Practical tips on using technology for legal empowerment

Experiences from around the world

7 May 2019
TECH FOR LEGAL EMPOWERMENT

1. Ground your idea in knowledge of both the problems in justice provision and of the people who face them
2. Build in space for flexibility and iteration
3. Implementing a tool requires ongoing efforts
COMMON TYPES OF TECHNOLOGY

- Static sites
- Guided pathways to legal information
- Guided pathways to specialised legal advisers
- ‘Live chat’ features
- Document assembly
- Online dispute resolution
- Structured data collection for use in legal cases
- Chatbots
Ground your idea in knowledge of both the problems in justice provision and of the people who face them.
“Even when you think you know people very well, things only bubble up in user testing.”
Adapting to context: Lawyers4Farmers
“Start by being clear on who you are designing for. It must be designed for the people you are working with. Don’t think for them!”
Build in space for flexibility and iteration
“If someone writes a message in a certain way, we will respond in the same way. We even make grammatical errors on purpose, and use slang and colloquialisms in our posts if it helps us interact with some people.”
“Built with, not for, your users.”
Implementing a tool requires ongoing efforts
“[User testing] was definitely worth the time. I wish we’d known that patience would pay off.”
“Marketing requires clearly defined research of the marketplace and planning while the product is in development, not when it is released. At this stage, it’s almost too late.”
Experiences from the field

Nelson Olanipekun
Team Lead at Gavel
@citizen_gavel | gavel.ng
Curious for more?

- **Full research report**: https://engn.it/legalempowerment
- **(Mobile-friendly) online summary**: https://library.theengineroom.org/legal-empowerment/
- **Legal empowerment e-mail digest**: https://theengineroom.us2.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=1747fd8a7bf587bd4a215d984&id=f636427846
- **Light-Touch Support programme**: https://www.theengineroom.org/light-touch-support/
- **Alidade tool selection support**: https://alidade.tech/
Thank you!

pverhaert@theengineerroom.org
laura@theengineerroom.org
@paolasinu | @engnroom