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Making a Case for CaseMap

This software organizes facts for litigators – and you don't have to refold it.

BY DAVID BECKMAN AND DAVID HIRSCH

CaseMap is a new type of software that is designed to make it easier to organize facts, characters, issues, documents and other parts of a case. Issued by Florida-based CaseSoft, the program may be described as a litigation must by at least one of us.

Hirsch: I say it's a must. It is like a spreadsheet for organizing facts, people and issues, as well as documents and other tangible things. Any lawyer who walks into a courtroom without it would be crazy.

CaseMap looks like a tabbed table with filtered rows and columns containing information cells. It permits a maximum amount of focused information to be viewed on a computer screen. You can home in on different types and categories of information on the fly.

It is cleverly done so that the need to use forms, essential to most database programs, is virtually eliminated. The interface is so good that one hardly ever needs menus, though menus exist for those who prefer them.

Beckman: You are normally hypercritical of software, so your enthusiasm for CaseMap is surpris-

The screenshot shows the CaseMap 3 - Hawkins software interface. It features a menu bar (File, Edit, View, Records, Table, Outline, Tools, Help) and a toolbar with various icons. Below the toolbar is a navigation pane with tabs for Fact, Object, Issue, and Question. The main area displays a table with columns: Full Name, Description, Jury Instruction, Eval by CA, LS: Facts, LS: Documents, and LS: Persons. The table contains several rows of case data, including 'Wrongful Termination', 'Age Discrimination', 'Retaliation', and 'Damages'. The 'Age Discrimination' row is highlighted in blue.

	Full Name	Description	Jury Instruction	Eval by CA	LS: Facts	LS: Documents	LS: Persons
1	Wrongful Termination	Hawkins claims that he was fired in		7	3	7	
2	Age Discrimination	Hawkins claims his age (52) was a	Age discrimination	22	4	10	
2.1	Age Discrim Against	There are a number of specific		18	2	9	
2.1.1	The Lang Memo			12	0	5	
2.1.2	Lang Verbal Threats			5	2	4	
2.2	Pattern & Practice			18	4	10	
2.2.1	Statistics	Statistical evidence shows a decre		10	0	4	
2.2.2	Old Wood Must Go Incident			6	2	2	
2.2.3	Claims of Other Employees	Other ex-ABI employees complain		2	1	3	
3	Retaliation	Hawkins claims Anstar Biotech		14	2	7	
3.1	Transfer	Hawkins claims his transfer to		5	1	5	
3.2	Demotion	Hawkins claims his demotion was		9	1	4	
4	Hawkins Deserved Termination	Even though Hawkins was not	N/A	17	4	9	
4.1	Harassed Female Staff Members	There are several staff members	N/A	8	3	5	
4.2	Poor Work Quality	This argument should be pretty	N/A	9	1	2	
5	Damages			7	1	6	
5.1	Failure to Mitigate	Hawkins has not made any effort	The plaintiff is	3	0	2	
5.2	Lost Wages	A rough estimate of his lost wage	If you find that Anstar	3	1	2	
5.3	Mental Anguish	Hawkins claims to be suffering from	If you find that Anstar	1	0	4	

CaseMap makes it easy to outline the issues in your case and to organize the facts, documents, witnesses, and demonstrative evidence that relate to each issue and sub-issue.

ing. While I like it, there is nothing this program does that you could not do a hundred different ways manually, or with other programs.

OnceIsEnough, found at www.onceisenough.com, is one such program. Also, don't forget TimeLine, our own customized case organization program, discussed in our November 1998 column.

To remind readers: Timeline uses a Lotus Notes template and database. Two drawbacks, however: It is not commercially available, and it

requires a Lotus Notes server.

CaseMap is built on a Microsoft Access database platform.

Litigator's Notebook, which is commercially available, also requires Lotus Notes, and costs more than CaseMap's \$500 price tag. Lotus Notes' structure suits big cases involving large groups. Its replication capabilities and scalability mean different people can be working on the same database simultaneously at different locations.

CaseMap's replication abilities are

not as strong, but they suffice for most lawyers. It can replicate databases, allowing it to be used remotely and then synchronized, updating the master file.

Hirsch: CaseMap is inexpensive, easy to set up and smooth to use. I tend to be picky (don't tell the secretaries), so I effuse when something works well.

I look at it this way: You can pound a nail with pliers and turn a screw with scissors. But there is something special about using the right power tool. CaseMap excels at processing and organizing information. It enables lawyers, who frequently think in terms of documents, to focus on ideas – locate the trees but visualize the forest.

CaseMap does need improvements, some of which will show up in the next version, a spokesperson tells me, including Web access and fields without character limits. The current limit is 10,000.

Also, CaseMap needs to focus more on internal handling of full-text documents and accepting images, rather than linking to them. It should be able to retain its focus and still eliminate the need for outside document management programs for full text.

Even lawyers with little computer experience should be able to use it if they approach the program with an open mind and take it one step at a time.

Beckman: CaseMap advises starting a database with a cast of characters, entering names and filling in fields. Facts are sliced and diced, and links to related items are largely automatic. You can brainstorm entries from the instant a case comes in. The method of data input is designed to minimize inconsisten-

cies, such as the same name appearing in different forms.

A key feature of the program is the construction of timelines. Events may be randomly entered without knowledge of the exact date. Sorting will be properly done even if an entry shows a date of 12/??/98.

Hirsch: This program is relatively young, but there is solid support. I have some doubts whether the current level of support can be maintained when the program takes off, despite assurances to me. Notice I say when, not if. Fortunately, you can figure this program out just from the 156-page manual. A sample database comes with the program. And CaseMap 101 offers an excellent tutorial in the Help menu.

knows you are ready. CaseMap enables trial on a higher level.

Beckman: You're the litigator. But I still find your enthusiasm surprising given your picky nature. And by the way, the secretaries have already noticed.

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Date & Time	Fact Text	Source(s)	Key	Status	Linked Issues	Eval by CA
Sat 01/10/1998 to Wed 01/21/1998	Philip Hawkins negotiates draft Hawkins Employment Agreement with William Lang.	Hawkins Employment Agreement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Undisputed	Wrongful Termination	↓
02/??/1998	William Lang tells Philip Hawkins that he has changed his mind regarding the Hawkins Employment Agreement	Philip Hawkins, Deposition of William Lang, p. 19, 13.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disputed by Opposition	Wrongful Termination	↓
Fri 01/15/1999	Philip Hawkins turns 51.	Deposition of Philip Hawkins, 5:11	<input type="checkbox"/>	Undisputed	Age Discrim Against Hawkins	?
Tue 05/11/1999	Philip Hawkins receives performance Hawkins Performance Review from William Lang. Is rated a 1	Hawkins Performance Review	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Undisputed	Wrongful Termination, Age	↓
06/??/1999	William Lang makes decision to reduce size of staff.	Deposition of William Lang, 43:19	<input type="checkbox"/>	Undisputed	Age Discrim Against Hawkins	↓
Mon 07/12/1999	Anstar Biotech Industries second quarter sales announced. Sales have dropped by 8%.		<input type="checkbox"/>	Undisputed	Demotion, Hawkins Deserved	→
Fri 07/30/1999	Philip Hawkins demoted to sales manager.	Deposition of Philip Hawkins, p. 24, 115.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Undisputed	Demotion	↓
Thu 08/05/1999 #1	Philip Hawkins and William Lang meet.		<input type="checkbox"/>	Undisputed	Age Discrim Against	→
Thu 08/05/1999 #2	Philip Hawkins alleges that William Lang tells him "The old wood must be trimmed back hard."	Complaint, p. 8; Deposition of Philip Hawkins, p21, 12;	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disputed/Us	Filter, Tag 1, Tag 2	
Mon 08/09/1999	Philip Hawkins transferred to Anstar Biotech Industries office in Fresno.	Deposition of Philip Hawkins, p.43, 118.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Undisputed	Run Filter, Ctrl+	
Thu 09/23/1999	Philip Hawkins writes letter to William Lang complaining about the way he's being treated and alleging plan to	Hawkins Letter of 9/23/99	<input type="checkbox"/>	Undisputed	Cancel Filters	
Fri 11/12/1999	Reduction in force takes place. 55 Anstar Biotech Industries employees are let go including Philip Hawkins.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Undisputed	Termination, Age	↓
Mon 11/22/1999	Philip Hawkins files suit.	Complaint	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Undisputed	Wrongful Termination, Age	↓
Tue 12/14/1999	Philip Hawkins turns down job offer from Converse Chemical Labs.	Rumor William Lang heard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prospective	Failure to Mitigate	→
01/??/2000	Philip Hawkins meets with Susan Sheridan	Rumor William Lang heard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prospective		?
01/??/2000	Philip Hawkins is diagnosed as suffering Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.		<input type="checkbox"/>		Mental Anguish	→

In less than 30 seconds, you can filter the master chronology down to just those facts that are undisputed, that mention a particular witness, or are particularly good or bad.

CaseMap can give you an edge. It can keep your client out of jail and keep you out of trouble. Most important, it should assist in expeditiously obtaining results. Many cases are settled because the other side