



COMMUNITY LEGAL CLINICS AND A2J GUIDED INTERVIEWS
October 2016

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2015-2016 report of the
Clinic Interview Partnership

This is the final report for the Clinic Interview Partnership project for the fiscal year of 2015-2016. It was prepared for Legal Aid Ontario by the Community Legal Clinic - Simcoe, Haliburton, Kawartha Lakes on behalf of a partnership of community legal clinics. A list of the project partners can be found at Appendix 1 of this report.

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Executive summary

Since 2012, a partnership of 17 community legal clinics has used A2J Author software to develop online interactive tools. Called the Clinic Interview Partnership (“**Clinic IP**”), the project has created 10 tools to increase the capacity of Ontario’s poverty law clinics. The tools, A2J Guided Interviews, help staff, students, community agencies, and clients with:

- document assembly
- intake
- referrals

The 10 Clinic IP tools build legal clinic capacity by making client interviews more efficient or by supporting volunteers, community agencies, and clients to play a role in entering data and creating documents. These A2J Guided Interviews support a mix of users. Some are exclusively for internal clinic use, by staff and students. Others can also be used by clients. An area of particular interest is trusted intermediaries. These are community agencies serving and trusted by hard-to-reach client groups, such as people who live in rural or remote communities or linguistic minorities.

The technology is mostly used in conjunction with person-to-person service. The reasons for this are threefold. First, Clinic IP remains a work in progress, so the A2J Guided Interviews are missing important functionality like account profiles and save and resume. This must be trained around. In addition, the people served by legal clinics face challenges with digital literacy and access. Using the tools with person-to-person service addresses these challenges. Finally, the project believes that by using the technology with person-to-person service, it can identify best practices for more client self-help.

At the outset, the project built template tools by working with legal clinic staff and practice aids, such as intake manuals. These A2J Guided Interviews were then piloted at select legal clinics, generating feedback, which resulted in iterative improvement. During the pilots, 11 of the 16 general service clinics in the project used at least one of the tools to serve clients. Encouragingly, 8 of the 11 clinics advise that the technology has become a regular part of their practice.

Even though the A2J Guided Interviews could not be saved and resumed, the technology was helpful to legal clinics. The tools were especially helpful in three ways:

- preparing appeals of Ontario Disability Support Program denials, a high volume and document intensive area of practice
- supporting student volunteers to deliver clinic services
- enabling clinics to better work with trusted intermediaries to serve hard-to-reach clients

The pilots also identified challenges. Experienced caseworkers find the A2J Guided Interview workflow prescriptive. And some Clinic IP tools are too time-consuming for internal use at a busy legal clinic. Use of document assembly tools, both at legal clinics and by clients and community agencies, is often impractical without save and resume functionality. In addition, the intake tools are not yet integrated with the case management system used by legal clinics, which results in clinic staff having to enter the same data into two different systems.

Where the tools are successful, promising outcomes are reported by the legal clinic:

- time savings on intake and document generation
- earlier access to legal clinic services
- student training times are shorter, resulting in clinics realizing more client service hours from each practicum placement
- new services, assisting clients with form completion
- better client experiences

These outcomes demonstrate that A2J Guided Interviews can expand and improve community legal clinic service. Observations from the pilots also suggest factors that may be critical to the success of A2J Guided Interviews when used in conjunction with person-to-person services:

- trial and error, through use, is important to the design process
- legal clinics may settle on different combinations of use and users to create new capacity, depending on what human resources are available to the clinic, the service area, and client need
- integration with the case management system promises to improve user experience by auto-populating previously-entered data into new A2J Guided Interviews and ensuring the same data does not need to be entered into multiple systems
- supporting multi-sector agency referral networks with A2J Guided Interviews is a promising strategy for identifying legal needs earlier, but requires careful consideration of client consent and data ownership
- A2J Author's institutional support in the United States and its continued improvement appear to be a foundation for the sustainable use of the tools by legal clinics

Outcomes and observations from the pilots have informed the design of a new server system for A2J Guided Interviews at legal clinics. This is a software wrapper for hosting the tools, providing necessary features for use with person-to-person services.

Using the new server system, the project is ready to launch its newest A2J Guided Interview, the *Caseworker tool*. This tool is designed to work in conjunction with the new case management system for clinics, called CIMS. It combines the uses of intake, document assembly and referrals in a new mobile-friendly version of A2J Author.

Once operational, the A2J Guided Interview will help legal clinics to provide more services:

- creating forms and documents at intake
- helping students and new caseworkers ask questions about various areas of law
- facilitating new ways of working with trusted intermediaries and clients

While Clinic IP remains a work in progress, A2J Guided Interviews promise to evolve as tools for community legal clinics. With time, the technology should be an enduring means of building capacity by working more closely with volunteers, community agencies, and clients.

COMMUNITY LEGAL CLINICS AND A2J GUIDED INTERVIEWS

A partnership of 17 community legal clinics uses a software called A2J Author, created by The Center for Computer- Assisted Legal Instruction (CALI) and Chicago-Kent College of Law's Illinois Institute of Technology, to develop document assembly and guided pathway tools. Its goal is to increase the service capacity of Ontario's poverty law clinics. Funded by Legal Aid Ontario ("LAO"), the Clinic Interview Partnership ("Clinic IP"), uses this technology to create interactive online tools – A2J Guided Interviews – that help with intake, forms and documents, and referrals. Clinic IP has created 10 such tools. These can be used by staff, volunteers, community agencies, and clients.

Clinic IP, a partnership of legal clinics

The project started at the Community Legal Clinic - Simcoe, Haliburton, Kawartha Lakes in 2008. In 2012, it evolved into a partnership of legal clinics, governed by a Steering Committee of clinic managers, LAO, and the Association of Community Legal Clinics of Ontario. The Simcoe clinic continues to manage the project and work is carried out by a team that includes a staff lawyer, content librarian, community legal worker, and programmer. In 2015/16, a subject matter lead and quality assurance tester supported the team's work. Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO) provided help with plain language and public legal information ("PLI"). The team works out of Parkdale Community Legal Services in Toronto.

A2J Author software

A2J Author is used across the United States. The software helps non-technical "authors" at courts, legal services organizations, law schools and other non-profits, to create and modify A2J Guided Interviews. These tools help people to complete forms or apply for help from legal aid providers.

The A2J Guided Interviews present an animated character that interviews the user. The character—an avatar—asks simple questions. In response, the user types or selects the answer. More difficult questions can be presented with help such as instructions, examples, and PLI, including audio and video. These appear in a "Learn More", which is a dialogue box next to the question.

The software guides the user one question at a time. Behind the scenes, a decision tree determines what question is asked next. The path can change in response to the user's answers. Logic helps organize the information entered, tabulating damages, flagging deadlines and providing other supports along the way. When the interview ends, the information is used to create forms and documents. If integrated with a case management system, it can be used to create or edit client records.

Creating legal clinic capacity

In Ontario, the technology is used at community legal clinics in conjunction with person-to-person service. Legal clinics have an advocacy mission, helping low income people with legal needs related to

social assistance, housing, workplace injuries, criminal injuries, and immigration, among other areas. The Clinic IP tools build legal clinic capacity either by making client interviews more efficient, or by supporting volunteers, community agencies and clients to collect information and generate documents.

A combination of technical necessity, practicality, and design theory explain why Clinic IP focuses on supporting a mix of person-to-person services and A2J Guided Interviews. Technical limitations are a significant reason. Legal clinics cannot yet integrate A2J Author with their case management system. Many American legal aid providers use A2J Author in conjunction with the HotDocs document server hosted by Law Help Interactive. This option is unsuitable for Ontario's legal clinics because it requires client data to be stored on server in the United States, which may have privacy law implications.

An Ontario-based server system is a core piece of the Clinic IP project. This is still in development. In the meantime, legal clinics use the tools on a temporary server system. This has limited functionality. For example, users cannot save and resume an A2J Guided Interview or create and manage user accounts. Focusing on use by legal clinic staff, volunteers, and community agencies allows the project to pilot the tools by training around the technical limitations.

In addition, many of the low income people served by legal clinics do not have sufficient access or the digital literacy to use the tools on a strictly self-help basis. While access and digital literacy are improving, barriers remain. Using A2J Guided Interviews in conjunction with person-to-person service helps overcome these barriers. Clinic IP's design theory is that by using the A2J Guided Interview technology with staff, volunteers, and community partners, legal clinics can identify best practices for expanded use by clients once the new server system is ready.

Document assembly, intake, and referral tools

The 10 Clinic IP tools support a mix of users. Some are exclusively for internal clinic use, by staff and students. Others can also be used by clients. An area of particular interest is trusted intermediaries. These are community agencies that serve and are trusted by hard-to-reach client groups such as people who live in rural or remote communities and people who do not speak English or French.

Document assembly

In the United States, A2J Guided Interviews were first used to assist self-represented litigants to fill out court forms. The Ontario project has developed a number of such tools for forms related to poverty law.

However, the Clinic IP focus is not pure self-help, but rather a new service to be offered by clinics. For example, the new service can be delivered directly by students who help people fill out forms. It can also be delivered online, for example the clinic can offer the resource after providing clients with summary advice. The document tools include "just-in-time" PLI, available if needed to help answer a question. With client or community agency use, it is often envisioned that forms generated by the service will be brought to the legal clinic for review before any further steps are taken. One example: many legal clinics do not have the capacity to help tenants seek remedies in repair and maintenance or tenants' rights disputes, but may be able to give advice on these topics or draft applications prepared by the client.

Although developed with a client user in mind, the project's document assembly tools have mostly been used by law students or legal staff to assist clients. These included tools designed exclusively for use at legal clinics such as A2J Guided Interviews for statutory declarations and affidavits.

Intake

In addition to document tools, Clinic IP has created A2J Guided Interviews for intake. These are guided pathways that support staff, student volunteers and trusted intermediaries to interview clients. One of the longest-used Clinic IP tools is an interactive intake manual. The tool guides the interviewer to ask questions by area of law. A lawyer or other caseworker at the legal clinic still gives the advice, but preliminary information is collected by a student, new caseworker, or community agency.

A2J Guided Interviews are also used for intake in the United States. People seeking legal assistance are guided to provide contact and eligibility information as well as a description of their issue. This typically requires the legal service provider to integrate A2J Author with their case management system. The Ontario legal clinic tools are similarly envisioned to be part of the new case management system for clinics, though funding and approvals for this integration are pending.

At present, the Clinic IP intake tool is designed to train new users and streamline information collecting at intake. This supports students and community agencies to play a greater role collecting information, which frees up staff time for other work. In addition, as trusted intermediaries, community agencies may be better positioned to get information from hard-to-serve clients.

Referrals

A newer use for the technology is creating referral tools. Community agencies can use the A2J Guided Interview to screen for legal needs, notify the clinic of the referral, and identify relevant public legal information to provide to the client. Clinic IP has created two types of these tools.

1. Community agencies to legal clinic

Clinic IP uses the guided pathways approach to help users identify and then contact service providers and information based on their need and location. If the client has a legal need, the community agency uses the tool to make a referral to the legal clinic and generate documents for the client.

By notifying the clinic, the tool aims to prevent the client from slipping through the cracks, which happens when the client doesn't actually get in touch after a referral. A goal is to eliminate undue delay in getting legal advice or assistance, especially where the delay may result in an escalation of the legal problem. For example, an employment dispute can escalate and cascade, over time, into a more serious cluster of problems such as job loss, which, in turn, can lead to eviction for non-payment of rent.

2. Multi-sector community agency networks

Community agencies are also interested in the potential of the technology to help with multi-sector service coordination. People with low incomes, who face additional challenges, such as newcomers or those who are homeless or at risk, have multiple needs. These people are served by many different community agencies. The agencies recognize that they serve the same clients and believe that client experience and outcomes can be improved with better inter-agency coordination.

With no one agency having a mandate to coordinate, agencies in Simcoe County and Toronto's Parkdale neighbourhood, envisioned that the A2J Guided Interviews, supported by the legal clinic, could create a pathway to all the services necessary for a client upon first contact with any one agency. The community agency that first sees a client does a quick survey of the client's situation and needs. With the client's consent, the agency then refers the client to other agencies whose services the client requires, sharing this information. As a party to a common consent, the agencies can then share information to coordinate services and set targets to follow up. For example, if a client doesn't make it to one of the agencies, others in the information loop can follow up when they make contact.

A goal of the legal clinic is to better connect with people who do not know that they have a legal problem. It is well-known that many people with justiciable problems do not realize that their issues are legal. As noted by George Thomson and Karen Cohl in a study for the Law Foundation of Ontario "people rarely experience legal problems without facing non-legal problems at the same time."¹

In response, Clinic IP developed a multi-sector referral system using A2J Guided Interviews. This required a high level of collaboration between the legal clinics and community agencies. The tool supports referrals between agencies even if the legal clinic is not one of the organizations to which the client is being referred. But this benefits the legal clinic. Specifically, it seeks to incentivize regular use of the A2J Guided Interview by all the agencies in the network, by making all inter-agency referrals easier and facilitating greater coordination.

Regular use helps the legal clinic leverage the needs screen, guided questions about the client's situation, to better flag legal needs for community agencies. When the A2J Guided Interview is used for all referrals, the needs screen can help recommend referrals to the legal clinic or public legal information even if the client or community agency did not realize that the needs were "legal" in nature.

Barriers to access to legal information and services continue to exist for people who do not speak English or French and people living in rural or remote areas of Ontario. The two clinics that use this tool do so in conjunction with established networks of community agencies: a "local immigration partnership", which is comprised of newcomer settlement service providers; and a regional "alliance to end homelessness", which consists of organizations serving those who are homeless or at risk.

The methodology also captures the benefits of issue screening that are sought by the various legal health check-up initiatives in Ontario and elsewhere. But the Clinic IP tool is not strictly a diagnostic tool for legal problems. The guided needs screen also flags other needs, recommending and facilitating, potentially, multiple referrals across a network.

¹ *Connecting Across Language and Distance: Linguistic and Rural Access to Legal Information and Services* By Karen Cohl and George Thomson for The Law Foundation of Ontario, December 2008, pg. 4

Designing and piloting at legal clinics

Designing guided interviews is complicated and challenging. It is work that touches on many disciplines. The project's methodology is twofold. First, the project team develops an interview concept. This involves identifying needs, analyzing practice guides and training materials, and consulting subject matter experts at partner clinics. These activities inform the design of a template or master interview. A plain language edit of the template is completed prior to its being put to use.

Between 2012 and 2014, the 10 Clinic IP tools were piloted at select legal clinics. Use of the tools generated feedback, which led to iterative improvement. Clinics each had their own version of each tool. Most of the tools could be adapted to a clinic's local practice by pre-setting options in the A2J Guided Interview. In addition, the project encouraged clinics to propose further modifications. The resulting change requests were often applied to both the local and master versions of the tool. This facilitated continuous design, by trial and error, and assisted in identifying promising applications.

Lessons from implementation

Software implementation is challenging. And working with community legal clinics to change their practice model to include A2J Guided Interviews was no exception. However, despite the technical limitations of a temporary server and no case management system integration, 11 of the 16 general service clinics in the partnership used at least one of the tools to serve clients. This generated valuable feedback. Encouragingly, 8 of the 11 clinics advise that the technology has become a regular part of their practice. But the pilots also show that some applications work better than others.

Challenges

Many experienced caseworkers find the A2J Guided Interview workflow too prescriptive. Some Clinic IP tools were too time consuming to use in a busy legal clinic. Use of some document assembly tools, especially those intended for clients, was impractical without save and resume functionality. Without any integration with the legal clinic's case management system, the intake tools, when used by clinic staff, created a double data entry redundancy because the same client data had to be entered twice, once in both systems. Finally, not all clinics were in a position to allocate time and resources necessary to sync the A2J Guided Interviews to their practice using early iterations of the tools.

What worked

Nevertheless, A2J Guided Interviews successfully helped community legal clinics to manage a high volume and document intensive area of practice. It also helped student volunteers at clinics to deliver service. And it supported clinics to serve hard-to-reach clients by working with trusted intermediaries.

1. High volume, document intensive area of practice

The tool of greatest interest to clinics helps with appealing denials of Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) benefits. This is a high volume case type for legal clinics and it involves a lot of document preparation. Designed for interviewing people denied ODSP benefits, the tool has a combination of intake, document assembly, and referral tool features. Information collected produces numerous forms, letters, and other documents for a review and appeal. The tool is used differently at different clinics, but most use it at intake to help students or non-legal staff collect information and create file opening documents. It is also used by staff as a document generator to prepare file correspondence. In one instance, it is used by a trusted intermediary as both a referral tool and document generator.

2. Students and volunteer support

A2J Guided Interviews have proven to be a helpful volunteer tool. This has been the project's most consistent success. Students volunteering or completing practicums at legal clinics are guided by the technology to interview clients, collecting information for intake and document assembly. The tool is a hands-on training support. It streamlines the interview, focusing the student on critical questions by area of law. The information entered is then reviewed by a legal caseworker.

3. Community agency partnerships

The technology supports new service pathways and partnerships between legal clinics and other community agencies. A2J Guided Interviews help trusted intermediaries to collect information, generate documents, and take steps to help clients with intake at a legal clinic. These applications show great promise, particularly as a means of reaching people who may not know their problem is legal. A2J Guided Interviews can increase the capacity of community agencies, as the first point of contact for clients, to make referrals to the legal clinic and suggest public legal information. The technology can be used by trusted intermediaries to deliver public legal information to hard-to-serve client groups, like linguistic minorities and people in rural and remote communities. The strategy appears to show significant promise when incorporated into an A2J Guided Interview that supports referrals within a multi-sector network of agencies that serve the same group of clients. The first two pilot projects using this approach support interagency networks serving, respectively, newcomers and people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in rural communities.

Promising outcomes

Where the A2J Guided Interviews helped, promising outcomes are reported by the community legal clinic. These include earlier access to legal services for clients, brand new services, time savings with intake and form filling, reductions in time required for training, and improved client experiences.

Time saved per process

Time savings on forms completion and intake have been reported by a number of clinics. The Rexdale clinic in Toronto observed that 1-2 hours were saved per ODSP denial appeal file during use in 2013-2014. The Simcoe clinic's time study shows about 1 hour of combined intake and administrative time has been saved per ODSP denial intake. This savings has created new capacity. For instance the Grey Bruce clinic reports now having more time for clients at satellite offices. And the Flemingdon clinic in Toronto noted that the technology supported a new student intake program, which freed up staff time.

Earlier access to legal services

In Simcoe County, a trusted intermediary for people who are homeless or at risk in rural and remote communities uses the tool for referrals and documents assembly. This expedites the appeal process and ensures that this hard-to-serve client group can get help sooner. In Parkdale in Toronto, the legal clinic, which is part of an interagency network of newcomer service providers, uses the tool to assist community agencies to screen for legal needs and make referrals. Both clinics report that the tools have reduced referral fatigue and helped prevent clients from slipping between the cracks after a referral.

Shorter training times, creating more client service from students

Clinics reported that the technology reduced training times for students and new staff. In addition to reducing the amount of time staff spend training students, savings in training time creates additional hours of service from the student. Many students are placed with clinics on a four month or shorter practicum. By supporting students to have more productive client interviews sooner, the clinic gets more client service from each student. At the Simcoe clinic, students have used the tool on intake since 2010. Hamilton's legal clinic reported that the ODSP denial tool saves 16-24 hours of training per intake student. And the Durham clinic reported that training now takes days instead of weeks.

New service offerings

The Rexdale clinic successfully used the software to create a new student-run housing form clinic for repairs and maintenance and tenants' rights in late 2011 and early 2012. The student service was later discontinued because Clinic IP does not have a reliable document server or save and resume functionality. This limitation also undid interest from clinics to make the tenant tools available to external users like clients and community agencies. But the housing form clinic showed that A2J Guided Interviews can support brand new form filling services at clinics.

Better client experiences

It is easier and requires less time to supervise students when the A2J Guided Interviews are used. At the Durham legal clinic, supervision of student assistance with intake is easier and faster. Similarly, the Hamilton clinic has used the technology to streamline intake and document work by students. At the Parkdale clinic, A2J Guided Interviews help students spend less time on figuring out what template to use. This also streamlines the entry of information, reducing the in number of errors that required remedial action. This improved client experience with faster service and less follow up to correct errors.

Observations

Observation of A2J Guided Interview use at community legal clinics suggests that several factors are critical to successful creating capacity using the technology. The design process needs to include a phase where the tool is used and finalized through trial and error. Syncing the tools with person-to-person interviews requires the flexibility to tailor access and workflow to the local clinic. It also requires winning over legal clinic caseworkers. Integration of the A2J Guided Interviews and the legal clinic case management system is one such step to winning over staff users.

External to legal clinics, use of A2J Guided Interviews by community agency networks as a common referral tool requires careful consideration of data ownership and client consent. Finally, the functionality, continuing improvement, and institutional support of A2J Author in the United States appear to provide a foundation for the sustainable use of the technology in the future.

Design by trial and error

Designing interactive online technology for legal clinics is challenging work. It draws on multiple disciplines including poverty law and practice, plain language design and interview psychology. It is difficult to ask questions and devise logic that reflects the many human judgments made in facilitating even more straightforward, unautomated, person-to-person interviews. The more complex the process, the more difficult it is to parse it into decision trees and associated A2J Guided Interview questions.

As one might expect, the length and clarity of the A2J Guided Interviews matter. The longer the interview, the less user-friendly it is. Longer interviews also lead to a higher probability of a mistake that will doom the transaction. However, shorter A2J Guided Interviews offer less opportunity for payoff – less information is collected, which may limit the number or scope of documents it can output.

Getting the design right requires trial and error and a brave legal clinic or two to suffer the difficulties of finalizing a new A2J Guided Interview, through use, by working with the project to iteratively improve the design. In instances where a tool was rushed into operation without live pilots, or where the pilots were limited, the A2J Guided Interview tended to be less successful.

Syncing with person-to-person services

Person-to-person service is a key part of A2J Guided Interview use at community legal clinics. Syncing or aligning the two types of service can be complicated. Calibrating a successful combination depends on factors such as the type of activity being automated, the client and their needs, and the level of person-to-person assistance available. These vary by clinic, even for the same area of law. For example, one clinic may have access to law student volunteers while another may serve remote communities. These clinics may have different paths to adapting the same A2J Guided Interview to create capacity.

Syncing the clinic's practice and the software involves adapting the A2J Guided Interviews to process a variety of user types who will play different roles as part of the same continuum of service. The variety of workflow scenarios underscore the necessity of supporting legal clinics to manage A2J Guided

Interviews to permit different levels of access, at different times, by the client, trusted intermediaries, and volunteer students. This includes deciding who gets what output and when.

For example, a student volunteer might interview a client and then check in with a supervisor for instructions. Afterwards, the client might be referred to a trusted intermediary for assistance with a form. Or a trusted intermediary may help a client apply to the legal clinic online and the legal clinic, subsequently, follows up with an interview. In each of these scenarios, different people are using the A2J Guided Interviews to support the person-to-person service.

Clinics have to change their practices to realize the benefits of the tools. There is a distinction that must be made between A2J Guided Interview used by self-represented litigants, as a self-help resource, and integrating use with person-to-person services. In the latter case, implementation involves earning a lasting acceptance by frontline legal clinic staff. This is a transformative initiative.

Change management is not unique to A2J Guided Interviews, but it is critical. As stated by John P. Kotter of the Harvard School of Business, “Most major change initiatives generate only lukewarm results. Many fail miserably.”² For legal service organizations to realize new capacity using A2J Guided Interviews with person-to-person services, the change must be managed patiently. Like any transformative change, this needs to be, in Kotter’s words, a “process, not an event” and work that “advances through stages that build on each other.” It is work that can take time.

Case management system integration

Clinic staff members have advised that the A2J Guided Interviews need to be integrated with other legal clinic information technology, the case management system in particular. Without integration, A2J Guided Interviews can create a data entry redundancy.

Integration would also support the transfer of data to A2J Guided Interviews from the clinic’s case management system. Auto populating an A2J Guided Interview with data from the case management system should shorten and simplify the user experience. When a process, such as intake, is completed by one user, a subsequent process, like a form completion interview by another user, should be pre-populated with all the data previously entered, at intake. This would support more efficient interviews by focusing each subsequent use of the A2J Guided Interview on new information, while the system automatically populates information already collected.

Integration would also enhance the technology’s usefulness as a resource to which the client can be referred after getting advice from the clinic. Conceivably this might include the auto population of suggested answers, entered by the legal clinic. This could help with more complicated fields on forms.

In addition to avoiding redundant data entry, integration would facilitate greater use of local content in the A2J Guided Interview by loading this information from the case management system. Local content in the tools, like lists of local doctors, has proven helpful to legal clinics in pilots. Presently, such data is coded into the A2J Guided Interview by the project team, which is laborious and difficult to update.

² *Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail* by John P. Kotter, Harvard Business Review
<http://hbr.org/product/leading-change-why-transformation-efforts-fail-har/an/R0701J-PDF-ENG>

Community agency networks and client data

Establishing non-legal agency partnerships with legal clinics requires collaboration and careful planning. Two implementation issues are client consent and data ownership. The agencies in the networks have to agree on terms of use for the A2J Guided Interview and rules for making referrals. This includes policies for collecting and storing the client's consent to share data with the agencies to which they are referred.

An emerging issue for multi-sector referral tools is data ownership. The system serves many organizations. The act of referring by A2J Guided Interview puts client data on a system owned by one organization, the legal clinic. Ownership and rights of access to this data, which was collected and shared pursuant to the client's consent, need to be agreed upon by the participating agencies.

The preliminary solution has been for the legal clinic to act as a data steward on behalf of the collaboration. It is too early to comment on the efficacy of this approach. The concept has been favourably received by community agencies and is being evaluated by legal clinics. In the future, block chain technology may offer a solution for achieving the ideal of total client control of personal data.

Incorporation of A2J Guided Interviews, as referral tools, into multi-sector referral networks has begun on a limited basis. Encouragingly, the lessons learned in facilitating one such collaboration have proven applicable in the other. Several additional interagency networks have made inquiries about the referral tool. From the networks using the A2J Guided Interview, the project has heard that it would be ideal if it could also be integrated into the client record management system of interested community agencies.

A2J Author sustainability

The functionality, continued improvement, and institutional support of the A2J Author software appear to ensure the long-term sustainability of A2J Guided Interview use at legal clinics. A2J Author's editing interface allows non-technical authors, like lawyers and public legal information editors, to build and update content without assistance from programmers.

A2J Author is licensed for use, free-of-charge, to non-profits and government. This means that precious program dollars can be invested in legal content development and maintenance instead of licensing and development of process flow software. There are limits to the A2J Author software. The graphic interface is basic and there is no document collaboration or file transfer functionality. The mobile interface is beta. It is not as robust as a dispute resolution software, like Modria. However, it has proven to be affordable, effective, and enduring.

A2J Author's extensive use (now serving 38 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, and Australia) since 2005³ and institutional support provide reasonable assurance that the software can be counted on to exist and evolve over time. In the United States, investments continue to be made both in the development of A2J Author technology as well as its implementation by courts, legal aid programs, clinics and law schools.

³ Source: A2J Author (retrieved September 21, 2016) <http://www.a2jauthor.org/>

A2J Author is supported by grants from institutions⁴:

1. Chicago-Kent College of Law, Illinois Institute of Technology
2. CALI (Centre for Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction), a consortium of mostly American law schools that conducts applied research and development in computer-mediated legal education
3. Legal Services Corporation, a grant making organization, which is the single largest funder of civil legal aid for low-income Americans

Support for A2J Author extends beyond software development to include regular trainings for authors and outreach. Creating A2J Guided Interviews is also a part of the curriculum of select universities and colleges. An online matching program connects legal service providers looking to update or create A2J Guided Interviews and student programs interested in a practical authoring project.

Over the course of the project, following the initial period of trial and error, the successful tools stabilized and continued to be used with little maintenance. This appears to be the experience of many organizations that use A2J Author technology in the United States. Nevertheless, supporting community legal clinics with A2J Guided Interviews will require some ongoing content maintenance.

Designing a system for legal clinics

Outcomes and observations of community legal clinic use of A2J Guided Interviews are reflected in the design of a new Clinic IP server system. This is a software wrapper for hosting the tools. It aims to support the mix of person-to-person and A2J Guided Interviews and integrate with the legal clinic's case management system. It will include functionality like save and resume. The server system supports the latest iteration of A2J Author, version 5, which has a mobile-friendly interface. (A2J Author 5.0 server files are available for download at <http://www.a2jauthor.org/> and on GitHub.)

In addition, for those clinics that wish to refer clients to A2J Guided Interviews, the system has the necessary permissions, functionality, and security and privacy protections. It enables caseworkers to send a link or "invitation" to an A2J Guided Interview. Using the invitation feature, the legal clinic can set the terms of use for the client or agency, like who gets what output and whether a password is required to start the A2J Guided Interview. The legal clinic can also determine what data, if any, will be auto populated in the tool, granting system access to selected pieces of client profile information. This functionality includes managing a client's consent to share their data with trusted intermediaries.

The server system is important to the long-term sustainability of A2J Guided Interviews at legal clinics. It allows each legal clinic to locally-administer the A2J Guided Interviews, local data selections, and user permissions. This ensures that templates for local forms and precedents can be easily attached to an A2J Guided Interview, without the assistance of a programmer. With the server system, it is envisioned that a single content librarian or moderator role would be able to support all of Ontario's 77 community legal clinics to sustainably use A2J Guided Interviews.

⁴ Source: Chicago-Kent College of Law, Illinois Institute of Technology (retrieved September 14, 2016) <https://www.kentlaw.iit.edu/institutes-centers/center-for-access-to-justice-and-technology/a2j-author>

Next step: legal clinic caseworker tool

Using the new server system, the project plans to launch its newest A2J Guided Interview designed to work in conjunction the new case management system for clinics, called CIMS. The tool combines the uses of intake, document assembly, and referrals. Called the *Caseworker tool*, it aims to help clinics get information into the case management system by:

- minimizing training
- guiding workflow between different users, like students, supervisors and trusted intermediaries
- supporting faster and fuller data entry, while reducing errors and omissions

But the *Caseworker tool* is much more than a guide to intake with a case management system. It provides additional intake support, functionality that is not a part of CIMS. This builds clinic capacity by:

- creating forms and documents with the click of a button
- collecting information about different areas of law
- working with trusted intermediaries and clients

The *Caseworker tool* exists as a prototype, but it will not be available to clinics until the new server system is developed. Integration with the new case management system is envisioned as an additional step, which, like the new server system, requires funding and approval from LAO.

Conclusion

A2J Guided Interviews can become a sustainable tool for legal clinics to work with staff, volunteers, community agencies and clients. However, Clinic IP remains a work in progress. The next step is the development of the server system. This will provide functionality necessary to build legal clinic capacity by combining A2J Guided Interview use with person-to-person service. It is envisioned that the new system will also make A2J Guided Interviews available to the community legal clinics that are not presently part of the project.

Looking to the future, A2J Guided Interviews promise to evolve as tools for community legal clinics. Building on the outcomes and observations of the Clinic IP pilots and leveraging the new server system, wider implementation will come with time.

This will require legal clinics to change how they deliver service. This change will not be linear, from design to development to implementation. It will be a highly iterative process whereby legal clinics try new approaches to using A2J Guided Interviews until a capacity building fit is found.

As new A2J Guided Interview applications are established, the uses and benefits of the technology will change as will, undoubtedly, the needs of community legal clinics and the people they serve. New technologies will also appear. But the change, experience, and content developed by using A2J Guided Interviews will position community legal clinics well to continue innovating the delivery of poverty law services to Ontario's low-income communities.

Appendix 1 – Clinic Interview Partnership

- Community Legal Clinic – Simcoe, Haliburton, Kawartha Lakes
- Community Legal Education Ontario
- Durham Community Legal Clinic
- Flemingdon Community Legal Services
- Grey-Bruce Community Legal Clinic
- Hamilton Community Legal Clinic
- Legal Clinic of Guelph and Wellington County
- Neighbourhood Legal Services
- Neighbourhood Legal Services (London & Middlesex)
- North Peel & Dufferin Community Legal Services
- Northwest Community Legal Clinic
- Parkdale Community Legal Services
- Peterborough Community Legal Centre
- Renfrew County Legal Clinic
- Rexdale Community Legal Clinic
- Sudbury Community Legal Clinic
- Waterloo Region Community Legal Services

Appendix 2 – A2J Guided Interviews

A2J Author version 4

Clinic IP's version 4 A2J Guided Interviews are hosted on a temporary server system:

Interview	Description	Status
1. ODSP denial intake interview	Designed for interviewing people denied ODSP. Suitable for staff, volunteers, and agency partners. Produces intake record, draft appeal form to Social Benefits Tribunal, internal review request, letters, retainer, and consent forms.	Used at 8 legal clinics, some since 2011. An additional 3 clinics used it on a pilot basis and stopped. Those clinics no longer using it generally cite concerns about lack of case management system integration.
2. Caseworker intake interviews	Formatted for CIMS integration and designed for caseworkers to collect client information and note advice given. Includes reminders about limitations and other deadlines, checklists, referral options, and other aids.	Used at 2 clinics on a pilot basis. Expressions of interest received from other project clinics, but release is pending the new server system.
3. Interagency referral interview	Supports agencies that are part of a network to refer clients to other agencies in the network. Produces a referral record, which is emailed to selected agencies.	Used at 2 clinics since 2014. Release to other clinics is pending the new server system.
4. Landlord and Tenant Board Tenant: Form T6 (Repair and Maintenance)	Designed for interviewing tenants with maintenance issues referred by a clinic or tenant duty counsel. Suitable for clinic volunteers and agency partners. Server limitations result in a bifurcated output. It produces a Form T6 with Schedule A and a Schedule of Parties on screen as a saveable PDF.	Operational for 11 clinics. Used by at least 6 clinics. Regular use stopped due to server limitations with output and security. Clinics have expressed interest in having clients use it, but this requires the new server system.
5. Affidavits and statutory declarations	Designed for interviewing people who need certain types of affidavits and statutory declarations. Suitable for students and agency partners. Produces MS Word-friendly intake record and draft documents.	Used at 1 clinic since 2012.
6. Refugee Basis of Claim	Tool for creating draft versions of the forms and documents containing the information necessary to complete the Citizenship and Immigration Canada Basis of Claim Form and associated forms and schedules.	Version requires a new server system. Design piloted at LAO Refugee Law Office using other software (LogicPull) Early iterations received mixed staff reaction. A LogicPull problem ended the pilots.
7. Supported intake interview	Designed for staff, volunteers and agencies to collect client info without giving advice. Includes questions on violence, social assistance, housing, WSIB, employment, human rights, small claims, debt, and education law.	Used at 1 clinic since 2010. Other clinics, which used tool and stopped, generally fault length and lack of case management system integration.
8. Intake screening and referral	Designed for reception staff and volunteers to screen clients prior to intake. Includes questions about eligibility and case criteria and, if client is ineligible, referral options. Produces intake record (PDF) if client is referred.	Inactive at present. Piloted at 2 clinics, but discontinued due to lack of integration with case management system.
9. Landlord and Tenant Board Tenant: Form T2 (Tenants' rights)	Designed for interviewing tenants referred by a clinic or tenant duty counsel. Suitable for clinic volunteers and agency partners. Produces a Form T2 with Schedule A and a Schedule of Parties on screen as a saveable PDF. MS Word-friendly Schedule A also sent to clinic.	Inactive at present. Used at 1 clinic in 2010-2011, which resulted in an extensive redesign that is still being programmed. The redesigned tool requires the new server system.
10. Court Fee Waiver Request	Designed for interviewing people who cannot afford to pay court fees. Suitable for staff, volunteers, and agency partners. Guides interviewer to select and complete the right form for asking the court to waive certain fees. Produces request form on screen as a saveable PDF.	Publically available at 1 clinic, this was the first tool developed by the project. The form is not used often in clinics practice, so the tool is envisioned for public use.

A2J Author version 5

Clinic IP's version 5 A2J Guided Interviews are hosted on a prototype of the new server system:

Interview	Description	Status
1. Caseworker tool	Designed to integrate with new legal clinic case management system, CIMS. It supports intake, including pre-intake diagnostic surveys, interviews by reception and students, referrals to and from the legal clinic and post-intake document generation. Interview questions are divided into modules that can be variously used by staff, volunteers, community agencies and clients.	Ready for use on new server system. Area of law modules complete for housing, social assistance, CPP, EI and OAS. Work is underway on criminal injuries compensation, employment, injured workers, immigration and refugee and health areas of law.
2. ODSP denial case prep.	Same design as A2J Author 4.0 version.	Ready for use on new server system.
3. CPP-Disability/ Employment Insurance case prep.	Designed for interviewing people who have been denied CPP-Disability benefits or Employment Insurance. Produces intake record, draft appeal form to Social Security Tribunal, reconsideration request, letters, retainer, and consent forms.	Preliminary program of testing and debugging of is complete. Tool is being developed with Sudbury legal clinic. Further development is pending design review by the clinic.
4. Landlord and Tenant Board Tenant: Form T6 (Repair and Maintenance)	Same design as A2J Author 4.0 version.	Ready for use on new server system.
5. Tenant application case prep.	Combines A2J Author 4.0 versions the Landlord and Tenant Board Tenant: Form T2 (Tenants' rights) and Form T6 (Maintenance) as well as the Form T1. Designed for interviewing tenants referred by a clinic or tenant duty counsel. Suitable for clinic volunteers and agency partners. Produces a Forms with Schedule A and Schedule of Parties.	In development.
6. Affidavits and statutory declarations	Same design as A2J Author 4.0 version	Ready for use on new server system.
7. Criminal Injury Compensation Board case preparation	Designed for interviewing people who wish to make an application for compensation for injury caused by criminal acts. Produces application forms, record requests.	Preliminary program of testing and debugging is complete. Redesign programming arising from testing is pending.
8. Refugee, immigration & citizenship	Building on Refugee Basis of Claim tool developed in A2J Author version 4, design is envisioned to repurpose forms also common to citizenship and permanent residency application processes to create a tool designed to help with all 3 processes.	Tool is being developed with the Parkdale legal clinic. The clinic has deferred work pending funding.
9. Interagency referral tool	Designed to support a network of agencies serving the same types of clients to make referrals to other agencies in the network. It includes a guided path that suggests referral option based on client need. Produces a referral record and alerts the agencies receiving the referral.	Ready for use on new server system.
10. Court Fee Waiver Request	Same design as A2J Author 4.0 version	Forms must be updated.