CLEO CENTRE FOR
RESEARCH & INNOVATION

a project of CLEO

Public Legal Education and Information in Ontario Communities:

Formats and Delivery Channels

AUGUST 2013

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1. Introduction

Community Legal Education Ontario/ Éducation juridique communautaire Ontario (CLEO) is an independent, non-profit public legal education organization. Its mandate is to provide low-income and disadvantaged communities in Ontario with public legal education and information (PLEI) to help them understand and exercise their critical legal rights.

CLEO also helps community-based organizations in Ontario improve their capacity to develop and deliver effective PLEI to their communities through a number of initiatives, including research, partnership building and knowledge sharing.

With this research, CLEO is taking a focused look at effective formats and delivery channels for reaching low-income and disadvantaged communities in Ontario with information about their legal rights. In recent years, the Internet and other technologies have significantly expanded the opportunities for reaching people with legal information. This study was conducted to assess the effectiveness of formats and delivery channels in this evolving context. Building on recent major civil legal needs studies, this research aims to gather contextualized, qualitative information to deepen our knowledge base.

In particular, this research project seeks to address the following questions:

- What formats are commonly used by members of low-income and disadvantaged communities in Ontario to access legal information (recognizing that format needs vary from community to community)?

- What delivery channels or access points are likely to reach these communities with legal information?

- Are there formats or delivery channels that are particularly effective for certain groups or communities?

This report is organized as follows:

Section 1.1 outlines the research methodology used.

Section 2 presents and discusses observations from service providers on formats and delivery channels organized around five key themes:

2.1 Printed PLEI materials
2.2 Online PLEI

2.3 Other formats and delivery channels
2.4 Trusted intermediaries and one-on-one support
2.5 Outreach and promotion

Section 3 identifies general themes and findings relating to PLEI formats and delivery channels.

1.1 Research methodology

This research was informed by a literature review of relevant research. The bulk of the research comes from the field of public legal education and information, supplemented by selected reports from the disciplines of literacy, health literacy and promotion, social services, information studies, and information and communications technology. Reports and data from Statistics Canada were also reviewed. Although numerous reports were considered, only the most relevant findings have been referred to in the body of the report.

As well, research data was gathered through an online survey of frontline workers from community service organizations across the province. Follow-up telephone interviews were also conducted with selected key informants who had previously completed the survey.

CLEO decided to seek feedback from frontline workers at community-based organizations because of the critical role they play in providing information and support to their clients. According to Karen Cohl and George Thomson, community workers or "trusted intermediaries" are often "the first to recognize that a problem has a legal component and to provide basic information or a referral". They note that these intermediaries "know the needs of their communities and clients and are often experts in outreach."[1]

Survey
In June and July, 2012, CLEO sent a survey to frontline workers at a large number of community legal clinics and community-based organizations across the province.

241 people participated in the survey. Most respondents completed the survey online, though some took advantage of the option of downloading the survey, completing it by hand, and returning it to CLEO's office via fax or regular mail.

[1] Karen Cohl and George Thomson. Connecting Across Language and Distance: Linguistic and Rural Access to Legal Information and Services, (2008), p. 44.

We heard from a broad cross-section of organizations by type (Figure A) and geographic location (Figure B).

Figure A: Top five types of organization of CLEO survey respondents

Rank	Type
1	Domestic Violence/Women's Issues
2	Community Legal Clinic
3	Multi-issue Organization
4	Community Information Services
5	Ethno-cultural, Immigrant Services, or Settlement Agency

Source: CLEO survey conducted in June & July 2012

Figure B: Service area of CLEO survey respondents

Toronto and area	29.5%
Eastern/Central Ontario	27.6%
Southwestern Ontario	24.3%
Northern Ontario	10.5%
Province-wide	8.1%

Source: CLEO survey conducted in June & July 2012

The survey consisted of both quantitative (close-ended) and qualitative (open-ended) questions on PLEI formats and delivery channels, probing for more detail on print and online formats and delivery channels, and seeking suggestions on how to reach communities with PLEI.

Survey respondents provided a large number of comments in response to the open-ended survey questions. Much of the discussion in this report is based on their comments as well as in-depth interviews with a cross-section of survey respondents. (See Appendix A for the survey questions and Appendix B for the interview questions.)

This report uses the following terms when describing results from the CLEO survey: "most" refers to responses from more than three quarters of the survey respondents; "many" refers to responses from more than half of the survey respondents; "some" refers to responses that represent less than half but more than one quarter of the survey respondents; and, "a few" refers to less than one quarter of the survey responses, but may be noted for the significance or importance of the view expressed.

Telephone interviews

The telephone interviews were conducted with 19 key informants from across the province who had previously participated in the online survey. Interviewees were selected with an eye to ensuring we heard from frontline workers at a broad cross-section of types of organizations that serve different communities from all parts of Ontario. (See Figure C below, and Appendix C for a list of the organizations that participated in the interviews.)

Figure C: Service area of CLEO interview informant organizations

Toronto and area	5
Eastern/Central Ontario	5
Northern Ontario	5
Southwestern Ontario	4
Province-wide	0

Source: CLEO telephone interviews conducted in November & December 2012

The purpose of the telephone interviews was to further explore some of the issues raised in the survey through qualitative questions. Interview informants were asked to elaborate on their responses to several survey questions as well as to further explore some of the research topics, such as their suggestions for better reaching clients with PLEI and the potential for online formats to assist in this process. (See Appendix B for the interview questions.)

2. Observations from the frontline

As discussed in many reports and supported by data from this research, PLEI is often most effective when it is delivered through a variety of formats and delivery channels. Learning characteristics and learning needs vary widely from person to person. Factors such as poverty, ethno-racial or gender inequality, culture, physical and mental disabilities, language barriers or literacy level impact people's capacity to absorb, understand and retain information, as well as their ability to use that information to solve problems. These factors also affect the formats and delivery channels through which people are willing or able to receive information.[2]

Low literacy levels may be a particular challenge. According to Community Literacy of Ontario, 16% of Ontarians have difficulty with even the most basic written materials and another 26% can read, but not well enough to meet the demands of today's society.[3] Those who are not fluent speakers of one of the official languages of Canada may also have difficulty navigating the legal system, and cultural differences may make it less likely that people will even recognize their problem as being legal in nature, or that they will know their rights and how to approach resolving their problem.[4]

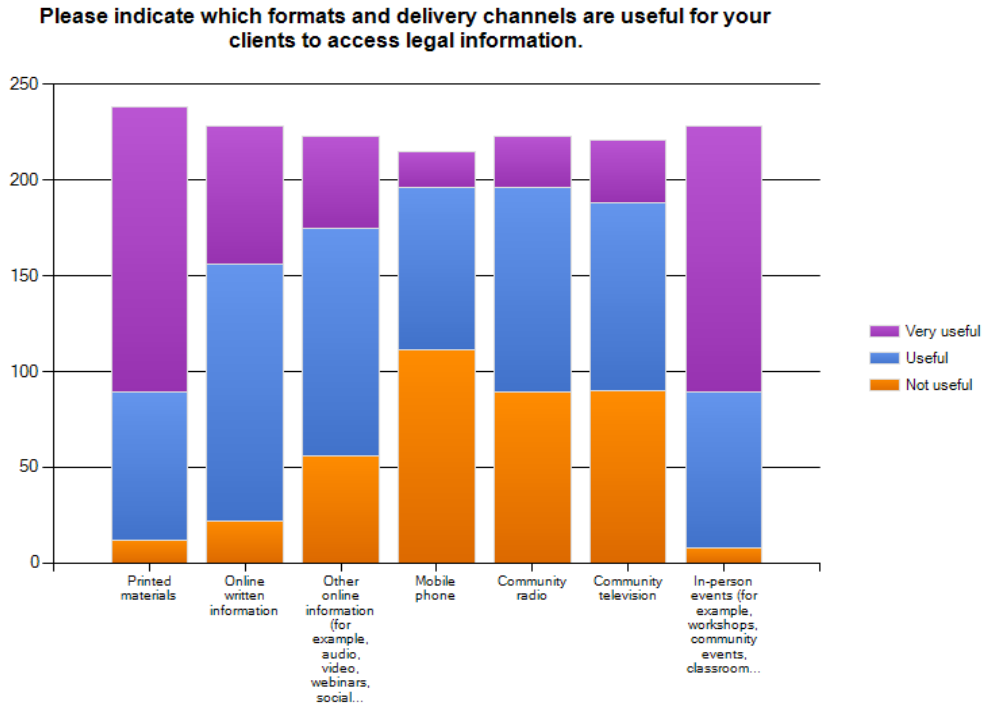
Stress has been identified as a particularly influential factor behind the need for multiple formats and delivery channels for legal information. Previous research has linked stress to "cognitive changes that affect the way one responds to information and support"[5] and has shown that people who experience stress, including those with a very high level of education, need to receive the same information several times.[6] Moreover, low-income and disadvantaged people tend to face clusters of related problems and have the greatest difficulty in accessing services.[7]

Survey respondents were asked to rate the usefulness of a variety of formats and delivery channels in helping their clients access legal information. The range of responses in the chart below (Figure D) gives an indication of the diverse needs of audiences for legal information in various formats and delivery channels. As one respondent noted, "No one form of communication will work with every age, or person with various levels of abilities and access to technology. Legal clinics may need to layer their communications and touch on all elements." Another wrote, "I try to give different

[2] CLEO, Multilingual Legal information and Issues in Development and Delivery (2009), pp. 23-29; Carol McEown and Gayla Reid, PLE Review: Reflections and Recommendations on Public Legal Education Delivery in BC (2007), pp. 17-30.
[3] Statistics Canada, International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (2003) and HRSDC educational attainment calculations based on Statistics Canada data (2012), as cited in Community Literacy of Ontario's "Literacy – why it matters!", p. 1.
[4] McEown and Reid, pp. 17-30.
[5] Susan McDonald, The Role of PLEI in Poverty Law Services as cited in CLEO, Linguistic Access Report (2005), p. 9.
[6] CLEO (2005), p. 19.
[7] McEown and Reid, pp. 17-20.

options to all my clients as they all learn differently and are receptive to different types of materials."

Figure D: Usefulness of formats and delivery channels for clients to access legal information



Source: CLEO Format & Delivery Channels Survey, June & July 2012

2.1 Printed PLEI materials

Survey results indicate that printed text materials remain an important format for reaching low-income and disadvantaged Ontarians with PLEI. Most survey respondents (over 90%) indicated that printed PLEI is either "useful" or "very useful" for their clients to access legal information (Figure D). It is interesting to note that over twice as many survey respondents rated printed materials as "very useful" compared to online written materials. In their comments, survey and interview respondents suggested printed materials are particularly popular among older adults and seniors and less popular among youth and younger adults.

Survey and interview respondents suggested that notable advantages of print formats include their portability and the fact that their clients do not need a computer or the Internet to access information in print. Some interview informants noted that portability

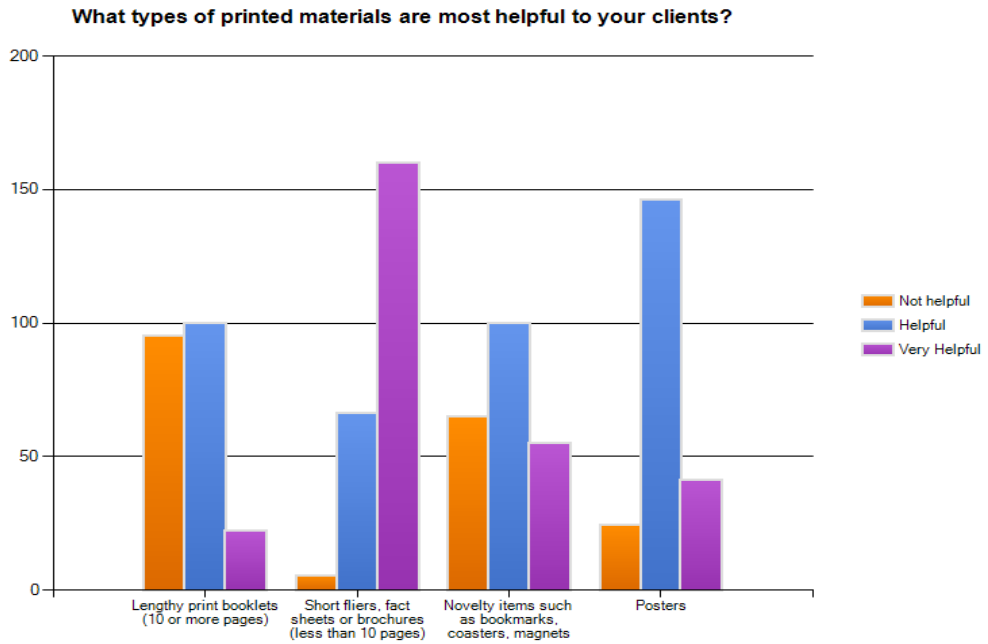
is helpful because clients can take materials with them to read at their convenience, refer back to as needed, and share with friends or family members.

Many of those who made positive comments about print formats also made clear that print is not an ideal format for everyone. Even when designed and written to be as accessible as possible, printed text formats are not always useful for those with low literacy or education levels, or those who learn better from oral information. One interview informant noted, "We do have clients here who access our various services who have print challenges … A lot of them … would not necessarily identify as print disabled but they do have challenges with print. It might be age or vision issues, or a long-standing learning disability. These people don't necessarily want to learn the technology out there for people with print challenges, and other things like YouTube videos can be a good way for them to access information."

2.1.1 Types of printed materials

Printed text materials of various types have long been recognized as an essential way to provide legal information to a wide variety of communities.[8] Not surprisingly, survey respondents indicated that a range of print formats are helpful to their clients (Figure E).

Figure E: Helpfulness of types of printed materials



Source: CLEO Formats & Delivery Channel Survey, June & July 2012

[8] CLEO (2009), p. 24; Family Law Education for Women (FLEW) Consortium, FLEW Community Survey (2007), p. 32; McEown and Reid, pp. 23-27; Shula Klinger, PLEI in British Columbia: Literature Review (2006), pp. 4-7.

Lengthy print booklets

Slightly more than half of the survey respondents indicated that they find lengthy print booklets helpful, but almost as many assessed them as unhelpful (Figure E). One survey respondent noted, "Our clients might be stressed and still going through trauma and lengthy information doesn't get absorbed. Clear info, concise and simple language [is best]." Another noted, "Most often the women I see are in crisis, so a small bookmark or flyer is all the information that they can take in, in that moment. The [longer] booklet is appropriate for when they are really ready to take in the information."

Some respondents indicated that lengthy formats are useful or even preferred by people who are both interested in and capable of investigating legal issues more deeply. Along these lines, one suggested, "Lengthy printed books are useful to some who want thorough information [including being] useful to myself as a service provider!"

Short fliers, fact sheets, or brochures

Respondents indicated that short fliers, fact sheets, or brochures are useful for clients in many circumstances because they are portable, brief, and concise but contain enough information to give a general sense of legal rights with respect to a type of problem and the next steps to take. These types of materials were singled out as being particularly important for people who speak languages other than English or French, people who are in crisis, and particularly vulnerable clients, especially those with low literacy and education levels or certain physical and mental disabilities. One respondent noted, "Lengthy documents are intimidating and challenging for those who are not used to reading, or reading in English." Another indicated, "Short documents are best as people feel that they can read and understand them."

Following are comments from survey respondents highlighting the usefulness of short fliers, fact sheets, or brochures.

- "Families and vulnerable tenants just need the highlights of the info and to be encouraged to phone a legal clinic, since each situation can be a bit unique. No booklet will answer all questions or complex situations."
- "Our clients are often in a hurry to gather information, and do not always have the literacy skills to fully understand lengthy legal messages. They will rather enjoy very visual publications and short messages."
- "Short fliers and posters seem to be most useful for clients, as the information does not come off as overwhelming and is more direct (so long as clear and simple language is used!)."

Posters and novelty items

Posters and novelty items such as bookmarks, coasters, and magnets were described as having both important uses and limitations. These formats generally contain a limited amount of text and lend themselves to simple, easy-to-understand language as well as the use of images or symbols to communicate information. Because of these features, posters and novelty items were noted by some respondents as being particularly effective for communicating basic legal information to those with language or literacy limitations, or to those who learn better from visual information. A few survey and interview respondents also suggested that these formats are useful for promotional activities and to advertise the existence and location of PLEI resources, legal advice and support.

Because novelty items can be quite small and therefore easily carried and concealed, a few respondents also found them to be useful for their portability and safety. This was the case in particular for respondents with clients in domestic violence situations who identified a need for their clients to keep legal information secret from a family member or partner.

Following are illustrative comments from survey and interview respondents about these formats and delivery channels:

- "Novelty items are fun and disseminate quickly – good for raising awareness of materials and resources."
- "Many of our clients do not have strong English skills or the time to read through lengthy booklets. Simple, concise information is best for them depending on the circumstances of why they need the information. Posters are great because they have more pictures and are more immediately visible."
- "Bookmarks and magnets are handy to keep resource numbers on the fridge, etc."

2.1.2 Delivery channels for printed materials

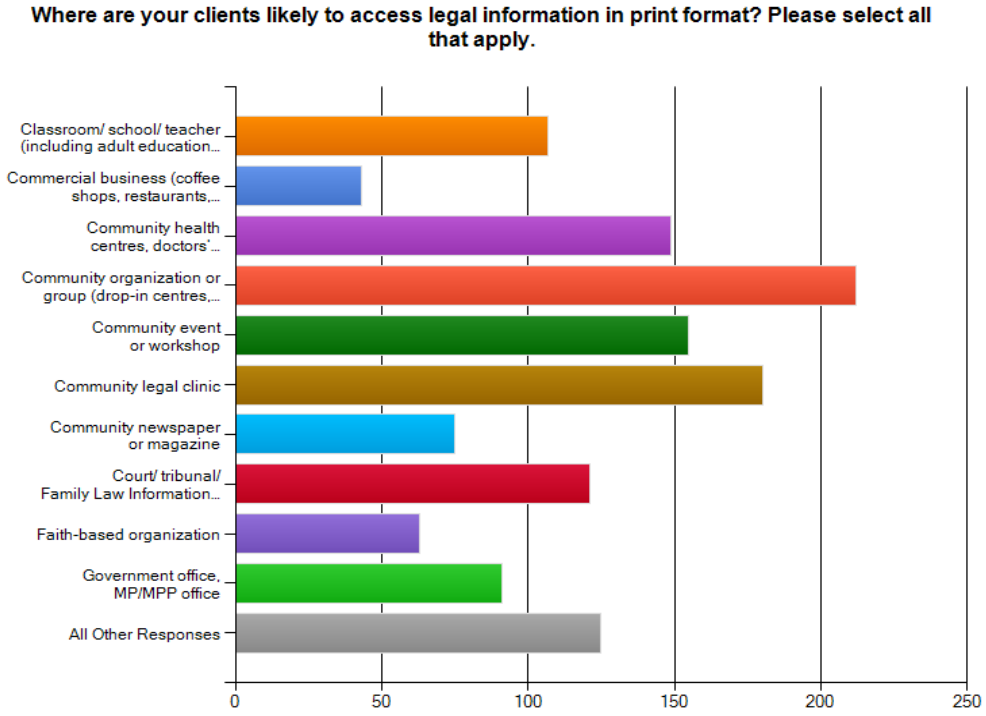
Research indicates that it is important to make materials available in a wide variety of locations and that people are most likely to come across printed materials if they are located in places they frequent in their daily lives.[9] Some survey respondents reported that they frequently give clients printed materials to reinforce information they communicate in one-on-one meetings, community workshops, and English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) classes. Many community agencies and organizations also make printed PLEI materials available through displays in their offices, at community events, or at a wide variety of locations throughout their community. Delivery channels have been found to be most effective when they are safe, private, close to home, and accessible.

[9] CLEO (2005) borrowing from health promotion and social service information; Klinger, pp. 3-4.

There are a variety of delivery channels that can serve these purposes. In rural and remote communities, for instance, Friendship Centres, places of worship, health locations (doctor and dentist offices, pharmacies, hospitals, etc.), libraries, post offices, court houses, grocery stores, banks, food banks, and liquor stores have been reported to be effective locations for displaying PLEI materials that can be independently accessed and taken home. In addition to most of the above, community bulletin boards, community newspapers, ads on public transit, and second language and literacy programs have been reported as being good delivery channels for multilingual print materials aimed at non-official language communities. Some research suggests it is effective to reach young people via posters and advertisements located in bus shelters and public transit.[10]

Our research reinforces the importance of making printed materials accessible to people through trusted intermediaries in a variety of contexts and at a wide variety of locations (Figure F).

Figure F: Delivery channels for print



Source: CLEO Formats & Delivery Channels Survey, June & July 2012

[10] Cohl & Thomson, pp. 25-27, pp. 37-38; Family Law Education for Women (FLEW) Consortium, p. 32.

2.2 Online PLEI

2.2.1 Access to computers and the Internet

Increasing numbers of Canadians have Internet access in their homes. The latest statistics show that 79% of Canadian households and 81% of Ontario households had home Internet access in 2010.[11] Nationally, the number is up from 73% in 2007; however, the statistics are not directly comparable because Statistics Canada redesigned its Internet Use Survey in 2010.[12] Of those with home Internet access, three quarters reported having high-speed connections, while the other quarter did not.

Not surprisingly, approximately two-thirds of the survey respondents who noted a recent change in how clients access information over the past year or two cited the increased use or availability of the Internet and online resources as the source of change.

While Statistics Canada's 2010 Canadian Internet Use Survey data do not examine whether Canadians use the Internet to access legal information specifically, they suggest that many Canadians use the Internet for purposes that are likely to include accessing legal information. For example, 74% used the Internet to window shop or browse for information on goods and services, 68% to read or watch the news, 65% to visit or interact with government websites, 58% to use social networking sites, 54% to research community events, 47% to use instant messenger services, and 37% both for formal education, training or schoolwork, and listening to the radio online.

Despite increased overall rates of access to the Internet, significant numbers of Ontario households – 20% or 1 in 5 – did not have home Internet access in 2010. There is a continued digital divide separating those with access to technology like computers and the Internet and those without, and this divide is experienced most acutely by low-income and disadvantaged communities. Statistics show the digital divide correlates to income, education, age, and where one lives.[13]

The income divide is particularly stark. Whatever a person's age, gender, education, or location, the lower a person's income, the less likely that he or she will have home access to the Internet. 97% of Canadian households in the top income quartile ($87,000 or more) have home Internet access, while only 54% of households in the lowest quartile (incomes of $30,000 or less) have it.

People who haven't attended post-secondary school, seniors, and people living in rural areas are also less likely to have access to the Internet. The 2010 Canadian Internet Use

[11] Statistics Canada, Canadian Internet Use Survey 2010.
[12] Statistics Canada, Canadian Internet Use Survey 2010.
[13] Statistics Canada, Canadian Individual Internet Use and E-commerce, 2010.

Survey indicates that people with some post-secondary education are three times more likely to use the Internet than those who have none. Among seniors, 51% of those aged 65 to 74 and 27% of those aged 75 years and older used the Internet that year. There is also an urban-rural divide, with 81% of households in large metropolitan areas, 76% of households in centres with an urban core of at least 10,000 people, and 71% of people in households outside these areas having home Internet access.[14]

Interestingly, newcomers have striking levels of home Internet access. While those born outside of Canada who have been in the country 5 years had similar levels of home Internet access as other Canadians (about 8 in 10), almost 9 in 10 or 88% of those born outside of Canada who arrived within the past 5 years had home access to the Internet in 2010.

Statistics Canada reports that for the one-fifth of Canadian households lacking access to the Internet, self-reported reasons included having no need for or interest in it (56%), the cost of service or equipment (20%), the lack of a device such as a computer (15%), or a lack of confidence, knowledge, or skills (12%).[15] Perhaps unsurprising was the finding that "[r]elatively more households in the lowest income quartile reported the cost of service or equipment (24%) as a reason."[16]

A related concept is that of the "second digital divide", or digital literacy divide: access to the Internet does not mean that people are effectively able to interact with or find and make use of online information in meaningful ways. Research conducted in the UK at the Legal Services Research Centre by Catrina Denvir suggests that the ability to find and effectively make use of online legal information correlates with levels of education in particular, as well as age and experience.[17]

The challenges faced by clients in accessing, finding, and using online legal information, as well as concerns about the increasing amount of legal information available only online, were raised throughout the survey and interviews, even in sections where these topics were not being probed. As noted earlier, although many survey respondents rated online materials as "useful", a much smaller number rated them as "very useful" compared to print materials (Figure D, page 11).[18]

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[14] Statistics Canada, Canadian Internet Use Survey 2010; Statistics Canada, Canadian Internet Use Survey 2009.

[15] Statistics Canada, Canadian Internet Use Survey 2010.

[16] Statistics Canada, Canadian Internet Use Survey 2010.

[17] Catrina Denvir, Nigel Balmer and Pascoe Plesence. Surfing the web – recreation or resource? Exploring how young people in the UK use the Internet as an advice portal for problems with a legal dimension (2011), pp. 97-103.

[18] Although not the focus of this research, the CLEO survey included a question about which formats and delivery channels are useful to service providers to access legal information. Responses revealed notable differences between how service providers assessed the usefulness of online formats and delivery channels for themselves, compared to how they assessed their usefulness for clients. At a glance, the overall usefulness ratings were about the same, with over 90% of respondents assessing online formats as "useful" or "very useful" for both themselves and their clients. But noticeably fewer service providers assessed

Many survey respondents commented that online formats are not necessarily accessible or useful sources of legal information for many low-income and disadvantaged Ontarians, and especially those who cannot afford computers or other devices, Internet service or printing; those with low functional or computer literacy or education levels; those who have limited English and French language skills; those with vision impairments; or those who live in rural or remote communities that lack broadband or high-speed Internet access.

The following comments are illustrative.

- "More are willing to use online resources. However, the most vulnerable often do not have computer skills or safe access to Internet. Printed materials are still very important to the population we serve."
- "There is a large amount of resources online for clients which is great but it can be overwhelming and difficult for clients to figure out what is useful. It would be beneficial to clients to be able to speak with representative or customer service to get clarification on information online immediately rather than maybe having to wait to speak with their counselor for support on their issues and the information they accessed."
- "Although much more information is available by way of the Internet... if you don't have the money to pay for access to the Internet, you cannot get the information."
- "Income is probably the biggest barrier to my clients accessing Internet. Some cannot get to the library because of rural transportation issues, and some will not have focus or attention to find and look for the information."

2.2.2 Online format and delivery channel preferences

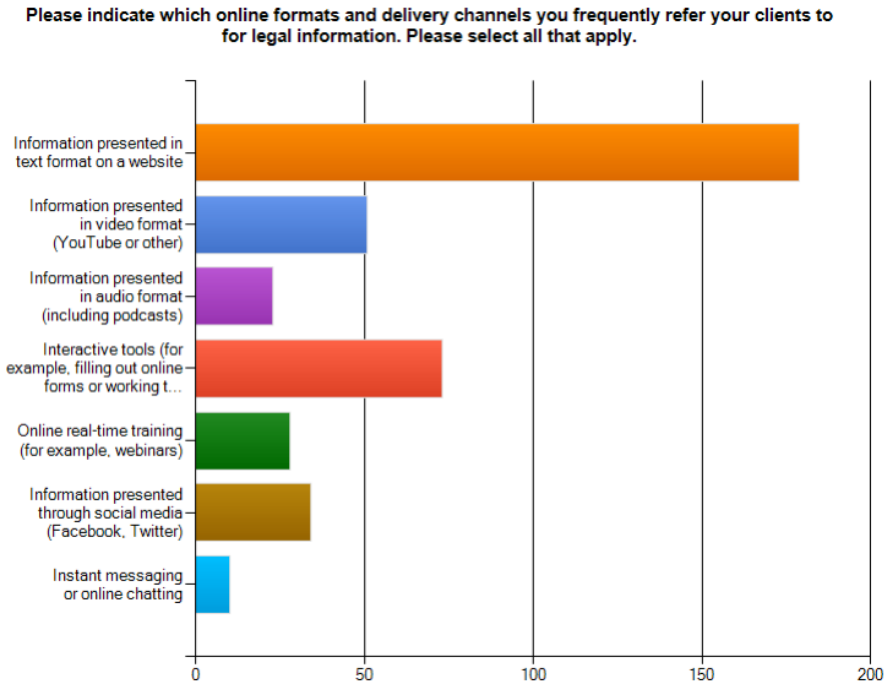
Some survey and interview respondents noted that clients who have home access and knowledge of how to use the Internet prefer using online formats and delivery channels because they are convenient. The ability to print out information for review, the fact that online information can be accessed after hours, independently and on one's own time, and that it can be available where service providers are far away, were also noted as advantages of online information. A few respondents, however, highlighted the fact that people in rural and remote communities face particular challenges in accessing online information because Internet access is not always available throughout these communities.

online written information as "very useful" for their clients (just under one-third) than for themselves (just over two-thirds). See Figure I, Appdendix E.

Online text

When asked which online formats and delivery channels they frequently refer their clients to, survey respondents overwhelmingly selected "legal information presented in text format on a website" (Figure G).

Figure G: Online formats and delivery channels to which clients are frequently referred



Source, CLEO Formats and Delivery Channels Survey, June & July 2012

Survey respondents suggested that online text is useful in a range of situations and to a diversity of users for a few reasons. Online text can be:

- printed and given to clients to read
- read together with clients
- quickly scanned, making it easy to spot relevant information.

A few respondents noted that people, including seniors they serve who use the Internet, prefer online text because they are most accustomed to a text-based format. Another respondent suggested that "[online text] is the source most frequently available". In a related comment, one respondent noted that online text is the format through which one can mostly easily access documents on government websites.

Although beyond the scope of this research project, we note that it is possible that there is currently more legal information available online in text format than in video, audio, or other online formats, not only because it generally requires less specialized software and fewer resources to produce, but also because of the ease of converting existing print publications to PDF (Portable Document Format), and because it may be easier and more cost-effective to revise online text to reflect changes in the law.

Interactive tools (online forms, decision trees, etc.)
About 40% of survey respondents indicated that they refer their clients to interactive online tools such as online forms and decision trees. A few survey and interview respondents expressed concerns that many of their clients have difficulty completing online forms on their own. Others mentioned that they wish more online forms were available, and a few noted that perhaps these formats are available and that they are unaware of them.

Online audio and video
Online video was identified as a useful format for those with low literacy or education levels, for those who are auditory or visual learners, for youth, and possibly, for some people with weak English or French language skills. Many youth and younger adults were noted as preferring video over other PLEI formats, online or otherwise.

Online audio formats like podcasts were considered useful for visually impaired people and for auditory learners. One survey respondent noted, "I would like to have more video/audio options available – meets the needs of people who are auditory or visual learners and those who may not be literate." Another indicated, "Online information needs to be both verbal as well as written so that those with low literacy or accessibility issues in regards to print can access it."

Online real-time training (such as webinars)
Responses from surveys and interviews to online real-time training were mixed. It was noted that it is difficult to refer clients to real-time webinars because they are time sensitive, it is difficult to keep up with the information, and it isn't always possible to have enough lead-time to promote them to clients. In addition, webinars are often not available in the non-English and non-French languages needed and, like audio and video formats, may not be used by clients because they take too much time to watch and clients prefer answers to their problems that they can get more quickly.

Although not the focus of the research, survey and interview respondents commented on the potential of webinars as a training opportunity for service providers, a point also made in other PLEI research.[19] Staff training via webinars was seen as cost-effective, time-saving, and convenient. It was also considered useful for learning where to go for

[19] Cohl and Thomson, p. 45.

information, for networking and making new professional contacts, and for learning general legal information.

Information presented through social media

A few survey and interview respondents identified social media as an effective vehicle for promoting awareness of the existence of legal information and services, in particular among youth and younger adults as well as people in some (but not all) remote First Nations communities where high Facebook penetration has been reported. One respondent commented, "I've noticed that clients are now using social media to access information, for example creating groups on Facebook, asking their friends on Facebook legal questions, etc." A few survey respondents raised privacy and safety concerns about social media, indicating that it is a particularly inappropriate source of legal information for groups such as women experiencing domestic violence.

Instant messaging/online chatting

Only a few respondents to the CLEO survey indicated that they refer their clients to legal information via instant messaging or online chatting. One interviewee mentioned having a well-used advice service for youth that fits in this category. Another has reviewed research in this area and identified this format/delivery channel as an "emerging area".

Mobile phones

Almost half of survey respondents rated mobile phones as "useful" or "very useful" for their clients to access legal information, and just over half of respondents rated them "not useful" (Figure D, page 11).[20]

Respondents gave several reasons why mobile phones are often not a useful way of reaching people with legal information. The data plans required to purchase Internet access on smartphones were cited by a few as being particularly expensive and thus a barrier to access by many low-income people. Also, the small size of the screens was noted as not being optimal for much more than finding and reviewing very basic information such as the location of products, services or contact information, or letting users know that an issue or resource exists.

At the same time, a few survey and interview respondents acknowledged that an increasing number of clients are using smartphones and related "apps", and emerging technologies like tablets to access information. This mirrors Statistics Canada data, which indicate growing numbers of people are using these kinds of devices to access the Internet.[21] One interview respondent from a youth-focused organization mentioned that clients primarily access the Internet on smartphones and tablets; another mentioned that they are seeing an increased number of people of all ages accessing the Internet on smartphones, though a much higher percentage among younger clients. Yet

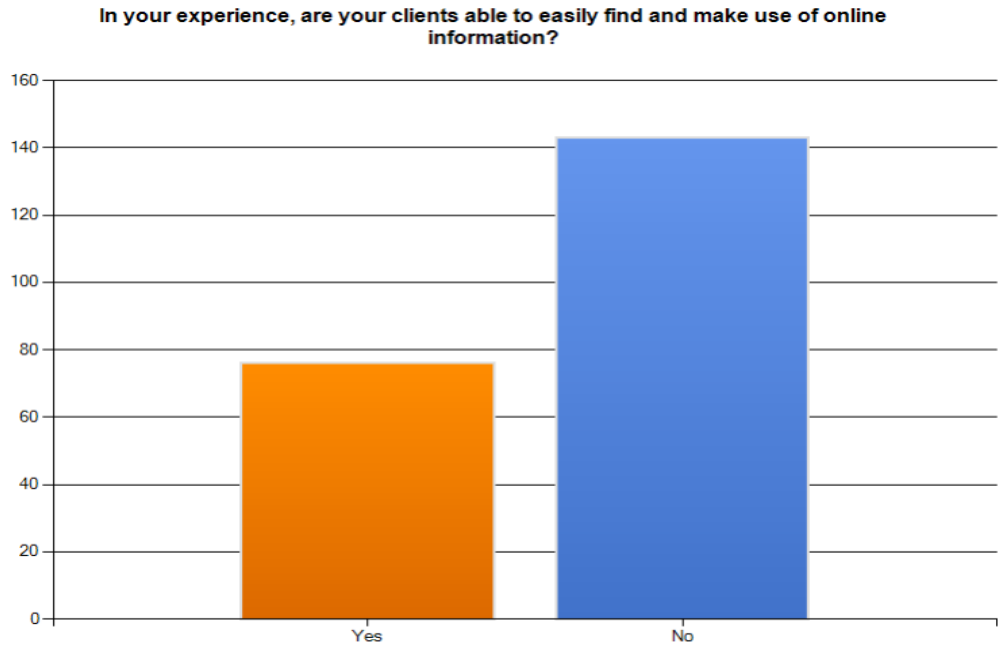
[20] It is interesting to note that over two-thirds of survey respondents rated mobile phones as "not useful" as a format/delivery channel for themselves, but only half rated them as "not useful" for clients.
[21] Statistics Canada, Canadian Internet Use Survey 2010.

another interviewee mentioned that tablets are increasingly popular among clients of all ages, from young adults to seniors, and that the trend among the latter surprised them.

2.2.3 Finding and using online PLEI

Our research suggests that it can be difficult for many people to find and make use of online information, even when they have access to the Internet. Two-thirds of the CLEO survey respondents reported that their clients are not able to easily find and make use of online information (Figure H).

Figure H: Clients' ability to find and make use of online information



Source: CLEO Formats and Delivery Channel Survey, June & July, 2012

A critical first step in using online legal information is finding where it resides in the vast world-wide web. Recent research by Catrina Denvir discussed earlier in this report suggests that locating information through an online search can be a challenge when youth are using the Internet to solve a legal problem. The youth that participated in the Denvir study had great difficulty finding the relevant information when they conducted Internet searches. Denvir concluded that a key factor in whether youth could find accurate answers was how high, or prominently, good information appeared in search results on the most commonly used search engines. (She also found that even when information was ranked high in a search, the youth in her study had difficulty assessing the credibility of information and displayed a lack of awareness about issues of jurisdiction.) She noted that if the information is not located, the quality of the content on a site and whether people are able to understand and use it are moot points, leading

her to conclude that ensuring information can be easily found through Internet searches is an essential first step.[22]

In mid-2012, the Legal Services Society of British Columbia (LSS) published three reports authored by independent consultants that assessed barriers and made recommendations for improvements to their PLEI resources, with a heavy focus on their online resources.[23] One of the consultants, Habanero Consulting Group, assessed the "usability" of the Family Law in BC website (FLWS) by intermediaries and end users. Their report drew several conclusions relevant to this research. In terms of using the site, the consultants found that many end users (mostly clients) required assistance to find the right information or to be guided through the site. In other words, they found the site was of low "usability" for the key target audience and yet very usable for intermediaries.

The Habanero report gave a few reasons why clients often did not find or use the information on the site. Those who were not familiar with the FLWS tended to choose search terms specific to their issues like "getting a divorce", as opposed to general terms like "family law". The FLWS appeared higher in search results where general terms were used, and users tend to consult websites that appear high in search results. Moreover, web traffic analytics showed users tend to go to official government sites like the Attorney General or Government of Canada sites first when searching for family law information. The consultants noted that this was because government sites appear official or credible. The LSS research showed it wasn't clear to end users who were tested that the FLWS was official or credible despite being funded by the Government of BC because the site was not labeled or identified as such.

Addressing barriers to finding and using online PLEI

Our research sought feedback on how to improve the accessibility and usefulness of online information. Survey and interview respondents suggested several things that can be done to increase the likelihood of reliable online PLEI being found and used. (Some of their comments focused on literacy-oriented suggestions, such as layout, design, and language, and will not be discussed here.)

A few survey respondents mentioned the importance of activities like training workshops aimed primarily at clients, but also for service providers, on conducting Internet searches, finding reliable legal information, and using the Internet safely, as well as to promote an awareness of the existence of high quality online PLEI.

Focus groups of newcomers conducted by one respondent revealed that even well-established online information portals such as 211.org or Settlement.org are not well known. When they first arrive in Canada, newcomers in the study tended to use search

[22] Denvir (2012).
[23] Legal Services Society of British Columbia. Public Legal Education and Information Resources Accessibility Initiative (2012).

engines like Google to find online information. The respondent noted that it is the more established groups of immigrants and refugees that tend to know about existing information portals.[24]

Other suggestions included taking steps to ensure search engine optimization so that key information appears more prominently in search results in search engines like Google, using web analytics to drive more traffic to a site and assess where existing traffic comes from, and creating or promoting existing online legal information hubs. It can also be helpful if people looking for online legal information are able to easily understand where PLEI comes from and when it was produced. As a starting point, it is a good practice to clearly label online PLEI with the name of the producing organization, the date it was produced, and the jurisdiction the information applies to.

Illustrative comments include:

- "The best way to improve accessibility in my experience is to support the client in person in accessing online information. A mini in-person tutorial of sorts where the client is empowered to lead the process and teach themselves/find information themselves but a person is available to support them if needed."
- "… We also find that sometimes even when the info is available online that people don't have the skills to know what or how to look for it. This type of technology is not always part of people's experience. The assumption is that if this type of information is out there that people using the Internet will find it. But that isn't always the case. People don't always know how to search for it, but they will come to an organization like ours and from there be prompted. It's a huge issue – how to make people aware the info is out there and to ensure they can access it."
- "1. Have the clients access it in our offices, with our help and direction. 2. Teach clients about web safety – erasing their tracks."

It is interesting to note that a few survey respondents maintained that it is not possible to improve the accessibility or usefulness of online information. One respondent indicated, "And many [clients] are not computer-literate, so online information is NOT useful for them." Another said, "If a client is illiterate online information is not going to be a practical resource; although most of our towns have resources that provide free computer use, some of my clients would not be comfortable asking for assistance, which is where our agency being able to provide this service has been very beneficial."

Addressing barriers to computer and Internet access

Our research suggests that there are some additional interventions that can assist with improving access to online PLEI. In their comments, respondents focused on the need for policies and programs to provide free or low-cost computers with high-speed Internet access at public places throughout the province. In particular, a few survey and

[24] WoodGreen Community Services (2011).

interview respondents said that it would be useful to provide more free or very low-cost, safe, private, confidential computer and Internet access at community agencies, libraries, courthouses, and other relevant public places that clients frequent, or to encourage the provincial government to increase social assistance amounts to help very low-income people afford computers and home Internet service.

Concern was expressed by a few respondents about the impact of the recent federal government decision to cancel funding for national initiatives to bridge the digital divide, in particular the Community Access Program (CAP). CAP provided funding to increase public access to computers and the Internet, and training and support to assist in the development of skills to use it effectively.[25]

Ultimately, it is a good practice in both rural and urban settings to ask clients about their access to computers and the Internet, as well as their communication and information preferences. While it may not always be possible to accommodate those preferences, it is an important first step to understanding and responding to clients' information needs.

2.3 Other formats and delivery channels

2.3.1 Community media

Many survey respondents identified both community radio and community television as "useful" or "very useful" for their clients (Figure D, page 11). The research did not specifically probe for information on community newspapers, though a few survey and interview respondents mentioned them as an important information channel.

At the same time, a few interview respondents pointed out that broadcast media in particular are not always available in communities where they are needed. They noted that satellite television and some cable providers in smaller communities do not offer community television channels, and that community radio frequencies similarly are not available throughout the province, particularly in small rural or remote communities.

A few respondents singled out the effectiveness of community media for non-English and non-French speaking ethno-cultural or linguistic communities and people who are homebound and isolated from the wider community. This can include seniors, women who do not work outside the home, young children, victims of domestic violence, people with some physical and mental disabilities, and some residents of rural and remote communities.[26] In terms of broadcast media, some research shows programming "should be transmitted at regular intervals and varying frequencies."[27]

[25] Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (2012).
[26] Cohl and Thomson, pp. 22-38; McEown and Reid, pp. 17-30; Middle Income Access to Civil Justice Steering Committee. Background Paper (2011), pp. 65-70.
[27] Klinger, p. 13.

Other research has shown that call-in programs can be useful for answering people's questions and at the same time, raising awareness of an issue.[28]

Following are some illustrative comments from the survey respondents regarding the importance of community media:

- "Bilingual, community TV is a good place to reach my community with legal information."
- "[T]he vast majority of the Vietnamese population in Toronto, the GTA area, do read our local Vietnamese newspaper faithfully. It would be ideal to have a story printed, with tips for legal information and where the person need to go to get help accessing this information and services."
- "Newspaper articles in free newspapers are good in small towns ..."

2.3.2 In-person events: workshops, community events, and classes

Not surprisingly, our research indicates that in-person events like workshops, community events, or classes, including English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL)and Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), remain an important way to reach people with legal information. Most of the survey respondents (96.5%) indicated in-person events are "useful" or "very useful" for their clients to access legal information (Figure D, page 11). Recent research has also found that workshops in participants' first language or ESL and LINC classes are effective channels for providing rights education and PLEI to non-official language communities.[29]

A repeated theme throughout this research is the myriad of barriers that low-income and disadvantaged people face in accessing legal information. Some survey respondents indicated a preference for in-person workshops, community events, and classes because the support offered at these sessions helps clients – particularly those with language, literacy, and disability barriers – better make use of the information they are receiving.

Respondents also indicated, as noted previously, that their clients often have problems making sense of or interpreting information. An example given by one respondent describes the frustration of clients who read online legal information from another jurisdiction – for example, the United States – and feel that their legal rights are being violated because the law is different in Ontario. In addition to helping clients with a legal problem understand or process information, in-person events were seen as useful for helping people without a legal problem understand their rights and responsibilities.

A few respondents suggested specific locales where in-person events or workshops could be held, such as community centres, libraries, and a wide variety of community agencies, including their own offices.

[28] CLEO (2009), p. 27.
[29] Cohl & Thomson, p. 45.

Following are some illustrative comments from the survey respondents:

- "High school education courses mandatory to all students – how to access legal information and support!"
- "Conducting Public Legal Education by a worker in-person with the clients is the ONLY viable way to do this."
- "Periodic information sessions at the same venue every month or so."

2.4 Trusted intermediaries and one-on-one support

Low-income and socially isolated people are most likely to seek out or rely on in-person support from a trusted intermediary, such as community workers, when seeking information and assistance. In Canada, this is particularly true for people who speak non-official languages, Aboriginal peoples, people with low literacy skills, people with disabilities, and others who are low-income and disadvantaged.[30] Moreover, because of cognitive changes that appear to take place when under stress, some research suggests "[o]ne-on-one, individualized information sessions may be the most appropriate way"[31] to initially address legal issues with people in crisis.

The CLEO survey and interviews did not probe respondents for feedback on this topic. Despite this, throughout the information-gathering process, a number of respondents made the point that, whatever the format, trusted intermediaries play a critical role in ensuring low-income and disadvantaged people access and understand PLEI. For example, one survey respondent suggested, "Make sure service providers are well informed. They are quite often the first point of contact for the individuals and families we serve and they/we need to be giving the best and most appropriate information." Another said, "I think that the Internet holds a lot of information and can sometimes be overwhelming for a person who may already be in a crisis situation. I think it is really important to ensure that service providers and community leaders are well informed of the services out there as they are normally the people to refer or give information."

Some of those who responded to the survey question about how to improve the accessibility and usefulness of online information suggested that clients would need some one-on-one support from intermediaries in order to find or understand online legal information. While a number of respondents who addressed this point specified that in-person support is critical, others suggested that phone or online real-time support would suffice. One respondent noted, "… people are using our website to access information or fact sheets and then calling us to clarify the information."

[30] Cohl and Thomson; Klinger; McEown and Reid, pp. 18-30.
[31] Susan McDonald cited in CLEO (2005), p. 19.

In a context where legal services remain inaccessible to many Ontarians because of the limited availability of affordable or free legal advice and representation services, support from a trusted intermediary in accessing PLEI and determining how to take action can offer important help.[32] How far this will take the client depends on several factors including the complexity of the legal problem, the resources available to the client, and the skill and confidence level of the client.

2.5 Outreach and promotion

The critical role of outreach in connecting low-income and disadvantaged communities to PLEI is a key theme arising from our research. In response to several survey and interview questions, respondents identified outreach as an important strategy for ensuring that more clients are connected with legal information. Many of the suggestions for making it easier for people to find online PLEI relate to improving outreach.

Some interview and survey respondents suggested that a successful strategy requires a variety of outreach activities in order to reach diverse groups and communities with legal information. For example, one interviewee whose organization has done research on how best to do outreach to the community in their Toronto neighbourhood indicated, "Always you need to think about whether you should "push" or "pull" the information. For example, do you create a portal for information [push], or do you drop it into the Chinese newsletter or Somali youth organization newsletter that people already use [pull]. We think you have to do both. Many won't find your portal. But people will learn about it over time … Word of mouth does grow. One half of clients will hear from someone they know, one quarter will see a sign on TTC [public transit] saying check us out." Yet another respondent noted, "Nothing like [the] personal touch. Be present at events, festivals, etc. Outreach, talk, discuss, keep the buzz going on social media, attend all events related to your clinic work."

Respondents tended to consider in-person events such as workshops, classes, and community events as both delivery channels for PLEI and useful outreach activities for raising awareness of the existence of PLEI. Not surprisingly, one of the most popular suggestions for reaching clients with legal information was to provide education or training to them about how and where to find reliable PLEI.

Outreach to service providers was also noted as an important aspect of PLEI delivery. One interview respondent noted that training for service providers such as webinars is useful only if service providers are aware of them. The respondent indicated that there is a fair amount of staff turnover in the community services sector and that ongoing

[32] Cohl and Thomson, pp. 52-53; Michael Trebilcock, Report of the Legal Aid Review; Middle Income Access to Civil Justice Initiative (2008).

outreach and awareness-raising among service provider networks is critical to ensuring that as many community workers as possible are aware of the resources available.

As noted previously, respondents also indicated that a number of other formats and delivery channels lend themselves to PLEI promotion such as social media, posters and novelty items, and community media.

3. Themes and findings

3.1 General themes

Several themes cut across a large number of responses to the survey and interviews.

The first is that PLEI needs to be delivered in various ways and through more than one delivery channel to reach target audiences. This has always been the case, but opportunities created by the Internet and other technologies have increased the possible formats and delivery channels with which to work.

A second and closely related theme is that many people continue to face significant barriers to accessing legal information, including language, literacy, disability, distance, and skill level or confidence. It is not uncommon for some people to face multiple barriers. This presents challenges for service providers on a number of levels, not least of which are finding accessible PLEI and making it available through delivery channels that are most likely to reach their communities. Effective strategies for addressing such varied needs may, at least in part, depend on greater coordination and communication among key stakeholders and producers of PLEI in the province.

The third theme that stands out is the importance of support from a community worker or trusted intermediary to help people, particularly those who face one or more barriers, find and understand legal information. It is interesting to note that this was not a primary focus of the original research but emerged through feedback and comments from survey and interview respondents. Responses from survey and interview respondents reminded us of the local nature of the work of many community-based organizations – that is, work that serves a community, often geographically local, that has unique characteristics and specific needs. As such, in-person events ranging from workshops, information sessions, and community meetings to one-on-one support were seen as effective channels for improving access to legal information.

The final theme that emerged from this research is the critical role outreach plays in PLEI delivery. Survey respondents repeatedly noted that service providers and end users are often unaware of the information and resources that already exist, and that they don’t always know where to look for PLEI, or how to tell if legal information is reliable. Outreach activities are key for promoting an awareness of the existence of PLEI, helping people find PLEI, and making people aware of how to assess PLEI for reliability.

3.2 Findings relating to formats and delivery channels

3.2.1 Print

Print remains a critical way to reach low-income and disadvantaged people with legal information. Although online media are gaining in popularity, print in various formats is particularly useful for audiences who have barriers to accessing online information.

In addition, print has the advantage of being portable. It can be taken home, referred to at the client's convenience, and shared with family and friends. In Ontario, PLEI print materials are widely available free of charge by community organizations and legal clinics.

For many if not most people, **short, concise booklets are useful**. This observation was made by survey respondents from a wide cross-section of community organizations, suggesting that short, concise materials are useful for a diversity of communities.

The research also suggests that print formats such as **bookmarks, posters, and novelty items are ideal for promotion**. Respondents noted that these formats are useful for raising awareness of a legal issue or legal right and for providing referral information.

3.2.2 Online information

Access to online information is growing. According to almost 40% of survey respondents, the greatest change in how their clients accessed information in the last year or two has been an increase in Internet use.

Online text in particular is useful to a growing number of people who have home computers and access to the Internet. The abundance of online text information and the relative ease of access for those with Internet access make this a useful format to a variety of users. Seniors and adults in general prefer online text because they are most accustomed to a text-based format (as opposed to youth who might look for information through social media or other online formats).

Online video can be useful for those with low literacy or education levels, for those who are auditory or visual learners, for youth, and possibly, for some people with weak English or French language skills. Many youth and younger adults prefer video over other formats, online or otherwise.

Social media is effective for promoting awareness of the existence of legal information and services, in particular among youth and younger adults as well as people in some remote First Nations communities with high Facebook penetration. **Mobile phones,**

tablets, and associated "apps" are emerging areas of technology that can be effective in reaching a growing audience but, at the moment, youth in particular.

3.2.3 Addressing barriers to accessing and using online legal information

Finding online legal information can be difficult for a number of reasons discussed previously in this report.

A number of strategies can be used to make online PLEI easier to find and use. Workshops and training sessions that promote awareness of the existence of online PLEI and show people how to conduct Internet searches, find reliable information, and use the Internet safely are useful for helping people find and use online legal information. The promotion of existing online legal information hubs, or the creation of new ones that address unmet needs, can also make it easier to find reliable online legal information.

PLEI providers can use search engine optimization to make key information appear more prominently in search engine results, and web analytics to drive more traffic to a site and assess where existing traffic comes from. It can also be helpful if people looking for online legal information are able to easily understand where PLEI comes from and when it was produced. As a starting point, it is a good practice to clearly label online PLEI with the name of the producing organization, the date it was produced, and the jurisdiction the information applies to.

In addition to the strategies noted above to make online PLEI easier to find, it is a good practice in both rural and urban settings to ask clients about their access to computers and the Internet, as well as their communication and information preferences. While it may not always be possible to accommodate these preferences, asking about them is an important first step to understanding and responding to clients' information needs.

3.2.4 Online training

Feedback from research participants indicated that it can be difficult to refer clients to real-time webinars because they are time sensitive and it isn't always possible to have enough lead-time to promote them to clients. In addition, webinars are often not available in the non-English and non-French languages needed; clients can have trouble keeping up with or following the information; and, like audio and video formats, webinars may not be used by clients because they take too much time to watch and clients prefer answers to their problems that they can get more quickly.

On the other hand, **webinars are useful to service providers**. Staff training via webinars can be cost-effective, time-saving, and convenient. This delivery channel can help service providers gain an awareness of legal issues, learn where to go for information, and network and make new professional contacts.

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Appendix A: Online survey questions

Reaching communities in Ontario with public legal education and information

We want to hear from you about how your communities access the legal information they need.

This survey builds on recent reports on civil legal needs and similar studies that touch on how people access legal information. We're taking a focused look at formats and delivery channels for legal information and gathering updated information on the most effective ways of reaching low- and modest-income people who have a problem and need legal information.

All of the questions, with the exception of #3, ask about formats and delivery channels accessed by your clients. The survey includes 13 questions and will take about 15 to 20 minutes to complete. We'll be collecting responses until Friday, June 29, 2012.

A summary of the survey results will be included in a final report, which will be publicly available. The report will be drafted so that responses cannot be attributed to you or your agency without your express permission.

1. Please indicate which formats and delivery channels are useful for your clients to access legal information.
Not Useful Useful Very Useful
Printed materials
Online written information
Other online information (for example, audio, video, webinars, social media)
Mobile phone
Community radio
Community television
In-person events (for example, workshops, community events, classrooms including ESL/ LINC classes)
Other (please specify)

2a. Have there been any recent changes (in the past year or two) in how your clients access the information they need to solve a problem? Yes____ No____

2b. If yes, please explain.

_____
_____
_____
_____

3. Please indicate which formats and delivery channels are useful to you as a service provider to access legal information.

	Not Useful	Useful	Very Useful
Printed materials			
Online written information			
Other online information (for example, audio, video, webinars, social media)			
Mobile phone			
Community radio			
Community television			
In-person events (for example, workshops and community events)			
Other (please specify)			

PRINTED MATERIALS (i.e., booklets, posters, fact sheets, etc.)

4a. What types of printed materials are helpful to your clients?

____ Lengthy print booklets (10 or more pages)
____ Short fliers, fact sheets or brochures (less than 10 pages)
____ Novelty items such as bookmarks, coasters, magnets
____ Posters
____ Other (please specify) _____

4b. Please explain why.

_____
_____
_____

5. Where are your clients likely to access legal information in *print format*? Please select all that apply.

_____ Classroom/ school/ teacher (including adult education and ESL/LINC classes)
_____ Commercial business (coffee shops, restaurants, grocery stores, laundromats, etc.)
_____ Community health centres, doctors' offices, hospitals
_____ Community organization or group (drop-in centres, food banks, ethno-cultural organizations, shelters, parenting centres, seniors centres, support groups, multi-issue organizations, etc.)
_____ Community event or workshop
_____ Community legal clinic
_____ Community newspaper or magazine
_____ Court/ tribunal/ Family Law Information Centre (FLIC)
_____ Faith-based organization
_____ Government office, MP/MPP office
_____ Library
_____ Other (please specify, for example, billboards, bingo halls, delivery through mailbox, etc.)

_____
_____
_____

ONLINE FORMATS

6a. Please indicate which online formats and delivery channels you frequently refer your clients to for legal information. Please select all that apply.

____ Information presented in text format on a website
____ Information presented in video format (YouTube or other)
____ Information presented in audio format (including podcasts)
____ Interactive tools (for example, filling out online forms or working through a decision tree)
____ Online real-time training (for example, webinars)
____ Information presented through social media (Facebook, Twitter)
____ Instant messaging or online chatting
____ Other (please specify) _____

6b. Please explain why.

_____
_____
_____
_____

7a. In your experience, are your clients able to easily find and make use of online information? Yes____ No ____

7b. Are there any difficulties that you think your clients regularly experience in accessing legal information online (for example, getting access to computers, privacy in access, printing off information)? Please provide comments.

_____
_____

8. In your experience, are there practices or suggestions for improving the accessibility or usefulness of online information? Yes ____ No____
Please provide comments.

_____
_____
_____

9. Has your organization explored issues relating to your clients' information needs or preferences, including how they use websites or the Internet? If so, please tell us about your findings.

_____
_____
_____

10. If you could give one tip or suggestion on how to reach members of your community with legal information, what would it be?

_____
_____
_____

11. Please provide your name and the name of your organization.
Name: _____
Organization: _____

We might wish to explore some of the issues that arise in this survey more deeply. May we contact you for more information?
_____ Yes
_____ No

12. What best describes your organization's service area? (select one)
_____ Province-wide
_____ Eastern/Central Ontario
_____ Northern Ontario,
_____ Southwestern Ontario
_____ Toronto and area

13. What type of organization do you work at? (select one)
_____ Aboriginal issues
_____ Anti-poverty issues/foodbanks
_____ Community information services
_____ Community legal clinic
_____ Consumer issues/credit counseling
_____ Court/ tribunal
_____ Domestic violence/women's issues
_____ Ethno-cultural
_____ Family/ child
_____ Government office
_____ Health or disability issues
_____ Library/literacy organization
_____ MP/MPP office
_____ Multi-issue organization
_____ Religious or faith-based organization
_____ Seniors
_____ Tenants' rights/housing/shelter issues
_____ Victim/offender issues
_____ Workers' rights/labour & employment-related issues
_____ Youth issues
_____ Other (please specify)

Please return hard copies of this survey:

By fax: 416-408-4424
By mail: CLEO, 119 Spadina Avenue, Suite 600, Toronto, Ontario M5V 2L1

Thank you!

Appendix B: Telephone interview questions

Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO) Research Project: Ontario community workers on what PLEI formats & delivery channels are effective for their communities

Online Survey Respondent Telephone Interview Questions

1. Agency background

What kind of services does your organization provide?

What is your role at the agency?

Which community or communities do you serve?

2. General questions on PLEI formats-delivery channels

In the online survey you indicated xxx is a very useful format for your clients to access legal information, xxx is useful and xxx not useful. Could you please tell me why certain formats are useful or very useful and why the others are not?

Are there enough public legal education and information (PLEI) resources available in the formats/delivery channels your clients prefer?

Only if the response is **no,** ask the following:
Please tell me which types of PLEI resources you would like to be able to refer clients to and why.

Is there anything else you can tell me about the format and delivery channel preferences of your clients?

3. Exploring online PLEI needs and preferences*

**A. Question for interviewees who indicated in the online survey that they never refer clients to online PLEI:*

In the survey you indicated that you do not refer your clients to online PLEI. You also indicated that xxx were the reasons why your clients have difficulty finding or making use of online information. Please tell me more.

Is there anything else you can tell me about your clients' online information needs and preferences, or how it might be possible to make it easier for more clients being able to find and use online PLEI?

OR

**B. Questions for interviewees who indicated that they do refer clients to online PLEI:*

In the online survey we listed a number of different online formats and asked you to tell us to which of these you frequently refer your clients. The formats we asked about are:

Information presented in text format on a website
Information presented in video format (such as YouTube)
Information presented in audio format (like podcasts)
Interactive tools (like filling out online forms)
Online real-time training (such as webinars)
Information presented through social media sites like Facebook and Twitter
Instant messaging or online chatting

You indicated that you refer clients to xxx and xxx. Please tell me more about why you refer clients to this/these format(s).

Would you would like to have more PLEI available in any of these formats? Please tell me more.

Please tell me why you do not refer to the other online formats/delivery channels?

In your survey responses you indicated that xxx were the reasons your clients have difficulty finding or making use of online information. Please tell me more.

When we asked you for tips or suggestions for improving your clients' access to or usefulness of online PLEI you recommended xxx. Please tell me more.

Is there anything else you can tell me about your clients' online information needs and preferences, or how it might be possible to make it easier for more clients being able to find and use online PLEI?

4. Delivery Channels for Printed Materials

How do printed materials reach people in the communities you serve? For instance, are there key places or events where people in these communities are likely to come across printed PLEI materials? Please tell me more.

What places or events are being overlooked for printed PLEI distribution?

Please tell me if you have any other thoughts or suggestions about how we could increase the availability of printed PLEI materials for your clients.

5. Exploring key tips for improving how we reach clients with public legal education and information

When we asked online survey respondents for one tip to reach the communities they serve with legal information, one of the most popular suggestions was to provide education or training to clients or service providers (trusted intermediaries) on substantive PLEI topics and/or how and where to find reliable PLEI. In what circumstances might online education and training on this topic via tools like webinars be useful for your clients, or for service providers like yourselves?

If you have any other tips or suggestions for reaching the community you serve with legal information and education, please tell me about them.

6. Exploring the results of research done or information collected by service providers about the information needs and preferences of their clients*

**These questions will only be asked of interviewees who indicated in the online survey that their organization has formally gathered or is planning to gather information about the information needs and preferences of their clients.*

In the online survey you indicated your organization has explored (or is planning to explore) issues relating to your clients' information needs or preferences, including how they use your website or the Internet. Please tell me about what was done and what the findings were.

Would you please share with CLEO a copy of documents or reports that you have related to this research?

7. Conclusion

Is there anything else you can tell me about the PLEI needs and preferences of your clients?

Thank-you very much for participating in our research project. A final report summarizing the results will be made publicly available.

Appendix C: Organizations interviewed

African Community Services of Peel
Comité Réseau d'Ottawa
Community Mental Health Association of York Region
Douro-Dummer Public Library
Elgin Oxford Legal Clinic
Family Services Ottawa
Hamilton Housing Help Centre
Justice for Children and Youth
Keewaytinok Native Legal Services
Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic
Muskoka-Parry Sound Sexual Assault Services
North Bay & District Multicultural Centre
Red Lake Indian Friendship Centre
Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region
Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre
West End Legal Services of Ottawa
WoodGreen Community Services
Workers' Action Centre (WAC)
Unknown organization

Appendix D: Project terms of reference

Assessment of effective format and delivery channels for reaching low-income and disadvantaged communities in Ontario with the legal information they need

Description of project
CLEO, and other community legal clinics and community-based organizations, tap into the legal information needs of the communities they serve in a number of ways – usually through a mix of ongoing connections and monitoring, supplemented by the occasional survey or more in-depth study. Most do not have the resources to conduct comprehensive surveys or focus groups of members of the public. As a proxy, CLEO and other legal services providers sometimes contact front-line workers who interact with their communities day-to-day on a personal basis and are in a good position to speak to those needs, to gain a better understanding. This project will address the following questions:

- what formats are commonly used by members of low-income and disadvantaged communities in Ontario to access legal information (recognizing that format needs will vary from community to community)?; are there some that rarely work or have other problems?
- what delivery channels or access points are likely to reach these communities with legal information?
- are there formats or delivery channels that are particularly effective for certain groups or communities?

Although not the primary purpose, this research may address additional questions (such as topic needs or language needs) if easily incorporated and explored in the same project.

Time frame
Four to six months (40-60 days for research/writing)

Methodology
Review and summary of key reports within last 5-7 years (preferably Ontario and community-based) with respect to the questions above. Reports may include:

- CLEO reports, including two linguistic access and Aboriginal access reports
- Connecting Across Language and Distance, 2008
- reports prepared by various Connecting Regions
- report by the Family Law Education for Women project
- review of relevant Statistics Report studies (e.g., format needs of groups identified by demographics or other characteristics – e.g., those with literacy barriers)
- other relevant reports (e.g., information studies faculties, legal clinics, Access Alliance, OCASI, community health centres, other)

Conduct 20 to 25 thirty-minute key informant interviews of major legal information/front-line community or legal service providers for low-income and

disadvantaged communities in Ontario (or others with relevant experience or expertise) relating to the key research questions

Short survey (3 to 10 questions) of community workers/ service providers. The survey will be widely circulated via email and through CLEO's websites; the survey will also be highlighted (and input possibly sought) through CLEO's various outreach activities.

Deliverables
At the end of this project, a final report will identify formats and delivery channels that are effective in reaching many communities in Ontario with the legal information they need. In making these findings, the report will:

- summarize findings on these questions from relevant, recent research
- provide a summary of feedback obtained from the interviews
- provide a summary of the survey responses

As well, the report will discuss other relevant findings or useful information obtained relating to these research questions, such as variations in format and delivery needs by different communities, good practices (and those to be avoided) mentioned by respondents, etc.

Appendix E: Figure I
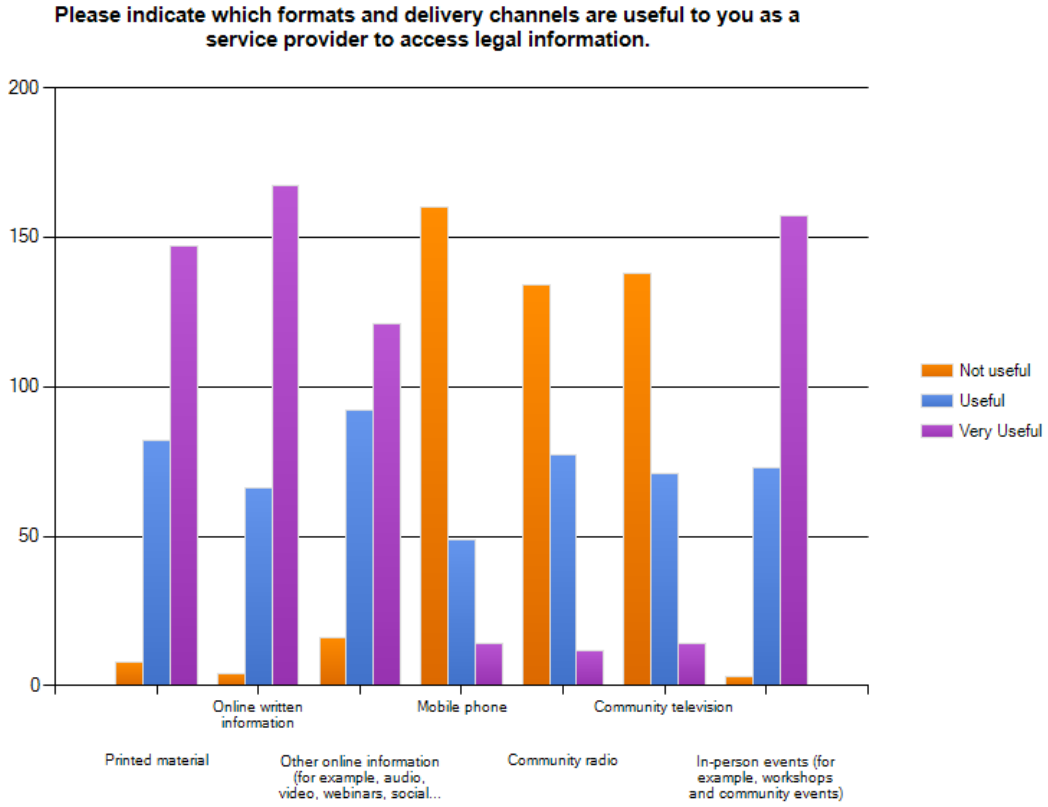
Figure I: Formats and delivery channels useful to service providers