



Technology Committee Agenda

Date: March 18, 2016

Time: 10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Location: N.C. Judicial Center, 901 Corporate Center Dr., Raleigh, N.C.

Attendees

Committee Members: Justice Barbara Jackson, Judge Susan Burch, Judge William “Mac” Cameron, Seth Edwards, Jeff Frazier, Jason Hensley, Lori Kroll, James J. MacCallum, Judge Linda McGee, Tina McNair, Carolyn Timmons, Rajesh Tripathi

Presenters: Ron Bowmaster, Judge Glen Dawson, Andrew Flewelling (remote), Jim Pauli, Doug Rowe

Reporters: Kurt Stephenson

Guests: Cindy Blackwell, Elizabeth Croom, Brad Fowler, Charles Fraley, Ginger Helms, David Johnson, Charles Lane, Tom Maleck, James Mallory, Jeff Marecic, Tom Murry, Emily Portner, Mark Prakke, Representative Sarah Stevens, Michael Robinson, Will Robinson, Stephanie Taborn, Wanda Thomas, Anthony Whitmore, Jon Williams, Mike Wilson, Fred Wood

Administrative Matters

A motion was made and approved to adopt the minutes from the February 19th Technology Committee meeting, as drafted and distributed.

Presentation Topics

Learning About Utah’s Technology Implementation Experience and Discussing Shifts in Court Culture - *Judge Glen R. Dawson, District Court Judge, Utah’s Second District Court, and Ron Bowmaster, Chief Information Technology Officer, Utah Administrative Office of the Courts*

Mr. Bowmaster started by providing background and context for the Utah Judiciary. The state has a unified court system governed by the Utah Judicial Council. Judges are appointed and

serve for retention. They do not have elected clerks or judges. They have several levels of court, and their “district court” would be equivalent to the Superior Court of North Carolina. The Utah Administrative Office of the Courts provides similar services to that of the North Carolina Administrative Office of the Courts. The Information Technology division has 41 staff; approximately half of those positions are support and 16 people are programmers.

In 2007 five initiatives spurred Utah’s move to an electronic court record; clerical restructuring, management principles, lowering costs of discovery, electronic record, and case management. Around the time of the recession the courts launched a year-long study to determine what the clerical system should become. Ultimately, it was decided that clerks should be quality control experts and to facilitate this change the court system needed to adopt good management principles. Initially, there were two clerk roles. Judicial Services Representatives were tasked with helping people at the counter, and Judicial Assistants supported judges directly. After eEverything was fully implemented one of the busiest courthouses saw 32,000 fewer people enter its doors each month, and the role of Judicial Services Representative was no longer needed.

The vision for the Utah Courts’ eEverything includes:

- seamless integration of court and litigant business processes
- court control of the litigation process through the management of internal and external events
- enhanced communication between the court and litigants
- a court record that is available anywhere, anytime, to everyone, on any device – simultaneously
- better management of judge time
- an open, accessible, fair, and impartial court environment

Utah courts are currently using the following technology as a part of the eEverything approach: eRecord, eDocuments, eFiling, eAppeal, eCitation, eWarrants, ePayments, eTranscripts, eService, eNotice, eCalendaring, eTracking, eIntegration, eAccess, and Master offense table. eEverything projects were completed separately using the CIO’s philosophy that any project that is initiated should be completed within six months. As a result of eEverything projects, clerical time savings are estimated at 8 – 16%, and time for case processing has decreased for most case types according to a NCSC study. In addition, despite an 11% recession-prompted employee layoff, the time to disposition has been maintained. While the Utah court system lost positions, they also chose not to fill clerical vacancies in the 18 months leading up to the mandatory eFiling launch. As a result, the courts have realized an annual savings of \$1.14 million in clerical salaries which they have been able to reinvest in salary increases for clerical staff. The reinvestment was important since the basic requirements for clerical positions changed. People in the positions must be college educated or complete a special project to maintain employment status. The Utah court system also provides 50% of tuition costs for employees who are continuing their education. Employees reapplied for the new positions, and they were also eligible for case manager positions. Utah courts also use a performance/merit system that requires employees to pass a test in order to advance into other positions.

Details of the system and rollout were also discussed. The case management system and integrated financial management system were built on top of an existing 20 year old system, and it is maintained on an in-house server. They continue to evaluate the use of cloud-based storage, but recovery from that system makes it cost prohibitive. Approximately 90% of court documents are filed electronically, and anything that is filed in paper is scanned and destroyed. Self-represented litigants are not required to file electronically. Filed documents are distributed electronically to all parties. They also made a decision to scan older files. These efforts reduced courthouse building costs by 20% through the elimination of file storage areas.

In annual surveys, about 90% of citizens exiting Utah courthouses indicate that the court process was fair. The private bar has not voiced any complaints with eEverything projects, and the number of self-represented litigants remains unchanged since forms have been placed online. The greatest eEverything implementation challenge was the cultural shift for judges. In order to allay concerns, judges were engaged early in the development process. They served on committees to help the technologists determine what should be built. In the end, an online tool called Judicial Work Space was created. Judicial Work Space serves as a case/incident management instrument, a resource for hearing preparation, and an in-courtroom case management system. The view is private and customizable. The judge can create notes on documents and share information with others as needed. Wired connections are available for attorneys and interpreters in court so that they may access information. The access of an individual is limited based on his or her role and the type of document.

Self-paced training videos were published online for users, but the best learning method seemed to be peer training. Judges who were experienced with the technology presented at state judges' conferences about the benefits of the Judicial Work Space. They also set up sessions during conferences where judges could receive hands-on training from other judges. The total shift to the Judicial Work Space case management system took about one year.

The Utah courts are now working to enhance technology for the appellate courts to facilitate access to electronic record from the lower courts. In addition, they are exploring online dispute resolution for small claims cases.

eCourts Strategic Plan Updates – *Representatives from BerryDunn - Andrew Flewelling (remote), and Jim Pauli, and Doug Rowe*

BerryDunn developed a web-based survey and a link was sent to Judicial Branch employees and certain external stakeholders. The survey is the first step in the consultants' evaluation of business processes in the courts. In three days, 1,015 people responded. Highlights of preliminary results for the online survey were presented in pie charts. The survey will close on March 25, 2016. The responses will inform the interview questions that BerryDunn will pose in face-to-face meetings with representatives of the respondent groups starting March 28th. A list of questions will be provided to the NCCALJ Technology Committee and interviewees. They will ask who, what, when, where, and how to get a foundational view of the business process.

Although outside of BerryDunn's scope for this project, it was discussed that in the future an in-depth flowcharting analysis of business processes could be beneficial to accomplish active case management goals.

BerryDunn also provided an overview of the draft project charter that committee members received by email. Committee members noted that the three initiative domains referenced in the document; technology infrastructure, business environment, management and governance, were consistent with previous conversations. They requested that the draft charter be edited to include additional information that would strengthen the business environment and governance domains. Committee members encouraged BerryDunn to ensure the information gathered during interviews captures why certain business processes are used and not just what processes are in place.

The committee also discussed options for informing the state government's Legislative and Executive Branches about the strategic initiatives of the Judicial Branch. Jeff Marecic, the NCAOC CIO, attends council meetings of state agency chief information officers, and this presents an opportunity to update the State Chief Information Officer and other Executive Branch technology department leadership. In addition, the N.C. General Assembly has standing committees focused on information technology that could be engaged either through legislative members or staff.