BEDFELLOWS

what public engagement has to do with open access to law, and why
BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

• hubris alert!

• substance: because we look at the same things

• methods: because we use the same tools
THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

• open access provides the library for public engagement

• most evident when public participation is premised on public access:
  • crowdsourcing-the-law projects
  • fix-the-law projects
TEXT AND PROCESS

- both fields have problems clarifying and communicating the relationship between black-letter representations and process.

- this could be about public education or helpful online intervention

- it could equally well be about interfaces.
A MORE GENERAL PROBLEM OF EDUCATION

• open-access publishers have a lot of experience in presenting legal material online....

• ...but their information (particularly caselaw) is technical and lacks immediacy

• we can learn from each other
METHODS: INFRASTRUCTURE

• both need highly-developed web-scaffolding for use by a broad public

• usually that involves more than traditional research software development practice
BARRIERS: EDUCATION, OR USABILITY?

- both fields have difficulty distinguishing usability problems from background-education problems
- both may need new definitions of usability
DARE WE MENTION FUNDING?

• both fields encounter funding problems that are *structural*

• government is limited in what it can support

• research groups are limited in what they can undertake

• marriages are hard to make
CRAFT KNOWLEDGE

• both risk man-from-mars problems

• open-access risks neglect of experience by legal publishers inside and outside government

• public engagement risks neglecting experience of gov’t. communicators, marketers, etc.
CONVERSATION, PLEASE