

Legal Library Case Study

Vinson&Elkins

[Vinson & Elkins](#) is a law firm of global distinction, working with leading companies on wide-ranging matters in key industries across the economy. For more than 100 years, Vinson & Elkins has built its firm on four strong foundations: delivering excellent work and service, advising on complex matters, succeeding as a team, and caring for its clients, colleagues, and communities.

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|--------------------------|---|
| Firm | Vinson & Elkins LLP |
| Offices | 14 Offices across 3 continents |
| Library users | ~700 attorneys and 550 business professionals |
| Library team | 7 Licensed users each on Liberty Digital and illumin |
| Products | Liberty Digital (Standard package) and illumin |
| Key features used | Customizable OPAC portal, Bib Types, Global Change, Information Boxes, ERM module, illumin dashboard, advanced search and analytics |
| Flexible options | Single Sign On (SSO), SAML |

The Challenge

Vinson & Elkins needed a single, controlled access point for legal and business research - one that could serve a firm of 1,250+ across multiple offices and practice groups without overwhelming users or creating fragmented workflows.

On the library management side, the team needed a system flexible enough to handle a collection in transition: a growing shift from physical to digital resources, increasing eBook and subscription holdings, and the need to customize how resources were presented by practice area, office, and user group.

On the research tracking side, requests were arriving across multiple channels: email, phone, in-person and chat with no centralized system to log, track, assign, or report on them. Demonstrating the library's value to firm management was difficult without reliable data.

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“We were looking for a customizable system, where we could control how we presented the information to our attorneys. Liberty is infinitely customizable; we can make it really look how we want it to”

— Michael McHenry, Director of Research & Knowledge Services (RKS)

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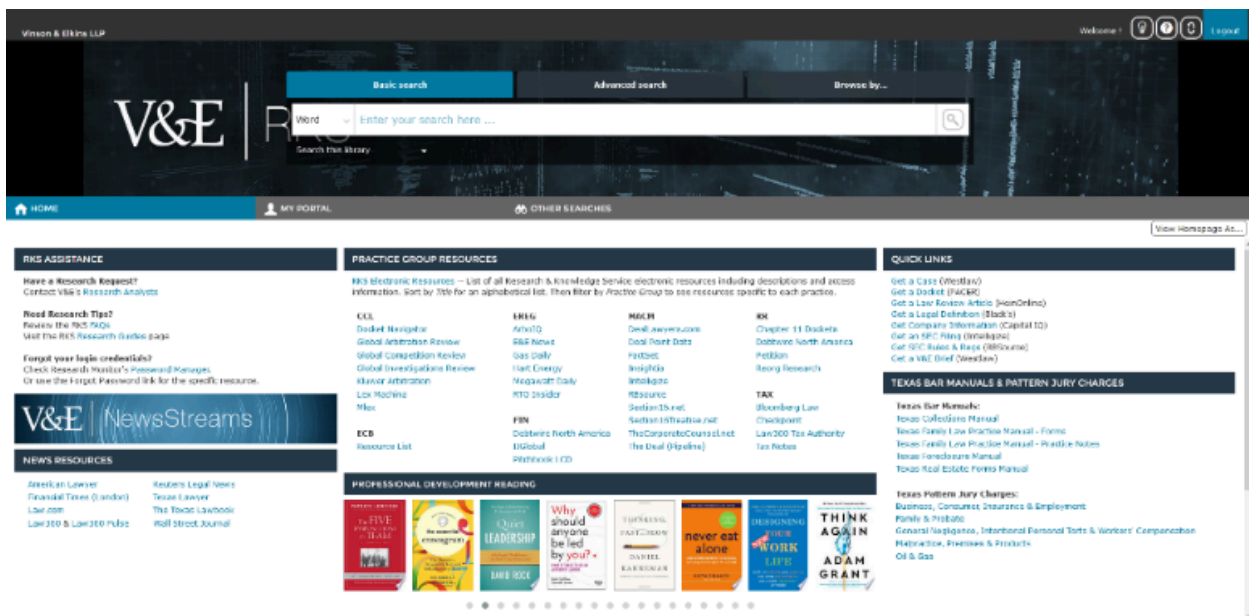
One Portal for the Whole Firm



The Research & Knowledge Services team deployed Liberty Digital's OPAC as the firm's central resource portal. A single, searchable access point for print and electronic holdings across all offices.

The portal gives attorneys quick access to the firm's most-used resources, highlights resources by practice area, and links through to training materials and research guides.

With over 43,000 MARC records linked directly to Westlaw, Lexis, Bloomberg Law, VitaLaw, Kluwer Arbitration, HeinOnline, PLI Plus, and others, the catalogue is comprehensive and fully searchable.



Customization that works at scale

Research & Knowledge Services Operations Manager Kelley Bocell makes active use of Liberty Digital's information boxes to surface targeted content to specific user groups - without exposing it to everyone. One information box was built specifically for Summer Associates, containing recorded video trainings, an FAQ, and onboarding instructions. Another uses the carousel feature to highlight a professional development book collection that attorneys can request to borrow.

Bib Types give Kelley further control: records can be categorized not just by resource type, but by source (RSS feed, blog, YouTube channel) or vendor (Westlaw, Bloomberg Law, Lexis) making the OPAC more useful and easier to navigate for attorneys who know what they're looking for.

Global Change allows bulk updates across groups of records - a significant time-saver for a team managing a collection of this scale.

Managing the shift to digital

The firm's physical collection spans over 2,300 titles and approximately 5,500 volumes across seven offices. In recent years, available shelf space has reduced significantly - some offices have given up 90% of library space - and the collection has moved predominantly digital.

Around 300 records exist for electronic resource subscriptions, and newsletters and journals that were once received in print are now processed as PDFs directly within Liberty.

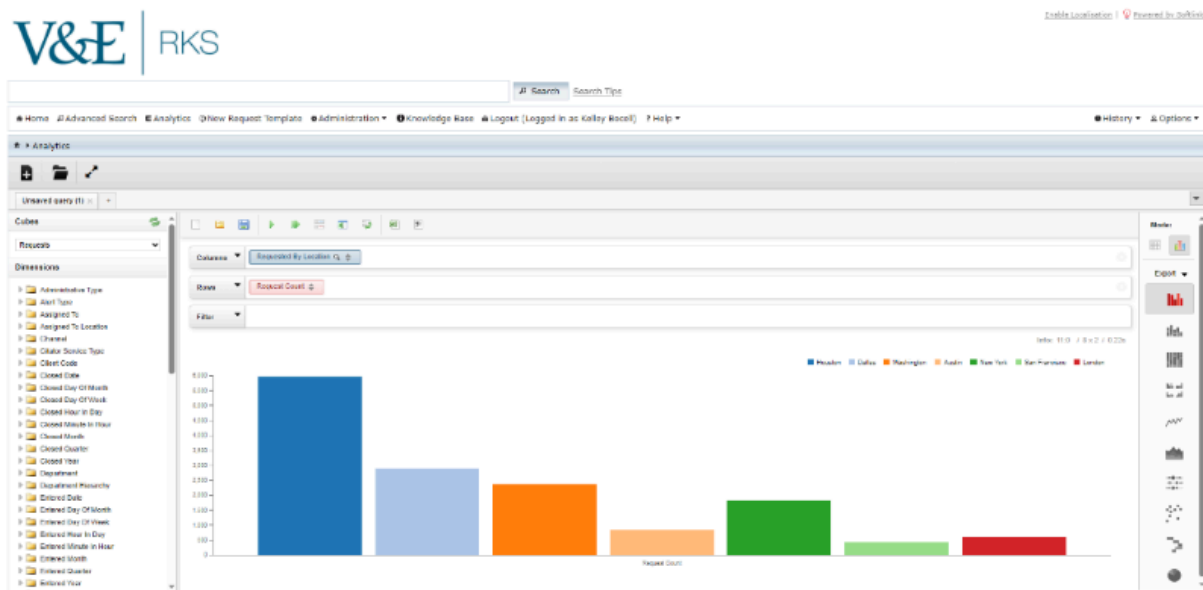
“I love that Liberty is able to accommodate this change in delivery method and checks in the PDF as a file on the serial record.” — Kelley Bocell, Research & Knowledge Services Operations Manager

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Research Tracking with Real Reporting

With research requests arriving via email, phone, chat, and in-person, the Research & Knowledge Services team needed a system that could centralize everything and produce meaningful data for firm management. [illumin](#) does both.

Requests from multiple email accounts are pulled into a single dashboard. The team can track total requests, request types, practice group sources, time-to-close, and researcher workload - all in one place. The graphical dashboard gives Kelley an at-a-glance operational view without needing to run reports manually.



“We've been able to track total requests, requests from practice groups, types of requests and time spent on a request; as well as how long it takes for researchers to close a request from the moment they open it until completion. illumin is a great platform to classify different types of requests because of the ability to create custom fields in addition to the standard fields currently existing in illumin.”

— Michael McHenry, Director of Research & Knowledge Services (RKS)

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Data that demonstrates department value

The analytics built into illumin give the RKS team concrete numbers to share with firm management. From 2024 to 2025:

- Research requests increased by 30%, driven by growth in primary research, BD research, retrievals, and alerts
- Library searches via the OPAC increased by 33%, with an average of 150 searches per month
- The OPAC maintained a 90% successful search rate

The Litigation group remains the team's primary practice group client, followed by Corporate and the combined BD/Comms groups - all tracked directly through illumin.

The Results

Vinson & Elkins implemented Liberty Digital and illumin within a few months of each other. Eight years on, both products remain central to how the Research & Knowledge Services team operates and serves the firm.

Liberty Digital gives attorneys and business professionals a single, customizable portal to find what they need - reducing time spent searching and increasing confidence in available resources. illumin gives the research team a complete operational picture: every request logged, tracked, and reportable.

Together, they allow the Research & Knowledge Services team to work more strategically, respond to requests faster, and make a clear, data-backed case for the department's value to firm leadership.

See Liberty Digital and illumin in action

Find out how [Softlink](#) can help your firm's library team manage resources, track research requests, and demonstrate value to leadership.

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