VENDOR VOICE*

LexisNexis Discusses Its Latest AI-Based Offering
## and the Technology's Role in the Legal Industry

The new Lexis+ AI solution taps into cutting-edge artificial intelligence competencies to help facilitate legal work.

*Vendor Voice is a paid sponsored content opportunity for legal industry vendors.

In the three years since LexisNexis launched Lexis+®—which provides enhanced data insight via advanced technologies such as machine learning—the product's subscriber base has eclipsed that of the company's legacy Lexis® solutions.

Users now interact with Lexis+ twice as often to manage tasks, utilizing capabilities such as brief analysis, Fact & Issue Finder, and a news hub that features legal updates culled from Law360® and LexisNexis® publications, according to Jeff Pfeifer, chief product officer at LexisNexis North America, UK, and Ireland.

In May, the company announced plans to introduce Lexis+ AI™ in late summer 2023. The new solution will leverage an emerging generation of artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities powered by large language models—known as generative AI—providing such functionality as document drafting guidance.
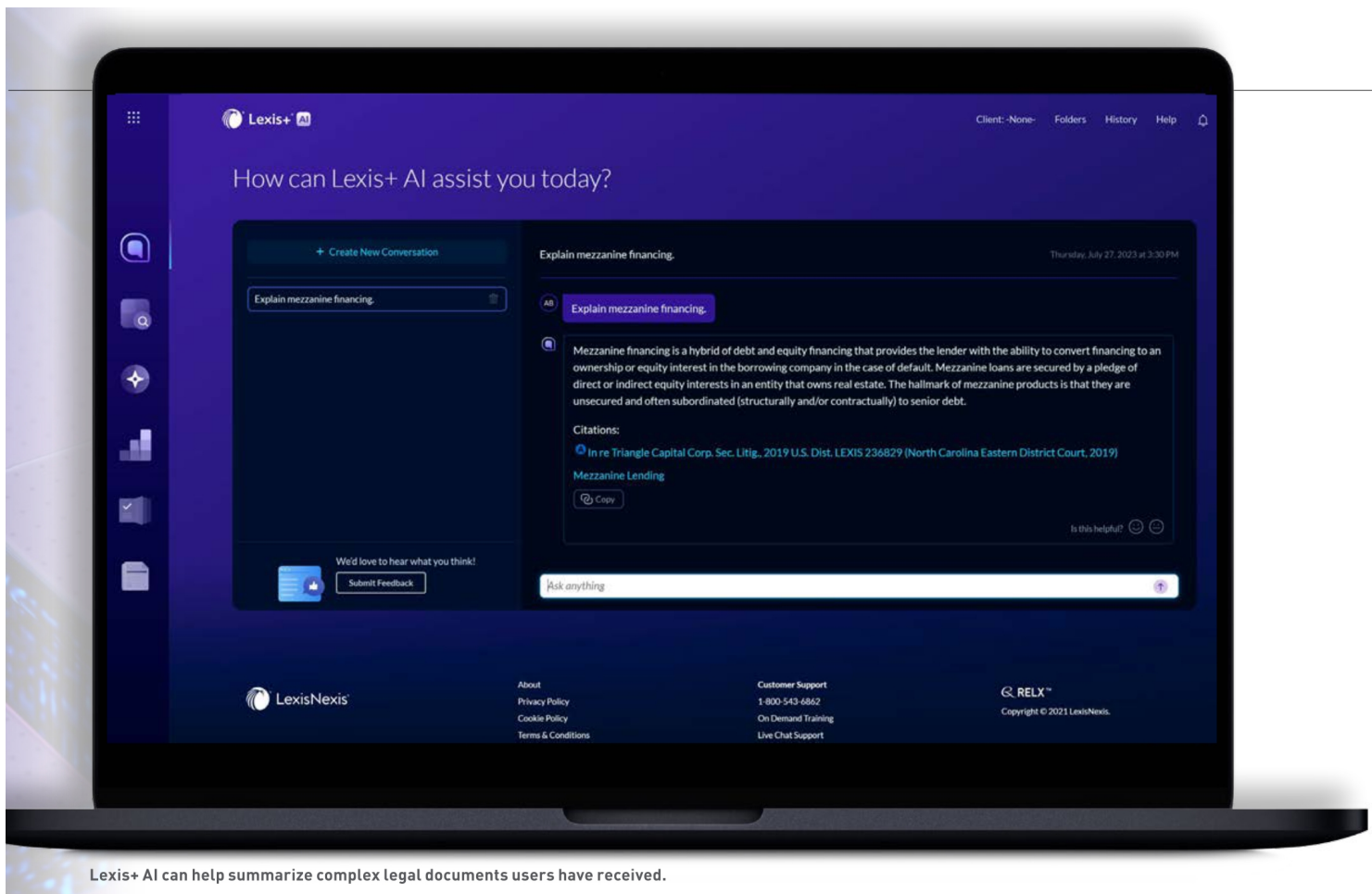
Lexis+ AI can help summarize complex legal documents users have received.

We recently chatted with Pfeifer about the evolution of Lexis+; some of the benefits the company's new generative AI platform can offer legal information professionals; and what upcoming tech implementations we might see within the legal industry.

Do law librarians use Lexis+ differently than you expected?

We see legal information professionals utilizing more of what I would call "power user capabilities," including new features we have launched to control how Lexis+ manages search requests. These features allow control over how our search engine treats a query—whether it is Boolean or natural language—and how that information is ranked and sorted. One example is a set of new capabilities in the Search Within Results function that was created based on feedback from legal information professionals.

Did any of that feedback come from the Librarian Advisory Board you mentioned had helped shape Lexis+ when we spoke back in 2020 for the November/December *AALL Spectrum* issue?

Our advisory board is still highly active. We meet twice per year and gather feedback throughout the year on new development concepts. We often take a new idea and bounce it off that group for input, and then we will bring ideas back to that group periodically to get an updated view on whether they think the development is hitting the target, or whether it needs further adjustment. We also have hundreds of legal information professionals who contribute to our regular research activities—which gives us a strong voice from the legal information professional community.

Both Lexis+ and the new Lexis+ AI product utilize artificial intelligence to provide additional insight into information. When did AI use become more prevalent in the legal industry?

Starting in about 2018, Google open-sourced an AI-based language model called BERT. Doing so allowed companies like LexisNexis to begin customizing applications for vertical domains like law. That really was a step change; it allowed us to begin specifically developing AI technology with the language of law in mind.

We like to think of our work as "taking BERT to law school"—which improved the quality of its artificial intelligence capabilities by tuning and customizing the performance of its AI and language models for the legal domain. We are building on that experience for this latest generation of AI

technology, which also requires similar training activities.

What role does AI currently play in the legal profession?

We focused on two types of artificial intelligence. One we refer to as extractive AI technology, which has been around for some time. It helps extract language patterns, identify patterns in text—or even, in some cases, predict likely outcomes based on an analysis of the text.

We introduced our earliest applications of extractive AI around four to five years ago in products like Lexis and Lexis+. However, there have been important developments in areas like cloud computing that improved our ability to leverage this technology for our clients. This latest generation of AI development builds on those earlier successes, and enables an opportunity for us to explore new capabilities.

What differentiates this next generation is the use of generative AI, which is the second type of AI we focused on. It is artificial intelligence that creates new content based on questions that have been asked. That aspect is so exciting, because there is so much content and work product creation in the legal industry. The technology lends itself to common use cases among lawyers, paralegals, and legal information professionals.

How long has generative AI been present in the legal realm?

We started leveraging generative AI—and more broadly, the large language model technology—about a year ago; that's when the earliest access opportunities became possible. Prior to that date, it was difficult to work with these models because the cost to operate them was simply too high and few organizations, outside of the largest technology companies, had the resources to apply these capabilities.

But starting about a year ago, the opportunity to deploy these models in much more efficient and cost-effective ways became available. Working with major cloud providers like Microsoft Azure and Amazon Web Services (AWS), these models can now be deployed quite efficiently, and we can make them available in our products and services in ways we couldn't just a year ago.

That's been a significant development—one that also enables security and privacy benefits that are very important. I'm sure most

Users can receive conversational-style responses to search queries in the Lexis+ AI product.

readers are aware of various generative AI issues with IP rights, and the discussion of what a model consumes and retains in language artifacts; both are real problems with earlier generations of large language models.

The models that are now available through major cloud providers allow us to "wall" model interactions to a specific user, and user interactions with our models are never retained into core services. Similarly, intellectual property, when exposed to a model, is only used in that session and isn't retained by our model.

These are very important topics for legal information professionals that have arisen in recent months because of collaboration between large language model providers and major cloud vendors.

What specific elements make AI particularly well suited for legal work?

The core alignment between the latest generative AI capabilities and law centers on text analysis and content creation. This leads us to explore common use cases in legal work—like drafting a document or an email to a client, summarizing a complex document, or conversationally interacting with an information service like Lexis+ AI.

These are the major use cases being pursued in the development of Lexis+ AI because we think each is fundamental to the practice of law—and they are likely to generate efficiency gains and improvements within the profession.

I'm really intrigued by an MIT study that suggests one might see gains in productivity among professional workers of 37 percent from generative AI. That's a massive number that comes from their analysis of workflow activity involving generative AI. Whether you believe the number will be as high as that in the MIT study or not, it's likely to be significant. It does require that we think about work patterns and how we work—with an eye toward thinking about what we might do differently in the future and how we might explore new work focus areas that are not possible today because of capacity restraints.

What are some of the specific ways we might see generative AI used in a legal environment?

Legal information professionals who are working with us over this initial development period seem to be really inspired by two use cases.

One is summarization—the ability to summarize an opponent's document; for example, a litigation complaint filing or a complex transactional agreement. They tell us they are looking to provide a short and succinct summary of the information and the key

issues that are involved for others in the organization.

The second is conversational search. Historically, searching has been a bit of a one-shot iteration—I ask a question; I get information back. If I want to ask a follow-up question, it involves framing that question back to the service in a new way.

But generative AI presents the ability to have an interactive conversation with our service—one where the product retains context for what you have previously asked. Legal information professionals seem to be extremely excited about the idea that it really works the way you would work with another legal professional: you would ask a question, get an answer, clarify your question, and get a follow-up answer. This is something we will explore further in the coming months—delivering on the promise of a conversational interaction with Lexis+ AI.

What do you think generative AI applications, and AI use in general, could look like in five to 10 years in the legal industry?

It will be much more widespread. The technology itself will be more mature; it will benefit from very deep and active development across the domain. It's quite likely we will see this very human-like interaction between individuals and more services like Lexis+ AI.

LexisNexis sees an opportunity over the coming years to continue expanding the use cases that are supported by the technology to explore deeper and more complex document drafting tasks. As an example, our clients are already asking us to explore use of this technology on their own data—their own work product. There are many work areas that may be interesting for future development. ■

LEXIS+ AI PRODUCT INFO

Year introduced: 2023

Pronounced: "Lexis plus AI"

Basic functionality: The Lexis+ AI platform leverages the largest collection of legal documents and records to provide users with comprehensive legal results [delivered with] unmatched speed and precision, backed by verifiable, citable authority in an easily digestible format. The product's intelligent legal drafting capabilities help users create legal documents and quickly alter their tone and language; users can also opt to receive a custom summary of legal documents to guide their analysis of the material more effectively.

R+A Research + Analytics