

Electronic Court Records Program

ECR E-Filing Project E-Commerce Description

BUSINESS NEED

ECR E-Filing is the third project component of the Department of Judicial Administration's (DJA) Electronic Court Records (ECR) Program. Established in 1997, the five-year goal for the ECR Program is to

Replace hard copy case files with electronic records. The official court record will be maintained in electronic form and can be accessed by file users in several ways. This allows automated data capture from digital documents, remote filing and access, and multiple simultaneous use of the case file.

The ECR E-Filing project will provide DJA's customers the mechanism to electronically file materials that comprise the case file. This will simplify the filing process for filers, and reduce, for DJA, hard copy maintenance and the burden of scanning papers into electronic images. Further, encoded document formats will enable automation of substantial amounts of data entry now performed by DJA.

OBJECTIVES

The ***primary objectives*** of the ECR E-Filing project are

- 1) to implement a system that
 - allows DJA's customers to electronically submit – via the Internet – all documents, including attachments, and other materials intended for the case file;
 - accepts or rejects submissions based on authentication, business rules, and standards as to format, completeness, etc.;
 - electronically notifies the filer whether a submission has been accepted for filing or rejected;
- receives and processes any required fees associated with e-filings;
 - automatically processes e-filings so that the Superior Court Management Information System (SCOMIS) case file index is updated with data obtained from the e-filing;
 - captures additional data from e-filings for automatic entry into SCOMIS and other systems used by DJA and Superior Court;

- stores e-filings in the Electronic Court Records system for retrieval and display;
 - fully incorporates and expands upon the technology infrastructure provided by the Core ECR and ECR Connectivity projects; and
- 1) to develop and act upon a plan for promoting the use of the ECR E-Filing system among law firms, single-practice attorneys, pro se litigants, and the general public in order to maximize use of the system.

A **secondary objective** of the ECR E-Filing project is to promote the objectives of the Law, Safety and Justice Integration (LSJI) Project by

- facilitating the electronic exchange of documents between DJA and other King County Law, Safety and Justice agencies via the King County Wide Area Network; and
- establishing ECR E-Filing document standards that will enable the automatic processing of data contained in those documents by other King County Law, Safety and Justice agencies.

SCOPE

The ECR E-Filing project encompasses the following scope.

Users Any individual or organization that submits materials to DJA for inclusion in a case file is a potential user of the ECR E-Filing system. Access to the ECR E-Filing system will be via the Internet for individuals and for organizations outside the King County Wide Area Network (KCWAN). The Superior Court, the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office and other King County agencies that file case file materials with DJA will access the ECR E-Filing system via the KCWAN.

Establishing access to the Internet or to the KCWAN is the user's responsibility. The ECR E-Filing Project will not provide wiring, modems, service agreements with Internet access providers and the like to potential e-filers.

A user's choice or version of browser should not hinder use of the ECR E-Filing system once Internet access is established provided the browser and its version are accepted industry standards. Similarly, use of the ECR E-Filing system should not be inhibited by the make or version of a user's PC or operating system provided the PC and operating system meet generally accepted minimums for Internet access. The ECR E-Filing Project will not provide PCs, operating system software, or browser software to potential e-filers.

E-Commerce/Payment of Fees Just as certain paper documents require payment of a fee before they are processed for filing into the case file, some e-filings will also require the payment of a fee. Upon receipt of an e-filing submission, the ECR E-Filing system should be able to determine

- if payment of a fee is required to process that submission,
- if payment for the fee is included with the submission, and
- if the included payment is for the right amount.

If the system determines that payment of a fee is required for a given e-filing submission but there is no payment included with the submission, then the submission is rejected and notification is sent to the filer.

Similarly, if the system determines that payment of a fee is required for a given submission, and payment is included but it is not the correct amount, the submission **and** the included payment are rejected and notification sent to the filer.

In the case where the system determines that payment of a fee is not required for a given submission but payment is included, the system should accept the submission (provided it meets the full set of acceptance criteria related to authentication, business rules, and document standards) but reject the payment. Notification indicating that the submission has been successfully filed and that payment is not necessary should be sent to the filer.

If the system determines that payment is required and payment in the correct amount is included with the submission, the system should accept both the submission (again, provided it meets all other acceptance criteria) and the payment. As with any other accepted submission, the system then sends notification to the filer.

In order to process payment, certain information obtained from the submission, e.g., case number, filer's name and address, will need to be associated with the payment. This information and the payment are then automatically sent from the ECR E-Filing system to the State-based financial system, used by the Department, for processing. The ECR E-Filing Project scope, then, necessarily includes responsibility for designing and implementing the processes required for data to be sent from the ECR E-Filing system to the State's financial system. Two-way exchange of data should not be ruled out.