

Just Connect Us: A Community-Oriented Civil Justice Data Commons

NSF Project #1952067

Professor Tanina Rostain, Faculty Director, Institute for Technology Law and Policy, Georgetown University Law Center
PG FY2020

Principal Research Investigators (Name, Institution)

- . Professor Tanina Rostain, Faculty Director, Institute for Technology Law and Policy, Georgetown University Law Center*
- . Professor Rebecca Johnson, Dartmouth College*
- . Dr. Amy O'Hara, Massive Data Institute, Georgetown University*

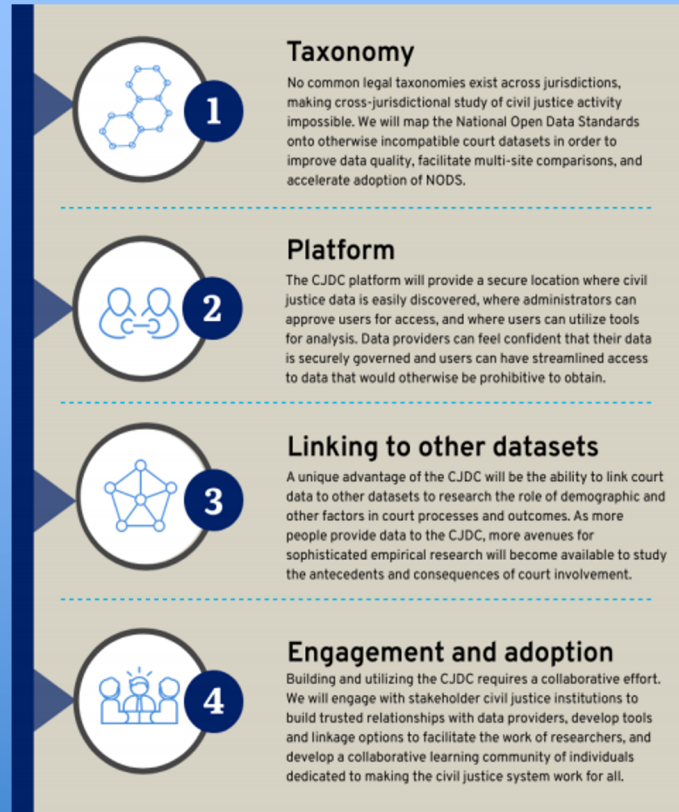
Community Partners (Name, Institution)

- Colleen Cotter, Executive Director at the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland,*
- Claudia J. Coulton, Case Western Reserve University, Center on Urban Poverty & Community Development*
- Hon. Kenneth M. Stoner, District Judge in the Oklahoma County District Court*
- Richard Vreeland, Acting Director at Legal Aid Services of Oklahoma*
- Ryan Gentzler, Director of Open Justice Oklahoma at the Oklahoma Policy Institute*
- Vanessa Natale, General Counsel at the D.C. Office of Administrative Hearings,*
- Karen Newtown Cole, Executive Director of the Neighborhood Legal Services Program*
- Beth Mellen Harrison, Director of the Eviction Defense Project at the DC Legal Aid Society*
- Sam Quinney, Executive Director of The Lab @ DC*
- Hilary Shager, Associate Director of the Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison.*
- Princeton's Eviction Lab*
- Urban Institute's National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership*

Suggested length: 15(s)

Project Overview

Visual Schematic



Project Vision

- **Build a comprehensive taxonomy that allows for easy harmonization of data across jurisdictions and host the data in a secure data commons platform with differing levels of access for interested parties, data researchers, lawyers, courts, and service providers**
- **Use the data in the data commons and outside data to create linkages between datasets and encourage adoption of the CJDC by collaborating with stakeholders and providing tools and linkage options to data providers**

Project Overview

Use-Inspired Research

- Currently the state of data collection across the thousands of jurisdictions is disparate and disorganized with stakeholders in Cuyahoga County, Ohio, DC, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin all describing different data collection policies at differing levels of digitization
- After interviewing stakeholders and hosting several workshops we have settled on a framework for the CJDC

PG Activities

- Engage with stakeholders in several communities to understand their interests and concerns and incorporated them into the design of the data commons
- Engage with academic data scientists about the technical requirements and best practices for a viable data commons
- Link court data with outside datasets to identify litigant race and ethnic characteristics
- Identify and test methods for turning court documents into a machine readable format
- Build out a comprehensive taxonomy that allows for easy harmonization of data across jurisdictions
- Create and manage a secure data commons platform with differing levels of access
- Use the data in the commons and outside data to create linkages between datasets
- Encourage adoption of CJDC by collaborating with stakeholders and providing tools and linkage options

Project Update

- **Conducted dozens of interviews with court personnel including chief justices, judges and court administrators, justice committees, legal aid directors, non-profits, and scholars from law schools, policy schools, and the social sciences**
- **Hosted two workshops for academics and data scientists about the requirements and best practices for a viable data commons**
- **Will use this knowledge to pursue the actual construction and management of the Civil Justice Data Commons if IRG proposal accepted**
- **Will engage with stakeholders to encourage adoption of the Civil Justice Data Commons if IRG proposal accepted**

Suggested length: 45(s)

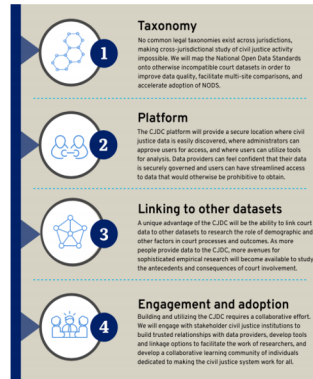
Project Evolution

We learned that legal service providers and researchers are the ones who are most comfortable with the idea of the Civil Justice Data Commons because they want to be able to provide a quantitative analysis of the work that they do to funders. We also learned that the courts themselves are not opposed wholesale to the CJDC because they see it as a tool that can potentially improve their operating efficiency and expand access to justice. As a result, during our several workshops, we created a set of rules and features for the CJDC that makes it appealing to legal service providers, researchers, and courts. Through our research, we have also focused on ethical aspects of conducting research using the court data, and with linkages to additional sources.

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Please organize the contents of slides (2) and (3) as a quad-chart using the template below. The quad chart should not be included in your lightning talks but should be submitted to NSF S&CC through an upload link that will be provided in the coming weeks.