

LiveHelp: Helping People Find Legal Information Online

Project Overview

In 2004 Montana Legal Services Association (MLSA), Iowa Legal Aid (ILA), and Pro Bono Net (PBN) received an LSC Technology Initiative Grant (LSC TIG) to support the LiveHelp Pilot Project, which would allow MontanaLawHelp.org and IowaLegalAid.org Web site visitors to ask remotely-located Web Site Specialists for help finding online legal information and resources. Through an online chat, the Specialists are able to immediately direct the Web site visitors to appropriate legal information, and in the case of IowaLegalAid.org, help seniors complete an intake online.

Current Status

LiveHelp has been launched on both MontanaLawHelp.org and IowaLegalAid.org. Implemented with LivePerson Pro software (<http://www.liveperson.com>), the feature currently allows Web site visitors to click a button, connect with a Specialist, and ask for information about a legal problem. The Specialist then provides the visitor with a link to the appropriate information or escorts the visitor to relevant resources on the site. (If a Specialist is unavailable, the visitor can choose to leave a message and receive the information in an e-mail.)

MLSA operates the project with ten Web site specialists, each of whom monitors requests for help on MontanaLawHelp.org for approximately four hours per week. ILA operates the project with four staff members, who all together monitor IowaLegalAid.org's help requests for approximately thirty hours per week.

Lessons Learned

Several important lessons have been learned from this project.

- Marketing must accompany the launch of the feature.
- Specialists must be familiar with Web site content.
- More experienced visitors may be using LiveHelp once they have identified content that does not exist on the Web site, leading Web Site Coordinators to be able to better identify missing content.

Future Innovations and Replication

MLSA, ILA, PBN, the Georgia Legal Services Program and its State Bar of Georgia Pro Bono Project, received 2006 TIG funding in order to support a focused expansion of the LiveHelp initiative in three areas that have high-impact potential to increase access to justice: 1) use LiveHelp to support and expand pro bono participation in Georgia; 2) integrate LiveHelp further with document assembly in Montana; and 3) test a cross-jurisdictional approach to delivering LiveHelp assistance that builds a national network to help clients in times of crisis.

Want to know more?

If you'd like to learn more about this project or see a demonstration, contact

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