

The Westlaw Column

Craig's Corner For Counsel: Westlaw China

Nearly every day, the importance of the People's Republic of China to the health of the world economy is mentioned in the mainstream and online media.

China's increasing emphasis on trade and foreign investment has brought new challenges for corporate counsel working on behalf of businesses within China and in the United States. They are often looking for guidance on maneuvering their way through a far different legal system.

It's a daunting task, but China offers great opportunities to in-house counsel who can deftly navigate its evolving legal system.

In October, at the Association of Corporate Counsel's (ACC) 2008 Annual Meeting in Seattle, West launched Westlaw China, which gives practitioners access to the industry's preeminent collection of Chinese law, complete with accurate English translations.

"Nearly everyone I spoke to at the ACC conference either had a presence in China or saw that there was a high possibility that they would in the future," says Gregory Dunn, Global Business Development Executive, West. "They saw value in having timely updates of the law, legislation and regulations in a single source. Also, having the information categorized, interpreted and translated into English by trained legal editors would help them expand their practice and handle these issues internally."

In developing Westlaw China with the needs of U.S. attorneys in mind, West conducted extensive research as to how attorneys find and use Chinese legal information. West discovered that Chinese legal information is difficult to find and unorganized. Moreover, if it is translated to English, the translations are of poor quality.

Westlaw China was built to address these issues. To make the laws easier to find, Westlaw China is organized into digests, giving attorneys a more complete view of the issues affecting their clients and their business. Trained legal editors gather and translate law and regulations, summarize the legal issues in each document and build legal topical hierarchies from the issues central to these laws and cases. All this information is linked by legal concept, not just key word, and easily accessible with search tools familiar to any Westlaw user.

Westlaw China's topical digests cover 32 topics, nine in English: Anti-Unfair Competition, Arbitration, Civil Law, Civil Procedure, Copyright, Trademark, Foreign Direct Investment, Mergers and Acquisitions, and Telecom and Internet Law.

Westlaw China also delivers more than 300,000 laws and regulations, and cases from the Supreme Court and provincial, local, and special courts

In addition, to keep counsel up-to-date on the constantly changing laws, Westlaw China's Current Awareness feature is compiled from more than 120 online sources and updated five times daily.

"More and more western businesses have operations in China, including many on the *Fortune* 500," says Stephen Yao, chief executive officer, Westlaw China. "But understanding Chinese law is quite challenging. Because the legal system is so different and ever changing, the information available in Westlaw China will become a very important reference to practitioners."

To learn more about Westlaw China, call 1-800-507-9378. You also can get more information about Westlaw China at <http://west.thomson.com/westlaw/global/china>. And, visit www.WestBlog.net to view interviews with Stephen Yao and Minnesota Supreme Court Justice Paul Anderson, who has traveled extensively in China, and has longstanding consulting relationships with lawyers and law schools in China.



Craig Miller

For additional insight on China, the following Westlaw databases also are available:

Chow's The Legal System of the People's Republic of China in a Nutshell (CHINALAW-NS)

China International Economic Trade & Arbitration Commission – All (CIETAC-ALL)

Arbitration in China: A Practical Guide (ICA-ARBCHN)

Journal of Chinese & Comparative Law (JCHINCL)

Hong Kong Civil Procedure (Hong Kong White Book) (HKCP)

China Business Review (CHBUSR)

China Daily (CHD Y)

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