

LEGAL AID BC

ACHIEVING DIGITAL EQUITY PROJECT

USER JOURNEY INTERVIEWS

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THANK YOU TO THE
X^wMƏθKWƏŸƏM (MUSQUEAM),
SKWXWÚ7MESH (SQUAMISH), AND
SƏLÍLWƏTΛ?/SELILWITULH (TSLEIL-
WAUTUTH) PEOPLES FOR ALLOWING
US TO WORK AND LIVE ON THIS
UNCEDED TERRITORY

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RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The user journey interviews described in this report are part of Legal Aid BC (LABC)'s multi-method [Achieving Digital Equity \(ADE\) project](#).

The objectives of the ADE user journey interviews were:

- To learn about people's strategies and goals during their search for legal help.
- To gather insights about processes of looking for legal information, and specifically, how participants would search for and navigate Public Legal Education and Information (PLEI) resources online.
- To learn about what types of challenges might lead to someone having difficulty locating useful information or giving up their search for legal help.

Together with findings from other components of the ADE project, the insights generated through this research can be used by PLEI providers to inform the design and delivery of PLEI in BC.

METHODOLOGY

For this study, we recruited 20 participants for a 1 hr moderated interview based on the goals developed with the principal consultant

- Participants were recruited from LABC lists, Facebook, Craigslist and selected intermediaries who circulated the study recruitment ads.
- Interested participants were directed to an online registration form where they were shortlisted if they met the criteria for participant recruitment.
- The shortlisted participants were then contacted directly by email or phone and a mutually convenient interview time was scheduled.
- With participants' consent, the interviews were recorded and transcribed.
- Participants were free to answer or not answer any question.
- Participants received an honorarium for their valuable time.

METHODOLOGY

Each interview was comprised of three sections:

1. Digital practices and preferences, previous experiences seeking legal help, and awareness of legal services in BC.
2. Use of a legal problem scenario to map help-seeking goals and strategies.
 - Scenarios included those on divorce, arrest and harvesting rights. Participants could choose the scenario that was most comfortable to them.
3. Use of the same legal problem scenario to:
 - search for help online
 - test out and provide feedback on one of LABC's websites
 - solicit suggestions for effective promotion and assistance

DEFINING “LEGAL HELP”

- Although the ADE research project focuses mainly on Public Legal Education and Information (PLEI)*, our interviews asked participants about their approaches to seeking “legal help” more broadly.
- This broad line of questioning about “legal help” enabled us to learn how participants understood legal help – that is what types of help they were looking for, and how this impacted their approaches to finding assistance and resources online.
- As we discuss below, participants often equated legal help with “legal representation” or advice from a lawyer. This impacted how they searched for resources and information.
- For instance, people often looked *online* for *offline* services – they were often looking for a knowledgeable person (usually a lawyer) or service who could assist them – either instead of, or in addition to, online resources.
- In this report, we explore what these broad insights about searches for legal help may mean for the delivery of PLEI resources and services in BC.

* PLEI includes: legal information, education about legal issues, and promotion or referrals to legal resources and services

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

- Predominantly people who report being Internet users
- People with lower income – (those whose income falls at or below Legal Aid BC's general income eligibility guidelines)
- People with fewer years of formal education (high school or less)
- Maximum ½ of participants with Legal Aid services experience
- Live in a variety of Legal Aid geographic areas (urban, rural, and all areas of the province)
- Combination of Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants
- Diverse ages and gender identities
- Combination of desktop and mobile or tablet users

RECRUITMENT RESULTS

•20 In-person Moderated Interviews

- 9 Cis Women, 11 Cis Men
- Age breakdown
 - 18-24: 2 participants
 - 25-34: 7 participants
 - 35-44: 6 participants
 - 45-54: 4 participants
 - 65+: 1 participant
- Regions
 - Interior/East Kootenays: 3 participants
 - North: 1 participant
 - Surrey/Fraser Valley: 3 participants
 - Vancouver: 6 participants

- Vancouver Island: 2 participants
- Greater Vancouver/Sea-to-Sky/Sunshine Coast: 5 participants
- Used Legal Aid – 10 YES / 10 NO
 - Indigenous – 6 YES / 14 NO
- Tests conducted on:
 - Desktop: 5 participants
 - Phone-only: 3 participants
 - Tablet: 1 participant
 - Desktop/laptop: 3 participants
 - Smartphone: 8 participants

HIGHLIGHTS

HIGHLIGHTS: KEY THEMES

Participants' "user journeys" suggest some common themes about searches for legal help:

- Legal issues are commonly associated with stress and/or trauma, and mental health issues. This creates barriers and makes emotional support important.
- Legal processes, concepts, and terminology are often unfamiliar. Many people may not know what services are available and how to find them.
- People often associate legal help with lawyers, and especially legal representation, which leaves out advice and information.
- Many internet users only, or primarily, use phones to go online; some may have limited data, and/or limited comfort with digital tools.
- Many do opt to look for legal help online – almost exclusively via Google. Search engines (like Google) mediate access to web resources in various ways.
- Online searchers are looking for trusted information about “next steps,” and often offline services to contact – ideally free services.
- Many want to speak to a person who can provide friendly, knowledgeable guidance. Chat, texting/messaging, phone, and in-person interactions are each valued for different reasons and by different users.
- Difficulties with website navigation / features can complicate online searches.

HIGHLIGHTS: IMPLICATIONS FOR PLEI IN BC

The following high-level implications flow from our findings, suggesting promising approaches for the design and delivery of PLEI in BC.

Many of these approaches are already being implemented by various organizations within BC's public legal sector.

- Develop and promote highly visible points of entry to PLEI which are:
 - Clearly named / branded
 - Accessible / low-barrier, and trauma-informed.
 - Available via multiple channels, online and offline.
- Enable BC residents to seek out and access PLEI through multiple channels, and communicate in ways that work best for them (e.g., through web, phone, text/message, email, chat, and/or in-person options).
- Design PLEI promotion and outreach to mitigate (e.g. stress-related) barriers, and to clearly communicate a fuller range of legal help resources available
 - E.g., information, referrals, self-help or assisted digital tools / services (in addition to legal advice and legal representation.)
- Continue offline and online promotion, including digital marketing.
- Focus on and address search issues, such as those in the Google 'grey area.'
- Continue to implement best practices in user-centred, accessible web design.
- Pursue an integrated approach that supports help-seekers to locate PLEI resources and move through help-seeking stages in the way that works best for them.

DIGITAL PRACTICES AND PREFERENCES

- We asked participants about their digital practice and preferences.
- We wanted to understand some of the ways participants want to connect with others, and by extension, PLEI resources and services.

DIGITAL PRACTICES AND PREFERENCES

INSIGHT

Participants use different devices for different purposes – e.g., phone for convenience, portability, and when away from home. Computers or tablets were preferred for certain types of tasks.

QUOTES

- “If I’m... on the run... then I’ll use my phone. I prefer to do messaging and stuff with my computer because it’s easier to type on a computer than it is on a cell phone”
- “If I’m reading a document, or things like that, I would prefer to read it on my iPad. It’s bigger.”

DIGITAL PRACTICES AND PREFERENCES

INSIGHT

Overall, smartphone is used frequently - in some cases, because not all participants can afford a desktop or laptop.

QUOTES

- “[I use] my phone a lot more. And especially these days to do everything. It's portable. It just makes a lot more sense.”
- *“Are there any disadvantages of using your phone to access the internet?”*
“Yeah, the biggest disadvantage. The size.”
- “I do have access to a desktop through the library, but recently it's just been mostly on my phone. That's why I'm just hoping to get more work... so that I can afford a laptop again.”

DIGITAL PRACTICES AND PREFERENCES

INSIGHT

Internet is costly (averaging \$75/month) but was considered a necessary / critical cost. Some described having limited data.

Internet was key in alleviating isolation, for entertainment, and for job searches. Some stretched themselves financially to stay online.

QUOTES

- “I think it's six or seven gigs of high speed [as a monthly cap]. So, [if] you don't have things running in the background, it's not too bad.”
- “If we didn't have Internet, we would be completely isolated from the world.”
- “Sometimes during COVID, [one needs to think about] what's more important, food on the table or internet... I don't have a lot of resources, but internet ... has been, probably, one of the most beneficial... I can find ads for work.”

DIGITAL PRACTICES AND PREFERENCES

INSIGHT

Many prefer texting. It's convenient and allows people to respond at their own time and pace. Messaging apps are also popular.

A few participants preferred phone calls.

QUOTES

- “Most people, I just text, to be honest with you. Because we all work different schedules. This way we're not disruptive to each other. And people are busy... they answer when they have time.”
- “Texting is probably [best]. Then: calling. Because [text] is the most direct. [People can respond] when they get a chance.”
- “I prefer to call people but use texting and Facebook messenger a lot. And WhatsApp as well.”

DIGITAL PRACTICES AND PREFERENCES

INSIGHT

Facebook Messenger is popular – many described it as the second “go to.” Participants liked that Messenger could be used even outside of cell range, as long as they were connected to Wi-Fi.

QUOTES

- *“What are the advantages of Facebook Messenger over text?”*
“I like the fact that you can see if they read it or not. You can see when they're online. And not everybody has a cell phone anymore.”
- “For my friends and family, it's usually on Facebook messenger, but for anything else, I usually use email. Everybody's on Facebook.”

The ubiquity of Facebook is a driver of its use.

DIGITAL PRACTICES AND PREFERENCES

Privacy is a concern, but not enough to stop using Facebook.

While using Facebook, participants used different privacy practices for different types of personal information.

INSIGHT

QUOTES

- “I don’t ... understand enough about what people can see and who is seeing it. So, yah, I do worry about what I say and who I'm saying it to. I would prefer not to say too much on [Facebook].”
- “I think Facebook's honestly selling our data. But I feel like the ads that they tailored towards me, they're pretty useful.”
- “I do [worry]. And I don't. I'm concerned for banking information and all of that, but a lot of the privacy thing is ... I kind of live a boring life... so there's nothing for them to find in that respect.”

Facebook’s popularity presents both opportunities and challenges for PLEI.

EXPERIENCES WITH LEGAL HELP, AND AWARENESS OF LEGAL RESOURCES AND SERVICES

- We asked participants about any previous experiences looking for legal help in BC, and about the blocks or barriers they encountered.
- We also asked participants what they knew about the kinds of legal help available in BC.

EXPERIENCES ACCESSING LEGAL HELP

INSIGHT

Participants had mixed experiences accessing legal help. Positive experiences often related to friendly, step-by-step help.

Negative experiences often related to unresponsiveness or communication lapses.

QUOTES

- “The person I talked to gave me a list of really easy ways to get started. So basically, he gave me a step sheet, like: ‘step one, do this,’ ‘step two, do this.’”
- “It was almost like [my concern] was just forgotten. ... It didn't feel personal, but it hurt; it was just frustrating. I think the nature of the whole thing made it more stressful.”
- “I just remember running in a circle with them trying to phone and being always told... it really came to a point where I just wanted to give up.”

EXPERIENCES ACCESSING LEGAL HELP

INSIGHT

Legal issues were accompanied by stress and high emotions.
People struggled to reach out and make the initial call for help.

QUOTES

- “I do think the human interaction is vital in a lot of cases, especially when we're in the age of mental health issues being so prevalent, and these are stressful situations.”
- “I was in a really bad spot. So, it took me a couple of weeks to call them.”

EXPERIENCES ACCESSING LEGAL HELP

INSIGHT

The stress of legal issues meant people needed a compassionate response and emotional support. One participant noted that an intermediary* (a community worker) was key in providing support.

QUOTES

- “... one [service provider] that I spoke to... just didn't have time for me. I'm left feeling a little worse than I was in the first place. Where if I'm talking to someone that's engaged, that's going to answer the extra questions, it just makes it feel more comfortable.”
- “It felt like another phone call that you just have to be on...emotionless.”
- “And so [a community worker] actually called Legal Aid for me. We had a conference call. And so she liaised the call for me because I was in a really bad place. And so, yeah, she is the one who got me through, who helped me. Oh, she was amazing.”

*Intermediaries are trusted community contacts (like service providers, community workers, advocates, Elders, volunteers, and helping professionals) who can help people access legal help.

EXPERIENCES ACCESSING LEGAL HELP

INSIGHT

Many also needed help in navigating legal processes / legal systems – especially in complex and stressful situations.

QUOTES

- “Looking at legal information [online]... I don't find it's really easy to look up. One thing that I kind of know about court is that it's highly based off of precedents and technical terms that I just don't quite know. And the more I look into that kind of stuff, the more questions I have and more confusing it gets. So I've kept it fairly simple with the types of questions I ask of people who do know stuff... [I've relied on] ... services or [reception staff]... pointing me in the right direction.”
- “There were a lot of other issues that I needed help with and still need help with ... in terms of ... my things, my property being damaged;... all of the emotional stress of being homeless; and all of those things. I need help with them, but I feel powerless...”

EXPERIENCES ACCESSING LEGAL HELP

INSIGHT

Participants expressed uncertainty about what services were available to them.

COVID-19 closures created further confusion.

QUOTES

- “I found... out [about] ... paths you can take if you’re Indigenous. But if you’re [not Indigenous], there's nothing for... battered women. The only option legally, for me, was Legal Aid, that I knew of, or that I still know.”
- “[It was hard to know] when [services] are open ... [with] all the closures and stuff. You never know what's open, so nobody really wants to go anywhere.”

AWARENESS OF LEGAL RESOURCES & SERVICES

INSIGHT

People often associate legal help (and Legal Aid BC) with representation by a lawyer; they were less aware of other services, like PLEI.

While most understood “representation,” the difference between legal “information,” and “advice” was not obvious for many. (This could also make searches confusing, as outlined below.)

QUOTES

- “I'm not very well-spoken. I don't like public speaking in public, so to have a legal representative speak in court for me... would be probably the deciding factor [in terms of] whether I would go to jail or not.”
- “... I ... asked what Legal Aid is for. What [someone] told me: ‘they give you a lawyer, if you can't afford a lawyer’ is what they said to me.”
- “I guess advice is ... the people who will potentially assign you to a lawyer... or just people who don't ask about your specific situation. They just tell you the general information ... And representation, I assume that means lawyer.”

APPROACHES TO SEEKING LEGAL HELP

- We presented participants with three scenarios and asked them to choose one.
- We asked them to explain what they would do first, and what they would do next. We documented their thinking with them, using a visual flowchart. We wanted to understand participants' approach and mindset as they approached the scenario.
- We also asked what works well or doesn't work when accessing legal help.

WHAT SCENARIO DID PARTICIPANTS CHOOSE?

A) Family Law scenario – 8 participants chose

A close family member, maybe a sibling or a cousin, has just told you that they are going to get divorced from their spouse. They have two children under 5. You know they suffer from depression and they are going to need help going through the process of getting a divorce.

B) Eligibility scenario – 9 participants chose

A close family member, maybe a sibling or a cousin, has just told you that they have been arrested. They make \$45,000 a year and you think, but are not sure, that they are eligible for legal aid. What would you do to help?

C) Indigenous harvesting scenario – 1 participant chose

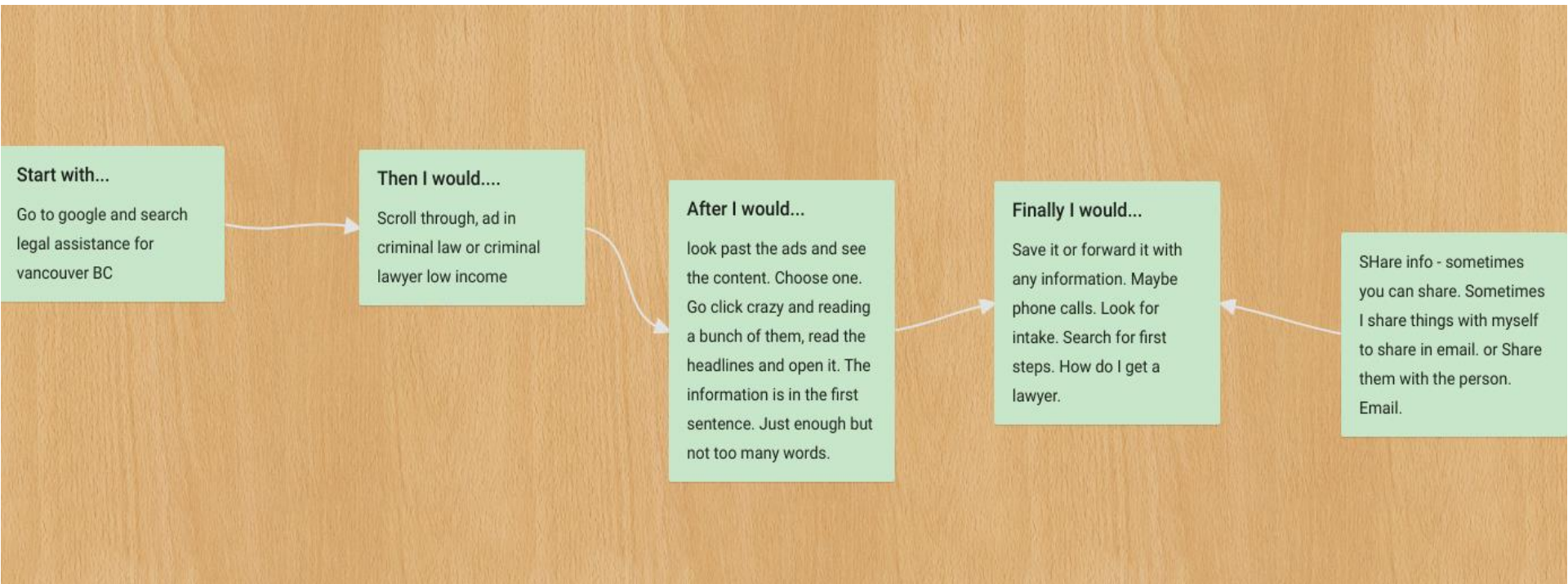
A close family member, maybe a sibling or a cousin, has just told you that they have been arrested for shooting a moose on their traditional territory. You have heard there is such a thing as harvesting rights for Aboriginal people. What would you do to help?

•About 40% of participants managed to find the information for their scenario.

LEGAL HELP-SEEKING SCENARIOS

In response to the legal scenarios, participants often said they would use Google to find information about what were the “first” or next steps.

People were often looking for legal help in the form of a lawyer or legal service.



LEGAL HELP-SEEKING SCENARIOS

People also used online searches to search for familiar and trusted, organizations who could provide legal services and/or support.

Those seeking help for an Indigenous relative often looked for services or organizations that specifically served Indigenous people.

Participants often searched online for *offline* resources (like phone numbers).

Start with...

I would Google native courtworker or legal aid and see if they can help.

Then I would....

Get in touch with the friendship centre.

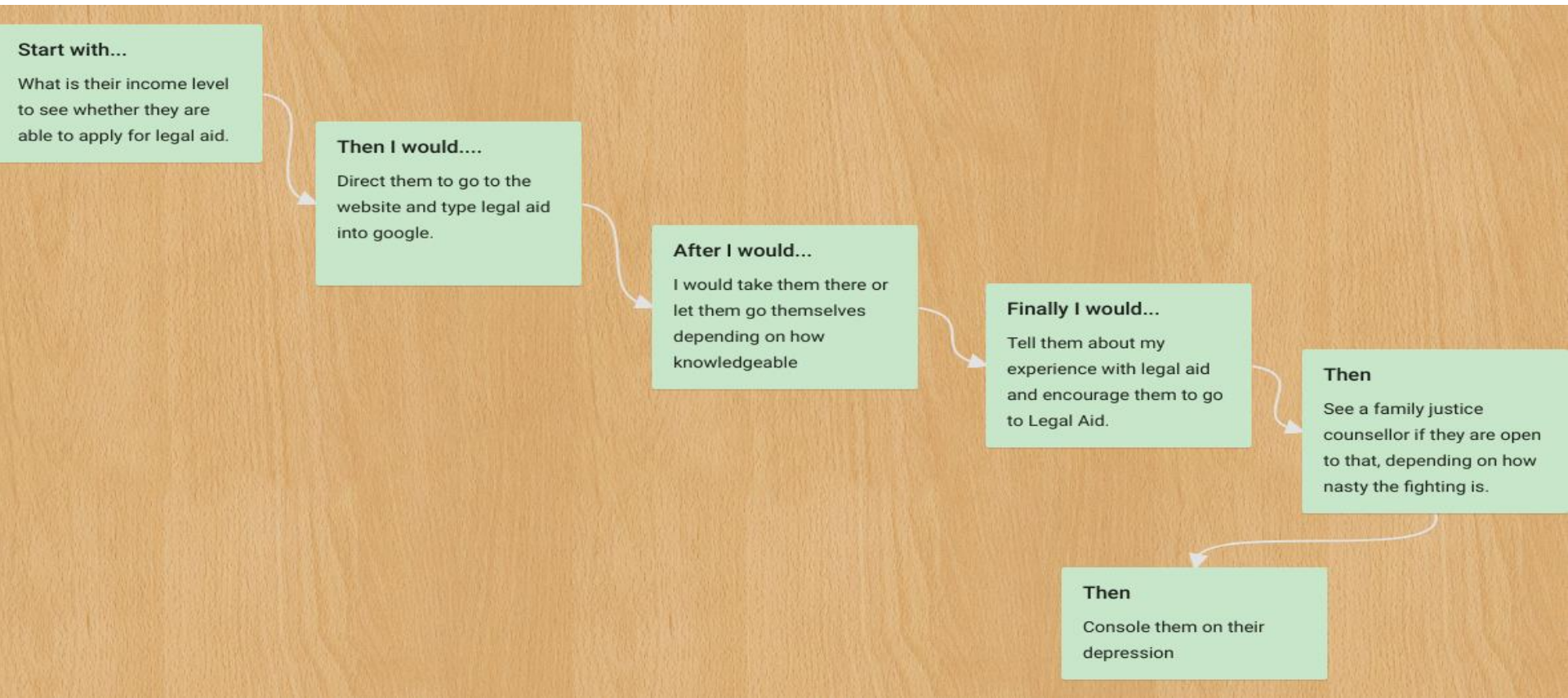
After I would...

I would look for an emergency number and if not, I would look for other ways to help.

LEGAL HELP-SEEKING SCENARIOS

Those with Legal Aid experience thought to contact Legal Aid for help.

Some were quite aware of the need to provide emotional or mental health support.



LEGAL HELP-SEEKING SCENARIOS

This participant would: listen and provide support; Google for trusted, detailed information about process; look for contact information; tailor their help based on the person's needs and capabilities; and try to access free legal advice.

Start with...

Listen to entire scenario. Hopefully respond appropriately and accordingly. Realize everything they know about this person. Make sure that I give them time to speak and try to respond.

Then I would....

Recommend getting a divorce keeping in mind they have a mental condition. Hopefully the reason I would support. Really something that they want.

After I would...

Look it up on Google. Look up BC Divorce law. Keep it simple and generate some detailed information about the process. Do it properly. Trusted resources.

Finally I would...

once we find trusted resources, go through the info. If there is contact info, or no cost, or talk to us without cost. we'd make a decision then. Try to base it on their needs and capabilities. Free would help more initially. Divorce is a costly process. Especially if they don't have a pre-nup.

APPROACHES TO SEEKING LEGAL HELP

INSIGHT

Participants had mixed approaches to legal help-seeking – favouring a variety of digital, phone-based, and in-person approaches.

QUOTES

- “... on Google... If I don't really find it on the first page, then I'll just start making calls and asking questions – random [phone] numbers that I find that might be able to point me in the right direction.”
- “I would apply online.”
“*What if applying online was not available?*”
“I guess I would prefer in person, but that that's only narrowly edging out online. Online, I know it would save me time. I also feel [that] going and talking to a person saves me time, because then I'm getting more information immediately.”

APPROACHES TO SEEKING LEGAL HELP

INSIGHT

Many participants were comfortable going online to seek legal help or information; some found this faster and more convenient.

Others described difficulties navigating legal information online.

QUOTES

- “90% of the resources I need I generally find online. I find you have access to more information a lot quicker. And with how busy life is, I personally don't find the library very effective just because it's kind of out of the way. It's hard to get to.”
- “I'm pretty independent in terms of... finding information for myself.”
- “Looking through all the information on the Canadian website, it is difficult to navigate through this. [There are] a lot of rules and regulations that... if I didn't spend a few days looking at [all the information], it would have been a lot more difficult to go through that paperwork, go through that process.”

APPROACHES TO SEEKING LEGAL HELP

INSIGHT

Likely because our interview participants self-identified as internet users, internet and computer access was not often mentioned as a barrier to legal help-seeking.

Participants' confidence with computers was high – averaging 3.9 out of 5. At the same time, many found using Zoom difficult in our interviews.

QUOTES

- “The computer, the internet... will become more relevant because of the pandemic... [But] there's a lot of people, myself included, that aren't comfortable enough. Like just even today, trying to get onto Zoom, I just go into a panic when I can't access what I want to access. I think ... something needs to be put in place so that people can feel more comfortable using the internet... and then they would use it more.”

It may be that people are comfortable doing their usual activities online but feel less confidence with new or unfamiliar tasks (in this case, Zoom), especially if they are feeling stress.

APPROACHES TO SEEKING LEGAL HELP

INSIGHT

Many participants valued speaking to a person who could provide knowledgeable, immediate, and personalized guidance.

This helped clarify confusing or complex legal information.

QUOTES

- “If I have a question, or I'm trying to understand something, and I'm not... getting the answers that I'm looking for, then I can re-word the question... over the phone a lot easier than I can look it up... A two-minute conversation... [can drag out] over five hours when you text someone versus when you call them... [And] most things that you read... they'll try to cover the generic situation that applies to most people. And there could be a good chance that you're reading a lot of stuff that doesn't apply to you. Or you're constantly reading the same thing over, trying to find what you're looking for. And that to me is kind of frustrating.”
- “Honestly, I read [websites], but I usually like to have an actual human being to confirm it on a phone call.”

APPROACHES TO SEEKING LEGAL HELP

INSIGHT

Speaking to a person (versus reading information or texting) was also valued for purposes of emotional support.

QUOTES

- “I still try to make the phone calls. I like hearing a person's voice, getting to talk to someone, especially when it's an intimate issue like this, when it's my family and it's... family law, there's a lot of personal information that I'm giving.”
- “It's a vulnerable time for a lot of people who need a little bit of connection... that's why talking to a person [helps]. You're getting to the bottom of an issue, but you're also getting some feedback... whether subconscious or not.”
- “I think that chatting [by text] with someone, the words are there, but the feeling on the phone is a richer medium... you can hear the nuance in their voice...it's important to hear that so that [I] feel acknowledged.”

APPROACHES TO SEEKING LEGAL HELP

INSIGHT

Some participants specifically preferred to speak to a legal helper in-person (instead of by phone, text, or video).

QUOTES

- “I just don't think that point would have been communicated as well over the video call as in person.... You basically express your emotions better and you communicate better [in person], I suppose.”
- “You can pretty much meet with who you need to, over stuff like Zoom and such, and have those conversations – discussion, advice. But I think there are... some things, [some] specific words... – like in my case, where [if we hadn't met in person,] I wouldn't have understood the point that they were trying to make to me, which made a big difference in the whole event.”

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE

- In this section, we asked participants to continue their online search, but to actually do so in a browser.
- They would continue with their chosen scenario.

WHAT TERMS DID PARTICIPANTS USE INITIALLY IN THE ONLINE SEARCH?

Divorce Scenario	Arrest/Eligibility Scenario	Harvesting Rights Scenario
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal Aid BC • Legal Aid BC • BC divorce law • Abby's Dad or Legal Aid • BC divorce • divorce British Columbia • Family lawyer or Legal Aid • Free legal advice counsel • family law BC • BC Legal Aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If family member is native: First Nations Courtworker Vancouver; if family member is not native: Legal Aid Vancouver. • Legal Aid income eligibility • who is eligible for Legal Aid • Legal Aid Society in British Columbia income • Legal Aid BC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wildlife rules, then Legal Aid

- Participants often knew to search with jurisdiction: “BC”, “Vancouver”
- The term “family law” was known to many participants
- The term “Legal Aid BC” was the most common search, indicating awareness of legal aid services. However, given that the interviewer had expressly been identified as working for Legal Aid, this could have impacted the search.
- Familiar organizations that specifically serve Indigenous people were sought by at least one searcher.

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE

INSIGHT

The majority of participants used Google, but Bing, Yahoo, and DuckDuckGo were also used. (Current worldwide market share of search engines is Google 86%, Bing 7%, Yahoo 3%¹, Duck 0.63%².)

QUOTES

- “I obviously go to Dr. Google for a lot of it... I'll Google, just do a Google search of what it is I want.”
- “[I'd] probably just Google it because... if I can find the answer there, then that's the most hassle-free method.... I don't talk to anyone about it. ... In some cases... having to explain the whole situation's kind of awkward... just Googling a simple question is faster than having to call someone. So, if it can be done that way, then that's preferable.”
- “I think I did just Google lawyers because I'm in panic mode. Right? So I Googled lawyers first, hit the person that comes up, and then I started weighing my options after I got some information. And then I landed on Legal Aid.”

¹ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/216573/worldwide-market-share-of-search-engines/>

² <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1220046/duckduckgo-search-engine-market-share-by-region/>

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE

INSIGHT

Searching for “legal aid” was complicated by issues with search engine features:

1) Google’s mapped results and associated categories in “Google My Business” and

QUOTES

2) The different ways in which Legal Aid offices appear in search results (as Legal Aid / Legal Services Society / Parents Legal Centre)

- [*Reading the categories:*] “One of them says ‘legal services’ and the second one says ‘legal services’ and the third one says “general practice attorney.” ... Well, I think one is certainly Legal Aid BC. It’s probably legal services – more service sector. Another one might be an information sector, and [the third] one ... sounded like law.”

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE

The screenshot shows a Google search for "legal aid bc" in a browser window. The search results include a map of the Greater Vancouver area with markers for "Parents Legal Centre", "Legal Services Society", and "Legal Aid BC". Below the map are three search results for legal services, each with a rating, address, and phone number. A red circle highlights the map and the first two search results. A grey callout box points to the map with the text "Participant finds the different categories confusing." Three red text annotations provide the participant's perspective on the results.

Map of searches closest

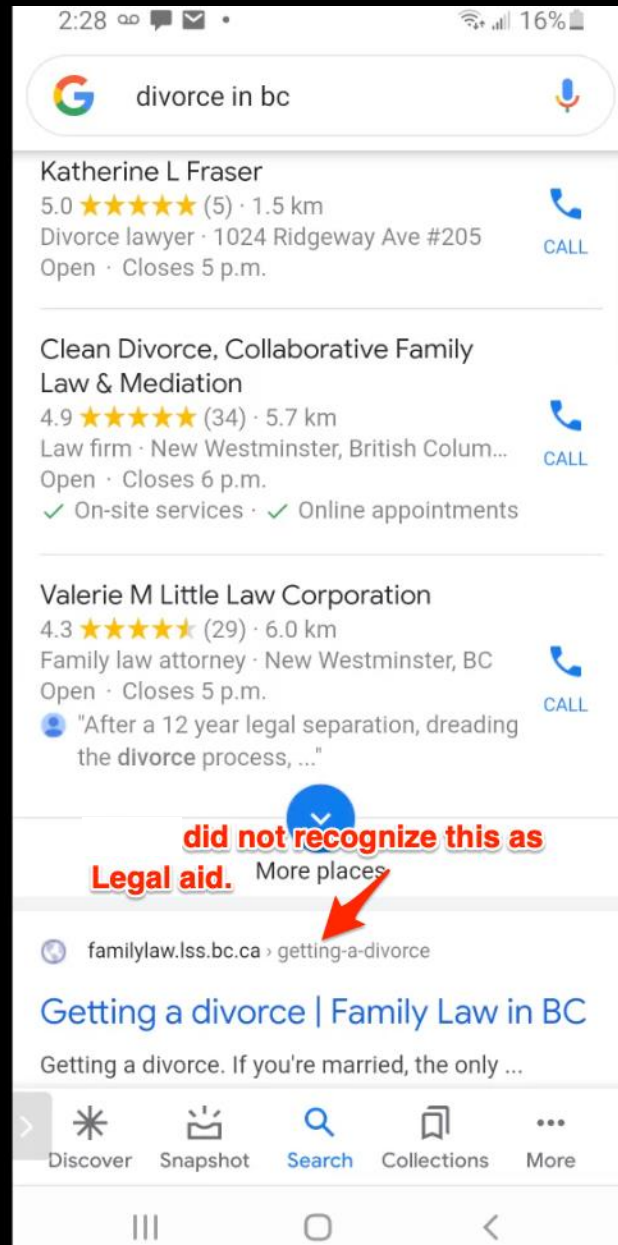
Participant finds the different categories confusing.

Not what I'm looking for. Association of lawyers. Best guess because it says general practice attorney and society. Seems to be like a group; society of people who offer legal services.

Parent's Legal centre I would guess that parents go where their kids need legal help of some kind.

Legal Aid BC is what I'm looking for.

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE



Participant found an on-topic resource, but didn't know if it was from a trusted service provider.

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE

Additional difficulties with search engines:

3) The search engine feature “People also ask” is not well understood and does not always provide relevant or accurate information.

“People also ask” boxes are a dynamic Search Engine Results page feature, containing sets of questions related to the original search query. Google and other search engines (e.g., Bing, Yahoo) use this feature.

- Participants were unsure about how “People also ask” works.
- They guessed it may be based on their search history.
- They guessed it likely offered correct / helpful information.
- Participants did not often focus on jurisdiction when it came to this feature.

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE

LegalZoom is the nation's leading provider of personalized, online legal solutions ...

People also ask

How do you get a divorce in British Columbia? ^

In **British Columbia**, you get a **divorce** by getting a **divorce** order from a judge at the Supreme Court of BC. You can get a **divorce** without appearing in court. You need to fill out several forms, **file** them with the court, pay the filing fees, and wait **for** your application to be processed.

[Do your own uncontested divorce | Family Law in BC](#)
family.legalaid.bc.ca/separation-divorce/getting-a-divorce/do-your-own-uncontested-divorce

[See all results for this question](#)

How do you get a marriage certificate in BC?

What is divorce mediation in BC? v

How to file a court form in B . C .? v

Ministry of Justice e-Divorce: Intro - British Columbia ✓
[justice.gov.bc.ca/divorce](#) v

Joint divorce means **making an application for a divorce together with your spouse**. It means that you and your spouse agree about getting a divorce and that you agree about all of the family law issues relevant to your situation, such as spousal support, and the division of family property and debts.

Type here to search

10:10 AM
2021-04-29

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE

MSN Canada | Outlook, Office, S... x who is eligible for legal aid - Bin... x +

bing.com/search?q=who+is+eligible+for+legal+aid&form=PRCAEN&httpsmsn=1&msnews=1&refig=03e010dd7cde47ecbf7e19a76206424d&sp=-1&pq=who+is+eligible+for+legal+aid&sc=5-29&qs=n&sk=&cvid=03e010dd7cde47ecbf7e19a76...

Microsoft Bing who is eligible for legal aid

ALL IMAGES VIDEOS MAPS NEWS SHOPPING

29,000,000 Results Date Language Region

People on social assistance almost always qualify for legal aid. You may be eligible for legal aid even if you have some money in the bank or even if you own a home. The types of individuals who have also benefited from legal aid include: people accused of a criminal offence,

[What is legal aid and who is eligible? - FREE Legal ...](#)
www.legalline.ca/legal-answers/what-is-legal-aid-and-who-is-eligible/

Was this helpful?

PEOPLE ALSO ASK

Who qualifies for legal aid?

People on social assistance almost always qualify for legal aid. You may be eligible for legal aid even if you have some money in the bank or even if you own a home. The types of individuals who have also benefited from legal aid include: refugees seeking Canadian immigration status, or immigrants facing deportation.

[What is legal aid and who is eligible? - FREE Legal ...](#)
www.legalline.ca/legal-answers/what-is-legal-aid-and-wh...

[See all results for this question](#)

How do you know if you are eligible for legal aid?

We may apply the following tests to determine if you are eligible for legal aid:

- Jurisdiction Test** looks at whether legal aid is available in that jurisdiction and area of law.
- The Means Test** looks at your income and assets. If you are eligible, we look at how much contribution you will pay towards the cost of the service.

[Legal aid eligibility tests - Legal Aid NSW](#)
www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/get-legal-help/applying-for-legal-aid...

Taskbar: Type here to search, File Explorer, Edge, Chrome, Word, Mail, 10:13 AM, ENG Wednesday, 2021-03-24

Callout box: Participant used "PEOPLE ALSO ASK", but the feature shows the incorrect jurisdiction.

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the search query "just family law, british columbia" entered in the search bar. The search results page displays several links related to family law in British Columbia. A callout box with a grey background and a white border points to the search bar. The callout box contains the text: "Participant added jurisdiction after noticing incorrect jurisdiction". Above the callout box, the text "Added location after seeing Utah" is written in red. The browser's address bar shows the URL "https://duckduckgo.com/?q=just+family+law%2C+british+columbia&kt=ffnt&ia=web". The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows the Windows logo, a search bar, and several application icons. The system tray at the bottom right shows the date and time as "5:46 PM 2021-03-15".

Mail - me here - Outlook | Post Attendee - Zoom | Welcome | Legal Aid BC | Children | Family Law in BC | New Tab | just family law, british columbi...

https://duckduckgo.com/?q=just+family+law%2C+british+columbia&kt=ffnt&ia=web

just family law, british columbia

All Images Videos News Maps Settings

Canada (en) Safe Search: Moderate

About Just Family Solutions
www.justfamilysolutions.ca/about.php
About Just Family Solutions At Just Family Solutions, Ron Smith is dedicated to cost-effective resolutions of family law legal disputes through arbitration and mediation. Ron graduated from the University of British Columbia law school in 1974, and has practiced in B.C. since 1975.

Family Justice - Province of British Columbia
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/life-events/divorce/family-justice
These web pages provide general information about family law in British Columbia. They have information for people considering changes in their family relationships such as separation and divorce, and may be of interest to people thinking of marrying or living with someone in a marriage-like relationship.

Welcome to Family Law in BC | Family Law in BC
https://family.legalaid.bc.ca
Family law issues are more complex when a relationship is affected by laws from outside Canada. ... Legal Aid BC is a non-profit organization committed to helping British Columbians resolve their legal issues. We provide free public legal information, advice, and representation to people with low incomes. ...

The Family Law Act - Province of British Columbia
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/life-events/divorce/family-justice/the-family-law-...
The Family Law Act - Province of British Columbia The Family Law Act The Family Law Act came into force on March 18, 2013. It replaces the Family Relations Act.

Family Law Act - Province of British Columbia
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/justice/about-bcs-justice-system/legislation-polit...
Family Law Act On Nov. 23, 2011, a new family law bill was passed in the B.C. legislature. The Family Law Act came fully into force on March 18, 2013, and replaced the Family Relations Act. The new act places the safety and best interests of the child first when...

Related Searches

- british columbia law society
- british columbia laws and regulations
- british columbia law institute
- columbia family law group

Added location after seeing Utah

Participant added jurisdiction after noticing incorrect jurisdiction

Share Feedback

Type here to search

5:46 PM 2021-03-15

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE

Additional difficulties with search engine features:

4) Google business listings also include a “Questions and answers” feature. Many questions are unanswered and/or include incorrect information.

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE

Legal Services Society

400-510 Burrard St, Vancouver, BC



Ask a question

Where can I get a copy of a basic standard BC will document?



Like



Answer

My neighbor built a fence illegally on my property. When I objected, he removed the fence by cutting the posts off their bases, but left the cement stumps behind in the soil. Can I sue him for the cost of removal in Vancouver small claims court ?



Like



Answer



Carlos Estrada

2 years ago

That's going to cost u more money then just grabbing a shovel and doing it yourself lol



1

Random answer from someone with irrelevant information.

Need to find out regarding tenant's bad huge problem as tenant's are

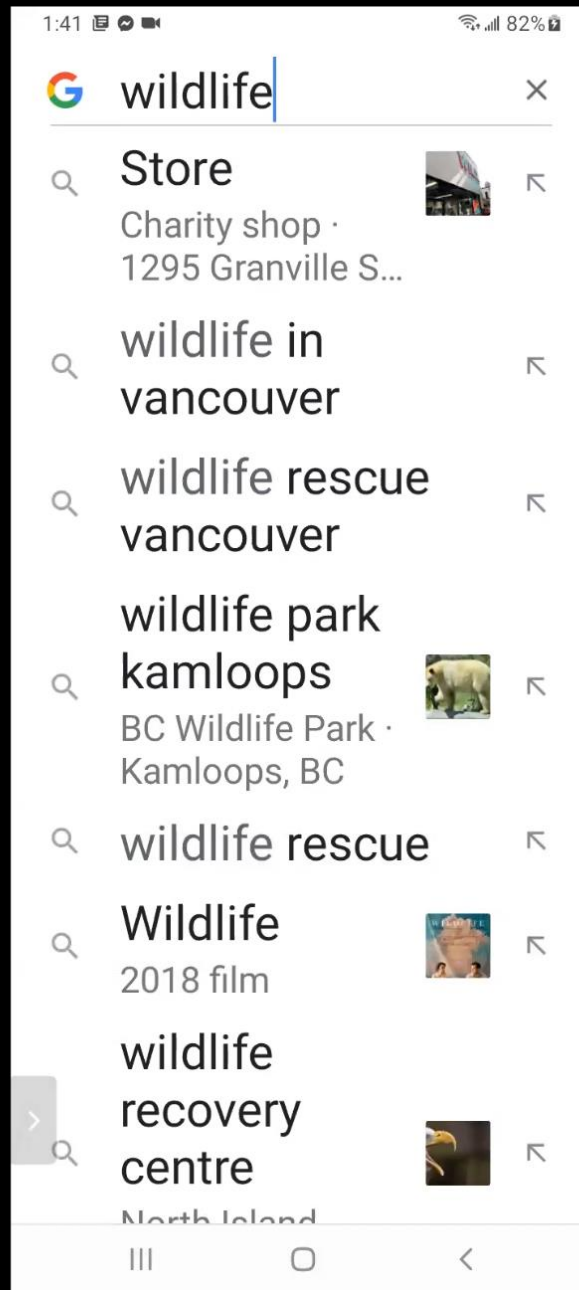
SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE

Legal concepts and terminology could also complicate searching.

For example:

- Lack of familiarity with legal terms like “harvesting rights.”
 - One participant searched for “wildlife” hoping to find information about a Wildlife Act (legislation). But the information generated was unhelpful.
- Lack of familiarity with the legal meanings of “advice” versus “representation”

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE



looks for info on
Aboriginal hunting/fishing.

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE

The screenshot shows a Google search interface with the query "legal aid bc eligibility". The search results are from the website lss.bc.ca. The first result is titled "Do I qualify for legal representation? | Legal Aid BC" and includes a snippet: "... legal assistant tells you that you do not qualify for legal representation, you may be ... at the value of your assets to determine your financial eligibility for legal aid." The second result is titled "Do I qualify financially for legal advice? | Legal Aid BC" and includes a snippet: "Family legal advice services have a financial eligibility test. To be eligible for family advice services, your net monthly...". Below the search results is a section titled "People also ask" with four questions: "Who qualifies for legal aid in BC?", "What is the maximum income to qualify for legal aid?", "Who qualifies for free legal aid?", and "Who is eligible for legal aid in Canada?". At the bottom of the page, there is a footer for "www2.gov.bc.ca" under the category "criminal-justice".

Participant does not recognize these legal terms as different.

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE

Participants shared various reasons for deciding to click on a specific site or link:

- Does it have a familiar and/or trusted name (e.g. “Legal Aid”) in the title
- Is the location of the service near them?
- Is it an ad?
- Does it have positive reviews?

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE

10:46 57%

See results about Legal Services Society
Legal Aid BC is the legal aid...

Legal Services Society

Legal aid office in Nanaimo, British Columbia

[Overview](#) [Reviews](#) [Photos](#)

[CALL](#) [DIRECTIONS](#) [SAVE](#) [WEBSITE](#)

321 Wallace St Room 201, Nanaimo, BC V9R 2K6 Nanaimo
Azwilliam St

[See other locations](#)

	Monday	9–11:30a.m.
	Tuesday	1–3:30p.m.
	Wednesday	9–11:30a.m. 1–3:30p.m.
	Thursday	9–11:30a.m.
	Friday	Closed
	Saturday	Closed
	Sunday	Closed

[Suggest an edit](#)

Hours or services may differ

I would start with this. I need help with legal services. It's local. It's better when you are looking for help that the people are close by.

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE

11:42 AM Wed Feb 10 44%

free legal advice counsel

Gmail - Email from Google Gmail free legal advice counsel - Google Search

Legal Services Society

OVERVIEW **REVIEWS** PHOTOS ABOUT

Catherine K
Local Guide · 21 reviews

★★★★★ a year ago
Friendly and productive!

georgemuscle
105 reviews

★☆☆☆☆ 5 months ago
Useless

MaHmooD KhaN
Local Guide · 246 reviews · 339 photos

★☆☆☆☆ 2 years ago
They are paid to provide service but they behave very rude

Y M
Local Guide · 323 reviews · 232 photos

I look at everything. I look to the words used, for example, "legal aid" 5 stars. But also read the reviews. To me, it looks reasonable.

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE

INSIGHT

Participants were aware that online search results included ads. Most said they usually skip or avoid ads.

However, device type / font size could make ads difficult to identify.

QUOTES

- “I can see how someone might get confused by that... Because I presume these ... ads at the top are not actually Legal Aid. They are the privately owned places, or like, you hire a lawyer.... I would not click on it, but maybe if I didn't have the exact prior knowledge, I might have clicked on it and I might have been confused for a while.”

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE

11:40 AM Wed Feb 10 45%

free legal advice counsel

Gmail - Email from Google Gmail free legal advice counsel - Google Search

Google

free legal advice counsel

All News Shopping Maps Images Videos Books Flights Search tools

Ad · www.justanswer.com/law/canada

Ask a Lawyer: Canada - BC Lawyers Answer You ASAP - JustAnswer.com

A Lawyer Will Answer in Minutes! Questions Answered Every 9 Seconds. 12MM+ Questions Answered. Helped Over 8MM Worldwide. Services: Expert Q&A, 1-on-1 Consultations, Connect in Minutes, Free Follow-Up Questions, 24/7 Access.

Rating for justanswer.com
4.9 ★★★★★ (505)

[Ask on JustAnswer Now](#)

[Ask Your Car Question Now](#)

[Get Medical Answers](#)

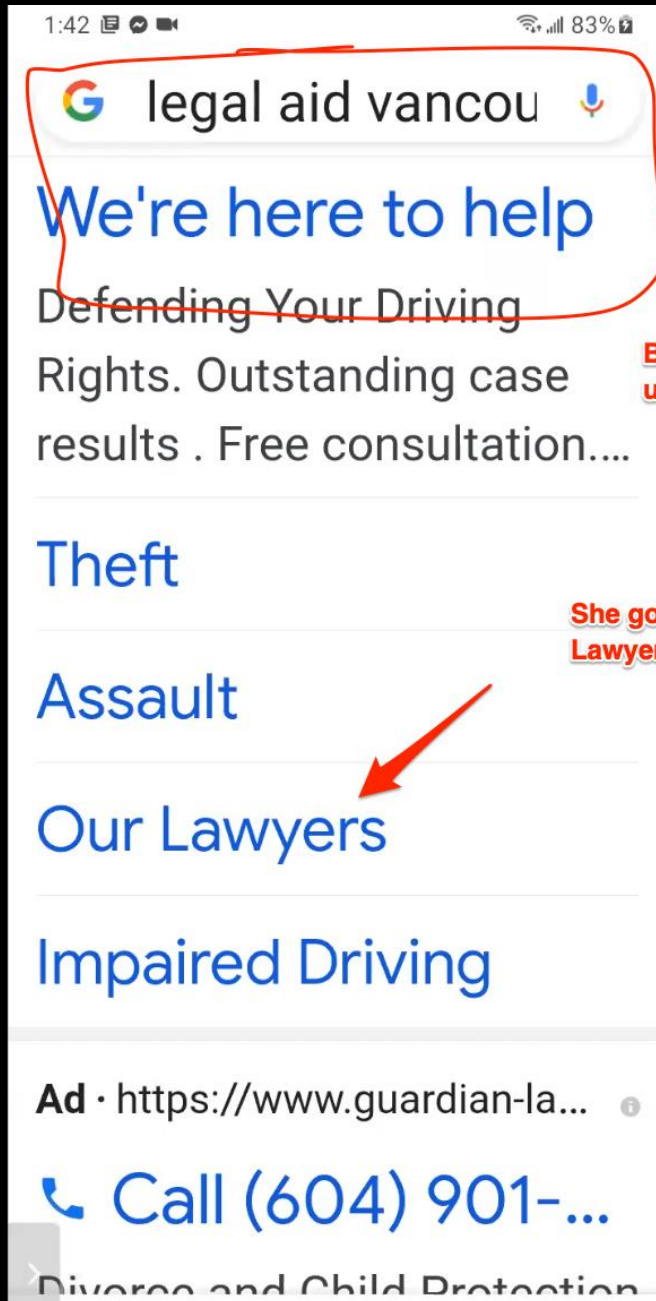
Ad · www.myinformationbase.com/

24 Hour Legal Aid - Free Lawyer Advice Online - myinformationbase.com

Top Legal Services. Find Attorneys in Your Area That Can Help 24/7. We Can Help! Get Immediate Legal Help From Pro Bono Attorneys. View Services. View Articles. Highlights: Offering Wide Array Of Articles, Experts Available. Providing Vital Information.

I try to avoid ads.

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE



Because of her font size, she is unaware that this is an ad.

She goes to "Our Lawyers"

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE

INSIGHT

Participants noticed and responded to Google's review feature.

Reviews in Google stood out as a key arbiter of decision-making about which links to click or sites to trust.

Participants also noticed testimonials on websites, or on Facebook.

QUOTES

- “I base a lot on reviews... It's not the final decision, but it matters.”
- “Sometimes on websites I'll look at reviews and then I'll go on to [a] Facebook... group and I'll ask people “[if] you've had dealings with this or that? And what was your outcome? Was it legit? Was it worth it?”
- “I often look at the reviews....most sites will have a review section of people who've used that site, whether it was helpful... Other people's opinion of that site is a big influence.”

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE

11:42 AM Wed Feb 10 free legal advice counsel 45%

Legal Services Society

OVERVIEW REVIEWS PHOTOS ABOUT

Questions and answers

Q: Does refugee can get this legal help?
A: Yes. Legal aid helps with immigration law.

See all questions (18)

Ask the community

Google review summary

5 4 3 2 1

3.8
★★★★☆
(22)

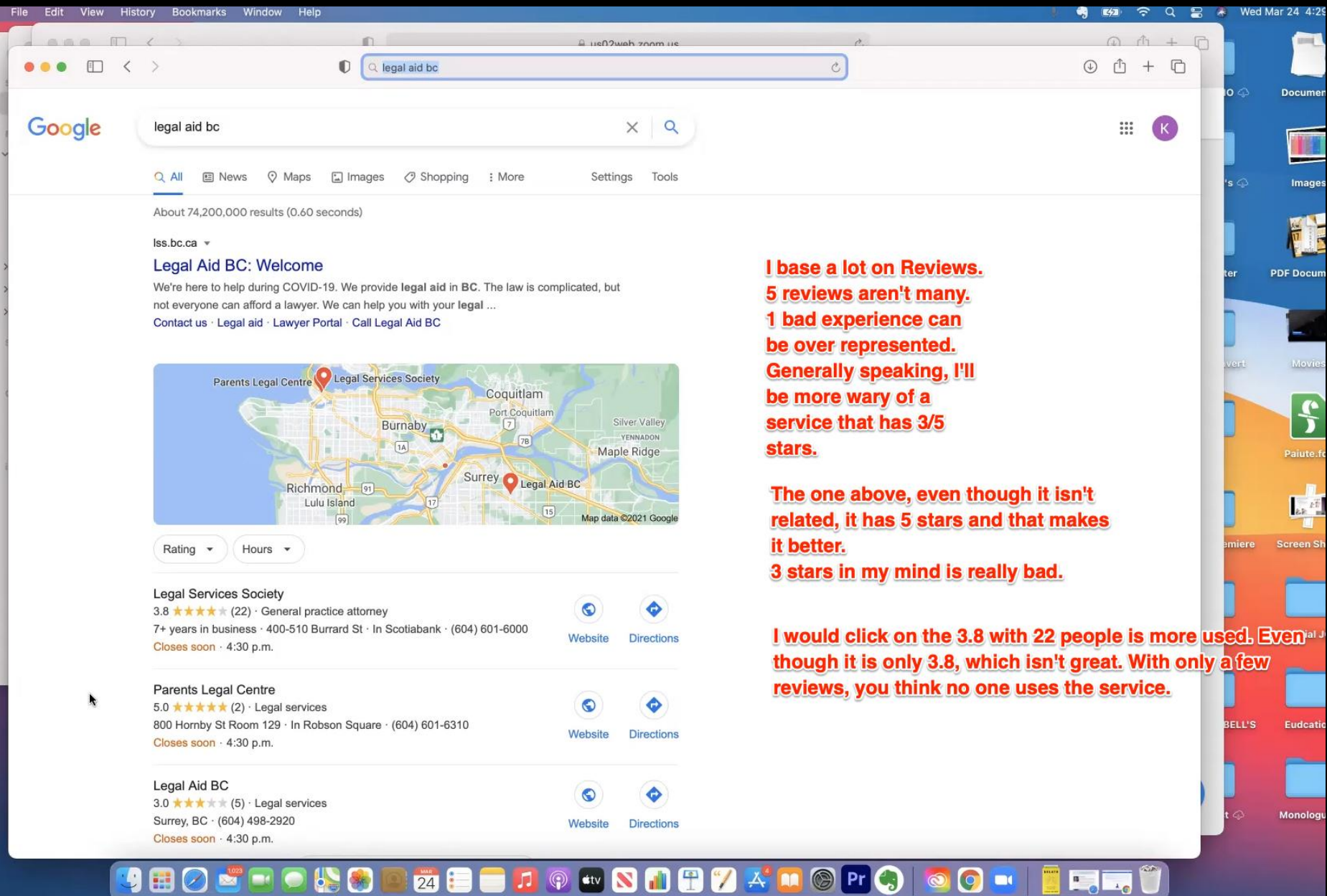
More Google reviews

Rate and review
Share your experience to help others

☆☆☆☆☆

One thing is the amount of reviews. 22 reviews it's a little low. If it was 3 or 4 I would be concerned.

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE



I base a lot on Reviews. 5 reviews aren't many. 1 bad experience can be over represented. Generally speaking, I'll be more wary of a service that has 3/5 stars.

The one above, even though it isn't related, it has 5 stars and that makes it better. 3 stars in my mind is really bad.

I would click on the 3.8 with 22 people is more used. Even though it is only 3.8, which isn't great. With only a few reviews, you think no one uses the service.

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE

INSIGHT

In addition to using reviews, participants shared various strategies for finding accurate legal information.

They chose sites by familiar/trusted organizations, or governments.

- They looked for government names and logos, or “gov” in the URL

QUOTES

- “Generally, we've got information underneath, like... down here, it says who they represent... it has, you know, a lot of transparency. It's easy to contact. I'll check out the disclaimer and privacy. If I have any doubts, you've got the Law Foundation seal at the bottom... those are reputable agencies”
- “I like to see an official banner, so that could be from a provincial government or from a well-known organization. I see if the source is credible first before I really make any firm to decisions on it. And I also read it carefully.”

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE

10:48 56%

lss.bc.ca

Legal Aid BC

Search

COVID-19: Legal Aid BC now takes phone-only applications. Find the legal help you need.

We're here to help during COVID-19

We provide legal aid in BC. The law is complicated, but not everyone can afford a lawyer. We can help you with your legal issue.

Apply by phone in your community.

Or call 1-866-577-2525 / 604-408-2172 (Greater Vancouver)

Family

"Definitely looks like a govt funded website"

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE

INSIGHT

Some also reviewed, tested, and compared information on many sites, and looked for repeated references to a trusted site.

QUOTES

- “I'm trying to look for the websites that are known, as opposed to just opinion pieces... To me, they're well-known if I [can] check them out, to see if it's accurate or not. Then you ask the question, is this true? Or can I do this or... that, and see what response has come up?... Some of it is kind of [about] instincts. But you know that the government... pages are going to be accurate and then you can... start from there.”
- “I don't just look at one site. I read many, many sites and the one that seems to be repeated, I tend to believe more.”

Others used “trust marker” features of security software such as McAfee or Norton.

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE

The screenshot shows a web browser window with several tabs open. The active tab is titled "Divorce british columbia - Yahoo". The address bar shows the search URL: ca.search.yahoo.com/search?fr=mcafee&type=E211CA1456G0&p=Divorce+british+columbia. The search bar contains the text "Divorce british columbia".

Below the search bar, there are navigation options: "All", "Images", "Videos", "News", "Anytime", and "The Web".

The search results include a section "Also Try: online divorce british columbia" and "Ads related to: Divorce british columbia".

The first advertisement is for "British Columbia OnlineDivorce - Divorce Papers For Just \$139". It features a green checkmark icon. Below the title is the URL onlinedivorce.com/BritishColumbia/Online_Divorce. The ad text describes the service: "Do Your Own **British Columbia Divorce** Papers. Made Easy Online. Save Money Today. Price Match Guarantee · Ready in 24 Minutes · 500000+ Customers · 24/7 Customer Support. Service catalog: Divorce with Children, Divorce Papers, Uncontested Divorce. Your access to Online Divorce's website is subject to and governed by our, Any ...".

Below the ad text are four sub-sections, each with a green checkmark icon:

- Find Out If You Qualify**: See If You Can File Your Divorce In Your State In About 30 Minutes
- How It Works**: 3-Step Process to Fast and Easy Divorce
- Why Us**: Trusted Solution for Uncontested Divorce
- Reviews**: View All Customers OnlineDivorce.com Reviews

The second advertisement is for "Free Divorce Agreement Bc - Download and Print. 100% Free." with a green checkmark icon. The URL is www.lawdepot.ca/OnlineForms/LegalSeparation. The text describes it as a "Professional Fill in the Blanks **Divorce Agreement Bc**. Step by Step Instructions. Helping Millions of People for More Than a Decade. Customize Your Forms in 5 Minutes. Easy Step-by-Step Process · 20 Years in Business · 100% Quality Guaranteed · Live Help, Chat, Phone".

Annotations on the page include:

- "Green checkmarks" pointing to the green checkmark icons in the ad title and sub-sections.
- "Yes, this means it is ok" pointing to the green checkmark icon in the "How It Works" sub-section.
- A callout box containing the text: "Green 'OK' comes from Norton, Green check mark comes from McAfee. These are trust indicators."

The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the search bar with "Type here to search", several application icons, and the system tray with the date and time: "10:05 AM 2021-04-29".

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE

INSIGHT

Some of the strategies used for assessing a website's credibility were less effective.

- E.g., Judging based on the look or design of the site, looking for sponsor logos, use of SSL, or copyright year.

QUOTES

- “I guess part of it depends on how official the website looks.”
- “I'll first look at the banner, look at the logos, [see] if it seems kind of amateur? ... look at the logo, see if it's professionally designed and see if the website is appealing to the eye.”

SEARCHING FOR LEGAL HELP ONLINE

Post Attendee - Zoom x Welcome | Legal Aid BC x

lss.bc.ca

Home Legal aid - Lawyers - Community workers - News - About us -

COVID-19: Legal Aid BC now takes phone-only applications. Find the legal help you need.

We're here to help during COVID-19

We provide legal aid in BC. The law is complicated, but not everyone can afford a lawyer. We can help you with your legal issue.

Apply by phone in your community.

Or call 1-866-577-2525 / 604-408-2172 (Greater Vancouver)

The site I was on before was more govt oriented.
This site looks more flashy.

Our locations
Our services
Our publications
Contact us

Children/MCF Criminal Immigration

Participant thought the site's "flashiness" indicated a non-government website. Their impression was that government websites are boring.

USING DIGITAL LEGAL RESOURCES

- In this section, we continued the scenario to reach a relevant digital legal resource. If the participant had not found an LABC website, we directed them to it.
- We were interested to hear how participants perceived various sites, and how they used these to answer their questions.
- Websites targeted by scenario:
 - Scenario 1 would find answers on the Family Law site
 - Scenario 2 was for the LABC main site
 - Scenario 3 was for the Aboriginal Legal Aid site
- Finally, we asked participants whether they thought chat features on websites were helpful.

USING DIGITAL LEGAL RESOURCES

INSIGHT

Some website features stood out as important for participants:

1. Participants looked for sites that were visually accessible and appeared trustworthy.
2. Some participants valued up-front access to phone-based help.

QUOTES

- “I don't see any typos... The layout of their website is... pretty solid... It's not scattered, and I can read it. It's not too bulked up...”
- “I didn't want to look at websites. I just wanted to make a phone call and talk to someone. And I think that's probably what I like about that website, is that it kind of gets you to that option right away.”

USING DIGITAL LEGAL RESOURCES

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://family.legalaid.bcc.ca/finances-support/property-debt/dividing-property-and-debts-after-you-separate>. The page features a header with the text "COVID-19 and the legal system. Your questions answered." and the Legal Aid BC FamilyLaw logo. A navigation menu includes "Separation & Divorce", "Children", "Finances & Support", "Abuse & Family Violence", and "BC Legal System". The main content area is titled "Dividing property and debts after you separate" and includes a list of conditions under "The law calls you and your partner spouses if:" and a section for "What's family property?". A callout box on the right side of the page contains the text: "Participants liked this site's clean design and up-front access to phone-based help." The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows the Windows logo, search bar, and various application icons, with the system tray displaying the time as 5:42 PM on 2021-03-15.

COVID-19 and the **legal system**. Your questions answered.

Legal Aid BC
FamilyLaw
Legal help for people in BC

Get more help: CALL VISIT

Separation & Divorce | Children | **Finances & Support** | Abuse & Family Violence | BC Legal System

Print | Forms | Glossary | Email

Dividing property and debts after you separate

The law calls you and your partner spouses if:

- you're **married**, or
- you've been living together in a marriage-like relationship (you might call it a common-law relationship) for at least two years.

If you divorce or separate, there are laws that say how the property and debt of spouses should be divided.

The law divides property into:

- **family property**, and
- **excluded property**.

What's family property?

Family property is everything you or your spouse own on the date you separate,

Participants liked this site's clean design and up-front access to phone-based help.

Live Chat

Type here to search

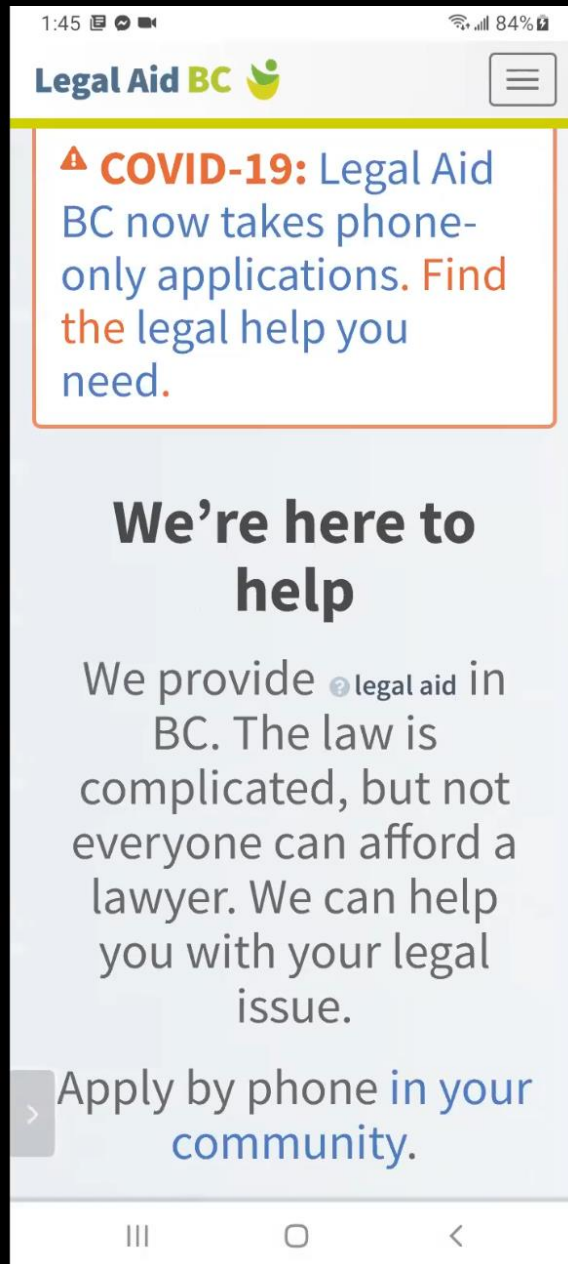
5:42 PM
2021-03-15

USING DIGITAL LEGAL RESOURCES

Various factors resulted in challenges navigating sites, and locating relevant information:

1. The same page that displayed well on a desktop appeared overwhelming on a phone / with larger font.
2. The purpose of some features (a texting number and an email share link) were not always obvious to participants.

USING DIGITAL LEGAL RESOURCES



There is a lot of information on this one.

Font size can shift users' response. This participant felt overwhelmed.

USING DIGITAL LEGAL RESOURCES

www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/home/get-help-with-government-services

All people 18+ can [register to get vaccinated](#) | [Province-wide restrictions](#) are in effect, including [travel restrictions](#)

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Quick question? Get a quick answer. (beta)

Text us: 1-604-660-2421

Standard message and data rates may apply.

Do not provide personal information such as health number, drivers license number or birth date.

doesn't understand that this is a Texting service. She thinks that the program itself is a BETA program. "This might not even work"

Ask a complex question

Call us toll-free: 1-800-663-7867

Victoria: [250-387-6121](#)
Vancouver: [604-660-2421](#)
Outside of Canada/USA: 1-604-660-2421

Accessible Options

Video Relay Service (VRS) works on our phone numbers for people who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired.

Call us toll-free: 1-800-663-7867

Participant was looking for phone number to call. But this highlighted number was not for calling.

Type here to search

10:09 AM
2021-04-29

USING DIGITAL LEGAL RESOURCES

family.legalaid.bc.ca/separation-divorce/getting-a-divorce/do-your-own-uncontested-divorce

COVID-19 and the **legal system**. Your questions answered.

Assume Legal Aid because it says so.

Legal Aid BC
FamilyLaw
Legal help for people in BC

Get more help: CALL VISIT

Separation & Divorce | Children | Finances & Support | Abuse & Family Violence | BC Legal System

Website is not "bulked" up. White background is good.
No Ads.
Ads make me less trusting of it.

Print | Forms | Glossary | **Email**

I would click here to email

Do your own uncontested divorce

Choose the correct guide

Divorce is the legal procedure for ending a marriage. In British Columbia, you get a divorce by getting a divorce order from a judge at the Supreme Court of BC.

Do your own divorce
A form... gets divorced with... or having to... court, in our short... story Do your own

Live Chat

Type here to search

10:10 AM 2021-04-29

How do you know page is legit?
"I'd probably read most of it, and then email them. There are no spelling mistakes. Try and talk to a real person. Has a twitter link Also it is funded by the law foundation."

I would click here to email

The purpose of this email share link was not clear to the participant.

USING DIGITAL LEGAL RESOURCES

More factors that resulted in challenges navigating sites, and locating relevant information:

3. A chart with relevant information was difficult to find (at the very bottom of a site). Many would scroll down the page, but not all the way to the bottom.
4. Legal terminology also played a role: acronyms were not understood.
5. Participants noted that website search features are often ineffective.

USING DIGITAL LEGAL RESOURCES

Net household monthly income table

Household size	Standard and Family Limited Representation cases	CFCSA and Criminal Early Resolution cases
1	\$1,670	\$2,670
2	\$2,340	\$3,340
3	\$3,010	\$4,010
4	\$3,680	\$4,680
5	\$4,350	\$5,350
6	\$5,020	\$6,020
7 or more	\$5,690	\$6,690

While those directly impacted by CFCSA issues will likely know this term, other users can feel alienated by unfamiliar acronyms. “CFCSA?”

USING DIGITAL LEGAL RESOURCES

INSIGHT

Ineffective website search tools were seen as a widespread problem. One participant described how he generally lacked trust in website search features:

QUOTES

- “Usually [website search features are] not as good as Google, so basically, whenever I use the search [feature], I have to be pretty specific to get a response... I think the person that makes the website doesn't really include all this stuff properly into the search algorithm. It doesn't even come up properly. Even though I search it properly. So that's why I've kind of lost faith in website search.”

USING DIGITAL LEGAL RESOURCES

INSIGHT

Chat features: While some expressed uncertainty or concern about privacy, live chat features on websites were generally seen as useful.

QUOTES

- “At first, I'm thinking that's not a great idea. But ... if it's a time sensitive issue, and someone needs to get that ball rolling, then maybe having that up there would be handy.”
- “That's come up and I've been curious. So... I click the 'chat with us' box, and 90% of the time, [chatting] has a much faster response time. I enjoy those.”
- “I don't really like using the chat box because I don't know who's on the other end, I don't know if that actually legitimately is part of that website or not. But... I will sometimes ask the generic-type questions on there.”
- “Always, if I can go on a chat online, as opposed to [being] on hold, on the phone, I'll go online.”

USING DIGITAL LEGAL RESOURCES

INSIGHT

Chat features were often seen as efficient and convenient – especially compared with waiting ‘on hold’ on the phone.

QUOTES

- “When chatting, you can multitask at the same time, and then the other person can do the thing... They'll provide you the information once they have it. [You can] minimize the chat, and then you'll get a little notification... I find it very efficient. Whereas when you're queued [on a phone]... I find it more time consuming.”
- “Those are great. It keeps me off the phone. It helps keep information clear for myself. I can type it all out as quickly as I can, or I can take my time, but at least this way, someone will reply to me. Then I know someone's on the other end, or at least the [chat]bot will look at my information and help me determine what's the best course of action to quickly access people with knowledge.”

USING DIGITAL LEGAL RESOURCES

INSIGHT

Chat-based help was also thought to be good for youth.

Chatting was associated with neutral / non-judgmental interactions, and less pressure to respond immediately.

QUOTES

- “There’s no anxiety to [chatting]... I think that's the biggest thing is that when that [legal] scenario happens, where someone feels judged, they're not exactly in a good mindset. And so just knowing that [the person on the chat is] not going to judge you for your situation, the only thing they can do is help you. I think that would really push it for sure.”
- “They’re [chatting or messaging] because they can put this ‘protective shield’ right above themselves so that they can feel safe because they don't have to answer right away.”

USING DIGITAL LEGAL RESOURCES

INSIGHT

Participants valued chatting with a person. But many feel chatbot technology is “painful” – insufficiently advanced and thus unhelpful.

QUOTES

- “If you're dealing with a person... they can usually pick up a little bit more of the innuendo... in... what you're asking... And [Artificial Intelligence] doesn't have that.”
- “Sometimes the question you're trying to ask, it isn't in the options available. So, you've got to keep going through them. And half the time they're redirecting you [to] something that's way off from where you started. And then trying to talk to the bot, [it]'ll be like, ‘please rephrase...’ or ‘use less words’ and... they still don’t understand... it’s irritating.”
- “[When] it’s a robot,... I know I'm not going to get my answers right away. I'd rather just search for myself rather than [ask] the robot... If there was a person, I'll use [the chat]...literally the only reason is just speed.”

ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

- We asked participants for suggestions about advertising and promotion of PLEI resources.

ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

INSIGHT

Participants identified online ads and social media as the primary place to advertise – especially Facebook.

QUOTES

- “Online...Make sure it shows up when people search stuff, just make sure it stays... closer to the top.”
- “To me and my friends, that would be social media marketing – Facebook and Instagram. I click on a lot of links... on Instagram marketing and Facebook marketing, more so than I ever would [with] a television ad... The call to action through social media, for me, is high.”
- “Facebook advertising, like it or not, gets seen out there. And especially when you're talking more [about] the older group. So [I suggest] well-placed ads there.”

ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

INSIGHT

Other ideas were TV, Skytrain/transit, and public/outdoor ads.

One participant recommended in-game ads.

QUOTES

- “I've been seeing... TV ads, and if you have the right ad, it will stick out. I liked the current ICBC ads: husband and wife sit... there [talking about ICBC]... They're realistic, you know? They're not flamboyant, ‘in your face’ type-of things. It's just something to get you thinking.”
- “So Skytrains, for sure. I think a lot of young people going to and from school, to and from work, they see this. I used to see them in subways all the time, ‘free immigration service’ or ‘free legal aid.’ Definitely a poster in public places where people go, supermarkets too.”
- “Play store games, like Candy Crush... in order to get a bonus or next level quite often they'll play an ad... [a] 30 second ad. I watch a lot of ads in between games.”

ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

We wanted to learn whether promotional print materials (like pamphlets placed in community spaces) were effective for helping people find digital legal resources. Responses were mixed:

“Do you use pamphlets in searches for help?”: Yes (7) No (5)

INSIGHT

QUOTES

- “I glance at them. These types of pamphlets I actually do have a look at, and I'm very curious... but I'm not... the one to always pick them up.”
- I have seen them in the health unit up near the hospital. I've seen them where... you relicense your vehicle. They have all sorts of little pamphlets there. So yes, I have occasionally picked one up... I read it, talked to my husband about it, and then I threw it out.”
- “I try to avoid paper just because I've ended up with a clutter of it.”
- I've never even really seen one for... legal issues...I can't think of any place where I've actually seen them.”

ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION

INSIGHT

For some, pamphlets provide a helpful orientation to the ‘landscape’ of a legal issue; they help people to learn legal terms and concepts.

This was especially important for framing questions and search terms effectively.

QUOTES

- “I find it to be quite helpful for the most part, because it gives you a general idea of where to go, how to start... if I’m at the courthouse, and ... I see something [that] pertains to why I’m there... and I’m confused. I’ll take it and I’ll read it just so I have a starting point.”
- “Brochures or pamphlets are a great way to get the initial information - so you can learn what questions to ask.”
- “I probably go more [to] Google than [a] pamphlet, but the pamphlets will give me maybe a different way of thinking. Because [with] Google... you have to know what you want to ask.... If you don't ask the right questions, you won't get the right answers. So, the pamphlet can be very handy...”

KEY THEMES AND IMPLICATIONS

FOR THE DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF PLEI IN BC

USER-CENTRED DESIGN

IMPLICATIONS

In general, design and delivery of PLEI should seek to meet potential service users “where they are.”

This means designing resources with an awareness that intended audiences may be:

- Impacted by stress, trauma and/or mental health difficulties.
- Unfamiliar with the landscape of legal systems, processes, and terminology; and relevant laws or ministries.
- Unfamiliar with the full range of PLEI or public legal resources and services that are available. (Many may think of representation or advice from a lawyer as the primary / only type of legal help available.)
- People with varying levels of digital technology access and comfort.

These themes highlight the importance of continuing to develop and promote highly visible points of entry to PLEI resources and services which are:

- Clearly named / branded
- Accessible / low-barrier, anti-oppressive, and trauma-informed.
- Available via multiple channels, online and offline.

USER-CENTRED DESIGN

IMPLICATIONS

The effectiveness of PLEI resources is very contingent on what people are trying to locate or understand.

User-centred design of both promotional materials and PLEI resources could consider that legal help-seekers are often looking for:

- Contact information for ‘offline’ services.
- Initial, personal guidance from a knowledgeable legal ‘navigator’ who can help clarify legal processes, options, and identify ‘next steps.’
- ‘Human’ interactions with service providers who are empathetic, non-judgemental, reassuring, and responsive. (Trauma-informed and anti-oppressive services.)
- Materials that can help them understand the ‘legal landscape’ and figure out what questions to ask.
- Credible, clearly relevant (topic-based) information about legal processes and ‘next steps.’

ENABLE PLEI ACCESS VIA MULTIPLE CHANNELS

IMPLICATIONS

Seek to provide highly visible points of entry to PLEI resources and services via multiple offline and online channels:

Wherever possible, enhance access to local in-person service locations that are clearly branded / named.

Develop a digital channel strategy that enables people seek out legal help, and communicate in ways that work best for them. Some considerations:

- Texting is a powerful way to communicate with people. PLEI providers could implement texting options for initial legal help inquiries, and/or for ongoing communication (if applicable).
 - For example, the BETA texting program that the province uses.
- Facebook Messenger is a ubiquitous platform which is familiar and accessible for many. However, it is also an external platform (beyond the control of PLEI providers), and entails considerable privacy concerns.
 - Each PLEI provider will need to assess the potential risks and benefits of this platform (and similar platforms) as a prospective channel for access to PLEI resources and services.
- Chat features are often helpful – particularly when attached to live human help.
- Chatbots may also be useful if users can escalate to human help in obvious ways.

ENABLE PLEI ACCESS VIA MULTIPLE CHANNELS

IMPLICATIONS

An additional element of a digital channel strategy could include:

- A unified email response system to handle requests (rather than individual staff people.)
 - This approach may help to avoid potential for communication lapses, or experiences where help-seekers feel “forgotten.” (For example, where a person is attempting to communicate with a staff member who is on vacation.)
 - There are many helpdesk type solutions that can collect, triage and assign incoming emails.
 - Many of these solutions are able to also incorporate multiple channels such as Facebook Messenger, Instagram DMS, and Twitter.
 - A valuable component of such a system would be to set clear expectations regarding next steps and timelines (when to expect a response), and how to follow-up if needed.

PLEI PROMOTION AND OUTREACH

IMPLICATIONS

PLEI promotion / outreach materials and activities can be designed with these same help-seeking needs in mind.

Promotion and outreach strategies could prioritize reducing emotional and stress-related barriers to reaching out for legal help. Promotion and outreach could:

- foreground easy ways to speak for free with a non-judgemental, empathetic person who can provide trusted legal information and referrals.
- advertise multiple channels for accessing this help or guidance, including: text or messaging, phone, web chat, and in-person office locations.

Promotion and outreach strategies could focus on clearly communicating the many types of legal help available – including PLEI resources and services.

- Depending on each PLEI providers' services, this could mean emphasizing a fuller range of services beyond legal representation and advice from a lawyer – especially PLEI information; referrals; digital PLEI tools and services; or one-to-one assistance navigating legal resources, legal processes, and options.

PLEI PROMOTION AND OUTREACH

IMPLICATIONS

Digital marketing strategies are key for promoting access to PLEI.

- Participants often suggested social media and Google as key online spaces in which to promote PLEI resources and services. However, each type of digital marketing strategy will need to be tested and evaluated by PLEI providers in relation to their service context and audiences.
- For example, use of website analytics can help PLEI providers to know whether a given online ad leads to a user's sustained engagement with a PLEI site, or just a "bounce" (very brief visit and departure).

Based on participant suggestions, key digital strategies to be tested and evaluated could include:

- Create a digital marketing campaign to target a larger understanding of the range of available legal services.
- Advertise PLEI resources and services on Google search.
- Use Facebook to target a rotating group of specific audience "segments" based on service user demographics

PLEI PROMOTION AND OUTREACH

IMPLICATIONS

Additional digital marketing strategies to test and evaluate could include:

- Create social media ‘shareables.’ Intermediary organizations can then post and share these, to support their community audiences in finding relevant legal services.
- Online games (along with dating apps) are one of the few online activities undertaken more frequently by people with fewer years of formal education.¹ Investigate placing ads in phone and online games. Key game categories include:
 - Casual: Designed for a mass audience, featuring frequent, shorter sessions. Examples: Wordscapes and Solitaire.
 - Hyper-casual: Lightweight, simple, instantly playable via short sessions; often featuring 2D or retro graphics. Examples: Helix Jump, Sandwich!, and Icing on the Cake. They often rely on advertising to generate revenue.

¹ According to Statistics Canada’s [2018 Canadian Internet Use Survey](#)

PLEI PROMOTION AND OUTREACH

IMPLICATIONS

Brief promotional print materials such as pamphlets appear to be important because they can help to frame legal issues and provide relevant vocabulary.

- Given that COVID-19 has limited visits to libraries, there may be value in expanding the distribution of promotional pamphlets to new locales, such as supermarkets.
- Explore whether there is an effective *digital* way to achieve the function and benefits of pamphlets – that is, to address people’s need for high level framing / orientation to legal topics and landscapes.
 - This likely entails challenges, given there are already many introductory pages to various topics online.

However, pamphlets appear limited in their impact on younger audiences.

- Our interviews suggest that most younger folks are not picking up pamphlets, but are instead going straight to search engines (especially Google.)

FOCUS ON THE GOOGLE 'GREY AREA'

IMPLICATIONS

Search engines – especially Google – have become a critical mediating “middle step” that come in between a searcher and PLEI content on legal help websites or digital tools.

- The Google ‘grey area’ includes expanded local maps; and the “People also ask,” “Reviews,” and “Questions and answers” features.
- PLEI providers have limited control over search engine tools, yet incorrect or confusing information that emerges via these (or other) features can prevent searchers from finding websites and digital legal resources.

This ‘grey area’ needs significant attention via a search engine optimization (SEO) strategy.



Google and other search engines are the “glue” between these. Search engines now take a more active role in mediating the experience.

GOOGLE GREY AREA: SEO

IMPLICATIONS

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is a vital aspect of assisting potential service users in locating PLEI resources.

- Search Engine Optimization strategies are a variety of web design techniques that help to increase the quantity and quality of website traffic from search engines (such as Google.)
 - For a useful introduction to SEO, see:
<https://searchengineland.com/guide/what-is-seo>
 - <https://moz.com/learn/seo/what-is-seo>
- For instance, one SEO strategy includes the development of Google cards/menus that break out the various services offered by a given organization (as in the image below).

Ad · <https://www.askalawyeroncall.com/legal-aid> ▾

Legal Aid - 24-Hour Legal Aid Online

Chat with Professionals in Minutes. All Fields of Expertise. Connect and Stay Informed. Post Your Question and Get Matched with the Right **Legal** Expert, When You Need Them.

Choose a Type of Lawyer Family Law, Real Estate, Criminal, Employment, Immigration & More.	Ask Real Estate Lawyers Verified Real Estate Lawyers ready To help you Online in minutes 24/7.
Get Family Law Answers Ask Lawyers: Divorce, Custody Alimony, Child Support & More.	Ask Civil Lawyers Get your Civil Law Answer Online ASAP. Connect to Civil Lawyers Now!

GOOGLE GREY AREA: “MY BUSINESS”

IMPLICATIONS

In cases where PLEI providers have multiple locations – for instance a main location and various ‘satellite’ locations (a hub-and-spoke model), they can implement a *Google My Business* optimization strategy for all of locations of the organization.

- Google will allow a single organization to manage multiple locations.
- Part of this strategy can be to prepare a style guide for all the locations.

References:

- “Google My Business lets you take advantage of your business’ presence on Google. With your Google My Business Account, you can manage and update your Business Profile and build a website to attract and engage more customers. Google My Business’ Business Profile encompasses what was once known as Google Places for Business, Google Listings and Google+ Business Pages.”
- <https://www.google.com/business/faq/>
- <https://pixelcutlabs.com/blog/google-my-business-categories/>
- Service to assist in management: <https://www.localclarity.com/>

Legal Services Society
3.9 ★★★★★ (23) · General practi...
7+ years in business · Vancouver, ...
Closed · Opens 8:30 a.m. Mon. · (6...

Parents Legal Centre
5.0 ★★★★★ (2) · Legal services
Vancouver, BC · In Robson Square
Closed · Opens 8:30 a.m. Mon. · (6...

Community Legal Assistance Society
3.3 ★★★★★ (12) · Legal services
7+ years in business · Vancouver, BC
Closed · Opens 9 a.m. Mon. · (604)...
🗣️ "... lot about the legal processes of residential tenancy in BC and...

Legal Aid BC
3.0 ★★★★★ (7) · Legal services
Surrey, BC
Closed · Opens 9 a.m. Mon. · (604)...

Dial-A-Law
4.5 ★★★★★ (4) · Legal services
7+ years in business · Vancouver, ...
Open 24 hours · +1 800-565-5297

Legal Services Society
4.0 ★★★★★ (6) · Attorney
5+ years in business · New Westmi...
(604) 585-6595

GOOGLE GREY AREA: Q+A, AND REVIEWS

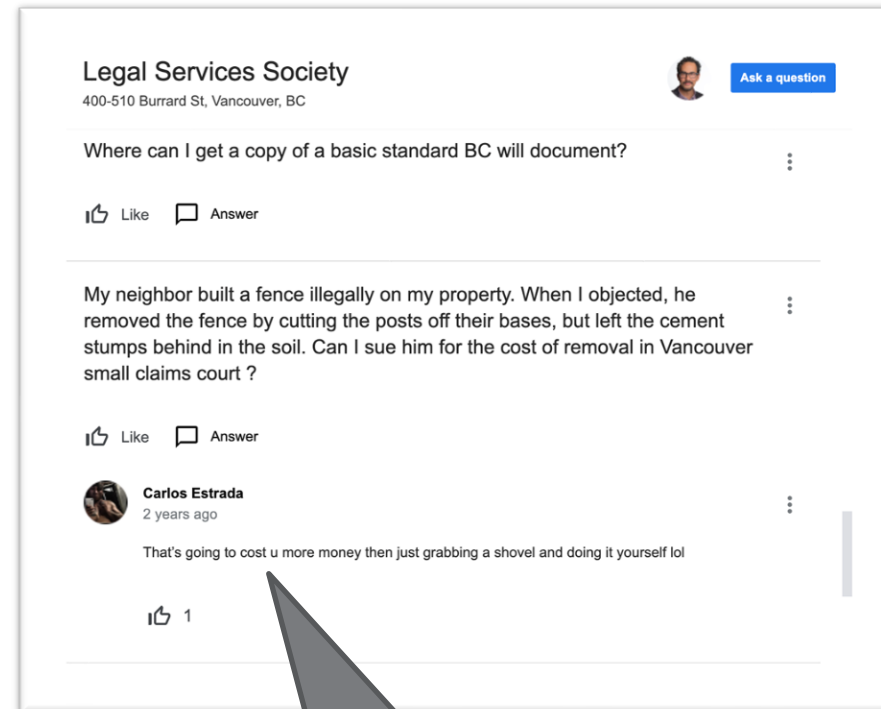
IMPLICATIONS

Each Google My Business listing has a “Questions and Answers” section.

- There is no way to turn this off. Many questions are unanswered or, worse, include low-quality or irrelevant answers
- PLEI providers could assign staff to review and answer questions, or at least generate a blanket response that indicates where they could go.
 - For example, “We do not answer questions in this forum, please refer to our website for more information.”

Online reviews are another powerful influence on legal help-seekers.

- PLEI providers could actively solicit reviews from service users to bolster the number of reviews on Google.



Correcting these kinds of statements would be helpful.

GOOGLE GREY AREA: SCHEMA

IMPLICATIONS

Schema plays a large role in increasing a website's "discoverability." It defines how the site is categorized by Google and what services can be offered.

Service providers can implement a data schema system to increase discoverability

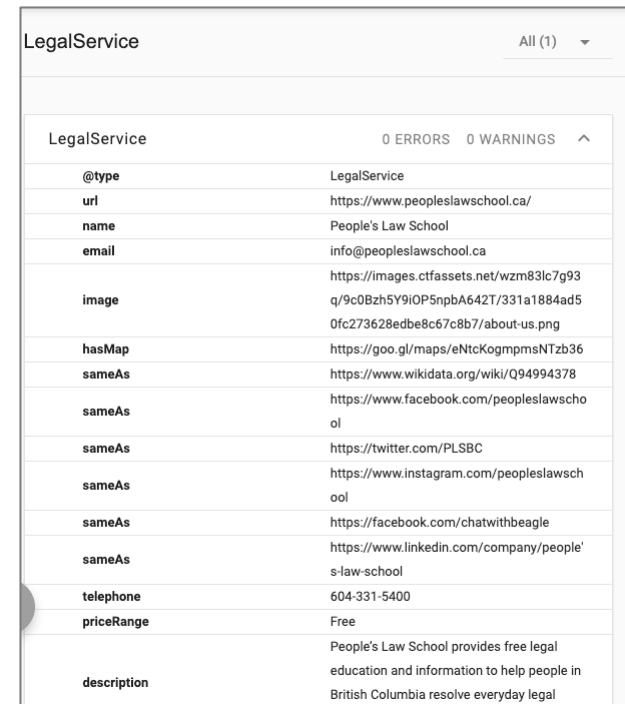
- In implementing schema, there should be at least a @type defined, as well as declaring "sameAs" linking the Wikidata and Wikipedia pages and social media handles.
- This will also assist in the consolidation of multiple locations through "suborganization" categorization.

One important authority to start with is Wikidata

- PLEI providers should attempt to keep Wikidata updated.

Wikipedia pages are also an important element

- PLEI providers can review their Wikipedia pages for accuracy and quality. But, by Wikipedia guidelines, subjects should not write their articles.



The screenshot shows a search result for 'LegalService' with a rich snippet. The snippet includes the following information:

LegalService	
@type	LegalService
url	https://www.peopleslawschool.ca/
name	People's Law School
email	info@peopleslawschool.ca
image	https://images.ctfassets.net/wzm83lc7g93q/9c0Bzh5Y9iOP5npbA642T/331a1884ad50fc273628edbe8c67c8b7/about-us.png
hasMap	https://goo.gl/maps/eNtcKogmpmsNTzb36
sameAs	https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q94994378
sameAs	https://www.facebook.com/peopleslawschool
sameAs	https://twitter.com/PLSBC
sameAs	https://www.instagram.com/peopleslawschool
sameAs	https://facebook.com/chatwithbeagle
sameAs	https://www.linkedin.com/company/peoples-law-school
telephone	604-331-5400
priceRange	Free
description	People's Law School provides free legal education and information to help people in British Columbia resolve everyday legal

Example Schema from PeoplesLawSchool.ca

DIGITAL RESOURCE DESIGN

IMPLICATIONS

In general, PLEI providers should continue to prioritize best practices in web design (including use of accessibility (WCAG) guidelines, user-centred design, designing for ease of navigation, use of plain language, use of inclusive, culturally appropriate and culturally safe content, and user testing, among other considerations.)

PLEI providers should consider that sites are increasingly being accessed by smartphone, and that many low income British Columbians may not have convenient access to desktop or laptop computers.

- This highlights the need to optimize sites for smartphone formats, and to provide alternative channels for online tasks not easily completed by phone (such as those requiring larger screens or more typing functionality).

While “user testing” of resources was outside the scope of our interviews, participants identified some website features that caused difficulty – for instance, unfamiliar legal terminology and acronyms (e.g. CFSFA and MCF).

- There is a better user experience if these are spelled out.

DIGITAL RESOURCE DESIGN: SITE SEARCH

IMPLICATIONS

Participants also noted difficulties with ineffective website search features.

Site search features should be optimized, with old or out of date content eliminated.

For PLEI providers with multiple websites, one way to radically improve site search functions is to implement a federated search.

- A federated search is a search that compiles search results across multiple websites.
- This kind of federated search is available through Google Search Appliance or other Drupal search engines (SOLR).

DIGITAL TOOL DESIGN

IMPLICATIONS

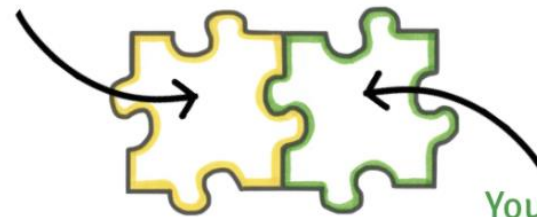
Beyond general principles of good web design, digital legal resource providers face additional content-related challenges because:

- Legal processes, concepts and terminology are complex and unfamiliar. This makes it difficult for people to navigate legal information, processes, and ‘next steps.’
- Legal issues are often accompanied by stress and/or trauma, and mental health difficulties.

Principles of user-centred design can help to consider how multiple types of content (e.g. LABC’s current ‘bite,’ ‘snack,’ ‘meal’ approach), and multiple channels (e.g. web, chat with human, phone, text/message) can integrate to meet audience needs.

- For example, the resources at <https://explaineracademy.com/> offer strategies to explain complex topics to people with no prior experience of them.

Audience Needs



Your Explanation

ExplainerAcademy.com

DIGITAL RESOURCE DESIGN: CROSS-LINKING

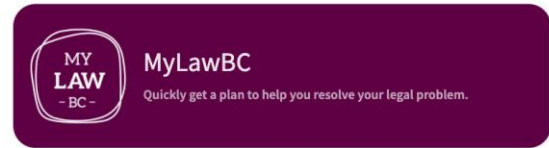
IMPLICATIONS

Cross-linking and cross-promotion among trusted websites can be an effective way to direct searchers to relevant content.

This leverages content from one site to for use in other sites.

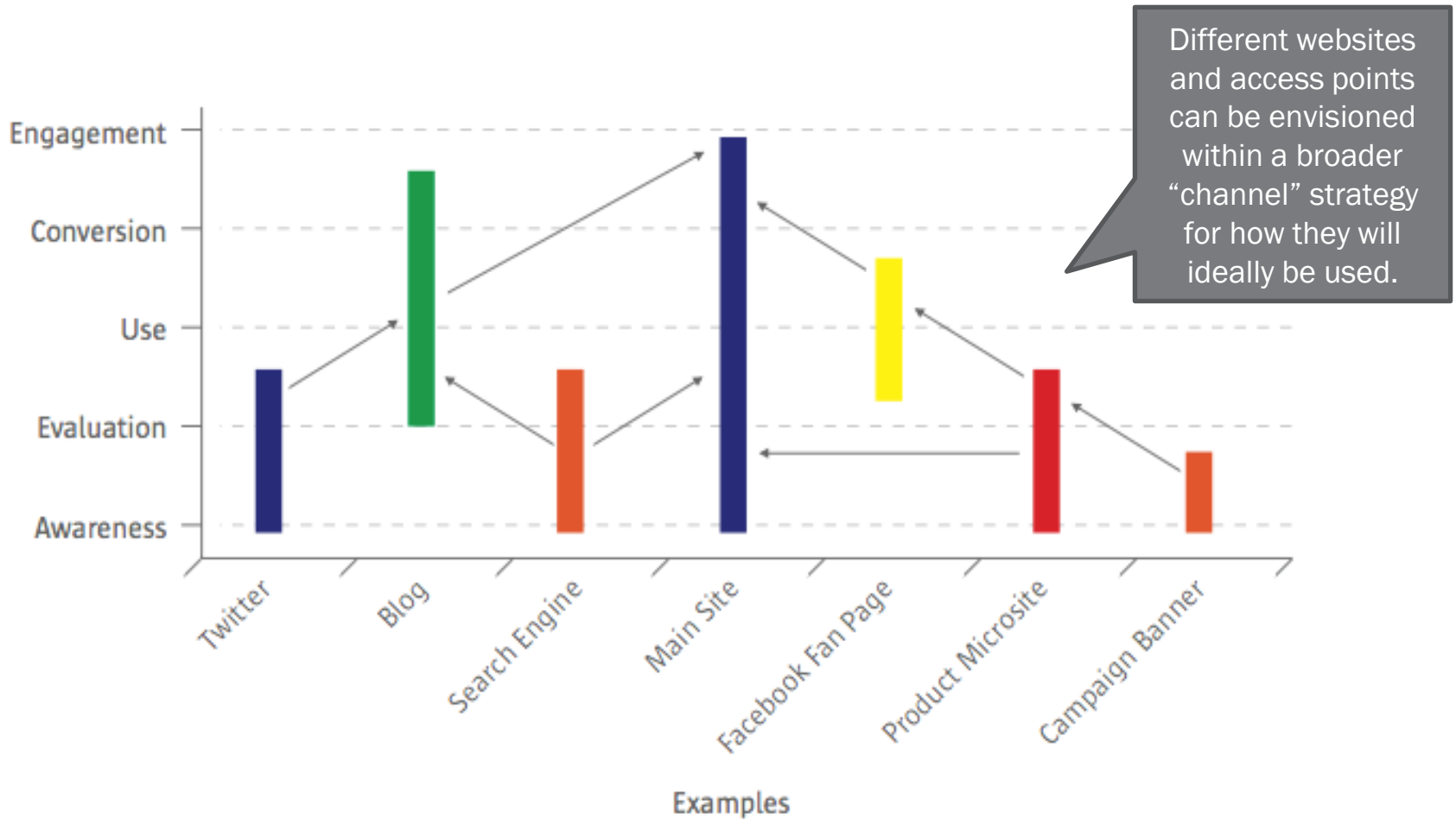
Cross-link content can also be picked up by Google and each site's search feature.

- PLEI providers with multiple sites can ensure there is cross-promotion through landing pages and links to relevant content on each of their sites.
- Cross promotion between the websites of government service providers and among PLEI providers is also helpful – as indicated by participants' search strategies.



DIGITAL RESOURCE DESIGN: CHANNEL STRATEGY

IMPLICATIONS

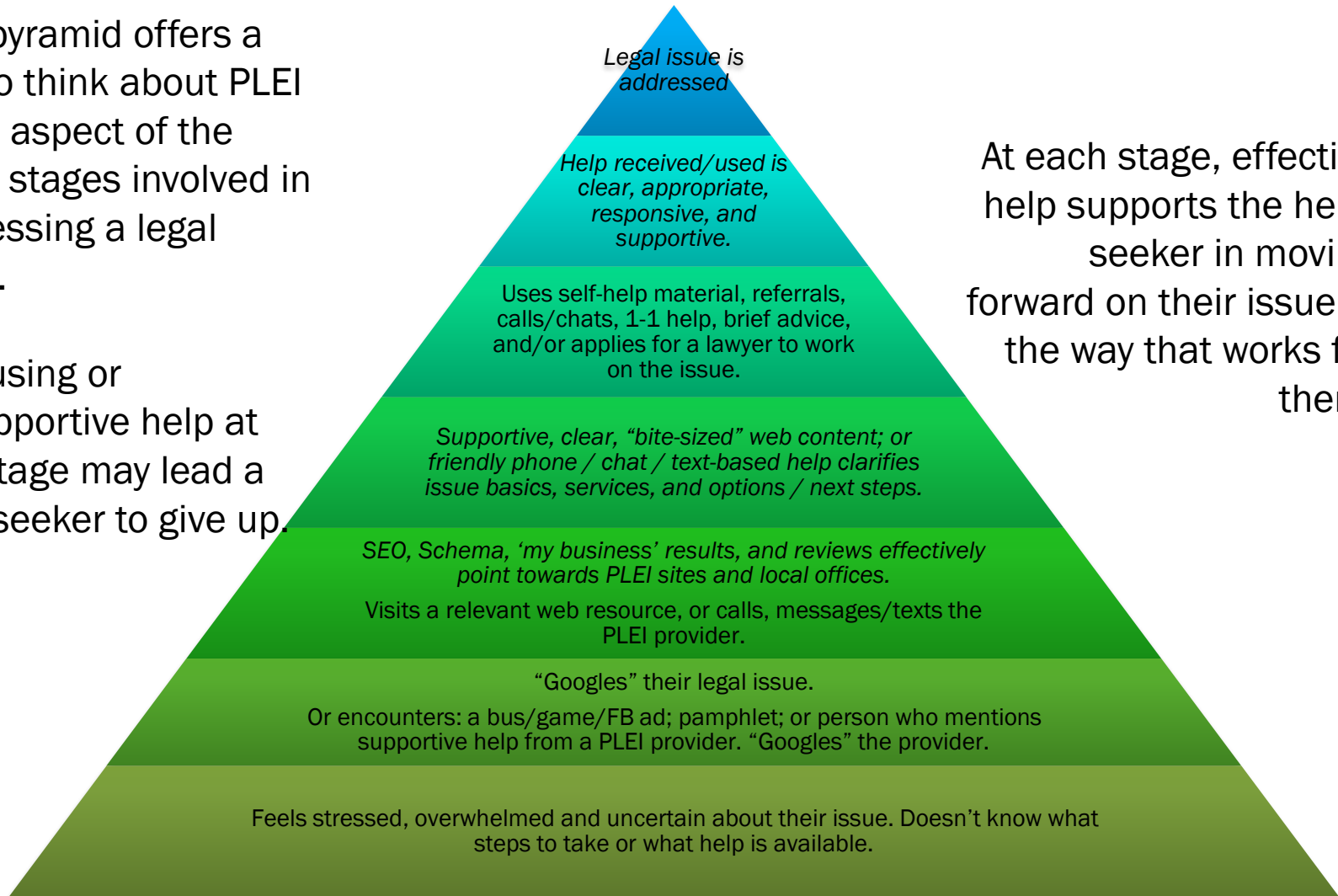


RedAnt "Digital Strategy Whitepaper"

PLEI USER JOURNEY (PYRAMID OF ENGAGEMENT)

This pyramid offers a way to think about PLEI as an aspect of the many stages involved in addressing a legal issue.

Confusing or unsupportive help at any stage may lead a help-seeker to give up.



At each stage, effective help supports the help-seeker in moving forward on their issue in the way that works for them.

THANK YOU

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August 2021