

CourtAlert® Case Watching and Court Data

Case Watch by Alternative Party Names

The Challenge

- CourtAlert watch services are typically based on Index number – used both by CourtAlert users to add cases onto watchlists and by the court to enter the data. Therefore, the “match” is always correct
- Some court data is available only by case caption, not by index number. Case caption includes the name of the main plaintiff and the main defendant. A problem arises when the names entered by a user when adding a case to their watchlist differ from the names as entered by the courts’ personnel
- Some matching techniques have previously been used by CourtAlert, for example in Motion Decision Alerts in Appellate Division First Department. They work well, but not perfectly

The Solution

- Where possible, the matching will continue to be done by Index number, not by name
- When court data is unavailable by index number, the user must enter names on the watchlist . The user can enter several alternative names for each party
- The system will then look for all the names that were entered
- CourtAlert will build a system-wide synonym dictionary; those new alternative names are then offered to users entering new names
- The Alert will specify both the names entered on the court data and the alternative name used for matching

For example:

The imaginary case of IBM v. Citi Bank will also have “International Business Machine” and “Honeywell” as alternative plaintiff names and “Citibank” as an alternative defendant name. A match with any of those names will produce an alert.

Future users entering a party name on their Watchlist, such as Honeywell will be prompted to include the alternative names as well. All new alternative names are added to the synonym dictionary.

Where is this new technique used? CourtAlert 231 – a motion decision alert for the Appellate Division First Department and CourtAlert 241- the new Oral Argument Alert announced today.