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Online Triage and Intake

A TOOLKIT FOR LEGAL AID ORGANIZATIONS

LSC America's Partner for Equal Justice
LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

in partnership with
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MAP MICHIGAN ADVOCACY PROGRAM

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Introduction

Eighty-eight percent of U.S. adults use the internet, including 79 percent whose family income is less than $30,000 and 64 percent who are 65 and older.[1] Meanwhile, legal aid telephone hotlines and walk-in offices are overwhelmed by the demand for services—a demand that in most states cannot be met without investing millions of dollars in additional staff. The money for these investments is not available, leaving legal aid organizations to explore more creative solutions.

Online triage and intake systems can serve as an important pressure valve for intake staff while also making it easier for anyone with a legal question to find answers. If your organization or state is considering online triage and intake, but hasn't yet begun exploring the possibilities, this toolkit will guide you through the questions you'll need to consider. It will also share best practices for developing a system that saves time and money, and that leads to better outcomes for people seeking legal help.

If you already have a triage and/or online intake system in place, this toolkit may help you evaluate that system and contemplate some changes or improvements.

1 *Source: Internet/Broadband Fact Sheet, Pew Research Center, 2016 http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/internet-broadband/*

Understanding Online Triage and Intake

The term "triage" derives from the French word "trier," which was first used by the Surgeon in Chief to Napoleon's Imperial Army, Baron Dominique Jean Larrey. His system attempted to sort and prioritize soldiers who needed medical attention on the battlefield to minimize loss of life.

WHAT IS ONLINE TRIAGE?

Online triage in the legal aid context is a website or website module that uses a series of questions to guide users to individualized legal information. There are many different versions, but generally online triage creates opportunities for users to sort themselves by demographics, legal issue, eligibility for services, and urgency, and then receive referrals to self-help or direct services from an attorney or other professional.

The following are the potential functions of a triage system:

- A centralized web portal that serves a defined geographic region.
- Navigation to self-help information and online forms.
- Referrals to organizations that are particularly suited to help the user.
- Preliminary legal aid eligibility screening based on factors such as geography or income.
- A path to an intake system for eligible users.
- Prioritization of cases based on urgency or the specialization of a referral partner.
- Diversion of low-priority cases away from hotlines and other intake systems.

WHAT IS ONLINE INTAKE?

Once online triage is complete and a user is determined to be a good candidate for services, he or she can be directed to online intake.

Online intake is a website or website module that allows prospective clients to provide information about their case to an organization to begin receiving services. Typically, a user will submit the information and it will go to intake staff who verify eligibility, run a conflict check, and then contact the prospective client.

Many organizations offer online intake as a simple way to collect client information when hotlines or offices are closed. Online intake also has the potential to reduce the amount of time intake staff spend on the phone or entering data into the case management system.

HOW DO ONLINE INTAKE AND TRIAGE INTERACT?

Each can be used independently as standalone approaches to bringing clients into the system, or they can be used in combination to meet a different workflow or goal. For example, a single program might use a triage component with gating criteria to ensure that only certain types of cases make it through to the online intake. Or a more robust triage system for a geographic region or state might be used to determine which program to refer people to, and then send them to that program's online intake system.

THE BENEFITS OF ONLINE TRIAGE AND INTAKE

There are numerous benefits to adopting an online triage or intake system, but the most significant benefits come when the systems are combined and seamless. A combined triage and intake system can:

- Provide help to more people.
- Provide immediate help when offices or phone lines are closed.
- Provide help to people who are not able to travel to an office to speak to intake staff or legal experts.
- Free up time spent answering repetitive questions, taking calls from people who are not eligible for services, and dealing with low-priority issues.
- Provide specific information and resources for individuals who don't fully understand their legal issue.
- Provide self-help guidance and resources to help all people work toward better legal outcomes.
- Provide a centralized online location for people in a region or state who are seeking legal help.
- Provide more holistic help and give people options for how to address their legal issues.

What to Decide Before You Start

There are a few important decisions you'll need to make before you begin building your online triage and intake system. Let's review your options and how to navigate them.

WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF YOUR TOOL?

The first, and possibly most important, question is, How extensive does your triage and intake system need to be?

For example, a small state with one legal aid organization might decide to use its system only to refer eligible clients to its own intake system and provide basic information to everyone else. However, a larger state might refer users to both legal aid and non-legal aid organizations, including nonprofits, courts, and private attorneys. It might also choose to offer an extensive library of resources and forms to make it easy for any user to get answers to their legal questions and begin taking action. Consider whether a statewide system is possible for your state; the efficiencies for legal services providers, clients/users, and all agencies referring into and out of the system (including bar associations, libraries, mediation centers, etc.) typically outweigh the challenges posed by intensive collaboration with multiple organizations.

Geography and the number of referral partners are the primary limiting factors. Will your system cover every county in the state? If not, where does it make sense to draw the lines? And in the counties that you will include in your system, what organizations will partner on referrals—and how big is that list?

Take stock of every possible resource that you might refer to. Is that list sufficient to meet the needs of the people you are trying to serve? Are there ways to grow that list? A triage system is only as good as the referrals it makes.

You also need to consider how "warm" you want your referrals to be. The simplest kind of referral—a "cold" referral—provides a phone number or link to an outside online intake system. In this case, your triage system would not need to store or transfer client information.

A "warm" referral would transfer information to the intake system or communicate with the referral recipient to help intake staff understand the issue and more quickly identify services the client needs. To provide a warm referral you'll likely need to integrate your triage system with the case management systems of your referral partners, or at a minimum, program your system to send a report with the relevant information whenever a client completes intake. If your system does store and transmit client information, you'll need to carefully consider the risks. If the triage system is not run by an organization that provides legal services, the information is not privileged and may be subject to subpoena. To protect the identities of prospective clients, many triage systems do not collect or store personally identifiable information.

Consider how this tool will fit into your self-help and/or organization website and its existing features. For example, if you have a "Find a Lawyer" section, will the triage tool interact with it or replace it?

Finally, you'll need an opportunity to check potential clients for conflicts after they've completed triage and before they're passed into a case management system. This can be automated so that the system runs a preliminary check against existing case and client names and other relevant information and flags any potential conflicts, which are then forwarded to an attorney to determine whether the conflict is genuine. Cases that aren't flagged are forwarded to the case management system for intake.

WHO IS ON YOUR COMMITTEE?

Your online triage and intake project will not be possible without strong leadership. However, even the most narrowly scoped online triage and intake project will require a committee to develop the branching logic and to sort out how to refer people to information and services. [1]

A useful committee will include a diverse collection of voices and experience. At a minimum, intake or hotline staff will be critical members of your committee because they will understand the nuances of how people understand their legal issues and the questions they typically ask. Your referral partners will also play an important role, both in the development of the logic tree that guides users to the right information and in sorting out where to refer users and how to prioritize the information users receive.

Here's a checklist of possible committee members and their likely contributions:

- **Executive Sponsor:** Makes high-level decisions, approves budgets, and is ultimately responsible for the success of the project.
- **Project Lead:** Convenes the committee and uses the feedback to make decisions. Also hires contractors, negotiates contracts, coordinates technical issues, schedules staff training, and establishes data collection.
- **Project Manager:** Responsible for making sure every part of the project gets done.
- **Attorneys:** Responsible for making sure the legal issues are represented accurately and that the case priorities are set.

1 As newer triage systems begin to use machine learning—the ability for computers to learn without being explicitly programmed—rather than branching logic, the role of committees may shift away from developing branching logic and more toward bringing providers onboard. For more information, read *Building A Litigant Portal: Business and Technical Requirements* (http://ncsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/accessfair/id/375).

INVEST IN A PROJECT MANAGER

Online triage and intake projects are complex, time-consuming, and require the coordination of a lot of different people. If you want to have any hope of completing your project on time and on budget, you need to make sure it has a project manager with time budgeted for tracking the progress of the work, following up on outstanding tasks, coordinating partners and contributors, managing costs, providing logistical support, and other project management responsibilities. Without this critical role, problems can go unnoticed for weeks and costs can spiral out of control.

- **IT Staff:** Advise on the technology and help implement the solution.
- **Intake Staff:** Provide insight into client needs and efficient processes for providing information, checking eligibility, and beginning a working relationship with the client.
- **Referral Partners:** Provide insight and knowledge to make sure that the legal issues are represented accurately and client needs are met. Partners also provide direction on where to refer clients based on their unique needs.

HOW WILL YOU WORK WITH YOUR COMMITTEE?

As you decide who to include in your committee, it's important to set expectations for how you will work together. Early on, map out when you'll meet and what you expect from the committee during each meeting. For example, you might first develop a draft of the system's logic tree, then schedule a meeting where the committee goes through the logic in detail and provides feedback. Then you might schedule another meeting to review a prototype of the system to further refine the logic and solicit reactions to the user interface. Finally, you might schedule one last meeting to consider any last-minute adjustments before the system is launched.

Outside of committee time, you might also schedule one-on-one meetings to learn more about referral organizations and the criteria they would like to set for referrals. Some systems require a central administrator to manage referral criteria while others let referral partners manage their own criteria. Regardless of who updates the criteria, these updates are critical to the success of your system. A triage system that provides outdated or inaccurate information can damage a client's case and will erode public trust in your organization and project.

WHAT TECHNOLOGY WILL YOU NEED?

Is your current case management system meeting your needs, or are you considering making a switch soon? Are you happy with your current website? Is it feasible to build your triage and intake system using the same Content Management System? If your current technology infrastructure requires updates or upgrades, consider planning them in coordination with your triage and intake system implementation.

FIND POWERFUL ALLIES

The success or failure of a new technology project often depends on how motivated staff are to develop and use the new tools. One useful strategy is to get a high-profile person to invest time and enthusiasm in your project. For example, in Florida, the Clay County pilot triage project had the backing of the Chief Justice of the Florida State Supreme Court. According to Joyce Raby, Executive Director of the Florida Justice Technology Center, this support made it easier to get the information she needed and to keep moving the project forward.

Every organization is different, but generally your case management system is the place to start, especially if your online intake system will need to be integrated with it. Once staff are comfortable with your case management system and most of the bugs have been worked out, you can tackle your website and online triage and intake projects together.

Here are some software selection best practices to help you navigate the process:

- **Make a list of your requirements:** Think through the limitations of your current system and what you really need. Also think about what's interesting, but not essential. List them all in a few different buckets, ranked by priority.
- **Understand your processes:** Map out how data gets entered into the system and how people use and manage that data. Are there weaknesses in the process? You'll want to test out your processes on a new system while also considering how the new system might help you make your processes more efficient.
- **Do the research:** Combining desk research and conversations with peers, compile a broad list of systems that might meet your needs.
- **Schedule demos:** Get an up-close look at three or four systems. Make sure to guide the vendor through your processes and your checklist of requirements. Be careful not to let them avoid questions or veer off on tangents.
- **Compare the systems against your requirements:** Some people use a scoring system. Others focus on the nuances of a couple of top priorities. However you compare the systems, use your list of requirements to sort out which system to choose.
- **Talk to references:** Your relationship with your vendor is very important. If you can't trust your vendor to provide the support you need you'll end up frustrated and inefficient. Once you've narrowed down to a top choice, ask other organizations about their experiences. Make sure you don't just talk to vendor-approved references. Message boards and online communities are a good place to find people who can offer insights or advice.

Develop Your Logic Tree

A logic tree is a map of all the pathways a user can take through your system.

Often called "branching logic," it is a common feature in survey tools and online forms. Simple branching logic is essentially linear. Each decision leads to a set of distinct options until the user reaches a final point.

In the example below, a user is asked "Which direction do you want to go?" She can select "North," "South," "East," or "West." Each of these options then leads to its own universe of options, in this case a state or country.

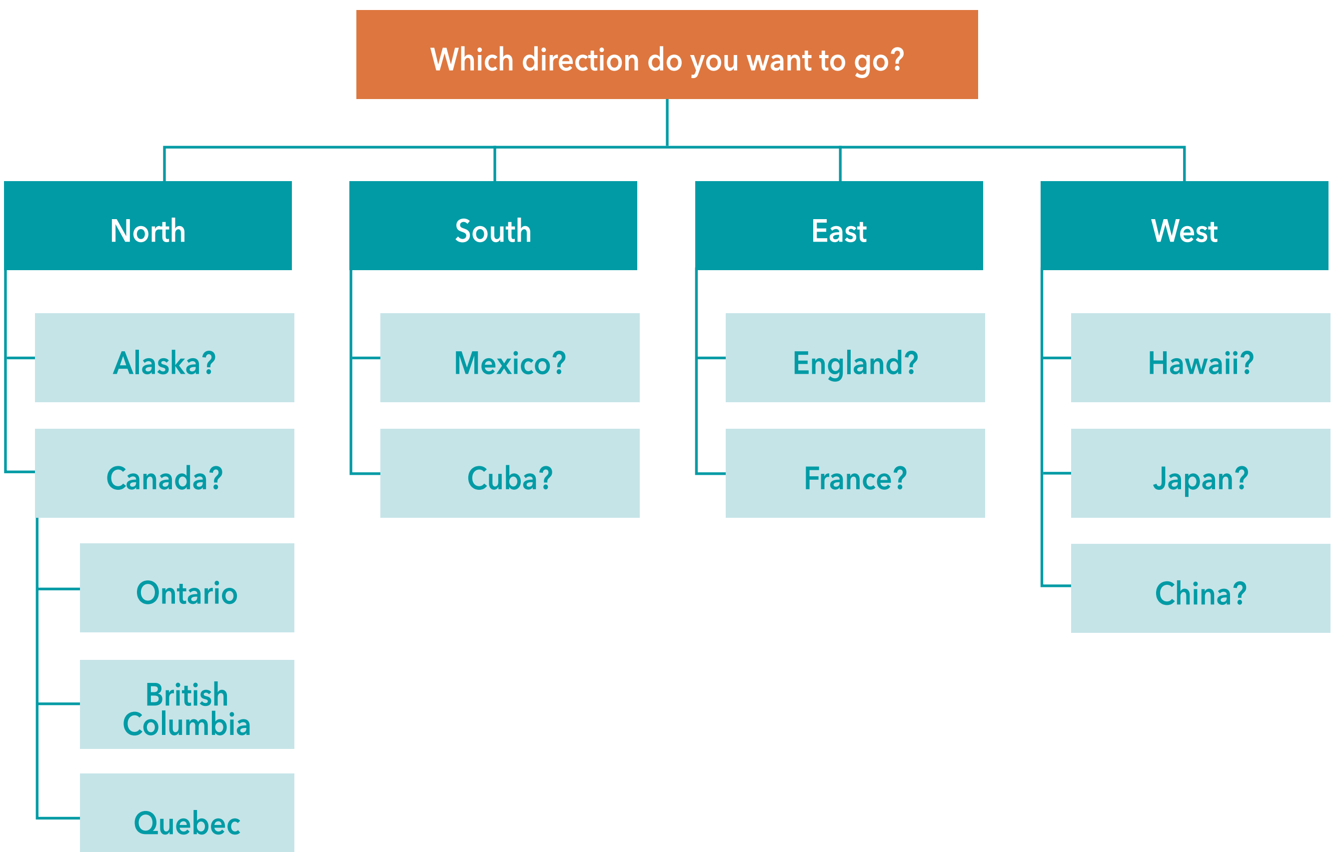

Figure 1: Example of Simple Branching Logic

More complex branching logic can take into account multiple answers to bring up the next series of options or lead to the same endpoint in multiple ways. For example, if a user enters that she is 60 or older, has a disability, and is an immigrant, a complex logic system that prioritizes demographic categories will offer her different questions and information about her housing issue than a 20-year-old veteran with a disability will see. Your needs will vary, but at a minimum a simple logic system will help you drive users to useful results that can help them solve their legal issue.

GETTING STARTED

Developing the logic tree will be challenging and time-consuming. Jack Haycock at Pine Tree Legal Aid said, “Whatever time you think it’s going to take, double it.” Fortunately, you probably don’t need to develop your logic tree from scratch. Many organizations have already gone through the painstaking process of sorting through the various options and priorities and developing the language that will guide users through the system. Using an existing logic tree as a template is a smart way to get a jump on the project. (This toolkit includes links to examples from Maine, Michigan, and New Mexico in the case studies.)

LANGUAGE IS CRITICAL

“Logic” is a good way to describe the pathways users can take through your triage system. Users select the answers and options that make sense to them, so it’s important that your triage system uses the terms that ordinary people recognize and typically use. For example, rather than ask “Are you seeking criminal record expungement?” you might ask “Do you want to fix or get rid of your criminal record?” Plain language that approaches the issue from the user’s point of view will make it more likely that each user progresses through the system and reaches useful results.

There are a number of different ways to arrive at the right language for your system. Hotline and intake staff will have valuable input on the language to use because they’re familiar with how callers and visitors talk about their legal issues and have experience translating what they hear into the legal issues and problem codes recognized by attorneys and courts. You may also want to hire a plain language consultant to help you recognize problematic terms and refine the way information is presented or phrased.

Some organizations test the language before they build the system. You can show a client the language you believe reflects their issue and ask them whether the question or phrase matches what they were expecting. Card sorting with flashcards can make this process easy and kind of fun.

KNOW WHEN TO MOVE FORWARD

One reason this stage can take so long is that it’s easy to quibble over a word here or a comma there, especially when you’re working with a committee made up of staffers from multiple organizations. However, your project leader needs to be firm. Build in multiple opportunities for formal feedback and set clear deadlines. Remind everyone that this is a complex, cooperative process and last-minute changes or a dozen rounds of revision will put the entire project in jeopardy. It’s also a good idea to manage expectations and remind your committee that not all suggestions will ultimately be incorporated into the finished product.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND AUTOMATING TRIAGE

Artificial Intelligence, or AI, might seem like the plot of a futuristic science fiction book, but it's already here, and it's already being used to automate and improve online intake and triage.

Over the last 25 years, there have been a handful of shifts in how we interact with technology. Early personal computers' operating systems used a command line interface. The advent of a graphical user interfaces like Windows made computers accessible to a much larger audience. In the late 1990s, the web browser made it much easier to distribute content online, and since then, the Cloud, smartphones, and mobile devices revolutionized computing.

Today, instead of typing an instruction or request into a command line, we can simply ask Siri or Alexa questions or give them vocal commands. This is a form of AI. If you type a command, it's easy for the computer to carry it out because it knows exactly what you want it to do. But if you're asking a question, it can be more difficult because you might word the question a little differently or pronounce words differently than other people—for example, "Siri, is it going to be sunny outside today?" compared to "Siri, what's today's weather forecast?" The software vendor could program every possible option for how you might ask that question, but that would be tedious and unlikely to anticipate every possibility.

That's where machine learning comes in. Machine learning lets the AI make guesses by interpreting what you've entered and about how to answer your question or carry out your command.

As more and more people become comfortable speaking to their computers, and those computers become better at responding, it's not difficult to see the possibilities of AI and machine learning for online intake and triage. People who call looking for legal help aren't always going to know exactly what they need or how to find the right kind of assistance—even branching logic might lose some percentage of those callers by not correctly interpreting their needs. Rather than writing everything into branching logic, you could give the AI rules and have it figure it out, routing people who need help to the right resources, which might be an article or a legal form or a lawyer or a regional legal assistance website.

An early form of this is called natural language processing. You can see it in action in the triage system of Illinois Legal Aid Online when a user starts to type a word or phrase to describe their legal problem and a pre-programmed list of potential options opens up to help guide their next move. AI provides the opportunity to do this without programming all the potential options, saving time and expanding the utility of the tool.

By giving it access to more information, AI can also become predictive. For example, it could look at the data elements and factors of a particular case and similar cases from the past and make guesses about how much time the case is going to take to help the organization allocate resources. Or it could predict likely outcomes based on what judge is assigned to a case and that judge's history with similar cases.

AI is not one thing—it's thousands of things, and that means it presents just as many opportunities to help legal assistance organizations. For example, if someone takes a picture of their eviction notice with their smartphone camera, AI can extract data from the photo, such as the address and the landlord's name. By cross-referencing that data against existing databases, it can learn that, say, that particular landlord is involved in a dozen other eviction cases, and that the address is in public housing (which makes it that much more critical because the consequence is the loss of housing and the subsidy that paid for it) so the organization's staff know things about the case before they even talk to the person.

While AI is here today, it's not yet in widespread use—though it is likely to be increasingly common moving forward. For legal assistance organizations interested in pursuing artificial intelligence, there are a couple of things to keep in mind.

First, you can't design and build this tool on your own. It takes a deep wallet and some of the best and brightest minds, but it also takes access to vast amounts of data to train AI and machines, which is why companies like Facebook, Google, and Amazon are the ones succeeding in this field. Second, the involvement of such companies provides data concerns. Are you OK sharing details of a case with Google?

A frequent concern about AI is the fear that it will replace people by "stealing" their jobs, but a better way to think of it is as a tool to make you better at your job. As an example, I.V. Ashton of Houston.AI cites "Ctrl-F," the keyboard shortcut for file search on a computer. Not that long ago, he said, lawyers had to manually search through thousands of printed pages of case files to find recurring terms or names, a search that might take hours or days. The ability to search digital files with the push of a button means that same search might take seconds—it hasn't eliminated jobs, but it has made the people who hold those jobs more efficient, making it possible to serve more people.

AI has the potential to change and improve triage systems for legal aid and other justice system entities. If you are building a new triage system, keep an eye and ear on this conversation in the national sphere. Among other projects in the works right now, LSC's pilot portal projects with Microsoft will be taking advantage of this new technology, making it open and available to others in the sector as well.

Design and Build Your Triage Tool

Your online triage and intake system is a specialized tool that you will design to provide legal help to your unique clientele, but it's only as good as the information it is sorting and serving up to the end-users. To do this you may need to partner or integrate with other information warehouses, such as robust self-help websites, United Way's 211, or through a tool like Open Referral.

Triage works best when it works in conjunction with a robust self-help/informational website. To evaluate your website, look at LSC's Statewide Website Evaluation site at https://webassessment.lsc.gov.

DO YOU NEED TO INTEGRATE?

It takes very little technology expertise to manually move data from one system to another. In most cases, it's as simple as running a report and uploading that report into the second system. However, regularly migrating data manually is cumbersome and can delay the time it takes to get information to staff members and attorneys.

Automatically transferring data from one system to another takes a lot of time and expertise, but it will likely be worth it in terms of time savings and process flow—especially if you are planning to do "warm referral" during intake to another party or platform, such as the court system for case processing, court-based triage, or other resources; Bar-based lawyer-referral services; low bono or Modest Means Program panels; or other agencies doing community services.

You will almost certainly need to hire a consultant to build your integration, but at a high level, data integration is about accurately mapping data from one system to where it will live in a second system and writing the rules that "push" data from one system to another.

When considering system integration, keep client confidentiality in mind. Make sure users are aware of (and agree to) their data being transferred to another system if it is external to your organization, and that there is no conflict with the providers.

CHOOSING A CONSULTANT

Even if you have skilled technology people on staff, you may need to hire a consultant, especially if you need to build an integration between systems. A consultant who is experienced using the specific technology you're implementing can save you a lot of time and money you might otherwise spend on learning by trial and error.

Before you start your search, it's important to define the scope of the work by mapping out the rough outlines of the project. From there, you'll consider what you'll need a consultant's help with and what you can manage yourself. This process of sorting out tasks and responsibilities has numerous benefits. Not only will it help you explain your project to potential consultants, it can also help you focus on the skills you'll need them to bring to the table.

Once you have a solid grasp of the project and the kind of help you'll need, ask yourself a few questions to help you focus on the kind of consultant you want.

- **Should your consultant be local?** It may be easier to work with someone face-to-face. Someone who works locally can learn more quickly about your organization and collaborate more directly, if she or he can meet you in person. However, depending on where your offices are located, sticking with someone in town may severely limit your options, especially if you're searching for a specific skill set or have a tight budget.
- **Should you work with an individual or a consulting firm?** Working with an individual can significantly lower your costs and ensure that your project gets the focused attention it needs, but it's also somewhat risky. A consulting firm is much less likely to drop your work for a more exciting project or decide to take a month's vacation at a critical time. You can usually count on a firm for the long haul. Firms also have project management support to help you work through the process, and their experience with a wide range of organizations and projects means you're less likely to encounter surprises.

The next step is to find the best fit for your organization. How do you find consultants qualified to help with your project? One simple way is through referrals. Reach out to other organizations to find out about their experiences and to ask who they've worked with and how well they liked them. Past clients can provide insight about how well consultants were able to handle projects and can bring up any issues to look out for. Board members and staff may also have connections that might be useful and may be able to help you get a lower rate. You can also search lists provided by state associations, organizations that support your community, and other directories.

Once you have a list of consultants you're interested in, get in touch with them and send a one-page description of your project that includes goals, needed skills, your budget range, and—if applicable—your openness to work with multiple consultants.

Next, schedule interviews to learn more about the candidates' backgrounds and skill sets. Make sure that the consultant explains the work in a way that is clear and easy for you to understand. This will help avoid miscommunications in the future and is a good test of how knowledgeable he or she is on the topic.

Some organizations put out requests for proposals (RFPs), but many established firms and individual consultants—including those most likely to meet your needs—may not choose to invest the substantial time necessary to answer an RFP when they don't know how likely they are to win your business. See an example RFP at https://www.idealware.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/RFP-Triage-TIG-15016.pdf, or learn more by reading *An Overview of the RFP Process for Nonprofits, Charities, and Libraries* (https://www.techsoup.org/support/articles-and-how-tos/overview-of-the-rfp-process).

Don't forget to ask for references and follow up with them. You can ask whether the consultant did similar work for the reference, whether the consultant finished on time and on budget, whether the reference was happy with the work, and whether the reference would hire the consultant again. Hiring a consultant is a lot like hiring staff. You need to make sure this is someone with whom you can build a relationship and work effectively.

CONSIDER THE DESIGN OF YOUR TOOLS

What design features will be important to your online triage and intake system? How will you build your site to make it easy for everyone to navigate through their choices and find the information or resources they need?

Here's a checklist of user experience best practices:

- The most important information goes at the top. For example, if a user has to click a button to begin triage, that button shouldn't be at the bottom of the page—otherwise she might never see it.
- Keep it simple—more text and images usually means more clutter.
- Always make it easy to navigate back to the beginning. You don't want someone to reach a dead end and give up on your site and risk losing a person who you might otherwise help.
- Let users know where they are on the site using icons or breadcrumb text.
- Use the same colors and basic layout as your website. You don't want to create any confusion about whether the user is still working with your organization, which will make it more clear if you send them to another agency's site.
- Make sure your website loads quickly, otherwise people might give up.
- Take a mobile-first approach. If you design for mobile, the desktop experience will likely be cleaner and mobile users (a growing majority of web users) will have no trouble navigating.
- Make sure buttons are big and easy to touch on a mobile device. The minimum size should be 1cm x 1cm with some padding.
- Avoid horizontal scrolling.
- Make sure login or search features are accessible on every page.
- Labels should be outside of the field the user is filling in.
- Split up form questions into sections or "next" pages to make the questionnaire feel less daunting.
- Error messages should be clear, concise, and provide direction on what to do next.
- Links should always stand out and be easy to identify as links.
- Link text should make it clear where the link is going to take the user.
- Buttons that change or delete data should be harder to click to prevent "pocket clicks."
- If your tool includes search, make sure users see a box where they can begin typing.

- The most important information on a page should stand out visually—make it easy for people to understand that this content is their top priority.
- Use color and size contrast to guide users to the most important content.
- How scannable is your content? Most users scan first and read second.
- Make sure text size is large enough for everyone to read and responsively resizes with the size of the screen.
- Avoid italics and all caps—for many users these are hard to read.

What Are Your Accessibility Requirements?

When designing an online triage or intake tool, don't assume that every person who will visit the site will see it in the same way.

Your audience will include people with varying abilities, and if it's not accessible to everyone who needs or wants to access it, your organization is falling short.

The United Nations recognized web accessibility as a basic human right in 2006. Steps to make websites accessible to people with disabilities also benefit many other users, including those who are older, recovering from injuries, or restricted to mobile devices, older computer technology, or slower connection speeds.

In this section, you'll learn about common website accessibility issues and identify what aspects of accessibility are important to your organization.

Usability testing is a way to evaluate your website or online intake form by asking people to complete it the way any real world user would and observing their behavior and reaction. This allows you to find anything that serves as an obstacle, or anything that is unclear or misleading, and fix it before going live.

Understanding and Applying the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

There are many resources and guidelines available on how to make your website more accessible, so we'll just summarize them here. If you want to read more, the World Wide Web Consortium Web Accessibility Initiative offers introductory materials and resource guides for planning for accessibility in its Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) at http://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/accessibility.php.

USABILITY TESTING

User testing is an iterative process that can, and should, be done at different stages of design and implementation. Explorative testing during the design phase can help capture users' thought processes and conceptual understanding of the design. Comparative testing, or A/B testing, lets users try two different approaches to the same goal to help determine which is more effective. Assessment testing on a rough draft or prototype of the site can help uncover technical or workflow problems.

Which techniques you employ, and at how many points during the design and implementation process, depends on your resources, but it's important that you do some user testing before launch. There's an entire field devoted to usability testing. Depending on the complexity of your system, you can hire experts to test it for you, or purchase software designed to track and record users' interactions with a site along with any critical incidents they encounter and any comments they leave. At a bare minimum, you can conduct usability testing on your own by recruiting people to participate.

If you choose to handle it yourself, there are a few tips and tricks that might help you be more successful.

- Recruit a diverse group of people for your testing cohort, including those with differing levels of comfort with technology, and different cultural backgrounds and language skills. Prioritize "real" users representative of your legal aid audience and those you wish to serve.
- Test as early and as often as you can. It's easier to adapt in the design stage than after implementation.
- Observe them while they navigate the site—encourage them to "narrate" their experience, but don't interfere or guide them. (Note the difference between *listening* and *observing*. While both are valuable, sometimes you can learn different things from watching than from asking questions.)
- Pay attention to how long it takes them to complete certain tasks and look for ambiguities or anything that is not clear, watching for trends or areas of overlap among different users.
- Focus them on specific tasks. Rather than "what did you think of this intake form," ask them for their thoughts on how easily they were able to enter their information and reach their desired goals. Ask if they understood what they just did and what they expect to happen next in the process.

Following the test, ask users about their experiences in an interview or by survey/questionnaire. There are pros and cons to each—written surveys and questionnaires can collect more structured data but are less "flexible" than interviews, and may pose challenges for people with language challenges. Whenever possible, ask open-ended questions to help uncover issues you may not have thought of.

Act on what you learn by making changes to improve the usability of the site, and then test it again. This not only ensures that the changes you made were appropriate but will additionally help you discover new usability problems.

Completing Your Launch Checklist

Before you can launch your website, you'll need to make sure it's ready for prime time. Restaurants call it a soft open, Broadway musicals call it a preview—either way, it's good to launch your site in a limited capacity, perhaps only internally, to iron out wrinkles and solve problems before releasing it widely to the public.

In this worksheet, you'll make sure you've dotted your I's and crossed your T's before your website goes live. Read through the checklist below and check off each pre-launch task as you complete it.

Has someone...

- [ ] Tested all the forms on the site?
- [ ] Proofed and copyedited content for accuracy and completeness?
- [ ] Replaced all placeholder text with content?
- [ ] Replaced all placeholder images with pictures and acquired licenses for any stock images used?
- [ ] Tested the site on all supported browsers?
- [ ] Made sure the web analytics tool is up-to-date and on the correct site and new pages?
- [ ] Been assigned to be "on-deck" during the transition in case something goes wrong?
- [ ] Made a PR plan and readied new materials for launch?
- [ ] Asked partners to help test their paths?
- [ ] Tested each (or most) paths to make sure each endpoint has at least one resource, and that resources are appropriate for that end point?
- [ ] Double-checked that all modifications to the design are complete?
- [ ] Ensured that all (or most) bugs are worked out?
- [ ] Considered including an "I have another [family/housing/social security] problem" as a catchall in every category that leads to generic lawyer resources for people who just can't pigeonhole their problem into one of your (many) options?

If you've completed this checklist, you're ready to set your new website loose in the world. Congratulations!

Collecting and Analyzing the Data

Your new online triage and intake tool will create a lot of data that you can track and analyze. But is it the right data? What do you need to measure to know whether your system is working and how you can make it better? What can you get from Google Analytics, and what will have to be retrieved from the triage database?

ESTABLISHING YOUR METRICS

The first step to creating useful metrics is clearly articulating your goals. What do you want your online triage and intake system to accomplish?

Is your goal for users to reach a results page with information to help them resolve their legal issue? Do you want to reduce the number of phone calls related to an issue? Do you want people to get started with an attorney more quickly? List your goals and then think about what kinds of data will help you measure your progress against each goal. For example, if you want to make sure people reach a results page, you can schedule a report in Google Analytics that shows you how many people left within 10 seconds ("Bounce Rate"), what page a user exits from, and the amount of time spent on a page. You can also track how many users moved on to intake when presented the link.

Beyond web metrics, you can use surveys, ratings features, and other feedback channels to track how well people like using the site. However, be careful when using these subjective measures. Some people might rate their experience negatively if they don't get a lawyer, even if the tool was easy to navigate and provided useful information. If you can cross reference your results to show whether a user received legal help you'll get a clearer picture of the actual user experience.

You can also track outcomes using your case management system or the database upon which your triage is built. Some triage systems that are not integrated with intake or a case management system create a unique confirmation code that is then entered into the client's file. Integrated systems can be configured to automatically log the triage data along with intake data in the client file. Looking at case outcomes—whether legal aid helped, and what level of service it provided—can help you determine whether your triage and online intake systems are working the way you intended. For more about outcomes measurement visit the LSC Civil Legal Outcomes Toolkit. (https://www.lsc.gov/grants-grantee-resources/civil-legal-outcomes/elearning)

Once you've decided what data you want to collect, you can schedule reports to deliver that data to you and develop a dashboard that collects all the information in one place. A dashboard is useful for at least two reasons. The first is that you can see a lot of data at once and are likely to notice connections or will see opportunities to drill deeper into the data. The second reason is that a dashboard can provide a lot of historical data in one place, allowing you to see trends and other changes.

You'll need to share data with partners—and to ask them to share it with you—in order to track outcomes and get information about how many cases they took on that you referred to them. Be clear about what information you'll need from them and why, and address any privacy issues up front by stating your intended use. You'll need to work together to make sure you get the data you need in the format you want without placing undue burden on them, and vice versa. Consider establishing a regular meeting or call to check in on this process and to discuss the data and relevant implications for both organizations, and to make any necessary and appropriate modifications to your systems.

Ongoing Maintenance

To keep your triage and intake system running well and continuing to provide useful information and referrals to users, you'll need to keep up with ongoing maintenance.

MAINTENANCE OF TRIAGE AND ONLINE INTAKE SYSTEMS

All websites require regular maintenance. Security updates and patches need to be addressed quickly, especially if client data is at all at risk. You will also need to periodically review new versions of your content management system after they are released and plan for future upgrades. Other maintenance tasks include fixing broken links, backing up your site, periodically testing loading speeds, checking search results, checking forms to make sure they're still functioning properly, and keeping up with changes to browsers and devices. If you don't have this maintenance capacity in-house, make arrangements with a contract web developer to provide these services.

UPDATING THE LOGIC

Referral partners will periodically move to new offices or change the focus of their work. You might also find that a referral partner is getting a disproportionate number of referrals or is not capable of serving the number of people who are referred to them.

As the lead and ongoing manager of this triage and intake project, you need to establish regular contact with your referral partners and schedule time to review how the system works and the information it provides.

One easy way to manage the changes is to create a shared document that referral partners can add to when needed—although they'll likely need a lot of prompting and reminders to make sure they follow through. Another option is an online form that partners can submit that collects the info you need to make the requested modification.

LEARNING AND ADJUSTING

Collecting data is important, but only if you have a plan for what to do with it. Many organizations schedule periodic reviews of the data and spend time analyzing it. If your committee will continue to meet after your triage and intake tool launches, you can report on your findings there and discuss opportunities to improve your system.

MARKETING

The success of your triage and intake tool will depend on how good you are at getting the word out to people in your state who need legal help. There are many ways you can find your audience. Here are a few ideas to help you get started.

- Reach out to client service organizations that frequently refer people to your organization. If possible, show them the tool in person and explain how it works.
- Reach out to your state bar association and suggest that they publicize the tool to their members as a place they can refer would-be clients that they cannot represent.
- Reach out to media organizations and suggest a news story that features your tool. If you have specific clients who are willing to talk to the media about their experiences, you're more likely to gain interest in the story.
- Post information in libraries, courts, and other places where potential clients are likely to visit.
- Use social media advertising to target specific audiences.
- Buy advertising on buses and at bus stops.
- Post to message boards where people might be seeking help.
- If your triage or online intake is connected to your existing website, determine how to best drive your existing traffic to these new tools.

Conclusion

Online triage and intake have the potential to significantly expand the reach of your organization and improve legal outcomes for the residents of your state.

The benefits are clear. Now it's time to take the first step. Good luck as you begin forming your committee and weighing your options. You have a big job ahead, but the work done in Illinois, Maine, Michigan, New Mexico, and other states has shown a clear path to success. Now it's your turn to build on that success and create a tool that will improve the lives of people across your state.

Did you find this TIG Toolkit useful? Please take a short survey to let us know what you thought of it to help guide future content:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TIGtoolkits

Case Studies

Michigan Legal Help

https://michiganlegalhelp.org/guide-to-legal-help

Michigan is a diverse state with vulnerable residents in remote rural areas and struggling industrial cities. Five legal aid organizations and a handful of non-LSC organizations provide legal help across the state.

For years, the statewide website kept a county-based list of every lawyer referral service and legal help organization in the state. If a Michigander needed legal assistance, she'd have to decide on her own whether it made sense to seek out legal help, and who to call. "Most of the referrals weren't very good," said Angela Tripp, Director of the Michigan Legal Help Program.

To solve this challenge, Tripp and her team set out to build the "Guide to Legal Help," a triage system that directs users to the precise information and help they need, while cutting down on the confused or misdirected phone calls received by legal aid offices and the statewide hotline. The triage system is built on the Drupal Content Management System and replicated/built upon Drupal modules created for similar triage systems in Maine and Connecticut. (Download an example of Michigan Legal Help's logic model at https://www.idealware.org/download/75656/)

"We wanted to put triage on the website to give people really focused referrals and avoid all that wasted time and energy," Tripp said.

NAVIGATING THE SYSTEM

Users who enter the Guide to Legal Help are first asked whether they're seeking help for themselves or someone else and whether they or their legal problems are in Michigan. If they're not Michiganders, they are directed to LSC's Find Legal Aid (https://www.lsc.gov/what-legal-aid/find-legal-aid) site with information about legal aid programs in other states.

If the user is in Michigan, she continues and selects her county and the kind of help she wants most—a lawyer, court forms, self-help information, or "I don't know." Once she's completed those steps she can select among 10 demographic categories including age, disability status, or whether she's at risk of homelessness. Next users enter whether they live with people and how many, enter their income, and select what kinds of benefits or assistance they receive. Many systems move into legal topics from here, but Michigan also asks about nine factors that help the system learn about some of the nuances of the situation. For example, you can select "I don't feel comfortable talking to the other party in my case" and "The way this legal problem gets resolved will have a huge impact on my life," and the system is able to prioritize the information you receive based on the level of urgency and some metric of whether the person is more or less likely to succeed on their own (without an attorney). Then users navigate simple logic trees to identify their legal problems.

If the system determines a case is urgent or a high priority and the user is income-eligible, the user gets a phone number or link for online intake to contact a legal aid partner directly. If the income-eligible client's case is not one that the program typically accepts for representation or needs a second, more interactive form of screening, the system directs the user to the statewide Counsel and Advocacy Law Line's hotline number or online intake link. If the case is not a priority for any of the referral partners, users are only referred to state and local bar association referral services. Everyone who completes triage also gets get self-help information relevant to their legal problem, including articles, toolkits, and Do-It-Yourself form completing tools. Triage also makes appropriate referrals to domestic violence shelters, court-sponsored mediation centers, and various private bar services (such as lawyer search databases, lawyer referral services, modest means referral panels, unbundled service panels, and Free Legal Answers).

LOGICAL COLLABORATION

The logic behind how users navigate the site and the results they get at the end of the triage process was painstakingly developed over many months.

Tripp and her team started with logic trees developed by other organizations, using them as templates that they modified based on what they knew about Michigan. They then took these first drafts to a committee made up of members of legal aid organizations in the state. "We reviewed the logic trees for six hours over two days with the committee, going through and talking about what's missing and the wording," Tripp said. She and her team then met individually with each referral partner to find out what kinds of cases each organization wanted to take and how to prioritize them. Sometimes the team discovered that there were secondary criteria. For example, for debt collection issues, a senior citizen might get the office phone number for an intake, while a 40-year-old with the same issue would be sent to the hotline for legal advice.

"Staff put hours and hours into talking to legal aid programs, then tweaking the logic, adding layers of classification—which took a lot of time and attention to detail," Tripp said.

One challenge in working with so many partners is the gap between what the partner would like to do and what it is reasonably capable of. For example, if a partner wants to be sent every case in its geographic region, but lacks the capacity to manage so many referrals, does the triage project leader reject the request, negotiate the number down, or simply send a flood of referrals?

Rivalry among organizations in the same geographic area and that serve overlapping populations is another challenge. "Practically speaking—logistically, politically—how do you handle who is listed first?" Tripp asked.

In the end, all of the hard work and collaboration has resulted in more than 400 results pages—each representing an issue area, a county, a special population, and the referral partners' requirements.

A FOCUS ON THE USER EXPERIENCE

Tripp and her team were already working with an established, successful website in MichiganLegal-Help.org. The challenge was to guide users to the triage tool and through the questions seamlessly.

"We did a lot of work on design," Tripp said. "We themed the look and feel to match Michigan Legal Help and discussed all the details: the shape of buttons, language, clickable areas."

Tripp and her team also thought carefully about how to guide people toward the triage system. Users who come to the website and browse through the self-help topics might get a pop up that says: "Can we help you with something?" If the user clicks, "Yes, I'd like help," she'll be asked a triage question and begin the process.

PUTTING THE SYSTEM TO THE TEST

Michigan carried out three rounds of user testing. The first two rounds were formal, in-person sessions. Typical users were given a fictional scenario and were asked to seek legal help through the system. They had the option to use a phone, tablet, or computer. As users navigated the triage system, Tripp and her team watched their body language, where they clicked, and whether they were successful in finding help. Tripp also interviewed users to get their reactions and to hear their suggestions for how the system could be easier to navigate.

The MLH staff also ran smaller, more targeted tests. For example, at Motor City Pride, an annual LGBTQ festival in Detroit, Tripp set up a table and asked people stopping by the MLH table to react to icons or button options. She also conducted a mobile test at a local ice cream shop, giving away free ice cream toppings in exchange for people doing a short usability test on a mobile phone.

"We could have tested it forever," Tripp said. "The number of permutations is huge."

THE NEXT STEPS

The next big step is to begin implementing a statewide online intake system that will work seamlessly with its triage system and integrate with Pika, the case management system used by all five LSC programs in Michigan. Once the intake project is complete, Tripp and her team will be able to see not only whether the user got legal help, but the end result of the case. The intake project began in the first quarter of 2018, and as of publication, two of the five LSC programs in the state are live. The online intake system is also built in Drupal, and easily enables visitors to submit all the information that legal aid programs require in the intake process. Separate user testing of this module was also done before launch.

In the meantime, Tripp has a "punch list" of items that had to be set aside to meet her launch deadline. For example, she would like to make the mobile buttons bigger, and adjust how the chat function works. She also would like to begin work on translating the site into Spanish and is interested in the possibilities of someday removing the logic tree and instead using a more complex search function. A fuller integration with the state bar's lawyer search and online Lawyer Referral Service is also planned for the near future, so triage users don't have to enter their county, income, and legal problem information again.

In the months since it was launched, about 115 people a day successfully complete triage to get individualized information and referrals. Nearly 70 percent of those who begin triage complete it, and it takes an average of 90 seconds for them to do so. Around 80 percent of those who use the triage system are at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, so both LSC-eligible and more moderate income people are using the tools to get information and referrals. "We want to only give meaningful referrals now," Tripp said. "The goal is to help them understand their problem—then talk to a lawyer or find other resources."

Pine Tree Legal Assistance

https://ptla.org/triage/me_triage

Maine is a small, mostly rural state. A little over a million people are spread over 35,000 square miles. Pine Tree Legal Assistance—the only legal aid organization in Maine—has offices in six counties, which allow it to serve more than 27,000 people each year. However, thousands more Mainers were not getting any help because they didn't know who to call or how to get through to the right people.

In 2015, Pine Tree launched "Find Legal Help," an online triage system modeled on the Legal Resource Finder developed in Massachusetts. The idea was to create a website that is easy to navigate and that allows people to access the information or legal help they need. (Download an example of PTLA's logic tree at https://www.idealware.org/download/75648/)

"It really works well for people who have a hard time being available during walk-in—people who are working, trying to manage childcare, have mobility issues," said Jack Haycock, Client Focused Technology Innovator at Pine Tree Legal Aid.

A FOCUS ON SIMPLICITY

Kathleen Caldwell spearheaded the original project, drawing on knowledge and inspiration from Rochelle Hahn at MassLegalServices.org and collaborating with Kate Frank and Kathy Daniels at CT Law Help. All three organizations decided early on that their triage systems needed to be simple—just a few questions up front to help sort out eligibility and short lists of options as users navigate through various topics.

"You have to get a clear idea of what you want or need the system to do," Haycock said.

The Pine Tree triage system was built using Drupal, an open-source CMS, and Drupal's free Webforms module. When users visit the site they first answer whether they live in Maine. If they live outside of Maine, they're directed to a page that helps them find legal resources outside of the state. If they are Mainers, it next asks for their Zip code. After a Zip code is entered, users check boxes to indicate demographic information such as whether they're over 60, have a disability, or immigrated from another country. Finally, users enter their household income.

Once demographic information is entered into the system, users choose among 10 topic areas and begin narrowing down their issue. For example, if a user chooses "Housing," she can then choose between options such as "I live in a group home or a homeless shelter" or "I have a problem with a former landlord." When users finish making their selections, they reach a screen that lists each selection and allows them to "Submit." When they do they reach the final screen that displays the results—self-help resources, phone numbers of organizations that can help, and if they are eligible for legal services, a link to the intake system.

THE LOGICAL NEXT STEP

According to Haycock, the most challenging and time-intensive part of the process was mapping the logic for how someone moves through the site and reaches a results page. "How you ask the questions, what questions you ask, getting the plain language squared away on that—it can get really complicated really quickly," Haycock said.

Pine Tree formed a committee that included intake staff, attorneys, and technical staff to map out every potential path, documenting in a spreadsheet (see Appendix C) hundreds of selections a user might make. Each selection was painstakingly considered both for how well it represents the legal issues facing Maine residents and the language that would make that issue instantly recognizable.

"The language has to be the language our clients are using," Haycock said.

To get at this language, Haycock said Pine Tree relied heavily on the experience of intake staff members who regularly field phone calls or talk face-to-face with people who are explaining their legal issues in the terms that make sense to them.

The need to get so many people involved and the complexity of the task mean that it's easy to fall behind or exceed your budget during this stage. "The logic tree is definitely a spot where you can end up spending a lot of extra time," Haycock said. "Whatever time you think it's going to take, double it."

HANDING OFF TO INTAKE

Small states with just one legal aid organization and few other referral options can use relatively simple technology to create a seamless experience for clients.

In Maine, once a user completes triage and the tool determines that she might be eligible for legal aid, she has three options. She can read articles and other online materials and attempt to handle the issue herself, she can contact an intake specialist at a legal aid office via a phone number on the screen, or she can click to being the intake process online. Only high-priority cases receive the phone option.

Pine Tree's online intake module is integrated with both the triage system and its case management system. This means that answers given during the triage process are automatically populated for intake and information entered in the intake system is sent to Pine Tree's case management system. Intake specialists call this a "warm referral" since the legal aid organization already has some information about the client before she completes intake.

Once the user completes the intake form, she's given a confirmation number and a message letting her know that the legal aid office will contact her to begin helping her with her issue. Behind the scenes, Pine Tree staff receive the client information and begin a conflict check to make sure she'll be properly served by the organization. Staffers also verify that the client meets all other eligibility criteria before taking the case.

LEARNING AND ADJUSTING

Caldwell and team did a lot of testing to make sure people could find the information and resources they needed.

“Once you have a prototype, the more live testing you can do the better,” Haycock said.

Caldwell and Haycock ran testing groups and observed body language, how people clicked through their options, and where they ran into dead ends.

The team also made sure to track web statistics that show how far people make it through the logic pathways and where they “bounce,” or leave the site.

Based on two years of data and feedback from users of Find Legal Help and the main Pine Tree website, Haycock led a redesign that simplified the site structure, updated the colors, added icons to represent the legal topics, and improved the size and contrast of the navigation buttons.

“One of the real strengths of the site is that it’s meticulously put together,” Haycock said. “It does a good job of leading people through the steps to figure out what kind of information they should be looking for.”

New Mexico Legal Aid

https://donate.newmexicolegalaid.org/content/online-triage

New Mexico is a small state, but it has big hopes for its online triage and intake system. Powered by Neota Logic's Reasoning Engine and built on a Pro Bono Net template, New Mexico's system can not only guide visitors to information or legal help. It has the potential to learn from case histories and adjust the information and kinds of help users receive. (Download an example of the question script at https://www.idealware.org/download/75651/)

"We're looking for ways to use the system to reduce the crisis factors," said Ed Marks, Executive Director of New Mexico Legal Aid. "But the key goal is to make sure people have 24/7 access."

HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS

New Mexico's system launched in 2016 and basically works like any other branching logic system. Users answer a few preliminary questions, which lead to other questions, each one progressively more customized to the user and her situation.

The first question New Mexico asks is whether the issue is civil or criminal. People looking for help with a criminal case are then diverted to the Public Defender's Office. According to Marks, this significantly reduces the number of people who mistakenly contact the hotline or call an office. Next, users answer demographic questions and whether they live in New Mexico. Users who are still eligible then choose from a list of legal issues or write in the issue if they don't see it on the list. If the issue involves money, income questions are asked, but more urgent needs such as domestic violence intervention go straight to intake.

Once client information is entered, the system does a preliminary conflict check and flags any potential conflicts. Flagged cases go to an attorney who can dig into the situation and evaluate whether the conflict is genuine. Cases that aren't flagged are forwarded to the case management system where an attorney can begin working on the case.

Automated conflict checks, however, are only the beginning of what's possible. The platform has artificial intelligence tools that can help organizations learn about their clients and how best to help them. "It has the capacity to see how one issue correlates with another," Marks said.

For example, if a lot of people who are facing car repossession then come back a few weeks later with a housing issue, the system can recognize that connection and the team can build in rules that help address both the car repossession and the chance that housing is at risk. Marks also sees the potential for calculating and comparing probabilities based on outcomes data, allowing attorneys to pursue legal options that have been proven to work in similar cases.

“We have the potential to make decisions that are customized to clients and individual facts,” Marks said.

WORKING WITH A COMMITTEE

The project kicked off in 2014, but it progressed slowly, in part because it took so long for the five partner agencies to develop the structure and language of the system.

“The original bottleneck was getting all the players to agree on what factors should be asked,” Marks said. “No matter what we think fits a neat pattern of steps, the client’s factor pattern is infinitely variable.” Marks estimates that there are 140,000 variations in the path a user might take through the system.

The committee also worked together to test the prototype. Staff members brought in clients and other beta testers and watched over their shoulder as they filled out the forms. Later in the process, intake staff selected callers who were willing to stay on the line and use the system while testers observed remotely.

Based on testing, the committee decided that a lot of jargon needed to be cut and clutter removed from the screen. “We tried to strike a reasonable balance,” Marks said. “It was very purposeful to make the screens as uncluttered as we could.”

The committee eventually agreed to launch when the system met the 80/20 threshold—if 80 percent of the sessions were directed properly the tool could redirect the other 20 percent to the phone hotline where intake staff would talk through the issue with the prospective client. Marks and his team could then look at that twenty percent and make adjustments. “If we start seeing patterns, we go back in to look at how we can reword questions,” Marks said.

UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

“It’s one thing to have a fancy Ferrari, but if you don’t know where to put the key and don’t have the resources to fix the engine, it’s not doing you much good,” Marks said.

Staffing turnover and reduced state and federal funding have severely limited New Mexico’s ability to take full advantage of what Neota Logic’s software has to offer—both on the technology side and in analyzing data and refining the system.

Marks is hoping that a new website called JusticeHub.tools can help. According to the site’s “About” page, JusticeHub.tools is “a social network & hub aimed to aid in the identification, prevention, mitigation and solving of justice issues that affect our communities.” Marks sees it as a kind of exchange, where organizations will be matched with programmers and other skilled techies.

“We’re damn good lawyers, but not as good as software companies,” Marks said.

Appendix A: Additional Resources

Access to Justice & Technology
https://www.neotalogic.com/2014/04/16/access-to-justice-technology/

Replicable TIG Projects - Online Intake & Triage
https://www.lsc.gov/online-intake-tig-projects

TIG 2016: Online Triage and Intake: One Year Later, Lessons Learned
https://www.lsc.gov/media-center/galleries-multimedia/video/tig-2016-online-triage-and-intake-one-year-later-lessons

Drupal Triage and Intake
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvYB2cSh6Qg#action=share

Triage and Expert Systems in Legal Aid: New Tools to Assist People in Need and the Advocates That Serve Them
https://youtu.be/mFU-f4qJ47w

Online Intake: The "Whats" and the "Whys" of Online Intake
https://youtu.be/g3FTtWnhA2Q?list=PLK1aPGXqH2DigMtpZrA60nI6F6bkcjMGH

Rethinking Online Triage: Not Just a Front End to Intake
https://www.illinoislegalaid.org/about/our-work/blog/rethinking-online-triage-not-just-front-end-intake

Utah Legal Services' Online Intake System Final Report
https://www.lsc.gov/sites/default/files/09478%20ULS%20Online%20Intake.pdf

CLEAR*Online Final Report
https://www.lsc.gov/sites/default/files/09558%20WA%20Clear%20Online%20Final%20Report.pdf

Online Intake Guide - 2011 / 2012
https://lsntap.org/content/online-intake-guide-2011-2012

Illinois Legal Aid Online Research and Development
https://lsntap.org/content/illinois-legal-aid-online-research-and-development

NCSC Report: Building A Litigant Portal: Business and Technical Requirements
http://ncsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/accessfair/id/375

Self-Represented Litigants Network Triage Working Group
https://www.srln.org/

Example RFP: Michigan Advocacy Program
https://www.idealware.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/RFP-Triage-TIG-15016.pdf

Appendix B: About This Toolkit

This Toolkit is the result of a collaboration between Idealware and the Michigan Advocacy Program (MAP), funded through the Technology Initiatives Grant Program of the Legal Services Corporation (LSC).

ABOUT IDEALWARE

Idealware, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, provides thoroughly researched, impartial and accessible resources about technology to help nonprofits make smart technology decisions. Idealware's research publications, assessments, and training save nonprofits time and money by providing guidance that gives nonprofit leaders the knowledge and confidence they need to decide what's best for their organization.

ABOUT MAP

Through direct legal help and statewide advocacy, the Michigan Advocacy Program provides access to the justice system for those who need it the most. The Michigan Advocacy Program's direct service components are Legal Services of South Central Michigan, which provides free civil legal advice and representation to low-income and senior citizens in thirteen counties, and Farmworker Legal Services, which provides free legal assistance and referrals to migrant and seasonal farmworkers throughout the state of Michigan. The Michigan Advocacy Program also provides administrative services to a number of independent statewide programs, including the Michigan Poverty Law Program, the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center, the Michigan Legal Help Program, the Michigan Elder Justice Initiative, and the Crime Victim Legal Assistance Project.

ABOUT LSC

The Legal Services Corporation (LSC) is an independent nonprofit organization established by Congress in 1974 to provide financial support for civil legal aid to low-income Americans. LSC was founded on the shared American ideal of access to justice regardless of one's economic status. LSC is the largest single funder of civil legal services to the poor in the United States. LSC is a grant-making organization, distributing more than 93 percent of its federal appropriation to eligible nonprofit organizations delivering civil legal aid. LSC also administers special grant programs supporting innovative practices in the areas of technology and pro bono engagement.

AUTHORS

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Dan is a versatile writer and editor who specializes in translating complex information into compelling stories. Prior to Idealware, he was a copywriter and editor at a marketing agency that serves large technology and financial services companies. He also has experience as a freelance writer and journalist, a census enumerator, a bookseller, and a college instructor. He is a graduate of Willamette University and the University of Michigan, where he studied anthropology and creative writing.

Angela Tripp, *Michigan Advocacy Program*
Angela is the Director of the Michigan Legal Help (MLH) Program, which is responsible for the statewide website for self-represented litigants (MichiganLegalHelp.org) and 15 affiliated Self-Help Centers around the state. In 2016, over 770,000 people visited the MLH website and over 86,000 people used its resources to complete legal forms. She has led the development and growth of MLH from its inception in 2011. She is also the Co-Director of the Michigan Poverty Law Program, the state support program in Michigan, and holds a J.D. from Northeastern University School of Law in Boston and a B.A. from the University of Cincinnati.

Chris Bernard, *Idealware*
Chris is a career writer and journalist with two decades of experience in newspapers, magazines, advertising, corporate and nonprofit marketing and communications, and freelance writing. Prior to Idealware, he was managing editor of a newspaper and a senior copywriter at an ad agency. For the past seven years, he's overseen Idealware's editorial and communications efforts, driving the creation and publication of more than a hundred articles, reports, and other resources and managing the communications calendar. Outside of his work at Idealware, he's an award-winning author and a frequent speaker and lecturer at literary conferences and festivals around the country.

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