Discipline

Legal design

Applies human-centered design to the world of law: legal documents, services and systems that people can understand and use.



In Spanish

Diseño legal

Origin

Several antecedents; formulated by Hagan (2020), of the Stanford Legal Design Lab

What it deals with

Contracts, procedures and courts are usually designed for specialists. Those who are not do not understand their rights or know what to do.

Principles

Visual
Present legal information so it can be understood.

Product
Create tools that help people complete a procedure.

Service
Design the person's journey from the problem to the solution.

Organization and system
Change how courts, law firms and public agencies work together.

Applications in design

Use it like this
Test legal documents with people who are not lawyers.

Avoid
Simplifying the text so much that it loses its legal validity.

Don't fall for it
Work with lawyers from the start: design does not replace legal knowledge.

Especialidad



Specialty

Comic contracts

Contracts told with panels and characters, so people who read little or in another language understand them.

Concepts



Concept

Contract visualization

Adding diagrams, timelines, and tables to a contract so it is understood faster and better.



Concept

Privacy nutrition label

A short table, always in the same format, that sums up what data a service collects and what it does with it.

Methods and tools



Method

In-depth interview

A long, open conversation with one person to understand their experiences and motives.



Approach

Privacy by design

Protecting personal data from the first sketch, with the most private option already set.



Method

Prototyping

Building quick, incomplete versions of an idea to test it before developing it.



Method

Service safari

Going out to experience services firsthand to observe what works and what does not.



Method

Usability testing

Watching real people attempt tasks with the product to find out where they get stuck.

Connections

Builds on

- Plain language

Related to

- Information design
- Service design
- Design for children
- UX writing

Authors and works

2020	**Margaret Hagan**	Described legal design as a way to change the legal system starting from people and using design methods.

Sources

Original sources

- Hagan, M. (2020). Legal design as a thing: A theory of change and a set of methods to craft a human-centered legal system. Design Issues, 36(3), 3–15. View source (https://doi.org/10.1162/desi_a_00600)
- Hagan, M. D. (2018). A human-centered design approach to access to justice: Generating new prototypes and hypotheses for intervention to make courts user-friendly. Indiana Journal of Law and Social Equality, 6(2), artículo 2. View source (https://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/ijlse/vol6/iss2/2)

Last reviewed: October 29, 2026

Atlas público de diseño, de Adriana Ojeda. Texto e ilustraciones bajo licencia CC BY 4.0.