

The National Self- Represented Litigants Project

Year in Review 2020



Our Team is Growing!

Director Julie Macfarlane, Project Manager Dayna Cornwall, Communications Manager Moya McAlister & Windsor Law RAs are now joined by:

- NSRLP West
- Social Justice Fellowship students
- PBSC McGill volunteers
- Ryerson Law RAs and volunteers
- Practitioner input – Aisha Amjad, Georgette Makhoul, Smuel Stern, Brynne Harding



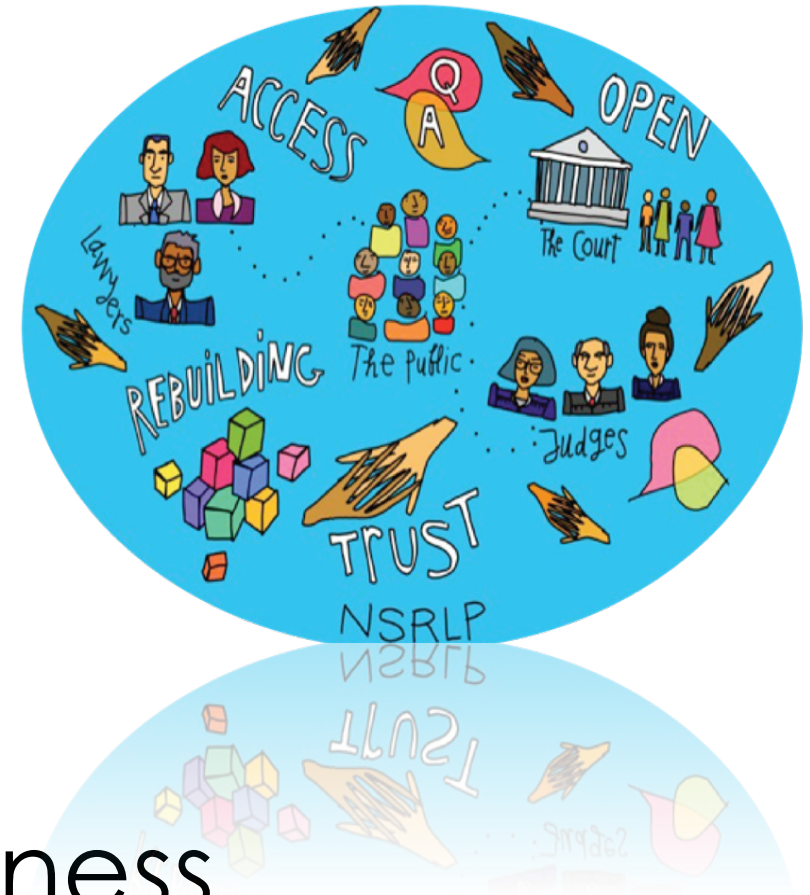
NSRLP Mandates

Research

Resources

Collaboration + Dialogue

Advocacy & Public Awareness



New Research

- Ongoing data collection via Intake Forms completed by SRLs
 - New push for greater diversity and inclusion in SRL data (used #A2J4ALL Campaign)
- *New Intake Report for 2018-19*
- SRL Case Law Database Reports
 - *SRLs and Legal Doctrines of “Vexatiousness”*
 - Update in progress for *Pintea v Johns: 18 Months Later*



Case Law Database: civil and family cases from 2010 onwards

Ani Zheku & Anna Sallah

Our main objective for 2020 was to complete family-related cases

All family-related cases across Canada from 2013-2018 now completed, and 2019 cases in process.

Next steps:

- All civil cases across Canada in 2019 to be completed, in addition to any identified gaps.

Total cases in Tracker: 939

Total cases in Survey: 844

Case Law Database: CanLI Case Comments

Thanks to Brynne Harding, Bennett Jones

1. Brandon Fragomeni "State-Funded Gladue Reports"
2. Kelsey Buchmayer "The Court of Appeal Emphasizes the Vital Role Judges and Counsel Play in Ensuring Trial Fairness toward Self-Represented Litigants" and "Woo v Galleria Supermarket: An Issue of Credibility or Just Confusion?"
3. Rebecca Flynn "Ontario Court of Appeal Clarifies that Courts must Exercise Caution Ordering Summary Judgments against Self-Represented Litigants in Child Protection Matters (and beyond....)"
4. Kaila Scarrow "A Widening Gap Between Ontario and Alberta's Approach to Awarding SRL Costs"

In progress...

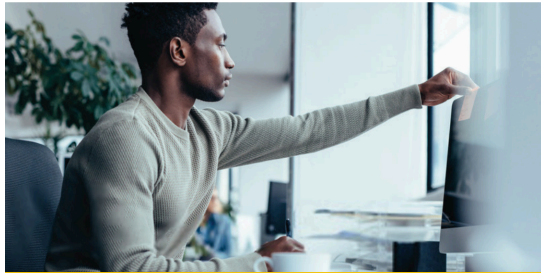
- *Anna Sallah, "Where do we draw the line? Determining the Limits of Judges in Assisting Self-Represented Litigants in Drop Dead Rule Cases," and Ani Zheku (topic TBD).*



The National Self-Represented Litigants Project

Settlement smarts

Tips on effectively using negotiation, mediation and judge-led settlement processes



representyourselfcanada.com



The National Self-Represented Litigants Project

The McKenzie Friend

Bringing a support person with you to court



representyourselfcanada.com



The National Self-Represented Litigants Project

Coping with the courtroom

A primer to help you navigate the written (and unwritten) rules of the courtroom



representyourselfcanada.com



The National Self-Represented Litigants Project

So you're representing yourself

A primer to help you get ready to represent yourself in family or civil court



representyourselfcanada.com



Updating and Rebranding Our Primers

COVID-19 Resources



- Court closure updates
- Procedures for making affidavits
- Procedures for POA and wills
- Bringing an urgent case application (also webinar)
- Making an agreement on co-parenting protocols (also webinar, sample clauses)
- Tenants and the eviction moratoriums
- COVID-19 Infographics Series (in partnership with Windsor Law COVID Advocacy Working Group)

Interventions Update: *Jonsson v Lymer*, 2020 ABCA 167

“A vexatious litigant order is a **barrier to access to the courts**, [...] it may become an **unsurmountable** barrier.”

“Parties are **entitled to self-represent**, and **court should be sensitive** to the challenges faced by self-represented litigants.”

“Vexatious litigant orders are the **most extreme response** to inappropriate litigation. [T]hey should **only** be used when **other procedural techniques are ineffective**.”

Family Law at the Library Project

- Recently re-launched “Lawyers in the Library” at Windsor Public Library
- Videos based on information sessions
- Ti-Li Network
- Final report to the Law Foundation of Ontario



The Access Revolution Blog

26 posts in 2020

Notable contributors:

- BC Chief Justice Robert Bauman
- Lawyer Tania Perlin
- Journalist/SRL Randi Druzin
- Advocate Barbara Captijn
- Andrew Pilliar
- SRL Chris Budgell
- Justice David Price



Jumping Off the Ivory Tower

Total listens: 23,000+

Top 5 episodes of season 5...

1. How 21st Century Needs (and COVID-19?) are Changing Legal Services
2. We're Only Human
3. An Accountable Legal Profession
4. NSRLP 2020
5. It's Not About You



2020 Fodden Award!

Premier award of the annual Canadian Law Blog Awards (CLAWBIES)

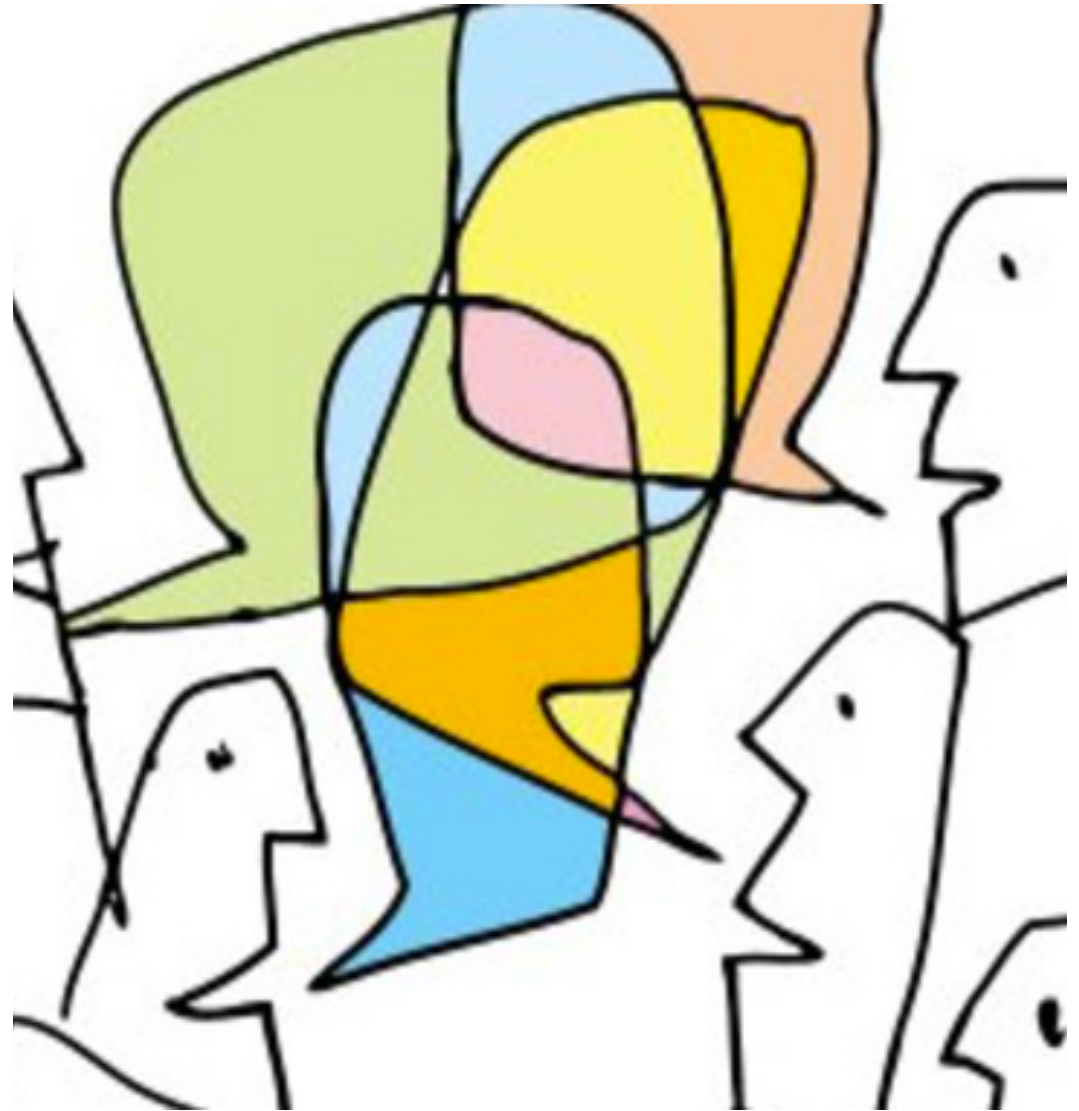
“The organization’s effort in amplifying the stories and voices of stakeholders involved in the Canadian self-represented litigant phenomenon – from litigants to A2J groups to judges to lawyers – is well deserving of this recognition.”

Nominations praised the NSRLP for:

- *“their continued effort in making the legal system more accessible to SRLs. Their recent primer is an essential tool for SRLs to be better prepared”*
- *“maintaining a current list of court changes nationwide due to COVID-19 ever since shutdowns started!”*
- *“promoting dialogue between self-reps and members of the legal profession. Understanding the ‘other’ side’s experiences and concerns is a very necessary part of resolving the current A2J crisis”*

User Feedback Projects

- Immigration and Refugee Board
- Ontario Superior Court
- Family Law Limited Scope Project
- Law Society of Ontario



2020 Website Stats

Total Users = 57,753 (2019 = 45,611)
Total Sessions = 73,101 (2019 = 61,052)

Visitors Geographic Breakdown

- Canada = 34,289 (59%)
 - USA = 18,490 (32%)
 - UK = 1,217 (2%)
- Pakistan = 641 (1%)
- Australia = 450 (0.8%)
- China = 381 (0.65%)
- India = 340 (0.58%)

Top Site Referrals

1. Facebook
 2. Twitter
 3. Steps to Justice
- *Large margin between 3 and 4*
4. Baidu
 5. LinkedIn
 6. Slaw

2020 Website Stats

Top Pages

1. Homepage
2. Blog: “The client most lawyers fear – and won’t represent at any price” (Donald Best, July 2016)
3. Arrangements for Swearing Affidavits During COVID-19
4. Template Social Distancing Clauses for Parents
5. Court Closures Updates
6. SRL Resources landing page
7. Blog: “Where’s the accountability in Canada’s justice system?” (Colin Alexander, March 2019)
8. National Directory of Professionals Assisting SRLs
9. Blog: “Inequality and discrimination in the justice system” (Julie, September 2018)
10. Blog landing page

2020 Website Stats

Top Google Search Queries Leading to NSRLP Pages

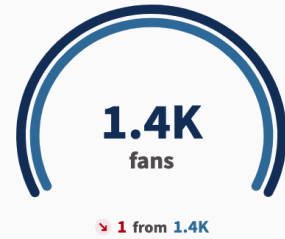
1. nsrlp
2. national self represented litigants project [also includes queries with the dash]
**large margin between 2 and 3 – clearly most searchers are looking for us specifically*
3. self represented litigants
4. lawyer misconduct
5. julie macfarlane
6. why is the canadian justice system unfair
7. how do lawyers decide to take a case
8. crooked lawyers
9. my lawyer lied to me
10. do lawyers make deals with each other

Katie Pfaff

f Posts



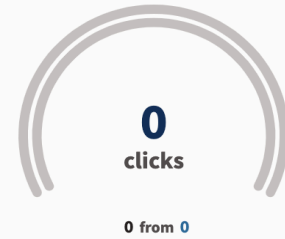
f Fans



f Engagement

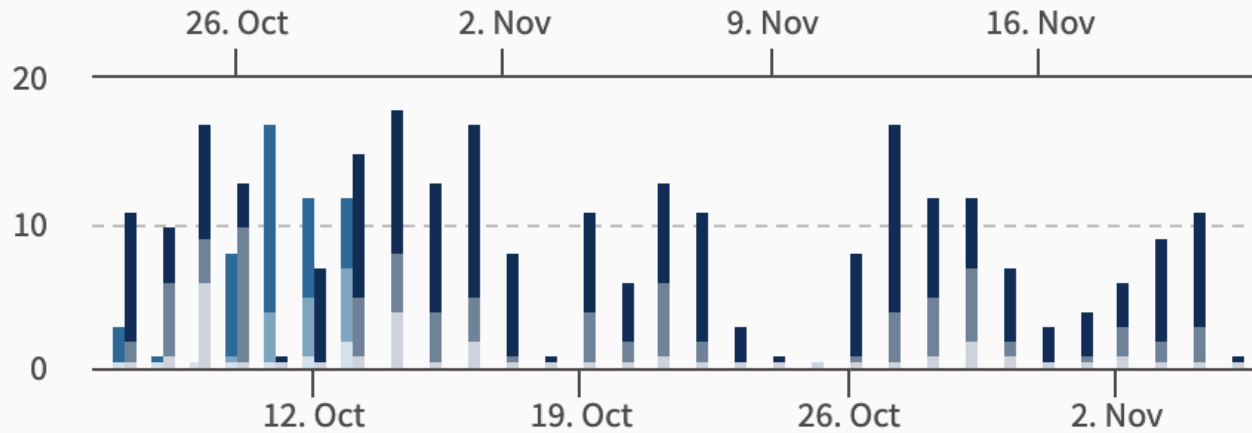


f Traffic

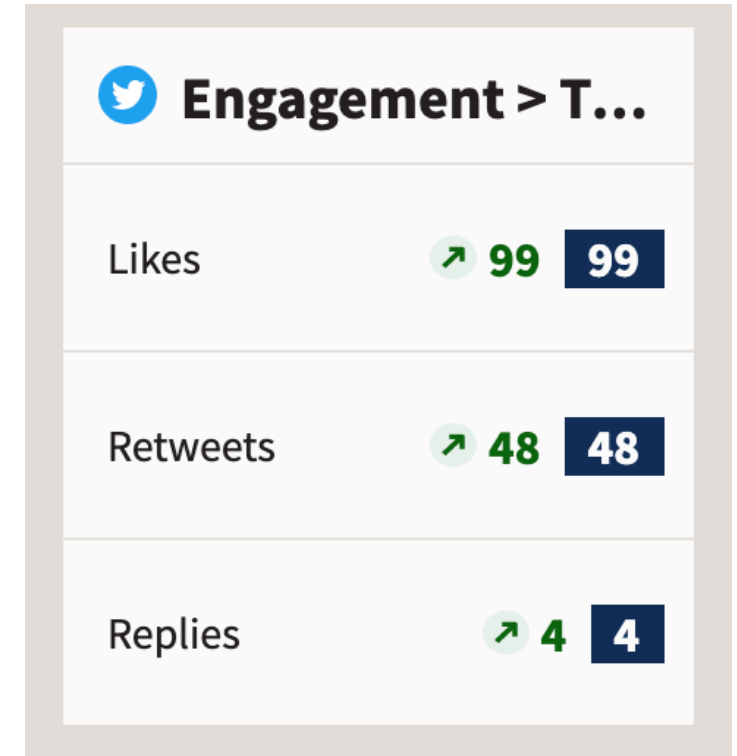
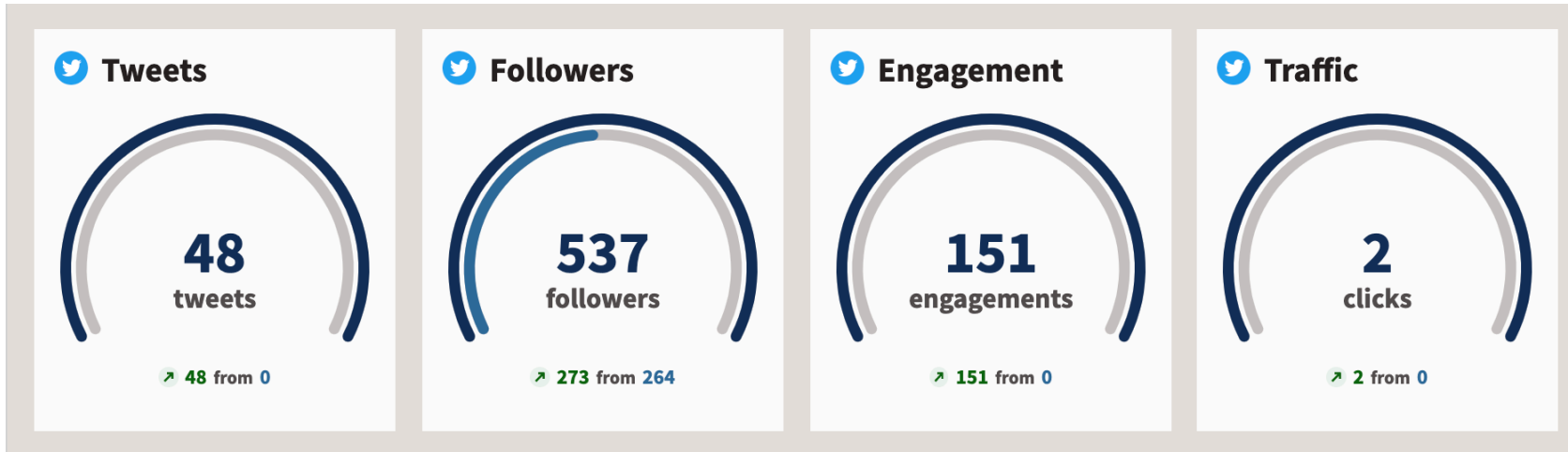


f Engagement > Type

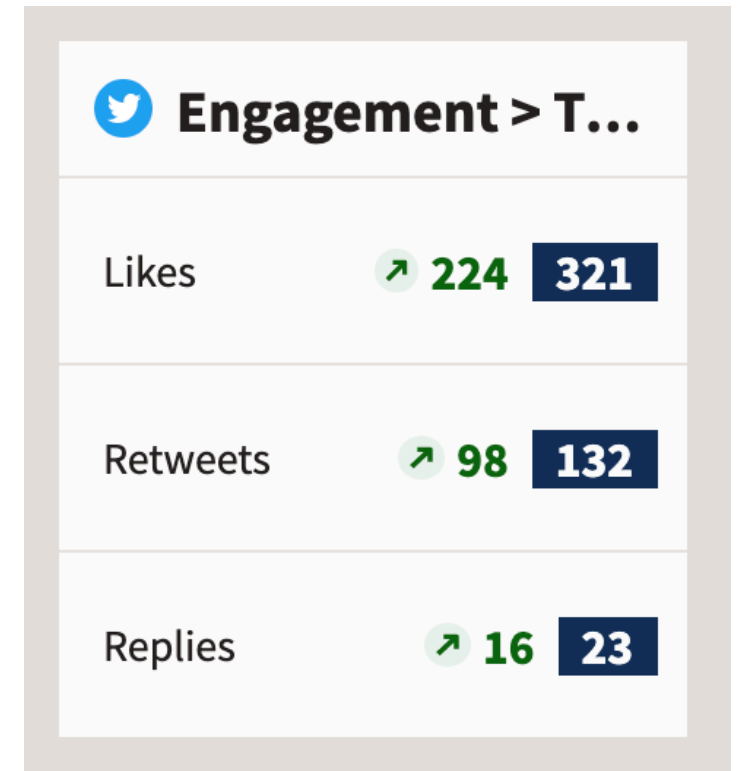
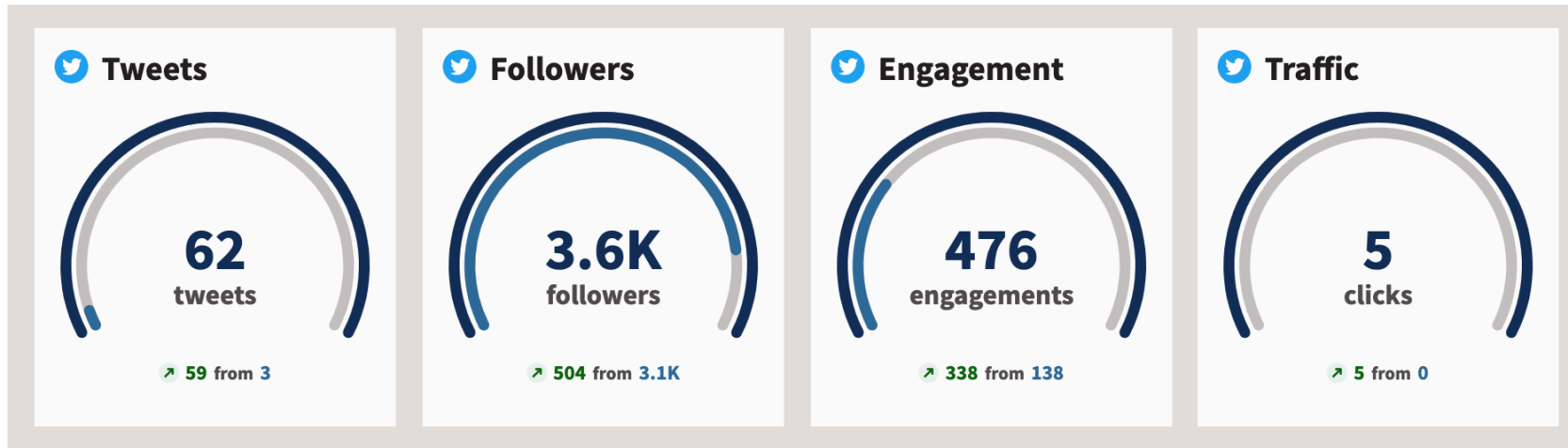
● Reactions ● Shares ● Comments ● Reactions ● Shares ● Comments



**Social
Media
Stats:
Facebook**



Social Media Stats: @selfrepscanada (Twitter)



Social Media Stats: @profjuliemac (Twitter)

Social Media: Introducing Instagram!

@selfrepscanada

- 160+ followers so far
- Great platform for infographics + fundraising
- Great engagement from legal and social justice organizations => want to expand outwards

