



**#21** Access To Justice  
AT DECAUWENHART COLLEGE OF LAW

The next set of questions will create the **General Heading** for your form. Your general heading should be the same as on the most recent set of documents filed in your matter.

**Continue**

**2 GENERAL HEADING**

Preview Mode  
[Variables](#)  
[Script](#)  
[Edit This](#)  
[Resume Edit](#)

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Make sure you type names **EXACTLY** as they appear in the General Heading of the last document you have for this matter, which means including any description that comes after each plaintiff name such as "a.k.a..." or "carrying on business as..."

**Continue**

**2 GENERAL HEADING**

Preview Mode  
[Variables](#)  
[Script](#)  
[Edit This](#)  
[Resume Edit](#)

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How many Plaintiffs in total are there in this matter?  
 Choose:

**Continue**

**2 GENERAL HEADING**

Preview Mode  
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[Script](#)  
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Okay, the next few questions will ask for your statements of fact for your Affidavit. Each statement will be a separate paragraph.

**Continue**

**4 AFFIDAVIT**

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[Script](#)  
[Edit This](#)  
[Resume Edit](#)

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Remember to:  
 1. Tell events in the order they happened.  
 2. Keep sentences short.  
 3. Use specific dates.  
 4. Use names, not him or her.  
 5. Focus on the most important information.

**Continue**

**4 AFFIDAVIT**

Preview Mode  
[Variables](#)  
[Script](#)  
[Edit This](#)  
[Resume Edit](#)

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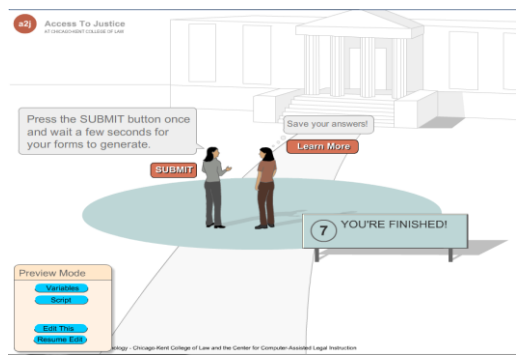
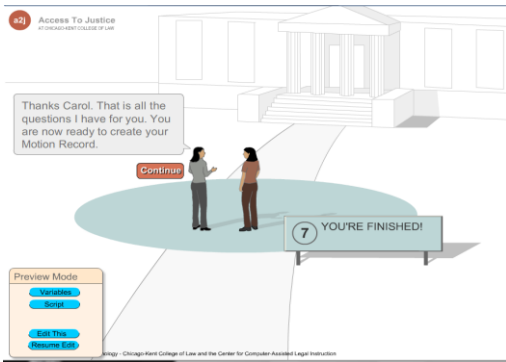
Type your first statement in the box below.

**Continue**

**4 AFFIDAVIT**

Preview Mode  
[Variables](#)  
[Script](#)  
[Edit This](#)  
[Resume Edit](#)

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Presented to A2J Author Developers  
 June 16, 2009

# Bob Aubin's Best Practices

### Numbering Questions with No Zeros

- (1) Question 1 : Text of my first que
- (12) Question 1 : This is question 5
- (13) Question 1 : This is question 6
- (14) Question 1 : This is question 7
- (15) Question 1 : This is question 8
- (16) Question 1 : This is question 9
- (17) Question 1 : This is question 10
- (18) Question 1 : This is question 11
- (19) Question 1 : This is question 12
- (110) Question 1 : This is question 1
- (111) Question 1 : This is question 1
- (112) Question 1 : This is question 1
- (113) Question 1 : This is question 1
- (114) Question 1 : This is question 1
- (115) Question 1 : This is question 1
- (116) Question 1 : This is question 1
- (117) Question 1 : This is question 2
- (118) Question 1 : This is question 2

### Report Using Question Numbering with No Zeros

- QuestionName 1-Step-1(14)
- QuestionName 10-Step-1(13)
- QuestionName 11-Step-1(14)
- QuestionName 12-Step-1(15)
- QuestionName 13-Step-1(16)
- QuestionName 14-Step-1(17)
- QuestionName 15-Step-1(18)
- QuestionName 16-Step-1(19)
- QuestionName 17-Step-1(20)
- QuestionName 18-Step-1(21)
- QuestionName 19-Step-1(22)
- QuestionName 2-Step-1(5)
- QuestionName 20-Step-1(23)
- QuestionName 3-Step-1(6)

### Numbering Questions with Zeros

- (003) Gender : Choose your gender
- (101) Question 1 : Text of my first qu
- (102) Question 1 : This is question 5
- (103) Question 1 : This is question 6
- (104) Question 1 : This is question 7
- (105) Question 1 : This is question 8
- (106) Question 1 : This is question 9
- (107) Question 1 : This is question 11
- (108) Question 1 : This is question 1
- (109) Question 1 : This is question 1
- (110) Question 1 : This is question 1
- (111) Question 1 : This is question 1
- (112) Question 1 : This is question 1
- (113) Question 1 : This is question 1
- (114) Question 1 : This is question 1
- (115) Question 1 : This is question 1
- (116) Question 1 : This is question 1
- (117) Question 1 : This is question 2
- (118) Question 1 : This is question 2

Report Using Question Numbering with Zeros

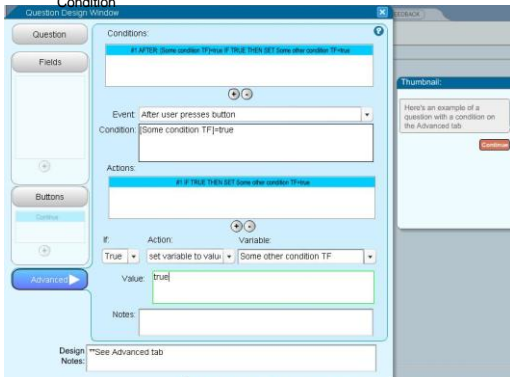
- Question-Name: 01-Step-1-(4)
- Question-Name: 02-Step-1-(5)
- Question-Name: 03-Step-1-(6)
- Question-Name: 04-Step-1-(7)
- Question-Name: 05-Step-1-(8)
- Question-Name: 06-Step-1-(9)
- Question-Name: 07-Step-1-(10)
- Question-Name: 08-Step-1-(11)
- Question-Name: 09-Step-1-(12)
- Question-Name: 10-Step-1-(13)

Avoid Complex Numbering Schemes

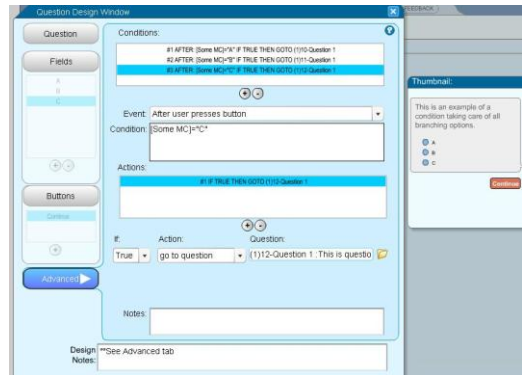
```

(001-Introduction: This is the intro)
(002-Name: Enter your name)
(003-Gender: Choose your gender)
(101-Question 1: Test of my first au)
(101a-Question 1: This is question 1)
(101b(1)(a)(6)(4)-Question 1: This i
(101b(1)(a)-Question 1: This is que
(101b(1)-Question 1: This is questi
(101b-Question 1: This is question
    
```

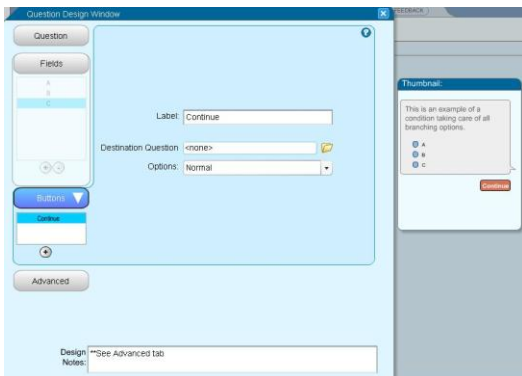
Use "See Advanced tab" in Design Notes Whenever You Have a Condition



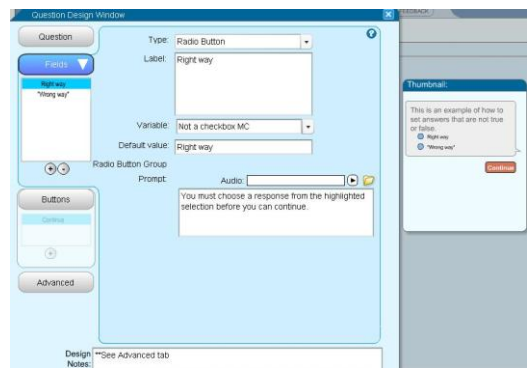
When Conditions Handle All Possible Branching Options...



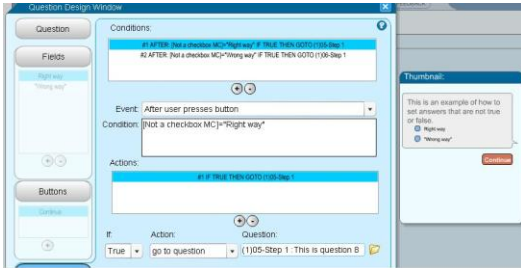
Set Question Destination to <none>



Setting Default Values for MC and TE variables



Setting Text or MC variables answers on Advanced tab



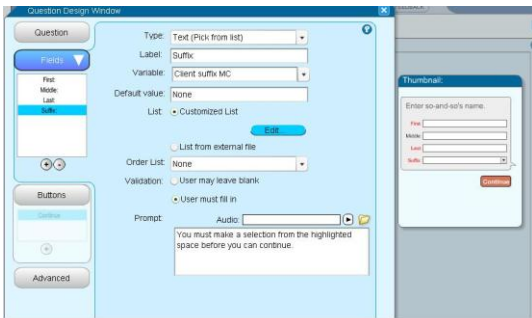
Setting Variables in A2J

For TF variables:  
Use true, not "true"  
Use false, not "false"

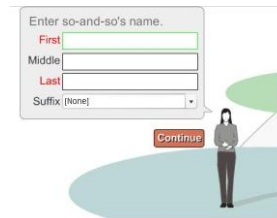
For all other variables, use quotation marks around values.

SET Some MC TO "Red"  
SET Some TE to "Green"

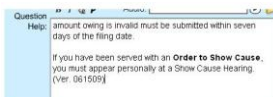
Use Default Text Judiciously



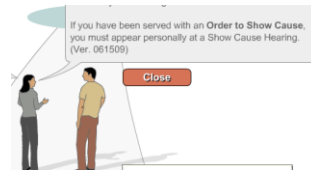
Use Default Text Judiciously



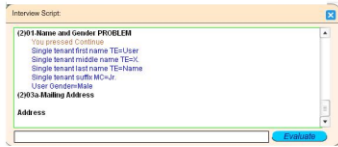
Insert Version Numbers into the Interview's Help Text



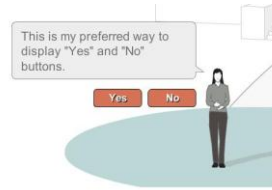
Insert Version Numbers into the Interview's Help Text



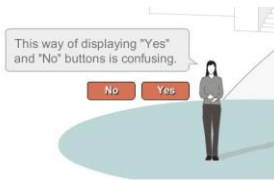
Insert Text into Script to Help Troubleshooting



Order for "Yes" and "No" Buttons



Bottom Line: Be Consistent



Leave the Complex Computation to HotDocs

```

AFTER: hasanyword([A2J Past child address2 people TE#A2J_OtherpeopleCount])=true
IF TRUE THE SET Past child address2 people TE#A2J_OtherpeopleCount TO
[A2J Past child address name TE#A2J_OtherpeopleCount] + " " + [A2J Past child address1
people TE#A2J_OtherpeopleCount] + " " + [A2J Past child address2 people
TE#A2J_OtherpeopleCount] + " " + [A2J Past child address city people
TE#A2J_OtherpeopleCount] + " " + [A2J Past child address state people
TE#A2J_OtherpeopleCount] + " " + [A2J Past child address ZIP people
TE#A2J_OtherpeopleCount]

AFTER: hasanyword([A2J Past child address2 people TE#A2J_OtherpeopleCount])=false
IF TRUE THE SET Past child address2 people TE#A2J_OtherpeopleCount TO
[A2J Past child address name TE#A2J_OtherpeopleCount] + " " + [A2J Past child address1
people TE#A2J_OtherpeopleCount] + " " + [A2J Past child address2 people
TE#A2J_OtherpeopleCount] + " " + [A2J Past child address city people
TE#A2J_OtherpeopleCount] + " " + [A2J Past child address state people
TE#A2J_OtherpeopleCount] + " " + [A2J Past child address ZIP people
TE#A2J_OtherpeopleCount]
    
```

Kate Bladow, Pro Bono Net



Plain Language and A2J Author

## Your Guide



Kate Bladow  
NPADO Project Coordinator  
Pro Bono Net



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## Clear, concise, and correct.

--Richard C. Wydick  
Professor of Law Emeritus  
UC Davis School of Law



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## Why bother?

- Everyone appreciates clarity.
- You empower your readers.
- It saves time and money.
- People won't dread reading your writing.



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### Original Paragraph

Word Count: 29; Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level: 14.44; Flesch Reading Ease Score: 43.21

Be firm but cordial in telling the landlord that locking a tenant out of the premises, without a court order, is improper and violates Montana's landlord and tenant laws.

### Revised Paragraph

Word Count: 24; Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level: 2.7; Flesch Reading Ease Score: 89.4

Talk to your landlord. Be firm but polite. Tell your landlord that he can't lock you out of your apartment without a court order.



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### Original Paragraph

Word Count: 78; Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level: 32.53; Flesch Reading Ease Score: 0.77

You may be evicted with not less than *fourteen* (14) days notice if you do not comply with the terms of your rental agreement; if you do not keep your rental unit clean and safe; if you do not allow your landlord access to the rental unit; if you remove a lock without receiving permission; or, if you replace or add a lock and either don't ask for permission in writing or don't give your landlord a key.

### Revised Paragraph

Word Count: 70; Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level: 5.8; Flesch Reading Ease Score: 77.8

- You can be evicted if you
- don't follow your rental agreement
  - don't keep your rental unit clean and safe
  - don't let your landlord into the rental unit
  - remove a lock without your landlord's permission
  - add or replace a lock without your landlord's permission
  - add or replace a lock, and you don't give your landlord a key

Your landlord must give you at least 14 days notice before he evicts you.



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### Original Paragraph

Word Count: 55; Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level: 12.37; Flesch Reading Ease Score: 39.02

### IS THE CITY REQUIRING YOU TO MOVE BECAUSE THEY ARE REDEVELOPING YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

If so, you may be a "displaced person" within the meaning of federal law and the City must help you relocate. "Displaced persons" include tenants, home and business owners who must move as a direct result of the City's acquisition of property.

### Revised Paragraph

Word Count: 43; Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level: 8.09; Flesch Reading Ease Score: 56.24

**Do you have to move because your neighborhood is being redeveloped?** If you said "yes," you may be a "displaced person." Displaced persons include renters, home owners, and business owners. The law says that the City must help displaced persons move.



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## Register

- Use active voice and direct address.
  - Use → You can find information about the laws here.
  - Instead of → Information about the laws can be found by [clicking here.](#)
- Use familiar words and phrasings.
  - Use → international
  - Instead of → intercountry
- Explain specialized terms.
  - For example → A rental agreement is also called a "lease."
  - For example → A Power of Attorney for Property lets someone else manage your money and property for you.
- Do not use foreign words, archaic and noun-heavy phrasings.
  - Use → methods for resolving a dispute
  - Instead of → dispute resolution methodologies



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## Reading Interest & Persistence

- Put the title at the top.
- Use headings.
- Organize your information.
- Answer your reader's questions.
- Make it short.
- Chunk the text.



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## Visual Accessibility

- Use sentence case.
- Avoid text enhancers – bold, italic, underline, strike-out, and reverse text.
- Chunk your paragraphs.
- Use headings.



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## Usability

- Test your document.
- Test your document.
- Test your document.



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## Resources

- *Plain English for Lawyers* by Richard C. Wydick
- *The Redbook: A Manual on Legal Style* by Bryan A. Garner
- *Is Plain Language Better?* by Maria Midlin - [http://www.transcend.net/pdf/Comp\\_Read.pdf](http://www.transcend.net/pdf/Comp_Read.pdf)
- *Plain Language Works for Pro Per Litigants* by Maria Midlin - [http://www.transcend.net/pdf/PL\\_article.pdf](http://www.transcend.net/pdf/PL_article.pdf)
- OKAPI! Readability Statistics - <http://www.interventioncentral.org/htmldocs/tools/okapi/okapi.php>



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## Kristina Kirby Illinois Legal Aid Online

- ❑ A2J Author Interview Project Life Cycle
- ❑ A2J Interview Template
- ❑ General Tips

## A2J Author Interview Project Life Cycle

- ❑ Create Priority List and Select a Project from the Priority List  
Project manager, Attorney Expert
- ❑ Scope Document Created Describing: User Base, Purpose, Scenarios, Output  
Project manager, Attorney Experts, Developer
- ❑ Form Set Finalized, Decide All Forms Necessary to Accommodate All Scenarios  
Project manager, Attorney Experts, Clerks
- ❑ Project Assigned to Developer for Programming  
Project manager, Developer

## A2J Author Interview Project Life Cycle

- ❑ Work Estimate Submitted  
Developer
- ❑ Draft Project Submitted to ILAO for "Beta" Testing  
Developer, Project Manager, Student Testers
- ❑ Project Circulated to Practitioners for Comment, Approval  
Project Manager, Attorney Experts
- ❑ Approved Interview Launched on Website  
Project manager
- ❑ Monitoring and Updating in Response to User Feedback, Changes in Law, Form Revision  
Project manager, Developers, Attorney Experts

## A2J Interview Template

- Introduction Screens Generally Explain:
  - The purpose of the interview
    - (ex: This program will help you create a petition to have your juvenile record(s) expunged.)
  - Any jurisdiction limitations
    - (this is important if your state does not have uniform forms for each county); and
  - How long the user can expect to spend going through the interview.

## Examples:

<p>Welcome to Illinois Legal Aid Online's <b>[name of document (in bold)]</b> program.</p> <p>This program will help you [description of goal]. Your documents will be ready to print after you have answered all of the questions.</p> <p>[Limitations in jurisdiction; "The documents created by this program are <b>not for use in Cook County.</b>"]</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Continue</b></p>	<p>You will answer questions for [minimum time to maximum expected time].</p> <p>The final document will be between [x and y pages], depending on your answers. You can use ["either Word or WordPerfect"/"Adobe Reader"] to open the document. You can then save the document on your computer or to a disk.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Continue</b></p>
--	---

## Ending Screens

- The ending screen generally explains that the interview is finished along with instructions on how to obtain and print the forms.

<p>Congratulations, <b>[Your first name TE]</b> -&gt; <b>undefined</b>. You have finished this program. Your [documents/forms/letters] is now ready for printing.</p> <p>If you need to change an answer to a question, use the drop-down menu titled "My Progress" at the top of the screen to go directly to a question.</p> <p>Once you are sure all of your answers are correct, click "Continue" for further instructions.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Continue</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. By clicking "Submit" you will exit this program and be taken to a different website to print your [documents/forms/letters].</li> <li>2. You will see a box titled "Get Document." Click on that box to download your completed [documents/forms/letters].</li> <li>3. A box titled "File Download" will pop up. Click "Open" to see your completed [documents/forms/letters].</li> <li>4. You may then print or save your [documents/forms/letters].</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Continue</b></p>
---	--

## General Tips:

- Organization-
  - Things to include at the beginning of the interview:
    - Qualifying questions
    - Indicate information needed to complete the interview

GOAL: SAVE THE USER'S TIME!

## General Tips:

- Required Fields
  - If there are restrictions on who can use the form, be sure you require answers to the relevant fields
- Strive for a 6th grade reading level
  - Use short sentences
  - Use simple words
  - Try not to use legal terms
    - ("the person suing you" vs. "plaintiff")
  - If it is not possible to avoid the use of a legal term, use a "learn more" or "pop-up" feature in A2J Author to define the term.

## General Tips:

- Do NOT attempt to collect multiple pieces of information in one question dialog.
  - Seeing several questions with several blank fields at one time is **more intimidating** than seeing one question and one blank at a time.
- Try to put yourself in the shoes of the user
  - what extra information do they need to complete the interview that can be accessed easily on the Internet.
    - For instance, use the "learn more" feature to provide links to the US Postal Service's website to look up zip codes

## General Tips:

- Have an expert and lay person comment on the finished interview
  - It is import to make sure both the statements in the interview and the resulting forms are legally accurate.
  - In addition, it is equally import to make sure that a lay person under stands all the questions being asked in the interview.

## Trainings/Events Calendar 2009

- Jan-March
  - TIG: Intro to Document Assembly (Joint session with PBN) and National HotDocs/A2J Training
    - slides available at <http://tig.jsc.gov/tigconferencepresentations.php> and <http://www.a2jauthor.org/drupal/?q=node/310>
  - Quarterly New User Training – Overview of Document Assembly and Features in A2J Author –
    - Recording available at <http://www.a2jauthor.org/drupal/?q=node/310>
  - Quarterly Advanced Training – Part I Re Field Types, Variable Types and Drop-Down Lists & Part II Re Overview of Repeat Dialogs –
    - Recordings available at <http://www.a2jauthor.org/drupal/?q=node/310>

## Trainings/Events Calendar 2009

- April-June
  - EJC: Not Just a Pretty Interface: A2J Author® is Changing How We Achieve Justice Through Technology --
    - Slides available at <http://www.a2jauthor.org/drupal/?q=node/310>
    - A2J Guided Interview available at <http://www.a2jauthor.org/viewer/shared/A2JViewer.php?interviewID=2009-05-30-17-27-57>
  - Innovative Uses of A2J Author – April 8, 2009
    - Recording available at [http://www.a2jauthor.org/drupal/?q=system/files&file=2009-04-08-12-09\\_DOC130\\_InnovativeUsesofA2JAuthor.wmv](http://www.a2jauthor.org/drupal/?q=system/files&file=2009-04-08-12-09_DOC130_InnovativeUsesofA2JAuthor.wmv)
  - Multimedia Forum – Video, Graphics & Audio – June 26, 2009
  - 3.0 Release Trainings (2 New User / 2 Advanced)

## Trainings/Events Calendar 2009

- July-September
  - New User Training – July 22, 2009
  - Advanced Training: Repeat Dialogs, Advanced Functions, and Nested Loops – September 16, 2009
  - Live Session - National HotDocs/A2J Training – Fall 2009
  - Court Technology Conference
- October-December
  - New User Training – October 28, 2009
  - Advanced Training (Topics TBA) – December 16, 2009
  - NLADA?

## Questions?

**Rachel Medina**  
**Stacy Weissman**

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