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2-4-2020

Does AI Hold the Keys? Bloomberg Law's Docket Key Unlocks Federal District Courts

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Repository Citation

Evans, Rachel S., "Does AI Hold the Keys? Bloomberg Law's Docket Key Unlocks Federal District Courts" (2020). *Articles, Chapters and Online Publications*. 60.
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Does AI Hold the Keys? Bloomberg Law’s Docket Key Unlocks Federal District Courts

Rachel Evans | Posted on February 4, 2020 | [Posted in Posts](#) — [No Comments](#) ↓

What is a docket exactly? The best way to describe it is the various forms that a case takes throughout its circuitation, embodied as different types of documents as the case progresses over time. Once a case is filed it enters the court system where it is tracked on the docket. Eventually the docket grows to contain the complete history of a given case (from filing to final decisions). Usually the docket begins with an initial complaint, and evolves to include all sorts of other filings. There are many ways to search for dockets. Among the most cutting-edge docket search tools on the market today is Bloomberg Law’s Docket Key, which just keeps getting better.

In a [press release last Wednesday](#), Bloomberg Law announced that their docket filing classification system “Docket Key” now encompasses all federal district courts as part of the system’s scope. This expands the reach of a great search tool which already uses machine learning to identify more than 20 categories of filings (including motions, complaints, notices, briefs, and orders). According to the press release, the repository contains “over 210 million docket entries” plus more being added every day.

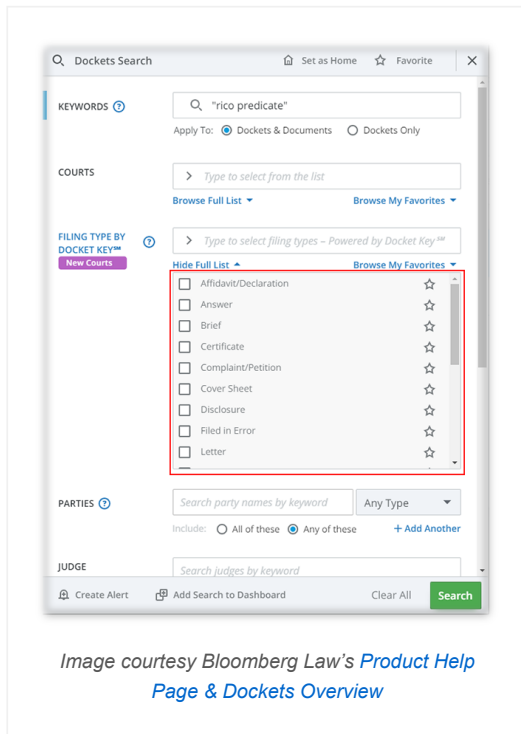


Image courtesy Bloomberg Law’s [Product Help Page & Dockets Overview](#)

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Although basic legal research courses in many law schools primarily focus on LexisNexis or Westlaw training, Bloomberg Law has some powerful tools to offer with their AI-engineered products. Their selection provides the essentials found within other legal-document specific collections, and additionally streamlines the docket-retrieval process by placing access to all Federal courts in a single location. From the [Tech At Bloomberg's blog post in 2019](#) we get a better picture of how Docket Key uses basic text classification, and then treats dockets with slight variations depending on the particular court. Fulya Erdinc, lead of Bloomberg Law's Machine Learning Engineering team comments:

“There can be lots of entries, and attorneys can be looking for a specific type of filing... by classifying those entries to the type of filing they’re looking for, we can accelerate this process... the challenge is that courts can differ in how they format the entries and the included text. For example, Federal Courts in California and Texas differ from other Federal Courts in how the entries are captured... we developed separate models for those courts.”

If you are just getting started with Dockets in Bloomberg Law, I encourage you to read through their short but [sweet product walk through](#), where you can easily navigate to Docket Key in the left-menu and find screencaptures (like the one [pictured here](#)), a guide to searching, and other helpful links. Have you explored Docket Key since it was expanded to include all Federal courts? What are your other favorite AI-powered tools for conducting legal research? Share your thoughts with us in the comments below!

About Rachel Evans

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◀ CS-SIS Members Interviewed in “So You Want to Be A Law Techie”

Tagged with: AI, Bloomberg Law, Docket Key, dockets, document retrieval, legal research, machine learning, text classification