

# Creating a Civil Justice Thesaurus

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## About the Forum

The Canadian Forum on Civil Justice is a non-profit, independent organization dedicated to bringing together the public, the courts, the legal profession and government in order to promote a civil justice system that is accessible, effective, fair and efficient.

Major research projects include:

- Civil Justice System and the Public
- Alberta Legal Services Mapping Project
- Cost of Justice Research

**Inventory of Reforms**

Search the Inventory

This database contains descriptions of civil justice system reform initiatives from across Canada, each described according to a standard format that includes information on the purpose, development, implementation, and evaluation of the reform. [Read more...](#)

Displaying 1 - 50 of 148 reforms.  
To filter the list, please enter search criteria in the fields above.

Year	Title	Jurisdiction
2009	BC Distance Mediation Pilot	British Columbia
2009	ClickLaw	British Columbia
2009	Federal Court Rules - Summary Judgment and Summary Trial (Rules 213 to 218)	Federal
2009	Manitoba Family Law Access Centre (FLAC)	Manitoba
2009	New Brunswick Family Court Pilot Project	New Brunswick
2009	New Brunswick Family Law Information Centre (FLIC)	New Brunswick
2009	Nova Scotia Action for Claim Valued Under \$100,000 (Rule 57)	Nova Scotia
2009	Nova Scotia Access for Damages Under \$100,000 (Rule 57)	Nova Scotia
2009	Nova Scotia Application in Court (Rules 5.07-5.09)	Nova Scotia
2009	Nova Scotia Civil Rules Revision Project - Discovery and Disclosure	Nova Scotia
2009	Nova Scotia Civil Rules Revision Project - Management of Litigation	Nova Scotia
2009	Nova Scotia Disclosure of Electronic Information (Rule 10)	Nova Scotia

[cfcj-fcjc.org/inventory](http://cfcj-fcjc.org/inventory)

**Clearinghouse**

Browse the Clearinghouse

The Clearinghouse includes bibliographic records of published materials such as books, conference proceedings and articles, as well as information on unpublished materials, such as conference presentations, draft reports and policies.

Displaying 1 - 20 of 183 publications that matched your search criteria.

Title	Date	Access
Family Law Act - <i>Unser de la famille</i>	2010-04-21	Online
Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (Statistics Canada, 2010). Tables from 2005/2006 to 2008/2009 covering civil and family cases, including case load, type of action, disposition, and procedural events.		Online
Access Pro Bono		Online
Access Pro Bono Society of BC, 2010. Web site of Access Pro Bono, an organization with the mission of promoting access to justice by providing pro bono services. Access Pro Bono was formed from a merger of the Western Canada Society for Access Justice and Pro Bono Law of British Columbia.		Online
Mapping the gap: A summary of legal resources for women in British Columbia		Online

[cfcj-fcjc.org/clearinghouse](http://cfcj-fcjc.org/clearinghouse)

## Clearinghouse Taxonomy

- Highlighted main areas of civil justice reform
  - *Civil Justice System*
  - *Access to Justice*
  - *Alternative Dispute Resolution*
  - *Court Administration*
  - *Judiciary*
  - *Legal Profession*
  - *Practice and Procedure*
  - *Technology*
- Largely pre-coordinated terms such as:
  - "Appointment and Tenure of the Judiciary"
  - "Technology and Law Firms"

## Foundational thesaurus research

- Conducted by Michael Lines in 2005-2006
- Established need for civil justice system thesaurus
- Explored possible applications
- Created draft thesaurus

## Need for an Inventory / Clearinghouse search thesaurus

- Complexity of civil justice reform
- Subject area is difficult to delineate
- Large variation in terminology across Canada
- Legal terms of art

## Search thesauri

- Scope Notes (SN)
- Poly-hierarchical tree of subject terms (NT/BT)
- Related Terms (RT)
- Synonyms (UF)

### legal service centres

SN	Centres serving the public which may provide a variety of legal services including information, advice, referral, or help finding a lawyer.
BT	legal service providers
NT	clinics
RT	legal information centres
NT	legal services
UF	justice access centres

## Benefits of a search thesaurus

- Alternative entry points capture variation in terminology
  - Consistent cataloguing and thorough searching
- Scope notes make use of terms of art clearer
  - Distinguish similar terms such as “costs” and “cost of justice”

## Benefits of a search thesaurus, cont.

- Rich relational structure encourages exploring the subject area (related, broader, and narrower terms)
  - e.g. may lead user from “cost of justice” to “legal fees”
- Focus on post-coordination of terms allows new topics to be explored as they emerge
  - e.g. family law + mediation

Pajek visualization of subject correlation in the Inventory of Reforms



## Faceted browsing

- Recent Clearinghouse update shifts from searching to browsing paradigm
- Increases ability of users to post-coordinate subject terms into meaningful combinations

### Search criteria

Subject:  
complex litigation

### Limit by additional subject

jury trials	(23)
trials	(23)
tort law	(21)
pre-trial procedure	(13)
jurisdiction	(8)
law offices	(6)
class action litigation	(6)
intellectual property	(4)
constitutional law	(4)
corporate law	(4)

see more

- [legal services](#)
  - (by manner provided)
  - [pro bono services](#)
  - [unbundled legal services](#)
  - (by type of service)

## Thesaurus Administration

### courts

Description

Update

Subject (en) courts

Subject (fr) tribunaux

Scope (en)

Scope (fr)

### Subjects

legal services  Remove

women  Remove

Attach Subject

legal aid clinics

clinics (UF legal aid clinics) ▼

Update

### Other fields

Suggested subject ▼ Delete

mapping research

Suggested synonym ▼ Delete

legal resources -> legal services

Canadian Forum on Civil Justice / Forum canadien sur le droit de la justice civile

## Thesaurus

### expedited litigation / litiges accélérées

Franglais

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**Definition**

Alternative rules of court that apply to certain proceedings, often where the amount in dispute is under a certain monetary limit. Compared to a case following the default rules, an expedited case may shorten timelines and limit or eliminate pre-trial stages such as discovery. May be mandatory or optional for the parties.

**Use for**

Expedited litigation rules are found across the country under a wide variety of names:

- simplified trial
- expedited actions
- expedited trial
- fast process
- fast track litigation
- simplified procedure
- streamlined procedure

**Related Terms**

For general simplifications in civil procedure that apply to all cases, use *simplification-of-process*. For rules that allow quicker disposition where important facts are agreed upon, use *summary trials*.

- summary trials
- simplification of process

**Broader terms**

- litigation
- rules of court

**Inventory of Reforms**

2009 [Nova Scotia Action for Claim Values Under \\$100,000 \(Rule 33\)](#) Nova Scotia

2009 [Nova Scotia Action for Damages Under \\$100,000 \(Rule 37\)](#) Nova Scotia

**Clearinghouse**

"Ontario's simplified procedure rule tested"

John Jaffey

24-47 (22 April 2005) *The Lawyers Weekly* 8.

[http://www.courts.gov.on.ca/eng/medias/05042405.html](#)

## Challenges

- Expert input
- Public input
- Bilingual development