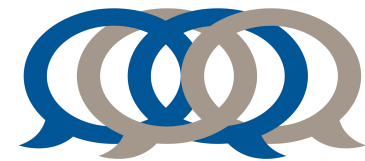


NSRLP NATIONAL SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS PROJECT

SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT 2014

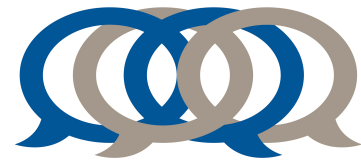


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"Think of being a SRL like throwing yourself into the middle of the ocean. You flail about and look up to the sun for direction, but you have no idea what is north, south, east or west." (SRL)



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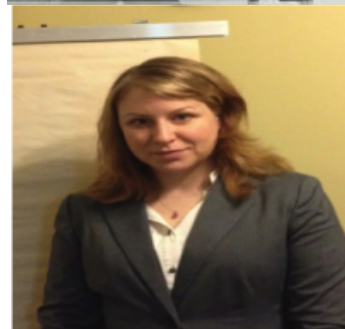
NSRLP TEAM



Dr. Julie Macfarlane
Project Director



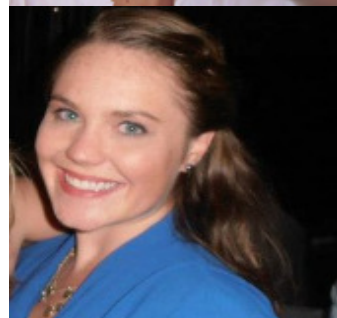
Hannah Bahmanpour
Research Assistant



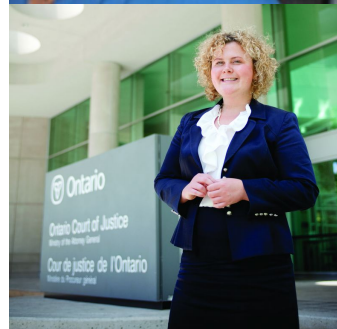
Christine Dymarski
Volunteer



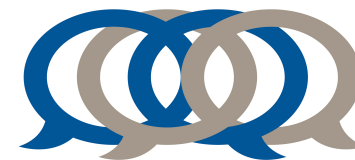
Sue Rice
Project Manager



Jasmine Attfield
Research Assistant



Brady Donohue
Volunteer



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NSRLP ADVISORY BOARD



NSRLP Board Members are a source of expert opinion for the NSRLP. They work with the NSRLP team to monitor emerging SRL initiatives and to communicate the new and ongoing work of the NSRLP.

From left to right:

Row 1 - Justice John Rooke, Judge, Associate Chief Justice, Alberta Queen's Bench; Jennifer Muller, SRL; John Manwaring, Professor of Law, Common Law Section, University of Ottawa

Row 2 - Camille Cameron, Dean, Faculty of Law, University of Windsor; Robert Harvie, Partner, Huckvale Wilde Harvie MacLennan, Bencher, Law Society of Alberta; Sherry MacLennan, Director Public Legal Information, Legal Services Society of British Columbia

Row 3 - Trevor C.W. Farrow, Professor, Osgoode Hall Law School; Mary Anne Docherty, Supervisor, Superior Court, Windsor; Noel Semple, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Windsor

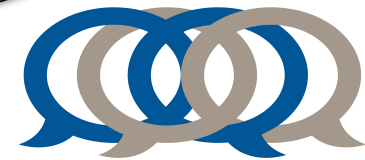
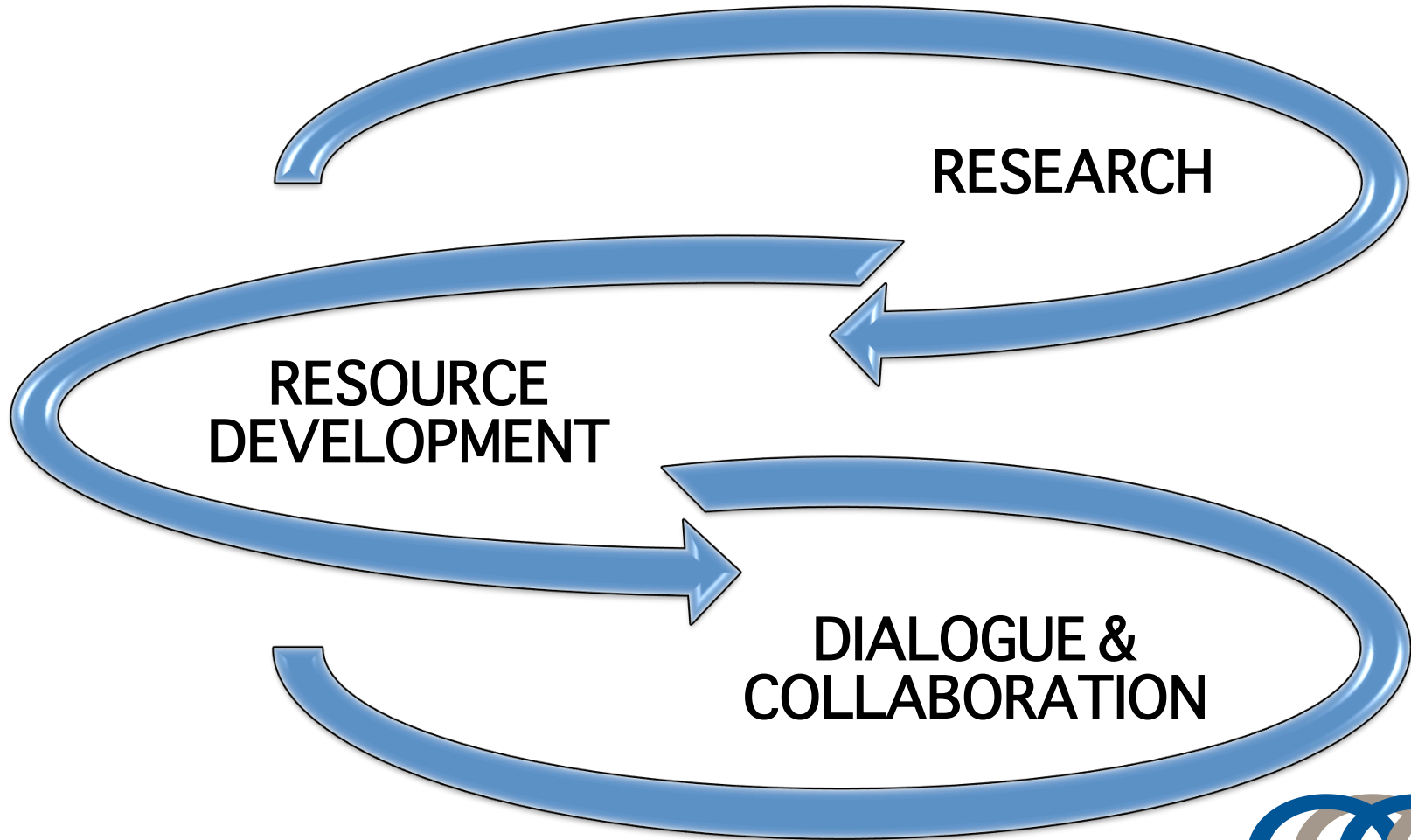


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NSRLP MANDATES



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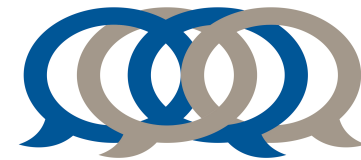
RESEARCH

National US Study with IAALS

(Institute for the
Advancement of the
American Legal
System)

Legal Advice vs. Legal Information (guidelines, training and evaluation)

Measuring the Costs of Self- Representation (with the Civil Justice Forum)



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LEGAL ADVICE VS. LEGAL INFORMATION – NOVA SCOTIA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE PILOT PROJECT

NSRLP in partnership with the Nova Scotia Department of Justice and John Greacen completed a Legal Information/ Legal Advice pilot project (February –May 2014) focused on clarifying the types of assistance and information that can be provided to SRLs by court services staff (“How Can I Help You?” Clarifying the Legal Advice/ Legal Information Distinction for Court Staff and the Public, 2014).

- Revised guidelines for distinguishing legal information from legal advice used as the basis of a training program
- Staff evaluations ranked the utility of this training very highly
- NSRLP helped develop the new guidelines and also designed and collated short surveys completed by court users to measure satisfaction
- Survey data showed high levels of user satisfaction with service provided by counter staff and appreciation for their assistance



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LEGAL ADVICE VS. LEGAL INFORMATION: NOVA SCOTIA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE PILOT PROJECT

Need help? With how the court works

Court staff CAN

- Provide applicable forms and instructions, and answer questions about how to complete forms, such as where to write in particular types of information
- Tell you what the requirements are to have your case considered by the court
- Tell you why we think your documents do not comply with the Rules and give you an opportunity to make changes
- Provide you with general information on court rules, procedures, and practices
- Give you procedural information about how your case is being managed and the process involved in each step along the way to having your case heard by the court
- Tell you the process you go through when you use conciliation, mediation, or another type of assisted dispute resolution
- Tell you the process you go through at a hearing or a trial
- Tell you what has happened previously in your own case
- Give you links to laws, regulations, and court rules—they may also be able to give you a copy
- Tell you what records the court keeps and which records you can look at
- Give you information from records that are open to the public
- Let you know where to find information about rules of evidence

Court staff CANNOT

- Tell you which of several available processes you should choose
- Tell you whether it is in your best interests to follow a particular process
- Predict what will happen to you in court in the future
- Tell you how any laws or regulations might apply to your case
- Give you information that is not open to the public
- Help you decide generally whether you should have witnesses and what questions to ask them
- How to give evidence and use evidence in court



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“CASES WITHOUT COUNSEL”: NEW PROJECT TO EXPLORE EXPERIENCES OF SELF-REPRESENTATION IN U.S. FAMILY COURTS

IAALS, the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System at the University of Denver, will be replicating the methodology of the Canadian National SRL Study with funding from the Bohemian Foundation. Five US states will be selected to participate.

The project will be conducted by IAALS' *Honoring Families Initiative* (HFI). Dr. Macfarlane and Sue Rice will provide their expertise to the IAALS study and Julie will be a co-author on the final report (summer 2015).

"No one in the U.S. has ever systematically and broadly asked self-represented litigants in the divorce system what the process was like for them and how the courts can help them navigate the justice system to achieve fair outcomes," said IAALS Executive Director Rebecca Love Kourlis.

Interviews will commence in September 2014 in the first two states.



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NSRLP RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

SRL Annotated Bibliography

Includes: Academic journals, newsprint, government reports, Canadian and International Sections and updated every 3 months

Julie's weekly blog is distributed via the NSRLP website, Facebook, Twitter & Bi-Weekly E-blasts

What Court Staff Told Us

A short summary document from our original research data and interviews with court staff . Used in court staff training in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia.

Coping With the Courtroom

A primer for SRLs preparing , emotionally and technically, for appearing in court and containing information and the type of practical self-help tips that SRLs told us they needed.

Currently being adapted by provincial governments and agencies to offer jurisdiction and case specific information

WATCH FOR...

"Settlement Smarts for SRLs"
July 2014

and updated provincial resources for SRLs
Fall 2014



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DIALOGUE & COLLABORATION - NSRLP IS AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT

Speaking Engagements and Workshops on the SRL Phenomenon:

13 conference presentations and trainings workshops Jan-June 2014 including:

- BC Family Justice Summit
- Newfoundland and Labrador Judicial Training
- American Bar Association Annual Conference
- BC Benchers Retreat
- CBA, New Brunswick, Newfoundland

Participation in The National Action Committee Roadshow for the “Cromwell Task Force – Roadmap for Change”:

- October 2013 – Toronto
- November 2013 – Vancouver & Edmonton
- January 2014 Colloquium – Toronto

SRL Speakers Bank

7 SRL speaking engagements including: Ontario County Law Association Presidents, Canadian Courts Administrators Network, BC Family Justice Summit

3 SRLs participating in Working Groups (eg BC Justice Form Filing Working Group, Civil Resolutions Tribunal Working Group)

3 SRLs featured in media stories



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DIALOGUE & COLLABORATION : NSRLP ACTS AS A CONVENER



Law Societies

NSRLP convenes quarterly conference call among leaders from Law Societies in Alberta, British Columbia, Nova Scotia and the National Federation. Discussion topics to date have included para-legals, Law Week, and unbundled legal services.



Legal Aid Boards

NSRLP convenes quarterly conference call among leaders from Legal Aid Boards in Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario and Nova Scotia. Discussion topics have included new program development and funding priorities.



SRL Coalition

Three SRLs who participated in the original study and “Opening the Dialogue” in May 2013 have created CASSLs (Canadian Association Supporting SRLs) as a means of networking and support.



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ACTION STEPS & SPECIAL PROJECTS

- **FEBRUARY to JUNE** - NSRLP has focused each month on one Action Step (from the Recommendations of the Final Report, 2014), creating a number of additional Project
- **FEBRUARY** - “Confronting the urgency of system change, embracing innovation and evaluation” (Julie’s Blogs, keynote address to the BC Family Justice Summit, launch of NSRLP YouTube channel)
- **MARCH** - “Listening to SRLs and including them as system stakeholders” (launch of Coping with the Courtroom)
- **APRIL** - “Making private legal services responsive to SRLs” (SRL for a Day, “What I Wish I Had Known”)
- **MAY** - “Evolving new models of public legal services” (Access to Justice All-Stars)
- **JUNE** - “Enhancing information portals forms, court guides, and on-line resources designed to meet SRL needs”



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WHAT I WISH I HAD KNOWN

We asked law students who had represented themselves in court before coming to law school,

“As a law student, what do you know now that you wish you had known when your were first an SRL?”

“Since starting law school, within weeks I found small things that would have helped with my case. Even just knowing how to start my argument and how to question witnesses..”

“Things take a long time. Just because it is important to you and you think this needs to be immediate – often it is not as urgent as you perceive it to be. You must be prepared to hurry up and wait..”

“I learned that justice is not as simple as I (as a layperson) previously believed. It was hard for me to grasp the importance attached to due process and following procedural rules at first. I saw it more simply: get the bad guy, prove he is guilty, put him away in jail, deter others.. .”



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SRL FOR A DAY

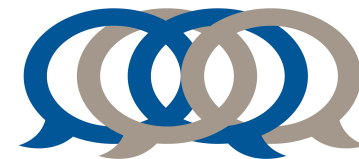
Reflecting Law Week 2014's theme of "Access to Justice: What Does it Mean to You?" NSRLP hosted "SRL For a Day" on Wednesday, April 16th. Seven prominent members of the legal community experienced what it was like to be a "SRL For a Day" as they shadowed SRLs at 311 Jarvis, or 393 University, two downtown Toronto courthouses with a very high volume of SRLs. They were able to speak with a number of SRLs and to observe first-hand the challenges facing them in family or civil court.



Jana Serocevic – SRL - Janet Whitehead – Chair, County and District Law Presidents' Association- Janice Etter - SRL

Legal Feeds – The Blog of Canadian Lawyer and Law Times

<http://www.canadianlawyermag.com/legalfeeds/2042/walking-a-mile-in-their-shoes.html>



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NSRLP'S ACCESS TO JUSTICE ALL-STAR TEAM

Family Duty Counsel
Team
Windsor ON



Heather Liu-Litwin, Law Help Ontario Volunteer



Registry Counter Staff
Prince, George BC

SRLs shared with us the name of someone working in public legal services who made a positive difference during their SRL experience.

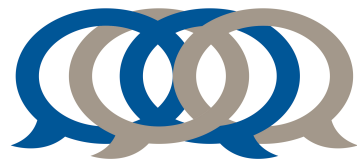
Access
to
Justice
All-Stars



Peter Halls, Court Service
Worker, FLIC
(Family Law Information
Clinic, Toronto ON)



BC Supreme Court
Self Help and
Information Services
-Vancouver Justice
Access Centre (JAC)

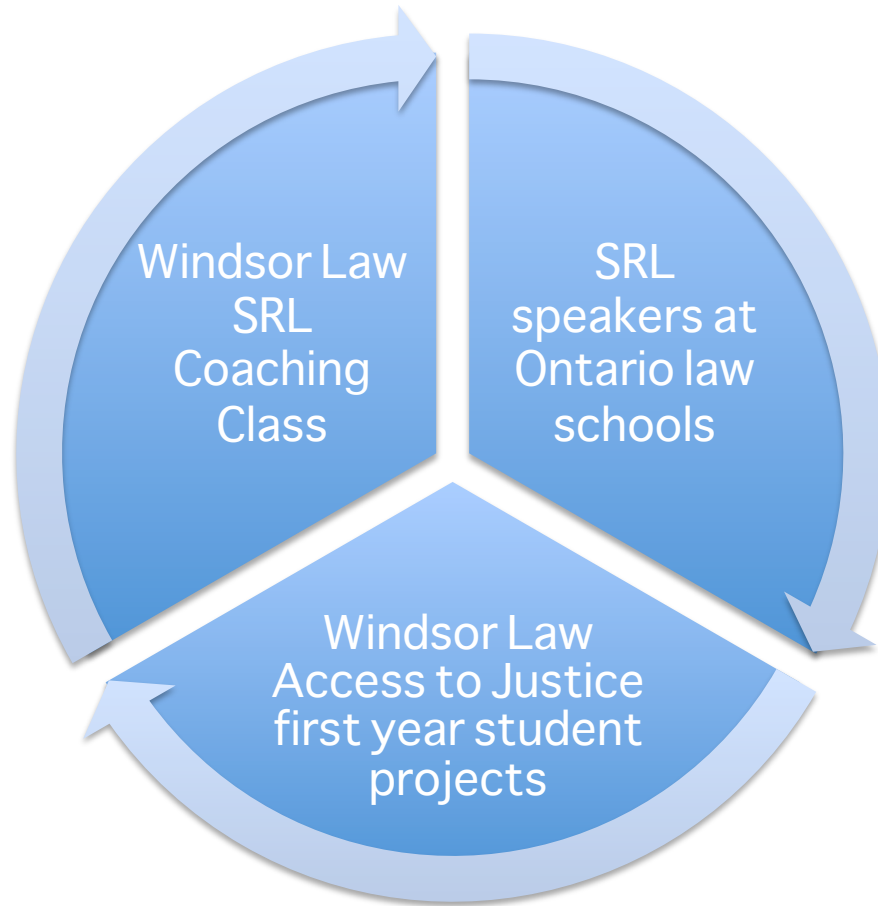


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LAW SCHOOL CURRICULUM INITIATIVES

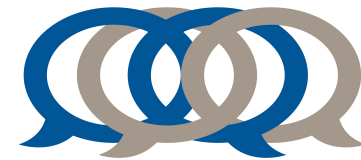
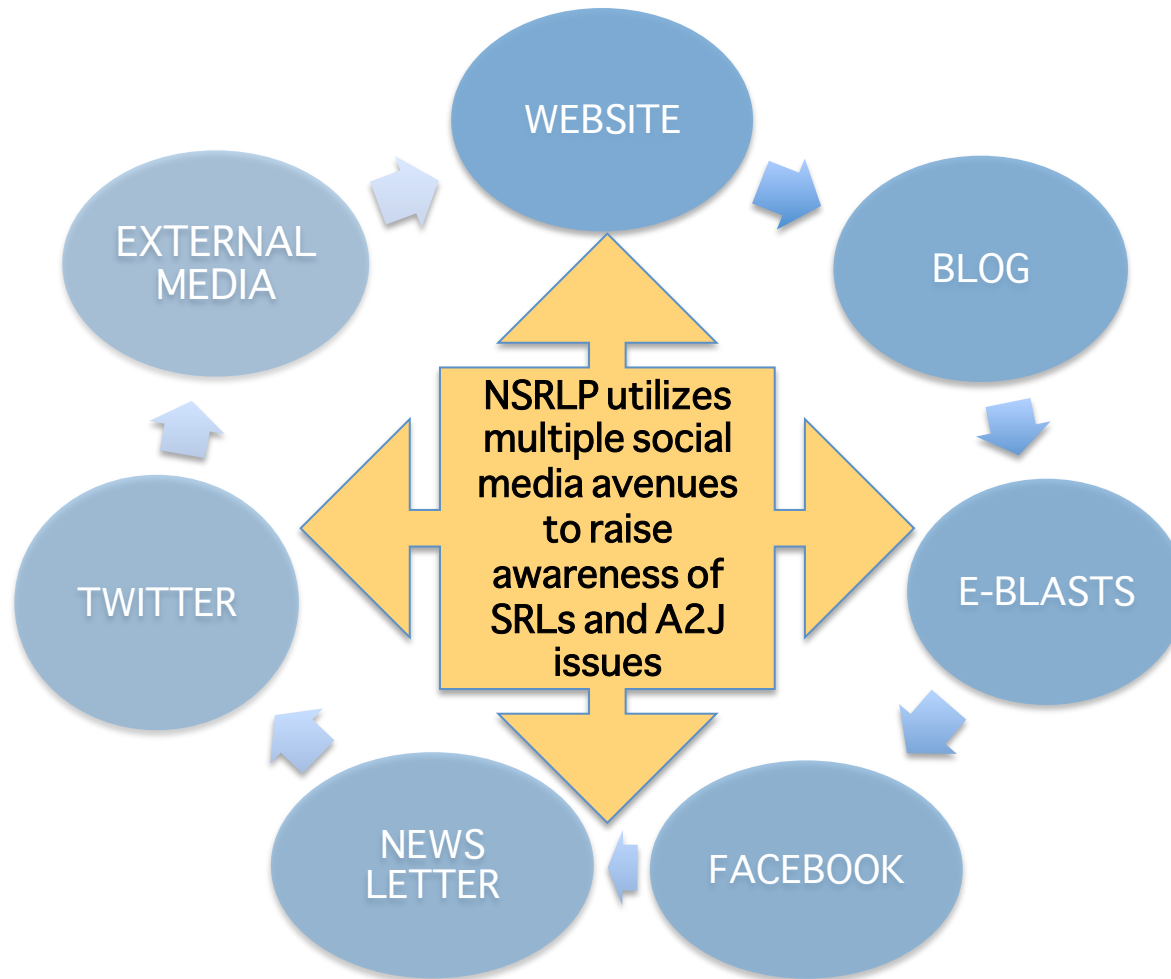


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USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO FURTHER DIALOGUE



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SOCIAL MEDIA QUICK FACTS

FOLLOWERS:

BLOG – 500 views per month

EMAIL SUBSCRIBERS – 561

FACEBOOK – 471

TWITTER – 557

as of June 30th, 2014

Twitter has proved to be the best social media tool for the NSRLP to reach a new audience , but we reach almost one third of our audience through each Facebook and search engines.



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WEBSITE

In the website's first full month, the website received over 2000 views, and in April there was a 20% increase in page views. (note – June 2014 newsletter and e-blast scheduled for release June 27 leading to increased views)

June 23, 2014, 7:28 pm The National Self-Represented Li... ▾

[« Return to Stats](#)

Months and Years

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2014		235	2,325	2,800	2,614	1,387							9,361

Average per Day

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Overall
2014		10	75	93	84	56							67

The most popular posts include “Coping with the Courtroom” and our Final Research Report, as well as a collection of posts from the blog, the newsletter, and our Access to Justice All-Stars project.



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FACEBOOK

 Representing yourself in a legal action shared a link.
Posted by Jasmine Attfield [?] · May 5

NEW BLOG: Culture Change in the Family Justice System: a talk to the BC Family Justice Summit
<http://wp.me/p4iNmM-8T> #a2jwatercooler





Culture Change in the Family Justice System: a talk to the BC Family Justice Summit
representingyourselfcanada.com

As the pressure for change ramps up, we are talking a lot about "culture change" in the justice system. If we are going to throw this term around, we have to be ready to confront what it really...

Like · Comment · Share 48

2 people like this.

 Write a comment... 

111 people saw this post

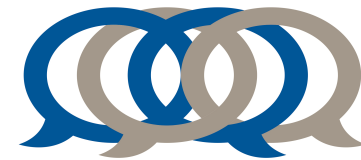
Boost Post

On June 30th our Facebook group had 471 members and we have up to 20 new members each week. Our posts on average reach over 100 people and average 7 shares when the post features linked content.

Total Page Likes as of Today: 471



A recent post received over 40 shares. Posts are often a catalyst for discussion in the comments and input via direct message.



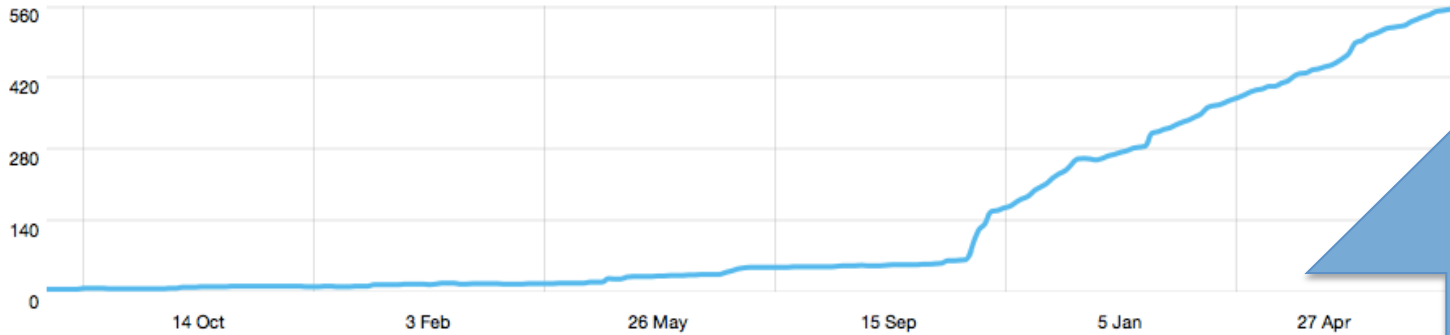
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TWITTER

557 followers as of 6/22/2014 (days shown in Pacific time)



We surpassed 500 followers in the first week of May and have a goal of 750 followers by September

Twitter offers a remarkable opportunity to network with both legal professionals and SRLs and has been a main source of traffic for our website both through our own tweets and the tweets and re-tweets of our followers.



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E-BLASTS & NEWSLETTER

NSRLP utilizes Mailchimp for a Bi-weekly E-Blast and Bi-monthly Newsletter

Our two weekly e-blasts have significantly outperformed the industry average, suggesting that our audience is both interested and engaged in the material we are distributing

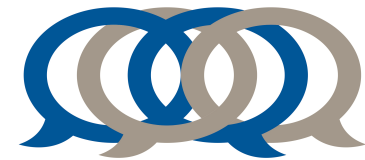


Industry average for opening = 7%
NSRLP average = 36% ++

Industry standard for clicking on content = 1%
NSRLP average = 9%

“SPEAKING UP -
THE VOICE OF
THE SRL”

NSRLP'S
newsletter
was published
on-line in
February
April
June



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EXTERNAL MEDIA COVERAGE (examples)

Legal Coaching

CBC Windsor Radio

<http://www.cbc.ca/windsormorning/episodes/2014/01/29/legal-coaching/>

DAY 6 with Brent Brambury

CBC National Radio

<http://representingyourselfcanada.com/2014/03/14/day-6-with-brent-brambury/>

Without a Lawyer

CBC Radio – Ontario Today

<http://representingyourselfcanada.com/2014/03/14/189/>

Women's Custody Battle Highlights Problems in Legal Aid System
Toronto Star

<http://representingyourselfcanada.com/2014/03/14/toronto-star-womans-custody-battle-highlights-problems-in-legal-aid-system/>

41 INTERVIEWS
to date

- Television
 - Radio
- Newsprint
- Professional Publications
 - Web

Coverage areas:
✓ Local
✓ Provincial
✓ National



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KUDOS

The presentation you gave on video was great.I think your presentation opened some eyes about the values of unbundling beyond it being just a concept or nicely spoken words. Some of the unbundling examples you gave were also very helpful as they put some flesh on the bones of a concept that I think many lawyers don't understand. It hit just the right notes.

– Michael Lucas, CEO Law Society British Columbia

Just a note to say how grateful I am for the ongoing of work of your NSRLP team. I was inspired (again) by the recent update recruiting for your SLR for a Day initiative.

– Mark Benton, Director, Legal Services Society of BC

Congratulations. This is yet another huge achievement in a world where rules and traditions have reigned for years and change has always been one of the usual suspects.

– SRL Tina D

You are changing the landscape and opening up so many topics and conversations! You are changing assumptions about who participates - it is great! The SRLs I've spoken with so far have been fantastic and I look forward to working together more.

– Lisa Nakamura, BC Justice Policy Analyst

You made my day, thank you!!! You made me feel heard, thank you so much! - SRL



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