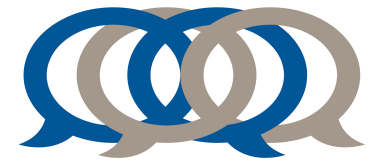




# NSRLP NATIONAL SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS PROJECT

## ANNUAL REPORT 2015



**THE NATIONAL  
SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS PROJECT**  
Research, Resources, Dialogue & Collaboration

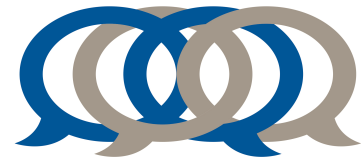


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“My heartfelt personal  
appreciation for being *my voice*....

My heartfelt societal appreciation  
for being *the voice of many*.”

– a SRL to NSRLP



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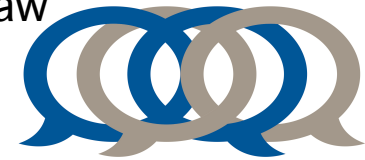
# ABOUT THE NSRLP

The National Self-Represented Litigants Project (NSRLP) builds on the National Self-Represented Litigants (SRLs) Research Study conducted by Dr. Julie Macfarlane from 2011-2013.

The NSRLP takes its mandate from the Final Recommendations of the Research Report: 10 Actions Steps for the SRL Phenomenon

- Generating energy and motivation for system change and new programming to assist SRLs
- Promoting and convening collaboration and dialogue among SRLs, lawyers, judges, policymakers and court services staff
- Developing new resources for SRLs, and acting as a clearinghouse for information for all justice system stakeholders on the SRL phenomenon

NSRLP is funded from 2013-15 by the University of Windsor, Faculty of Law and aligns with Windsor Law's mandate to promote Access to Justice for all Canadians.



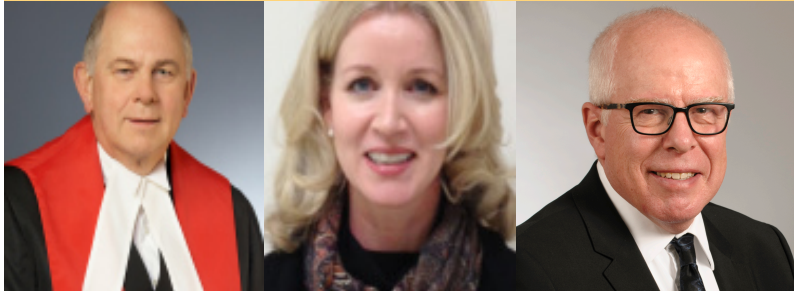
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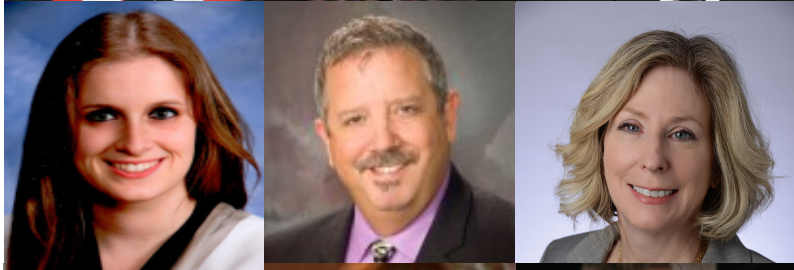
# NSRLP ADVISORY BOARD

NSRLP Board Members are a source of expertise and collegial support for the NSRLP. They work with the NSRLP team to monitor emerging SRL initiatives and to communicate the work of the NSRLP to their constituencies.



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:** Erin Chesney - *Law Student Representative*; 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 - *Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Windsor*



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# NSRLP TEAM



Dr. Julie Macfarlane  
Project Director

*“2015 has been another very busy and very rewarding year for us at the Project. We believe that our work is now helping to change previously been unfair negative perceptions about SRLs, their motivations and their needs, both among the public and inside the legal establishment.”*



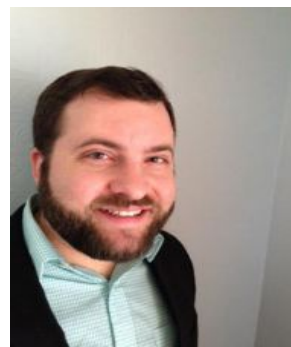
Sue Rice  
Project  
Manager and  
Research  
Co-ordinator



Erin Chesney  
Research  
Assistant



Tamara  
Thomas  
Research  
Assistant



William Good  
Volunteer



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# *Tribute to Patrick Lobzun*



Pat Lobzun sat at the table during the 2014 NSRLP Advisory board and voiced his opinion “: “ordinary Canadians deserve and need to see their experiences being taken seriously, you have to keep doing this, it’s so important.”

He became familiar with the NSRLP’s work while creating numerous video projects for our organization.

He was a talented cinematographer and producer. His many credits include “The Radio Revolution, The Rise and Fall of the Big 8”, For Roy Orbison and many music videos, training videos, and news segments. His company, Lobzun Visuals, was in operation for 35 years. He was a friend to the media arts community, especially in the Windsor/ Detroit area, lending his expertise and mentorship to aspiring artists and fledgling arts organizations. He often combined his passion for film and photography with his love of travel. To Patrick, life was an adventure; the road was an open book, ready to be read, traveled, and explored.

Pat was an honorary NSRLP team member and his presence, passion and wit will be greatly missed.



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# NSRLP MANDATES



- RESEARCH

- RESOURCES



- DIALOGUE  
& COLLABORATION



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# 2015 THEMES

January – March: Social Impact of Self-Representation

**De-stressing Litigation: Working Out the Kinks** - A collaborative NSRLP/ Canadian Mental Health Association (Windsor)/ Ontario Court of Justice (Windsor)/ Canadian College (Windsor) project highlighted the stress and anxiety caused by self-representation.

<http://windsorstar.com/news/local-news/free-massages-at-windsor-courthouse-nixed>

**Bring a SRL to School Day** - five local SRLs attended [Windsor Law](#) classes on March 3rd, 2015.

<http://representingyourselfcanada.com/category/bring-a-srl-to-school-day/>

**Lunch and Learn (Flip Your Wig and Pro Bono Students Canada)** on the work of the NSRLP and the social costs of self-representation

**Blogs on Social Impact of Self-Representation (Julie & Noel)**



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# 2015 THEMES

April – June: Communication

**Can LII Primer** - <http://representingyourselfcanada.com/can-lll-primer/>

**Client Communication Feedback Survey** - endorsed by legal profession leaders.

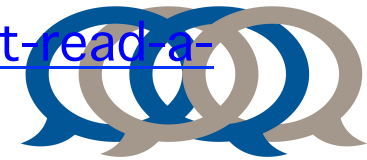
<http://representingyourselfcanada.com/client-communication-feedback-survey/>

**Take the Pledge** - Goodbye “non-lawyer”, hello “legal service professionals”.

<http://representingyourselfcanada.com/2015/05/26/take-the-pledge-we-are-legal-service-professionals-not-lawyers-and-non-lawyers/>

**LSUC Elections**

<http://representingyourselfcanada.com/2015/04/29/must-read-a-message-from-the-nsrp-to-voters-in-the-lsuc-election/>



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# 2015 THEMES

## September – December: Law & Conflict Resolution

**The Use of Summary Judgment Procedures Against SRLs** – research report on how summary judgments are being used to dismiss cases involving SRLs before they reach trial

<http://representingyourselfcanada.com/2015/11/16/the-use-of-summary-judgment-procedures-against-srls/>

**New Brunswick Court Staff Training** – Distinguishing Legal Advice from Legal Information – John Greacen and Sue Rice in Fredericton, New Brunswick

**PBSC Coaching Project** – NSRLP and Pro Bono Students Canada began a collaboration on a Family SRL Coaching Project at Windsor Law. NSRLP has provided training, identified SRLs in the community and ongoing guidance to this project.

<http://representingyourselfcanada.com/2015/09/09/pro-bono-students-canada-begins-srl-family-law-coaching-project-at-windsor-law/>

**McKenzie Friends project** – research project (conducted by Judith da Silva) on judicial perspectives on the inclusion of MF in the courtroom



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# 2015 THEMES

## Special Project: Election 2015 – Talking Justice

NSRLP created and promoted a series of questions for Canadians to present to those running for office in their riding to address the issue of access to justice for all Canadians.

<http://representingyourselfcanada.com/2015-election-a2j-questions/>

## Canadian Judiciary – CJC

Public Confidence in Canadian Justice: A Rough Week

<http://representingyourselfcanada.com/2015/12/08/public-confidence-in-canadian-justice-a-rough-week/>

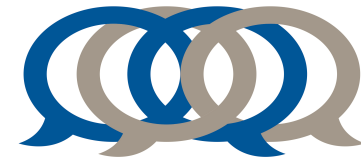
Beyond the Justice Camp Debacle: When the Public Asks Judges to be Accountable

<http://representingyourselfcanada.com/2015/11/24/beyond-the-justice-camp-debacle-when-the-public-asks-judges-to-be-accountable/>

Summary Judgments – the backstory that may shock you

<http://representingyourselfcanada.com/2015/11/16/summary-judgments-the-backstory-that-may-shock-you/>

*“So, after stumbling in the dark for years, I can see why a judge is exasperated with me. I would be too. I'M NOT A LAWYER! NEVER stepped in a court room. I SHOULD NOT be there and I am GROSSLY incompetent to representing a case that is well beyond my complexity of understanding and grasp. I have no alternative. I am a self-represented litigant who gets on the judge's nerves because of road blocks at every turn.”*  
- SRL



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# 2015 RESEARCH

National US  
Study with  
IAALS

(Institute for  
the  
Advancement  
of the  
American  
Legal System,  
University of  
Denver)

Legal Advice  
vs. Legal  
Information

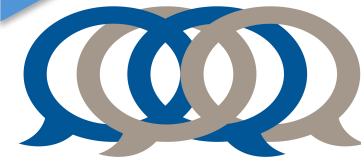
(court staff  
training and  
evaluation)

SRL  
Intakes

(ongoing  
collection  
and analysis  
of  
demographic  
and some  
experiential  
data)

Summary  
Judgment

McKenzie  
Friends



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# IAALS

## Cases Without Counsel

- Modeled after the SRL Research Project, Cases without Counsel, being conducted by IAALS at the University of Denver, released preliminary findings in August. Striking similarity between the preliminary results of the US study and the findings of the 2011-13 Canadian study.
- Four states in which research is being conducted: Oregon, Colorado, Massachusetts and Tennessee.
- An event held in August including 4 SRLs who presented their experiences and participated in all group discussion.
- Why do people represent themselves?
  - primarily for financial reasons
  - they are desperately seeking legal assistance where they can find it
  - they are working hard on their cases, but often feel overwhelmed, disadvantaged, discouraged, and even traumatized, as they navigate the legal system on their own.
- The final report of the US study is expected in early 2016.



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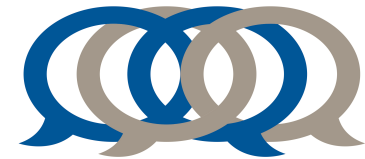
# SRL 2015 INTAKE REPORT

Tracking the Continuing Trends of the Self-Represented Litigants Phenomenon: Data from the National Self-Represented Litigants Project, 2014-2015

- The report provides an analysis of one year's worth of intake data (March 2014-March 2015) from 69 SRL respondents.
- We shall continue to add to this data in the coming year, including making an effort to reconnect with those who contacted the NSRLP in the 12 months between the end of the original study and the commencement of the new intake procedure.

NSRLP Intake Form is available at:

<http://representingyourselfcanada.com/intake-form/>



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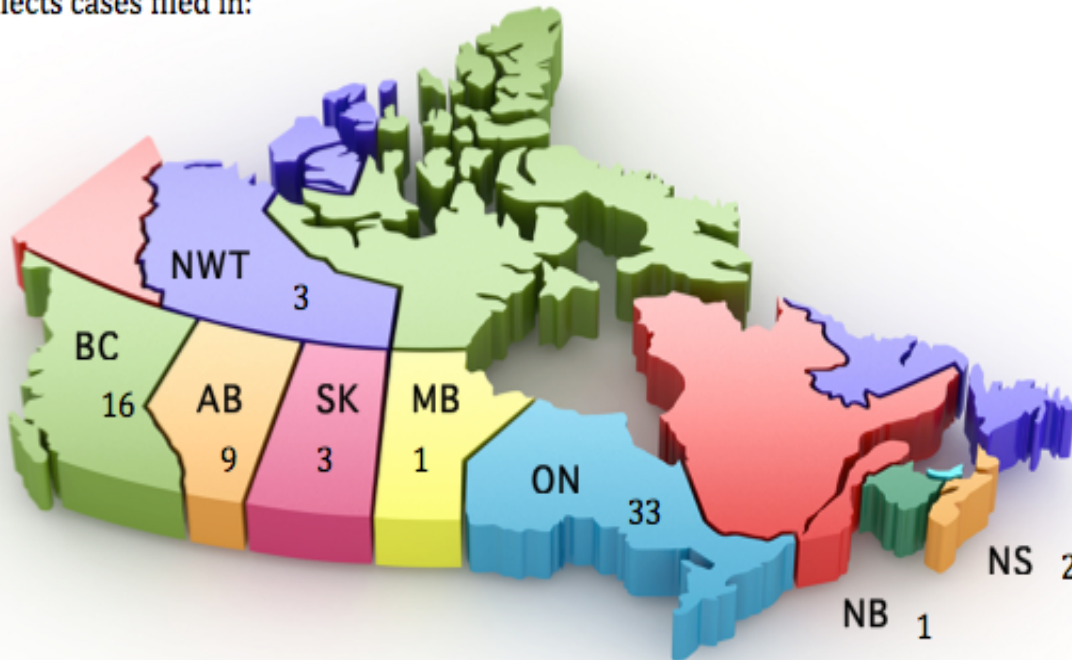


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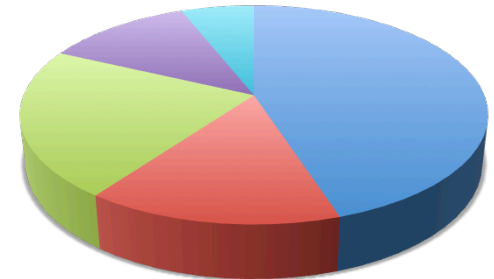
# SRL 2015 INTAKE REPORT

## Place of residence:

68 respondents answered this question and some filed in multiple provinces/territories. While the majority are still Ontario cases (n=33) our data now reflects cases filed in:



*1 respondent did not specify location*



## SRL Annual Income

- Less than \$30,000
- \$30,000 - \$50,000
- \$50,000 - \$75,000
- \$75,000 - \$100,000
- More than \$100,000



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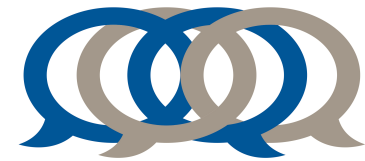


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# SUMMARY JUDGMENT RESEARCH REPORT

Tracking the Continuing Trends of the Self-Represented Litigants Phenomenon: Data from the National Self-Represented Litigants Project, 2014-2015

- The number of summary judgment applications in cases involving SRLs rose by more than 1000% between 2004 and 2014
- Removing cases involving formal declarations of vexatiousness or indicia of same, SJPs involving SRLs still rose by 800% between 2004 and 2014
- 96% of applications were brought by represented parties against SRLs and 95% were successful
- Applications under Ontario's Rule 20 & 21 between represented parties rose by 93% from 2004 to 2014
- In 2014, 61% of applications between represented parties were successful
- Applications involving SRLs rose by 225% from 2004 to 2014
- In 2014, 88% of applications where represented parties moved against SRLs were successful



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# RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

### **The Use of Summary Judgment Procedures Against SRLs**

<http://representingyourselfcanada.com/2015/11/16/the-use-of-summary-judgment-procedures-against-srls/>

### **The CanLII Primer**

<http://representingyourselfcanada.com/2015/03/26/new-srl-resource-announcing-the-can-lll-primer/>

### **The CanLII Primer in French**

[https://representingyourselfcanada.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/nsrlp-canlii-primer-v1\\_french.pdf](https://representingyourselfcanada.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/nsrlp-canlii-primer-v1_french.pdf)

### **Updated NSRLP Resource List for SRLs**

Provinces updated and added include: Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Saskatchewan.

### **Updated SRL Annotated Bibliography**

<http://representingyourselfcanada.com/annotated-bibliography>

- **Coping With the Courtroom, Settlement Smarts for SRLs, Working with SRLs: Ideas and Suggestions from the Bench**



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# NSRLP'S ACCESS TO JUSTICE ALL-STAR TEAM

Welcome to our 2015 All-Star Inductees!



Dom Bautista  
Executive Director  
Law Courts Centre  
Vancouver, BC



Victoria Foster  
Lawyer  
Red Deer, AB



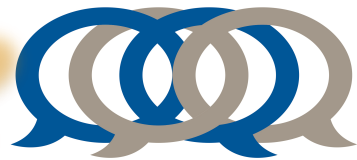
Glen Gardener  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
(Innovations)  
Ministry of Justice  
Saskatchewan



SRLs and justice system professionals nominate those who work in public legal services and have made a positive difference during their SRL experience.



Halton Legal Check-Up Project  
Community Partners  
Halton Region, ON



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# DIALOGUE & COLLABORATION

## Initiatives include:

- Regular consultation to government and pro bono agencies
- IAALS (Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System) – Dr. Macfarlane and Project Manager & Research Co-ordinator Sue Rice are providing ongoing development assistance and training for U.S. SRL Study including on-site training of U.S. staff and interviewers.
- Showcasing individual efforts via the Access to Justice All-Stars Team
- Promotion of #a2j on Twitter
- SRL Speakers Bank
- Flip Your Wig campaign- Jana Saracevic becomes the First SRL “Flip Your Wig Ambassador”

<http://representingyourselfcanada.com/2015/03/06/jana-saracevic-becomes-the-first-srl-flip-your-wig-ambassador/>



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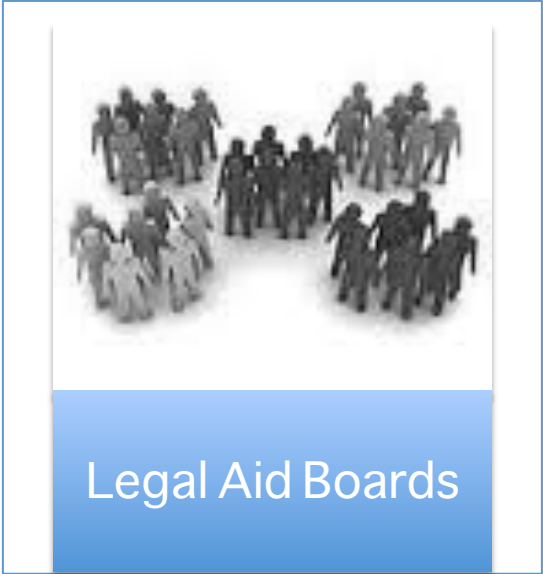


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# DIALOGUE & COLLABORATION : NSRLP ACTS AS A CONVENER



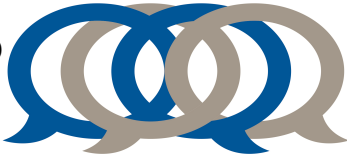
NSRLP convenes a quarterly conference call among leaders from Law Societies in Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, Nova Scotia and the National Federation. Discussion topics to date have included para-legals, Law Week, and unbundled legal services.



NSRLP convenes a 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.



A small steering group of SRLs have created CASSLS (Canadian Association Supporting SRLs) as a means of networking and support. NSRLP facilitates these conversations and offers assistance with a start-up website



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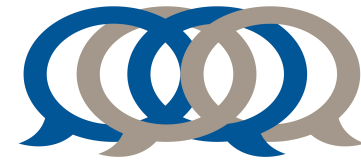
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# DIALOGUE & COLLABORATION

## #21

### Speaking Engagements & Workshops on the SRL Phenomenon including:

- Western Law “Access to Justice in Family Law Symposium”
- Justice Education Society BC
- SLASTO
- Continuing Legal Education Society of British Columbia (Board Retreat)
- Ministry of Justice, and SATA, Saskatchewan
- Winkler Institute Social Labs
- Simon Fraser University, UBC Access to Justice class
- Ontario Court of Appeal
- AFCC Minneapolis chapter
- Minneapolis judiciary
- U Windsor Law 1<sup>st</sup> Year Orientation (RA Erin Chesney)
- Toronto Lawyers Association
- Labour Board
- SOAR
- FDRIO
- Four Australian keynotes and workshops



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# SRL PARTICIPATION

## 2015 HIGHLIGHTS

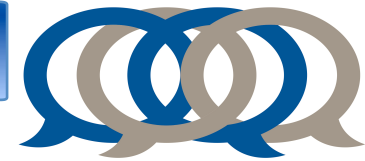
### SRL participation

- Civil Resolution Tribunal and BC Access to Justice Commission – Jennifer Muller
- Flip Your Wig Ambassador – Jana Saracevic
- NuLawLab SRL interactive video testers  
Northeastern University
- Commentaries on SRL's Bill of Rights
- CBC documentary
- Video clips
- FDRIO Panel

### SRLs featured in media stories

6  
over 85

SRL Voices Heard

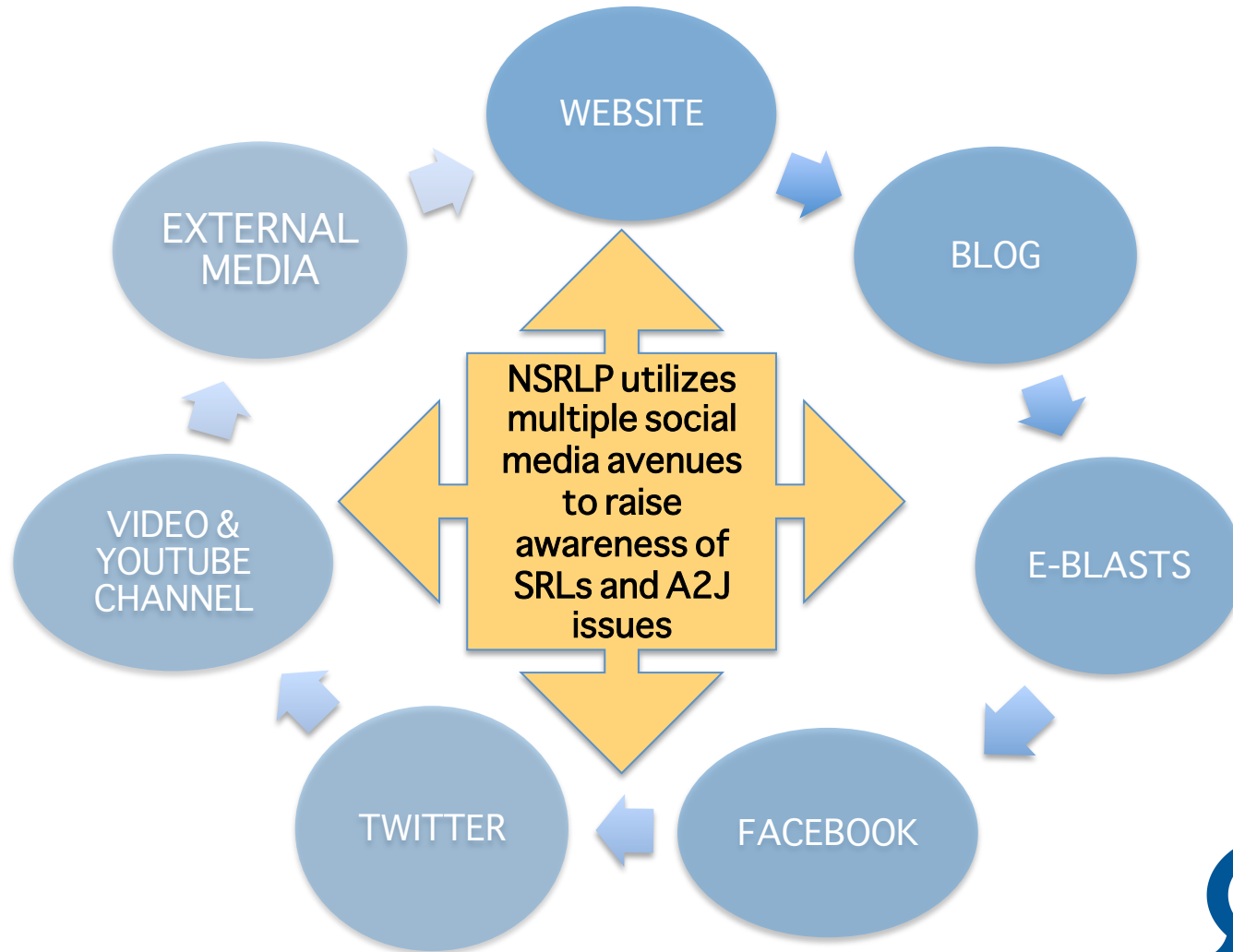


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# USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO FURTHER DIALOGUE



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# WEBSITE ANALYTICS

## 2015 Highlights



Page Views 29,832



Most views in a month: April 3,660



8,092 unique visitors to the website in 2015



15,893 unique visitors to the website to date

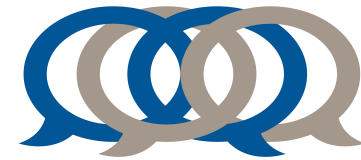


Most popular post of 2105 - Can LII Primer

All stats as of December 10, 2015



Remains the most popular feature



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# WEBSITE ANALYTICS

## 2015 Highlights

Stats for 2015

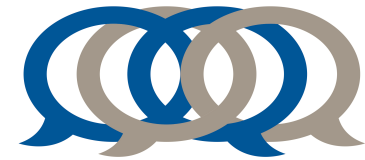
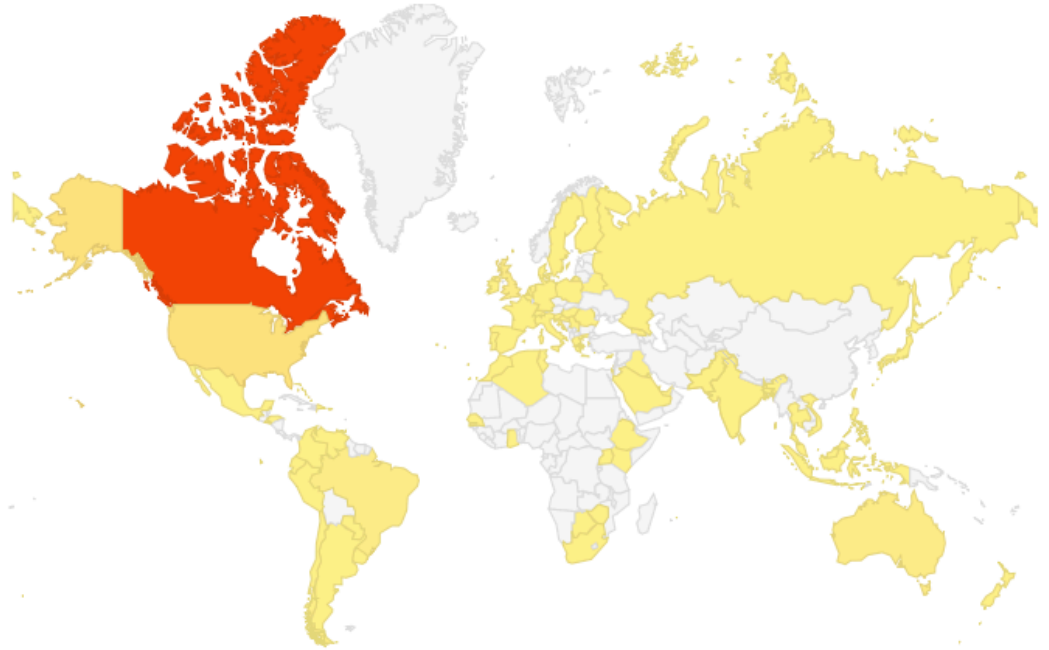


# 82

countries  
viewing  
NSRLP website

Top 5:

1. Canada
2. US
3. Australia
4. Brazil
5. UK



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# NSRLP IN SOCIAL MEDIA – THE NUMBERS

670 E-BLAST

742 FACEBOOK

1301 TWITTER

28 WORDPRESS

+ 977

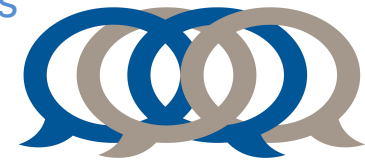
YOUTUBE  
VIEWS

---

**2741** DIRECT SOCIAL MEDIA  
FOLLOWERS

Social Media channels are interconnected to share all content on all avenues

All stats as of December 10, 2015



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# SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT & FACTS

## E-BLASTS

Contain 3 to 4 news pieces highlighting NSRLP initiatives, other Canadian and international SRL and a2j stories

All E-Blasts are archived and available on the NSRLP website

## FACEBOOK

Proven to provide a voice for SRLs, this forum generates discussion empowering system users to provide feedback and comment on current a2j issues

## TWITTER

#a2j – has become “the” hashtag for access to justice work in Canada.

NSRLP started to use #a2j in early 2014 to generate a discussion and log of conversations regarding the SRL phenomenon and access to justice. That conversation count is now in the thousands.

## YOUTUBE

Hosts 7 NSRLP videos

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCB5wqSy0SCQhwyzyq9Zdmog>



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# JULIE'S BLOG

## 6

Guest Bloggers:

Heather Hui-Litwin – *lawyer, former SRL and volunteers as a duty counsel with Law Help Ontario*

Erin Chesney – NSRLP Research Assistant, U Windsor Law L3

William Good – NSRLP Volunteer, U Windsor Law L3

3 SRLs who contributed anonymously

## 36

Published Blogs in  
2015

## 129

 Comments  
generated

To date, the blog generating most comments:

Lessons for Tarion from the SRL Phenomenon

<http://representingyourselfcanada.com/2015/06/09/lessons-for-tarion-from-the-srl-phenomenon/>

Blogs are posted Tuesdays and highlighted on Twitter and Facebook

All stats as of December 10, 2015



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# NSRLP EXTERNAL MEDIA COVERAGE

(2015 highlights)

# 110

# of NSRLP interviews given by the end of 2015

ABC Radio – Hobart Australia

The Windsor Star –Free Massages at Windsor Courthouse Nixed

<http://representingyourselfcanada.com/2015/01/19/windsor-star-free-massages-at-windsor-courthouse-nixed/>

Regular stories and interviews in the Law Times, Lawyers Weekly and Canadian Bar Association National magazine

All stats as of December 10, 2015

- Television
- Radio
- Newsprint
- Professional Publications
- Web

Coverage areas:

- ✓ Local
- ✓ Provincial
- ✓ National
- ✓ International



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# KUDOS 2015

*“It was a pleasure for us to have you at our retreat. We are embarking on new and exciting times in the justice system. Your thoughts and perspectives were so helpful to me and I know to the Board. The legal profession and the public are fortunate to have your leadership in this area.”*

- Ron Friesen, CLEBC Exec Director

*I wanted to thank you on behalf of my entire group for all of your support with this project and for taking the time to speak with us yesterday.*

*With all of the work you have contributed on this topic and the huge contribution you have provided to the understanding of this topic we are so grateful to have had the opportunity to speak with you.*

- Caitlin Williamson, Simon Fraser University

*“I just really need clarification as I can not go through another clerical error like last time. It's just so depressing and crippling from where I sit. Just thinking of doing the rest of these documents, the case conference and so on literally makes me sick. So to get help I find it very rewarding especially when it comes to NSRLP.”*

-SRL on the PBSC Coaching Project



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