Review: Concordance 10 and E.L. Native Review for Concordance

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Concordance 10
law.lexisnexis.com/concordance
TechnoScore: 4.8

E.L. Native Review for Concordance
www.electroniclegalsoftware.com
TechnoScore: 4.6

1 = Lowest Possible Score;
5 = Highest Possible Score

The word "concordance" implies "harmonious mutual understanding." LexisNexis' new Concordance 10 litigation support software lives up to this billing thanks to its Unicode support. But how well do this and the many other new features work for lawyers knee-deep in discovery documents and transcripts? We asked litigation support expert and longtime Concordance user Paul Easton. Paul ended up delivering a twofer, reviewing both Concordance 10 and Electronic Legal Software's Native Review for Concordance.

INTRODUCTION
Concordance 10 is the second major release of this venerable document and transcript review program since LexisNexis acquired it in 2006. Whereas Concordance 2007 (v.9) introduced a revamped user interface, version 10 now includes support for Unicode and integration support for E.L. Native Review.

Unicode positions Concordance to go global by enabling viewing and searching of international character sets. E.L. Native Review for Concordance enables you to view electronic documents without having to open them in their native applications or convert them to TIFF or PDF files.

INSTALLATION AND DATABASE CONVERSION
Download and installation remains as simple as always. I've successfully installed and used Concordance 10 on Windows XP, Windows Vista, and the Windows 7 Release Candidate.

Because Concordance 10 uses different registry and install folder locations from Concordance 2007, you can install both on the same computer, which I did without any issues. However, supporting Unicode required LexisNexis to make major structural changes to Concordance's database format. Therefore, there is no backward compatibility to older database versions.

If you attempt to open a Concordance version 7, 8, or 9 database (versions older than 7 are not supported) in version 10, the software will prompt the you to convert the database to the new format. Concordance 10 also provides a bulk conversion option.

I have not run into any problems when converting databases, but you should always use common sense and back up databases before conversion.

GOING GLOBAL
At first blush, Concordance 10 looks exactly the same as version 9. Appearances are, however, deceiving.

By supporting Unicode, Concordance is now a useful tool for international discovery projects. I've successfully imported Chinese and mixed Chinese-English text, in various Office formats and HTML files using several character encodings, and have had no issues viewing, indexing, and searching the Chinese text.

You need to understand a number of issues, however.

First, before taking advantage of Concordance's Unicode support, you must have installed the appropriate Windows language packs on his or her computer.

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Second, some languages, such as Chinese, do not delineate words with spaces. This makes building an index of words difficult. Concordance does not provide any language-specific, pattern-matching algorithms to determine words when indexing. Instead, each character is considered a "word" for the index.

For example, in English, Concordance would add "America" and "Americans" as separate words in its index. A search for "Americans" would not return "America" as a hit unless wildcards are used. When searching in Chinese, however, a search for the two characters that compose the word "America" would also return the Chinese for "Americans" as a hit. For the same reason, the "match whole word

only" option in find and replace operations does not work in Chinese and other logographic languages.

Another issue specific to Chinese is that a search using traditional characters will not return hits on the simplified versions of the same characters, and vice versa. This needs to be explained to Chinese-language reviewers who may be used to conducting Web searches, such as with Google, where a search in one form will return results from both forms.

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Third, a number of search (e.g. fuzzy search) and data validation features are only available in English.

Fourth, the "Send To" option in the "File" and right-click context menus sends only ANSI text to other applications, meaning Unicode will be lost. Therefore, you can't send Chinese text from Concordance to CaseMap, Sanction, Excel, or other third-party applications.

As the preceding examples show, an understanding of the language and how Concordance builds its index is important to enable the crafting of appropriate search queries. The help files contain tips and discuss issues with Unicode importing and searching, many of which are language-specific. Anyone working with non-English documents in Concordance should closely read the help files.

GOING NATIVE

The second exciting new feature of Concordance 10 is integration support for Electronic Legal Software's Native Review, which finally brings native-file review to Concordance.

This integration is important for a couple of reasons. Native review can significantly decrease the costs of large document reviews. Why pay to have the entire universe of potentially relevant documents converted to images if you can first review them in their native formats and only process those you will actually produce?

Another benefit of native file review is that some file formats do not render well when converted to images. For example, images generated from spreadsheets may not display hidden rows and columns, hidden text, comments, and formulas. Having to open these documents in their native applications, however, significantly slows the review. Therefore, one trend in document-review software over the past few years has been the creation of native or near-native viewers, so that reviewers can see what the original document looked like without having to own and fire up the native application. This functionality was conspicuously missing for Concordance users, until now.

E.L. Native Review for Concordance works in much the same way that image viewers such as Concordance Image and IPRO do. When synchronized with a Concordance database, Native Review will display the native files associated with the Concordance records. You can move among documents from either Concordance or from Native Review. Native Review references the original documents using external links in the Concordance database, generally in a "FILEPATH" or similar

field. There is no need to create an image base or mess with load files.

Download, installation, and registration of Native Review were simple. Although the developers only support installing the program on Windows XP, I had no issues installing and running it on Windows 7 Release Candidate. I didn't test on a Vista box as the developers made it clear that they do not support Windows Vista and informed me that they will likely skip Vista and go straight to Windows 7.

Before starting Native Review you must first open a database in Concordance. If you have only one database open, Native Review will detect and sync with it. If you have multiple databases open, Native Review will prompt you to select a database with which to synchronize.

Currently, the software has a bug that only enables it to synchronize with the first database listed. If you select any other database, you'll get an error message and have to close and restart the program. Electronic Legal Software is working with the Concordance developers on fixing this. For now, I would use Native Review only when you have a single database open in Concordance.

The program seemed a bit slow to load, even with small databases containing only a few hundred documents. Once it starts, however, it is snappy. I could move among documents in Native Review about as quickly as in Concordance Image. Unlike Concordance Image, reviewers can apply tags to documents within the Native Review interface, so they will not have to toggle between two program windows. Reviewers can also edit Concordance database fields from within Native Review. They cannot, however, add issues or notes.

One feature that I was particularly excited about was the ability to apply hot keys to tags in E.L. Native Review. Not having to use the mouse provides an efficiency boost to document review.

I could not detect any formatting differences when viewing documents in Native Viewer and in their native applications. Unicode is supported and I had no trouble viewing Chinese language documents. Viewing and moving around spreadsheets in Native Review is simple and, at the click of a button, you can check for hidden rows, columns, and invisible text.

More than 200 document types are supported, but when you encounter a document that the program cannot display, the program provides a link to open the document in the application associated with the file extension on your computer, a link to look up the file extension at the Filext.com Web site, and a button that will display the document in a File Hex Viewer.

All in all, I found Native Review a solid tool that provides an improved method for reviewing and tagging documents. I highly recommend it for all users of Concordance 10.

CONCLUSION
I award Concordance 10 a TechnoScore of 4.8 out of 5, and E.L. Native Review for Concordance a 4.6.

In Concordance 10, LexisNexis has made a number of improvements under the hood that increase performance and security, fixed a number of bugs from version 9, and made some minor interface improvements. These tweaks and fixes should persuade existing users to upgrade, while Unicode should attract new users to Concordance. Thanks to Unicode, you can deploy Concordance world wide, as long as you understand the peculiarities of the languages with which you are working.

> **I strongly recommend that anyone who has upgraded to Concordance 10 download a demo of E.L. Native Reviewer.**

Just as exciting is Concordance's integration support for a native file reviewer. E.L. Native Review gives Concordance users a whole new document-review experience. If you currently pay outside vendors to convert documents to TIFF or PDF, the savings realized from native file review should more than pay for Native Review's cost.

As wonderful as native file review is, however, you still have to convert your documents to images at some point if you want to apply redactions. Native Review doesn't feature any production tools, even

for native file productions. Electronic Legal Software still need to work out some bugs, but this shouldn't prevent you from using it in a production environment.

I strongly recommend that anyone who has upgraded to Concordance 10 download a demo of E.L. Native Reviewer. Together they provide a whole new review experience without requiring a switch to an entirely new review platform.

ELECTRONIC LEGAL SOFTWARE'S RESPONSE
We invited Electronic Legal Software to respond to this *TechnoFeature.* The company responded as follows:

"Thank you for your thoughtful and thorough review of E.L. Native Review for Concordance. Here are a few comments:

"E.L. Native Review for Concordance can be used with Concordance 2007 (v 9) and Concordance 8.21 or greater in addition to Concordance 10.

"The reviewer mentioned the error message that occurs when E.L. Native Review for Concordance is synchronized with Concordance 10 and there are multiple databases open. We are aware of the issue and have isolated it to Concordance 10 only. The error does not occur with Concordance 2007 (v 9)."

Paul Easton is a Concordance Certified Software Administrator. He is Managing Director for Global Colleague's Asian operations, dividing his time between Taiwan and India. He has managed high-volume, multi-national, multi-lingual discovery projects for the United States' largest law firms and corporations. He also maintains a personal blog where he shares thoughts, tips, and discoveries related to the management of legal projects.

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