



THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA



# ICAN!: ACCESSING RIGHTS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

A Study of the Interactive Community Assistance Network:  
A Kiosk and Web Based Self-Help Legal Services System



by **Dr. James W. Meeker and Richard Utman**



AN EVALUATION OF  
THE LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF ORANGE COUNTY'S  
INTERACTIVE COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE  
NETWORK  
**(I-CAN!)** PROJECT

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May 22, 2002

**Table of Contents**

Table of Contents ..... i

Executive Summary ..... ii

Introduction ..... 1

Description ..... 3

Development ..... 6

I-CAN! Modules ..... 11

Location ..... 14

Court Personnel Interviews ..... 19

User Surveys ..... 23

User Interviews ..... 35

GIS Analysis ..... 39

Conclusions ..... 45

Appendix A: I-CAN! Flyer ..... 48

Appendix B: Survey One ..... 50

Appendix C: Survey Two ..... 51

## ***Executive Summary***

This is an evaluation of the development and early deployment of the Legal Aid Society of Orange County's (LASOC) Interactive Community Assistance Network (I-CAN!). I-CAN! is an innovative attempt to use technology by LASOC to increase access to justice for their client community and to reduce the burden on the judicial system created by the increasing numbers of *pro per* litigants. The basic conclusion is that I-CAN! works and its various modules produce forms and pleadings that conform to Judicial Council standards. Survey and interview data indicate that users overwhelmingly find I-CAN! very helpful and would recommend it to others. Interview data of judges and court personnel indicate that all of the judges who were aware of I-CAN!, and most of the court personnel see I-CAN! as beneficial, helping *pro per* litigants to prepare more readable, better prepared and useable pleadings which in turn makes their job easier. There are some perceptual data suggesting I-CAN! helps *pro per* litigants in terms of better preparation for their litigation and better outcomes. It is important to stress that this particular conclusion is tentative and based on limited perceptual data from one judge. While evidence of helpfulness does not appear to vary across modules, ease of use does. Analysis of the developmental history indicates creation of in house expertise in module construction is more effective than reliance upon outside consultants and/or contractors.

The evaluation also indicates that I-CAN!, as operated during this evaluation, is not without problems. Recommendations are made to improve the validity and utility of its online data collection system. Field observations indicate that the kiosk based version

## Meeker & Utman I-CAN! Evaluation

of I-CAN! appears to work best at the courthouse where the users are going to file their pleadings. It is at its strongest when it is part of an integrated system of *pro per* assistance. Given the observation above, it is important that when future modules are developed, there is full consultation with other service providers and court personnel that are likely to interact with the users of that particular module. Periodic consultation with these individuals can provide a valuable source of information on how well I-CAN! is operating in the field and what modifications need to be made.

In summary I-CAN! represents a bold attempt to expand legal services to LASOC's client community through the use of technology. It also provides the potential to systematically inform LASOC how well these services are permeating throughout that community. It appears to be helping the courts as well as LASOC's client community. However, the full impact of I-CAN! cannot be assessed until it matures and reaches a level of stability in its development.

## **Introduction**

In 1996 the Access to Justice Working Group estimated that at best only 28 percent of the legal need of the poor in California was being partially met. This lack of access increases even more if you take into consideration the working poor, near poor and moderate-income population.<sup>1</sup> A major consequence of this lack of access has been an increased burden on the justice system especially in the area of court resources needed to deal with parties trying to represent themselves without an attorney.<sup>2</sup> In an effort to use technology to address this problem, the Legal Aid Society of Orange County (LASOC) and the Superior Court of Orange County created the Interactive Community Assistance Network (I-CAN!) project. This report is an initial evaluation of the development and early deployment of I-CAN!.<sup>3</sup>

The primary goal of I-CAN! is to explore using technology to assist *pro per*<sup>4</sup> litigants with certain legal pleadings. Experience has shown that individuals seeking to file pleadings with the court without benefit of counsel slow the judicial process, contribute to the burden of over crowded dockets, and request assistance from judicial personnel that is often not available and sometimes not allowed. Because *pro per* litigants often cannot successfully complete the required forms when initiating or

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<sup>1</sup> *And Justice For All: Fulfilling the Promise of Access to Civil Justice in California*, State Bar of California, 1996 pp 37-42.

<sup>2</sup> See Finding 11, *And Justice For All*, p 47.

<sup>3</sup> This evaluation was funded in part by a grant from LASOC to the University of California, grant No. LASOC-29837.

<sup>4</sup> An abbreviation of the Latin phrase, *in propria persona*, “in one’s own proper person.” This phrase as well as the phrase *pro se* refers to parties in legal actions representing themselves without benefit of legal counsel. See *Black’s Law Dictionary, Fifth Edition*. St. Paul Minn: West Publishing Company, 1979, pp 712 & 1099.

## Meeker & Utman I-CAN! Evaluation

responding to various kinds of lawsuits, they encounter serious problems concerning access to justice. A significant number of *pro per* litigants cannot afford counsel and are in the poverty population that LASOC represents.<sup>5</sup>

This evaluation focuses on a general description of the project, its development, interviews with court personnel on their reaction to the project, interviews with a sample of users, and an analysis of a sample of user evaluations. This evaluation has been ongoing during the development and implementation of the project. Because I-CAN! is expanding through the deployment of new kiosks, the creation of new modules and new services such as electronic filing, this should be seen as an initial evaluation, not a complete evaluation of the entire project. Although this evaluation focuses on a limited number of modules and specific kiosk locations, enough experience with the project and observations have been made to allow the evaluators to make a number of findings about the strengths and weaknesses of the project. The full impact of I-CAN! and its potential impact on the legal system and its users will not be known until the project reaches a level of stability in its development and implementation.

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<sup>5</sup> I-CAN!, Self-Help Technology for Unrepresented Litigants, Bob Cohen, Executive Director of the Legal Aid Society of Orange County (hereinafter cited as I-CAN!).

## **Description**

I-CAN!, in its kiosk form, is a computer (which is hosted by a centralized server) and a printer housed in a cabinet that combines computer text, sound, and video in a highly unique, “user friendly” manner. It makes the process of preparing court forms as easy as technically possible, while at the same time ensuring conformity with court requirements.<sup>6</sup> It is also multilingual, with modules available in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

There are several components that make the system “user friendly” and are designed to handle problems of literacy,<sup>7</sup> lack of training and fear that contribute to the digital divide between the affluent and the poor.<sup>8</sup> Where appropriate, a touch screen interface is employed, and where text or number input is required, a standard keyboard is used. Screen text instructions are read to users by an on-screen video guide that facilitates use by those with low levels of literacy. The user controls the pace of presentation. A screen will remain open for approximately four minutes for the user to consider a response before closing and reverting back to the language selection screen.

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<sup>6</sup> For another general description of I-CAN! and its history, see Eric Kleiman, “Touch-Screen” *LSC’s equal Justice* Spring 2002 p 22 (hereinafter cited as Kleiman). For more general discussions of kiosks, see Legal Services Corporation, Office of Inspector General, *Increasing Legal Services Delivery Capacity Through Information Technology*, August 1996, LSC/OIG-95-035 (hereinafter cited LSC Office of Inspector General); National Center for State Courts, *Kiosks* Briefing Paper, [www.ncs.dni.us/ncsc/briefing/kiosks.htm](http://www.ncs.dni.us/ncsc/briefing/kiosks.htm) (hereinafter cited as Kiosks). Also see Appendix A for a flyer on the kiosk.

<sup>7</sup> All I-CAN! instructions are sent to Transcend, a literacy translation service, to assure that English and Spanish instructions are at or below a 5<sup>th</sup> grade literacy level.

<sup>8</sup> See Julia R. Gordon, “Legal Services and the Digital Divide,” *Management Information Exchange Journal*, Spring 2001 (hereinafter cited as Digital Divide).

## Meeker & Utman I-CAN! Evaluation

I-CAN! also has a password feature that allows the user to terminate a session and permits the user to return and complete the form from the same point at which it was terminated. This feature benefits users who have insufficient information or time to complete a pleading in one session.

The I-CAN! kiosks prepare original forms to be filed with the court clerk and copies for the user. I-CAN! also prints a missing information page to remind the user to insert needed information before the form is filed. The instruction page also informs the user how to file and serve the I-CAN! produced pleadings and provides information concerning other services available from community agencies. The Domestic Violence module, for example, will prepare the Temporary Restraining Orders and additional documents necessary to obtain orders for custody and visitation. It also has a video safety plan that provides information to help protect victims of domestic violence and a video court tour for those not familiar with the courthouse.

The kiosks also have some features that will allow for increased functionality in the future. For example, they have headphone/microphone combination units to provide the potential for direct access to a help desk. At the time of this evaluation, this function had not been implemented. LASOC and the Orange County Court system are also working on electronic filing of I-CAN! pleadings. However, this capability is just being developed as this evaluation report is being written.

The heart of the I-CAN! project is the programming. I-CAN! asks for discrete pieces of information one screen at a time and builds upon previous answers to guide the user through pre-determined pathways to produce and print a pleading or document. Hierarchical option choices that usually start with one's name and address and end with a brief narrative setting forth the facts of the case progress from simpler to more

## Meeker & Utman I-CAN! Evaluation

demanding requests for information. The programming has designed into it a number of decision points that will lead the user down different paths depending upon the answer given. As the programming gains information from the user, it allocates it to different forms as required and prompts for additional information as needed based on prior responses.

While kiosk technology has limitations, it does have the potential of enabling litigants to assert or defend their legal claims especially in those areas in which the courts are impacted by *pro pers*. It has the potential of increasing what users can do with limited legal assistance, but not the ability to meet all the legal needs of the poor. As observed by the Inspector General of the Legal Services Corporation:

Thus kiosks should be viewed as a medium to service only a segment of the total legal services caseload. That segment is large, but not so large that the need for legal services providers would be reduced at all. Kiosks can match LSC grantees with vast numbers of new clients, serve many who previously had no access to legal assistance, and thereby cut into the backlog of unmet legal need.<sup>9</sup>

I-CAN! is available on the web and does not require a kiosk to access it. Indeed, LASOC estimates that twenty percent of I-CAN!'s users have accessed it over the Internet. However, the major goal of the project is to increase access to justice for the poor, and that group, because of the digital divide, overwhelmingly access I-CAN! through kiosks at public locations at the courthouse and the Family Support Division of the District Attorney's office and not over the Internet.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> LSC Office of Inspector General, *supra*, note 6, p 13.

<sup>10</sup> See Digital Divide, *supra*, note 6.

## ***Development***

Federal resources for access to civil justice for the poor reached their highest level of support in 1980 and then declined radically during the next two decades.<sup>11</sup> Faced with shrinking resources, many legal aid organizations, including LASOC, had to resort to different strategies and legal services delivery mechanisms to provide for their clients. One approach is the development and use of clinics where one attorney or paralegal can assist many clients at once by giving educational sessions on how to fill out certain legal forms and documents. In many respects I-CAN! is the logical extension of this strategy through the application of advances in computer and information technology.<sup>12</sup> Colorado was one of the first jurisdictions to explore the use of kiosks for the delivery of legal services in 1987.<sup>13</sup> Arizona's project called QuickCourt, started in 1993,<sup>14</sup> is perhaps one of the best known and was the inspiration for I-CAN!. When Orange County Superior Court Judge John Wooley became aware of QuickCourt, during a visit to Phoenix, he approached Bob Cohen, the Executive Director of LASOC, to explore the possibility of developing such a system for Orange County.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, I-CAN! is not even the first California experiment with kiosks and the legal system. In 1992, the Long Beach

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<sup>11</sup> Access to Justice Working Group, *And Justice For All: Filling the Promise of Access to Civil Justice in California*, 1996, State Bar of California.

<sup>12</sup> For a discussion arguing for the increased adoption of technology in the delivery of legal services, see Meeker & Dombink, "Access To the Civil Courts for Those of Low and Moderate Means" *Southern California Law Review*, Vol 66:2217, July 1993. For a discussion of the potential hazards of increased use of technology in the delivery of legal services, see Zorza, "The Emerging Tech Challenge to the Legal Profession," *Judicature*, Vol 84, No 6, May-June 2001, p 302.

<sup>13</sup> Kiosks, *supra* note 6, LSC Office of Inspector General, *supra*, note 6.

<sup>14</sup> *Id.* While the QuickCourt project was one of the earliest and well known kiosk projects, it was terminated in 2000. However, the Arizona Supreme Court currently has self-service center PCs connected directly to their website providing many of the same functions; see [www.ksg.harvard.edu/innovat/winners/qcaz94.htm](http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/innovat/winners/qcaz94.htm).

<sup>15</sup> Kleinman, *supra*, note 6, p 37.

## Meeker & Utman I-CAN! Evaluation

Municipal Court introduced AutoClerk to handle parking, traffic, and small claims matters. Ventura County Municipal Court installed AutoClerk kiosks in area malls in 1993. While I-CAN! is not the first application of this technology for delivery of legal services, it is currently one of the most advanced applications that is providing services to users in the state.

Thus far I-CAN!'s development can be described in three phases:

1. Conceptualization phase: conducted by LASOC's Executive Director, Bob Cohen, and the staff of LASOC with assistance and guidance from Richard Zorza, who developed a prototype web based legal services system for The Fund for the City of New York. Initially I-CAN!, was to be programmed by Brett Heap of FarHeap Solutions (March, 1999 – May 1, 2000);
2. Proof of concept phase: Under the direction of Nick Homer, program director (May 12, 2000 – July 1, 2001);
3. Orange County expansion phase: Under the direction of A.J. Tavares, program director (July 10, 2001 to present).

The essence of I-CAN! is the melding of information processing technology with the requirements of legal pleadings via the system's programming. This is not a simple, straightforward task and created some difficulties in the early stages of the project. The structure of the Domestic Violence module, the first module attempted, has gone through three major iterations.

The first attempt, developed by Far Heap Solutions, with the assistance of Dr. Stephen Thaler, demonstrated the conflicts that can be created when two completely

different organizations with different goals embark on a unique project.<sup>16</sup> There was a fairly long learning curve of exploring potential different artificial intelligence technologies<sup>17</sup> and their suitability to providing the type of legal assistance contemplated. Part of this delay was the result of imperfect communication and different goals between attorneys and information technology professionals. During the early days of the project there was no written contract that addressed the issue of intellectual property rights. There was only a verbal agreement between LASOC and FarHeap Solutions promising to pay for the development of I-CAN!. At some point, FarHeap Solutions claimed ownership of I-CAN! with the intent to commercially exploit its potential.<sup>18</sup> Such ownership claims were completely in opposition to LASOC's desire to create a system that would be freely shared with other legal aid organizations to increase access to the courts for their client community.<sup>19</sup> This split of goals led to the termination of Far Heap Solutions' involvement in I-CAN!'s development.<sup>20</sup> Since the module that Far Heap Solutions had developed was not workable, it had no commercial value.

Under the guidance of Nick Homer, LASOC then employed a second outside programming firm, Cotelligent. It tried a different solution, with the intent to develop a general template that could be used with any future module, no matter what the substantive area involved. This proved to be a complex and time-consuming strategy. While it did produce a functioning module creating pleadings to assist with domestic

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<sup>16</sup> For an additional discussion of this problem, see Meeker and Utman, "Notes On Methodological Issues Encountered During A Field Evaluation Of A Pro Per Intervention" paper presented at the NLADA/AARP Evaluation Meeting, March 11 & 12, 2002, Washington, D.C. (hereinafter cited as Notes on Methodological Issues).

<sup>17</sup> For example, neural network approaches were considered as a possible programming strategy until it was determined it would not work.

<sup>18</sup> Later Dr. Thaler made a similar claim.

<sup>19</sup> Commercial exploitation was also counter to the interests of the major funders of I-CAN!, the Legal Services Corporation, California's IOLTA funding, and the Orange County Court system.

violence, Cotelligent did not produce a general template that could be used to generate other forms. Additionally, the module created by Cotelligent was not easily translatable to other languages.

Because of its complexity, the Domestic Violence module was not deployed until February 2001. The first module deployed, a simpler module, Answer to Paternity Complaint (Governmental) became operational at the Lamoreaux Justice Center on November 17, 2000. Learning from their first attempt and having employed copyright counsel, LASOC retained all legal rights relating to both modules. However, LASOC did provide assurance to the Legal Service Corporation (LSC) and the Judicial Council of California, Administrative Office to the Courts (AOC) that it would freely make the benefits of these modules and the underlying technology available to other LSC funded programs and to the Courts throughout the state of California.

Not entirely satisfied with the pace and expense of software development by Cotelligent, Mr. Homer created the first software development team housed within LASOC and working directly with LASOC staff. By June of 2001, Small Claims, Paternity Petition, Family Support Case Opening, License Denial Review, Wage Assignment Review and Fee Waiver were completed and deployed.

When A.J. Tavares became program director in July 10, 2001 he expanded the in-house development team and began an evaluation of the existing modules, making enhancements to them; created additional modules, translated modules into Spanish, and deployed additional kiosks in various locations. As a result of these enhancements, the user interface was refined to improve usability, as well as enable deployment via the

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<sup>20</sup> This split created the potential for litigation, but at this time all claims appear to have been dropped.

## Meeker & Utman I-CAN! Evaluation

Internet. In addition, the capability of customizing any module for use in areas outside of Orange County was completed and expansion of video help assistance was made possible for all modules. The purpose of the video was to accompany the text and assist in document preparation as well as provide a tour of the court.<sup>21</sup>

From I-CAN!'s development, it is clear that there can be a tension between those trying to write programs and those who are trying to outline the legal contingencies that have to be addressed in order to successfully complete pleadings acceptable to the court. This tension can become more problematic when there is lack of agreement about control and ownership of the project. LASOC's successful development of different I-CAN! modules at this point has clearly been the result of effectively developing its own programming expertise in-house.

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<sup>21</sup> The video was developed under the direction of Jeff Isbell, Director of Community Education and Training and the former Director of KYOU television.

## ***I-CAN! Modules***

One of I-CAN's most powerful features is its ability to select the appropriate court forms and ignore the others not needed by particular users. There are currently eight modules<sup>22</sup> that produce a combined total of up to twenty-one different forms.

1. Answer to Complaint for Parental Obligations (ACPO-G): 1299.04  
(Governmental)
2. Fee Waiver (FW): 982(a)(17)
3. License Denial Review (LD): 1296.95
4. Wage and Earnings Assignment Hearing (WE): 1299.28
5. Case Opening (CO):  
Orange County District Attorney Family Support Division
6. Domestic Violence Restraining Order (DV):  
DV-100 Application and Declaration for Order  
DV-100A Child Custody, Visitation, and Support Attachment to Application  
and Declaration for Order  
DV-110 Order to Show Cause and Temporary Restraining Order  
DV-120 Response to Application and Declaration for Order  
DV-130 Restraining Order After Hearing (CLETS)  
DV-140 Proof of Service  
(unnumbered) Declaration Re: Notice  
MC-020 Declaration attachment  
MC-150 Declaration Under Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and  
Enforcement Act  
1285.52 Financial Statement  
1296.31A Child Custody and Visitation Order Attachment  
1296.31B Child Support Information and Order Attachment
7. Petition to Establish Parental Relationship (PEPR):  
1296.60 Petition to Establish Parental Relationship  
1296.65 Response to Petition to Establish Parental Relationship  
1296.605 Summons  
1285 Order to Show Cause

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<sup>22</sup> Currently there are a number of other modules that are under development or planned.

Meeker & Utman I-CAN! Evaluation

1285.20      Application for Order and Supporting Declaration  
MC-150      Declaration Under Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and  
                 Enforcement Act

8. Small Claims (SC): Fact sheets, blank forms, and court directions map.<sup>23</sup>

Four modules produce only one completed form (ACPO-G, FW, LD, and WE).<sup>24</sup>

The DV pleadings are free of charge, but all other pleadings require a \$190 filing fee upon presentation to the clerk. Consequently, many of the indigent users also file an Application for Fee Waiver (FW) with their other pleadings. In this analysis, the FW was most often coupled with the Answer to Complaint for Parental Obligations (Governmental) ACPO-G.

The License Denial Review (LD) module produces an application to review the District Attorney's denial of the applicant's request to vacate the suspension of his driver's license for failure to pay child or spousal support. The Wage and Earnings Assignment Hearing (WE) module prepares an Order to Show Cause under California Rule of Court Rule 1299.28 to contest the assignment of wages for the payment of child support from the applicant's paycheck. The Case Opening (CO) module produces an information sheet for use only by the District Attorney of Orange County, who like all other California county district attorneys, is responsible for the collection of child support in his county. The Small Claims (SC) module provides no pleadings for filing, but prints blank forms and information sheets, which can be used to prepare on a typewriter a small claims complaint.

The Domestic Violence (DV) and Petition to Establish Parental Relationship (PEPR) modules can produce multiple forms. These particular modules demonstrate one

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<sup>23</sup> LASOC states that an upgraded module that provides necessary forms will be available in the near future.

## Meeker & Utman I-CAN! Evaluation

of the major strengths of I-CAN! in that a user does not have to decide which court forms are necessary for their pleadings. Rather the program produces the appropriate forms based on answers provided by the user. In addition, the user enters information on a screen once, and I-CAN inserts that information wherever it is needed, eliminating the duplication that those who fill out the forms by hand or typing must endure. Not only does this reduce the effort required to complete the forms, but it insures reliability of information contained in the pleadings.

Court pleading forms can and do change. Often such changes are relatively minor and technical in nature. The I-CAN! modules have been designed so that these changes can be quickly and easily made without modifying the user interface unless absolutely necessary.

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<sup>24</sup> In addition, these modules print blank forms needed to complete the pleadings, such as Proof of Service and Orders.

## ***Location***

At the time of this evaluation, a number of kiosks were in operation at different locations. All of these locations were visited, and the individuals in charge of the kiosks at these locations were interviewed. It is estimated that over 6,000 individuals have used I-CAN! between November 2000 and the winter of 2002.<sup>25</sup> I-CAN!'s data tracking system became operational in May 2001. From that point through April 2002, 5,174 pleadings and documents were created by I-CAN!. Unfortunately, the system as configured now, does not allow tabulations on how many pleadings and which modules are being used at each kiosk. LASOC is currently considering modification of the system to have this capability.

The most important location, and the one where the kiosks have been most used, is the Lamoreaux Justice Center. This courthouse location contains three kiosks: two that are open for the general public at the Family Law Information Center (FLIC) and one at the Community Services Project (CSP), both located on the seventh floor. All of the users at the CSP office were clients being assisted by the domestic violence counselors at CSP.

The FLIC staff member who is assigned the task of monitoring the kiosks is a member of the Court Clerk's staff. The kiosks are only available when she is on duty. She is instrumental in directing potential users to I-CAN! and provides assistance if needed. Because of this monitoring, these kiosks had a high user rate, were routinely restocked with paper when needed, and were quickly repaired if there were problems.

## Meeker & Utman I-CAN! Evaluation

Because of its high use rate, these kiosks were used to select users for more intensive interviews about the nature of their interaction with I-CAN!.

CSP is under contract with the county to provide assistance to domestic violence victims in applying for temporary restraining orders. Because I-CAN! also provides assistance in this area, this created a potential conflict. Civil courts can be seen as loosely structured formal organizations with different competing objectives and goals.<sup>26</sup> What judges may want out of a particular intervention is not necessarily what clerks and other support personnel want. In addition, these players may have different ideas of appropriate goals than LASOC, which is trying to implement the intervention.<sup>27</sup> In order to minimize potential conflicts between CSP, a compromise solution was worked out where the kiosk was placed in their space in the courthouse and users are referred to the kiosk after first dealing with their counselors. This solution appears to have worked well.

A kiosk was installed outside the small claims and civil court clerk's office of the Superior Court building in Fullerton (North Court) during the fall of 2001. In January 2002 it was removed for repairs. At the time of its installation, the five clerk supervisors were trained on how to operate the kiosk and what to do if it failed to function. An interview with one of these clerks suggests that this kiosk was not heavily used. This clerk did see some I-CAN! produced small claims forms. It was the clerk's understanding that I-CAN! was focused primarily on family law issues and that North Court did not handle these types of cases (its primary focus is on criminal and non-family

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<sup>25</sup> Kleiman, *supra*, note 6 page 24.

<sup>26</sup> See Malcom Feely, *Court Reform on Trial: Why Simple Solutions Fail*, A Twentieth Century Fund Report, 1983, for a development of this idea as applied to the criminal court system.

<sup>27</sup> Notes on Methodological Issues, *supra*, note 17.

## Meeker & Utman I-CAN! Evaluation

law civil cases). The utilization of this kiosk will likely change when modules that are more applicable to the cases handled by this court are implemented.

There are three kiosks located in the lobby of the District Attorney's Family Support Division office. A number of the receptionists in charge of monitoring the kiosks were interviewed about their experiences. A primary reason for locating kiosks in this location are that the modules are designed to handle actions out of this office (Answer to Complaint for Parental Obligations Governmental ACPO-G, Case Opening CO, and Petition to Establish Parental Relationships PERP). One receptionist suggested that the ACPO-G was rarely used because a large sign in the lobby directed individuals to see a receptionist. Once they had done so, they usually wanted to speak to someone in person about their case, not just file an answer. When such a request was made, the individual was directed to a case worker, not to I-CAN!. One receptionist did notice a learning curve among some kiosks users. Users were seen producing an expected pleading for this location, like a case opening, and then later returning to use unrelated modules, like the Domestic Violence module. Interviews also indicated that the kiosks operated more smoothly and had fewer problems like paper jams when those in charge of monitoring the equipment took an active interest in the project.

Kiosks are also located in two non-legal settings. One is in the lobby of Irvine's City Hall. Interviews with the receptionists in charge of monitoring the kiosk did not appear as strongly committed to the project as those located in legal settings. It also did not appear that it was as heavily used. The other was located at the San Juan Capistrano Public Library. It also did not appear heavily used.

Putting I-CAN! in a public library created a potential conflict of goals between different organizations.<sup>28</sup> A primary goal of LASOC with I-CAN! was the development of an intervention that could assist many *pro per* users of the court. This means locating kiosks in public accessible places like public libraries. I-CAN!'s development was largely funded by grants from the Legal Services Corporation (LSC). During the past two decades, the history of LSC funding for field legal aid organizations, like LASOC, has been characterized by increased restrictions on who are eligible clients for federally funded legal assistance. These restrictions cover income eligibility requirements, citizenship restrictions, and types of legal assistance. When kiosks are placed in public areas with open access, it is difficult to control who will use the services. While there have been some discussion on possible methods to restrict users,<sup>29</sup> these methods were not built into I-CAN!.

This conflict became even more defined when LASOC approached the public library system for the location of a kiosk. As a public institution, this organization took the position that all services available on their premises should be open to the public regardless of income or citizenship status. This conflict will become even greater as the web version of I-CAN! becomes more heavily used. The solution to this goal conflict adopted by LASOC has been the development of modules that are specifically designed to assist their client community. While others may use the modules, because of public access, the modules are not designed to assist the non-eligible community, even though they may provide some assistance to this community. This strategy has apparently been accepted by LSC.

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<sup>28</sup> Notes on Methodological Issues, *supra*, *zx* note 17.

## Meeker & Utman I-CAN! Evaluation

In the future, when LASOC incorporates the ability to generate kiosk specific use statistics better understanding about location variation will be possible. From our observations, it appears that the family law courthouse is the most heavily used with public non-legal settings as the least used. This is predictable given that the pleading modules concentrate on family law issues and the pleadings have to be filed at court. With the development of electronic filing and its incorporation into the kiosks this situation may change. Electronic filing will allow better exploitation of the advantages of public accessible kiosks in areas away from the courthouse.

Another important observation is the involvement of those in charge of monitoring the kiosks. When these individuals were experienced with the system, had positive attitudes about the program, and served as gatekeepers directing individuals to the kiosk for assistance, the kiosks were used more and maintained at a higher level of functionality (fewer paper jams, crashed systems).

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<sup>29</sup> For a discussion of different technology solutions such as smart cards, see LSC Office of Inspector General, p 14.

## ***Court Personnel Interviews***

Under the leadership of Alan Slater, Chief Executive Officer of the Orange County Superior Court, the Court partnered with LASOC to obtain the initial grants to create I-CAN!. As discussed in the introduction, the Court is concerned about the increasing numbers of pro per litigants, the potential negative impact they are having on the judicial system, as well as the negative impact on access to justice. Consequently, it is important to know how the individuals in the court system who are most likely to have interaction with I-CAN! feel about the system and how well they think it is working. Since data collection for this evaluation started in September of 2001, it was decided to restrict interview data collection of users and court personnel to the two modules that had been the most used at that time. These modules were the Domestic Violence (DV) and the Answer to Complaint for Parental Obligations (ACPO-G).

During February of 2002, when the judicial interviews took place, the Family Law Division of the Orange County Superior had assigned one Judicial Officer to hear domestic violence cases (DV) and three to hear District Attorney child support enforcement cases (DA). All four of these Judicial Officers (judges) were interviewed<sup>30</sup> along with two additional judges who were likely to have handled I-CAN! cases in the past while serving as backup judges to the other four.

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<sup>30</sup> Most of the interviews were conducted face to face, one was by phone.

Meeker & Utman I-CAN! Evaluation

The interviews were open ended and loosely structured, addressing the judge’s knowledge of I-CAN! and reactions towards the pleadings it produced. Table one summarizes the general responses in the interviews.

Table 1. Judicial Officer Responses To Interview Questions

Questions	DA case judges	DV case judge	Other judges
Number interviewed	3	1	2
1. Do you deal with <i>pro per</i> litigants? (frequency)	Yes (80-100%)	Yes (100%)	2 Yes (N/A)
2. Do you know what I-CAN! is?	2 Yes 1 No	1 Yes	2 Yes
3. How familiar with I-CAN! are you?	2 moderate 1 none	moderate	1 moderate 1 low
4. Can you recognize I-CAN! pleadings?	2 Yes 1 No	Yes	1 Yes 1 No
5. What is the quality of I-CAN! pleadings?	2 Good 1 N/A	Fine	1 Okay 1 N/A
6. Are I-CAN! produced pleadings acceptable?	3 Yes*	Yes	2 Yes*

\*The judges who did not know what I-CAN! was at the start of the interview nevertheless accepted it in theory, after the evaluator described I-CAN! to them.

Five out of the six judges who dealt with cases likely to have I-CAN! produced pleadings knew about the project, and four had at least moderate familiarity with the project and could recognize I-CAN! produced pleadings. One DA judge, who said he was not familiar with the project, expressed favorable support of the concept once the project was described to him. The majority of the judges indicated that the quality of the pleadings were good, fine or okay, and all felt that the pleadings were acceptable.

In general the judges made a number of favorable comments about I-CAN!. Of great importance to the judges was the contrast between hand-written forms and printed I-CAN! pleadings: “Hand-written forms are a mess, especially if taken home,” and “I-CAN! has made my job easier.” There were some attitudes expressed that I-CAN!

pleadings can positively influence outcomes: “Being able to read it [the pleadings] makes it easier to grant the relief sought,” and “[the I-CAN! user’s] chances of being successful increases dramatically.” There were also statements suggesting that I-CAN! helped *pro pers* file more complete pleadings and better prepared them for their court appearances: “I-CAN! [produced documents are] more complete,” “I-CAN! makes sure the information is correct and accurate,” “I-CAN! users tend to ask fewer questions, so they seem to know what they are doing better,” “I-CAN! helps to calm people down and be better prepared when they come to court,” “[I-CAN! users] know what the court is interested in,” and “I-CAN! helps with education.”

During January of 2002, four judicial filing clerks were interviewed about their experiences with I-CAN!. Because these individuals accept the pleadings to be filed and make the decision to reject incomplete or improperly completed pleadings, they are in a unique position to judge the impact of I-CAN!. The interview with the DV filing clerk was most extensive. Like the judges, she generally liked I-CAN! pleadings because they were easier to read, more complete, and had fewer items missing when compared to the hand-written forms submitted by most *pro pers* not using I-CAN!. She felt the quality of I-CAN! pleadings was better. I-CAN! pleadings that were rejected generally had problems with failure to provide the name or a physical description of the person to be restrained or had an insufficient declaration of the violence facts. However, these problems were no greater than with non-I-CAN! pleadings.

The clerk at the DA filing window handling child support collection cases felt that I-CAN! pleadings were of a better quality than other *pro per* pleadings. Like the others, he especially appreciated that the pleadings were printed, but also felt they had more

## Meeker & Utman I-CAN! Evaluation

information. He estimated that about 75 per cent of the I-CAN! pleadings were acceptable the first time submitted.

Another clerk, who was serving as a general backup clerk at this time, felt that I-CAN! produced pleadings had no impact on her job. She felt they were no worse and no better than pleadings produced by *pro pers* in general. She felt that most *pro pers* did not know what they were doing or what was going to happen. She estimated that only about 50 per cent of the filings she received could be accepted on first submission.

A final clerk who was interviewed handled a large number of fee waivers. She was familiar with I-CAN! and felt that its major advantage was the production of printed pleadings.

In general, the court personnel were favorable toward I-CAN!. I-CAN!'s capability of producing printed forms appeared to be its major advantage. Some of the judges also felt that I-CAN! had a positive influence on quality, outcome, and education of users.

**User Surveys**

I-CAN! users were measured in several different ways. There were paper surveys that were filled out by users, on line surveys, and a sample of users were intensively interviewed. Since I-CAN! involves an interaction between computer technology and a user, it has the capability to gather evaluative information during the interactive process. Indeed, I-CAN! has a series of on line satisfaction measures that are systematically gathered while the pleadings are being printed. However, as currently structured, these measures are totaled giving global measures on user responses for individual measures. The data were not collected in such a manner to create a data matrix of individual users and their specific responses. This limits the ability to conduct multivariate analyses to check different response patterns by user characteristics (for example, differences between men and women, ethnic groups, etc).<sup>31</sup>

To overcome this limitation two paper surveys that were collected from users were used to conduct the multivariate analysis: one from December 11, 2000 to June 5, 2001 with 296 respondents and one from June 8, 2001 to July 18, 2001 with 45 respondents (see Appendix B and Appendix C).

Table 2: Survey One How Easy Did You Find I-CAN! To Use

Easiness	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
(1) Very easy	174	58.8	58.8	58.8
(2) Easy	91	30.7	30.7	89.5
(3) Average	27	9.1	9.1	98.6
(4) Difficult	1	.3	.3	99.0
(5) Very difficult	3	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	296	100.0	100.0	

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<sup>31</sup> Notes on Methodological Issues, *supra*, 18, p 5.

## Meeker & Utman I-CAN! Evaluation

The data contained in the two surveys are different; therefore, they have to be analyzed separately. Table two indicates that 89.5 percent of the respondents found that I-CAN! was either very easy or easy to use. The mean response was 1.54.

Table three indicates a similar pattern for how helpful I-CAN was.

Table 3: Survey One How Helpful Was I-CAN!?

Helpfulness	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
(1) Very helpful	219	74.0	74.0	74.0
(2) Helpful	52	17.6	17.6	91.6
(3) Average	20	6.8	6.8	98.3
(4) Not Helpful	3	1.0	1.0	99.3
(5) Not helpful at all	2	.7	.7	100.0
Total	296	100.0	100.0	

92 percent indicate that I-CAN! was helpful or very helpful with a mean response of 1.37. For both questions, respondents were very positive about I-CAN!; less than 2 percent of the respondents did not find I-CAN! helpful or difficult to use.

Table four indicates that most of the users in the survey were using the domestic violence or the answer to paternity complaint (83.1%).

Table 4: Survey One Module Distribution

Module	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Fee Waiver Alone	14	4.7	4.7	4.7
Answer to Complaint Parental Obligation (ACPO-G)	177	59.8	60.0	64.7
Paternity Complaint	19	6.4	6.4	71.2
Domestic Violence (DV)	69	23.3	23.4	94.6
Small Claims	10	3.4	3.4	98.0
Case Opening	4	1.4	1.4	99.3
License Denial	1	.3	.3	99.7
Wage Assignment	1	.3	.3	100.0
Total	295	99.7	100.0	
Missing	1	.3		
Total	296	100.0		

While too few of most of the modules are in the sample to make comparisons to see if there are differences in terms of ease of use and helpfulness, we can compare the

two most frequently used modules, the ACPO-G and the DV. Table five presents the mean values for the two modules, and Table six presents the analysis of variance (ANOVA) results for these comparisons. For helpfulness, there was no significant difference between the modules; however, the DV module was significantly easier to use than the ACPO-G module.

Table 5: Survey One Mean Differences For Modules

Evaluation	Module	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
EASY	ACPO-G	177	1.63	.80	6.03E-02	1.51	1.75	1	5
	DV	69	1.35	.56	6.79E-02	1.21	1.48	1	3
	Total	246	1.55	.75	4.80E-02	1.46	1.65	1	5
HELPFUL	ACPO-G	177	1.40	.73	5.51E-02	1.29	1.51	1	5
	DV	69	1.23	.46	5.52E-02	1.12	1.34	1	3
	Total	246	1.35	.67	4.28E-02	1.27	1.44	1	5

Table 6: Survey One ANOVA Table For Ease of Use and Helpfulness

Evaluation		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
EASY	Between Groups	4.031	1	4.031	7.297	.007
	Within Groups	134.782	244	.552		
	Total	138.813	245			
HELPFUL	Between Groups	1.422	1	1.422	3.189	.075
	Within Groups	108.810	244	.446		
	Total	110.232	245			

Toward the end of the time period this survey was in effect, the fee waiver module was introduced. The fee waiver pleadings can either be produced alone or along with another pleading. Table seven shows that fee waivers are not randomly distributed across all modules,<sup>32</sup> but are concentrated with either the ACPO-G module or alone.

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<sup>32</sup> There is a significant, at the .001 level, chi square of 25.807 with 7 degrees of freedom, indicating a strong association between module and fee waiver. According to LASOC the fee waiver module is now the most used module.

Meeker & Utman I-CAN! Evaluation

Table 7: Survey One Fee Waivers By Modules

Module		Fee Waivers		Total
		No	Yes	
Fee Waivers Alone	Count	0	13	13
	% within MODULE		100.0%	100.0%
Answer to Complaint Parental Obligation	Count	8	11	19
	% within MODULE	42.1%	57.9%	100.0%
Paternity Complaint	Count	5	1	6
	% within MODULE	83.3%	16.7%	100.0%
Domestic Violence	Count	4		4
	% within MODULE	100.0%		100.0%
Small Claims	Count	5	1	6
	% within MODULE	83.3%	16.7%	100.0%
Case Opening	Count	3	1	4
	% within MODULE	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
License Denial	Count	1	0	1
	% within MODULE	100.0%		100.0%
Wage Assignment	Count	1	0	1
	% within MODULE	100.0%		100.0%
Total	Count	27	27	54
	% within MODULE	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%

The table clearly indicates that fee waivers are most likely to occur by themselves or with the ACPO-G module.

The survey also asked users from whom, if anybody, they received help from in connection with their pleadings. Table eight gives the percentage of users receiving help from different sources by modules. As was expected, source of help did not vary by module except for assistance from CSP counselors and the Family Law Facilitators. CSP counselors mainly provided assistance for the DV module, which is the primary focus of

Meeker & Utman I-CAN! Evaluation

the CSP program. The Family Law Facilitators mainly provided assistance with the ACPO-G module, which is the module most relevant to their job. No respondents

Table 8: Source of Help by Module

Module	No Help	CSP	Attorney	Legal Aid	Fam Law Facilitator	Friend	Religious Leader
Fee Waivers Alone	28.6% (14)	0% (14)	0% (14)	7.1% (14)	35.7% (14)	0% (14)	0% (14)
Answer to Complaint Parental Obligation	26.1% (176)	1.1% (177)	11.1% (177)	21.5% (177)	40.7% (177)	8.5% (177)	0% (177)
Paternity Complaint	36.8% (19)	0% (19)	0% (19)	21.1% (19)	31.6% (19)	5.3% (19)	0% (19)
Domestic Violence	20.3% (69)	53.6% (69)	0% (69)	29.0% (69)	5.8% (69)	8.7% (69)	0% (68)
Small Claims	10.0% (10)	10.0% (10)	10.0% (10)	10.0% (10)	10.0% (10)	10.0% (10)	0% (10)
Case Opening	25.0% (4)	25.0% (4)	0% (4)	0% (4)	28.0% (4)	0% (4)	0% (4)
License Denial	0% (1)	0% (1)	0% (1)	0% (1)	0% (1)	0% (1)	0% (1)
Wage Assignment	0% (1)	10% (1)	0% (1)	0% (1)	100% (1)	0% (1)	0% (1)
Total	294	295	295	295	295	295	294
Pearson Chi Square	4.336	121.294	9.149	6.381	33.456	2.119	-
df	7	7	7	7	7	7	-
p	.740	.000	.242	.496	.000	.953	-

reported receiving assistance from religious leaders. It is speculated that once I-CAN! is more widely used outside the courthouse that patterns of assistance will change.

Table eight offers some insight to the ANOVA differences between DV and ACPO-G on ease of use. Tables five and six indicate that the DV module was considered significantly easier to use. Table eight indicates that users of this module were more likely to receive help (53.6%) from CSP in contrast to users of ACPO-G who received less help (40.7%) from the Family Law Facilitator. To test if receiving help explains the difference between perceived ease of using the two modules, we duplicated the analysis

in Tables five and six restricting the analysis to only users who received help.<sup>33</sup> Table nine indicates even users receiving help found the DV module is easier to use than the ACPO-G module. Table ten indicates this difference is significant.

Table 9: Survey One Mean Differences Of Ease Of Use For Modules By Users With Help

Module	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
ACPO-G	72	1.65	.89	.10	1.44	1.86	1	5
DV	37	1.32	.53	8.71E-02	1.15	1.50	1	3
Total	109	1.54	.80	7.66E-02	1.39	1.69	1	5

Table 10: Survey One ANOVA Table For Ease Of Use For Users With Help

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.637	1	2.637	4.247	.042
Within Groups	66.428	107	.621		
Total	69.064	108			

Consequently, the higher assistance rate for the DV module does not explain the difference in perceived ease of use by users. This consistent finding of different ease of use between these modules is perplexing. The ACPO-G module produces a single form while the DV module produces multiple forms suggesting more time and effort by the user and a greater amount of information needed. Alternatively, it may be in the manner that help is being provided by CSP and the Family Law Facilitator (FLF). At CSP the counselors prescreen potential users, show them a video, and provide some counseling before the user attempts to complete an I-CAN! pleading. In contrast the FLF staff typically refer potential users to I-CAN! with instructions to return with a completed pleading for consultation later in the day. This suggests that the perceived ease of use of

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<sup>33</sup> Of the 37 DV users receiving help, 36 had help from CSP; of the 72 ACPO-G users receiving help, 71

I-CAN! can be strongly influenced by the type of assistance available for users. To test this a two way ANOVA was calculated with module type (DV/ACPO-G) and help (help or no help) as the independent variables. The analysis indicates only a significant module effect and no significant help or interaction effects. An alternative explanation may be sex of user. Women primarily use the DV module while men mainly use the ACPO-G. Unfortunately the second survey, which asked for sex identification, did not include the ease of use variable so this explanation cannot be tested with these data. The interview data (discussed below) suggest a possible sex ethnicity effect. The survey found that the DV module was used primarily by white and Hispanic women who appeared to have a better education than the Hispanic men who primarily used the ACPO-G module. However, these data are strongly impressionistic and are based on few observations (see interview data section below). Clearly this issue needs further investigation and future online surveys should be constructed to gather information pertaining to ease of use variation.

Survey two has a much smaller sample and asks a different set of questions (see Appendix C). This survey did not ask how easy I-CAN! was to use, but did ask how helpful it was. Table eleven indicates that this smaller sample found I-CAN! to be even more helpful than the first sample. 87 percent of the respondents indicated that I-CAN!

Meeker & Utman I-CAN! Evaluation

Table 11: Survey Two, How Helpful I-CAN! Was

Helpfulness	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
(1) Very helpful	39	86.7	86.7	86.7
(2) Helpful	6	13.3	13.3	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

was very helpful and the remaining 13 percent indicated I-CAN! was helpful. Like survey one, survey two indicated the heaviest used modules were DV and ACPO-G (see Table twelve).

Table 12: Survey Two Module Distribution

Module	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Fee Wavier	7	15.6	15.6	15.6
Answer to Complaint Parental Obligation	20	44.4	44.4	60.0
Parental Complaint	6	13.3	13.3	73.3
Domestic Violence	10	22.2	22.2	95.6
Case Opening	2	4.4	4.4	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

While the second survey asked for age information, all users indicate they were in the 18 to 61 category. Future surveys will need a much finer categorization of age for this variable to provide useful information. A similar problem occurred with the income question with responses varying from hourly, weekly, monthly and yearly data coupled with many failing to answer the question. The second survey also asked for sex and ethnicity information reported in Tables thirteen and fourteen.

Table 13: Survey Two, Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	21	46.7	48.8	48.8
Male	22	48.9	51.2	100.0
Total	43	95.6	100.0	
Missing	2	4.4		
Total	45	100.0		

Meeker & Utman I-CAN! Evaluation

Table 14: Survey Two, Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Hispanic	22	48.9	48.9	48.9
White	15	33.3	33.3	82.2
Asian	4	8.9	8.9	91.1
African American	3	6.7	6.7	97.8
Mixed	1	2.2	2.2	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

While I-CAN! appears to be equally used by men and women, the users are primarily Hispanic and white, reflecting the largest ethnic groups in the county. These demographic characteristics are not equally distributed across modules.

Table fifteen indicates that both the FW and DV modules are disproportionately used by women while men are more likely to use ACPO-G and Parental Complaint modules. There does not appear to be a statistically significant relationship between gender and module; however, the numbers are small and there are a large number of cells that have less than five observations making statistical tests on these data problematic.

Table 15: Survey Two, Module By Gender

Module		Gender		Total
		Female	Male	
Fee Waiver Alone	Count	5	2	7
	% within Module	71.4%	28.6%	100.0%
Answer to Complaint Parental Obligation	Count	7	12	19
	% within Module	36.8%	63.2%	100.0%
Parental Complaint	Count	2	4	6
	% within Module	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
Domestic Violence	Count	6	3	9
	% within Module	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%
Case Opening	Count	1	1	2
	% within Module	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	21	22	43
	% within Module	48.8%	51.2%	100.0%

Meeker & Utman I-CAN! Evaluation

Table sixteen indicates that the ACPO-G module is more likely to have Hispanic users. The table also indicates that the DV module is used primarily by both whites and Hispanics. As was the case with the prior table, there is no statistically significant association between module and ethnicity; the small numbers indicates such tests are problematic.

Table 16: Survey Two, Module By Ethnicity

Module		Ethnicity			Total
		Hispanic	White	Other	
Fee Waive Alone	Count	3	2	2	7
	% within Module	42.9%	28.6%	28.6%	100.0%
Answer to Complaint Parental Obligation	Count	12	5	3	20
	% within Module	60.0%	25.0%	15.0%	100.0%
Parental Complaint	Count	3	1	2	6
	% within Module	50.0%	16.7%	33.3%	100.0%
Domestic Violence	Count	4	5	1	10
	% within Module	40.0%	50.0%	10.0%	100.0%
Case Opening	Count		2		2
	% within Module		100.0%		100.0%
Total	Count	22	15	8	45
	% within Module	48.9%	33.3%	17.8%	100.0%

Survey two also asked if the user uses the Internet. Table seventeen indicates that Internet use varies greatly by module. Indeed, users of the ACPO-G module appear to be disproportionately non-users of the net. If the modules are collapsed into two categories, ACPO-G versus other modules, there is a significant association between Internet use and modules, with ACPO-G module users being less likely to use the Internet.<sup>34</sup> This could

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<sup>34</sup> Pearson Chi Square = 6.910, df = 1 and p = .009.

partially explain why ACPO-G module users find it significantly less easy to use than DV module users.

Table 17: Survey Two, Module By Internet Use

Module		Internet Use		Total
		No	Yes	
Fee Waiver Alone	Count	2	4	6
	% within Module	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%
Answer to Complaint Parental Obligation	Count	14	5	19
	% within Module	73.7%	26.3%	100.0%
Parental Complaint	Count	3	3	6
	% within Module	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Domestic Violence	Count	3	7	10
	% within Module	30.0%	70.0%	100.0%
Case Opening	Count		2	2
	% within Module		100.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	22	21	43
	% within Module	51.2%	48.8%	100.0%

Finally, survey two asked where respondents would like to use I-CAN!. The survey provided a choice of five locations, and users were allowed to pick as many locations as they wanted.<sup>35</sup> Community centers at forty four percent was the most popular location followed by police station (31%), bank (24%), grocery store (20%), and clinic (18%).

While these surveys were originally administered by hand, they were eventually adopted as part of the modules with users filling them out while waiting for forms to be printed. As noted earlier, the data files were not set up to allow for the type of analysis

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<sup>35</sup> The categories were not mutually exclusive; therefore percentages may add to more than 100.

that was done above. The recommendation is that LASOC change their data collection format to allow for this type of analysis. As the analysis above indicates, this can lead to valuable information about users' responses to the system. In general, users found the modules very helpful with little variation among modules. There are differences in perceptions about the ease of use of the modules that runs counter intuitive. While the analysis above suggests some possible explanation for these differences, the data are too tentative at this point to make any definitive conclusions. Online versions of these surveys need to be expanded to specifically address ease of use of different sections of I-CAN!, as well as better education, income, demographic characteristics, and expectation perceptions.

## ***User Interviews***

Forty six people (30 females and 16 males) were interviewed in depth after using I-CAN! at the Lamoreaux Courthouse during the fall of 2001. Though they ranged in age from eighteen to over sixty one years, most of interview subjects (76%) were between the ages of eighteen and thirty eight years. Only DV module users (30) and ACPO-G users (16) were interviewed. The subjects were asked if they would agree to answer a number of questions about their I-CAN! experience. The interviews were very loosely structured but efforts were made to ensure similar type questions were asked of all users. While they were not asked how helpful I-CAN! was, they were asked if they would refer I-CAN! to someone with a similar problem and all but one said yes. The one hold out qualified their recommendation to someone who had some computer experience.

Of the thirty DV module users, twenty six were female and twenty four were between eighteen and thirty eight years of age. Eighteen were white, eight Hispanic, two African American, and one was Pacific Islander (this information is missing for one subject). DV users reported having annual incomes of from less than \$9,999 to over \$70,000 per year, with eight reporting annual incomes under \$10,000 and three reporting annual incomes of over \$70,000. The rest were spread fairly evenly across income ranges. Thirteen were below \$29,999 per year, and seventeen were below \$39,999 per year. Thirteen reported annual incomes over \$40,000 per year.

Of the sixteen ACPO-G users, twelve were male and twelve were between eighteen and thirty eight years of age. Nine were Hispanic, six were white, and one was Asian. ACPO-G users reported having annual incomes of from less than \$9,999 to not

## Meeker & Utman I-CAN! Evaluation

more than \$39,999 per year, with six reporting annual incomes under \$10,000 and two reporting annual incomes of between \$30,000 and \$39,000. Ten had annual incomes below \$19,999 per year and two had incomes above \$30,000 per year.

Comparing the two module users, ACPO-G users were more likely to be male, older and earned less than the DV users. The ACPO-G users were also disproportionately Hispanic in comparison to DV users.

All but one person interviewed found out about I-CAN! only after coming to the Lamoreaux Family Law Courthouse. The remaining user came first to the North Court in Fullerton for a DV application, used I-CAN! there, and came to Lamoreaux later to finish preparing her application for filing. Either the Family Law Facilitator or the Domestic Violence counselors referred most to I-CAN!. Nearly every person interviewed also came to file pleadings with the Family Law Court, either as applicants for Domestic Violence TRO's or as respondents to child support collection actions. These users wanted to take action in the courts, not learn about the law or court procedures. In other words, these users were interested in using I-CAN! to file pleadings; they were not using the system to just gather information about the subject matter in I-CAN!.

Practically all the subjects interviewed gave information about their difficulties using I-CAN! (44 of the 46). Table eighteen indicates that most (84%) reported one or more difficulties. The mean number of difficulties was 1.91 problems with a standard deviation of 1.44 problems.

Table 18: User Interviews Number of Difficulties Encountered

Number of Difficulties	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
None	7	16	16
1	13	29	45
2	11	25	70
3	6	14	84
4	4	9	93
5 or more	3	7	100

Most of the difficulties concerned confusion about the meaning of questions on the I-CAN! screens (39 difficulties). Many had problems getting what they thought they wrote to print. Some reported that gibberish printed in the caption or in the body of the pleadings. Ten said I-CAN! incorrectly wrote what they intended to print. Seven reported losing data, especially while using the password feature. Six had problems with the pace of the screens, most of these saying that I-CAN! closed a screen before they were finished using it. Others had trouble getting started, trouble with the touch screen, or trouble with the printer.

Six subjects reported difficulty using the keyboard. Since it is fixed into the narrow desk of the kiosk, some found it odd and somewhat less responsive than one that is movable. Twelve also experienced difficulty getting the touch screen to respond. Sixteen subjects were asked specifically about the touch screen, and the vast majority reported liking it (14 of 16). Few subjects reported difficulty with the video, and those few either had trouble with the volume or didn't know how to turn it off. Of the thirty two subjects asked about it, eleven found it annoying or did not use it, but seventeen found it helpful and four found it very helpful. At least two of the domestic violence module users found the video to be calming and comforting. Many preferred the anonymity of the video to a living person.

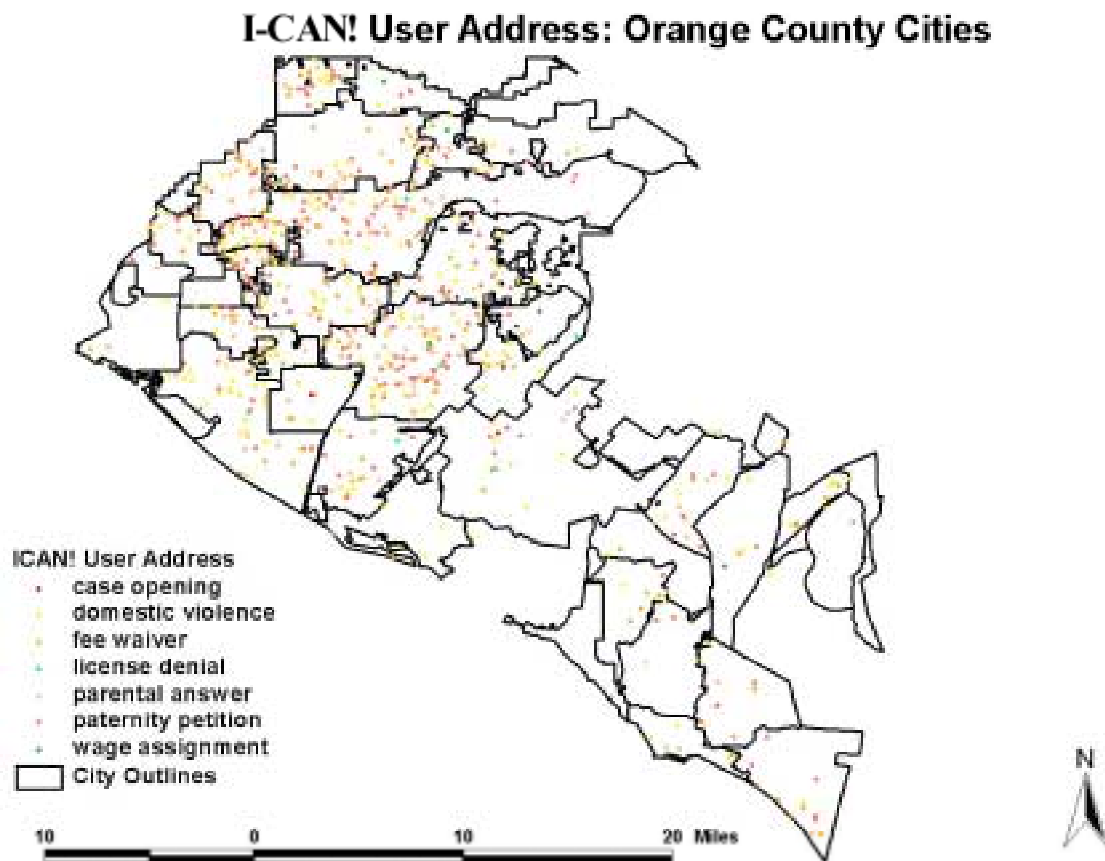
Notwithstanding these specific difficulties and problems, a number of comments were made about I-CAN!'s ease of use: "Easy to read," "Step by step process is very simple," "The logical pattern and flow of the questions is helpful," "I-CAN! was easier and faster than the services of a paralegal, who charged \$400 on a similar matter two and a half years ago," "Tried by hand at first with help, but it was too difficult. I-CAN! worked nicely," "I-CAN! is better than handwriting" (this user did the latter several months earlier), and "Did it by hand a year ago and found I-CAN! to be much easier. It's confusing going back and forth between forms and instruction pages."

In general the response by users interviewed was very positive. Probing the users on their specific experience did reveal that I-CAN! is not difficulty free. LASOC needs to closely monitor user difficulties in order to make I-CAN! more responsive to the users' needs. Printing and mechanical difficulties could probably be solved with closer monitoring of those in charge of the kiosks in specific locations. If LASOC could develop the capability of monitoring where users drop out of the program, this might give some indication of which specific screens are causing problems. Alternatively, occasionally running focus groups through the programming or field interviews of users could provide better feedback of specific screen difficulties.

## GIS Analysis

LASOC was able to give the evaluators a sample of user addresses by module taken during the fall of 2002. This allows a geographic information system (GIS) analysis of the spatial patterning of the users. The GIS analysis presented here is intended to be illustrative of the type of insight such an analysis can provide for this type of intervention.<sup>36</sup>

The map below shows the locations of the home addresses of the different module users. This map clearly indicates the users are coming from all over the county.



<sup>36</sup> The evaluators would like to acknowledge the assistance of the following graduate students at the University of California, Irvine who assisted with the GIS analysis: Grace Law, Evan Nakano, Darcy Purvis, and Isabel Sirinopwongsagon.

Meeker & Utman I-CAN! Evaluation

Table nineteen gives a tabular breakdown by different cities. Most users (98%)

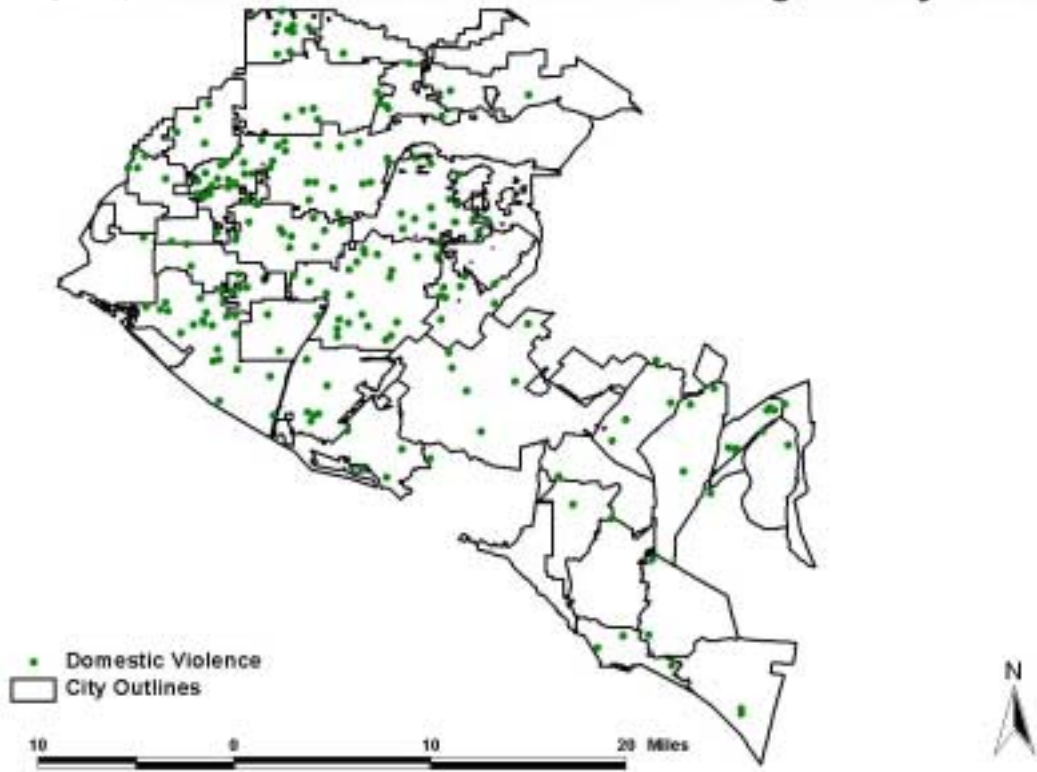
Table 19: Home Cities of I-CAN! Users

City	Frequency	Percent
Aliso Viejo	18	1.5
Anaheim	205	17.0
Brea	8	.7
Buena Park	55	4.5
Costa Mesa	35	2.9
Cypress	21	1.7
Dana Point	10	.8
Fountain Valley	11	.9
Fullerton	62	5.1
Garden Grove	71	5.9
Huntington Beach	69	5.7
Irvine	29	2.4
La Habra	42	3.5
Laguna Beach	1	.1
Laguna Hills	7	.6
Laguna Niguel	9	.7
Lake Forest	40	3.3
Mission Viejo	9	.7
Newport Beach	10	.8
Orange	66	5.5
Placentia	25	2.1
Rancho Santa Margarita	19	1.6
San Clemente	23	1.9
San Juan Capistrano	18	1.5
Santa Ana	193	16.0
Seal Beach	5	.4
Stanton	28	2.3
Tustin	28	2.3
Villa Park	1	.1
Westminster	33	2.7
Yorba Linda	13	1.1
Orange County unincorporated	15	1.2
<b>Total Orange County</b>	<b>1179</b>	<b>97.8</b>
Los Angeles	13	.8
Riverside County	16	1.3
San Bernardino	1	.1
<b>Total other than Orange County</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>2.2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1209</b>	<b>100.0</b>

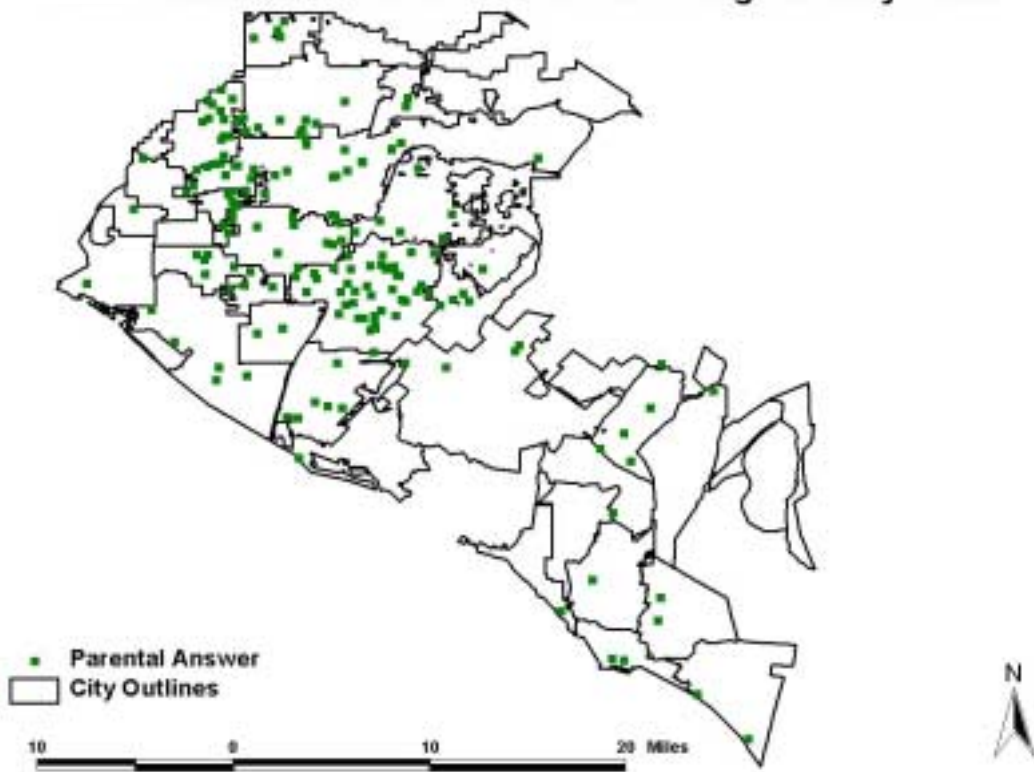
are Orange County residents. While both Anaheim and Santa Ana dominate the other cities, they are also the largest cities in the county.

If we look at the three largest used modules at this time, DV, APOC-G, and FW, we see that while all are used by residents throughout the county the spatial patterns are different.

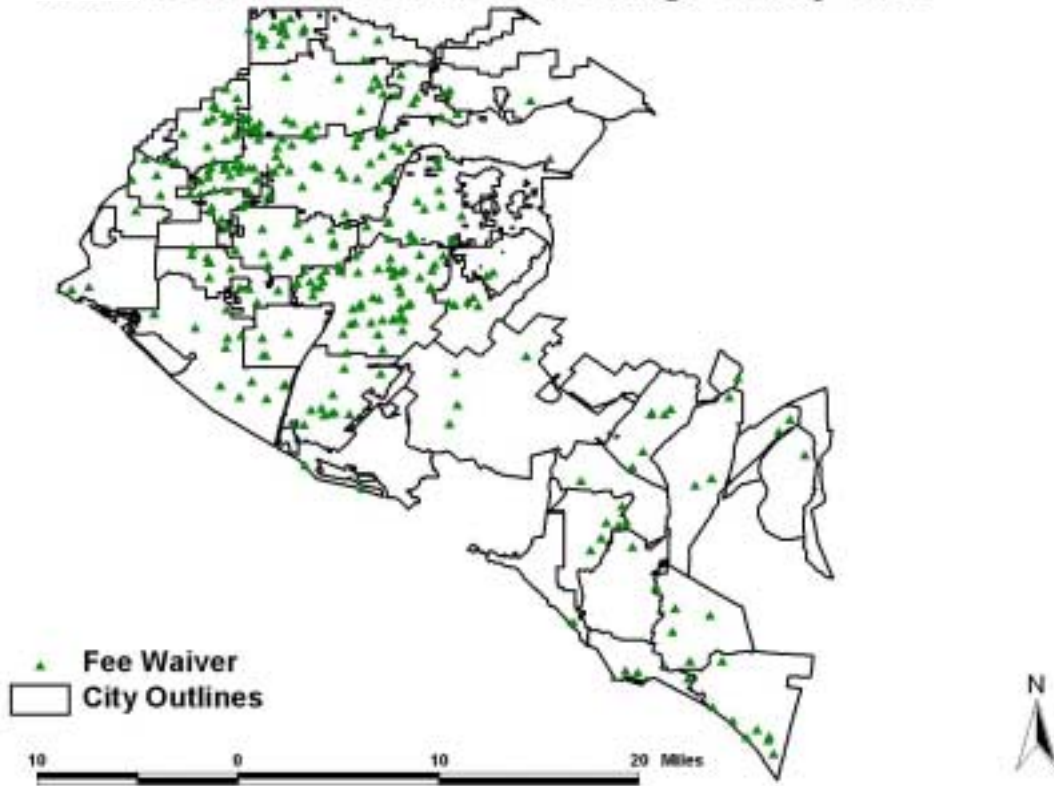
**I-CAN! Domestic Violence User Address: Orange County Cities**



**I-CAN! Parental Answer User Address: Orange County Cities**

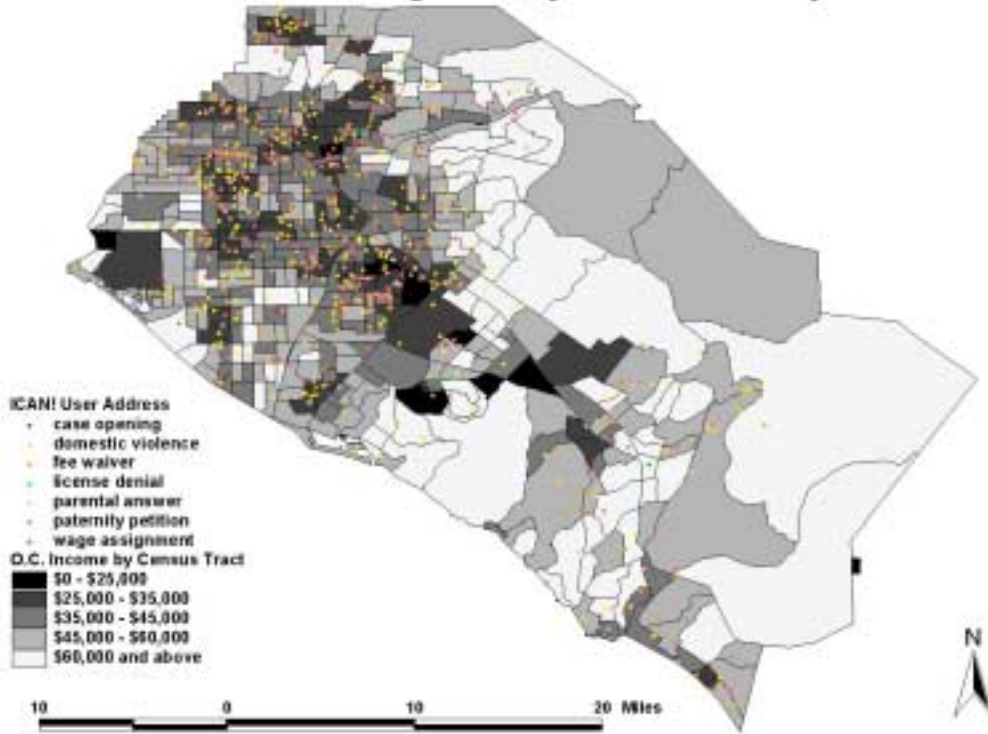


**I-CAN! Fee Waiver User Address: Orange County Cities**

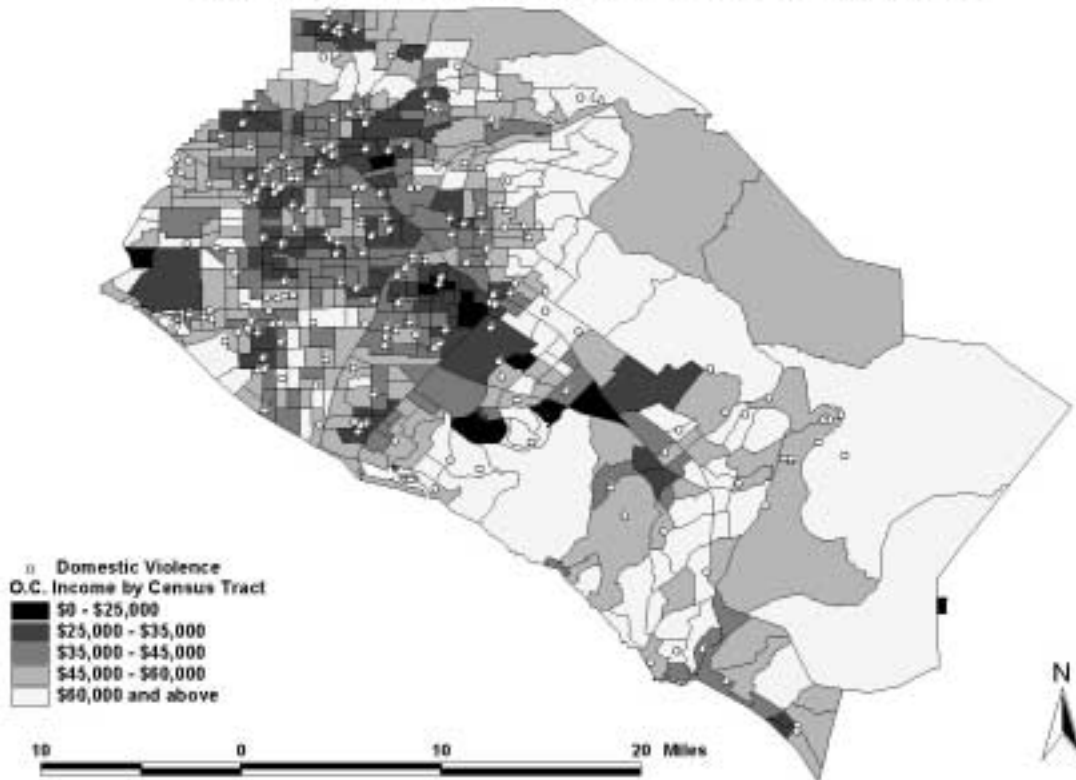


GIS also allows us to introduce other variables to the map. I-CAN! was designed to assist LASOC’s client community with their pleadings. This client community is primarily those that come from the poorer segments of society. The next set of maps presents the location of I-CAN! users and the census tracts of the county shaded by the average income level in that tract. The darker the tract the lower the average income is for that tract. The maps indicate that while many if not most of the I-CAN! users are coming from poorer tracts, not all of the poorest tracts have I-CAN! users. This suggests that some of these areas should be investigated to determine if outreach efforts are necessary. This type of analysis can also help in determining where in the community to place additional kiosks in the future.

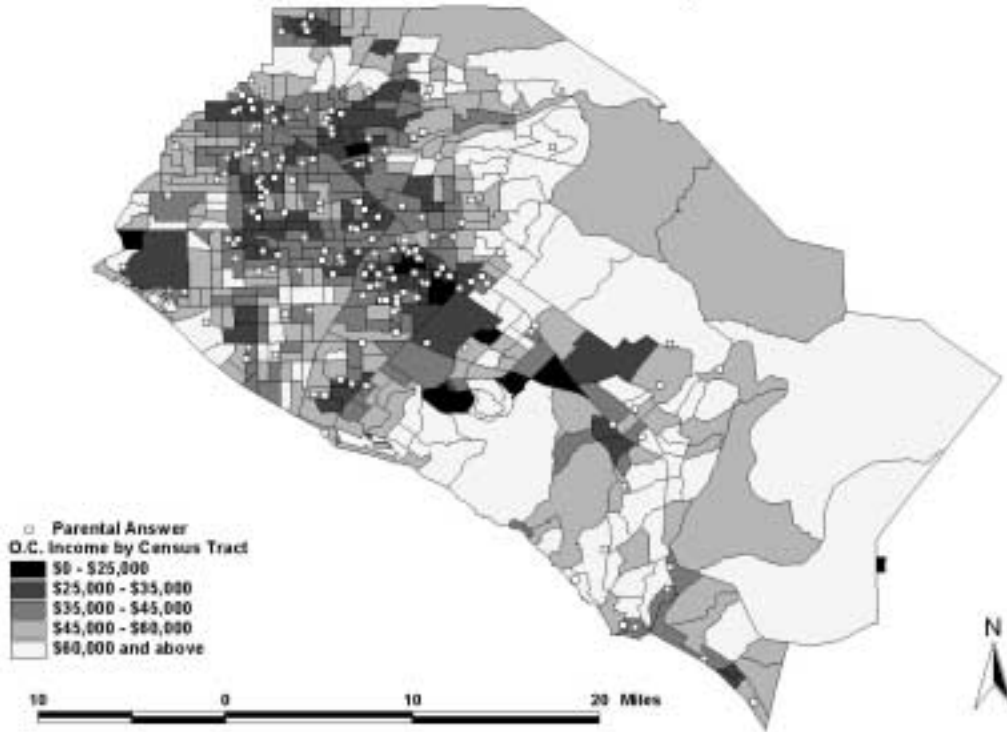
### I-CAN! User Address: Orange County Income Level by Census Tract



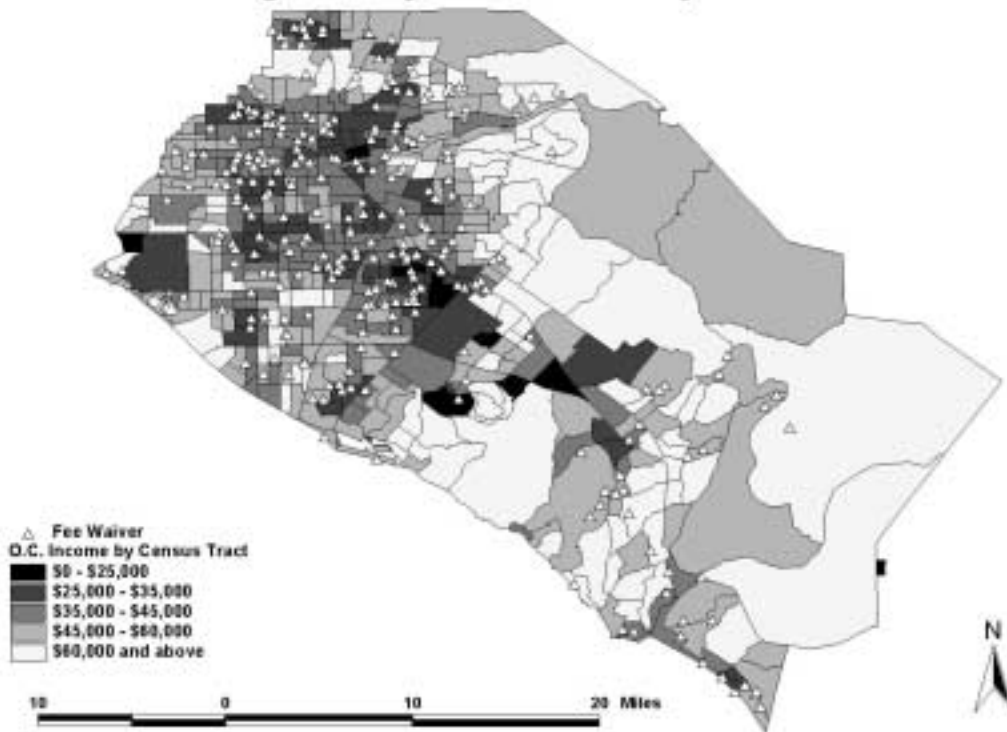
### I-CAN! Domestic Violence User Address: Orange County Income Level by Census Tract



### I-CAN! Parental Answer User Address: Orange County Income Level by Census Tract



### I-CAN! Fee Waiver User Address: Orange County Income Level by Census Tract



## **Conclusions**

I-CAN! works and produces forms and pleadings that conform to Judicial Council standards. Survey and interview data indicate that users overwhelmingly find I-CAN! very helpful and would recommend it to others. Interview data of judges and court personnel indicate that all of the judges who were aware of I-CAN! and most of the court personnel see I-CAN! as beneficial, helping *pro per* litigants to prepare more readable, better prepared and useable pleadings which in turn makes their job easier. There are some perceptual data suggesting I-CAN! helps *pro per* litigants in terms of better preparation for their litigation and better outcomes. It is important to stress that this particular conclusion is tentative and based on limited perceptual data from one judge.<sup>37</sup> While evidence of helpfulness does not appear to vary across modules, ease of use does.

Analysis of I-CAN!'s development history indicates combining legal services with information technology is not without its problems. The history of this project suggests that developing such technological approaches is best done within the legal aid provider's organizational structure, and not contracted out to other technology development organizations. For this project, it was more successful for LASOC to hire the technology experts and to incorporate them in its organizational structure, rather than to pursue a strategy of relying on outside consultants.

The evaluation also indicates that I-CAN!, as operated during this evaluation, is not without problems. It is our recommendation that the data collection system be expanded in order to obtain additional data concerning the usefulness of the system.

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<sup>37</sup> Outcome data that are relevant to determining I-CAN!'s effectiveness are difficult and expensive to obtain. Perhaps with the introduction of electronic filing and better integration of court and I-CAN! data, this may be possible in the future.

## Meeker & Utman I-CAN! Evaluation

Currently the way the system collects data from users limits its utility for systematically analyzing differences in user responses with different variables. The capability to only compile total summary responses for variables restricts the ability to conduct multivariate analyses to explore differences between modules and different groups of users. Variables on the internal survey need to be expanded to focus on ease of use variables for different segments of the modules. Questions on demographics, income and education need to be revised. LASOC should also consider expanding the range of variables to gather data on users expectations of I-CAN! and the legal system and any potential educational benefits that I-CAN! may be providing. LASOC also needs to develop the ability to monitor level of individual kiosk use, when users sign on, and how long they take to complete a module, as well as when and at what point users prematurely terminate an I-CAN! session.

Field observations indicate that the kiosk based version of I-CAN! appears to work best at the courthouse where the users are going to file their pleadings. It is at its strongest when it is part of an integrated system of *pro per* assistance. The introduction of additional modules and the addition of electronic filing may modify this finding, but that is the clear observation here. This is coupled with the observation that those kiosks associated with individuals in charge of monitoring the kiosks, fixing minor problems, keeping the printer operational and referring users to its services appear to work best in the field, especially if those individuals are supportive of the program and familiar with the modules. It also appears that when these monitors have direct line of sight to the kiosks, support is better. This can be verified in the future once LASOC develops the ability to monitor specific kiosk output and user interaction with the system. As LASOC expands the web access of I-CAN!, careful consideration should be given to the problem

of collecting data to determine if this field observation is an artifact of observing I-CAN! in its early stages or a true limitation to this type of *pro per* assistance.

Given the observation above, it is important that when future modules are developed, there is full consultation with other service providers and court personnel that are likely to interact with the users of that particular module. Periodic consultation with these individuals can provide a valuable source of information on how well I-CAN! is operating in the field and what modifications need to be made.

In summary I-CAN! represents a bold attempt to expand legal services to LASOC's client community through the use of technology. It also provides the potential to systematically inform LASOC how well these services are permeating throughout that community. It appears to be helping the courts, as well as LASOC's client community. However, the full impact of I-CAN! cannot be assessed until it matures and reaches a level of stability in its development.

## Appendix A: I-CAN! Flyer

**Is I-CAN! available to other organizations?**  
Absolutely. LASOC and its funders are committed to making I-CAN! freely available to the courts, LSC and JOLTA-funded organizations and their service partners - as long as they do not charge for its use. Also, I-CAN! can be customized for use outside the Orange County area.

**What does an I-CAN! module cost to develop?**  
Cost varies based upon factors such as the number of legal forms, the complexity of the questions, the number of data elements to be collected and the cost of IT development resources. If you would like to fund a module, a language-specific version of a module or a video, please contact LASOC.

**What is I-CAN!'s technology?**  
I-CAN! uses standard web and database technologies. Specifically I-CAN! uses Microsoft's ASP technologies to dynamically create screens, IS to process the screens and SQL database software to store module-specific information. Net Meeting enables the Help Center capability and Media Player is used to play the "video guide" and court tour videos. I-CAN! operates on Microsoft's Windows 2000 operating system.


**For More Information:**  
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Website: [www.legal-aid.com](http://www.legal-aid.com)

**Information on...**



**Self-Help  
Legal Systems**

Tel: (714) 571- 5232.

**What is I-CAN! ?**

I-CAN! is a kiosk and web-based legal services system designed to provide pro per litigants convenient and effective access to vital legal services. I-CAN! modules create properly formatted pleadings, provide court tours, and educate users on the law and steps needed to pursue their matter.

**How does I-CAN! work?**

I-CAN! modules were designed for individuals with little knowledge of computers. A "video guide" takes the



users through a series of tutorial-type questions. Answers are chosen by touching a computer screen and are then "mapped" to the appropriate judicial forms. I-CAN! minimizes the information a user must type by providing multiple choices when possible. Videos for court tours and safety tips (e.g., for Domestic Violence) are a part of many modules. Users can get instant assistance from a Help Center by touching an icon on the screen.

**What civil matters does I-CAN! support?**

I-CAN! facilitates the completion and filing of forms for the following civil matters:

- Answer to Governmental Complaint
- Regarding Parental Obligations
- Domestic Violence Restraining Orders
- Fee Waiver
- License Denial Review
- Paternity Petition
- Small Claims Matters
- Eviction Defense - Answer to Complaint
- Wage Assignment Review

**Where can I find I-CAN! ?**

I-CAN! modules operate on touch-screen kiosks and workstations at locations easily accessible to low income persons such as courthouses, legal aid offices, community centers, women's shelters and libraries. You can find the nearest I-CAN! location at [www.legal-aid.com](http://www.legal-aid.com) or by calling 800.834.5001.



**Is there a fee for using I-CAN! ?**

No. I-CAN! is free. However, court filing and service fees will be charged by the court or Sheriff unless the court grants a fee waiver. Also, some locations charge for printing.

**Does I-CAN! support multiple languages?**

Yes. Many modules have been translated into Spanish and some into Vietnamese. It is a requirement that the judicial forms be submitted in English. So when a pro per puts non-English information into I-CAN!, that information is left blank on the form but is printed on a separate page so it can be translated and written onto the form later.



"The first duty of society is justice." ..  
Alexander Hamilton

**Who developed & funded I-CAN! ?**

I-CAN! was developed by the Legal Aid Society of Orange County and was jointly sponsored by public agencies and private organizations including:

- Legal Services Corporation
- Judicial Council of California
- State Bar of CA - Legal Services Trust Fund Commission
- Judicial Council of California
- Superior Court, County of Orange
- Orange County District Attorney - Family Support Division
- Orange County Public Library System
- Disneyland
- City of Irvine
- City of Fullerton

**Appendix B: Survey One**

**I-CAN! USER SURVEY**

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What did you use the I-CAN! Kiosk for?

- Answer to Paternity Complaint
- Paternity Complaint
- Domestic Violence/Restraining Order
- Small Claims Advice

2. Did you find I-CAN! easy or difficult to use?

1	2	3	4	5
Very Easy	Easy	Average	Difficult	Very difficult

3. How helpful was I-CAN!?

1	2	3	4	5
Very Helpful	Helpful	Average	Not Helpful	Not Helpful At All

4. In addition to using I-CAN!, did you receive help from any other person(s), service, or organization listed below? (Check all that apply)

- No help other than I-CAN!
- Community Service Program
- Attorney/Lawyer
- Legal Service Agency (e.g., Legal Aid Society)
- Family Law Facilitator
- Friend or Family Member
- Religious Leaders
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Additional Comments: (Please write any comments you may have about your experiences using I-CAN!)

**Appendix C: Survey Two**

# I-CAN! SURVEY

Please answer these questions. It will take just 2 minutes! Your answers will keep I-CAN! running. We won't share your answers with anyone else.

1. What did you use I-CAN! for?
  - Answer to Complaint for Parental Obligation     Petition to Establish Parental Relationship
  - Case Opening     Small Claims Advice
  - Domestic Violence Restraining Order     Unlawful Detainer
  - Fee Waiver     Wage Assignment
  - License Denial
  
2. Is I-CAN! helpful?    Very Helpful     Helpful     Not Helpful     Not Helpful At All
  
3. Did anyone besides I-CAN! help you complete the forms? (Check everyone who helped.)
  - The I-CAN! computer     Community Program
  - Free Legal Service (like, Legal Aid Society)     Lawyer
  - Friend or Relative     Priest, pastor or someone from your church, temple
  - Family Law Facilitator     Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. What is your ethnicity or race? (Check only one.)
  - Hispanic     African American     Mixed: (explain) \_\_\_\_\_
  - White     Native American     Other: (explain) \_\_\_\_\_
  - Asian
  
5. What is your age?    Under 18     18-61     Older than 61
  
6. Are you a man or a woman?    Man     Woman
  
7. Are you single or married?    Single     Married
  
8. Do you pay for most of the expenses for your family?    Yes     No
  
9. How many people live in your home, including yourself?
  - 1     2     3     4     5     6     7     8     9 or more
  
10. What is your total monthly income (before taxes and deductions)? \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  
11. Do you use the Internet?    Yes     No
  
12. Where else would you like to use I-CAN!?
  - Grocery Store     Bank     Police Station
  - Clinic     Community Center     Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  
13. What city do you live in? \_\_\_\_\_

Meeker & Utman I-CAN! Evaluation

**Other Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_