns: To Do, In Progress, Done. Add tasks, drag between columns. Tracks counts per column.

Matter Dashboard

One-screen overview of all active matters and case progress.

Statute & Regulation Library

Track statutes and regulations with title, jurisdiction/body, and status (In Force, Amended, Repealed, Pending, Under Review).

Brief Outline Builder

Drag-and-drop hierarchical outline. Tab to indent, Shift+Tab to outdent. Click RAG on any item to pull related content from indexed documents. Copy as text for export.

Unified Search

Search across wiki, notes, chat, timeline, and documents in a single query.

8 Drafting

Tab: DRAFTING

Six sub-tools for legal writing, citation building, and argument preparation.

Brief / Memo Drafter

Start legal drafts with title and content fields. Save and resume drafts across sessions.

Heading & Issue Framer

Generate and refine issue statements, point headings, and section headings. Analyses clarity, persuasiveness, and precision.

Style & Citation Checker

Scan drafts for consistent citation format, unnecessary legalese, and adherence to court-specific style requirements.

Legal Theory Generator

Generate legal theories and arguments from a topic or subject, informed by your indexed authorities.

Legal Citation Builder

Build properly formatted legal citations. Enter the case/statute and the propositions it supports.

Opposing Counsel Prep

Enter your position and key authorities. The system uses RAG to identify potential counter-arguments, flag weaknesses, and suggest rebuttal strategies.



PRO TIP

Run Opposing Counsel Prep before any hearing or filing. It is far better to discover weaknesses in your argument before opposing counsel does.

9 Utilities

Tab: UTILITIES

Calculator & Unit Converter

Quick math and unit conversions (Meters, Feet, Kilometers, Miles) without leaving your research workspace.

Date & Timeline Calculator

Calculate durations between two dates. Useful for limitation periods, filing deadlines, and procedural timelines.

File Statistics & Duplicate Finder

View statistics about indexed files and identify potential duplicates.

Export Center

Export your research as Markdown, CSV, HTML (printable / Save as PDF), or JSON. Select which sections to include: Wiki Pages, Notes, Chat History, Tasks, Timeline, Outline.

10 Collaboration

Tab: COLLABORATION

Collab Package Creator

Create shareable packages (HTML + JSON state) for collaborating with colleagues.

Multi-State Merger

Paste multiple JSON states and merge them intelligently, resolving conflicts automatically.

Side-by-Side Comparator

Guide and tools for running two Lab instances simultaneously for detailed comparison.

11 Nexus

Tab: NEXUS

The Living Knowledge Nexus is an auto-growing knowledge graph that connects everything in your lab. Every time you index documents, save wiki pages, write journal entries, or run research queries, the Nexus extracts concepts and relationships via Ollama. These build into a force-directed graph where nodes are coloured by authority tier.

| Node Colour | Meaning |
|-------------|-------------------------------|
| Gold | A-Tier (Binding Authority) |
| Blue | B-Tier (Persuasive Authority) |
| Steel | C-Tier (Secondary Sources) |
| Grey | Manually added concept |




Click any node to load its weighted authority chunks, pruned chat context, and all cross-references. Use Refresh Nexus to reprocess the graph, or manually add concepts.



PRO TIP

The Nexus reveals hidden connections between your research topics. Watch for unexpected clusters — they often point to insights you have not consciously made yet.

12 Keyboard Shortcuts

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ctrl+S /  S | Save current state |
| Ctrl+E /  E | Export lab |
| Ctrl+I /  I | Import lab |
| Tab | Indent outline item (in Outline Builder) |
| Shift+Tab | Outdent outline item (in Outline Builder) |
| Enter | Send query (in RAG Engine input), Add task/concept/outline item |

13 Troubleshooting

Ollama shows 'offline' or 'CORS blocked'

If opened via file://, CORS blocks Ollama API calls. Serve via a local HTTP server: `python3 -m http.server 8080`, then open `http://localhost:8080`. Ensure Ollama is running with `OLLAMA_ORIGINS=*` for cross-origin access.

RAG returns no results

Documents must be indexed first. Go to Research → Document Library → click INDEX ALL DOCUMENTS. Ensure `nomic-embed-text` is pulled.

Storage full / quota exceeded

The lab uses localStorage which has limits (typically 5–10 MB). Export your lab state, clear old data, or use the encrypted export for archiving.

Data lost after clearing browser data

localStorage is tied to the file path or URL origin. If you clear browser data, your lab state is gone. Always export before clearing. Use encrypted exports for critical matter files.

Import fails or shows error

Ensure the JSON file was exported from The Legal Research Lab. Files from other knives or corrupted files will fail.

Second Opinion model not responding

The second model must also be pulled in Ollama. Check the model name in the RAG sidebar and verify with `ollama list`.

Mobile layout issues

The Lab is responsive but complex tools (Kanban, Nexus, Concept Map) work best on larger screens. Use landscape mode on tablets.

14 Accuracy & Limitations

The Legal Research Lab is a research aid. All AI-generated output must be independently verified by a qualified legal professional.

| Tool | Accuracy | Notes |
|---------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| RAG Engine | Depends on model + data | Quality of results depends on indexed documents and model capability |
| Case Summarizer | Good for structure | May miss nuance in complex opinions; always verify holdings |
| Holdings Extractor | Indicative | Best treated as a starting point, not a final analysis |
| Autopilot | Experimental | Goal-driven loops may occasionally repeat or miss relevant material |
| Authority Weighting | Effective | Only as good as your tier assignments — review regularly |
| Nexus | Conceptual | Connections are AI-inferred; may contain spurious links |
| Citation Builder | Format only | Does not verify that the citation is correct or current |

⚠ CAUTION

This software does not constitute legal advice. No lawyer-client or other professional relationship is created by using this tool. All outputs must be independently verified by a qualified legal professional before any reliance or action. The software is provided as-is without warranty of any kind.

15 Glossary

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Authority Tier | Classification of legal sources: A (binding), B (persuasive), C (secondary). Used for weighted RAG retrieval. |
| Autopilot | Agentic research mode where the AI loops through documents toward a stated goal, logging each step. |
| Binding Authority | Legal authority that a court must follow, e.g. decisions of a higher court in the same jurisdiction. |
| CORS | Cross-Origin Resource Sharing. Browser security policy that can block Ollama API calls from file:// URLs. |
| Embedding | A numerical vector representation of text, used for semantic similarity matching in RAG retrieval. |
| IndexedDB | Browser-based database used to store document embeddings locally (larger capacity than localStorage). |
| JSON | JavaScript Object Notation. The data format used for lab state export/import files. |
| Kanban | A visual project management method using columns (To Do, In Progress, Done) for tracking tasks. |
| Knowledge Nexus | Auto-growing force-directed graph connecting legal concepts extracted from research activity. |
| localStorage | Browser storage mechanism where the Lab saves its state between sessions. Limited to ~5–10 MB. |
| Obiter Dicta | Judicial comments made in passing that are not binding as precedent. |
| Ollama | Local AI inference server. Required for RAG, summarization, autopilot, and nexus features. |
| Persuasive Authority | Legal authority that a court may consider but is not bound to follow. |
| RAG | Retrieval-Augmented Generation. Combines document search with AI generation for grounded answers. |
| Ratio Decidendi | The legal principle or rule that forms the basis for a court's decision; the binding part of a judgment. |
| Second Opinion | Feature that sends your query to a second AI model for comparison with the primary response. |

State File A JSON file containing the full lab state — all tools, notes, documents, and settings.

Wikilink A link in the format [[Page Title]] that creates cross-references between wiki pages.

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Build your case.

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