

Question: What's the difference between an online search using NATURAL LANGUAGE and one using TERMS & CONNECTORS?

Answer: Online research systems may differ in how they interpret natural language searches. Consult the Help guide of the service you are using for complete explanation. Generally, the differences are outlined in the table below. Examples of each as used in LEXIS follow.

Natural Language	Terms & Connectors	
uses plain language search words usually structured as a question	uses search words, synonyms, alternative formats	
conducts a broad search based on the general context or concept of your words	adds structure and relationships among words and where they will appear in a document (uses boolean operators)	
helps to define the issues and reach specific topics	helps to find highly specific results on a topic	
uncovers key terms and how they're being used within legal documents in order to refine search	interprets the structured search literally and can often miss relevant documents	
usually produces a large pool of results	usually produces a limited pool of results	
ranks results by relevance to your concept with the best match at the top of your list	ranks results by relevance to the terms, their relationship, their location within the document as interpreted by the system's algorithmic search method (how the system will order and process your search) with the best match at the top of your list	
operates similarly throughout any of the databases within each system	may operate differently depending upon the structure of the documents in the unique database being searched	
		Commonly Used:
	Connectors	& or and to locate both terms space between words is interpreted as "and" and not to eliminate a word
	Proximity	w/s - w/p - w/n words must appear within the same sentence - same paragraph - within "n" words of each other, where "n" equals the number of words between your terms
Forms, Truncation	! Root expander * Universal character Plurals - automatic from singular	

I. Using Natural Language Search in Lexis NY State Cases, Combined

1. Sign into Lexis
2. Go to the **New York** tab
3. Click on the database title **NY State Cases, Combined**

The screenshot displays the Lexis website interface. At the top, the Lexis logo is on the left, and navigation links for 'Switch Client', 'Preferences', 'Help', and 'Sign Out' are on the right. Below the logo is a search bar and a navigation menu with tabs for 'All', 'Legal', 'News & Business', 'Public Records', 'New York', and 'Find A Source'. The 'New York' tab is active, and a red circle highlights the 'NY State Cases, Combined' database link in the 'Find Cases' section. The right sidebar contains several utility panels: 'Recently Used Sources' (with 'Criminal Records' selected), 'Quick Tools' (with a search input field and buttons for 'Get a Doc', 'Shepardize', 'Find a Source', and 'Lexis@Web'), 'Lexis Advance' (with a 'Sign in to Lexis Advance' button), 'Search by Topic or Headnote' (with a 'Select Topic' dropdown and 'Go' button), 'Featured Legislative Sources' (with a search icon and '50 State Surveys, Legislation & Regulations'), 'Find Forms' (with search icons for 'Transactional Forms' and 'Litigation Forms'), and 'Related Litigation Tools' (listing 'LexisNexis® Verdict & Settlement Analyzer', 'Litigation Profile Suite (Expert, Judge, Attorney)', and 'CaseMap®').

4. Click on the **Natural Language bar** next to the search box.
5. Check the **Lexis on-screen research tips** such as:
 Natural Language Searching
 Type in your research issue as an individual term, phrase, list, or sentence. Enclose phrases in quotation marks. Wildcard characters such as ! or * are not valid in natural language searches.
6. Enter your search issue or question.
 Here we're looking for cases regarding *cyberbullying affecting children in school*.
7. Need additional terms? Click **Suggest terms for my search**.
 Need to restrict by specific dates? Click **Restrict by Date**.
 Wish to search only a specific segment of a document, ie. OPINION? Use **Select a Segment**.

The screenshot shows the Lexis search interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs for 'All', 'Legal', 'News & Business', 'Public Records', 'New York', and 'Find A Source'. Below this is a search bar with the text 'cyberbullying affecting children in school' entered. To the left of the search bar, there are tabs for 'Terms & Connectors', 'Natural Language', and 'Easy Search™'. The 'Natural Language' tab is highlighted with a red circle and an arrow. To the right of the search bar, there are buttons for 'Suggest terms for my search' and 'Search'. Below the search bar, there are sections for 'Restrict using Mandatory Terms' and 'Restrict by Date'. The 'Restrict by Date' section has a red underline. At the bottom left, there is a section titled 'Natural Language Searching' which is also circled in red. This section contains the text: 'Type in your research issue as an individual term, phrase, list, or sentence. Enclose phrases in quotation marks. Wildcard characters such as ! or * are not valid in natural language searches.' To the right of this section, there are links for 'How Do I...?' with sub-links for 'Combine sources?', 'Restrict by date?', and 'Restrict using mandatory terms?', and a 'View Tutorials' link.

8. With no further restrictions, click enter. We have a total of 51 hits.

9. The first in our list - People v Marquan appears to be highly relevant to our topic. Significant is the explanation in the OVERVIEW and the CORE TERMS associated with this case. Important also is the yellow triangle to the left of the decision. This is a Shepard's indicator of Caution - Possible negative treatment.

10. Click on the title of the first case to view it.

The screenshot shows the Lexis search interface. At the top, the Lexis logo is on the left, and navigation links like 'Switch Client | Preferences | Help | Sign Out' are on the right. Below the logo is a search bar with 'Search', 'Get a Document', 'Shepard's®', and 'More' dropdown menus. To the right of the search bar are 'History' and 'Alerts' icons. Below the search bar, there's a 'FOCUS™ Terms' field and a 'Search Within' dropdown set to 'Original Results (1 - 51)'. A 'Go' button and an 'Advanced...' link are also present. On the far right, there's a 'View Tutorial' link. Below the search bar, there's a 'View' dropdown set to 'Cite' and a 'Sort By' dropdown set to 'Relevance'. A 'What's this?' link is next to it. In the center, there's a pagination control showing '1 - 50 of 51' with left and right arrows, and 'Edit Search | Show Hits' links. Below the pagination, the search results are displayed. The first result is highlighted with a yellow background. It has a yellow triangle icon to its left. The title of the case is 'People v Marquan M., No. 139, COURT OF APPEALS OF NEW YORK, 2014 N.Y. LEXIS 1527; 2014 NY Slip Op 4881; 42 Media L. Rep. 2005, July 1, 2014, Decided, THE LEXIS PAGINATION OF THIS DOCUMENT IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE PENDING RELEASE OF THE FINAL PUBLISHED VERSION., THIS OPINION IS UNCORRECTED AND SUBJECT TO REVISION BEFORE PUBLICATION IN THE OFFICIAL REPORTS.'. Below the title, there's an 'OVERVIEW' section and a 'CORE TERMS' section. The 'OVERVIEW' text reads: 'A county's cyberbullying statute was overbroad and facially invalid under the Free Speech Clause of the First Amendment, as it prohibited a broad spectrum of protected speech far beyond the cyberbullying of children, and severing the portions of the statute that applied to adults and other entities would not cure all its constitutional ills.'. The 'CORE TERMS' text reads: 'cyberbullying, bullying, sexual, emotional harm, inflict, annoy, electronic, local law, disseminating, photographs ...'. The second result is 'Trapp v. Trapp, [NO NUMBER IN ORIGINAL], Supreme Court of New York, Appellate Division, First Department, 136 A.D.2d 178; 526 N.Y.S.2d 95; 1988 N.Y. App. Div. LEXIS 3201, March 24, 1988'. The third result is 'In re Kingsley, [NO NUMBER IN ORIGINAL], Domestic Relations Court of the City of New York, Children's Court, New York County, 183 Misc. 727; 49 N.Y.S.2d 947; 1944 N.Y. Misc. LEXIS 2248, August 16, 1944'. The fourth result is 'Board of Education v. Nyquist, [NO NUMBER IN ORIGINAL], Supreme Court of New York, Nassau County, 94 Misc. 2d 466; 408 N.Y.S.2d 606; 1978 N.Y. Misc. LEXIS 2270, June 23, 1978'. The fifth result is 'Winkler v. State Liquor Authority, SUPREME COURT OF NEW YORK, APPELLATE DIVISION, FIRST DEPARTMENT, 3 A.D.2d 1011; 164 N.Y.S.2d 456; 1957 N.Y. App. Div. LEXIS 4892, June 28, 1957 - Decided'. At the bottom of the page, there's a footer with 'Outline', 'Page', 'Select a Reporter', and 'Doc 1 of 51'.

- Read the case to determine if it truly is of interest.
Use screen options to navigate through this case, go to the next document etc.

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Lexis® Switch Client | Preferences | Help | Sign Out

Search Get a Document Shepard's® More History Alerts

FOCUS™ Terms Search Within Original Results (1 - 51) Advanced... View Tutorial

View Full Edit Search | More Like This | More Like Selected Text | Shepardize® | TOA

People v Marquan M., 2014 NY Slip Op 4881 (Copy w/ Cite) Pages: 16

Source: [New York > Find Cases > NY State Cases, Combined](#)

Terms: **cyberbullying affecting children in school** (Suggest Terms for My Search | Feedback on Your Search)

Select for FOCUS™ or Delivery

*2014 N.Y. LEXIS 1527, *; 2014 NY Slip Op 4881, **;
42 Media L. Rep. 2005*

[1]** The People & c., Respondent, v Marquan M., Appellant. County of Albany, Intervenor-Respondent.

No. 139

COURT OF APPEALS OF NEW YORK

2014 N.Y. LEXIS 1527; 2014 NY Slip Op 4881; 42 Media L. Rep. 2005

July 1, 2014, Decided

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PRIOR HISTORY: People etc. v. Marquan M., 2014 N.Y. LEXIS 1291 (N.Y., June 5, 2014)

DISPOSITION: **[*1]** Order reversed and accusatory instrument dismissed.

CASE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW: ISSUE: Whether a **cyberbullying** statute, Albany County, N.Y., Local Law No. 11 (2010), was overbroad and facially invalid under the Free Speech Clause of the First Amendment. [1]-As the statute embraced a wide array of applications that prohibited broad spectrum of protected speech far beyond the **cyberbullying of children**, it was overbroad and encroached on protected free speech; [2]-Severing the portions of the statute that applied to adults and other entities would not cure all of the law's constitutional ills, including its prohibition of annoying and embarrassing speech; [3]-Accordingly, the trial court erred in denying defendant's motion to dismiss charges that he violated the statute.

OUTCOME: The trial court's order was reversed and the accusatory instrument was dismissed.

Related Content Page Select a Reporter Doc 1 of 51 Term of 70

II. Using Terms & Connectors Search in Lexis NY State Cases, Combined

1. Sign into Lexis
2. Go to the **New York** tab
3. Click on the database title **NY State Cases, Combined**

The screenshot displays the Lexis website interface. At the top, the Lexis logo is on the left, and navigation links for 'Switch Client', 'Preferences', 'Help', and 'Sign Out' are on the right. Below the logo is a search bar with a dropdown menu set to 'Search'. To the right of the search bar are buttons for 'Get a Document', 'Shepard's®', and 'More'. Further right are links for 'History' and 'Alerts'. Below the search bar is a navigation bar with tabs for 'All', 'Legal', 'News & Business', 'Public Records', 'New York', and 'Find A Source'. The 'New York' tab is currently selected. Below the navigation bar is a 'Sources' section with a 'View Tutorial | Help' link. The 'New York' subtab is active, showing a 'Search Selected' button. The main content area is divided into several columns of search options, each with a 'View more' link and a list of checkboxes. The columns include: 'Find Cases', 'Search Court Records, Briefs and Filings', 'Find Expert Witness Analysis, Jury Verdicts & Settlements', 'Find Statutes, Regulations, Administrative Materials & Court Rules', 'Find Jury Instructions', 'Search Analysis & CLE Materials', 'Health Care Reform Resources', 'Emerging Issues', 'Search Law Reviews & Journals', 'Search News', and 'Access Directories'. On the right side of the interface, there are several utility panels: 'Recently Used Sources' (with a dropdown menu showing 'Criminal Records' and a 'Go' button), 'Quick Tools' (with a search input field and buttons for 'Get a Doc', 'Shepardize®', 'Find a Source', and 'Lexis®Web'), 'Lexis Advance®' (with a 'Sign in to Lexis Advance' link), 'Search by Topic or Headnote' (with a dropdown menu and a 'Go' button), 'Featured Legislative Sources' (with a search icon and text '50 State Surveys, Legislation & Regulations'), 'Find Forms' (with search icons for 'Transactional Forms' and 'Litigation Forms'), and 'Related Litigation Tools' (with links to 'LexisNexis® Verdict & Settlement Analyzer', 'Litigation Profile Suite (Expert, Judge, Attorney)', and 'CaseMap®').

4. Click on the **Terms & Connectors** bar next to the search box.
5. Enter the key words and construct the relationship among them inserting **Search Connectors** (described on the screen).
Here we're looking for cases regarding *cyberbullying affecting children in school*.
We enter **cyberbully! w/p child! w/seg school**
6. Need additional terms? Click **Suggest terms for my search**.
Need to restrict by specific dates? Click **Restrict by Date**.
Wish to search only a specific segment of a document, ie. OPINION? Use **Select a Segment**.
7. Click **Search**.

The screenshot shows the Lexis search interface. The browser window title is "Lexis®". The navigation bar includes "Search", "Get a Document", "Shepard's®", and "More". The main navigation tabs are "All", "Legal", "News & Business", "Public Records", "New York", and "Find A Source". The current page is "New York > Find Cases > NY State Cases, Combined".

The search interface includes the following sections:

- Broaden this search with additional sources:** A list of sources with checkboxes, including "NY State Cases, Combined" (checked), "New York Civil Practice: CPLR (Weinstein Korn & Miller)", "Warren's Weed New York Real Property", "Warren's Heaton on Surrogate's Court Practice", "White, New York Business Entities", and "Warren's Negligence in the New York Courts".
- Select Search Type and Enter Search Terms:** A section with a "Terms & Connectors" bar containing the search terms "cyberbully! w/p child! w/seg school". Below it are buttons for "Natural Language" and "Easy Search™". To the right are links for "Suggest terms for my search" and "Check spelling". A "Search" button is also present.
- Restrict by Document Segment:** A section with a "Select a Segment" dropdown and an "Add" button. A note states: "Note: Segment availability differs between sources. Segments may not be applied consistently across sources."
- Restrict by Date:** A section with a "No Date Restrictions" radio button selected, and "From" and "To" date input fields.
- Search Connectors:** A table of connectors and their functions, highlighted with a red circle.

Connector	Description
and	and
w/p	in same paragraph
w/seg	in same segment
w/s	in same sentence
pre/N	precedes by N words
and not	and not

Additional features include "How Do I...?" links for "Combine sources?", "Restrict by date?", "Restrict by document segment?", "Use wildcards as placeholders for one or more characters in a search term?", and "View Tutorials".

8. Notice that you have only one result with this highly specific search rather than the 51 hits that we saw in our previous Natural Language sample search. This one result is the same at the top of our relevancy list within the Natural Language sample search.

The screenshot shows the Lexis search interface. At the top, there is a menu bar with 'File', 'Edit', 'View', 'Favorites', 'Tools', and 'Help'. Below the menu bar, the Lexis logo is on the left, and 'Switch Client | Preferences | Help | Sign Out' is on the right. The search bar contains the terms 'cyberbully! w/p child! w/seg school'. The search results are displayed in a list, with the first result highlighted: 'People v Marquan M., 2014 NY Slip Op 4881'. The search results are displayed in a list, with the first result highlighted. The search results are displayed in a list, with the first result highlighted. The search results are displayed in a list, with the first result highlighted.

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
Page Safety Tools
Lexis® Switch Client | Preferences | Help | Sign Out
Search Get a Document Shepard's® More History Alerts
FOCUS™ Terms cyberbully! w/p child! w/seg school Search Within Original Results (1 - 1) Go Advanced... View Tutorial
View Full
Edit Search | Save As Alert | More Like This | More Like Selected Text | Shepardize® | TOA
▲ People v Marquan M., 2014 NY Slip Op 4881 (Copy w/ Cite) Pages: 15
Source: New York > Find Cases > NY State Cases, Combined
Terms: cyberbully! w/p child! w/seg school (Suggest Terms for My Search)
2014 N.Y. LEXIS 1527, *; 2014 NY Slip Op 4881, **;
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OUTCOME: The trial court's order was reversed and the accusatory instrument was dismissed.
CORE TERMS: cyberbullying, bullying, sexual, emotional harm, inflict, annoy, electronic, local law, disseminating, photographs, harass, free speech,
Page Select a Reporter Doc 1 of 1 Term 57 of 57
100%