



King County

Department of Judicial Administration
Superior Court Clerk's Office



Electronic Court Records: The King County, WA, Experience

Kansas Supreme Court's Electronic Filing Committee
October 5, 2010

Presented By:

Hon. J. Wesley Saint Clair, Superior Court Judge
Teresa Bailey, Deputy Director, Clerk's Office

Agenda



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- Introduction to King County Superior Court and Clerk's Office
- The KCSC Electronic Court Records (ECR) Program Implementation
- Bringing Judges Along – What's in it for Me?
- Application Demonstrations
- Down Time
- *Additional Information

Washington State Courts



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THE SUPREME COURT Six-year terms, staggered
<ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ Appeals from the Court of Appeals♦ Administers state court system
COURT OF APPEALS Six-year terms, staggered Division I, Seattle; Division II, Tacoma Division III, Spokane
<ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ Appeals from lower courts except those in jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.
SUPERIOR COURT Four-year terms
<ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ Civil matters♦ Domestic relations♦ Felony criminal cases♦ Juvenile matters♦ Appeals from courts of limited jurisdiction
COURTS OF LIMITED JURISDICTION Four-year terms District and Municipal courts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">♦ Misdemeanor criminal cases♦ Traffic, non-traffic, and parking infractions♦ Domestic violence protection orders♦ Civil actions of \$75,000 or less♦ Small claims up to \$5,000

King County Superior Court & Clerk's Office



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- Locations: Seattle, Kent, Juvenile, Harborview
- 53 Judges
- 13 Commissioners
- 76,000+ new case filings in 2009
- 1,758,928 documents were filed in 2009
- 7,000+ documents filed daily

Ash Institute Award



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“The King County Electronic Court Records Program demonstrates the power of collaboration to fundamentally improve the judicial process. The King County Clerk’s office worked hand-in-hand with multiple parties to replace the paper-based process and enhance justice. It is our hope that as a 2007 Innovations in American Government Award winner, King County will share its practices with other judicial departments around the country.”

Stephen Goldsmith, Director
Innovations in American Government
Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government ₅

ECR in King County



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“Justice Denied? Not in Seattle”

Visionaries Series: Changing the World,
One Story at a Time

By Bill Mosher



<http://www.divshare.com/download/4995627-5ac>

ECR Program in King County



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The Master Plan - Highlights

- States the mission, vision, goals & strategies
 - Identifies the vision that the 'Electronic Court Record' will be the official record of the court
- Defines management structure, stakeholder involvement & communications plan
- Divides the vision into manageable stand-alone phases
- Identifies 'Connectivity' as a separately funded phase



ECR Program Timeline

1998 ECR Program Master Plan Published; Document Imaging



2000 ECR Core: Clerk's Office Electronic Court Records File Management System



2002 ECR Viewer: Superior Court, Clerk's Office and Law, Safety & Justice Partners record viewing over KC WAN



2005 eFiling and ECR Online: Clerk's applications for filing and viewing documents via the internet



2009 Mandatory eFiling implemented and eWorking Copies submittal functionality



2010+ Online Court Forms, Enhancements, ECR Core Rewrite



Phase 1: Core ECR

Clerk's office internal imaged record management system

- Electronic workflow processing for staff
- Security of sensitive documents
- Routing & process history captured in activity log
- Integrated electronic docketing with WA State system



Phase 2: Connectivity

Accessing Electronic Court Records via KC WAN
and move to electronic official court record:

- Budgeted change management and support
- Included equipment, viewer application & training
- Purposeful stakeholder committees and agreements developed – issues & participants



Connectivity Success Tips

- Obtain early buy-in for transition away from paper (Master Plan)
- Stair-step implementations / change
- Develop a list of exceptions
- Maintain a commitment to service (trust, printing)
 - Average # of pages per document
- Ease the burden with tools
 - Electronic sort of documents
 - Calendar based file queue
- Provide training and help resources



Bringing the Judges Along

- Involve Judicial Officers – pro technology and not
- Make the case for the change – build buy in
- Listen to input – pressure points become clear
- Set up an Ad Hoc Committee – report back
- Group falls into 25-50-25, assess who is present
- Address issues – make exceptions



Bringing the Judges Along

- Meet – Review – Revise – Incorporate – Meet....
- Come up with a realistic timetable
- Plan for success by getting inches, not feet
- Communicate, Communicate, Communicate
- Build trust and establish an environment of success
- Stair step implementation – phased in to ease stress, prove incremental success



What's in it for Me?

Judicial Transition: Paper to Electronic Records

Requires business process changes – mindset adjustment

- Allows for viewing records
 - In chambers
 - On the bench
 - In other courtrooms
 - Off site
- Even on it's worst days, it is better than paper

Phase 3: Electronic Filing



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Goals: Faster, Better, Cheaper

- Convenient document filing process via internet
- Decrease clerks' document processing time
- Quicker record access – viewing documents
- Increase document image quality
- Create time & resource savings

Why Mandate E-Filing for Attorneys?



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- DJA was facing huge budget cuts in 2008; many options were considered
- Customer feedback encouraged us to mandate e-filing for attorneys
- In 2007, updates to State General Rule 30 enables local court's authority to mandate e-filing



What's in it for Me?

Judicial Transition: Paper to Electronic Filing

- Electronic Filing
 - Review & finalize order in MS Word
 - Sign & e-file / digital signature
 - E-mail order to staff and/or parties
- Once your constituency is on board & using electronic records, users will expect the next best thing to be added.
- Do not underestimate how dependent you will become on electronic records and filing



Application Demonstration

- E-Filing Application - Public filing
- E-Filing - Judicial Officer
 - Signing and filing order
 - Review queue process
- ECR Viewer Application
 - Access to records

eFiling Application



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Four distinct electronic processes:

- Filing documents into an existing case or to start a new case
- Electronic service of eFiled documents
- Submit Judge's Working Copies electronically
- Electronic Ex Parte via the Clerk submittals

eFiling Application



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Role based functionality

- Public: Free for non-fee filings, eCommerce for fee payments, Shopping Cart, eService & eWorking Copies
- Judge: Electronically sign orders (digital signatures), e-mail filed documents, MS Word filings
- DPA: Pre-filing judicial review submission process, bypass eCommerce, MS Word filings
- Clerk / Public Def: Batch submissions, MS Word filings



Administration Functionality: Table Management

- User Roles
- Documents Type identification
 - Fee / No fee
 - SCOMIS codes
 - Order flag
- Case Types requirements
 - Minimum required document(s)
 - Role based process flow: Criminal queue
 - Scheduler / Case Information Cover Sheet

eFiling Application



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File format validation – Error messages identify issue

- PDF or TIF (MS Word for specific roles & process)
- Orientation: portrait (file stamp placement)
- Page size: 8.5" x 11"
- Margins: 3" top on page one, 1" other pages
- File size limitation: 5 MB (50 MB per submission)

How the Clerk's Office Facilitated Mandatory E-Filing Success



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- Facilitated creation of Local General Rule 30 to guide the practice
- Engaged in community outreach & marketing
 - Promoted: *Free, Easy, Convenient & Green*
 - Provided eFiling CLE demo: over 2500 participants
 - Assigned staff liaisons with agencies and departments
- Implemented enhanced eFiling application functionality

How the Clerk's Office Facilitated Mandatory E-Filing Success



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- Expanded Customer Service Support
 - eServices help desk: phone & e-mail
 - eFiling webpage: FAQs, video tutorials, step-by-step guides, application demos, contact #s
- Developed phased approach to waiver process
 - Supported learning processes

Technology Issues



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Hardware / Software issues will occur - be prepared

- Develop a plan:
 - Notification mechanism: internal & external
 - Create & document application down filing process
 - Document and test process plan
- Be aware of & ready for the publicity

eFiling Application Status Page



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If eFiling application or a component is unavailable customers:

<http://www.kcscclerkefilingstatus.com/>

- Access status page via internet – outside KC network
- Select process link and print coversheet provided
- Input submitter's contact & process specific information
- Comply with an alternative filing option:
 - File in hard copy at any Clerk's Office location, or
 - Fax file during normal business hours

eFiling Application Status Page



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King County
Always at your service

Dept of Judicial Administration – E-Filing
Superior Court Clerk's Office



The King County Superior Court Clerk's Office
eFiling application suite is currently **unavailable**.

For alternative submittal information, please select the
appropriate link below:

- [Filing Options](#)
- [Ex Parte Via the Clerk](#)
- [Working Copies](#)

This site will be updated when the eFiling application
suite is back online.

eFiling Application Status Page



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<http://www.kcscclerkefilingstatus.com/>



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Always at your service

Dept of Judicial Administration – E-Filing
Superior Court Clerk's Office



The King County Superior Court Clerk's Office eFiling application suite is currently online and **available for use.**

Scheduled Maintenance Notifications

None at this time.

October 7, 2009 1:16 PM



***Additional Information**

- State and Local Rules
- Technology Manager Input
- Revenue Opportunities
- ECR Program Lessons Learned
- Contact Information



Links to Rules

Washington State RCW 36.23.065

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=36.23.065>

Washington State Court Rules: General Rules

http://www.courts.wa.gov/court_rules/?fa=court_rules.list&group=ga&set=GR

King County Local Court Rules

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/courts/Clerk/Rules/LocalRulesbyIndividualLink>



Washington State Rules

- RCW 36.23.065 Electronic reproductions are acceptable media
- GR 31 Access to court records – Privacy is Protected
- GR 15 Sealing, redacting & destruction of court records – Privacy or safety vs public interest in access
- GR 22 Family law & guardianship cases restricted access & confidential reports – two documents (sealed and not)
- GR 30 E-Filing authorization, digital signature, hours, fees, waiver – Access to justice issues



KC Superior Court Local Court Rules

LGR 31 Online access to court records limitations

- Cases filed November 1, 2004 & after
- All criminal cases (case type 1)
- All civil cases (case type 2) except DV & anti-harassment protection orders
- All probate cases (case type 4) except guardianship cases



KC Superior Court Local Court Rules

LGR 30 Mandatory e-filing for attorneys

- Documents that shall not be e-filed
- Documents that may be e-filed
- Waiver process
- Fee for *eWorking Copies* service
- *eWorking Copies* exceptions
- Non-compliance fee

Technology



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- Washington State Technology Standards

<http://www.courts.wa.gov/jis/?fa=jis.display&theFile=electronicFilingResources>

- Safety Nets: System redundancy and failover
- Duplicate platform: Protect against data corruption & software failure
- Build a system that can grow: modular & scalable

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Technology



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Historically we have a very good record. The production system has several safety nets in place for system redundancy and failover. Our production system runs simultaneously with a duplicate platform which is configured identically to the production platform, failover. This duplicate platform is at the ready to accept production processing should the production hardware fail.

In order to protect against data corruption or software failure, our data is safeguarded in multiple locations and system build procedures and files are available to reconstruct the system on either of two fully functional platforms. These safety nets provide system availability when either software or hardware or both fail. King County IT provides network and power redundancy.

Any system that can grow, as ours has, should be built both modular and scalable for all aspects of the system. At King County we are preparing to replace the current ECR with a more modern version and scalability is a key requirement for the new system.

We recommend the same for any agency contemplating such an implementation.



Revenue Opportunities

- What are customers willing to pay for?
 - eFiling -- eWorking Copies -- eService
 - eViewing -- Expedited processes
- Strategies for charging
 - Subscriptions, Flat fees, individual document fees, service provider, technology surcharge
- Offset project costs or cover the cost of new staff



Lessons Learned

- The Master Plan kept all on the same page
- Involve a sponsor / leader from the toughest constituency
- Acknowledge, appreciate & capitalize on all that your staff knows
- Listen to concerns of court & employees
- Include customers: focus groups, user groups, surveys, pilot projects



Lessons Learned

- Develop Service Level Agreements with partners: court, prosecutor, defense
- Acknowledge connectivity as a phase in your project – budget for it
- Prepare for the time & efforts of change management
- Define what is expected & what you will deliver
- Set dates and obtain signatures



Lessons Learned

- Good ideas or missed things come up during project development
- Controlling your scope allows you to call your project done
- Start a new project or new phase that is “enhancements” or “new components” from the parking lot
- Specialized features can be a huge efficiency



Lessons Learned

- Acknowledge that what you are building is an enterprise system
- Staff up to make sure you have enough tech support for an enterprise system
- Have failover and standby systems
 - Test, test, test
 - Document, document, document
- Have a plan for continuous maintenance and keep to it



Lessons Learned

- E-Filing is better when mandated
- E-Filing is attractive if records are kept electronically -- if paper record is not also kept
- Learn about the federal e-filing model because your users will compare you to it

Electronic Court Records: The King County Experience



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- Clerk's Office eFiling web site:

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/courts/Clerk/E-Filing>

- Contact information:

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