

# The Use of Legal Terminology in Sovereign Citizen Pseudolegal Texts

This poster highlights a selection of the results of a recent key item analysis comparing the use of legal terminology in a collection of Sovereign Citizen pseudolegal documents submitted to courts to that of their legitimate legal counterparts. Two corpora were constructed for this study: a corpus of legitimate legal documents consisting of 302,857 words taken from 138 texts and a corpus of Sovereign Citizen documents consisting of 355,821 words taken from 250 texts.

The two tables below list the top positive key items of each corpus that are instances of legal terminology. The key items for the legitimate legal document corpus were determined by using the Sovereign Citizen document corpus as the reference corpus and vice versa. The statistical significance of key items was calculated in AntConc using a log-likelihood test with a cutoff value of 15.13, which is equivalent to 99.99% confidence ( $p < 0.0001$ ) (Anthony 2019). This resulted in a list of 915 LLD key items and 835 SCD key items, which were then ranked according to their %DIFF score, which is an effect size metric determined by the proportion of the difference between the normalized frequency of a key item in the target and reference corpus.

Top Legitimate Legal Document Key Items

Rank	Overall	LLD	SCD	LL	%DIFF	Key Item
1	12	197	0	306.2	46190.3199	impoundment
2	22	228	1	342.76	26687.2917	proxies
3	23	113	0	175.62	26452.3154	subscription
4	24	112	0	174.06	26217.3392	refund
5	25	110	0	170.96	25747.3867	premium
6	32	97	0	150.75	22692.6956	foia
7	36	89	0	138.32	20812.8856	condominium
8	38	87	0	135.21	20342.9331	ballots
9	40	85	0	132.1	19872.9806	subclass
10	42	83	0	128.99	19403.0282	ballot
11	44	159	1	236.21	18580.6113	proxy
12	46	70	0	108.79	16348.337	impounded
13	47	66	0	102.57	15408.432	charity
14	50	63	0	97.91	14703.5033	mcc
15	51	249	2	366.19	14527.2711	vote

Top Sovereign Citizen Document Key Items

Rank	Overall	SCD	LLD	LL	%DIFF	Key Item
1	5	205	0	252.54	34797.1449	affiants
2	7	181	0	222.96	30711.6255	ucc
3	8	179	0	220.5	30371.1656	ginnie
4	10	174	0	214.34	29520.0157	usc
5	11	158	0	194.63	26796.3361	remic
6	12	282	1	335.68	23902.4265	us
7	19	109	0	134.26	18455.0673	republic
8	22	107	0	131.8	18114.6073	admiralty
9	24	107	0	131.8	18114.6073	creditor
10	28	98	0	120.71	16582.5376	juris
11	31	88	0	108.39	14880.2378	securitization
12	32	86	0	105.93	14539.7779	treason
13	39	78	0	96.07	13177.9381	reserved
14	42	75	0	92.38	12667.2481	persona
15	44	70	0	86.22	11816.0983	securitized

Key items were deemed to be instances of legal terminology if they or a related citation form had an entry in the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of Black's Law Dictionary (Garner 2019). Individual items that were clearly indicative of a single larger phrase defined in Black's were included (e.g. "notary" for "notary public"); however, key items that appeared as part of multiple larger phrases but not on their own (e.g. "excessive") were not.

Of the top 300 legitimate legal document key items, 87, or about 29%, are instances of legal terminology. This stands in stark contrast to the top 300 Sovereign Citizen document key items, where 150, or fully 50%, are instances of legal terminology. Because key items were determined by comparing the two corpora to one another, these tables highlight the terms which most strongly distinguish the texts in one corpus from the those in the other. Nevertheless, the key items for both corpora reflect a shared interest in several topics as indicated by the appearance on both lists of multiple financial terms as well as terms used to show familiarity with operating in the legal system, including acronyms which refer to specific pieces of legislation and legal Latin.

## Questions for Feedback

1. This key item analysis is being followed up with a part of speech analysis and a qualitative examination of several texts selected from each corpus. Is there another way you would approach this sort of data?
2. A number of key items for both corpora (e.g. "securitization") refer to complex legal concepts the meanings of which are not necessarily obvious from just a concordance line. How much context is needed when presenting these terms to an audience that may not have a legal background?

## References

Anthony, L. 2019. *AntConc (Version 3.5.8) [Computer Software]*. Tokyo, Japan: Waseda University. Available at: <http://www.laurenceanthony.net/software/>.

Garner, B.A. ed. 2019. *Black's Law Dictionary*. 11th ed. West Group.



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