



State of Kansas

Office of Judicial Administration

Kansas Judicial Center
301 SW 10th
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1507

(785) 296-2256

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Electronic Filing
Kelly O'Brien, CITO, Office of Judicial Administration

Technology in the District Courts

The court system has always varied from district to district in terms how much and what type of technology has been employed. This is because counties are responsible for funding court operations other than salaries and wages, and the counties have responded with differing levels of interest and funding. The differing levels of county technology funding have resulted in a variety of district court computer systems that have made centralized reporting and data sharing a challenge for the courts.

In attempting to provide a centralized system, the challenge to the Judicial Branch has been to find a system that meets the needs of both rural and urban courts statewide and that provides features and functions that are attractive and usable for both courts with extensive technology experience and those with little or no experience. The challenge has also been to fund this project as a county/state partnership.

In November 2001, the Office of Judicial Administration (OJA) began a statewide installation of a case management system called FullCourt. FullCourt fully integrates accounting, case management, document management, juvenile compliance, and jury all in one software package. Four pilot sites were selected: Anderson County (Garnett), Morris County (Council Grove), Pottawatomie County (Westmoreland), and Ellis County (Hays). The software was completely installed in 103 counties by October 2004. OJA will install FullCourt in Shawnee County in July of this year.

Judicial Branch Electronic Filing

The Judicial Branch is currently engaged in implementing the electronic filing pilot project. This project interfaces the centralized electronic filing system with the appellate courts' case management system and the distributed FullCourt case management system used in 103 of the 105 district courts in the state. (An additional district court, Shawnee County, is scheduled to implement FullCourt case management in July of 2013.) Johnson County uses, and will continue to use, a self-supported countywide system called JIMS.

In an electronic filing environment, the case management and document management systems must be integrated. Data can be shared between these systems without reentering the information. The benefits of this integration include significantly faster and more accurate access to case information. For example, while it will be possible to perform text searches in the document management system to find papers, using this approach exclusively could prove inefficient because the same data formatted for document retrieval may exist in many other pleadings. In other words, every attempt to find a specific paper would produce multiple documents. The user would be required to sort through them to find the correct one. The case management system addresses this concern and provides a retrieval mechanism that serves as an index to the documents.

Live filings from pilot filers were processed using the electronic filing system by the Court of Appeals in December 2012. The first of three pilot district courts, Leavenworth County (1st Judicial District), began processing electronically filed documents from pilot filers in January 2013. The remaining pilot district courts are Douglas County (7th Judicial District), scheduled to be implemented mid-March 2013, and Sedgwick County (18th Judicial District), scheduled for implementation in late April 2013.

The first court scheduled for the statewide rollout of electronic filing is Shawnee County in July 2013. The rollout of the system to the remaining 100 district court locations, contingent on funding, will occur between the second half of 2013 through the end of 2015.

Benefits of Electronic Filing

Attorneys

Distance Filing

Kansas courts use a date stamp to measure compliance with its deadlines. A “date stamp” provides for a quick and easy way to verify the precise date and time a document was filed.

With electronic filing, an attorney whose office is ten hours from the court can finish the brief by 4:30 p.m. and have it timely filed by 5:00 p.m., just as his big-city opponent can do.

Immediate Access

The e-filing system will permit attorneys representing parties to have immediate access to the filings as soon as they are up on the site. No more waiting two or three days for a copy of the brief to come in the mail.

Courts
Court Personnel

Judges and clerks need to have access to filed documents to review and analyze. The documents can be retrieved immediately, and they can be retrieved from anywhere.

The court also benefits by adopting electronic filing, in lieu of paper briefs. The costs in time and money to handle, store, catalog and retrieve paper briefs are significantly reduced.

Electronic Filing Breakout of Budget and Expenditures

		FY 2011 Actual	FY 2012 Actual	FY 2013 Budget	FY 2014 Budget	FY 2015 Budget	Total	On-Going Maintenance
Expense								
	Services	5,722	113,299	473,578	747,210	378,178	1,717,987	306,116
	Hardware		62,406		50,000		112,406	
	Software		269,939	81,002	299,719	157,500	808,160	
	Total	5,722	445,644	554,580	1,096,929	535,678	2,638,553	306,116
Funding								
	2272		28,049	145,674			173,723	
	3057	5,722	119,270	301,904			426,896	
	1000		298,325	107,002	1,096,929	535,678	2,037,934	306,116
	Total	5,722	445,644	554,580	1,096,929	535,678	2,638,553	306,116

Centralized Electronic Court Vision

The Kansas Supreme Court envisions creating a statewide centralized electronic court. The centralized courthouse will use technology to increase access to the courts, improve court efficiency, and ensure that judges have complete and timely information with which to make the most effective dispositions. The centralized electronic court would also be a foundation that we are able to build upon in the future. For example, if traffic cases were to be centralized, it would just be another system that could be accessed through the e-court portal.

The transition from the current technology environment to the eCourts environment represents a philosophical shift in the way the Judicial Branch manages Information Technology. Since each county is responsible for operational costs, the purchase and support of servers

hosting the distributed FullCourt case management system are provided for from local county budgets. In the eCourts environment, the majority of operational costs associated with an enterprise case management system would be realized at the state level.

A Kansas centralized electronic court system will transform how court staff conducts daily court business. Since all court functions will be centralized and standardized, it will easily allow a clerk to process cases independent of geographical location. This would allow clerks statewide to share workloads and resources.

The electronic filing system will allow this type of work to occur, but only on a limited basis. The functions that would be able to be done remotely using electronic filing would be limited to basic electronic filing processing, such as reviewing and accepting electronic submissions from filers. Work related to functions of the case management system like scheduling and accounting cannot be performed remotely until a centralized case management system is in place. To achieve the full benefits of working remotely using technology, a centralized electronic filing and case management system is required.

A centralized electronic court will provide judges and litigants with immediate access to authorized case information, details, and records provided by the Kansas courts. Our traditional courts have operated within a paper-based system where information and documents could only be accessed at a single courthouse during the eight hour business day.

The Kansas centralized electronic court system, when fully implemented will provide some of the most frequently requested court services from any computer with an Internet connection, at any time. Consumers and the legal community will have 24-hour-a-day/7 day-a-week access (based on that individual's authorization) to:

- documents and case records,
- court information and court calendars, and
- case-related filing and payment services.

The Kansas centralized electronic court system will supplement, rather than replace, in-person services at our physical courthouses. Those traditional services will remain available. Court hearings and trials will continue to convene in courthouses across the state and will be open to the public.

The Judicial Branch does not currently have the technology infrastructure or resources required to implement and support an eCourts environment. Recognizing this fact, a Judicial Assistance Grant was sought and awarded allowing the Office of Judicial Administration to contract with Gartner Group to perform an impact assessment detailing requirements necessary to move from the current technology environment to an eCourts environment.

Gartner’s assessment focuses on technology, staffing, processes, and business management. Following a GAP analysis and peer review, several of Gartner’s findings are highlighted below:

- The budget is insufficient to support the information technology infrastructure required.
- Funding does not support the growing demands of the District Courts.
- The current network availability target is well below industry standards.
- Bandwidth constraints need to be improved.
- Many servers are old and require more time to maintain.
- There is no redundancy in the current data network.
- An integrated approach to processes will be needed to move forward with an enterprise case management system.
- Current lack of standardization and automation increases time spent on tasks.
- Staffing levels are inadequate to support an enterprise approach.

Gartner’s budget impact analysis resulted in the following operational costs and full-time equivalent (FTE) positions overview:

- Estimated Capital Expense \$1.83MM
- Estimated Staffing 12-15 FTE

These findings reported by Gartner Group represent the necessary infrastructure investment required to move from the current technology environment to an eCourts environment capable of supporting an enterprise case management system. The completion of these initial requirements would allow the Judicial Branch to take the additional steps needed to acquire and implement an enterprise case management system and move toward eCourts.

Electronic Filing and eCourt Breakout of Budget and Expenditures

Fiscal Year	Electronic Filing Statewide Implementation with Maintenance and Support	eCourts Capital Expense	eCourts Software License	eCourts Software Customization and Configuration	eCourts Maintenance and Support	Total by Fiscal Year
FY 2014	\$1,096,929					\$1,096,929
FY 2015	\$535,678	\$600,000				\$1,135,678
FY 2016	\$306,116	\$1,200,000				\$1,506,116
FY 2017	\$306,116			\$1,241,635		\$1,547,751
FY 2018	\$306,116		\$3,786,800		\$500,000	\$4,592,916
FY 2019	\$306,116				\$500,000	\$806,116
FY 2020	\$306,116				\$500,000	\$806,116

eCourts Additional Staffing by Fiscal Year	
FY 2014	
FY 2015	Process Standards Leader, Grade 27 Project Manager, Grade 27 Network Architect/Engineer, Grade 29
FY 2016	Database Administrator, Grade 32
FY 2017	4 Helpdesk Technicians, Grade 25 CMS Enterprise Architect, Grade 29
FY 2018	
FY 2019	
FY 2020	