NORTH CAROLINA COMMISSION ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF LAW & JUSTICE

Technology Committee Minutes

Date: December 18, 2015
Time: 10:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Location: N.C. Judicial Center, 901 Corporate Center Dr., Raleigh, N.C.

Attendees

Members: Justice Barbara Jackson, Judge Susan Burch, Judge William "Mac" Cameron, Jeff Frazier, Susan Frye, Sally Ann Gupta (attending on behalf of Senator Harry Brown), Jennifer Harjo, Jason Hensley, Lori Kroll (attending on behalf of Carl S. Armato), Dean J. Rich Leonard, Chief Judge Linda McGee, Tina McNair, Carolyn Timmons, Rajesh Tripathi
Presenters: Brad Fowler, Ted Enarson, Richard Schauffler
Reporters: Paul Embley, Kurt Stephenson
Guests: Danielle Seale, Emily Portner, Will Robinson, Marcos de Souza, Representative Sarah Stevens, Jon Williams

Administrative Matters

A motion was made and approved to adopt the minutes from the November 20th Technology Committee meeting, as drafted and distributed.

Presentations

Modernization in State Government: An Inside Perspective on Opportunities & Expectations – *Ted Enarson*

Mr. Enarson is an Operations Manager focusing on improving processes and procedures in a state government agency.

Background:

The agency and its operations have a number of similarities to the court system. It has a three-level administrative decision-making process that allows customers to appeal. The agency workload fluctuates due to a variety of factors, including the strength of the economy. They rely heavily on a mainframe computing system that was programmed in the 1980s and lacks the flexibility required to meet changing needs. Cases that enter the agency may be tracked in satellite systems which create disconnects. The agency relies heavily on a paper process that includes customers submitting information, hard copy files, and agency-mailed letters.

Opportunities:
The agency looked at an integrated cloud based system used in Nevada. The system offered better agility to law and procedural changes, better scalability, and opportunities to automate work for increased staff productivity. The agency worked with the same vendor and then customized the Nevada tools to meet the needs of North Carolina.

The launch for the new system is anticipated in early 2017. Once fully operational, the system will trigger work items and then assign the case to an employee based on business rules. The employee will have a dashboard with preprogrammed variables to quickly determine available dates for hearing. Once scheduled, the system generates a printed notice, unless parties waive their right to a printed copy and choose to view online. The online files provide the option for multiple users to view simultaneously at any time. Electronic storage also reduces the need for file rooms, and once parameters are set, the system can destroy a document at the appropriate time.

The new system will have automatically programmed reports and internal users will also be able to generate ad-hoc reports. The information will create new options for data mapping and data analytics. This will allow the agency to consider shifting resources to areas of greater need.

The agency has explored VOIP call distribution to direct incoming calls to available staff and the OBIEE analytics tool developed by Oracle for prepopulated reports.

Expectations:
A transition of this magnitude is a multi-year endeavor. It is important to layout all the specific details early, otherwise the cost associated with later add-ons can be expensive. Staff time commitments should be expected for dozens of people from subject matter experts to technical programmers. Staff will be involved in planning, elaboration sessions, and testing.

Implementation will require user training and preparation to help staff understand opportunities for efficiency and better for customer services. Customers will need to hear about the system before and after launch.

Internally, the agency will need to decide when the use of legacy systems will end. A few options include setting a date to cease use, overlapping systems for a period, or converting things from the older system. The agency should also evaluate the need for changes in legislation or internal rules. Business process and staffing changes may also be needed to

accommodate the changing system. Equipment needs and data warehousing decisions should be considered as well.
Decisions made by the agency:
The agency chose to back-convert 6 months of data in order to cover most outstanding cases. If an older case comes in then it can be worked through the old system. They will not convert old closed cases still in paper.

They will utilize generic capture flow technology to pull information from handwritten filings, and then staff can follow-up with the customer to fill any voids in data.

In order to interact with the system a user must have an account, and depending on the role of the person, he or she has different views and capabilities.

The legacy system is still being changed while the new system is in development.

Estimating the Amount of Paper in Court Files and an Overview of Data in the N.C. Judicial Branch – *Brad Fowler, Planning and Organizational Development Officer, NC Administrative Office of the Courts*

This presentation provides an estimate of the paper in court files of different types. This includes paper from parties and documents generated by the court. NCAOC Research & Planning staff visited six counties and pulled a sample of various case types from 2013.

On average, 4 pieces of paper are added to a case file in a clerk's office each second. The average number of pages ranged from 2.8 for district infractions to 113 pages for a juvenile abuse/neglect/dependency case. Approximately 20% of pages also had an image on the back of the document. Using the number of case filings, it is estimated that 31,369,840 pages were in case files in FY 12-13, and this equals about 22,960 linear feet of documents. Similar numbers are estimated for FY 14-15. As a result, counties have thousands of square feet devoted to file storage.

Small claims and infractions are form-driven cases and most of the information resides in a database. This makes these cases good candidates to maintain information electronically. On the other hand, civil superior and estates cases are not currently form driven. So, as we move forward in discussions about a transition to electronic files we should consider what information we keep from current file types and what is actually needed to fulfill the requirements of a court record. Another way to think about this shift is to consider things that matter, where a stakeholder has already indicated that they want this information; things that can be measured; or things that might be important but haven't been defined yet.

Originally ACIS and VCAP were designed as indexing system that include items captured, much like card catalog system. Over the years, there have been increased expectations for case management and performance management tools.

A significant amount of case level detail exists but it is maintained in hard copy files. As a result, accessibility is limited. To increase the accessibility there will likely be technology costs and data collection costs. In addition, the data will require standard definitions and should be presented in a consumable format.

There are challenges with data. In some instances, the application requires that information be entered into a field before the system will proceed. Other fields may be required by policy. There are a lack of standard written definitions for some data fields and this leads to design questions about drop down fields versus free text fields.

Looking at Ways that Other States Collect and Utilize Data – *Richard Schauffler, Director of Research Services, National Center for State Courts*

It is important for data to be available, complete, accurate, and timely. It should also be consistent, interpretable, relevant, and secure.

Richard shared examples of how data is used in the courts of Utah, Massachusetts, Harris County, and Wisconsin. He noted that transparency has been a key for any jurisdiction that has been successful.

Utah shared performance data with the state's legislature to show what they were doing. They didn't ask for money until they figured out how to use the data. Now, they publish court performance measures online. Their site defines what is being measured, how it is measured, and why it is important for measurement. Judges can drill down to individual cases by clicking on the bar graph to find pending cases. They have been able to identify trends in data and make rule changes based on the information.

In Massachusetts they implemented performance management without waiting for "better data" or a case management system. Instead the "bad data" helped them determine where gaps in data existed or where information was gathered inconsistently. Massachusetts uses the data to determine what, if any, substantive reasons exists to explain differing outcomes in districts.

Harris County in Texas is data driven for management. They share information openly which means that all elected court officials get the same information. This also allows them to share a common vision and work in partnership to create a successful system. They waited a year to publish online which gave local officials time to review "suspect" data and build data integrity before starting. They break out information by judge and each court has a dashboard. A judge can see individual case data as well as averages across the judge group.

The lessons learned from Harris County are as follows:

- You can't manage a caseload until you can manage an individual case and clearly understand the caseflow process – from arrest or filing to case completion

- Achieving higher levels of performance begins with understanding and measuring your performance today
- Higher performance is achieved by creating a culture that embraces analytics
- Measure, Compare and Share for Continual Improvement
- Data Quality is the foundation upon which credibility is built

The Wisconsin Judicial Dashboard has basic workflow for judges, such as cases on the docket, and then in the corner, they have statistics about the last 12 months.

The emphasis in data now is on predictive analytics, GIS data, and customer service. In Minnesota, estates are filed online using fields. They have a tool that looks at cases that had negative results and then create a profile that can be applied to future cases for closer monitoring. GIS data could be used to show what type of transactions happen in what places, and the information may be helpful in determining where courthouse facilities should be built. Data should also be customer focused. Examples of customer focused use of data is providing a card for users who are likely to return frequently. The card could have information about your case. This avoids the need to retell information each time a person arrives in court.

Answers to Questions:
There are different models for how court data is resold by 3rd party vendors. There are privacy and redaction concerns that may be raised, and states have different public records laws.

Generally courts are weak on reporting and tracking collections.

Organizational performance measurement is not about an individual, but it is necessary to have this focus to begin the conversation.

Discussing the Vision Statement – *Paul Embley, Chief Information Officer, National Center for State Courts*

The committee moved to adopt the following:

The Technology Committee vision statement:
To utilize technology to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, timeliness of process critical to implementing the mission statement of the Judicial Branch.

Reimagining the Courts and Potential Intersections with Technology - *Paul Embley, Chief Information Officer, National Center for State Courts*

The committee discussed topics which have been, and will continue to be, important as the group moves forward. Information from the following list will be reported to the full NCCALJ meeting in January 2015.

1) Comprehensive eFiling with an integrated case management system that allows stakeholders to manage the business of the courts.
   - Allows court officials and other parties to have robust access to documents and process the court's workflow electronically.
   - These tools increase efficiency and give various players the ability to manipulate documents and information at the case level.
   - The case level data can be used at a macro level to measure the accomplishment of system-wide goals, look at the predictive nature of case data, and perform other data analytic functions.

2) A formal information technology governance process is critical to determine which projects are chosen to best address the business needs of the court. In 2013 the N.C. Judicial Branch embarked on the process to determine an IT governance structure. After meeting with national experts and reviewing work performed by other states who have a mature IT governance process, a charter was drafted. It included a process that complemented the needs of North Carolina courts and the best practices of others in the country.

   Having reviewed the draft IT Governance Charter, the NCCALJ Technology Committee adopted a motion supporting the draft governance structure and recommending that the proposal is provided to the Chief Justice for his review.

3) The unified court system of North Carolina must ensure that information too is collected uniformly. The demand for data in a usable format is ever-growing. It is important for data to be available, complete, accurate, and timely. The committee will look for opportunities that will enhance the judicial branch's ability to provide data that is consistent, interpretable, relevant, and secure.

4) The NCCALJ Technology Committee will serve as an advisory committee to ensure the development and implementation of a strategic plan for the eCourts information technology initiative of the Judicial Branch. The advisory committee requested that the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts publish a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the solicitation of interest from vendors who could produce the strategic plan.

   The strategic plan shall:
   - Clearly articulate the requirements for the e-Courts system, including well-defined milestones, costs parameters, and performance measures.
   - Prioritize the funding needs for implementation of the various elements of the system.
   - Identify any potential issues that may arise in the development of the system and plans for mitigating those issues.
   - Address the potential for incorporating any currently existing resources into the e-Courts system.