



# Findings from the LexisNexis Practical Guidance / Thomson Reuters Practical Law Focus Group Inquiry

## A Feit Consulting Consumer Insights Report

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**After years of development and several iterations, is Lexis' Practical Guidance ready for prime-time? This is the question that Feit Consulting recently explored in a series of focus group discussions comparing LexisNexis Practical Guidance with Thomson Reuters Practical Law.**

For the focus group participants, the answer was ... yes! Recently re-branded from Lexis Practice Advisor, Practical Guidance is winning attorney and librarian converts from Practical Law. Focus group participants found the organization and functionality on Practical Guidance to be better than Practical Law on many levels and the content quality on Practical Guidance to be sufficiently comparable to Practical Law. This is sweet news for the many firms choosing between Westlaw and Lexis, especially given Lexis' attractive pricing.

Feit conducted four focus group sessions with a total of twelve focus group participants. The group was comprised of three attorneys and nine librarians/researchers, all experienced with both services. Demographically our group came from small firms (3), medium firms (5), large firms (3) and academic institutions (1). They were asked to complete a series of research exercises and then participate in discussion groups moderated by Feit Consulting. The group provided an excellent representation of the market

*"As far as analytics and graphs and models, I think the Lexis products are much better. Practical Guidance as it stands, far exceeds what we have in Practical Law as far as that type of high-level analytics and the type of information that it's providing to the end user. As far as my impression of it, there's not a lot in Practical Law. I think that you can sort of benchmark against Practical Guidance, Practical Guidance is really the only tool that's using graphics and analytics in this service."*

Library & Research Director, Mid-Sized Firm

delivering solid feedback from a variety of perspectives in a vendor-neutral setting.

Overall, focus group participants expressed great trust in both products and were comfortable with the presumption that the quality and breadth of information and authors was comparable on both sides.

*"In Practical Law, I got twice as many hits as I got in Practical Guidance. But top hits in both areas were very, very, very similar. I would say the top 5 hits were almost identical. What I like about Practical Guidance is that I could toggle out to secondary material, which I did, that also seemed very on point if I was looking for something more."*

Research Services Manager, Mid-Sized Firm

Participants repeatedly commended Lexis Practical Guidance for its superior organization, lay-out and ease of use. These qualities were cited by one attorney as to why she has made Practical Guidance the center of onboarding for new associates in her department. Another attorney reported recommending Practical Guidance to her corporate clients for its ease of use over Practical Law which she found to be not as intuitive to use and navigate. The Practical Guidance 'look and feel' was viewed as more intuitive compared to Practical Law which was described as "old school."

Participants liked that Practical Guidance typically returned more targeted search results than Practical Law, with some people complaining that Practical Law's results and filters were "cumbersome" and "difficult to dig through". On Practical Guidance, *Practice Notes* and/or *Resource Kits* appeared towards the top of search results whereas Practical Law tended to put forms at the top of results lists. Which approach was favored by our focus group participants varied depending on the research task.

Several people appreciated the links on Practical Guidance to other resources and tools were static and always available for navigation whereas on Practical Law the links scrolled up with the page, making navigation more difficult. Another feature noted on Practical Guidance was the clear labeling showing frequency of updates and material maintenance. Practical Law's downloading protocol was favored by several participants for running downloads in a separate window.

To further understand the group's thoughts about how the services compared, we looked at two key features on both services: 1) State Law Comparison Tools and 2) Market Standards v. What's Market

## State Law Comparison Tools

Both products offer tools for comparing laws and regulations on various topics across customizable jurisdictions and both products cover all 50 states; but participants repeatedly cited as a significant advantage the fact that Practical Guidance's state law comparison tool includes the ability to compare federal laws to corresponding state laws, which Practical Law doesn't offer.

*"I thought [Practical Guidance] was easy to navigate. Anyone could use it. Just having all the jurisdictions and U.S. Federal is fantastic. I wouldn't go to Practical Law now that I saw them both side-by-side."*

Senior Research Manager, Mid-Sized Firm

Exporting data from the Practical Law comparison tool was problematic for some. One participant ran side-by-side tests and preferred Practical Guidance's download output as it included a linked Table of Contents that was "a lot more user friendly and a lot easier" than what they downloaded from Practical Law's comparison tool.

## Market Standards v. What's Market

Both services provide searchable databases of publicly filed transactions and agreements allowing researchers to analyze and compare terms or features across multiple deals and agreements. Practical Guidance has *Market Standards* and Practical Law has *What's Market*.

Participants preferred Market Standards because of the charts and graphs on the main dashboards that provided quick visual summaries of complex data. These graphics distinguished the two services as charts and graphs were not available on What's Market. (Note: *Thomson Reuters has recently announced What's Market analytics as part of the Practical Law Dynamic Tool Set for which users will need to pay extra and that "will be sold as an upgrade to Practical Law."*) Our understanding of Market

*"You know people are drowning in data, so they want to know 'what does this mean?' That's what I think Market Standards really gets right and does well. It gives you this overview so that you know at first glance what it is I'm looking at and why it's meaningful and impactful."*

Library Director, AmLaw 100 Firm

Standards indicates that it also covers more deals and provides more detailed deal points, but in our focus groups we were not able to conclusively evaluate these functional and content differences.

## Licensing & Cost

The products take very different approaches to packages and pricing. Participants noted that these focus groups are timely because Practical Law's high cost has led many firms to look for an alternative. Furthermore, that Thomson Reuters continues to segment and monetize products, content, and features (e. g. the removal of most privacy/ data security content to another platform, and the extra charges for subscribers to add the *Dynamic Tool Set* capabilities to their contracts) was a source of frustration for the library directors. In contrast, Lexis Practical Guidance gives subscribers all content and tools sets - including data privacy and security - for all practice areas in their subscriptions. Based on our research, we believe Practical Guidance is well-positioned as a satisfactory and more competitively priced offering.

*"I'm really excited! I've always gotten the impression that Lexis is trying much harder to stay current and be more available for the AI and those sorts of practicalities and that makes me more excited for a product like Lexis."*

Attorney, Large Firm

The value of these practice tools for increasing legal research and drafting efficiency was acknowledged by all participants. Practical Law, with a head start and aggressive marketing, initially set a high bar to meet. But as the market matures, Lexis Practical Guidance is meeting and exceeding that bar. Practical Guidance users preferred the superior organization and the integration of analytics and found the core content to be robust enough to be considered as a viable alternative to Practical Law.

The rapid advancement of Lexis Practical Guidance is a real win for Lexis and the marketplace.