

Cite-Text: Extraction and reliability of judicial precedents

In common law countries, legal precedents established by higher courts is a binding law. Article 141 of the Constitution of India states that law established by judicial orders of the Supreme Court is binding on all the courts. The decisions of the higher courts are binding on the lower courts. Therefore, lawyers and legal researchers rely on precedents, or past court decisions to draft legal documents and advise clients.

Without clear information on how a precedent had been treated in past rulings across multiple jurisdictions, researchers cannot accurately assess its relevance to their case. Identifying relevant precedents is still a manual task that requires one to go through the judgments that have cited a precedent, the context in which they are cited and the if the courts have approved the precedents or viewed it negatively. Therefore, the task of identifying reliable judicial precedents is a time consuming process and is also prone to error and bias.

We need automated solutions to simplify the task of looking at how a judgment has been cited by others and whether it has been cited approvingly or viewed negatively. Such a tool will bring in more clarity on what constitutes binding portions of a case law and the context in which they have accepted or rejected by the courts. We build two parts to achieve the above task:

Extracting Cited Text:

We build an algorithm to detect and extract specific portions of a legal document where a particular precedent is cited. This saves professionals valuable time and effort compared to manually searching for relevant passages, especially for lengthy texts that discuss multiple precedents. The cite text extractor journey is [here](#).

Classifying Sentiment:

We classified precedents in more than 1000 judgments into four relevant classes. Then we generated features as the top 5000 most commonly

occurring phrases and we were able to train a Logistic classifier with accuracy of 76%. Our training approach prioritizes reliability, enabling users to assess classifications with confidence based on transparent metrics provided. The four classes are:

Relied by Parties: This indicates that the parties involved in the case relied on the precedent to support their arguments. This can also mean that a party dismisses a precedent. Parties include appellants, respondents, investigating agencies, amicus — mainly any party apart from the adjudicating court.

Accepted by Court: This indicates that the court explicitly accepted and applied the precedent in its decision.

Neutral: This indicates that the precedent was cited but the court did not express any opinion on it, or the opinion is unclear.

Negatively viewed by Court: This indicates that the precedent was dismissed or viewed negatively by the court in arriving at its decision. This category contains precedents that are either declared 'bad in law' by the court or are simply not relevant to facts of the case they are adjudicating on. This classification can also mean that the understanding of the judgment is incorrect or inaccurate and not the judgment itself.

Our cite text sentiment analysis journey is [here](#).

Ultimately, this feature is designed to be a powerful tool in your legal research arsenal, empowering you to efficiently navigate complex legal documents and discover relevant information. Our goal is not to provide you with direct answers to your query, but to provide you with tools to adapt in the fast pacing legal environment.