Clicklaw Project Evaluation Report

A report on an evaluation of Clicklaw, a Law Foundation of BC Funded Project, 2007 – 2012

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Introduction

The Clicklaw Project began in 2007 as a Public Legal Education and Information Working Group initiative, led by Courthouse Libraries BC and funded by the Law Foundation of BC. Working with 24 contributor organizations and a Steering Committee, Courthouse Libraries BC led the development of the Clicklaw website (www.clicklaw.bc.ca) to improve access to justice by providing the British Columbia public with a single point of entry to online public legal education and information (PLEI).

The Clicklaw website was launched in the spring of 2009 and has continued to grow over the last three years. The site now links to almost 1,300 resources as well as over 800 locations where people in BC can find legal assistance. While Law Foundation project funding for the website has now ended, Courthouse Libraries BC has taken on the operation of Clicklaw as a core service.

With the project phase completed and Clicklaw now a Courthouse Libraries BC program, we undertook an evaluation of the Clicklaw project. This evaluation allows us to set benchmarks and to use the information gathered through the evaluation to help guide future enhancements and respond to users' needs.

Our evaluation looks at the original project goals and the current Courthouse Libraries BC strategic plan. We focused our evaluation on five key goals. Goals 1-3 are from the original project charter; goals 4 and 5 are from the Courthouse Libraries BC service plan:

1. Improve access to PLEI
2. Improve networking and increase engagement of contributors
3. Identify gaps in PLEI programming
4. Enhance the knowledge and skills of […] the public [and information/referral specialists] so they can make effective use of legal information and tools
5. Enhance access for the public in BC to legal information and tools that are understandable to them and help them take next steps relating to their legal problem

We gathered information through Google Analytics, a Clicklaw user survey, a Clicklaw contributor survey, and surveys of training participants. See Appendix A for more information about the methodology.

GOAL 1: Improve access to public legal education and information (PLEI)

- **Traffic to Clicklaw has increased – visits are up by 50% by year 3 compared to year 1[i]**
- **65% of Clicklaw visitors surveyed report they found PLEI relevant to their legal issue**

Traffic

Since the launch of Clicklaw in 2009, there has been a steady increase in traffic with more and more people using Clicklaw to look for public legal education and information.
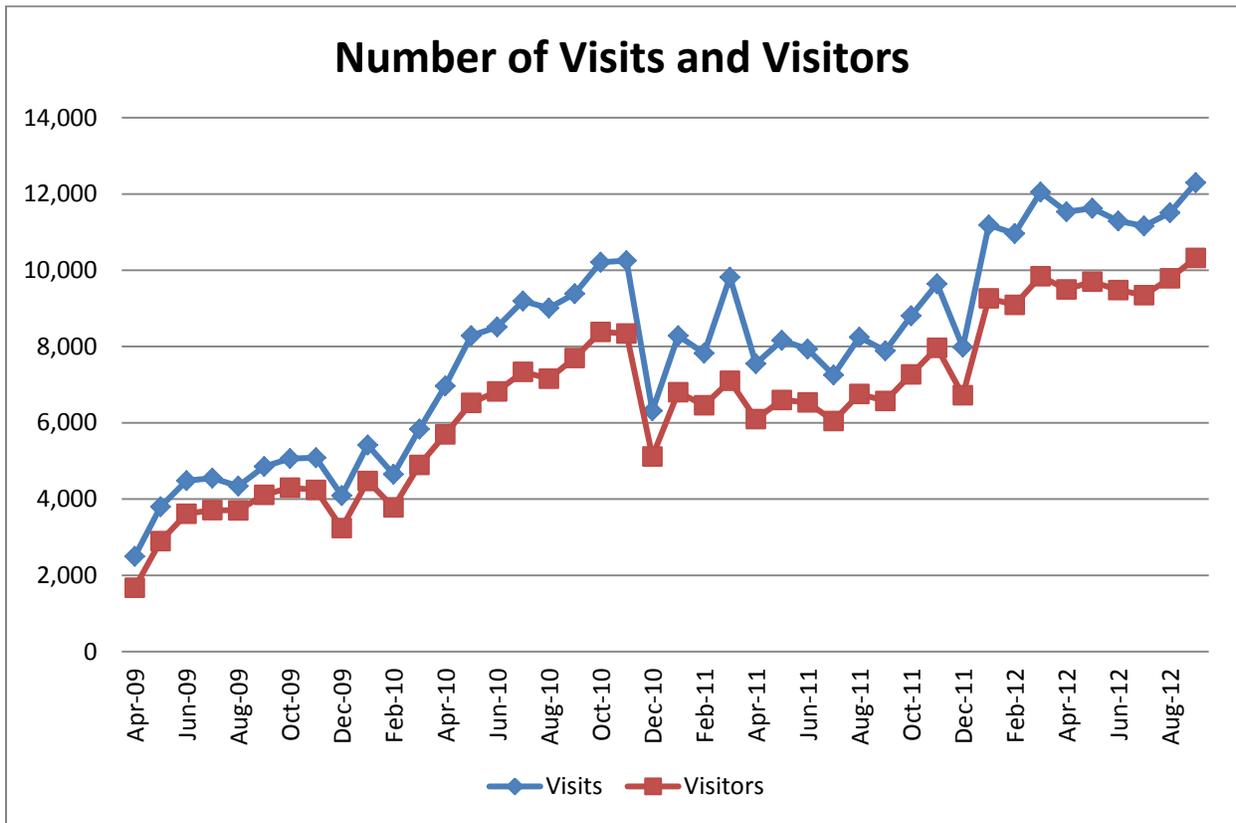
Project milestones

April 2009 – launch of Clicklaw

December 2009 – launch of HelpMap

April 2010 – enhancements to search, addition of more common questions, launch of LawStartBC promotional campaign, expansion of social media

October 2010 – launch of the Clicklaw charades videos

November 2010 – HelpMap enhancements, including advice/representation services listed at top of search results, "get directions" feature

April 2011 – further enhancements including translated information

September 2011 – addition of more common questions

November 2011 – Ministry of Justice adds multiple links to Clicklaw
December 2011 – launch of Clicklaw widgets (final component of Law Foundation funded project)

The number of Clicklaw visits and visitors continues to grow. We're encouraged to see that the traffic rates for 2012 are strong and are continuing to grow. Our longer term goal is to see a steady increase in the levels of traffic to Clicklaw.

Traffic over a three year period

	Year 1: Oct 1, 2009 – Sept 30, 2010	**Year 2:** Oct 1, 2010 – Sept 30, 2011	**Year 3:** Oct 1, 2011 – Sept 30, 2012	**Percentage increase from year 1 to year 3**
Unique Visitors	61,585	75,231	95,167	54.53%
Visits	81,488	99,741	122,251	50.02%

User survey – success in finding information

From July to September 2012, we invited Clicklaw visitors to complete an online survey after their visit to Clicklaw. We wanted to learn if users were able to find legal information on Clicklaw. We received responses from 606 Clicklaw visitors. Here is a summary of the results:

1. **Which best describes you?**

I'm a person with a legal question	58%
I'm assisting a client with their legal question	9%
I'm assisting a friend or family member with their legal question	15%
I'm a teacher or student interested in legal study materials	4%
Other, please specify...	14%

2. **Which of the following best describes the primary purpose of your visit?**

To find legal information	74%
To find a person who can provide legal assistance	13%
Other, please specify...	13%

3. **Using Clicklaw, were you able to find information that you will use?**

Yes	65%
No	35%

We asked the visitors who were unable to find information if they could tell us why they thought they couldn't find information. We will analyze the information gathered through this question to help direct future enhancements for Clicklaw.

The results of this user survey establish a baseline measurement that we will use for future planning and evaluation, with a goal of increasing the percentage of people who find useful information via Clicklaw.

Conversion

A conversion rate is the percentage of visits that result in visitors completing an action on the website. Through our website traffic analysis tool Google Analytics, we are measuring the conversion rate for visitors clicking through to a PLEI resource on a contributor's website. This "resources conversion rate" averaged 33% from October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012. That is, 33% of visits during the period resulted in clicks to resources on contributors' websites. (Note that many visits to Clicklaw feature visitors obtaining the information they need directly on Clicklaw, for example from HelpMap entries or the 140 common questions on the site.) We would like to see an increase in the resources conversion rate, so we will be investigating ways to address this with our developers in the months ahead.

> **Goal 1 summary:** Clicklaw is well used as a point of entry to legal information and assistance in BC. Our traffic continues to grow, providing access to legal information to thousands of people in BC every month.

GOAL 2: Improve networking and increase engagement of contributors

- **All contributors[ii] feel that Clicklaw makes them more connected to the PLEI community**
- **77% of referral traffic[iii] to Clicklaw comes from Clicklaw contributors; overall, 23% of total traffic to Clicklaw comes from Clicklaw contributors**
- **All contributors see value in training their staff on using Clicklaw**

Contributor perspective on Clicklaw's strategic value

In September 2012, we distributed a survey to Clicklaw contributors to ask for their thoughts on Clicklaw in terms of strategic value. We received 21 responses representing 75% of contributors.

We asked contributors to rate the following statements on a scale from 1-5, with 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree:

- Being a Clicklaw contributor makes our organization feel more connected to the wider PLEI community in BC
  Average: 4.33

- It is important for our new information and referral staff to have an orientation to Clicklaw as a tool to help them do their work
  Average: 4.13

- It is important that our PLEI information sessions for intermediaries and the public include information about Clicklaw
  Average: 4.12

Comments:

- It has been extremely useful to be able to refer/link people who send us various PLEI questions to the Clicklaw site. Great work!
- Clicklaw is our number one referral for clients' PLEI needs. It has immense value to us, and it has become an indispensable component of full and effective service to our clients.
- Clicklaw links are sent to our clients after they make appointments with our lawyers and they all find Clicklaw useful and user-friendly.
- Court registry staff use it, they love it.
- We've been referring applicants to Clicklaw to access legal information.
- Clicklaw is a great tool that is used by our staff when referring callers on our telephone Infoline service. We also make a point of mentioning Clicklaw when speaking to other advocates and service providers. Clicklaw is also helpful to us in terms of generating traffic for our website.
- I do have a sense that a resource that is uploaded to a category goes to the end and may never make it to the front.
- We appreciate being a part of Clicklaw.

Contributors' participation in keeping Clicklaw information current

We also circulated a survey to Clicklaw contributors to ask for their feedback on how the Clicklaw interface works for them from an operational perspective. We received replies from 16 contributors.

We asked contributors to rate the following statement on a scale from 1-5, with 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree:

- The contributor admin side of Clicklaw is easy to use (the admin side is where a contributor logs in to edit resources/services)
  Average: 4.38

We also asked contributors about their experience in keeping information up to date on Clicklaw.

Please tell us how current your information is on Clicklaw

Answer Options	Never	Rarely	Some-times	Very often	Always	N/A	Rating Average
When our resources change (e.g., URL/link, year of publication) or new resources are created, we update them on Clicklaw within a week	0	4	4	6	1	1	3.27
When our services change, (e.g., hours, address) we update our information on Clicklaw's HelpMap within a week	0	4	5	5	0	2	3.07

Contributors identified staff changes and resources as barriers to keeping information current. We will continue to work with contributors to explore ways to support them to keep their information on Clicklaw accurate, and updated in a timely fashion.

Referrals from contributor sites to Clicklaw

Traffic on Clicklaw comes from three types of sources:

- search engines such as Google and Bing,
- other websites that link or "refer" traffic to Clicklaw ("referring sites"), and
- direct traffic where visitors type the Clicklaw URL directly or come from a link in an email.

From October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012, 58% of Clicklaw traffic came from search engines, 30% from referring sites, and 12% was direct traffic.

Of the referral traffic to Clicklaw, 77% came from the websites of Clicklaw contributors. The net result is that 23% of overall Clicklaw traffic came from Clicklaw contributors.

Through Google Analytics, we can see PLEI organizations are linking to resources of others in the community by linking to the Clicklaw listings of others. As of September 30, 2012, 68% of contributor organizations have a Clicklaw widget or direct links to Clicklaw on their sites. (A widget places information from Clicklaw into a block on the contributor's website, and is a source of referral traffic to Clicklaw.)

The number of referrals to Clicklaw from contributor websites has been increasing. In late 2011, the Ministry of Justice updated many of their pages to include more links to Clicklaw. Rather than providing a link to publication titles on the Queen's Printer website, the Ministry pages now provide a link to Clicklaw. Andrew Mitchell, Stakeholder Relations Officer at the Ministry, explains:

"This change[iv] was made in the left-hand navigation column of every MAG page and resulted in thousands of new links to Clicklaw, and eliminated the need for the Ministry to maintain identical publication indexes. It also improved MAG's service delivery because Clicklaw offers the public greater access to a wider variety of PLEI materials as well as the HelpMap."

"Also in late 2011, the Ministry of Attorney General replaced its PDF list of Family Justice Centres (FJCs) with links to the list of FJCs in HelpMap. This change allowed the Ministry to offer the public interactive maps of FJC locations and eliminated an unnecessary redundancy."

Referrals from Clicklaw to contributor sites

A review of the traffic on the websites of 10 contributor organizations[v] for the period October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012 shows that Clicklaw is a major source of referral traffic for all of them. Clicklaw was the number one referring site for several of these websites, and in all cases was in the top three referring sites.

Goal 2 summary: All Clicklaw contributors who responded to our survey indicate that they feel more connected to the PLEI community as a result of their involvement with Clicklaw. Through Google Analytics, we can see PLEI organizations are linking to resources of others in the community by linking to their listings on Clicklaw. Future work in this area will focus on the quality of linkages, with the goal of providing the user with a seamless experience.

GOAL 3: Identify gaps in PLEI programming

- **"Clicklaw and Beyond" report produced in 2009**
- **50% of contributors report using Clicklaw when planning PLEI programming**

As part of the Clicklaw project, Courthouse Libraries BC worked with Gayla Reid and Carol McEown to produce a report mapping PLEI resources as of 2009. The report, "Clicklaw and Beyond: Public Legal Education and Information Materials in BC", identifies and analyzes gaps and overlaps in PLEI programming and resources. The report was designed to serve as a planning tool for PLEI providers in BC, and is available on Clicklaw at http://clicklaw.bc.ca/resource/1921.

In the Clicklaw contributor survey, we asked contributors to rate the following statement on a scale from 1-5, with 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree:

- Clicklaw helps us to identify gaps in PLEI programming or resources (e.g. for the purpose of preparing a funding application).

  Average: 3.56

Looking only at those respondents who indicated a 4 or a 5 to this statement, 50% of contributors reported that they use Clicklaw to identify gaps in PLEI programming or resources.

In addition to referencing the "Clicklaw and Beyond" report, the PLEI Working Group has also used the Clicklaw site itself to identify gaps and overlaps. For example, in 2012 the PLEI Working Group used Clicklaw to identify gaps and overlaps in family law (see the report "Review of BC Family PLEI Resources"[vi]), and is currently using Clicklaw to identify gaps in PLEI research.

More work can be done in promoting the Clicklaw site as a tool for identifying gaps in PLEI programming, including by funders encouraging applicants to use Clicklaw in this way.

Goal 3 Summary: The "Clicklaw and Beyond" report and the current Clicklaw site provide tools that can be used to help identify gaps in PLEI programming. Several PLEI contributor groups report that they use Clicklaw when planning PLEI programming. With the support of funders, there is potential for Clicklaw to be used to a greater extent as a planning tool by those involved in producing PLEI.

GOAL 4: Enhance knowledge and skills of the public and information/referral specialists so they can make effective use of legal information and tools.

- **With training, intermediaries' confidence in using Clicklaw increased by 43%**

Training surveys

From June 2010 to June 2012, Clicklaw staff provided over two dozen presentations and training sessions to various groups on using Clicklaw. We focused our efforts on providing training for intermediaries who work with legal information, with the idea that strengthening their skills would have a multiplier effect as intermediaries work with many clients who could benefit from greater access to PLEI.

For the purpose of this evaluation, we're focusing on the training sessions that featured a hands-on component – either in a computer lab setting, or via a webinar where participants were able to use the Clicklaw site to solve practice questions.

We held 15 training sessions with 157 people. Participants were asked to rate their confidence using Clicklaw before the training, and their confidence using Clicklaw after the training.

Of the 157 people trained, 99 completed a survey about the training.

Those reporting above average confidence in using Clicklaw...	Number of participants	% of participants	% increase
...before the training	63/99	64%	
...after the training	96/99	97%	52%

At Courthouse Libraries BC, our strategic plan includes key performance indicators (KPIs) that measure the increase in client confidence in using legal information tools (in this case Clicklaw). We aim for 90% of clients to feel confident after attending a training session, and to see a significant overall increase in confidence levels.

Our surveying showed that 97% of participants felt confident using Clicklaw post training, and that confidence levels increased from 4.16/7 to 5.94/7, a 43% increase.

Average confidence rates increased significantly:

	Pre-training	Post-training	Percentage increase
Confidence using Clicklaw	4.16/7.00	5.94/7.00	43%

Goal 4 Summary: We are exceeding our expectations with our Clicklaw training in terms of its impact on client confidence, and will continue to aim for these high results in future.

GOAL 5: Enhance access for the public in BC to legal information and tools that are understandable to them and help them take next steps relating to their legal problem.

- **Helpfulness of information found through Clicklaw rated at 4.3/5.0**
- **Understandability of information found through Clicklaw rated at 4.4/5.0**
- **Ability to take next steps after using information found through Clicklaw rated at 4.0/5.0**

Second level of Clicklaw user survey results

Of the 606 visitors who took the Clicklaw user survey, 101 completed a follow-up survey a few days later. The concept behind the follow-up survey was to check back in with visitors after they had time to work with the legal information they accessed through Clicklaw.

Here are the results of the follow-up survey:

1. When you visited Clicklaw, which best described you?

A person with a legal question	48%
Assisting a client with their legal question	19%
Assisting a friend or family member with their legal question	21%
A teacher or student interested in legal study materials	4%
Other	9%

2. Which of the following best describes the primary purpose of your visit to Clicklaw?

To find legal information	84%
To find a person who can provide legal assistance	6%
Other	10%

3. Was the information you found through Clicklaw helpful?

1 (not helpful)	2	3	4	5 (very helpful)	Mean
2 (2%)	5 (5%)	9 (9%)	33 (33%)	51 (51%)	4.3

4. Was the information you found through Clicklaw understandable?

1 (not understand able)	2	3	4	5 (very understand able)	Mean
2 (2%)	1 (1%)	11 (11%)	27 (27%)	59 (59%)	4.4

5. Did the information you found through Clicklaw help you take next steps relating to the legal issue?

1 (not at all)	2	3	4	5 (a great deal)	Mean
6 (6%)	4 (4%)	11 (11%)	39 (39%)	40 (40%)	4

The majority of people who found PLEI materials related to their issue found it to be helpful, understandable, and were able to take next steps relating to their legal issue.

Comments

- I really appreciate the plain language and easy to use nature of the site when helping patrons with legal reference questions.

- The booklet gave me an excellent overview of my executor tasks - and has helped me decide which I will do myself and when to seek legal/accounting advice.
- Being located in a remote community and not having physical access to services makes online BC relevant law info very important to myself and my clients.
- This is a very valuable service for the layperson.
- I think Clicklaw is a fabulous resource for non-lawyers who, like the friend I was helping, do not understand the scope of legal practice, and the way an investment in legal services can save an individual from a lot of grief and greater costs in the future. Thanks, Clicklaw people.
- I wish I could just type in my question and get an answer or be directed to who could give me the answer. Thank you.
- Hello, I found the site most useful and the referral to another government site for further information was incredible. I was able to download the "My Voice ...Advanced Care Planning Guide" and use it with my friend and family. Thank you so much for providing the service.

Goal 5 summary: The majority of respondents in our follow-up visitor survey found the information they found through Clicklaw to be helpful, understandable, and were able to take next steps relating to their legal issue. That respondents rated their ability to take next steps at 4 out of 5 is a success indicator for all those producing PLEI in BC.

Conclusion

We now have a solid evaluation framework in place for Clicklaw. We've set benchmarks that we will use for future evaluations, and we've gathered information that will help inform the future development of the Clicklaw website.

We plan to have ongoing evaluations of Clicklaw to make sure we're continuing to respond to users' and contributors' needs so we can continue to improve access to public legal education and information.

Some areas that we will explore in the next year include:

- Ways to continue increasing good traffic to the site, along with increasing the resources conversion rate.
- Deeper analysis of the comments from visitors who reported in the user survey that they were unable to find legal information they will use.
- Feedback from contributors that the "findability" of their resources could be improved.
- Ways to encourage users to click through to the HelpMap to find options for legal assistance.
- Supporting contributors to keep information current and updated in a timely fashion.
- Sharing survey methods and results with Clicklaw contributors so we can continue to evaluate the impact of PLEI.

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[i] October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2010 compared to October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012.

[ii] All contributors who responded to the survey (21).

[iii] Referral traffic is traffic coming from other websites. It is different from traffic coming from search engines, or traffic from visitors who enter the Clicklaw URL directly into their browser.

[iv] This change was not made to former Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General pages when it joined with the Ministry of Attorney General to form the Ministry of Justice.

[v] The contributor organizations reviewed are BC Law Institute, BC Civil Liberties Association, People's Law School, PovNet, SFU Centre for Education, Law & Society, West Coast LEAF, BC Centre for Elder Advocacy & Support, Tenant Resource & Advisory Centre, Community Legal Assistance Society, and The Law Centre.

[vi] Erin Shaw and Gayla Reid, "Review of BC Family Public Legal Education and Information Resources", June 2012, available at http://lss.bc.ca/assets/aboutUs/reports/PLEI/BCFamilyResourcesReviewJune12.pdf.

Appendix A: Methodology

Google Analytics

- Google Analytics script is embedded on Clicklaw website pages.
- In general, data has been collected since the Clicklaw website was launched in April 2009.
- Google Analytics was set to collect data for the resources conversion rate in June 2010. (The resources conversion rate measures the percentage of visits that result in a click through to a PLEI resource on a contributor's website.) A different GA profile was set up for this purpose, so that it can track clicks to outbound links.
- Beginning in 2009, Courthouse Libraries BC has helped some contributor organizations with setting up Google Analytics to track traffic on their own websites.

Clicklaw user survey

- The survey started on July 13, 2012 and ended on October 2, 2012.
- The survey consisted of two parts that were delivered separately:
    1. Website pop-up survey (606 complete responses)
    2. Email invitation to complete follow-up web survey (102 complete responses)
- The website pop-up survey:
    - The survey aimed to learn about what types of users are visiting Clicklaw and whether or not they find information that they will use.
    - A pop-up survey script was embedded on the Clicklaw website. When a new visitor arrived, a pop-up invitation would show up to tell the visitor about the survey and ask whether they would be willing to complete the survey at the end of their visit. If the visitor selected 'Yes', the survey window would stay in the background and would only show up when the visitor exited the Clicklaw website, indicated by closing the browser window or loading a different website. If the visitor selected 'No', the pop-up invitation would disappear and the same visitor would not be presented with the invitation again.
    - The setting was for all visitors of Clicklaw to see the pop-up invitation.
- Email invitation to complete follow-up web survey:
    - The follow-up survey aimed to learn more about how visitors felt about the information they accessed through Clicklaw in terms of helpfulness, understandability, and ability to take next steps relating to the legal issue.
    - The email invitation survey was sent to respondents of the pop-up survey who indicated that they found information on Clicklaw that they would use (390 respondents) and who gave their email address (198 respondents). The email was sent two to three days after the date the respondent submitted the initial survey response, giving them time to digest the information they found via Clicklaw. A reminder was also sent for those who did not view or complete the follow-up survey.

- The survey tool used was FluidSurveys (http://fluidsurveys.com). Compared to other tools in the market, the tool offers the flexibility of customizing the questions in the pop-up survey and the ability to only show the questions in the survey after the visitor exits the Clicklaw website.

Clicklaw contributor survey

- The survey was conducted in September 2012.
- The invitation to the survey was delivered by email to Clicklaw contributors.
- The survey tool used was SurveyMonkey (http://surveymonkey.com).
- The survey consisted of two parts:
    1. Strategic value survey (21 complete responses)
    2. Operational perspective survey (16 complete responses)
- The strategic value survey:
    - The survey asked Clicklaw contributors for their thoughts on Clicklaw in terms of strategic value.
- The operational perspective survey:
    - The survey asked Clicklaw contributors for their feedback on how the Clicklaw interface works for them from an operational perspective.

Surveys of training participants

- The surveys were conducted over 15 training sessions with 157 people from June 2012 to June 2012 (99 respondents in total).
- The survey tool used was SurveyMonkey (http://surveymonkey.com).
- The surveys were delivered on paper and via a link to the online version, depending on the training situation.