



National Legal Aid

National Legal Aid Best Practice Standards

Standards for the Use of Technology in the Delivery of Legal Services (Non-litigation)

Principle

Technology should be used to enhance clients' access to legal services.

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Element	Includes	Best Practice Standard
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology should be used to enhance clients’ access to legal services • Technology choices should be based on an analysis of client group needs and their access to technology. • A range of service options should exist to assist clients to access services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of the service by clients is a prerequisite to access. • Services should employ strategies to ensure that clients are aware of the availability of services. • Strategies should be consistent with the ability of the service to meet client demand.
Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology initiatives should provide equity in service coverage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology choices should be designed to facilitate access by clients who may experience social or economic disadvantage. • Technology initiatives should address access barriers which prevent clients from using new technologies. • Equity strategies may be wide ranging & would include strategies for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clients with limited access to computers and the internet eg: the use of intermediaries - Clients with limited literacy e.g. the use of multi media - Clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds e.g. material in languages other than English - Clients with a disability e.g. technologies that address issues such as sight impairment, hearing impairment and mobility restrictions. - Clients living in rural and remote areas with limited access to services and bandwidth.

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Element	Includes	Best Practice Standard
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services should be provided so as to maximize value of a limited resource. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficiency markers should be established to determine effectiveness including measures of satisfaction and timeliness • Collaboration and information sharing between service providers should occur to enhance efficiency.
Professional Competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services provided through technology should be of a high quality and reflect good professional practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services should be able to demonstrate that staff have the professional competence to provide the service they are required to provide. In this context, competence is wider than legal competence and includes high level technology skills. • All staff providing the service should receive appropriate training, professional development and professional supervision. • Where paralegal staff are used, services should demonstrate appropriate supervision.
Accuracy and Consistency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff should be provided with the appropriate resources to enable them to use the technology to provide a consistent and accurate service. 	
Clear definition of service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services should operate within clearly defined parameters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services made available through technology should be clearly defined and the scope of the service offered should be apparent to clients using the service.

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Clear Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services should operate in accordance with clear standards that incorporate all elements of best practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards should exist for services made available through technology. These standards should cover a range of matters such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scope of service - Professional and ethical obligations - Client confidentiality - Client service standards - Conflict policy - Professional supervision - Client feedback mechanism. • All standards should be consistent with the elements of best practice.
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology Initiatives should have measures in place which indicate efficiency, effectiveness and quality. Services should be evaluated regularly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services should have a range of measures incorporating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - financial measures - non financial measures of effectiveness - quality measures - client feedback. • Services should have evaluation strategies in place to ensure continuous review and improvement.