

**VISUAL LANGUAGE IN THE COMMUNICATION OF THE BRAZILIAN  
JUDICIARY**

*A LINGUAGEM VISUAL NA COMUNICAÇÃO DO JUDICIÁRIO BRASILEIRO*

*EL LENGUAJE VISUAL EN LA COMUNICACIÓN DEL PODER JUDICIAL  
BRASILEÑO*



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**ABSTRACT:** The research is integrated into the contemporary effort aimed at a law closer to society. Dominated by digital interfaces, the world has become highly visual, a fact that aligns with numerous organizations' expectations of speed and efficiency. The investigation focuses on the use of visual language in the Brazilian judicial system and the identification of its predominant characteristics. It constitutes a bibliographical and documentary research with an exploratory approach. Initiatives and projects applying Visual Law were identified in eighteen Brazilian states, encompassing common law, labor, and federal jurisdictions, including the public defender's and attorney general's offices. In some cases, changes in the form of procedural documents occurred. A preference for supplementary informative tools (summaries and synopses) was also observed. The utilization of Visual Law in the judicial system is recent, with a higher incidence of cases since 2020. As for the characteristics, the "information block" structure stands out, sometimes accompanied by thematic icons.

**KEYWORDS:** Legal Communication. Visual Language. Semiotics. Judiciary. Information and Communication Technology.

**RESUMO:** *A pesquisa integra-se ao esforço contemporâneo orientado a um Direito mais próximo da sociedade. Dominado por interfaces digitais, o mundo tornou-se muito visual, fato que acompanha as expectativas de celeridade e eficiência de inúmeras organizações. Tem como objetivo investigar o emprego da linguagem visual no judiciário brasileiro e identificar suas características predominantes. Trata-se de pesquisa bibliográfica e documental, com abordagem exploratória. Foram identificadas iniciativas e projetos de aplicação do Visual Law em dezoito estados brasileiros, vinculados a justiça comum, do trabalho e federal, incluindo defensoria pública e procuradoria. Em alguns casos, houve mudança na forma dos documentos processuais. Verificou-se também a opção por instrumentos informativos complementares (resumos e sínteses). O emprego do Visual Law no judiciário é recente, com maior incidência de casos a partir de 2020. Quanto às características, destaca-se a estrutura em "blocos" de informação, por vezes acompanhados de ícones temáticos.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Comunicação Jurídica. Linguagem Visual. Semiótica. Judiciário. Tecnologia da Informação e Comunicação.*

**RESUMEN:** *La investigación se integra al esfuerzo contemporáneo orientado hacia un Derecho más cercano a la sociedad. Dominado por interfaces digitales, el mundo se ha vuelto muy visual, hecho que acompaña las expectativas de rapidez y eficiencia de numerosas organizaciones. Investigar el uso del lenguaje visual en el sistema judicial brasileño e identificar sus características predominantes. Se trata de una investigación bibliográfica y documental, con un enfoque exploratorio. Se identificaron iniciativas y proyectos de aplicación del Derecho Visual en dieciocho estados brasileños, vinculados a la justicia común, laboral y federal, incluyendo la defensoría pública y la procuraduría. En algunos casos, se produjeron cambios en la forma de los documentos procesales. También se observó la preferencia por herramientas informativas complementarias (resúmenes y síntesis). El empleo del Derecho Visual en el sistema judicial es reciente, con una mayor incidencia de casos a partir de 2020. En cuanto a las características, se destaca la estructura en "bloques" de información, a veces acompañados de iconos temáticos.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Comunicación Jurídica. Lenguaje Visual. Semiótica. Poder Judicial. Tecnología de la Información y la Comunicación.*

## **Introduction**

Human existence presupposes language in its most varied forms. Beyond merely a means of communication, the linguistic turn of the 20th century revealed the pragmatic nature of discourses, contributing to new conceptions regarding the relationship between the material (GRACIA, 2005).

For all those who seek legal education, more than just mastery over words, there is a demand for the gradual incorporation of a specialized vocabulary repertoire suited to express what is (known as) Law. For a long time, legal knowledge has sustained its way of being through uncommon words and aphoristic expressions unfamiliar to the understanding of the ordinary citizen.

Among other factors, the emergence of the "era of rights" (BOBBIO, 2004) combined with the evolution of technologies that facilitated access to information (CASTELLS, 2017), has given rise to an ideology that aspires to more popular legal institutions. This requires transformations in legal practices and communicative forms of Law.

Dominant in digital interfaces, the world has become even more visual, a factor intertwined with the speed and efficiency expectations accompanying the development of Information and Communication Technologies. In this context, legal relationships can be translated into terms of visual signs to make the Law understandable to a more significant number of people.

Considering these factors, the purpose of the research reported here was to identify the use of visual language in the communication of the Brazilian judiciary. The study follows the contemporary effort to bring the Law closer to social reality through language. In addition to identifying the panorama of Visual Law application in the Brazilian judiciary, there was also an objective endeavor to recognize the predominant visual characteristics identifiable in the various initiatives employing this technique.

## **Materials and Methods**

The exploratory research involves bibliographic and documentary reviews (MARCONI; LAKATOS, 2010). The bibliographic review was specifically adopted regarding the general theoretical aspects related to visual communication.

In the exploratory documentary review, efforts were made to obtain information and documents related to using visual communication techniques and resources within the realm of

common justice based on available reports on the websites of the twenty-seven states' courts in the federation. To accomplish this, a search technique was employed on each court's website using the Google platform<sup>3</sup>, using the following formulation: [boolean operator "site:"] [URL of the court's portal] [space] [key phrase in quotes]. Thematic vital phrases were used, such as: "Visual Law, "; "Legal Design, "; "Visual Language." An example of a search formulation used is the site:www.tjsc.jus.br "Visual Law". This formulation generally allows retrieving texts from portals containing the critical phrase located explicitly on the indicated site. To expand the results, search formulations were chosen by combining the words "justice" or "judiciary" with the corresponding state, along with the thematic vital phrases.

From the documents obtained where the Visual Law technique was employed, an analysis was conducted to recognize these documents' main visual characteristics.

## **Results and Discussions**

### **Observations on Visual Language and Visual Law**

Humans communicate and relate through symbolic mediations, employing a shared linguistic system that allows them to perceive and give meaning to the world. Life manifests itself in language because it is precisely through language that importance is attributed to existence (ECHEVERRÍA, 2003). Social life is an existence whose common "raw material," the substrate that underpins all sharing and communication of values, is language. It establishes the parameters and conditions for thinking, speaking, and acting. Using language is more than representation; it is intervening in the world by creating senses and generating meanings that engender modes of being (BEZERRA, 2015).

By using language, a human being inherently shares concepts and values. Even if their actions do not extend beyond verbal communication in society, the simple act of verbally expressing oneself positions them as a component of the cultural system in which they are embedded. Furthermore, when employing language, an individual cannot avoid engaging in other forms of interaction within that same cultural space (DUTRA, 2014).

When deeply incorporated and rooted in human existence, every technology (consider language as one of them) becomes part of humanity itself, of its own existential condition. Ibáñez (2004, p. 43, our translation) suggests that language "[...] is born from a relationship with the world that is tailored to our body and its characteristics, and it returns to it. That is why

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<sup>3</sup> Available at: <http://www.google.com.br/>. Accessed in: 02 July 2023.

we have the illusion that it describes the world 'as it is.'" Society is so profoundly integrated into language that the constitutive role, namely, the influence of speech on the patterns that determine shared values and meanings, is readily overlooked. The definition encompasses an inherent social input into language, implying the recognition of words "[...] do not have a sense in themselves; they derive their senses from the discursive formations in which they are inscribed" (ORLANDI, 2005, p. 43, our translation).

Wolff (2004, p. 17) observes that in contemporaneity, images are quickly produced, reproduced, and acquired, becoming less singular (standard) and thus extensively present in all spheres of existence.

Discourse is a word in motion, a language practice that generates human existence. In this sense, "the specific materiality of ideology is discourse, and the specific materiality of discourse is language." (ORLANDI, 2005, p. 15, our translation). In its form and content, legal discourse reveals itself as a material dimension of Law, aspiring to broad recognition and acceptance.

However, one of the contemporary criticisms directed at legal discourse concerns the excessively formal nature of its vocabulary. This aspect conflicts with the ideal of access to justice, as language is how interaction with the world is realized (WITTGENSTEIN, 1999).

The convergence between Design and Law in recent decades, besides providing new methods to understand and solve complex problems in information design, seeks to incorporate principles and techniques of semiotics. The goal is to adapt technical texts to their recipients more appropriately (COELHO; SOUZA, 2022). This integration is motivated by the intention to transform legal communication through visual and textual elements. This approach is widely recognized as Visual Law.

According to Coelho and Souza (2022), "Visual Law aims to make a document effectively **useful**, facilitating communication with the reader. It is a way to simplify legal language," giving documents a design that provides a pleasant and easily comprehensible reading experience.

Coelho and Holtz (2020) explain that American universities such as Stanford, Cornell, and Yale have been developing significant projects and laboratories on the subject. In Brazil, legal professionals have been intuitively applying some design and Visual Law concepts since 2017.

The National Council of Justice, through Resolution No. 347 (CNJ, 2020), considers that within the scope of the Strategic Communication Plan, it is necessary to take into account

accessibility to information. Therefore, it is appropriate to adopt "visual law resources that make the language of all documents, statistical data in digital environments, data analysis, and workflow processes clearer, more common, and accessible."

### Overview of the Use of Visual Language in the Judiciary

The conducted research allowed for identifying initiatives involving using Visual Law in the judiciary in eighteen (18) federation states linked to common justice, labor justice, federal justice, public defense, and the attorney general's office. Only nine (9) states did not present such initiatives: Acre, Amazonas, Pará, Tocantins, Alagoas, Piauí, Sergipe, Mato Grosso do Sul, and Minas Gerais.

The table below provides an objective description of which states, public judicial organizational instances, categories of identified information, and the respective specifications of the document(s).

**Table 1** – Scenario of Visual Law application in the Brazilian judiciary

| Region    | State          | Judicial Instances | Category                      | Specification   |
|-----------|----------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| North     | Acre (AC)      | -                  | -                             | -   |
|           | Amapá (AP)     | TJ                 | Informational                 | Information Bulletin for magistrate; guide for virtual hearings.      |
|           | Amazonas (AM)  | -                  | -                             | -   |
|           | Pará (PA)      | -                  | -                             | -   |
|           | Rondônia (RO)  | TRT14              | Procedural Document           | Correction Minutes (Internal Affairs).                                |
|           | Roraima (RR)   | TJ                 | Informational; Procedural Act | Insert accompanying the Urgent Protective Measure.                    |
|           | Tocantins (TO) | -                  | -                             | -   |
| Northeast | Alagoas (AL)   | -                  | -                             | -   |
|           | Bahia (BA)     | JF                 | Regulation                    | Ordinance No. 2/2021.   |
|           | Ceará (CE)     | TRT                | Procedural Act                | Summary of Sentence.  |
|           | Maranhão (MA)  | TJ                 | Regulation; Informational     | Provision No. 59/2020 (Internal Affairs); Guide for Virtual Hearings. |
|           | Paraíba (PA)   | TJ                 | Procedural Document           | Intimation Warrant.   |

|                     |                          |                          |   |  |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|--|
|                     | Pernambuco (PE)          | TRT                      | Informational;<br>Procedural Act                | Summary accompanying judgment.   |
|                     | Piauí (PI)               | -                        | -   | -  |
|                     | Rio Grande do Norte (RN) | JF                       | Informational;<br>Procedural Act                | Slides in Conciliation and Instruction Hearings; models of citation and attachment intimation warrants; various communicative and procedural acts. |
|                     | Sergipe (SE)             | -                        | -   | -  |
| <b>Central-West</b> | Goiás (GO)               | TJ                       | Informational;<br>Procedural Act                | Summary of Sentence.   |
|                     | Mato Grosso (MT)         | TRT                      | Informational;<br>Procedural Act                | Summary of Sentence.   |
|                     | Mato Grosso do Sul (MS)  | -                        | -   | -  |
|                     | Distrito Federal (DF)    | TJ; PGF                  | Regulation;<br>Procedural Document              | Joint Ordinance 91 of 09/01/2021; electronic filing  |
| <b>Southeast</b>    | Espírito Santo (ES)      | TJ                       | Regulation                                      | Provision No. 45/2021  |
|                     | Minas Gerais (MG)        | TJ                       | -   | -  |
|                     | Rio de Janeiro (RJ)      | MP                       | Procedural Document                             | Civil Public Action.   |
|                     | São Paulo (SP)           | Public Defender's Office | Procedural Document                             | Term of Conduct Adjustment (Summary).  |
| <b>South</b>        | Paraná (PR)              | JF; TJ                   | Administrative Document;<br>Procedural Document | Letter of Contract Template; Code of Ethics Guide; Summary of Sentence.  |
|                     | Rio Grande do Sul (RS)   | TJ                       | Administrative Document;<br>Informational       | <i>Projeto Descomplica</i> : circular letters from the Internal Affairs; guide for virtual hearings.   |
|                     | Santa Catarina (SC)      | TJ                       | Procedural Document                             | Warrants, official notes, and terms of hearings.   |

Source: Compiled by the authors.

**Amapá (AP):** The Precedent and Collective Actions Management Unit of TJAP created an "informational bulletin"<sup>4</sup>, in which Visual Law elements were employed.

The publication was designed for frequent and swift information dissemination, allowing for reference to the dynamics of processes that lead to the establishment of qualified precedents in TJAP, STJ and STF. Its purpose is to assist judges in staying and applying legal principles. Simultaneously, the

<sup>4</sup> Available at: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eb5q10a3AHdMG81opvu\\_SrDTbEamxNiX/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eb5q10a3AHdMG81opvu_SrDTbEamxNiX/view?usp=sharing). Accessed in: 02 July 2023.

initiative aims to apply the concept of Visual Law to technical documents by translating what is understood only by those in the field into a more comprehensible format, democratizing access to information for everyone within the justice system and society as a whole (MENESCAL, 2021, online, our translation).

Furthermore, Judge Ilana Kabaczniak Luongo Kapah from the Single Court of Calçoene utilizes a **guide for virtual hearings**<sup>5</sup>, which accompanies the citation and notification warrant (SOUZA, 2021b)

**Rondônia (RO):** The Internal Affairs of the Labor Court of Ouro Preto do Oeste (RO) implemented Visual Law in the "**correction minutes**"<sup>6</sup>. Described by Federal Judge Maria Cesarineide de Souza Lima, President and Comptroller of the 14th Regional Labor Court:

The proposal of the Internal Affairs aligns with a humanized approach to make anyone an active participant for better comprehension of the results of a correction. It is of fundamental importance that the Labor Justice becomes increasingly transparent and efficient in democratizing access to information. (ALEXANDRE, 2022, online, our translation).

Within the scope of the Court of Justice of Rondônia, there is a mention of the awarding of a proposal to be implemented, referred to as the "*Visual Law do Julgamento das ADins do TJRO*"<sup>7</sup> (PODER JUDICIÁRIO DO ESTADO DE RONDÔNIA, 2021).

**Roraima (RR):** The State Court of Justice of Roraima, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the creation of the State Coordinators for Domestic Violence (Cevid), has announced the commencement of the use of Visual Law in the processes of "**Urgent Protective Measures.**" According to Judge Suelen Alves State Coordinator for Domestic Violence, "the initiative arose from the necessity to facilitate the understanding of the prohibitive measures of the Maria da Penha Law for individuals engaged with the justice system" (PODER JUDICIÁRIO DO ESTADO DE RORAIMA, 2022, online, our translation). These are appended materials that, electronically or in print, accompany all preventive, urgent measures issued by the court, containing precise information about the decision, as well as guidance and contact details for specialized assistance networks (TRIBUNAL DE JUSTIÇA DE RORAIMA, 2022).

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<sup>5</sup> Available at: <https://bernardodeazevedo.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/guia-audiencia.pdf>. Accessed in: 02 July 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Available at: <https://portal.trt14.jus.br/portal/sites/default/files/correicao-interna-2022-07/ASSI NADA - ATA DE CORREIÇÃO 2022- VT OURO PRETO DO OESTE-RO.pdf>. Accessed in: 02 July 2023.

<sup>7</sup> Visual Law is a technique that employs visual elements to enhance the clarity and accessibility of legal communication, and the Judgment of ADIs (Direct Actions of Unconstitutionality) at TJRO (Court of Justice of the State of Rondônia) refers to the process of adjudicating cases involving challenges to the constitutionality of laws by the Court of Justice of the State of Rondônia.



**Bahia (BA):** The Federal Justice of the Judicial Section of Bahia issued "**Ordinance No. 2/2021**"<sup>8</sup>, which authorizes the application of Visual Law in processes related to social security benefits (SOUZA, 2021a).

**Ceará (CE):** Judge Karla Yacy Carlos da Silva from the 13th Labor Court of Fortaleza employs Visual Law to create **summary judgments**<sup>9</sup> (SOUZA, 2021b).

**Maranhão (MA):** The General Office of Justice of the Maranhão Court of Justice, through its "**Provision No. 59/2020**"<sup>10</sup>, establishes the Compliance Program within the internal affairs, "acknowledges training and periodic education on ethics, integrity, and governance, utilizing Visual Law techniques" (SOUZA, 2021a, online, our translate). Judge Michelle Amorim Sancho Souza, from the 1st Court of Presidente Dutra has developed a **guide for virtual hearings** to assist the parties (SOUZA, 2021b).

**Paraíba (PB):** Analyst Caio Bruno from the 3rd Civil Special Court of Campina Grande has incorporated Visual Law elements into a summons writ, making it more accessible to parties without legal representation. This initiative earned the 1st place prize in the 48th National Forum of Special Courts – FONAJE (GUEDES, 2021).

**Pernambuco (PE):** Sergio Torres Teixeira, a appellate judge from the Sixth Regional Labor Court (TRT6), in collaboration with Professor and Researcher Paloma Mendes Saldanha, from the Logos Group at PPGD/Unicap, devised a "**summary with visual elements**"<sup>11</sup> to accompany judgments resulting from appeal proceedings. "However, the judgment retained its traditional format and essential legal components, with the graphical scheme serving as an additional aid to facilitate understanding of the judgment's outcome" (TRIBUNAL REGIONAL DO TRABALHO DA SEXTA REGIÃO, 2021, online, our translation).

**Rio Grande do Norte (RN):** Marco Bruno Miranda Clementino the presiding judge of the 6th Federal Court of the Federal Justice of Rio Grande do Norte, devised **warrants of citation and attachment notices**<sup>12</sup>, in collaboration with "two interns from the court who were studying Law and also possessed knowledge in the field of design" (AMAGIS, 2020, online,

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<sup>8</sup> Available at: <https://bernardodeazevedo.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/port-jfba.pdf>. Accessed in: 02 July 2023.

<sup>9</sup> Available at: <https://bernardodeazevedo.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/13-VT-fortaleza-resumo-sentenca.pdf>. Accessed in: 02 July 2023.

<sup>10</sup> Available at: <https://bernardodeazevedo.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/prov-tjma.pdf>. Accessed in: 02 July 2023

<sup>11</sup> Available at: <https://www.trt6.jus.br/portal/noticias/2021/07/21/visual-law-iniciativa-piloto-usa-linguagem-grafica-para-facilitar-comprensao-de>. Accessed in: 02 July 2023.

<sup>12</sup> Available at: [https://f.i.uol.com.br/fotografia/2021/01/06/16099683085ff62ab4665b2\\_1609968308\\_3x2\\_md.jpg](https://f.i.uol.com.br/fotografia/2021/01/06/16099683085ff62ab4665b2_1609968308_3x2_md.jpg). Accessed in: 02 July 2023.

our translation). Clementino states that "design methods are often applied in the Innovation Lab of JFRN (INOVE.JFRN), where the court has conducted various design thinking workshops and even held court hearings" (INNOVARE, 2020, online, our translation).

The practice involves using visual law, meaning the incorporation of visual elements in legal documents intended for the external audience, to render technical-legal language more lucid and comprehensible, as well as make judicial communication more empathetic and inclusive. It also aims to enhance internally conducted activities, given that its utilization introduces convenience to the unit's daily operations. This is a burgeoning experience that integrates diverse projects, currently encompassing collaborative guides, protocols for conducting teleconferences, internship programs, the 6th Court's customer relationship page on the JFRN website, hearing records, decisions, judgments, citation warrants, notifications, and possession orders, among others. In addition to applying icons, logos, pictograms, infographics, flowcharts, and other graphic elements, videos are also employed, and their inclusion in the documents is facilitated through QR codes (INNOVARE, 2021a, online, our translation).

Lianne Pereira da Motta Pires, judge of the 9th Federal Court of Rio Grande do Norte, applied the "**Visual Law through slides**", technique in videoconferencing hearings she presided over in Caicó (RN). "For the magistrate, virtual court hearings present an appropriate environment for the application of Visual Law" (JURINEWS, 2021, online; SOUZA, 2021b, online, our translation).

**Goiás (GO):** Aline Tomás, judge of the 2nd Family Court of Anápolis, "initiated the '*Projeto #Simplificar*'<sup>13</sup>, through which the magistrate started transforming homologating judgments into **concise didactic summaries**, sent via WhatsApp" (MIGALHAS, 2021, online; SOUZA, 2021b, online, our translation).

**Mato Grosso (MT):** Implemented in the Labor Court of Colíder, in the northern part of the state, the project led by Judge Grazielle Lima "aims to 'translate' legal language to facilitate the understanding of decisions. The goal is for anyone to comprehend what the judge is saying without a lawyer's assistance." The judgments are accompanied by a "plain-language summary so that workers and employers can independently understand their gains, losses, and what should be paid to the attorney or in court fees" (G1 MATO GROSSO, 2021, n. p.; ALVARES, 2021, online, our translation, our translation).

**Distrito Federal (DF):** According to Joint Ordinance 91 of September 1, 2021 (TRIBUNAL DE JUSTIÇA DO DISTRITO FEDERAL E DOS TERRITÓRIOS, 2021), the

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<sup>13</sup> The objective of the *Projeto #Simplificar* is to streamline and modernize bureaucratic processes to make the lives of Brazilian citizens more accessible and efficient.

Innovation Lab "Aurora" of the Federal Court of the Federal District and Territories instituted the "*TJDFT+simples*" project, which aims to combine "plain language and visual law to enhance society's access to justice through clearer, accessible, and inclusive communication" (AURORA, 2021, online, our translation).

In turn, the Federal Attorney General's Office (PGF), an entity of the Attorney General's Office of the Union (AGU), has adopted Visual Law in pleadings and other internal communication tools. With the implementation of the *LINGUAGEM JURÍDICA INOVADORA* project:

[...] a significant improvement in the presentation of arguments was observed, along with procedural consistency, achieved through guidance to federal public attorneys regarding procedural stages suitable for Visual Law language use and the inclusion of audio and video via QR Codes, facilitated by the creation of an explanatory manual, internal dissemination (*PGF Comunica*), and a dedicated page on the AGU/PGF network (Federal Attorney General's Office), storing project-related information. Consequently, Federal Attorneys can engage in higher-quality and more excellent work, with the opportunity to develop an innovative experience better suited to the online methodology, effectively applying Visual Law to make legal documents more interactive, facilitating communication, and prioritizing the judge's needs in understanding the presented arguments (INNOVARE, 2021c, online, our translation).

**Espírito Santo (ES):** In the context of the judiciary oversight at TJES, Provision No. 45/2021 stands out, which addresses the issue of the treatment and protection of personal data by the delegates of extrajudicial notarial and registration services. In its Article 23-D, paragraph 5, it is stipulated that:

The notary offices must take care to produce privacy notices with wording in understandable and audience-oriented language, utilizing Visual Law and Legal Design techniques (clear language and illustrative elements) while adhering to the provisions of Article 6, section VI; Article 9, caput and paragraph 1, and Article 14, paragraph 6, of the Data Protection Law. (ESPÍRITO SANTO, 2021, our translation).

**Rio de Janeiro (RJ):** The State Public Prosecutor's Office of Rio de Janeiro has incorporated visual resources (infographics) to enhance the comprehension of events referred to in a Public Civil Action<sup>14</sup>, concerning the metro line 4 from Copacabana to Ipanema (SOUZA, 2020).

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<sup>14</sup>Available at: <http://bernardodeazevedo.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/ACP-linha-4-do-metro-Primeira.pdf>. Accessed in: 02 July 2023.

**São Paulo (SP):** The State Public Defender's Office of São Paulo has adopted Visual Law for the creation of a synthesis of a **Conduct Adjustment Term**<sup>15</sup>, which, "beyond the consensual resolution of the conflict that prevented the filing of a public civil action, applied visual law as a communication methodology directed towards the citizens who are recipients of the municipal public health service" (AZEVEDO; ARBEX, 2022, online, our translation).

**Paraná (PR):** The Innovation and Creativity Laboratory (LINC) of the Federal Justice of Paraná, at the request of the Planning and Management Section, developed a "**new model of contract letter** based on the utilization of visual law concepts, design thinking, and plain language" (JUSTIÇA FEDERAL DO PARANÁ, 2021). The Court of Justice of Paraná released a **simplified version of its Code of Ethics and Conduct**<sup>16</sup>, utilizing Visual Law to "generate publicity and facilitate the understanding of the content" (DOMINGUES, 2022).

In the jurisdiction of Ponta Grossa, Judge Laryssa Angelica Copack Muniz of the 1st Criminal Court employed Visual Law techniques to create summaries of criminal judgments, aiming to facilitate the recipients' understanding of the decisions (INNOVARE, 2021d; SOUZA, 2021b).

**Rio Grande do Sul (RS):** The Innovation Commission of the Court of Justice of Rio Grande do Sul (INOVAJUS) initiated the **project DESCOMPLICA**. The President of INOVAJUS, appellate Judge Ricardo Pippi Schmidt, "explains that the intention is to propose to judges that the drafting of legal texts be simple, clear, and concise, for more appropriate and direct communication" (CAVALHEIRO, 2020, online, our translation). Within the framework of the judiciary oversight, new circular letters were developed<sup>17</sup>. The General Justice Oversight incorporated Visual Law starting from August 2020.

Up to the present [2021], more than 35 Recommendations have been issued, addressing highly relevant topics for the justice system. For instance, they include guidance on process digitization, issuance of payment orders, fee collection, and matters concerning Childhood and Youth. After the first two months of implementation, a survey was conducted with judges and staff in October 2020, inquiring about their opinions on the new format. The approval rate among respondents reached 98% (INNOVARE, 2021b, online, our translation).

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<sup>15</sup>Available at: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fIeTb351zTVKEMoCTQiukYGmouXDa4G\\_/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fIeTb351zTVKEMoCTQiukYGmouXDa4G_/view). Accessed in: 02 July 2023.

<sup>16</sup> Available at: [https://www.tjpr.jus.br/documents/18319/63132788/modelo\\_codigo\\_etica\\_FINAL\\_20220419.pdf/838e8fa5-fd6e-6b6f-28be-fc207f1588de](https://www.tjpr.jus.br/documents/18319/63132788/modelo_codigo_etica_FINAL_20220419.pdf/838e8fa5-fd6e-6b6f-28be-fc207f1588de). Accessed in: 02 July 2023.

<sup>17</sup> Available at: <https://www.tjrs.jus.br/novo/noticia/descomplica-comissao-de-inovacao-do-tjrs-lanca-projeto-para-mudar-o-texto-juridico/>. Accessed in: 02 July 2023.

On the other hand, "Judge Clarissa Costa de Lima, who presides over the Work Accident Court in Porto Alegre, adopted a **Quick Guide for Virtual Hearings**<sup>18</sup>. The initiative, along with other colleagues, emerged during a Visual Law course, a technique that employs visual resources to clarify legal text" (CAVALHEIRO, 2020, online, our translation).

**Santa Catarina (SC):** Judge Leila Mara da Silva, from the jurisdiction of Indaial (SC) is developing the "Simples Assim" project with the support of JudLab (PODER JUDICIÁRIO DE SANTA CATARINA, 2021). Conducted in partnership with the Design and Law programs of the Regional University of Blumenau – FURB, the project aims to "create new standard models for writs, official letters, and hearing terms, as well as explore multimedia resources to enable society to understand more simply and efficiently what they need to proceed with judicial processes" (FURB, 2021, online, our translation).

### Common Characteristics Found in Documents Employing Visual Law

The table below displays the documents in which Visual Law was applied, obtained from the internet, along with their respective access links:

**Table 2 – Documents Employing Visual Law Identified**

| State         | Inst. | Document  | Document Access Link  |
|---------------|-------|---|---|
| Amapá (AP)    | TJ    | Information Bulletin                                  | <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eb5q10a3AHdMG81opvu_SrDTbEamxNiX/view">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eb5q10a3AHdMG81opvu_SrDTbEamxNiX/view</a>   |
|               | TJ    | Guide for Virtual Court Hearings                      | <a href="https://bernardodeazevedo.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/guia-audiencia.pdf">https://bernardodeazevedo.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/guia-audiencia.pdf</a>   |
| Rondônia (RO) | TRT14 | Correction Minutes (Internal Affairs)                 | <a href="https://portal.trt14.jus.br/portal/sites/default/files/correicao-interna-2022-07/ASSINADA - ATA DE CORREIÇÃO 2022- VT OURO PRETO DO OESTE-RO.pdf">https://portal.trt14.jus.br/portal/sites/default/files/correicao-interna-2022-07/ASSINADA - ATA DE CORREIÇÃO 2022- VT OURO PRETO DO OESTE-RO.pdf</a> |
| Roraima (RR)  | TJ    | Accompanying Insertion for Urgent Protective Measures | <i>Not Identified on the Web</i>  |
| Ceará (CE)    | TRT7  | Summary of Judgment                                   | <a href="https://bernardodeazevedo.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/13-VT-fortaleza-resumo-sentenca.pdf">https://bernardodeazevedo.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/13-VT-fortaleza-resumo-sentenca.pdf</a>   |
| Maranhão (MA) | TJ    | Guide for Virtual Court Hearings                      | <i>Not Identified on the Web</i>  |
| Paraíba (PA)  | TJ    | Writ of Subpoena                                      | <i>Not Identified on the Web</i>  |

<sup>18</sup>Available at: <https://www.tjrs.jus.br/novo/noticia/guia-rapido-para-audiencia-virtual-mostra-em-apenas-uma-pagina-as-instrucoes/>. Accessed in: 02 July 2023.

|                          |                          |  |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| Pernambuco (PE)          | TRT6                     | Summary of Judgement   | <a href="https://www.trt6.jus.br/portal/sites/default/files/resize/images/dr_sergio_visual_law-750x1061.jpg">https://www.trt6.jus.br/portal/sites/default/files/resize/images/dr_sergio_visual_law-750x1061.jpg</a>  |
| Rio Grande do Norte (RN) | JF                       | Slides in Conciliation and Instruction Hearings                          | <i>Not Identified on the Web</i>   |
|                          |                          | Writ of Immission into Possession; Writ of Summons and Attachment Notice | <a href="https://f.i.uol.com.br/fotografia/2021/01/06/16099683085ff62ab4665b2_1609968308_3x2_md.jpg">https://f.i.uol.com.br/fotografia/2021/01/06/16099683085ff62ab4665b2_1609968308_3x2_md.jpg</a><br><a href="http://bernardodeazevedo.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/mandado-citacao-intimacao-penhora.pdf">http://bernardodeazevedo.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/mandado-citacao-intimacao-penhora.pdf</a> |
| Goiás (GO)               | TJ                       | Summary of Judgment  | <a href="https://uploads.emaisgoias.com.br/2021/08/b0a194d9-pagina-1-1448x2048.jpg">https://uploads.emaisgoias.com.br/2021/08/b0a194d9-pagina-1-1448x2048.jpg</a><br><a href="https://uploads.emaisgoias.com.br/2021/08/a7999898-pagina-2-1448x2048.jpg">https://uploads.emaisgoias.com.br/2021/08/a7999898-pagina-2-1448x2048.jpg</a>   |
| Mato Grosso (MT)         | TRT                      | Summary of Judgment  | <i>Not Identified on the Web</i>   |
| Distrito Federal (DF)    | PGF                      | Petitions  | <i>Not Identified on the Web</i>   |
| Rio de Janeiro (RJ)      | MP                       | Public Civil Action  | <a href="http://bernardodeazevedo.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/ACP-linha-4-do-metro-Primeira.pdf">http://bernardodeazevedo.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/ACP-linha-4-do-metro-Primeira.pdf</a>  |
| São Paulo (SP)           | Public Defender's Office | Summary of Conduct Adjustment Term                                       | <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fleTb351zTVKEMoCTQiukYGmouXDa4G_/view">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fleTb351zTVKEMoCTQiukYGmouXDa4G_/view</a>  |
| Paraná (PR)              | JF                       | Model of Contract Letter   | <i>Not Identified on the Web</i>   |
|                          | TJ                       | Code of Ethics Guide   | <a href="https://www.tjpr.jus.br/documents/18319/63132788/modelo_codigo_etica_FINAL_20220419.pdf/838e8fa5-fd6e-6b6f-28be-fc207f1588de">https://www.tjpr.jus.br/documents/18319/63132788/modelo_codigo_etica_FINAL_20220419.pdf/838e8fa5-fd6e-6b6f-28be-fc207f1588de</a>  |
|                          | TJ                       | Summary of Judgment  |  |
| Rio Grande do Sul (RS)   | TJ                       | <i>Projeto Descomplica:</i> Circular Letters from the Oversight          | <i>Not Identified on the Web</i>   |
|                          | TJ                       | Guide for Virtual Court Hearings   | <a href="https://www.tjrs.jus.br/novo/noticia/guia-rapido-para-audiencia-virtual-mostra-em- apenas-uma-pagina-as-instrucoes/">https://www.tjrs.jus.br/novo/noticia/guia-rapido-para-audiencia-virtual-mostra-em- apenas-uma-pagina-as-instrucoes/</a>  |
| Santa Catarina (SC)      | TJ                       | Writs, Circular Letters, and Hearing Terms.                              | <i>Not Identified on the Web</i>   |

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Upon analyzing documents that utilize Visual Law, the recurrent presence of visual elements can be observed, including:

- Information structured in "blocks," sometimes accompanied by icons categorizing themes, aiming to facilitate the comprehension of each subject covered in the documents;

- Prominent numerals guiding the reading sequence of the text;
- Highlighted titles and subtitles through color attributes and/or within frames;
- Iconography and illustrative photographs;
- Diagrams representing structures and flows;
- Tables organizing categories;
- Bar charts illustrating quantities;
- QR codes for accessing additional sources.

A noteworthy consideration is related to the fact that the majority of documents incorporating Visual Law represent endeavors that, although endorsed by the corresponding organizational entities, do not possess an "official" status, meaning they lack legal standing. These documents serve as a "supplementary mediator" between the public and officially recognized documents. This is evident, for instance, in summaries of Judgments, Verdicts, and Hearing guides.

Another observed aspect involves the utilization of Visual Law within the pandemic context. The pandemic challenged the judicial system to conduct teleconference hearings, prompting the creation of guides for Virtual Court Hearings.

### **Final Considerations**

It has been observed that the theme of "Visual Law" is the subject of discussions in lectures and training programs. However, its use in legal communication by judicial instances is still in its initial stages, with more prominent projects emerging from 2020 onwards.

The effort towards modifying judicial procedures and documents to make them more accessible to the public is remarkable. The research revealed the existence of initiatives and projects applying Visual Law in 18 Brazilian states, encompassing both common law and labor courts, the federal judiciary, public defenders, and the attorney general's office. Although, in some cases, the application of this technique results in the transformation of the form of official documents, the initial approach typically involves including supplementary informative tools, such as summaries or synopses.

The projects emerge scattered, originating from individual actions of judges and judiciary staff, both independently and in collaboration with external entities (academic

researchers and specialized professionals). Furthermore, technical courses have contributed to fostering these initiatives.

Regarding the actual procedural document and supplementary content (informational, summaries, among others), the application of Visual Law aims to cater to society-oriented communication, even though it's also implemented in internal processes.

As for the characteristics of documents utilizing Visual Law, adopting an "information block" structure is notable, often accompanied by icons that categorize the treated subjects. This seeks to simplify the comprehension of each topic addressed in the documents.

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