

# Virtual Legal Clinic

Sharon Austin

<https://github.com/sharon-launchcode>

# Description

1. A remote connectivity platform (such as an app) that can be used to set up remote/virtual legal clinics specifically designed to service rural areas.
2. A user would access either a web platform or app and would be guided through a series of plain-language questions on income, eligibility, etc. This alone would save a tremendous amount of time and energy in empowering a user -- or her guardian, or her caregiver -- to find the right resource much more quickly.
3. A user could be virtually connected with an "on-call" pro bono attorney (either in real time or by appointment) who would provide pro bono counsel and advice through the web portal

# Planning - User Stories

1. Motivated by problems described by lawyers at a Hackathon in trying to reach clients that are hard to reach by disposition, or are located in hard to reach places. The lawyers are trying to do pro-bono work for them, but cannot connect.
2. The project actually combined two user stories; a lawyer in Florida, and a lawyer in Tennessee. Each lawyer was working with a different problem, but both of them sought an online centralized location that could be expanded to areas beyond their own jurisdictions.

# Planning - User Story 1

“Every year, approximately 20,000 youth age-out of the foster care system throughout the U.S. The statistics on how youth fair after they leave foster care are grim. Compared to their peers, youth who age-out of foster care without being connected to caring and committed adults are less likely to complete their education and obtain employment that pays a living wage. They are at greater risk of homelessness, incarceration, becoming parents early and having their own children involved in the foster care system. Many are left to deal with the trauma they experienced at home or in the foster care system without adequate access to medical and mental health care.” *Jessica Rae*

# Planning - User Story 2

“Build a remote connectivity platform (such as an app) ..... theoretically be set up so that the user would access either a web platform or app and would be guided through a series of plain-language questions on income, eligibility, etc. The user would then be virtually connected with an "on-call" pro bono attorney (either in real time or by appointment) who would provide pro bono counsel and advice through the web portal on behalf of the legal services organization in the same way as if the person attended a traditional walk-in clinic. Ideally, the platform would be a secure connection (thus avoiding the problems of waiver of confidentiality) and the user could upload documents such as warrants, etc, directly into the screen through their smartphone or other web access device through photos, screenshots, or even just pointing the camera toward the document if they lacked technological sophistication. Something that was built in plain language that is universally acceptable for an LSC org but was also available for other types of legal clinics (bar associations, non-LSC funded partners, etc) would be ideal. Preferably, no set-up would be required by the LSC org on the user side as the accessibility would be user-friendly and in plain language.” *Kimi*

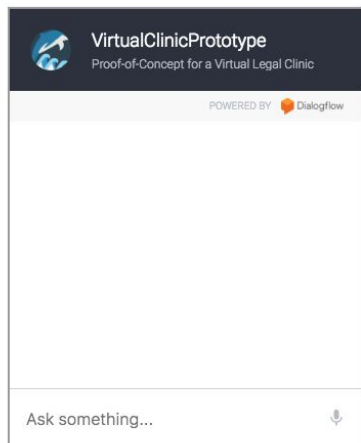
# Features Addressing the Needs of Both Lawyers

1. Chat
2. Video Conference
3. Intake Forms
4. Ability to upload documents

# Technology Stack

1. Languages: JSON, JavaScript
2. Chat Mechanisms: Slack, and Google's Dialog Flow
3. Database: Google's Firebase
4. File Upload: Slack
5. Video: WebRTC
6. Styling: Bootstrap and Firebase's default, Material

# Overall View -- Components may be separate



**Upload Documents with Slack!**  
LOG IN with your email account and post  
to: #sharon-testing

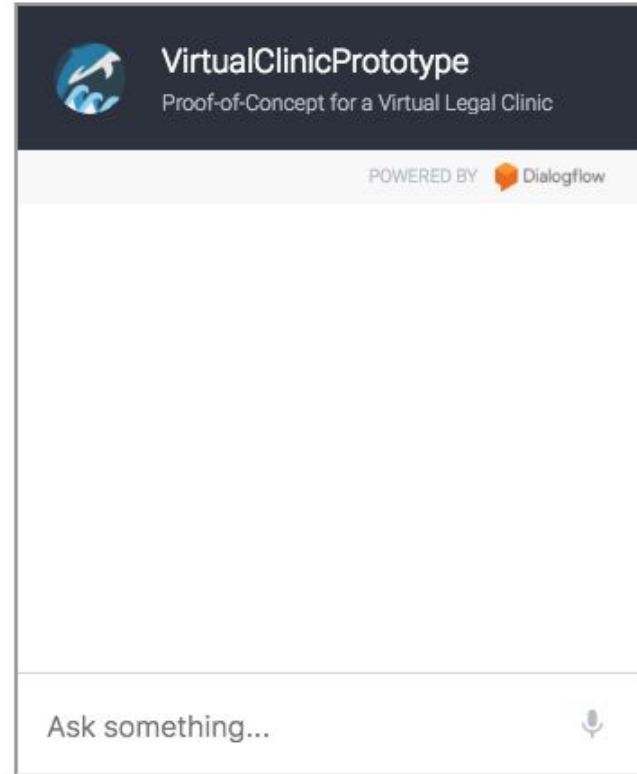
[Go to SLACK](#)

Need an account? [Sign up here.](#) 



# Chat -- Initial Interface

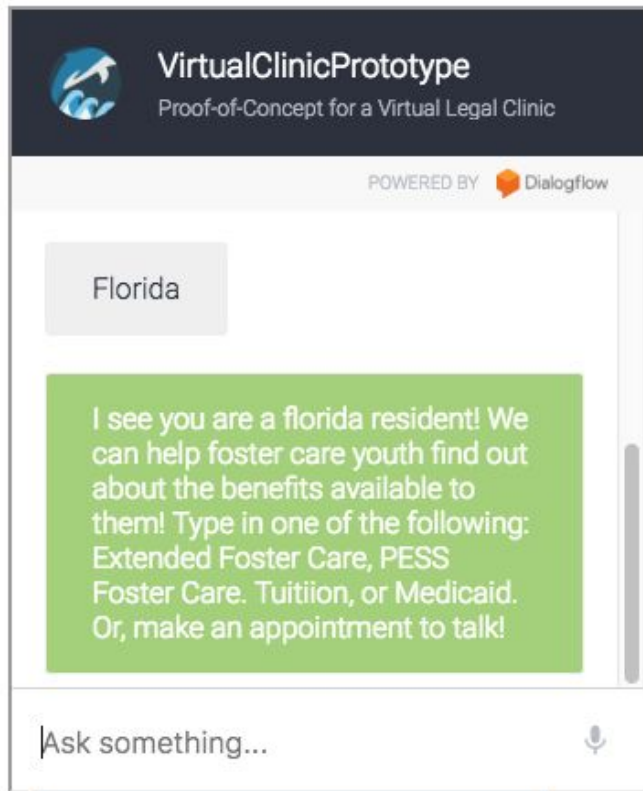
Google's Dialogflow is mobile ready, or may be integrated into a website, as is shown for the Proof-of-Concept website for the Virtual Legal Clinic.



# Chat - Florida

The premise of the Proof-of-Concept is that any user who stumbles across the site will be able to use it, no matter which state they live in.

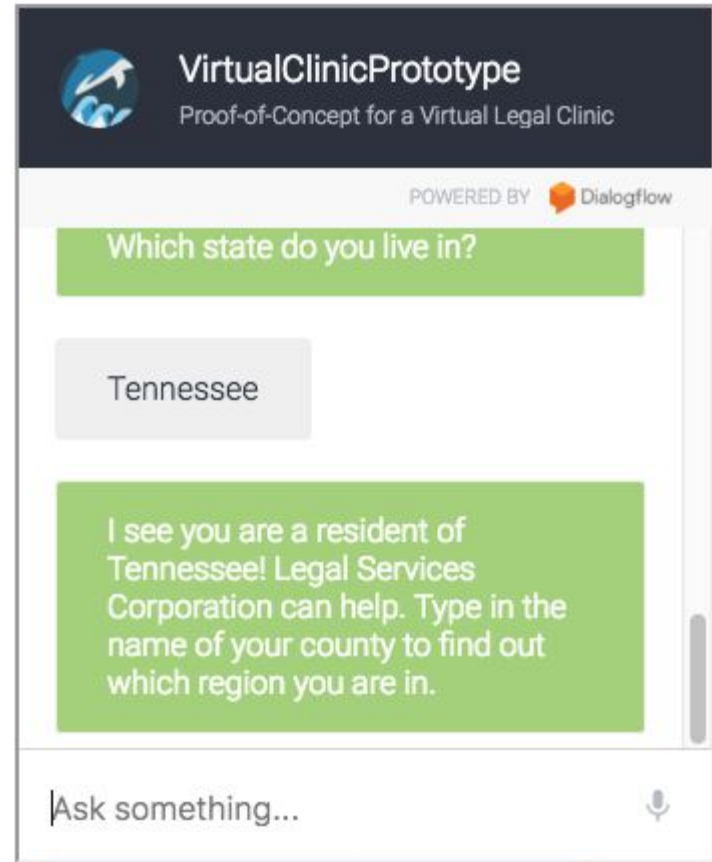
Legal jurisdictions are often outlined in *physical* boundaries. But the Internet crosses borders. The idea is that any user who uses the chat for the Virtual Clinic Prototype can be directed to the legal help they need. This is done by first asking the state of residence, and forking the path to legal help from there.



# Chat - Tennessee

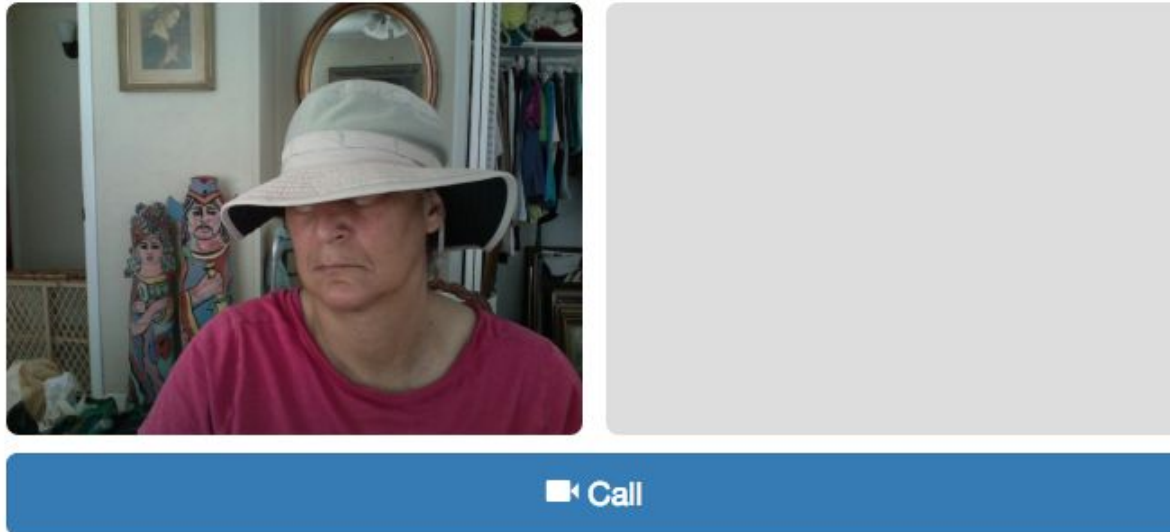
When a user types, for example,  
“Tennessee”...

The user will be taken to a different  
path for help than if the user answered,  
“Florida”



# Video Chat

One of the lawyers requested the ability to hold a video chat with clients. As envisioned, the chat would lead to a link to an appropriate legal entity, which, in turn, would have video chat capability.



# Video Chat -- Continued

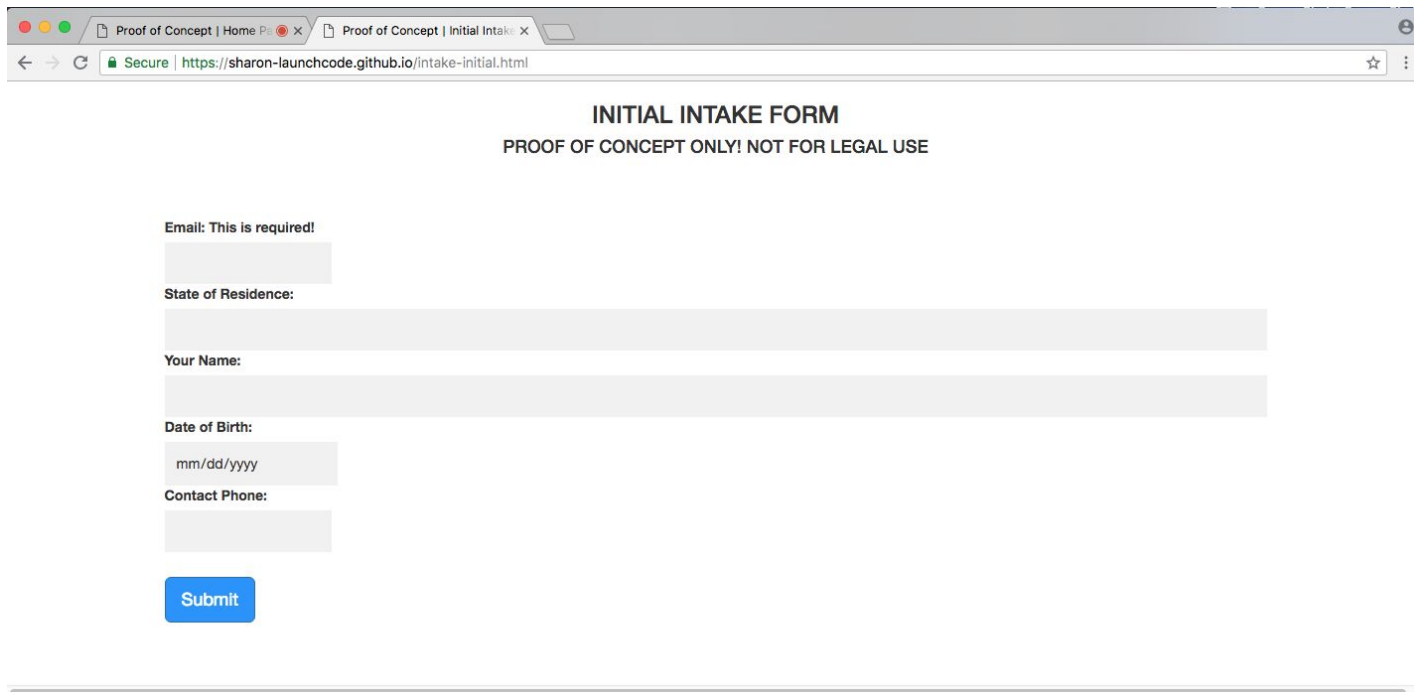
## Proof of Concept: Virtual Legal Clinic



Call

# Initial Intake Form

Some documents that are currently on paper could be replaced by digital forms instead.



The screenshot shows a web browser window with two tabs: 'Proof of Concept | Home' and 'Proof of Concept | Initial Intake'. The address bar shows a secure connection to <https://sharon-launchcode.github.io/intake-initial.html>. The form itself is titled 'INITIAL INTAKE FORM' with a subtitle 'PROOF OF CONCEPT ONLY! NOT FOR LEGAL USE'. It contains several input fields: an email field with a red error message 'Email: This is required!', a state of residence field, a name field, a date of birth field with a placeholder 'mm/dd/yyyy', and a contact phone field. A blue 'Submit' button is at the bottom.

**INITIAL INTAKE FORM**  
PROOF OF CONCEPT ONLY! NOT FOR LEGAL USE

Email: This is required!

State of Residence:

Your Name:

Date of Birth:

Contact Phone:

# Uploading Documents

Where uploading actual documents is necessary, cloud-based third-party platforms are used. In this manner, there is no need for a client to download special software to be able to upload documents. The advantage of using Slack is that comments may be added to the documents that are uploaded.

## Upload Documents with Slack!

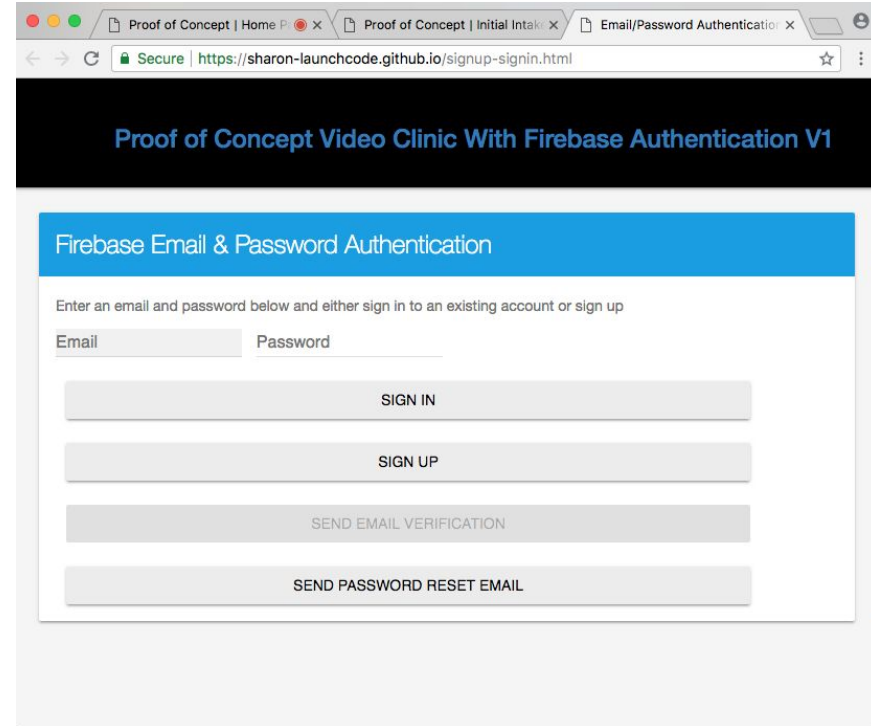
LOG IN with your email account and post to: #sharon-testing

[Go to SLACK](#)

It's important to note that accounts must be created before enabling a user to upload a document into Slack, or to otherwise take advantage of legal assistance.

# Account Creation

Each legal entity would have its own separate account management. Recall that the chat portion of the clinic would direct the user to the proper legal entity that could help them. Although the chat function could be accessed universally, the accounts would not be shared between the states or other organizational divisions, unless they took specific action to do so. Each legal entity would have distinct records.

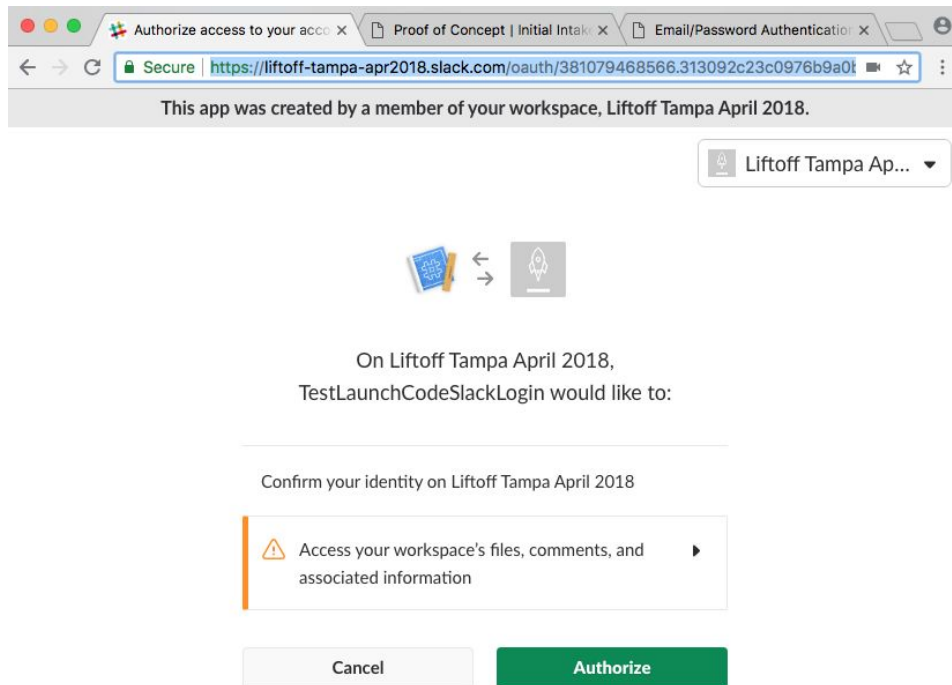


The screenshot shows a web browser window with three tabs: 'Proof of Concept | Home P...', 'Proof of Concept | Initial Intak...', and 'Email/Password Authentication...'. The address bar shows a secure connection to <https://sharon-launchcode.github.io/signup-signin.html>. The page has a black header with the text 'Proof of Concept Video Clinic With Firebase Authentication V1' in blue. Below the header is a blue bar with the text 'Firebase Email & Password Authentication'. The main content area is white and contains the text 'Enter an email and password below and either sign in to an existing account or sign up'. There are two input fields: 'Email' and 'Password'. Below the input fields are four buttons: 'SIGN IN', 'SIGN UP', 'SEND EMAIL VERIFICATION', and 'SEND PASSWORD RESET EMAIL'.



# Authorizing the Use of Slack

The appropriate legal entity would authorize an account with a client. Once that client has been granted an account, he/she is authorized to use a special Slack channel to be able to upload documents and add additional comments or information.



# In Slack

Once in Slack, the user can upload documents, but also be directed to additional help in specialized legal channels.

The screenshot displays the Slack desktop application interface. At the top, a blue banner states: "Slack needs your permission to [enable desktop notifications](#)." Below this, the left sidebar shows a user profile "A Slacker Name..." with a dropdown arrow and a bell icon. Underneath is a search bar "Jump to..." and a list of channels: "All Threads", "Channels" (with a plus icon), "# general" (highlighted in green), "# legal-services-corp", "# random", "# tennessee", and "# test-may-2018-clinic". Below the channels are "Direct Messages" (with a plus icon), including "slackbot" and "Sharon (you)", and an "Invite People" button. At the bottom of the sidebar are "Apps" (with a plus icon), including "Dialogflow Bot". The main content area is for the "#general" channel, showing a header with "1" member and "0" topics, and a description: "Company-wide announcements and work-based matters". Below the header is a search bar and icons for phone, info, settings, and a list icon. The channel name "# general" is prominently displayed. The message history shows a welcome message from the system dated "Wednesday, May 30th", followed by a message from "Sharon" at 1:18 PM stating "joined #general along with AnotherLegalHackathonTest.", and another message from "Sharon" at 4:05 PM saying "hi". A date separator "Saturday, June 2nd" is shown. Below this is a message from "Sharon" at 12:44 PM stating "set the channel purpose: Welcome! This channel is the starting point for uploading documents. We'll work together to make sure they get to the proper place!". At the bottom is a message input field with a plus icon, a placeholder "Message #general", and icons for mentions (@) and emojis (😊).

Slack needs your permission to [enable desktop notifications](#).

**A Slacker Name...**

Sharon

Jump to...

All Threads

Channels

**# general**

# legal-services-corp

# random

# tennessee

# test-may-2018-clinic

Direct Messages

♥ slackbot

• Sharon (you)

+ Invite People

Apps

• Dialogflow Bot

**#general**

☆ | 👤 1 | 🏷 0 | Company-wide announcements and work-based matters

Search

**# general**

You created this channel on May 30th. This is the very beginning of the **#general** channel. Purpose: Welcome! This channel is the starting point for uploading documents. We'll work together to make sure they get to the proper place! ([edit](#))

+ [Add an app](#) [Invite others to this channel](#)

Wednesday, May 30th

**Sharon** 1:18 PM  
joined #general along with AnotherLegalHackathonTest.

**Sharon** 4:05 PM  
hi

Saturday, June 2nd

**Sharon** 12:44 PM  
set the channel purpose: Welcome! This channel is the starting point for uploading documents. We'll work together to make sure they get to the proper place!

Message #general

**About #general**

Channel Details

Highlights

Pinned Items

1 Member

• **Sharon** (you)  
[Invite more people ...](#)

Shared Files

Notification Preferences

# What I learned

1. Structuring data for Dialogflow
2. Structuring data for Firebase
3. Integration of third party apps
4. WebRTC
5. Concepts of NoSQL through Firebase JSON data structure

# Thank You!

And especially, thank you to LaunchCode for their amazing program of empowerment!