

Paralegals Connect Newsletter

January 2019 *First Quarter * Volume 3



Paralegals Connect is made of 5 Groups all dedicated to providing valuable information and support at every stage of your paralegal/legal career.

Currently, our groups have approximately 13,200+ combined active members worldwide. We have become the largest paralegal networking group worldwide.

We invite you to join all five of our groups and become part of our worldwide Paralegal Family.

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Paralegals Connect

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ParalegalsConnect>

Our first and largest group created for paralegals and paralegals-in-the-making to interact with other paralegals worldwide and provide valuable information to succeed in the paralegal industry.

Paralegals Connect: Study Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ParalegalsConnectStudyGroup>

A group created for those attending a paralegal school or studying for a Paralegal Certification Exam where you can post questions about your legal studies.

Virtual/Freelance Paralegals Connect

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Virtual.FreelanceParalegalsConnect>

A group designed for Virtual and/or Freelance Paralegals and those intending to break free of their 8-5 to go out on their own.

Paralegals Connect Employment Board

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/PCEmploymentBoard>

A group designed for those seeking legal employment or internships, and for those seeking to hire legal professionals for their firm.

LSAT Connect

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/LSATConnect>

A group designed for those studying for the Law School Admission Test.

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Meet our Admins



Crystal Cornett

Founder of Paralegals Connect.

Crystal Cornett has been a Paralegal since 2004. She earned her first Paralegal Certificate from the University of Houston in March 2006.

Crystal received the degree of Associate of Applied Science from the Center for Advanced Legal Studies and her second Paralegal Certificate in 2010. She is a member of the Lambda Epsilon Chi National Honor Society for Paralegal / Legal Assistant Studies (LEX).

Crystal currently practices Real Estate Law in Houston, Texas.



Eunice Colón

Eunice has been a paralegal since 2003, and she currently practices Real Estate Law in Houston, TX. Eunice has a bachelor's degree in Psychology and in Spanish from the University of Houston.

Eunice is also the owner of a hand-made jewelry business, and she has extensive experience in creating and running Facebook Groups and websites.

Eunice is a full time Real Estate Paralegal in Houston, Texas.



Kira Muren

Kira Muren joined the Paralegals Connect admin team in 2018. She has been working as a civil litigation paralegal in Frederick, Maryland since 2013.

Kira has her Associates Degree in Paralegal Studies and is working on her Bachelor's in business administration at Frostburg State University.

In addition to work and school, Kira also currently serves on the paralegal advisory committee for Frederick Community College.



Katy Rodriguez

Katy has been a paralegal since 2014. She began her legal career at 16 as a file clerk in a small law office in her hometown. Katy completed her Level 2 Certificate in Paralegal Studies in 2011 and her Associate of Applied Science in Paralegal Studies in 2013. Katy is a member of the Capital Area Paralegal Association of Texas and is currently studying to take the NALA CP Certification Exam.

Currently, Katy is the paralegal for a solo practice that specializes in Business Law & Litigation, Corporate Law, Oil, Gas & Mineral Law, Bankruptcy, and Creditor's Rights Litigation in the Permian Basin and Fort Worth areas of Texas.

Meet our Affiliates

We would like to thank our Affiliates because they are the ones that make it possible to print and distribute our Newsletter to our members, various paralegal schools throughout the US, and large firms throughout the US.

*Thank
you*



To Become an Affiliate with Paralegals Connect please contact Crystal@ParalegalsConnect.com for additional information or visit <http://www.paralegalsconnect.com/become-an-affiliate.html>.

Paralegals Connect is always looking for Affiliates that can offer our paralegals, legal assistants, future paralegals, and future attorneys the skills and services to help them succeed in their legal careers. We strive to provide information to the latest resources, education, and cost-effective opportunities that will enhance the skills, knowledge, and competencies of our members.

Becoming an Affiliate with our groups offers world-wide visibility to approximately 13,200+ combined group members in the legal industry.

**Only official Affiliates are permitted to advertise without our Groups.*

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ARMENHYL provides Local and Nationwide Service of Process

We look forward to being a quality resource for the Paralegals Connect community! Our goal is to ease your workload. You can assign your Service of Process needs to us with confidence, then focus on other priorities. Let us do the legwork of ensuring that your documents are delivered successfully both near and far!

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CobbleStone Software provides award-winning contract management software to simplify and automate contract tracking and management for legal professionals. CobbleStone's software provides a centralized repository for one-click contract access, unlimited document storage, easy searching and reporting, advanced reporting, proactive key-date alerts, online contract calendar, in-system collaboration, desktop and mobile access, and much more to take the stress out of contract administration. Contact CobbleStone today for a free demo or trial system at <https://www.cobblestonesoftware.com/paralegals>

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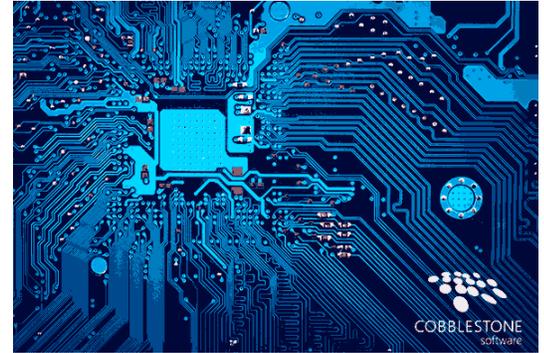
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CJC is always seeking NY paralegals to join her Independent Affiliate team. For more information visit www.cjcp paralegal.com, email ccentolella@cjcp paralegal.com, or contact 315-256-0601.

A Paralegal's Guide to Effortless Contract Analysis and Data Extraction

Written by: Mark Nastasi



Contract review is a daunting task for paralegals. In most cases, having an extra set of eyes to review contract terms is critical to ensure no bad clauses slip through the cracks. The duty of reviewing agreement terms and clauses is a time-staking task, making the effort and focus it takes to review contracts priceless to an organization. Moreover, paralegals bear a great amount of work to complete the contract negotiation and signing process quickly—all while preventing unwanted or risk associated clauses from being overlooked in the contract's final review. Having a *smart* assistant handle contract data extraction, data entry, and contract tracking can be a lifesaver to the busy paralegal and, in many cases, can provide assurance that your organization's contracts will be mistake proof.

This article should be used as a guide for paralegals on how contract artificial intelligence (AI) can help detect and prevent predicaments that could cause your organization to be at risk if an unwanted or damaging clause is missed during the contract review process.

Contract management software, supported with [AI](#) and machine learning, can be leveraged during the contract review process for better results. The use of contract data extraction services, clause recognition, and text-mining smart tools can transform your organization's contract management process and make the paralegal's daily struggles a breeze.

Improve the Contract Review Process with Smart Tools

Let's imagine your organization:

- provides products and services for its customers via formal agreements
- enters into agreements and has contracts with subcontractors and vendors (as most companies do)
- has some type of contract tracking system such as a spreadsheet or contract database

In a typical company, agreements are drafted and routed to a paralegal or contract administrator for contract review. The contract document must be opened, saved locally or in a system repository, and reviewed in thorough detail. Paralegals typically review contracts for unacceptable terms that could harm their company and then insert terms that their organization requires.

What if the legal admin misses a harmful clause and fails to remove or alter it? What if he or she forgets to include a required clause (such as limitation of liability)?

If this contract becomes binding and fully executed, the organization may be exposed to undue risk. Worse yet, the paralegal may be in jeopardy of losing their job.

How can we reduce this risk for the paralegal and the company they were hired to protect?

I often hear, "let's hire a second person to review the terms again" or "I wish I had more time to read it again." What if the paralegal could review the contract terms a second time? What if you could tell your computer, "don't allow this clause", "flag the contract if it is over X value", "always ensure the contract has this language", "never allow a bank routing number in the contract", and more? The good news is that you *can*.

Paralegal professionals should have access to a software solution that assists them to help alleviate stress and mitigate risk. With contract AI and machine learning, paralegals can teach the system which clauses to recognize, which items to flag, which phrases are "no-no" phrases, and what to identify regarding personal names, locations, expiration dates, and PII (personally identifiable information). The contract software engine acts as your assistant, learning from you via configuration and from data already in your contract system.

5 Steps to Contract Management Success

Let's help transform the paralegal to a **contract management software professional**. This example describes the process of gathering, extracting, importing, and analyzing data using CobbleStone Software's Contract Insight™ Contract Management Software.

Step 1: Gathering Contract Data

Let's assume your contract spreadsheet or database has important contract tracking fields such as *counterparty name, address, contract effective and expiration dates, title, contract owner (legal professional) name, and department*. Next, one can use the extracted and cleansed contract data and counterparty metadata (field data) from their contract spreadsheet as the basis for employee names, counterparty names, addresses, and basic contract metadata.

Step 2: Extracting Contract Data

The contract software professional uses software tools that help extract unique customer and vendor data to the Contract Insight™ Software application's vendor and customer management tables. This helps paralegals with a solid counterparty database for vendor management and customer management.

Simplify Your Contract Management With Smarter Software

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Step 3: Importing Data to Contract Insight

The contract software tool is used to cleanse the extracted contract data fields from the spreadsheet and add additional important contract data. Once ready, the contract data is imported into the contract repository as contract records in Contract Insight.

Step 4: Using VISDOM™ AI for Contract Analysis

After structured data has been established in Contract Insight, the contract files and documents are imported. The contract software professional uses CobbleStone's VISDOMSM AI software data mining, file-based text mining, and machine learning to associate files based on the vendor and customer data fields. This helps analyze the text in the file with the data in the structured contract.

Cobblestone's VISDOMSM AI and Machine Learning can be configured by your organization's paralegal (after some training) or by retaining CobbleStone for this service. The software's user-friendly tools provide improved contract oversight, proactive opportunity identification, and risk mitigation.

About the Author

Mark Nastasi is the Executive VP and founder of CobbleStone Software with over 20 years of professional experience in the industry. He launched the first commercial contract software in 1995 named CMTS (Contract Management Tracking System). He has worked extensively with general counsels, paralegals, lawyers, and legal professionals to help manage contracts better. You can reach Mark by email at mnastasi@cobblestonesoftware.com



Step 5: Contract Workflows

Finally, the paralegal can configure their organization's contract workflows. This helps route tasks and alert notifications for new contract requests. This way, employees can easily submit new contract requests using an online contract request intake form and the system will route tasks to the appropriate legal reviewer using Contract Insight Workflows.

Although each contract data project poses unique challenges, following some basic steps and utilizing a contract database software built for contract management can help.

About CobbleStone Software

CobbleStone Software provides Contract Insight™ Contract Management Software as a cloud-hosted (SaaS) or deployed (on-premise) solution. Contract Insight Software is used by thousands of legal professionals for their contract management software needs.

Founded in 1995, CobbleStone was among the first and most experienced companies to offer a contract management software product, and we continue to be a leader with full contract lifecycle management software.

Discover CobbleStone's [Contract Insight™ Contract Management Software](#) and [data extraction](#) services.



Basic Locate (Skip Tracing) Skills for Paralegals

Written by: Bennett Crisp,
Private Investigator
Crisp & Associates, Inc.
Savannah, Georgia



Paralegals are often tasked with discovering where a defendant or witness currently resides in order to serve them legal process. A paralegal having this skill is an asset to any law firm and is considered a valuable team member. So, let's get right into it. How do you find someone?

The first step and a must have for those who routinely need to find someone is an account with a private data provider. A private data provider is not just any data provider. They provide *private* data for specific uses, such as a landlord running a credit check, a potential employer performing a criminal background check, and yes, a law firm who needs to serve legal process. These purposes are exclusions from privacy law and because they are excluded, this data can be sold to those with a legitimate legal purpose such as those mentioned above. Some of the better private data providers are TLOxp®, Accurint®, IRB Search® and Tracers®.

Once you have your account with a private data provider, the next step is positively identifying the subject in their database. You'll need to confirm his or her full name and correct SSN and DOB. These databases pull data from credit headers, phone and utility companies, state DMV, etc. One thing to know is data providers are not all the same. Their sources will not be the same. How the data can be searched and how it displays will be different. Try several databases and compare the results. It's best to use more than one data provider, as the data in one could be more current than another.

Once you've positively identified the subject with your private data provider, the next step is to find the subject's last known address. In these databases, you'll see residential addresses for the subject with start and end dates for the subject being there. These dates are usually pulled from credit headers. The start dates are usually correct. The end dates may not be correct. Often an end date at an address will show as today's date or maybe just a year ago for an address the subject started living at a long time ago. If you see other addresses for the subject during this timeframe, the end date is usually wrong, and the address will not be current. The last known address will be the one with the most current *start date*. Don't just search one source. Search other sources of data such as state voter registration, state DMW, utility records, phone records, state professional licenses and state corporation records. The county tax assessor is another good source. Search as many of these other sources as you can and look for any address data for the subject. Timeline these addresses out if you can. Which address is most current? Cross reference the address data. Which address keeps showing up? Often these results can narrow down to one address, which will be the most current last known address. Sometimes it can only be narrowed down to two or three and you're not sure which is the most current.

Once you have your last known address or addresses, the last step is verifying if the subject is current at an address.

Check the county tax assessor website. If it's a house and the tax bill goes to another address, it's probably a rental. Maybe the subject owns the home. Check the sales records. When did he or she buy it? You can easily locate a phone for the owner and ask if the subject is current. They will usually tell you. Apartment complex managers often won't give out that information. One newer data provider, NCA Search® provides access to Post Office NCOA (National Change of Address). 60% of those who move will leave a forwarding address and will do so within two months of moving. If the person is someone who would likely leave a forwarding address and none is found, this means the address is more likely to be current. Sometimes a person will move and won't show in other databases but will have left a forwarding address with the Post Office. Check social media. Is he recently in a photo outside the same last known address that's shown on the tax assessor site or on Google maps? Address verification is the most difficult step and may require talking with others about the subject. Usually it doesn't get back to the subject.

A successful locate is a *verified* current address. If you can't confirm the subject if current with a third party, searching more and more sources of data until you're nearly certain is the next best thing and you will usually be right. If you still can't find the subject, a private investigator who specializes in locates often can.

With these basic techniques, common sense, and persistence, probably 70% of people can be found without too much difficulty.

Ten Things I Wish They Had Taught in Paralegal School

Written by: Donna R. Pevey



Theoretical knowledge, practical knowledge - it is all the same right? Actually, no. I learned just how completely different when I decided to go to college to get my paralegal degree after working as a legal secretary for over 20 years. During those two years I can honestly say, with zero arrogance, that there was not one thing I learned that I did not already either know or had at least heard of before. This is quite understandable given the number of years I had spent working in the legal field, but the biggest eye opener for me was how many times during class I would find myself thinking that these students may never even utilize any of this information that was being taught at the moment. Then my thinking would wander to how beneficial it would be that instead of simply teaching, for example, what a motion, an answer, or a discovery document is, students would be taught the practical steps needed to complete assignments involving these documents and others.

In every subject, there were practical skills I thought of that would be so helpful. Simple things we learned over time that we now do as if we are in overdrive. Skills we take for granted and do not even realize how difficult our jobs would be if we did not possess them. This is when I realized just how different theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge are.

Having theoretical knowledge means you understand the fundamental concepts and have the know-how about how things work. Practical knowledge ensures that you have the skills to take this theoretical knowledge and do something with it instead of simply knowing it.

I spoke to several seasoned paralegals and asked: **What are some practical skills you have learned on the job that they wished they had been taught in college?**

The list was very long, things I had never even thought about myself. Here, I have chosen the ten things that seemed to be mentioned most often:

1. How to File Electronically:

It is good to know what a motion is or how to draft an answer to a complaint, or any of the many different types of legal documents we deal with on a daily basis. But what if your attorney signs the answer to the complaint, hands it to you and says, "file it." Then what? Teach the students a basic knowledge of electronic filing procedures. How to do an electronic signature, how to access the different court websites, the basics of electronic filing.

2. Discovery/Notice of Service:

Students are taught what Requests for Production of Documents, Interrogatories, and Requests for Admissions are by definition. What happens when the discovery is answered, or in final form to be propounded to the other side and you are asked to handle it from there. Then what? Teach the students that the actual discovery is not filed, that only a Notice of Service is filed, and the original discovery is maintained by the original party.

3. Summons, Subpoena, Subpoena Duces Tecum:

We are taught what these three documents are by definition, but are students taught in what situation to use which? Your attorney tells you he wants you to obtain medical records of the opposite party. How do you do that? Students should be taught that these must be issued first before they can be served. Some courts also require a Request to Issue a Subpoena Duces Tecum be filed before having it issued.

4. Table of Contents/Table of Authorities:

These two things are used a lot in law firms, especially in appellate practice. Students should be taught what goes onto a Table of Authorities and a Table of Contents and where the information is obtained. Things such as all the page numbers that are listed after the cases cited in a Table of Authorities.

5. Certificate of Service:

We all know what a Certificate of Service is and what it is used for. Stop for a minute and think about what if you had never seen one before in your life, would you know what to do with all of those names and addresses listed? If you were creating one from scratch, how would you know who to list?

6. Document Production:

Your client is served with Requests for Production of Documents. Once you assemble all the applicable documents and you have this massive number of documents you must send to counsel for the other party. Do you know that each page should have an identifying number called a Bates number for ease of reference? Do you know that for the Bates numbered documents you do not produce because they are privileged that you must make an index of these documents called a Privilege Log or that some information in certain documents must be redacted? Redacted? What is that?

7. Pleadings Index:

You have a case and so far, there have been 25 pleadings filed in the case and the file is not organized. You need to organize the file. Students need to be instructed on how to create a pleadings index and to keep it updated as filings are done.

8. Schedule a Deposition:

Your attorney tells you that he wants you to schedule the deposition of the opposite party in one of your cases and to please take care of getting this done. Then what? How useful would it be if students knew that you need to coordinate available dates with the other party, decide on a location, arrange for a court reporter, and prepare and file a Notice of Deposition?

9. Billing Time/Keeping Track of Time:

Not much is taught in school about billing your time, and it is such an important part of the job. Students need to know the difference in block v. detailed billing. The most common billing increment is .10 of an hour and tasks are billed in 6-minute increments. Therefore, .10 is 6 minutes not 10 and .2 is 12 minutes and not 20. Paralegals need to know what sort of tasks are not billable to the client. Most importantly, to form a habit of keeping track of every single task that is done throughout the day no matter how minor it may seem, so billable time is not lost.

10. Calculating / Calendaring Deadlines:

In the mail you receive a motion filed by the other side. You know you are responsible for calendaring deadlines from incoming documents. Do you know which documents have a 30-day deadline? A 20-day deadline? If you do not know, do you know where to look to find out this information?

Students graduating from college or paralegal school have a wealth of theoretical knowledge upon obtaining their degree which will be very beneficial to them in starting their career as a paralegal. How much more of an asset to a firm would these same students be if upon graduation, they did not have to learn as they go, but instead already possessed the practical skills that are needed to apply that knowledge?

Article By:

Donna R. Pevey is a paralegal with the firm of Jeffery P. Reynolds, P.A. in Jackson, Mississippi. She has been working in the legal field for over 25 years as a legal secretary, legal assistant, and as a Paralegal. After working as a legal secretary for over 20 years she decided to go to college as a personal challenge, not to change careers. She graduated Magna Cum Laude with an Associate of Applied Science in Paralegal Studies from Hinds Community College in 2014.



Judgment Enforcement vs. Debt Collection: What's the Difference?

Written by: **Christa Centolella, Owner of CJC Judgment and Paralegal Services**



If a court has made a judgment in your favor, you are no doubt eagerly awaiting collection of your monetary award. However, you may require the assistance of a judgment enforcement company if the other party refuses to pay; CJC Judgment & Paralegal Services can assist you recovering what is rightfully yours. Capably serving clients in Auburn NY, and all of NYS since 2013, this multi-faceted paralegal service can assist in a number of matters. They can also help you understand the difference between judgment enforcement and debt collection by clarifying the following points.

How A Judgment Is Enforced

A judgment enforcement company may be able to garnish the debtor's wages in order to recoup money owed, enlist a lien on assets or even seize property as collateral. They can also track debtors, called skip tracing, that have fled the location where the judgment was made, which many debt collection companies are simply not capable of. There are many methods that can be utilized according to current laws, and the right company will make use of all available options.

Judgment Enforcement vs. Debt Collection

In general, debt collections agencies utilize very limited methods when pursuing outstanding debt. These can include things like making phone calls, sending correspondence through the mail, and enlisting a representative to appear in person. Conversely, judgment enforcement companies make use of more aggressive methods that are allowable by state laws.

The Role of the Court

While the court is integral in making the initial judgment, the responsibility for enforcing the payment is considered the responsibility of the person whom the judgment was in favor of, and as a result a whopping 80% of debt is never recovered due to lack of resources, time or money.

Whether you are seeking a process server, paralegal services or notary public in Auburn, NY or need help pursuing an outstanding court ordered judgment anywhere in New York State, CJC Judgment & Paralegal Services is here to help you. Call (315) 256-0601 to learn more or visit them [online](#) for the full range of services available.



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Group Rules can be found at:
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