



# Gen Z Rising

How the Next Generation of  
Lawyers is Reshaping Law Firms

The next generation of lawyers is telling you what they want from the next generation of legal research tools.

***Are you listening?***

## Introduction

The digital revolution has fundamentally changed the way we communicate, travel, work and live. Industry upon industry has been forced to transform their operations, workflows and policies to adapt to this digital-first era. Now an entire generation of Americans who have grown up with technology at their fingertips is entering the workforce and causing significant disruptions in the way organizations conduct their business. This generation has not only embraced the ubiquitous use of digital technologies, they don't even know a world without them.

This workforce disruption is now arriving in the legal services industry. The legal market is starting to see the impact of the digital revolution with the newest crop of associates at law firms and this development is changing the way that law firms operate.

This white paper explores how a new generation of lawyers is reshaping large law firms, how these digital natives are leveraging their mastery of technology to drive productivity gains in the legal profession, and what law firms need to do to win and retain the battle for Gen Z talent by providing them with access to the technology tools they value—and expect—to be provided by their employers.

# The Next Generation

For years, we have been talking about the arrival of millennials into the legal profession. Just as the legal profession had adjusted to this unique demographic group, a new generation has arrived in law schools across the U.S.—and they are now accepting job offers as associates in large U.S. law firms.

Generation Z, also known as iGen, consists of the generation born after millennials (1996 and after). There are approximately 23 million Americans in this generation and, within the next few years, Gen Z will become the fastest-growing generation in both the U.S. workplace and U.S. marketplace.

## **Here are some of the key identifying factors of this generation:**

- Far more diverse and inclusive than any other generation;
- Do not always define themselves by traditional identifiers (e.g., race/ethnicity/gender/sexual orientation);
- More likely to be seeking career opportunities that provide sense of purpose or meaning; and
- Less receptive to employers requiring long hours at the office, expectation of remote work arrangements and flexible hours.

But perhaps most of all, Gen Z lawyers are digital natives who grew up with technology at the center of their lives from their earliest memories.

Gen Z lawyers have a base assumption that law firms will embrace any and all technology tools that support their new lawyers, ranging from mobile devices and apps to productivity tools and video conferencing. This includes tech-enabled solutions that are at the foundation of the legal profession: legal research.

## Gen Z Lawyers: New Expectations from Tech Tools

The only way to know what Gen Z lawyers are seeking in terms of specific legal research tools is to ask. LexisNexis commissioned PwC in 2019 to structure, execute and analyze a comprehensive study of more than 5,000 U.S. law students at 201 ABA-accredited U.S. law schools.

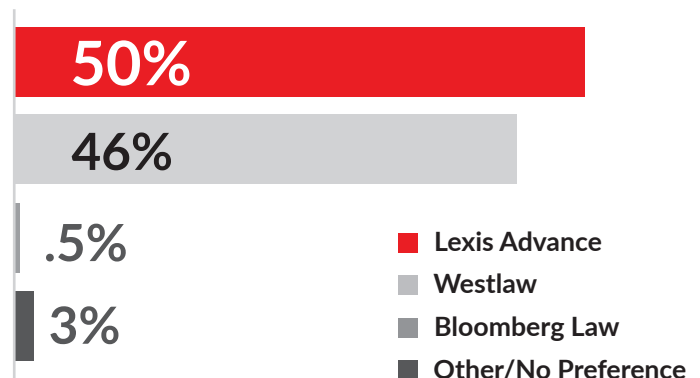
The results of the Next-Gen Legal Tech Study provide tremendous insights into future lawyer attitudes, behaviors and key drivers of what they want from a legal research solution. The top line finding from this research was that Lexis Advance® is the #1 preference for legal research across a broad range of categories.

**Overall, 50% of law students said they prefer Lexis Advance for legal research, compared to 46% who prefer Westlaw Edge, the nearest competitor. Interestingly, rising second-year law students reported the largest margin of preference for Lexis Advance (53% vs. 43%), suggesting that the members of the Gen Z cohort are shifting to Lexis Advance more by the year.**

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**New lawyers across the U.S. prefer Lexis Advance to Westlaw Edge, according to a new blind research study conducted by PwC.**

**50% of new lawyers prefer Lexis Advance to Westlaw Edge**

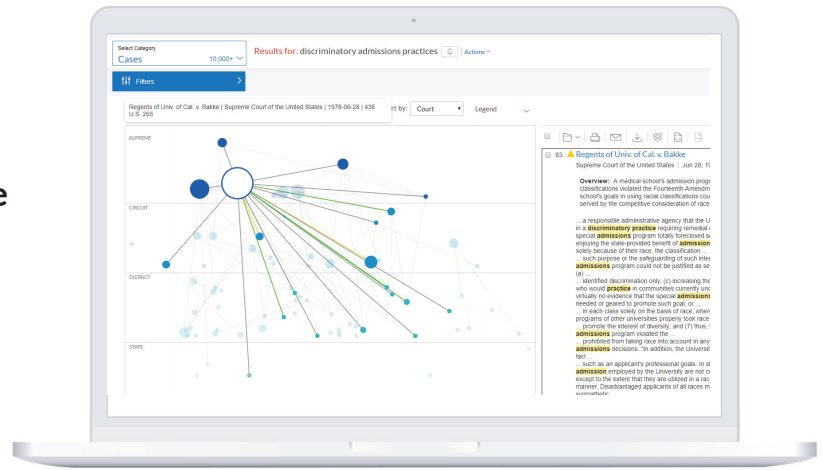


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The PwC study found there are two attributes law students value most in legal research technology: speed of results (62%) and ease of use (73%). In addition to speed and ease, Gen Z Lawyers are embracing visualization and analytics tools to help them obtain deeper insights.

- **77% find visualization tools helpful for identifying the most relevant results,** and Lexis Advance promoters are benefiting from visualization tools more than users of other platforms

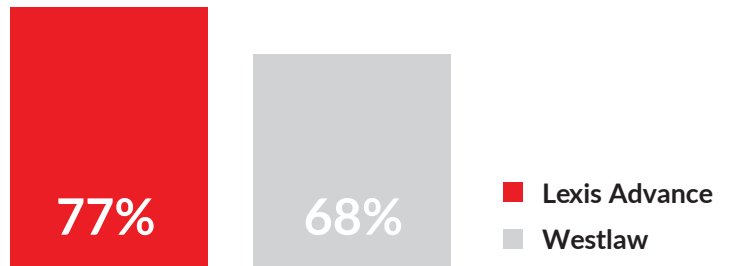
**80%** of Lexis Advance-preferred students say LexisNexis visualization tools make it quick and easy to find the most relevant results, as compared to only 59% of Westlaw-preferred users



Visualization tools on Lexis Advance

- **76% say that legal analytics tools are helpful for performing analysis or drafting legal memoranda,** with Lexis Advance promoters again deriving more value from analytics than users of other platforms

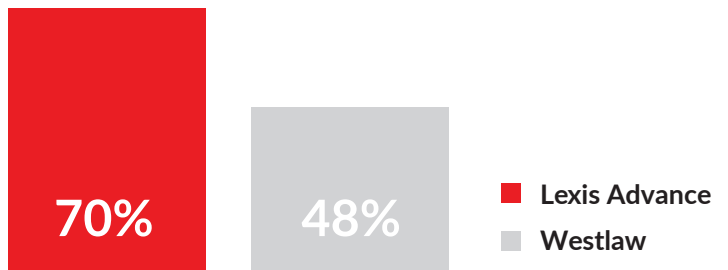
**77%** of Lexis-preferred students said that LexisNexis provides the most effective AI and analytics tools, compared to just 68% of Westlaw-preferred users



*“Lexis (Advance) helps me narrow my search with its wide selection of keywords and filters, and also provides me with an option to see an overview of my search results using various visualization tools,”* said one law student in the Next-Gen Legal Tech Study.

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Furthermore, a majority of next-gen lawyers feel LexisNexis is more invested in providing effective training to prepare them for future success **(70%)** as opposed to similar sentiments about Westlaw (48%).



*“LexisNexis is more user friendly,”* said a law student in the Next-Gen Legal Tech Study. *“The different colors used to identify search results are super helpful and an awesome way to quickly identify if a search returned results covering all your keyword searches.”*

These results are not happenstance. LexisNexis has been tracking law student preferences for many years and has been developing its flagship Lexis Advance product based on input received from its customers—including students. The goal has been to design a legal research solution for the next generation of lawyers who expect a flawless user experience with all of the benefits of advanced technology built into the tool.

In short, Gen Z law students are telling us that they want access to a legal research solution that is fast, easy to use, delivers more relevant results and is powered by leading-edge technology—such as AI and legal analytics—to help them obtain deeper insights.

*“I find navigation within LexisNexis to be visually easier than other research tool programs,”* said another law student in the Next-Gen Legal Tech Study. *“This makes functionality superior because it’s easier to utilize the tools once you select criteria for your research.”*



# How Law Firms Can Win the Talent War

Gen Z lawyers are destined to help usher in a new era of improved productivity at law firms. Their digital-first mindset allows them to use previously unimaginable technologies to do a few important things that law firms need to appreciate:

- Drive new efficiencies in the business of law firms
- Pinpoint new insights in the practice of law for clients
- Create new value for law firms in how they serve clients
- Deliver the technology tools and training required for success

This “rise of the associate” gives new lawyers more influence in the law firm marketplace and legal industry experts agree that these professionals will grow keenly aware of this dynamic in the years to come. **It is essential for law firms to understand what the members of Gen Z are seeking in a career experience, so they can effectively recruit and retain the next generation of standout lawyers. The most successful law firms of tomorrow will harness this generational contribution by acquiring the best of these young lawyers today.**

Attracting and retaining this elite talent will help law firms see around the corner at what is coming, stay ahead of their competitors, and be the first to identify innovative strategies for improving client service and achieving greater efficiencies. One key strategy for winning this talent war is to make available to these young lawyers the technology tools and resources they prefer to use.

This means that law firms need to equip their next generation of associates with the productivity tools that enable them to work faster and smarter, training programs that better prepare them for adoption of new technologies, and the legal research solution they most prefer when they graduate from law school.

## Conclusion

As the newest generation of lawyers arrives in law firms, they are likely to bring some upheaval in the way law firms recruit new associates and the way they equip these professionals. It is essential for law firms to understand what the members of Gen Z are seeking in a career experience, so they can effectively recruit and retain the next generation of standout lawyers.

This will require firms to focus on building a diverse and inclusive workforce, creating opportunities for young lawyers to find purpose in their careers, and rethinking traditional models of the workplace. It will also require a serious focus on acquiring the specific kinds of technology solutions and tools that are in alignment with the expectations of these young lawyers.

**The next generation of lawyers is telling you what they want from the next generation of legal research tools. Are you listening?**

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## About Lexis Advance

Lexis Advance is the flagship product of LexisNexis Legal & Professional, offering vast legal, regulatory and business information—more than 60,000 legal, news, business and public records sources—as well as world-class analytics tools that deliver greater knowledge and insights to data-driven professionals, improve compliance and service delivery, and decrease risk. LexisNexis Legal & Professional, which serves customers in more than 130 countries with 10,000 employees worldwide, is part of RELX Group, a global provider of information and analytics for professional and business customers across industries. For more information about the Lexis Advance service, please visit: [www.lexisnexis.com/lexisadvance](http://www.lexisnexis.com/lexisadvance).

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