



## UTAH ONLINE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ODR) USER EXPERIENCE (UX) EVALUATION



### OVERVIEW

Until recently, the civil legal system was primarily designed to facilitate in-person appearances, which present a challenge for those with inflexible work schedules, transportation limitations, medical issues, caregiving demands, and disabilities. **Online dispute resolution (ODR) is a method of alternative dispute resolution that aims to resolve legal disputes using internet-based platforms.** By replacing in-person appearances with remote negotiation, ODR is often presented as a promising solution for narrowing the United States' justice gap - the difference between the incidence of civil legal needs among low-income Americans and the resources available to meet those needs. However, technology can be more of a hindrance than a help if not designed with the users in mind.

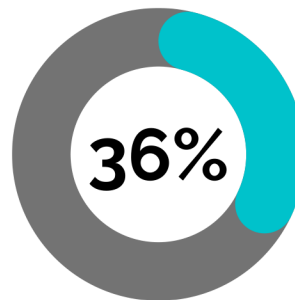
Utah built its own ODR for small claims cases but did not receive the level of defendant participation or case resolution that it expected. **In Spring 2020, i4J partnered with the Utah Administrative Office of the Courts to conduct a user experience (UX) evaluation** to identify how the Utah ODR platform could be improved or enhanced, with a focus on functionality, usability, accessibility, and comprehension issues.

### Pre-Evaluation ODR Statistics

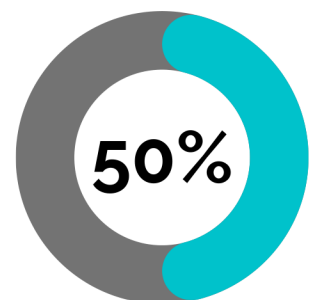


#### Research Questions

Can defendants in Utah small claims cases understand the court summons and transition from paper to online platform? Can they then successfully register, negotiate, and resolve their case using ODR?



Percent of defendants who registered to join their case on ODR



In cases where both parties joined ODR, half did not reach a resolution



### OBJECTIVES

1

Understand stakeholder goals and guidelines

2

Discover users' pain points with current experience and tech

3

Co-create solutions for an improved experience

4

Design and test an ODR prototype aligned with user needs



## PROCESS

1

### Research

Stakeholder interviews identified user needs and potential vulnerabilities in the ODR's UX and UI design.

2

### Usability Testing

Live, moderated usability tests on participants' own smartphones revealed challenges in the small claims summons and ODR platform experience.

3

### PAR Workshops

Participatory action research workshops with low-income community members generated design insights for solutions.

4

### Prototype Design

Solutions from the PAR workshops drove the interactive prototype design of updated ODR experience.

5

### Test & Iterate

Usability testing of the prototype provided data on how well the solutions worked, and generated recommendations for a redesign and future research.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

1

### EASE THE TRANSITION FROM PAPER TO PLATFORM

Employ the best practices of URL formation, website naming, and UI design, and highlight key information on the paper forms to assist website users.

2

### STREAMLINE THE REGISTRATION PROCESS

Apply the best practices of web form design by providing consistent system status visibility, error prevention, and matches between the system and the real world to make the registration process easier for website users to complete.

3

### SIMPLIFY DOCUMENT SHARING AND REVIEW

Implement intuitive design choices by integrating document-sharing functionality into the chat interface and using best practices for system status visibility and error prevention to improve document management for website users.

4

### IMPROVE ODR INFORMATION AND HELP

Anticipate and address common questions about ODR throughout the user experience and apply best practices for visual hierarchy, user onboarding, and effective FAQ design to make it easier for website users to access critical information.

5

### CLARIFY LEGAL INFORMATION AND USER OPTIONS

Employ best practices for visual information hierarchy, define keywords and clarify roles, and simplify the claim response experience to help defendants better understand their legal rights and feel more confident in their actions.