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I.   PROJECT GOALS

The primary goal of the Arkansas Automated Document Project is to use automated document technology to enhance assess to justice for all Arkansans. There are several objectives that must be accomplished to achieve success of this broad goal. Specifically, three main areas of automation development were targeted including: pro se documents; pro bono documents; and legal aid staff documents. The following includes the LSC-approved objectives and goals as set forth in the Evaluation Plan for Arkansas Hot Docs/A2J Project:

1) Increase the quality of service and accessibility to the courts for low income people by creating automated forms using HotDocs and A2J software that enable pro se litigants to easily, accurately and effectively produce pro se pleadings.
2) Facilitate completion of 2,000 online A2J/Hot Docs online interviews for pro se/advocate use in year one of this project and 4,000 completed interviews in year two of this project.
3) Conduct an education and outreach plan in conjunction with the Arkansas Pro Bono Partnership, AATJC and with the ABA to inform pro bono attorneys of the automated advocate resources that are available for use for qualified pro bono attorneys.
4) Conduct an education and outreach plan in conjunction with the Arkansas Pro Bono Partnership, AATJC and with the ABA to inform and train pro se users and access providers about the automated pro se resources that are available.

II.   EVALUATION DATA AND METHODOLOGIES

Arkansas submitted a project evaluation plan specifying the methods and data sets that would be used to assess the Project's accomplishments. The approved evaluation plan set forth a clear goal and four primary objectives as detailed in Section I. The evaluation plan included detailed strategies and activities to achieve goals and objectives. Specific evaluation questions and various ways of collecting types of evaluation data were used to determine the success of this project. Some of the primary evaluative resources are listed below. There were no major deviations from the LSC approved evaluation plan.

Development and Soft Launch Testing

Early testing included stakeholder feedback, client user testing and legal services staff user testing. Information from the initial testing phase provided suggested changes

and future directions. Additional qualitative data was obtained through the stakeholder partners through interviews and committee meetings with partners. One of the most important sources of developmental testing was from the in-person interviews conducted with clients after they complete the forms and observations during the process.

Statistical Data
The number and types of online interviews created and posted on the SWWS was used as a baseline measure of the progress of the Project. The types of documents were determined by a review of the Arkansas SWWS and the Template Manager on the NPADO server. The next critical measure was determining the number of interviews and document assemblies on the NPADO. These statistics were provided by NPADO and Arkansas had a remarkably high usage rate. Arkansas had 5,793 interviews and 3,088 completed assemblies in 2007. See Section IV (Objective 2) for more details.

Post Launch and Outreach Evaluation Data
The evaluation questions provided specific points of inquiry to determine whether our objectives and goals were achieved. These questions were implemented in a variety of ways in multiple instruments. We did in person and online client user testing. We administrated the surveys at all trainings ranging from public librarians to district judicial conferences and legal services staff. The feedback from these surveys has been important in directing the project and as objective information to present to court system to foster collaboration and partnership. The survey feedback has also helped to improve the way we present the trainings and outreach to the general public and justice community.

Check this paragraph: Since January 2008 we have conducted in-person outreach and training about the availability and use of the automated forms with approximately 625 staff of entities ranging from public libraries and the courts to legal services programs. A limited number of pro bono attorneys have also been trained. Of the trainees, 12.4% completed surveys evaluating the benefits of the automated forms to clients.

III.   Summary of Major Accomplishments, Recommendations and Future Steps
Check to make sure the data / assertions in the following bullets are correct: The Arkansas Automated Document Project resulted in profoundly broadening the impact of the SWWS and benefit of the website for low-income Arkansans. The Project has had several major accomplishments:
- Development of a substantial automated document catalogue for pro se users: 8 packets with a total of 30 court forms
- Development of a substantial automated document catalogue for advocate users: 23 automated documents are designated for advocate use only.
- In 2007, 3008 forms were completed.
- Training some 75 staff and pro bono advocates to use these templates.
- Training some 550 staff of court and law libraries and the courts e.g., in the use of the forms and how to help clients use the forms.
- Training participants overwhelmingly indicated the automated document project would help clients complete and file forms with the court. Ninety-nine percent

(99%) of survey respondents rated the effectiveness of these resources as excellent or very good for pro se litigants.

The Project has also promoted a closer relationship between legal services and the Arkansas Administration Office of the Courts (AOC). After development of several automated packets we began a concentrated outreach effort to the justice community. Although there is not a formal relationship between this project and the court system there has been considerable interest generated and some collaboration has begun. As the project expands and outreach continues we hope this project will be viewed as an essential public service in the Arkansas court system. A primary goal is that the sustainability of this project may be shared by both legal services and the courts.

The future steps for this project include expansion of the automated document catalogue and continuation of outreach and training to the court, pro bono and pro se communities with a goal of creating a viable partnership with the court system.

See section VII for recommendations to other state programs that are beginning or streamlining their automated document projects.

IV.   In-Depth Analysis of Accomplishments (maximum 10 pages).

The four primary project goals listed in the Evaluation Plan for Arkansas Hot Docs/A2J Project were achieved.

Objective 1

The first primary goal/objective, as set forth in Section I above, was to "increase the quality of service and accessibility to the courts for low income people by creating automated forms using HotDocs and A2J software that enable pro se litigants to easily, accurately and effectively produce pro se pleadings." Several strategies and activities were implemented to achieve this objective beginning with obtaining the HotDocs and A2J software and hiring a template developer to create the online interviews for the court forms and instructions. Arkansas received a copy of the software and Vincent Morris was designated as the Hot Docs Developer (HDD) [1].

The next essential action item for completing the first objective was determining what forms would be most useful and acceptable by the state court systems (AOC). To achieve this objective we have worked closely with the Arkansas Bar Association (Ark. Bar), the Arkansas Access to Justice Commission (AATJC) and we opened initial communications with the AOC about this project. The AATJC created a Pro Se Forms Committee working closely with the HDD, as well as an Education and Marketing Committee that includes in their objectives to educate the Judiciary of the need of statewide automated forms. The Judiciary trainings and outreach have been very

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[1] Vincent Morris is the Hot Docs Developer responsible for developing and automating the documents for this project. He is a licensed attorney in Arkansas and has eight years of Internet Technologies experience. Arkansas would like to emphasize the importance of the donated software from both LexisNexis and The Center for Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction in developing this project. We express our gratitude on behalf of the thousands of Arkansas who have benefited from this technology.

successful and have lead to collaborative efforts. The primary stakeholder, and now partner, AATJC determined that initial development should focus on Pro Se Packets (a packet means multiple forms and directions) and set these as the highest priority for production. Next in priority were legal aid staff and pro bono resources. Arkansas has developed multiple pro se packets and advocates resources.

There are 8 automated packets published on the public area of the SWWS consisting of a total of 30 automated documents and detailed instructions. There are an additional 23 automated documents published solely for advocate use in the member area of the SWWS.

Arkansas used several evaluation methods, questions and data to determine the value of our automated resources. Evaluations included user (both client and advocate) surveys, observations and interviews. This testing provided valuable feedback that was use to modify both the online interviews and final document product. Surveys are given consistently at outreach and trainings throughout the state. These surveys are aggregated and shared with the developer and the Arkansas Access to Justice Commission.

Feedback from the court community (via surveys, dialogue and other communications) has indicated that the online automated materials have improved the clients' ability to accurately complete their legal forms. Composite results from surveys administered to access point providers indicate that the automated document project is helping clients complete and file forms with the court. Ninety-nine percent (99%) of survey respondents rated the effectiveness of these resources as excellent or very good for pro se litigants.

There was very little negative feedback received for this project, however, there were some criticisms that have been helpful. As with all critical evaluative data there are some simple solutions to issues and some broader issues that harder to address. The simple issues are easily managed and handled quickly. The larger issues are more problematic to address.

One of the concerns we have received is concerning technology itself as a barrier and access points for poverty level users. These systemic critiques have shaped our present and future direction for this project. We have done and continue to do substantial outreach to public libraries as a point of terminal access and to court clerks as a point of informational access. Both these communities have been overwhelmingly supportive of our efforts. Additionally, we are beta testing the first Small Claims Packet Terminal in an Arkansas district with the largest amount of small claims cases filed each year. Although we are aware that barriers will still exist for poor Arkansans to access technology we are discussing, planning and working towards practical solutions.

Objective 2
The second primary goal/objective as set forth in section one above was to "Facilitate completion of 2,000 online A2J/Hot Docs online interviews for pro se/advocate use in year one of this project and 4,000 completed interviews in year two of this project."

Many of the same strategies and activities that were implemented to achieve the first objective were used for achieving this goal; however, the data used to determine this goal was more quantitative. Although user interviews and partner interviews were helpful in determining user activity the main source for this data was the NPADO statistical report of the number of interviews and document creations by state on the national server.[2]

Arkansas began document production in late 2006 but did not begin to market our work until 2007. The following user statistics have a data range from January 1 – December 31, 2007. In our first year of Hot Docs/A2J production Arkansas had the seventh highest number of assemblies in the nation and the sixth most interviews.

Total Automated Document Assemblies 2007

Arkansas Totals	2007
Interviews	5,793
Assemblies	**3,088**
Percent of Interviews Resulting in Documents	54%

Top five (5) Automated Document Assemblies 2007

Form Name	Interviews	Assemblies
1. Pro Se Divorce Packet	3,993	2,246
2. Pro Se Expungement Packet	726	353
3. Pro Se Living Will	301	157
4. Pro Se In Forma Pauperis Packet	160	99
5. Debt Collector Stop Contact Letter	137	77
Totals:	**5,317**	**2,932**

The goal of reaching 4,000 completed assemblies in 2008 is also likely to be achieved. The first quarter NPADO statistics show Arkansas with 1907 interviews and 1205 completed document assemblies. This is an increase from 54% to 61% in completed assemblies. There is also a substantial increase in the number of interviews and assemblies in the first quarter of 2008.

Objective 3 and Objective 4

The final two primary objectives both involved conducting an education and outreach campaign to inform and train our target audiences. These groups include: pro bono advocates; pro se users; legal aid staff; and community partners.

Arkansas provided several trainings for legal services staff, pro bono advocates, court clerks and librarians on the automated document project. These trainings are done in person and are facilitated by the HDD. Many of these trainings received CLE accreditation for the pro bono community and legal aid staff. These trainings show users how to access and utilize the automated document tools provided on the website. We did several pro bono outreach CLE meetings in 2007 and continue to do so in 2008. Composite

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[2] NPADO, specifically Kate Bladow, has provided the server statistics consistently throughout our project. This resource has been critical in understanding the volume of use and what documents are most often accessed.

results from surveys administered to attorneys attending the CLE trainings indicate that the automated document project is helping pro bono and legal services attorneys better serve their clients. Of the attorneys surveyed, 89.5% rated the effectiveness of these resources as excellent or very good.

Our pro se outreach efforts included several different approaches. Legal Aid of Arkansas led several hands on pro se workshops using the automated forms for both divorce and expungement. Other pro se assistance was provided with technical help phone assistance to anyone having issues with the resources. In 2008, we have launched chat based assistance for pro se users.

We also focused on training and educating access point providers including law librarians, public librarians, court clerks and trial court assistants. These trainings educated the access providers about these resources and then requested that they make our brochures and posters available for their clients. As noted above, 99% of trainees responding to surveys rated the effectiveness of these resources as excellent or very good for pro se litigants.

As a result of the outreach effort we have distributed nearly 15,000 brochures and hundreds of posters informing the public about how to utilize these resources. Recipients of these materials include: public libraries; law libraries; court clerks; trial assistants; and other community organizations. The volume of traffic, feedback from partners, and large amount of distributed materials strongly suggest that the trainings for both pro bono advocates and pro se users (or access point providers) has increased access to justice by assisting the legal services client, pro bono client, and self-litigant.

V.   Factors affecting project accomplishments

The project has been exceptionally streamlined due in large part to the benefit of following the best practices of other states and replicating much of their content. The availability of trainings, development resources and the listserv continues to be very helpful.

Three essential factors that have led to success in this project are the free donation of the HotDocs software from LexisNexis, the development of the A2J software and the NPADO server that provides a viable hosting solution for the automated templates. This project would simply not have been possible without these critical tools.

The close working relationship between our program and the Arkansas Access to Justice Commission has given the project both direction and a status level that extends beyond the legal aid community. It is this relationship that has introduced the project to the Arkansas courts and it is this relationship that will lead to court collaboration and partnership.

Another key element in achieving our objectives in this project has been the in-house capacity to develop the automated documents. The Arkansas Hot Docs Developer is

also an attorney. He drafts the legal content and does the programming for the automation. The HDD also does the majority of the outreach, training and promotions with this project.

There are factors, however, that have created challenges in reaching the objectives. Some of these challenges are likely shared by many programs and are out of the control of individual programs.

Check this: Despite the high number of individuals that have successfully completed the court forms, some pro se and advocate users have found the interface confusing for both. The sharp transition of leaving the SWWS to a website that lacks the SWWS branding is confusing many users. I have received feedback from users that have stopped at this point due to the incorrect impression that you must be registered. Further some users have commented upon about error messages or failed assemblies. We are now exploring how these problems can be rectified.

Arkansas realizes that users need to be fully trained in the use of automated document resources and has taken measures in provide training to pro bono and legal aid advocates. The HDD has trained several hundred pro bono attorneys in the resources since the project began in what is now a pre-approved CLE course. The HDD has also done multiple staff trainings, but will provide a joint program (statewide) training for all employees this October. Several trainings have been provided to court clerks, librarians, and other court assistants to help better assist pro se users of the materials. However, usability is still an issue.

Another challenge we have faced with this program is resistance to providing any type of pro se assistance to the community, automated or otherwise. This resistance is currently a minority voice and we have taken carefully chosen steps to avoid an increase of pro se assistance resistance. It mainly has been voiced from rural counties where the perceived impact of providing pro se resources to the poor is that the very small attorney population (in some areas one attorney per town) will lose possible clients. This is not a new concern among rural attorneys and some have felt this way about free legal services generally. There have also been some isolated instances of negative feedback from judges; however, with our focus on judicial outreach we have the support of the majority of judges who are aware of our efforts.

In response to the negative feedback, and by looking to other state examples, we have re-branded our project to be a "court assistance" project instead of a "pro se" project. This re-branding has had a positive effect with both the courts and the private bar. Although there have been challenges with this project we have experienced far more support of the project than negativity.

VI.   Strategies to address major challenges

We addressed staffing and development issues by utilizing in house technology capacity. ALSP Associate Director of Technology and Justice Projects, Vincent Morris, has managed the online effort since 2003. With a background in technology and as a licensed attorney, he has created or coordinated both the technology and the content for the

website. Mr. Morris received in-person basic training in 2005 and advanced training in 2008.

        With the staffing and technical resources in place Arkansas focused on two primary factors for success: quality documents and justice community acceptance. We are well on our way to developing a high quality catalogue of automated resources for both pro se and advocate use. The training and outreach has been focused on the courts, private bar and librarians. We have created a solid foundation for future collaboration and partnership. In fact the AOC is sending a five person team (including three circuit judges) to the Court Solutions Pro Se Conference this September. The AOC is also paying for travel and lodging cost for the HDD to attend with the team and have paid for other travel expenses associated with requested outreach/ and trainings.

        The Arkansas Access to Justice Commission is a critical partner in this project. The Commission's mission to provide equal access to justice in civil cases to all Arkansans supports the goals of this project. The Commission voted to partner with the Arkansas Legal Services Partnership in creating Commission "Sanctioned" court forms and instructions and that has provided validity to the project that has been valuable in seeking private bar and court support.

        The unique structure of the commission brings major stakeholders and influentials together to improve the access to civil justice in Arkansas for low-income citizens. This project has utilized the Commissioners in forging relationships throughout the state of Arkansas. The Commission realized the critical need for court collaboration with the Automated Document project and began efforts to form these critical relationships. Commissioners, including a Circuit Judge and Supreme Court Justice have participated in pro se conferences and the Supreme Court Justice does a regular training with the HDD targeted to pro bono attorneys and using the automated forms. This is a pre-approved 1 hr Ethics CLE. The partnership, guidance, and validity that the Commission has provided have been a major factor in the project's success.

VII.   Major lessons and recommendations

Lessons were learned during the course of the project. Plain English writing and ease of navigation have been protocols for public content published on the SWWS since we began online services delivery. The automated documents presented certain issues concerning these standards including the bulky interview process and the legalese that is often necessary in the actual forms generated for the user. We addressed these challenges in various ways and provide the following lessons we learned:

Interviews:
- Using A2J Interview interfaces for pro se users when available. They are easier for the user to navigate and provide more educational information within the interview itself regarding the legal topic at issue.
- When a Hot Docs interview is used and there are a large number of questions we should limit the number of questions per screen
- Using closed-ended questions as much as possible (e.g., limiting the need for the user to type in lots of text)

Assembled Documents:

- Because many forms must contain sophisticated statutory language or legalese we maintain our commitment to plain English drafting by wrapping all forms in packets that contain substantial directions, instructions, and explanations for the user. We attempt to write all instructions for the automated document packets on a 5th – 9th grade reading level.

General:

- In any logic based system that must handle a large variety if scenarios there are going to be certain possibilities overlooked and the resulting document may not be the best fit for the user. After appropriate testing is completed you must be prepared to publish the template to the public. There may be issues, but it can always be edited. In fact (as stated in recommendation 3 below) editing documents after roll out can have benefits for justice community buy-in.
- Outreach and training is critical to a successful program. All advocates and point of contact users (such as clerks and librarians) must be fully trained in its use.

Arkansas has benefited greatly from the states with automated document projects and we are happy to share recommendations to other states that are beginning or streamlining their automated projects. Arkansas has three basic recommendations.

Recommendation 1: Create and engage an Automated Document Committee as early as possible even before receiving funding. The Committee should be small, but active and with authority to grant final status on templates. The stakeholder community can be much larger, but the authorizing body should be an elite force able to react quickly.

Recommendation 2: Replicate when possible. There will rarely be a document that can be completely replicated by just changing it to your state name, but there will be large sections that can be taken from other's templates. In addition to the content and technology that can be replicated the templates also provide a large catalogue of "how to" documents by just looking at how other states have done things.

Recommendation 3: Be able to adapt to change as necessary. The template priority list will likely need to be changed due to user feedback. It has been important to the success in Arkansas that we not only change/adjust or edit the templates when we receive useful community feedback, but that the justice community can feel confident that their suggestions are being heard and acted upon.

The Automated Document Project is successful. Although the project is large in scope it has been narrow in focus. We sought to automate content in the most efficient and productive manner possible and promote to the public, therefore enhancing access to justice. To date we have trained many types of users of the program and we have high "buy-in" from legal services advocates and pro bono attorneys for the current resources available. The Arkansas courts are becoming a vocal supporter of the project.

The pro se community also looks to our website for information and resources. Our website received over 1 million pages views and high usage of the automated documents. Online document assembly has allowed us to program the directions and safeguards needed for the pro se document while making the process far less complex. These safeguards and controls have relieved concerns about form publication voiced by Arkansas Courts and Arkansas attorneys.

Arkansas is looking forward to continuing this project and is currently seeking critical funding to continue this project so as to reach the next step in court collaboration. This project has become a critical part of the service delivery model in Arkansas.