

Using Technology to Solve Family Law Issues

Our guests today are from coParenter (Canada and the U.S.)

CoParenter

coParenter is an Online Dispute Resolution platform that helps separating, divorced and never-married parents make & manage coParenting responsibilities, create court-ready parenting and holiday plans, resolve disputes and make more informed, child-centric decisions that save them time, money and keep them out of court.

As an early, middle and late-stage intervention tool, users can access on-demand mediators who help parents better understand their dispute and coach them towards binding, child-centric decisions. The neutral platform allows coParents to communicate, track scheduling, and manage responsibilities. The platform also helps coParents keep accurate records of communications and activity (requests, pickups/drop offs, expenses, etc.) tracked through the app. All records are available to either coParent or to a third-party judge, virtually eliminating the He Said/She Said that often plagues family litigation. The app can be used on any iOS or android mobile phone, or can be accessed through a personal computer. coParenter is a privately held social venture and is not part of an official court.¹

****Be prepared to ask questions and engage in rich discussions with the coParenter creator!**

Ottawa County, MI -- Family Court ODR

Ottawa is using ODR to reduce show-cause hearings and resolve non-payment of child support. Matterhorn has been providing these services because before the 2016 ODR implementation, the court dealt with 100+ show-cause hearings per week.² The system gives secured communication capabilities to court staff, case managers, and involved parents.³ It also allows for automated notifications from the court via text or email. Matterhorn is an ODR provider based in Michigan, and has posted positive results from this family ODR initiative. It reports that after the first year of the program, show-cause hearings were down by 27% and related failure to appear warrants were down by 36%. Show-cause hearings are now held at court only two days per week and discussion is being held with the Office of Child Support for a statewide system.

¹ <https://www.coparenter.com/what-is-coparenter/>

² <https://getmatterhorn.com/get-results/family-court/>.

³ *Id.*

MyLaw B.C.

MyLaw B.C. is an online platform that provides “pathways” for online solutions in the following areas: divorce, abuse and family violence, missed mortgage payments, and wills and estates.⁴ It has a limited ODR service for divorcing couples. This includes a pathway for couples to create a separation plan online, as well as learning their options for working through your family law matters. The program also provides parties with information on what to do if you've been served with court documents. Through the site’s “dialogue tool”, couples can discuss their situation in the online portal to attempt to reach a resolution without going through the courts.⁵ This is a voluntary process, but its creators note its successes.

Our Family Wizard

Our Family Wizard offers tools to parents for scheduling, tracking, reimbursement requests/payments, communication, and creating logs of the communication.⁶ This platform also allows parents to create 3rd Party accounts for others they want to be able to join in, such as their therapists.⁷

Although Family Wizard is not run by the courts, many courts in the U.S. and in Canada have ordered its use during custody disputes.⁸ To facilitate this, the platform also offers accounts for professionals, such as lawyers, mediators, and other professionals.⁹ Professionals can use the platform for communication with clients, and in some circumstances are also able to monitor the use of the app by the parents (such as monitoring parent-to-parent communication).¹⁰

WeVorce

See <https://www.wevorce.com/>. This site states that it helps couples “Get Peace of Mind with Minimal Conflict in 3 Simple Steps...1) Define optimal outcomes & complete guided modules, 2)Our experts create & review your court-ready documents & 3)Get complete divorce documents & filing instructions.” Please review the site and see what you think!

⁴ MyLAW B.C., <http://mylawbc.com/>.

⁵ MyLAW B.C., <http://mylawbc.com/tools/>.

⁶ <https://www.ourfamilywizard.com/>

⁷ <https://www.ourfamilywizard.com/third-party-accounts>

⁸ <https://www.ourfamilywizard.com/professionals>

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.*