California Conference on Self Represented Litigants
Wednesday May 16
3:30 to 5:00 p.m.
Workshop II-A

Distance Services:
Using Videoconferencing, Hotlines, Email and the Web to Provide Services

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Sacramento County Public Law Library

Co-coordinator, CCCLL Virtual Reference Service
Chair, CCCLL Virtual Reference Task Force

Handout Materials
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1. “Ask the Law Librarian” link on the Judicial Council Self-Help Center Website
2. What you see when you click on the “Ask the Law Librarian” link

Get Help From The Librarian In Real Time With ASK Now

AskNow's law librarian service lets you ask questions and get answers, in real time, right here on the Internet, from live law librarians throughout California. The AskNow law librarian service is available:

- Monday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. & 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.
- Tuesday-Thursday 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.
- Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- Live Reference staff are not available on Holidays

When you click on the AskNow button on this page, the law librarian who answers your question may or may not be a librarian at your local law library. When the law librarian cannot answer your question by referring to free Internet resources, you may be referred to your local public law library. The law librarian expert service is not available at all times. If a law librarian is not available we recommend that you call or visit your county public law library.

It is unlawful for librarians to interpret legal information or advise an individual how the law might apply to one's situation. This kind of service would constitute the unauthorized practice of law. If you need further help to solve your legal problem, we recommend that you consult an attorney.

About AskNow's law librarian service Participating Law Libraries Privacy Statement

Once you are connected, please do not use your "forward" or "refresh/reload" buttons on your browser, or you will be disconnected!!

If this is your first visit to our site:
- You may be asked to accept a Mecdco Security Certificate. You must accept this in order for our site to work for you. You will then be taken directly to our site.

Directory of California's public law libraries

Participating Libraries

- Bernard E. Witkin Alameda County Law Library
- Bernard E. Witkin California State Law Library
- Butte County Public Law Library
- Contra Costa County Public Law Library
- Fresno County Law Library
- Kern County Law Library
- Law Library for San Bernardino
- Los Angeles County Law Library
- Orange County
### 3. Sample Chat #1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chat Transcript</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Patron:</strong> 13:36 2005/12/05 (GMT-8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Librarian 1:</strong> 13:39 2005/12/05 (GMT-8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Librarian 1:</strong> 13:52 2005/12/05 (GMT-8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Librarian 1:</strong> 13:52 2005/12/05 (GMT-8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Patron:</strong> 13:53 2005/12/05 (GMT-8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Librarian 1:</strong> 13:56 2005/12/05 (GMT-8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Patron:</strong> 13:57 2005/12/05 (GMT-8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Librarian 1:</strong> 13:59 2005/12/05 (GMT-8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Patron:</strong> 14:00 2005/12/05 (GMT-8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Librarian 1:</strong> 14:00 2005/12/05 (GMT-8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Librarian 1:</strong> 14:01 2005/12/05 (GMT-8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Librarian 1:</strong> 14:01 2005/12/05 (GMT-8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**4. Sample Chat #2**

**Chat Transcript:** The mother currently has custody of my grandchild and refuses visitation by the father or my husband, even though the father has visitation rights. The father wishes us (grandparents) to seek guardianship of the child since the mother is a drug user, on welfare and does not provide a stable environment for the child. As grandparents of the child what are our rights?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Librarian 1:</th>
<th>06:51 2005/09/19 (GMT-8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thank you for your inquiry. Please hold for the next available librarian. If you experience a long delay you may prefer to disconnect and try again later.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Librarian 1:</th>
<th>07:03 2005/09/19 (GMT-8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Law Librarian 38 - A librarian has joined the session]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Librarian 1:</th>
<th>07:05 2005/09/19 (GMT-8)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hello, this is the law librarian. I'm reading your question...</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Librarian 1:</th>
<th>07:05 2005/09/19 (GMT-8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You can find information on visitation rights in the Family Code section 3100 etc. This is on the Legislature’s website. Would you like the link?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patron:</th>
<th>07:08 2005/09/19 (GMT-8)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, please.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Librarian 1:</th>
<th>07:10 2005/09/19 (GMT-8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Family Codes are at <a href="http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html">http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Librarian 1:</th>
<th>07:12 2005/09/19 (GMT-8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I will send information on guardianship next.</td>
<td></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patron:</th>
<th>07:12 2005/09/19 (GMT-8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thanks!</td>
<td></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Librarian 1:</th>
<th>07:14 2005/09/19 (GMT-8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 things: First, an excellent book called “The Guardianship Book for California: how to become a child’s guardian / by David Brown and Emily Doskow. Published by Nolo, 2005. This will give step by step guidelines. Many law libraries, and public libraries will have this book, or you could purchase it directly from the publisher’s website at <a href="http://www.nolo.com">http://www.nolo.com</a> It will contain forms. It costs about $30.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Librarian 1:</th>
<th>07:16 2005/09/19 (GMT-8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2d - There will be basic information on guardianship on the Judicial Council of California’s website. Go to <a href="http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/family/guardianship/">http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/family/guardianship/</a> Just be aware that is it basic info; the book will have more detailed info, but look at the website too, to get started.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Librarian 1:</th>
<th>07:16 2005/09/19 (GMT-8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Would you like a transcript of this chat emailed to you so that you will have the websites?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patron:</th>
<th>07:16 2005/09/19 (GMT-8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thank you very much. I appreciate your help!</td>
<td></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patron:</th>
<th>07:17 2005/09/19 (GMT-8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, please.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Librarian 1:</th>
<th>07:17 2005/09/19 (GMT-8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ok, let me verify your email, is this correct?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patron:</th>
<th>07:18 2005/09/19 (GMT-8)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, that’s correct.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Librarian 1:</th>
<th>07:19 2005/09/19 (GMT-8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ok, I will email.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Librarian 1:</th>
<th>07:19 2005/09/19 (GMT-8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can I help you w/ anything else?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patron:</th>
<th>07:19 2005/09/19 (GMT-8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>That’s it for now. Thanks!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Librarian 1:</th>
<th>07:20 2005/09/19 (GMT-8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thank you for using the 24/7 reference. Please contact us again when you need assistance finding legal information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. History of California Law Librarians’ Online Chat Reference Service

AskNow / QuestionPoint
California Law Librarians’ Online Chat Reference Service

History of the Project

September 2001  
CCCLL voted to participate as law reference experts for the 24/7 Reference program of the Metropolitan Cooperative Library System.

January 2002  
Law Librarians began answering targeted legal information questions for AskNow, California’s online chat reference service.

December 2002  
Law Librarians were answering about 100 questions per month, live and via email. Most questions were live sessions transferred to law librarians by the public library staff.

January 2, 2003  
California Courts Self-Help Center website added an “Ask the Law Librarian” link to navigation bar of every page on the site. The number of questions rose from about 5 per day to 5 per hour.

August 2004  
24/7 Reference, the chat software used by AskNow, was purchased by OCLC.

October 2005  
AskNow began using OCLC’s hybrid software, QuestionPoint:24/7.

March 2006  
QuestionPoint software, originally HTML based, converted to a flash-based program.

Statistics

December 2002  
The Law Librarians handled 100 questions per month, via live chat and email.

2003  
During the first nine months of the year, the Law Librarians received an average of 1000 chats per month, but 11.5% were abandoned before the Librarian could answer them.

2004  
The Law Librarians consistently handled 290-295 live chats per week.

2005  
The Law Librarians received over 16,400 questions, including 600 e-mail responses in 2005. Approximately 1366 questions were answered per month. The chat reference service had an approval rate of over 82%.

2006  
The Law Librarians chatted with 6542 users, and answered 4515 emailed reference questions. Approximately 921 questions were answered per month.

Participating Libraries

Current Participants:  
Bernard E. Witkin State Law Library of California  
Fresno County Public Law Library  
Los Angeles County Law Library  
Orange County Public Law Library  
Placer County Law Library  
Sacramento County Public Law Library  
San Bernardino County Law Library  
San Francisco Law Library

Past Participants:  
Bernard E. Witkin Alameda County Law Library  
Butte County Public Law Library  
Kern County Law Library  
Riverside County Law Library  
San Diego County Public Law Library
Greetings from the California law online reference service at AskNow. We apologize that we did not get to your question when you sent it to our chat line. The volume of questions we receive at this popular service is unfortunately greater than our staff can respond to in real time. Many important questions, like yours, are lined up in our e-mail follow-up queue.

We sincerely hope that you found the information you were looking for when you sent us your question, either through your own research at the law library, through consultation with an attorney or with the court staff if you had an action pending.

During our chat sessions, there are websites we often recommend for finding the official law, and for finding explanations of law and procedure for common legal matters.  
- [www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html) - for browsing or searching the official California law—the “Codes”.  
- [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp) - great explanatory information, plus links to forms, courts/court rules, case law.  
- [www.nolo.com](http://www.nolo.com) – the publisher of popular self-help guides found in most law libraries, their website has excellent content.

If these do not answer your questions, it may be that you are asking something requiring more detailed explanation or interpretation that will require the work of an attorney, the court staff or our own time spent in the law library. Find the website, or the location and hours of your county’s law library at [www.publiclawlibrary.org](http://www.publiclawlibrary.org).

One of the law library’s main purposes is to make available to the public in one central place the research materials that will help people find answers to their questions about the law and legal procedure.

Trained and helpful staff will show you how to find and use the materials successfully. The staff also may know of local agencies or other sources of assistance or information that can help you make progress in your research.

As for the chat service, our busiest time period is between 11:00 and 2:00. If you would like to try to contact us again in the future, you will have a better chance of getting some chat time with our librarians if you can connect outside of those hours.

Sincerely, the law librarians at California AskNow.
7. Chart showing the percentage of questions coming from the various counties and the percentage of California’s population residing in those counties.
8. Emailed Questions Queue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Chat Transcript</th>
<th>Received</th>
<th>Updated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2406652: Chat Transcript: I am in the middle of a divorce. I have filed my Declaration of Disclosure, Income and Expense Declaration, and Schedule of Assets and Debts. My wife, after repeated requests, has not submitted these papers. It is my understanding that we can not move forward until she does. I also have heard that there is a way to legally force her to complete the documents. What do I need to do in order to do this? Thank You</td>
<td>-- Unassigned -- Patron: Anonymous Patron</td>
<td>2007/04/18 08:23:17</td>
<td>2007/04/18 08:53:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2406234: Chat Transcript: my 16 year old daughter ran away from home last week after being caught by a deputy sheriff in her new boyfriend's vehicle having sex quite openly in front of young kids. the parents called the police. my daughter was harbored at this boyfriends house and claimed to be afraid to come home she then told the mother that i hit her last halloween with a belt which is a blatant lie she also told this woman that i abuse drugs. once again a lie that i can prove beyond any doubt. i was not aware of any of this until cps showed up at my door yesterday and asked to come into my home and speak with me I having no idea what was happening let them in and answered all of their questions. they then asked to speak to my daughter alone of which i allowed. Jessica told them again that i had struck her on halloween which the truth is my daughter struck me. I said nothing about this for fear of any consequences for her. how do I defend against these false accusations and what are my rights. thank you</td>
<td>-- Unassigned -- Patron: Anonymous Patron</td>
<td>2007/04/18 06:21:29</td>
<td>2007/04/18 08:49:49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2404793: Chat Transcript: Is there a way to seal or expunge a misdemeanor arrest when the case was never filed by the DA?</td>
<td></td>
<td>2007/04/17 16:07:08</td>
<td>2007/04/17 16:07:08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Sample script.

DIVORCE

GETTING STARTED
Thank you for using our virtual reference service. Your question was transferred to a law librarian for email assistance. The law librarians can recommend and refer you to online and print resources that will help you find answers to your law-related questions, but we cannot explain or interpret the law itself, or give legal advice.

When trying to get a divorce, if you do not plan to employ an attorney, we recommend that you talk with your local family law facilitator. Every court in California has a lawyer that will help you with family law problems for free. These lawyers are called "family law facilitators." The facilitators can't represent you in court, but they can help in other ways. In some counties, they show people how to fill out court forms. They can give you brochures about family law and tell you about other places to get help, like lawyer referral services, legal aid clinics, and self-help law centers. To find your family law facilitator, go to http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/lowcost/flf.htm.

You may want to look at a book called “How to Do Your Own Divorce in CA,” written by Attorney Ed Sherman, and published by Nolo Press. This book will take you step by step through the process of getting divorced, including providing forms and sample instructions. This book is available at large bookstores, large libraries, directly from the publisher’s website at www.nolo.com and from your local public law library. To find the law library nearest you, go to www.publiclawlibrary.org/find.html.

The California Courts website, particularly the self-help section, has some helpful information about divorce. To look at this website go to: http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/family/divorce/.

You may want to visit your local law library for more in-depth research. To find the law library nearest you, go to www.publiclawlibrary.org/find.html.

Best of Luck,

Law Librarian
10. *Index to AskNow Scripts prepared by the Sacramento County Law Librarians*

**CHILD SUPPORT**
- Setting up a Support Order / General Info
- Calculating Child Support
- Modifying a Support Order
- Effect of Subsequent Spouse Income
- Enforcing Support Orders
- When Does Child Support End?

**Collecting Judgments**
- Collecting Money Owed To You (not necessarily with a judgment)
- Length of a Judgment / Renewing a Judgment

**Criminal Records**
- Expungement
- Reducing Felony To Misdemeanor For Expungement
  - Explanation of CII, a question on the expungement form
- Criminal Records – Getting Copies of Your Own Records
- Background Checks on Others

**Custody and Visitation**
- Setting Up a Custody/Visitation Order
- Modifying a Custody/Visitation Order
- Children’s Wishes in Custody Disputes
- Enforcing Custody/Visitation
- Termination of Parental Rights
- Interstate Child Custody

**Disclaimers**
- Introduction: No Legal Advice
- Lowering Expectations
- Sorry For The Delay, Need More Info
- Beyond Scope

**Divorce**
- Getting Started
- Residency Requirements
- Default
- What’s My Next Step?
EVictions
   General Landlord-Tenant
   Section 8- HUD Requirements
   Property Left in Rental Unit- Tenant Perspective
   Evicting a Lodger

GuARDIANSHIP

Judicial Complaints/Disqualification
   Disqualifying Judges
   Complaints about Judicial Misconduct

NAME CHANGE
   For an Adult
   After divorce
   For a Child

ReFerrals – AGENcIES & ORGANIZATIONS
   Law Library
   Facilitator
   Child Support Agency
   Small Claims Advisor
   Nolo Press Books

ReFerrals – WEBSITES
   http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/forms/
   http://www.uscourtforms.com
   http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/opinions/continue.htm
   http://www.nolo.com
   http://www.findlaw.com
   http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov
   http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html
   http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courts/
   http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/family/support/flf.htm
   http://www.publiclawlibrary.org/find.html

REQUEST COPIES OF COURT DOCUMENTS
SERVICE
   Incarcerated Parties
   Service of Summons by Publication – Divorce
   Service—Personal CCP 415.10
   Service—Substituted Service CCP 415.20
   Service by mail—Notice and Acknowledgement of Receipt (FL-117):
      Family Law under CCP 415.30
   Service by posting
   Service on a minor
   Service on a respondent who is under a conservatorship

SMALL CLAIMS
   General
   Web sites
   Books
   Where to sue
   Suing an out-of-state business
   Suing Out of State individuals
   Appeals
   Collecting Your Judgment

STATUTES OF LIMITATIONS / LIMITATIONS OF ACTIONS