

## Law Clinic Administration Tool

### **Program Overview:**

- Perform a “Means Test” and initial capture for clients
- Book and view appointments
- Create and store legal files between client and practitioner
- Store information about clients and practitioners
- Produce stats regarding the operation of the clinic

#### *→ Current process at the clinic*

When a person approaches the law clinic, they are initially screened by reception. The first thing that reception must determine is whether or not the person qualifies for legal aid. This is done by completing a means test. The means test calculates a person's financial means and establishes whether said means are low enough to qualify for legal aid (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxucLvtizwHoXzIZd2J5WC1oT1k/view?usp=sharing>). This is currently done by hand. If the person does not qualify for legal aid, then he/she can still make an appointment with a legal practitioner, but the practitioner will not be able to open a file for the individual and can only offer legal advice. If the individual does qualify, then an appointment with a legal practitioner will be made (this is once again done by hand with the secretary writing in the appointment into a diary) . At this appointment the practitioner will make a determination as to whether or not a file needs to be opened, or whether an advice is sufficient. If a file is opened, then certain additional information must be captured (like the type of matter- divorce etc.)

#### *→ What our program will do (I will outline the most ambitious version and we can always trim back the fat).*

The first thing to do would be to capture some basic details about the individual. I am thinking we can make a base class 'Person\_who\_approached\_clinic'. This class would contain details such as name, age, whether married etc. The program can then assist with an automated means test. We could replicate the form and prompt the administrator to go item by item. For example, if 'no' is answered to the first three questions, then the rest of the test need not be completed. This will show off our command of if statements and check boxes etc. The rest of the means test involves some basic maths and this will show off our skills around that.

So once we have determined whether or not the individual will qualify for legal aid, we can classify them accordingly with an inherited class (one for advice only and one for qualifies for legal aid).

Our program can then show available appointment slots and allow the administrator to select one for the individual (this might be slightly ambitious).

Ancillary functions - generate statistics report for a given time period (eg how many clients were seen for the month of May, how many new files opened etc.)

Our program would also have to save to a file so that the computer can be turned off.

→ *Some thoughts*

First prize for me would obviously be to actually use this program in the clinic. However, I am mindful of the fact that we are still at the beginning of the journey to becoming coding ninjas. Also, I do not want to make this into a bigger time commitment than it should be. My thinking is thus to start fairly conservatively in terms of what we try to get the program to do. If we find that we have that sorted in a week or two, then we can start getting more ambitious. I am thinking here about things like SQL and databasing.

→ *Things that I did not initially mention about how the clinic functions*

So the clinic is not as backward as the above may have led you to believe.

As mentioned, once a client is seen, then one of two things can happen:

1. The first thing is that the client is given legal advice, without a file being opened. If this is done, then the attorney gives the client a written record of the advice given, capturing further details (as per this form - ). Reception will then take this handwritten document and enter the details into a Microsoft Access Database file.
2. The second thing that can happen is that the attorney opens a file for the client. The details are then likewise entered into the Microsoft Access Database file.

So we do already have the ability to draw stats etc. from the Microsoft Access Database file.

Where I see the potential for improvement is in the streamlining of information capturing. It seems redundant to me to have an initial screening of the client where certain information is captured by hand, then an appointment with client, where further information is captured by hand, and then an entry into a database where the information is consolidated. I think that as much information should be captured in the initial screening appointment. If in doing so, the legal practitioner saves 5min of his time per appointment, then that really adds up over the course of the year, allowing him/her to focus on the legal as opposed to clerical aspects.

The means test is done by hand and this is definitely something that would benefit from being automated.

At the most ambitious, we would have a program that could add an entry to the existing Database file.

What is currently not electronic is the appointment system. So this is something we could also look at.

The following is currently captured into the database:

- Client name
- Opposition
- Nature of matter
- Date opened
- Date closed
- Practitioner
- Reference Number

#### GUI Design:

- Login Page
- Initial Procedure
- Means Test

#### Preliminary Capture:

1. Name and Surname
2. ID Number/Birth date (International Students)
3. Date and Time of Visit

#### Means Test:

1. Means Test (New Window)
  - a. Client Qualifies and books appointment
  - b. Client doesn't qualify but requires advice
  - c. Client doesn't qualify but doesn't want advice

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BxucLvtizwHoXzlZd2J5WC1oT1k/view?usp=sharing>

→ *Some ambitious ideas*

One of the technology related things that I have done in the Clinic is to create a Google Calendar for the office (not very high tech I know, but surprisingly revolutionary!). It would be pretty cool if our application could interface with that. I think this link means that it is possible - <https://developers.google.com/google-apps/calendar/quickstart/dotnet>.

Databasing (SQLite)

Not for now, but if we ever decided to market our application to law practices:

- ❖ Have all documents backed up on Google Drive
- ❖ Easy ability to save a document to Google Drive
- ❖ Ability to pull precedents from a precedents folder in Google Drive