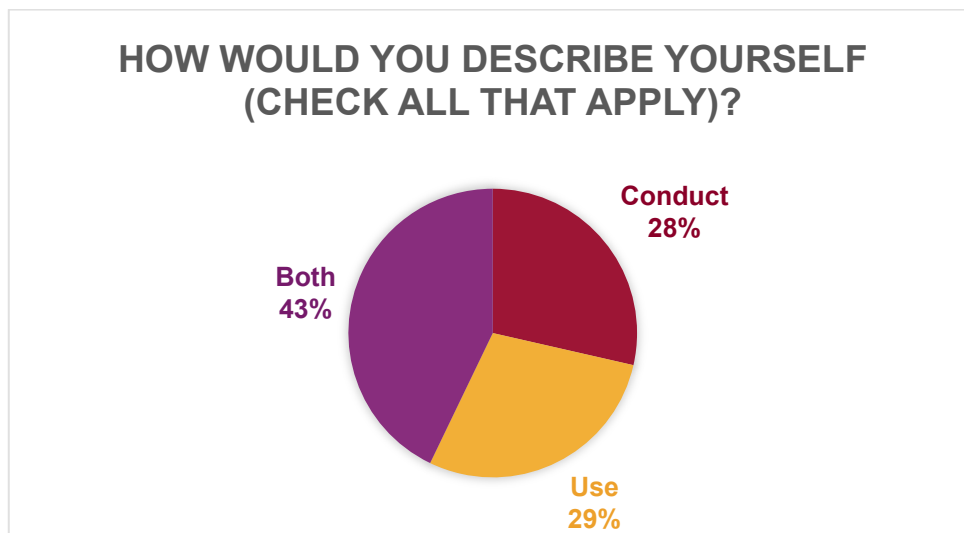


Starting Points from the Survey

At the end of 2017, we circulated a survey to begin to better understand our attendees and your policy surveillance activities; 22 of you responded. Here are some of the key results, organized according to our agenda and lightly salted with some interpretation and questions.

HOW WE FIT INTO POLICY SURVEILLANCE:

When asked if they conduct or use policy surveillance, or both, a plurality of responded selected both options:



AUDIENCES AND PURPOSES:

Those of us who use policy surveillance use it for a variety of purposes:

| # | Answer | % | Count (N=16) |
|---|--|-----|--------------|
| 1 | Evaluate laws and policies and their impact on health | 69% | 11 |
| 2 | Provide technical assistance to others to help them understand the legal environment | 69% | 11 |
| 3 | Identify possible solutions to public health problems my colleagues or I may be facing (i.e., what are other jurisdictions already doing?) | 63% | 10 |
| 4 | Define the current legal environment to identify gaps or areas of opportunity (for advocacy, policymaking, etc.) | 75% | 12 |
| 5 | Other: Creating data for others to do some or all of the above | 13% | 2 |

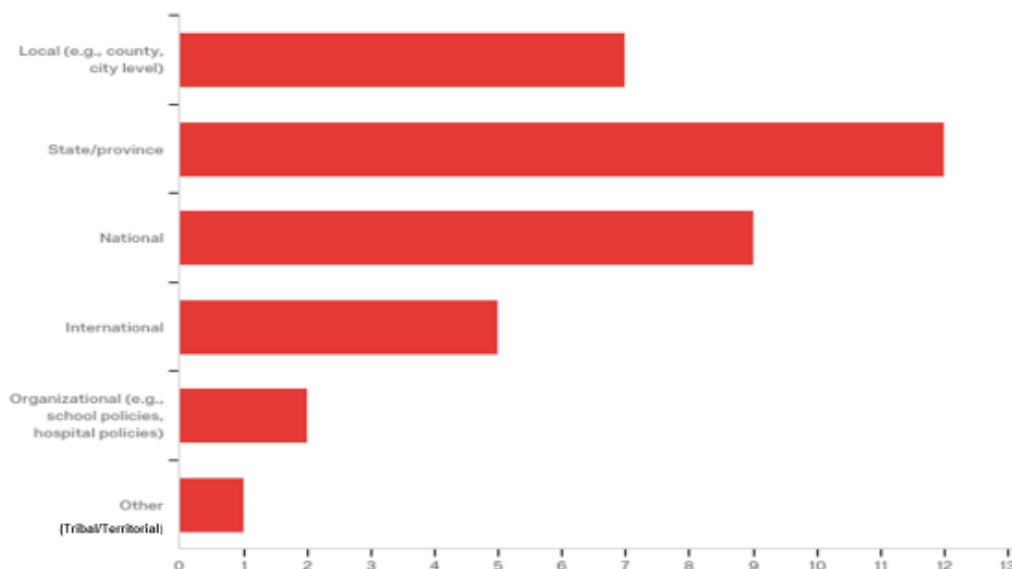
It is interesting to compare this with what producers say about their most important audiences:

- Researchers and policymakers were each the most important audience for 48% of you.
- Government and advocates were in the next rank.
- The news media, workforce and students were at the bottom of most lists.

It is also interesting to look at the features that users value in the policy surveillance products they use.

The big winner is text of the law, followed closely by interpretive content; accessible data was extremely or very important only to 31% of users. A codebook had the most divisive responses with 25% saying it is extremely important and 25% saying it is slightly important. This points to a possible gap in our group between those who see use data for research and those who do not. We will return to this in the Dissemination results.

The most common jurisdictional levels is the state/province followed by national and county.



RESEARCH METHODS AND DOCUMENTATION (PRACTICES OF PRODUCERS)

- 10 respondents out of 15 create both cross-sectional and longitudinal data. Only one respondent creates exclusively longitudinal data.
- The research process of 71% includes defining the scope of a legal dataset in advance through an iterative process of research, analysis, and expert consultations – but 28% have some other approach.
- For 78% the research process includes the participation of a subject matter expert to help define the scope of the dataset.
- Legal research methods look pretty similar, but documentation in a protocol is 50-50.

| Answer | % | Count (N=15) |
|---|----------|---------------------|
| Keyword searches in a legal database | 80% | 12 |
| Table of content searches within Chapters or Acts | 53% | 8 |
| Using secondary sources to identify laws | 73% | 11 |
| Recording your search strategy in a protocol (for example, for research of primary resources recording search terms, number of search results, specific databases search, and exclusion and inclusion criteria) | 53% | 8 |
| Require legal text to be collected and retained in a readily accessible, organized system | 80% | 12 |

As a group, we seem to differ in what challenges us: maybe we have some clever solutions to share:

| Question | Extremely easy | | Somewhat easy | | Neither easy nor difficult | | Somewhat difficult | | Extremely difficult | | Total respondents to the question |
|--|-----------------------|---|----------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------------|---|----------------------------|---|--|
| Access to legal text in any form | 8.33% | 1 | 25.00% | 3 | 8.33% | 1 | 58.33% | 7 | 0.00% | 0 | 12 |
| Collecting legal text (the body of laws) that is unencumbered (e.g. no copyright issues) | 7.14% | 1 | 42.86% | 6 | 14.29% | 2 | 35.71% | 5 | 0.00% | 0 | 14 |
| Cost to access legal databases | 9.09% | 1 | 27.27% | 3 | 36.36% | 4 | 9.09% | 1 | 18.18% | 2 | 11 |
| System to store and organize legal text | 7.69% | 1 | 30.77% | 4 | 0.00% | 0 | 53.85% | 7 | 7.69% | 1 | 13 |
| Other challenges? | 0.00% | 0 | 20.00% | 1 | 0.00% | 0 | 40.00% | 2 | 40.00% | 2 | 5 |

Other challenges?

- Depends on the country - in some places it's easy to locate legal text online, others not. Language is also a challenge
- Unpublished Laws
- length of the statutes and regulations
- Access to local and tribal laws
- defining what is "law"
- Staff time to create longitudinal data. That would be the dream
- One person who could not join us let me know outside the survey how important that translations used/shared be official.

We asked about standard coding elements, with mixed results:

| Answer | % | Count (N=15) |
|---|----------|---------------------|
| Effective date (i.e., the date the law or policy went into effect) | 87% | 13 |
| Valid-through date (i.e., the last date the policy was in effect as reflected by the legal text used to code) | 40% | 6 |
| FIPS Code or other unique identifier for a jurisdiction (If other, what do you use?) | 20% | 3 |

Major barriers challenges in coding the legal data include (from text responses):

- Resources (time, money) – mentioned by 3
- Coding the law because of ambiguity – 2
- Developing a clear coding scheme – 2
- Expertise of coders in specific area of law, inconsistencies across coders (i.e., some more generous with codes than others)

Updating of research varies, and has its own special challenges:

| Answer | % | Count (n=15) |
|--|----------|---------------------|
| (Real time (as law passes or goes into effect) | 20% | 3 |
| Quarterly | 7% | 1 |
| Semi-annually | 7% | 1 |
| Annually | 20% | 3 |
| We do not update | 7% | 1 |
| Other | 27% | 4 |

- Other includes:
 - periodically, depending on funding
 - We generally lack resources to update, but depends on the project.
 - We do not update the data YET. But we would like to annually.

- Depends on the project; for PDAPS we try to update at least semi-annually if not quarterly; other projects depend on what the client wants (usually semi-annual or annual).

QUALITY CONTROL

There is broad agreement on some aspects of quality control (QC) for legal research, but not all:

| | Answer | % | Count (N=15) |
|--|--|----------|-------------------------|
| | Comparison with secondary sources | 73% | 11 |
| | Redundant research (more than one researcher independently collects the law for some or all jurisdictions) | 73% | 11 |
| | Random checking of a sample of jurisdictions | 40% | 6 |

QC for coding shows less agreement:

| | Answer | % | Count (N=15) |
|--|---|----------|-------------------------|
| | Comparing coding with secondary sources | 40% | 6 |
| | Redundant coding (more than one researcher independently codes the law for some or all jurisdictions) | 60% | 9 |
| | Computing and reporting Interrater-reliability estimates after redundant coding | 33% | 5 |
| | Other | 7% | 1 |

Other was: “We have a verification step that involves contacting contacts in government to verify accuracy and implementation of a specific policy.”

No one from Temple or Legal Science reported on their statistical quality control process – to be presented at meeting.

DISSEMINATION

In the vast majority of times data are publicly available. Only 1 has fee.

Recall what publication products users valued: Almost half gave top value to text of the law, followed closely by interpretive content; accessible data was extremely or very important only to 38% of users. A codebook had the most divisive responses with 30% saying it is extremely important and 30% saying it is slightly important

Here’s what producers reported providing:

| | Answer | % | Count (N=15) |
|--|-----------------------------|----------|-------------------------|
| | Data in a CSV or Excel file | 33% | 5 |
| | Word or PDF table | 60% | 9 |
| | Protocol | 33% | 5 |
| | Codebook | 20% | 3 |

| | | |
|--|-----|---|
| Interpretive content, such as a policy brief | 47% | 7 |
| Text of the law | 27% | 4 |
| Links to text of the law | 47% | 7 |
| Other? Please describe | 20% | 3 |
| We don't publish our data | 7% | 1 |

Other included:

- We have a publicly available methods document.
- Website
- Summary report page highlighting interesting findings; a white paper combining our background policy memo and 5-state survey memos

Other dissemination practices:

| Answer | % | Count (N=15) |
|--|-----|--------------|
| Scholarly publications (papers that summarize the current state of the law (e.g., "mapping papers"), evaluations, commentaries or law review articles) | 53% | 8 |
| Self-published reports | 53% | 8 |
| Conference presentations | 87% | 13 |
| Sharing with media | 20% | 3 |

TECHNOLOGY

We use many different software tools to do our work:

| Answer | % | Count (N=15) |
|--|-----|--------------|
| Microsoft Excel | 67% | 10 |
| Microsoft Access | 7% | 1 |
| Atlas TI | 7% | 1 |
| Google Forms | 13% | 2 |
| Google Docs | 13% | 2 |
| Paper forms | 0% | 0 |
| MonQcle/Workbench software | 27% | 4 |
| Internal/proprietary software [describe as much as possible] | 13% | 2 |

Proprietary/ internal software:

- "We have worked with web developers to create a database, and input data directly online (we generally cut and paste from Word documents, which we use to conduct our analysis)"
- We don't code

- Software/tech choices may have a lot to do with stability and size of funding, tied to how long it is expected that the surveillance will be maintained.