

ECOURTS OPPORTUNITY FOR BUSINESS PROCESS CHANGES

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Abstract

The Minnesota Judicial Branch began the eCourt MN project which included implementing electronic court records through imaging and the acceptance of electronic filings in 2012. Washington County Court Administration was selected as one of the eight pilot counties for this project. Day forward imaging of all documents began in October of 2012 for all case types. The acceptance of electronic filings and using electronic records in the courtroom for civil and family case types began in November of 2012. By the spring of 2013 all case types began accepting electronic filings.

Whenever an implementation of this magnitude is rolled out it is necessary to evaluate current business processes to determine if business process reengineering is needed. As Washington County Court continued rolling out the steps involved in being selected as a pilot, it became apparent that the court needed to examine current business practices, and determine if there were any changes that could be made to become more efficient by reducing the steps involved and therefore the processing time. Washington County Court needed to determine if staff were simply duplicating the paper process in the electronic world and identify any remaining non-value added steps in the process.

The methods of this research involved a two-step process. The first step in the research was to conduct a job time standards evaluation for all tasks that each division performs to determine the full time equivalency (FTE) needed to complete work in each division. The results showed that the processing time for the electronic filing of new cases and subsequent filings were greatly reduced compared to paper filings. In fact, each division showed a reduction in FTE's needed for electronic filing both for initial filings and subsequent filings compared to paper

filings. This was not totally unexpected as electronic filing requires much less data entry. However, the paper process is still necessary since only two case types - civil and family - are currently mandatory for e-Filing and it is only mandatory for attorney's and government agencies.

Observation of staff processing work was also examined to determine if staff were performing any non-value added tasks that may have been essential in the paper world but in the electronic world are no longer required. There were steps determined to have value in the paper world but not in the electronic and certain processes were moved to other areas due to electronic records.

The next step involved conducting a survey of the other seven pilot counties, as well as two other counties who either had been imaging previously or were determined by this researcher to have implemented some process changes with regard to imaging. The survey asked questions regarding (1) how these counties were using electronic records, (2) what steps in moving to electronic records had been implemented so far, (3) if they had re-engineered or streamlined how they did business with the implementation of electronic records, and (4) whether these changes create efficiency - reducing staff processing time, reducing case processing errors and creating better customer service for attorneys, justice partners and the public. The results of the survey were analyzed to determine who should receive a follow up interview in order to obtain more in depth information on the recipient's current business processes and create a list of possible changes that Washington County could implement in order to become more efficient.

Of those counties surveyed five were selected for follow up interviews due to the answers they provided regarding the use of electronic records and business process changes. The information gathered during the interviews was reviewed by the Washington County management team and a decision was made regarding changes that would be implemented on a pilot basis to determine if efficiency was created in staff processing time. The pilot's set up involved:

1. Centralizing the acceptance of preparing a file electronically for the Court of Appeals.
2. Imaging files so an electronic record was available for court.
3. Centralizing acceptance of electronic filing in the criminal division and using reports from the case management system Minnesota Court Information System (MNCIS) for further case processing.
4. Serving orders electronically for child support and child protection cases.
5. Moving copies of electronic documents from court records to the specific division.

The centralization of electronic file preparation for the Court of Appeals was beneficial and should be continued in order to create subject matter experts in this area and to equally distribute work according to the workload needs for each division. The centralization of the acceptance of subsequent documents proved to be very beneficial in the criminal division due to designated staff being available throughout the day to accept documents in a much quicker time frame. Implementation of this process could be considered in other divisions.

Also moving copy requests and back-scanning of paper files for court to each specific division were obvious changes that proved more effective and should be continued. Copy requests no longer require pulling the paper file as the images are available to print, so it proved to be extra steps to notify the court records division to make the copy. The fact that this process

was still in place demonstrated that staff were struggling to leave the paper processes behind. Furthermore, it is quicker and easier for the specific division to back-scan the file because they are more familiar with the documents and appropriate security levels.

Finally, the research showed that movement and notification of electronic filings between staff and judge teams by email was a frustration to all. Use of the MNCIS report should be considered and piloted until the new task manager technology is implemented, which will allow for documents to be moved within the case management system. Also, other divisions specifically the civil division, should start serving orders electronically as attorneys expect it and orders are received more timely and accurately. There is also savings in postage costs, copying costs and the reduction in processing time of returned mail, associated with this change. There are many benefits to electronic records and electronic filings, and it will be necessary for Washington County Court Administration and the State of Minnesota to continue to work with staff, judges and attorneys to create a more efficient court.

Introduction

On October 22, 2012 a senior court clerk in the Washington County Court Criminal Division walks to her cubicle. She is full of excitement because the day holds much promise! Today is the start of document imaging. She has listened carefully to the training and the implementation plans. She is certain her job is to become so much easier. She sits at her desk eagerly awaiting her first set of documents to process for the day. She selects a document and inputs it into the MNCIS case management system's register of actions. She is sure this will be the best innovation that her court has experienced in some time. She right clicks on the entry in MNCIS and selects "Scan Image." It seems simple enough. Then a pop-up box appears.

The system asks her to "select a document type." "But wait," she questions, "Didn't I just enter that?" After making a selection, she is then asked for the document security level. She frantically scans the fifteen-page "110.41 Document and Data Security Classification" Court Administration Process Guide, a long list which tells her the correct security level out of the four different security levels this document falls under.

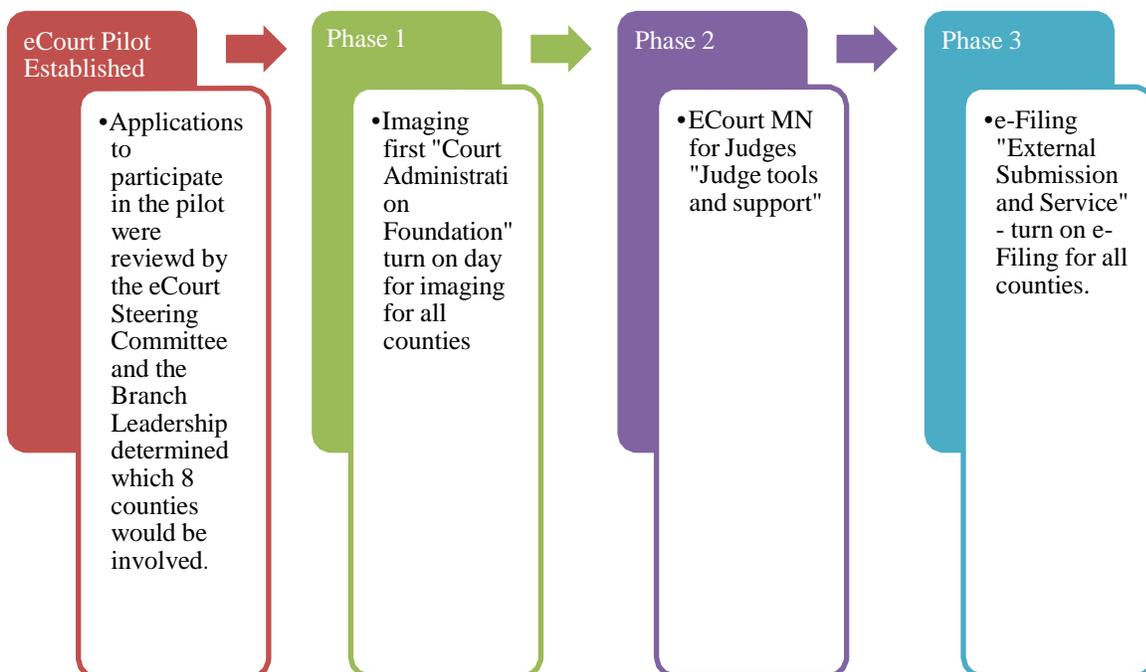
She eventually gets the document scanned to the event in MNCIS, locates the spreadsheet stating the appropriate document types and security levels, and finally makes entries into all the required fields. She schedules the hearing and creates notices to mail to the parties. She pauses, perplexed, wondering how she gets the image of the notice into MNCIS. She asks her co-worker. She is told, much to her dismay, she must print the notices and scan the images back into MNCIS. "Seriously?" she exclaims. Then she silently ponders how she still has all the same steps as before, but additionally she has to print to create an electronic "paperless" record.

The promises that going paperless hold for the courts include: 1) no more lost files or documents; 2) more than one person can view a file at a time; 3) no more getting up and going to the records room and pulling the paper file to answer questions when the public calls or when

they request copies of documents; 4) no more pulling files for court and Judges are able to review files anywhere with a computer; 5) most importantly, the expectation of streamlining case flow processing and the ability to re-engineer business processes to become a more efficient court.

The Minnesota Judicial Branch began considering paperless options in 2011 and started developing the eCourt Minnesota project. The mission of the project is to streamline court operations using new technologies and processes to eliminate paper-based court records. The initiative was adopted by the Judicial Council for the 2012-13 biennium and an eCourt Steering Committee was established to make recommendations on the roll out. (eCourt Minnesota). The beginning stages involved setting up eight pilot counties that would image, accept filings electronically and use electronic case records in the court room. After receiving feedback from the pilot counties the committee recommended rolling out the rest of the eCourt project in phases listed in figure 1.

Figure 1: eCourt MN Rollout



The vision of the project is to have all Minnesota courts operating in an electronic information environment while still ensuring timely and appropriate access to court information. This includes: e-filing or imaging all active cases; giving all partners and external constituents secure access to the electronic records; streamlining court processes due to efficiencies gained from electronic records; and using electronic case records only when accessing the court file including for court hearings, by all judges and court staff.

In the Spring of 2012, Washington County Court was selected as one of the eight pilot counties for the eCourt initiative. Figure 2 below shows the time frame for Washington County to implement the required steps in the pilot process.

Figure 2: Steps in Pilot Process



The use of electronic document images for court hearings for civil and family cases began when electronic filings started being accepted. Judges used the case management system (MNCIS) to view all court file documents for cases on their calendars and paper files were no longer maintained in those areas. This was a difficult adjustment for some of the bench, as the

current system does not allow for an easy way to locate specific documents or areas of documents quickly when necessary. The use of electronic images and files for criminal court hearings had a slower implementation and attempts were made to improve issues that were discovered with the civil and family roll out. Currently as part of phase 2 (see figure 1 above) a system for Judges to review files and images in a much more user friendly way is being developed. This system is expected to be piloted by two Washington County Judges sometime in March of 2015, and it is anticipated that once it becomes available juvenile and probate hearings will be conducted with electronic case records.

During the beginning stages of being a pilot for the eCourt initiative, there was anticipation that moving into the electronic world would create a more efficient and effective court. In some instances that has been the case, such as being able to review documents electronically without needing the paper file. However, the court has yet to really streamline its business processes and, in some instances, has added additional tasks to the staff's workload. The staff are still imaging documents for all filings received from pro se individuals as well as in those areas where electronic filing is not yet mandatory. This adds an additional layer of work. The Minnesota Supreme Court issued an order making e-Filing mandatory in September of 2013 in the civil and family areas, so these areas are more likely to see a time savings at this time. Mandatory e-Filing in the criminal, juvenile and probate areas is being examined and is expected to take effect in July of 2015. There also needs to be a way for pro se litigants to use the system and obtain access to technology to file electronically. The reality is however, until this is developed and rolled out, Minnesota courts will be living in the dual world of paper and electronic filings.

Furthermore, when a document is produced from MNCIS, such as a notice or order, to get it attached to the register of actions it is necessary to print it, scan it, attach it to the appropriate event in MNCIS, and select the correct document and security level. Staff finds this very frustrating and obviously this adds an additional layer of work.

Another area needing improvement is the ability to send notices electronically to attorneys or parties on the case. To accomplish this requires printing the document, scanning it into MNCIS, and then saving it to the desktop to download it into the e-File and serve system and then serve the parties if they are signed up for eService. Since pro se individuals are not currently using the system this can be a bifurcated process requiring the pro se individuals to still receive a paper copy. This process for serving orders electronically will be examined to see how it can be done more efficiently as attorneys find it frustrating that they are required to file electronically but still receive paper from the courts. The question that will be examined is - are the current steps involved with the paper process of printing, copying and mailing orders less tedious than the steps involved in serving orders electronically, having parties come to the front counter to obtain copies, and simply is this a necessity in the electronic world? This research examines this question.

Currently document processing includes:

- Imaging and accepting e-Filings for new cases as well as subsequent filings
- Printing notices, imaging them back into the case management system and mailing them
- Back-scanning files for electronic calendars and the Court of Appeals
- Notifying Judges through email of filings that need their attention

- Saving signed documents from Judges to a shared drive and court staff downloading those orders or documents into the case management system and then printing, copying and mailing them to the parties
- Sending copy requests that come through the electronic file and serve system (eFS) for documents or orders printed out to the Court Records Division for them to monitor and print out once they are processed or signed

All of these tasks are done differently in each division without any real efficiency. Staff at times are interrupted from their work because a file must be back-scanned for court or might miss something urgent that has been e-Filed as they are in court or assigned elsewhere. This can be frustrating as some of these job functions were not required in the paper world or were handled more efficiently in the paper world. For instance, if a law clerk had an under advisement order that was due today, they would put a bright green slip of paper on it when routing. Now, they download it into the folder and expect that staff will look at it right away. Unfortunately, staff have other duties and can't always look at the folder. Also, staff seems to be continuing to follow all the same steps involved in the paper world when processing their job functions as well as adding the steps now required in the electronic world, thus not creating any real efficiency and in some instances doubling the work.

The goal of this research is to examine the current case flow processing in Washington County Court as well as other courts around the State; and determine if re-engineering our business processes and re-aligning the work flow will create time savings in processing work, leading to cost savings, fewer errors in case processing and better customer service as documents are processed faster and parties receive notices and orders more timely. Minnesota Trial Courts are a state-funded and unified court system with 87 counties divided into 10

judicial districts. Washington County is in the 10th Judicial District which is the 2nd largest district in the state.

Literature Review

Electronic courts records are a means to put the paper court file documents into the electronic case management system. The below figure shows the required technologies that Minnesota determined are necessary to create a paperless court.

Figure 3: Required Technologies to become a Paperless Court.



Electronic filing is defined as a way to give filers a secure method to send documents to Court Administration over the internet that will automatically populate into the official court record, including transferring monies electronically that post into the appropriate financial accounts. As Roger Winters (Winters, 2005) described it, “Electronic court records and electronic filing are more than technological challenges. They entail changes in practices and presumptions about documents, records, signatures, and many related things.”

With any major technology transformation it is important to look at how technology can be used to re-engineer how you do business and create efficiencies. The concept of courts moving to an electronic record and developing a process to receive documents electronically has been discussed since the 1990s (Winters, 2005). In 1993, Midtown Community Court in New York was the first court to use a paperless system; it totally transformed how they did business (www.courtinnovation.org 2013). In 2011, the Center on Budget and Policy estimated that courts would face budget shortfalls possibly as high as 180 billion dollars (Hall D. J., 2010). Given these extremely difficult budget times it became necessary to re-evaluate how the Judicial Branch does business while still preserving the quality of justice and level of service, but in a more efficient manner.

Many courts began looking at technology to meet core purposes and responsibilities during these difficult economic times. Technology, specifically the electronic court record and electronic filing, were areas that could create time savings and allow courts to examine business process re-engineering. The National Center for State Courts website states “Re-engineering a court system involves evaluating and adjusting any number of court operations — from the structure of the court itself, to venue requirements, to its use of technology — to improve processes and save money, while increasing efficiency and maintaining service levels to the public.” (Hall D. J., 2010).

Benefits of the Electronic Record

The following are some of the benefits that that can be achieved in moving to an electronic record (McMillan, 2010):

- Physical space savings
- Speed and ease of access to the electronic court documents

- Ease of maintenance and organization of the electronic files
- Secure environment for court information
- Environmentally friendly
- Remote access to court documents
- Data-entry time savings

Because of these benefits, courts are moving to electronic records, but the need for courts to really examine business processes and re-engineer case flow management is another tangible benefit that needs to be examined.

As the courts move forward with technological changes many clerical functions now performed by staff will be eliminated. For instance, staff previously received filings over the counter or through the mail, they receipted for the filing fees, and processed the paperwork including entering the case and the parties and registering documents. As these tasks become automated with e-Filing, not only will business process changes be necessary but also staff may need to be reallocated. The face of the court house will change with the full implementation of e-Filing, video conferencing and other such technology, and staff may need to be moved from the back office up to the front counter to help assist litigants with the new way of doing business, specifically pro se litigants. One thing is certain - the way courts do business will be changing with regard to technology and e-Filing. “Flexibility will be the keynote for the future as the “new” state court will sometimes be personal, sometimes virtual, and sometimes electronic.” (Suskin, 2010).

The state of Utah has already planned for this and redesigned their personnel structure. Utah expects a gross staff savings of 8 to 16 percent once they realize the full potential of electronic records (Utah Judicial Council Report, 2010). They have evaluated both the tasks that

have had little or no change due to electronic records as well as those new tasks created from electronic records such as quality control. By doing this they were able to determine opportunities for re-distributing staff toward information technology, case management, self-help centers and centralization of some court functions that are not tied to a physical location such as appeals, transcripts and default judgments. In planning the move toward pro se litigants using the e-Filing system, Utah anticipates the need for staff specialists to assist these individuals with ensuring forms are complete, providing instructions on completing the forms as well as the court process and information about resources and services. Utah anticipates this to be an area where they are going to definitely need to re-train staff to be better able to assist with this process.

Volusia County, Florida began e-Filing in April of 2013, and in the fall of that year their Chief Judge determined they would move to electronic calendars for circuit and county civil files and would no longer maintain paper files. They are in the process of doing so for juvenile and family files also. According to Don Murphy, Director of Court Operations, the initial roll out of e-Filing “did produce additional layers of work for staff as they balanced between the paper and electronic world”. They established a centralized civil intake department to handle the front end scanning duties for all paper filings. Once their system allowed for importing all civil e-Filings directly into their case management system for viewing, they developed a judicial viewer that gives a quick read to the progress docket and attached images. With this new integration they have centralized intake back into the departments. They are now mandatory for all case types and have recently created an e-portal website for all pro se litigants to e-File. Don Murphy states, “It is constantly changing as the electronic world requires users to learn that it’s not just in the electronic filing, but also in the back office work for signing orders and documents, workflow movement, and the outside distribution of electronic notifications that need to be considered in

our evolving process. Work is being done in each of these phases. The challenge is that until it is all electronic we have to balance how the work is performed.” (Murphy, 2014)

Mandatory versus Voluntary e-Filing

Many courts are considering mandatory e-Filing in order to increase efficiencies and create time savings to keep from living in the dual world of paper and electronic. Several states as well as the Federal District and Bankruptcy courts have already made it mandatory. However, Robert Roper the former CIO for the Colorado Judicial Branch, states that since this is such a radical change in how we do business, it is best implemented in steps and that mandatory e-Filing has a role, but should not be rushed. He also indicated courts should not succumb to the pressure that may be put on them to move to mandatory in the beginning by vendors. The lesson learned in Colorado is that it is better to allow the opportunity for voluntary adoption and move toward mandatory as more of a cleanup tool (Roper, 2007).

Minnesota made e-Filing mandatory for attorneys in September of 2013 in the civil and family areas for the eight pilot counties. This has cut down immensely on the paper received in both of these areas. The number of e-Filings in the non-mandatory areas keeps rising each month also, indicating that even when it's not mandatory attorneys and agencies are still conforming to the new process. Of course, until all case types are mandatory and pro se litigants are given the opportunity and tools necessary to use the e-Filing system there is still going to be paper involved in our work flow processes. There are several counties in Minnesota that are pushing to make e-Filing mandatory in all case types and the Minnesota Judicial Branch Rules Committees are in the processing of making it mandatory for attorneys and government agencies in all case types in the eight pilot counties, effective July of 2015.

However, there have also been many concerns surrounding making it mandatory for all case types specifically in the criminal and juvenile areas. One concern is that the public defenders in Minnesota do not have the technology or the funding to send and receive all documents electronically. In 2012, Minnesota instituted a \$2 technology fee that is an additional fee collected on most case filings or copy requests and it goes into a fund that will allow the public defenders or other agencies to apply for grant money for technology purposes. The thought is that this will assist the public defenders in using the electronic record and the electronic file and serve system.

Another issue in instituting mandatory e-Filing in Minnesota is that documents are still not available for stakeholders to view. Minnesota's State Court Administration is currently working with the vendor on a portal that can be used to give appropriate access for parties on cases or documents that are confidential. This has been a difficult and lengthy process but eleven of the fourteen early adopters are currently using the new portal MGA (Minnesota Government Access). The State is now rolling MGA out to all prosecutors and public defenders in the pilot counties and will continue to do so until all government agencies have access to view public documents electronically. The ability to allow government agencies to view the appropriate confidential documents is still being worked on. Also, one of the delays involved in the implementation process is for the agencies to be able to get all the legal contracts for access signed by the appropriate people.

Minnesota still needs to develop a process for pro se litigants to be able to use the e-Filing system. The number of pro se litigants in the court system is increasing and will only continue to grow as legal fees continue to sky rocket and the average litigant may no longer be able to afford to hire an attorney. Currently only attorneys and government agencies are using

the e-File and Serve System however the rules will be amended in July of 2015 to allow for the use by pro se litigants. Minnesota must still develop a way for all pro se litigants to be able to use it without reducing access to justice. This must include appropriate equipment provided at the courthouse, training and general assistance on how to use the system. Central Minnesota Legal Services and the 4th Judicial District Court of Hennepin County in Minnesota, are working together with grant funding to develop an e-Filing system that allows pro se litigants to complete automated forms from the Lawhelp website (Lawhelp). Once the forms are completed litigants will be able e-File them into the courts case management system. (Rawdon, 2014).

What is Business Process Re-engineering and Why is it Important?

The definition of business process re-engineering is as follows: Thorough rethinking of all business processes, job definitions, management systems, organizational structure, work flow and underlying assumptions and beliefs ((Business Dictionary.com). According to Thomas Clarke from the National Center for State Courts (Clarke, 2010), “Re-engineering is about dramatically changing business processes to create efficiencies in court operations while maintaining or improving the quality and effectiveness of court services. Just as technology has helped the private sector to fundamentally rethink how it operates, technology enables court systems to make the changes to their business processes that are necessary to manage growing caseloads with fewer dollars.” The main idea behind business process re-engineering is the need to break away from the old way of doing things and develop new processes that improve performance, efficiencies and outcomes.

It is difficult to make fundamental changes in any organization, but given the tradition the Judicial Branch is built on, it can be an immense challenge to secure buy-in to re-engineer current practices and processes. One approach is that re-engineering processes should be based

on a set of guiding principles that assist the courts in redesigning their business processes. Examples of such principles are: Governance, Essential Functions, and Case Administration. The Case Administration Principle involves how courts redesign every day operations as it pertains to case processing from filing to disposition and evaluating the balance between efficiency and effectiveness (Clarke, 2010). This principle is relevant to the research for this project as with the implementation of electronic court records appears to be an excellent time to recreate the process flow. One of the steps in process re-engineering is to examine cycle time analysis, or the total time it takes to complete an activity to full cycle, and to determine if in the process there are any non-value added activities that can be eliminated. There is an expectation that Washington County is just re-creating the paper process in the electronic world and possibly performing steps, just because they have always done them in the paper world, that maybe unnecessary in the electronic world.

What has Minnesota Done to Streamline Processes?

In the last 40 years the Minnesota Trial Courts have moved from a two-tier, county funded, and loosely-coupled court system with an elected clerk of courts, to a single-tiered, state-funded, unified judicial branch. In 2005 the Chief Justice created the Judicial Council which is comprised of 25 members including 19 judges who are voting members and 6 administrators who are non-voting members. This council serves as the policy-making body for the Judicial Branch. They are responsible for setting high-level policies and advising the Chief Justice on judicial administration matters. (Griller, 2010).

In 2008 the Minnesota Judicial Branch began looking at ways to handle continuing budget deficits and staffing shortages. The Judicial Council formed a 13-member Access and Services Delivery (ASD) Committee to look into possible solutions to deal with the budget crisis

and reduce staff. The committee's purpose was to develop options in several areas, but more specifically for restructuring delivery systems, redesigning business processes, expanding the use of technology, and prioritizing functions at a state level at the lowest possible cost. "The judges and court administrators of the committee developed a number of recommendations in four areas: staff to the lowest norm; workflow re-engineering in an electronic environment; legislative and court policy reforms; and structural and governance issues (Minnesota Judicial Council, 2008) (Suskin, 2010).

The Council reviewed the recommendations, determined what changes were necessary to implement and then began making changes to business processes in 2011. Due to the pressure to become more efficient and examine staffing levels, especially in the rural courts, it felt necessary to re-evaluate how certain areas were handled and how technology could be used to achieve efficiencies with less staff. The following is a list of some of the technology initiatives that were undertaken to create efficiencies and move to an "e-everything" court:

- Centralized payables citation processing
- In-court updating
- E-citation processing
- E-charging
- Centralizing juror qualification and summoning
- Centralizing conservator account monitoring preparation and electronic reporting

All of these initiatives have been implemented at least to some extent in all 87 counties. The creation of a centralized court payment center for citation entry, citation payments and citation phone calls was a huge undertaking. This also involved developing a system to pay citations over the phone and on the web. Currently this centralized area handles all citation

entry, calls and payments for 85 of the 87 counties in Minnesota. The two largest metropolitan counties expect to transition to the centralized unit within the next couple of years.

Minnesota has already centralized several of the eCourt court functions. All courts in the state have implemented day forward imaging as of last fall. E-Filings are only being accepted by the eight pilot counties at this point. All counties in Minnesota also send files to the Court of Appeals electronically. A centralized e-Appeals unit was created in the 4th Judicial District, and is responsible for collecting all the electronic images including documents, exhibits and transcripts into indexes that are then electronically transmitted to the Court of Appeals. This process requires each local court to back-scan all documents that are not imaged, as well as scan in all paper exhibits and transcripts. This can be a time consuming process for the local courts and often there is an extremely short time frame to complete the process.

Another area Minnesota has centralized is the e-filing support call center. Staff are located at a centralized location and the e-Filing website, as well the Minnesota Judicial Branch website, directs filers to call there with questions on the e-Filing process. They have also centralized the financial balancing of all funds received into the e-Filing system. This is a pilot project and has not yet been implemented on a permanent basis, but more than likely will be once the remaining counties begin accepting e-Filings.

eCourt Minnesota Goals and Mission

When Minnesota began discussing the move to electronic records, the eCourt Minnesota team set up goals and a mission for the project (eCourt Minnesota). The goals are as follows:

1. Increase productivity and reduce operational costs by using and providing electronic court information.

2. Provide easy to use electronic court services to constituents including involving them in creating solutions.
3. Build secure and reliable business and technical infrastructures to support electronic court services by:
 - Transforming court processes.
 - Examining existing rules, statutes and policies and seeking changes as needed.
 - Building a sound and secure technical infrastructure with a comprehensive disaster recovery capability.
4. Promote and facilitate culture change from paper processes to electronic court processes:
 - Implement a consistent, statewide solution.
 - Actively support and educate judges, court staff and external constituents.
 - Continuously identify business processes for increased efficiencies.
5. Create a fiscally sensible, cost-neutral electronic court records process for ongoing operations.

Minnesota is still in the process of developing tools in many of these areas and the entire project will continue to evolve and is anticipated to take years to fully complete. For instance, the e-Signature process is still evolving and currently involves many steps. Court staff email the judge letting them know there is a document or order that needs their attention, the judge accesses the document in the case management system, saves the document to a designated folder, places their electronic signature and saves the document to another shared folder for staff to access. Staff then goes into the folder to find the appropriate document for their division, place an electronic file stamp on it and downloads it back into the case management system. This is a very time-consuming and inefficient process. However, Tyler Technologies the vendor for

MNCIS and the electronic file and serve system are working on the ability to sign documents within MNCIS and this will be available soon. They also route documents to Judges by an email notification process, but an electronic workflow system called Task Manager is being developed where queues within the case management system will be used to route documents and Judges will then will be able to sign the documents without moving them to a folder. Once this is rolled out the workflow process will be much more streamlined and efficient.

One of the questions raised by a Judge in Washington County is whether the court is ensuring that due process is being met in moving to electronic records and filings. Procedural due process ensures that appropriate and just procedures are used throughout the court so people feel they have been treated fairly. (Hanson B. K., 2011). As the court looks at streamlining its processes, due process must be preserved.

As Washington County evaluates how it can re-engineer its processes, the court should keep in mind the Seven Principles to Streamline the Work Process and Improve Quality, Efficiency, and Cost:

1. Organize around outcomes, not tasks.
2. Identify all the processes in an organization and prioritize them in order of redesign urgency.
3. Integrate information processing into the real work that produces the information.
4. Treat geographically dispersed resources as though they were centralized.
5. Link parallel activities in the workflow instead of just integrating their results.
6. Put the decision point where the work is performed and build control into the process.
7. Capture information once and at the source.

(Champy, 2003).

Minnesota is an innovator in re-engineering business processes and centralizing court functions and will continue to do so as electronic records are implemented. This is why it is important for Washington County to analyze how they can streamline processes in moving to electronic court records.

Methods

The research for this project involved evaluation and job task timings of staff's current case flow processing and then determining any non-value added activities. Data was collected through surveys and interviews on how courts in Minnesota have changed in their work flow processes since moving to electronic records. After evaluating the data received, the Washington County management team determined what areas could possibly be streamlined or centralized. It then set up a pilot project implementing these office structure changes in an attempt to streamline business processes, and determine if centralization or changes in our processes will assist us in gaining efficiencies in the electronic environment. One of the most important factors to be evaluated will be to see if staff are simply replicating the paper process in the electronic world, and if so, how it can make the move to a more efficient way of doing business. There are 10 Judges chambered in Washington County with 51 staff including nine who are part of the management team. Washington County had case filings in 2014 of 37, 439 (Appendix 1) and from January through November 2014, 78,590 initial and subsequent documents were filed electronically (Appendix 2).

An electronic survey was developed, pre-tested and sent out to the chosen recipients. The survey results were evaluated and it was determined, which counties had re-engineered some of their processes with regard to imaging and electronic filing and service. Follow-up interviews were then conducted with those counties to get more detailed information on the changes made. The data collected was then reviewed by the Washington County management team and it was determined what process changes should be piloted. A period of two weeks was allowed for training on the new processes and then the pilot was conducted for two weeks. During the pilot staff again performed job time standards on the new processes.

Conducting Job Time Standards

Job Time Standards are conducted every few years in Washington County to determine if staff are allocated appropriately, both in the office overall as well as in each division according to the amount of work that is processed and the time it takes to complete it. First, a list is developed of every task that each division performs and is put in an excel spreadsheet (Appendix 3). It should be noted that major projects are not included in the job time standards such as record retention and exhibit management. Then a formula is used to determine the average number of actual days worked in a year. The formula is then incorporated into the excel spreadsheet to determine the number of staff needed to perform the task, the full time equivalency (FTE).

Staff then record how many of the tasks they performed in a certain time frame. For instance, 10 documents were entered into the MNCIS case management system in 30 minutes. This collection of data went on for a two week period and then the results were turned into each division supervisor. The supervisor then calculated how long each task took and extrapolated the number of tasks into a yearly count. Once the yearly count of each task is inputted into the spreadsheet, the formula calculates the total number of staff needed in each division. This number is compared to the number of actual staff to determine if the division is overstaffed, understaffed or staffed correctly.

Survey

An electronic survey was created and sent by email to all the Court Administrators of the eCourt pilot counties (except Washington County) asking 10 questions regarding their current business processes with moving to electronic records (Appendix 4). The survey was also sent to two other counties not in the pilot program that had possibly changed some of their business practices.

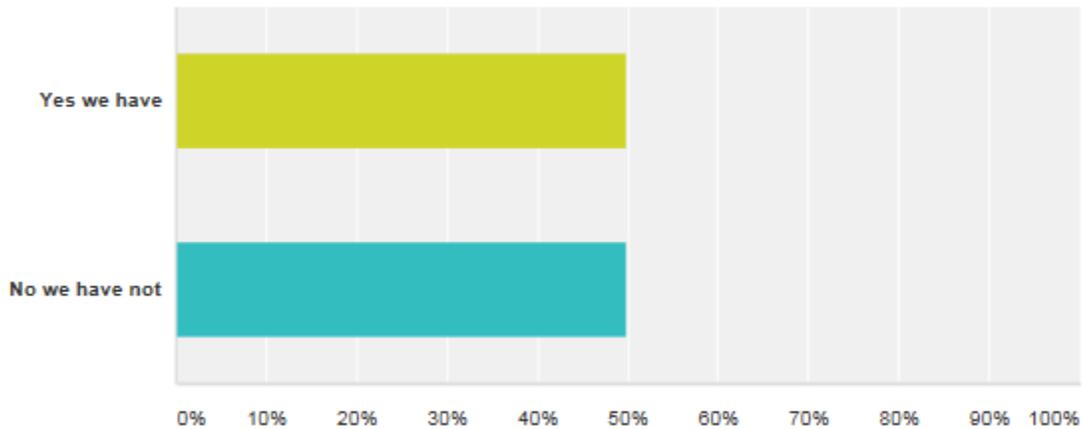
One county in the 1st Judicial District was selected as they have been imaging prior to the pilot counties implementing it and one in the 3rd Judicial District was selected as they had changed some of their mail processes. A total of 9 people received the electronic survey (Appendix 5).

The survey was pre-tested and a few adjustments were made to the questions to ensure information was clear and concise. The respondents were asked to complete the survey or forward it to someone in their office better suited to complete it. Ramsey, Hennepin and Dakota County had other individuals complete the survey. They were given approximately two and a half weeks to respond and a reminder email (Appendix 6) was sent to those who had not yet completed it about 10 days after the initial survey email. There were a total of eight responses, or a 73% response rate. Each response was reviewed and five counties were chosen for follow-up interviews. The criteria for a follow-up interview was any responses in the survey indicating they had changed their way of doing business by moving or centralizing duties due to electronic records or e-Filing. Figure 4 gives the percentage of answers indicating they have made changes.

Figure 4. Survey Results

With the implementation of document imaging and/or e-filing have you changed where work is processed or centralized any case flow processes in your office?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes we have	50.00% 4
No we have not	50.00% 4
Total	8

Interviews

The counties chosen to receive a follow-up interview were Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey and Kandiyohi, which are all pilot counties, and then Carver County which is in the 1st Judicial District which has been imaging for 5 years. A list of questions was developed (Appendix 7), however; when the interviews were conducted they were tailored to the specific responses received in each individual survey. The goal of the interviews was to collect more information on any process changes that have been made. Each interview was about 15 minutes in length and took place over the phone (Appendix 8). The purpose of the interviews was to obtain more in-

depth information on how electronic records are handled in the pilot counties. After analyzing what changes other counties have implemented, this researcher made a list of proposed process changes in an attempt to create efficiencies in case processing.

Business Process Changes to Consider

Below is the list of possible changes that were considered by the Washington County management team to pilot.

1. **eService** – Send orders and notices electronically in civil, family and juvenile divisions.
2. **Centralization of eAppeals** – Set up a two-man team that is responsible for preparing all electronic files for the centralized appeal unit.
3. **Workflow between Judge Team and Staff** - Implement the use of reports as opposed to sending emails to notify Judicial Teams that something has been filed that needs their attention. Judicial teams will determine what documents they wish to be notified of when filed
4. **Centralize Acceptance of Electronic Filings** - Create one area to just accept subsequent filings electronically and then use reports to finish case processing.
5. **Copy Requests** - Move copy requests of electronic documents from court records to the specific divisions.
6. **Customer Service Windows** - Reduce counter coverage. Currently there are two people who cover the specialty courts (family, juvenile, civil and probate) counter. Since moving to mandatory e-Filing for the civil and family areas, the number of customers coming to the counter has reduced.
7. **Quality Assurance** - Move quality assurance to the specific division as opposed to court records.

8. Data Security Reports - Move the monitoring of the data security reports to one person, as now each supervisor monitors his or her own division. That person will send corrections to the individual and copy the supervisor.

Several members of the management team met a few different times and determined the following changes would be piloted to determine if there was a time savings. It was taken into consideration that given the time frames and the training period that only a few changes would be piloted at a time.

1. Serve family child support orders and juvenile CHIPS orders, through the electronic file and serve system (eFS). It was determined that these are areas where we should have parties signed up to receive service electronically which is a necessary step.
2. Move back-scanning of files for court to the appropriate division.
3. Move the preparation of the electronic file for the centralized appeal unit, for all case types to the criminal division.
 - This person will receive the event listing MNCIS report which includes the filing codes notice of appeal and request for file from the court of appeals (Appendix 9) for cases being appealed.
 - Determine if the file has been fully scanned.
 - When the Court Of Appeals request the file be sent electronically, this person will scan any exhibits or transcripts and process the case for the centralized unit to send to the Court of Appeals.
 - There will also be a person in the family division who will be part of this team and act as a backup.

4. Move copy requests for electronic documents that come through eFS to be processed by the division as opposed to court records.
5. Centralize the acceptance of documents through eFS to the staff who work the criminal front counter.
 - They will be responsible for reviewing all subsequent filings that come in through eFS.
 - They will look for the 3 rejection criteria – appropriate fees, correct case file and correct venue.
 - They will also make certain the documents have the correct security level, public or confidential, as determined by the MN Rules of Public Access.
 - The event listing report will be run in MNCIS which will include all the filing codes accepted through eFS during a certain time period (Appendix 10).
6. Use electronic means when a transfer of venue is ordered on file.
 - Upload the transfer order to MNCIS
 - Use the copy feature in MNCIS to send the file electronically if non-pilot county
 - Initiate File through eFS for pilot counties
7. Create a pilot judicial team for notification of documents filed that need their attention or some action be taken by them. The MNCIS event listing report will be scheduled to go to the pilot judicial teams and will include all pre-determined filings where the team needs to perform some type of action such as signing orders.

The other areas for possible changes will still be examined, but will be piloted at a future date.

The pilots were set up to allow for two weeks of training and practice and then two weeks timing the process changes. The timings included the same steps as in the previous job time standards. Staff kept track of how many tasks were processed in a certain period of time.

Findings

The goal of this research was to examine the current case flow processing in Washington County Court as well as other courts around the State, and determine if re-engineering our current business processes and re-aligning the work flow will create a more efficient court. It was anticipated that staff may have been just replicating the same process with paper, in the electronic world and therefore resulting in no real time savings, and in some instances may have increased processing time.

Job Time Standards

The job time standards were completed by all divisions on current tasks and were conducted for a two week period. Observation of staff performing some of their work also took place to determine any non-value added tasks. One of the findings that resulted from the job time standards was that for both new case filings and subsequent filings, in all divisions, staff processing time was greatly reduced when filed electronically as opposed to in paper. Appendix 11 is the summary of the complete 2014 job time standards for Washington County. This shows the number of FTE's needed in each division, as well as the actual number of staff in all divisions. The results show most divisions have a time savings and thus a reduction in FTE need, due to electronic records and filings, except for the Court Records Division which has taken on back scanning of files for court as well as quality assurance of imaged documents. However, it should be noted that the timings did not take into consideration a couple of major projects - record retention and exhibit management. Below are the timings for case initiation as well as subsequent filings. The data shows that the processing time for case initiation is cut almost in half when done electronically. The civil division staff is fairly new which could have resulted in a smaller time savings. It also should be noted that the mail component timed here is the division opening, file stamping and distributing mail delivered to their office. What it does not include is

the Court Records Division staff person who is responsible for opening; receive stamping and distributing mail to each division, which takes approximately 72 minutes each day. This entire step is eliminated with electronic filings.

Figure 5: Job Time Standards: Paper vs. Electronic

	Electronic		Paper including mail
Case Initiation			
Civil	6 minutes		7.46 minutes
Family	7.35 minutes		14 minutes
Criminal	7.78 minutes		15.5 minutes
Subsequent filing			
Civil	7.30 minutes		15.95 minutes
Family	3.70 minutes		10.30 minutes
Criminal	3.50 minutes		17.13 minutes

While observing staff performing certain tasks, and also through conversations, there were certain tasks determined to no longer have any value in the electronic world. For instance, stamping documents confidential or original; when documents are scanned into MNCIS, the electronic image now becomes the original and the security of the document is also entered at that time and if confidential a lock appears over the image. Another non-value added step is initialing the paper document after file stamping. This step was put in place so that when reviewing a paper file, you would know right away who was responsible for filing the document. When viewing the file electronically, you are able to hover over a certain area and it shows the

name of the person who entered it into MNCIS. After discussing whether these were necessary still with the management team, all of these tasks were eliminated.

Surveys and Interviews

All of those surveyed agreed there were definitely efficiencies in moving to electronic records, specifically: no longer searching for lost files; no longer having to pull the paper file for court hearings, questions from the public or to make copies; and electronic filings eliminated much of the data entry. The survey information gathered indicated how many counties were operating with the electronic records and filings, as well as those that had changed some of their business processes due moving to electronic records. Table 1 gives a quick summary of the percentage of those who answered yes to questions taken into consideration when determining who should receive a follow-up interview and areas of interest to this researcher.

Table 1. Electronic Record Survey Answers

Serving orders electronically	62.5%
Use both interactive/batch scanning	25.0%
Use electronic images only for court hearings	62.5%
Centralized or changed where work is processed	50.5%

The follow-up interviews resulted in more detailed information as to how processes have been centralized or changed.

Results of interviews showed that all of the pilot counties except Kandiyohi County were using the e-File and serve system to serve orders on parties, even though at times it was a bifurcated process as not all parties were signed up for e-Service. However, it was much more efficient in the civil and family areas as e-Filing is mandatory for attorneys; but there is still the

issue of the pro se litigants. There were differing thoughts on the acceptance of e-Filings and whether this should be a two-step process or a “you touch it you finish it” approach. Several counties felt it was not efficient to have someone just accept filings and not process the work, especially in the civil and family areas. Ramsey County had a different logic and actually has defined positions for the two-step process:

NFC: New Filing Clerk– the clerk who works primarily in the EFS queue accepting new filings and pulling proposed orders to route to chambers.

EC: Entry Clerk – the clerk who works the filing on the MNCIS end. This work is usually completed via MNCIS reports that run daily. In smaller departments, the NFC and EC may be the same person.

Kandiyohi is using courtroom clerks to accept subsequent electronic filings and also to complete the necessary case processing. The review and acceptance of electronic subsequent filings is done during down time in court, and then the rest of the processing is completed when the clerk is out of the courtroom. All electronic new case filings are done by the individual division.

Hennepin County had a form of two- step process for the criminal area’s acceptance of documents in eFS, deemed level 1 and level 2 processors. Level 1 processors accept the filings and do the basic case processing in MNCIS. If it requires more complex work, such as scheduling a hearing, it would then be moved to the level 2 processing queue. These queues are available in the electronic file and serve system. They have also developed an excel spreadsheet listing all the criminal filings in the eFS system and whether they are level 1 or level 2 processing. The spreadsheet also gives the processing steps for the level 1 queue filings.

Another change that Hennepin has implemented is generating and using MNCIS reports to notify judicial teams of electronic filings that require attention or action, instead of using email notification. The reports are set up to run on a schedule and include certain filings that were predetermined by each team. Once the report is received, it is up to the law clerk to perform the appropriate action. Hennepin is also implementing a second shift to accept electronic filings in the civil area. At the time this research paper is being written, the implementation is at the preliminary stages and no information on the efficiency of this shift was available.

Both monitoring of data security reports and data quality of imaged documents in all courts interviewed is either done by each specific division or by supervisors. Many of those interviewed, however, could see this task being centralized or a document security expert being developed at a District level. Back-scanning of files for court is done differently depending on the size of the county. Some have the court room clerks do it, others have records staff or the mail person do it, and some have hired temporary staff to do this task. Preparation of files electronically for the Court of Appeals is mostly done within the specific division, but many felt this task could be centralized.

After the Washington County team met and analyzed the data collected from the interviews, it was determined the following changes would be piloted to look for efficiencies. It should also be noted that three members of the management team paid a visit to Hennepin County to observe current business processes. This step was not part of the data collection methods of this paper; however the information was used in determining the changes to be piloted.

Pilot Areas

1. **Electronically Serve Orders** - Serve family child support orders and juvenile CHIPS orders through the electronic file and serve system (eFS). It was determined that these are areas where the majority of the parties will be signed up to receive service electronically.
2. **Back- Scanning Files for Court** - Move back-scanning of files for court to the appropriate division.
3. **Copy Requests** - Move copy requests that come through the electronic file and serve system from court records to the specific divisions.
4. **Centralize E-Appeals** - Move file preparation of the electronic file for the centralized appeal unit for all case types to the criminal division.
5. **Centralize EFS Process** - Centralize the acceptance of documents through eFS in the criminal division to a two staff team.
6. **Electronically Transfer Venue** - Use electronic means when a transfer of venue is ordered on file.
7. **Change Workflow Process between Judicial Teams and staff** - Create a pilot judicial team for notification of documents filed that need their attention or some action be taken by them.

The pilot group for serving orders to parties through eFS included the child support area and the child protection area. The timings, however, showed that the electronic service took approximately 3 minutes and the paper mail process took about 5 ½ minutes; this is per order.

Table 2 below is the list of pros and cons found in these areas.

Table 2 Pros and Cons of Electronic Service .

Pros of Electronic Service
1. Saves paper
2. Saves time stuffing envelopes
3. You only have to have one copy of the order and notice of filing
4. Attorneys get paperwork quickly. It used to be weeks before they received a signed order back, now it is a matter of days.
5. There is a record that the order was received and who received it.

Cons of Electronic Service
1. If a case was processed and closed before EFS was implemented and one attorney files a new document, that party/attorney is the only one signed up for eService, which then requires a bifurcated process. It is necessary to save the order and notice of filing and upload it in EFS for the party signed up for eService and then make paper copies for the other party/attorney and send by mail.
2. Some attorneys forget to sign up for eService on every case, so then we need to call them or send a reminder.
3. On family cases where the child support office and the county attorney are parties, only one of them signs up as a service contact. Also, the child support office had difficulties getting the emails due to support staff not having an appropriate security level to receive this type of email.
4. We have to download and save the document to our computer before we can upload in EFS.
5. There is uncertainty how we would send certified copies of orders, writs and transcript of judgments.

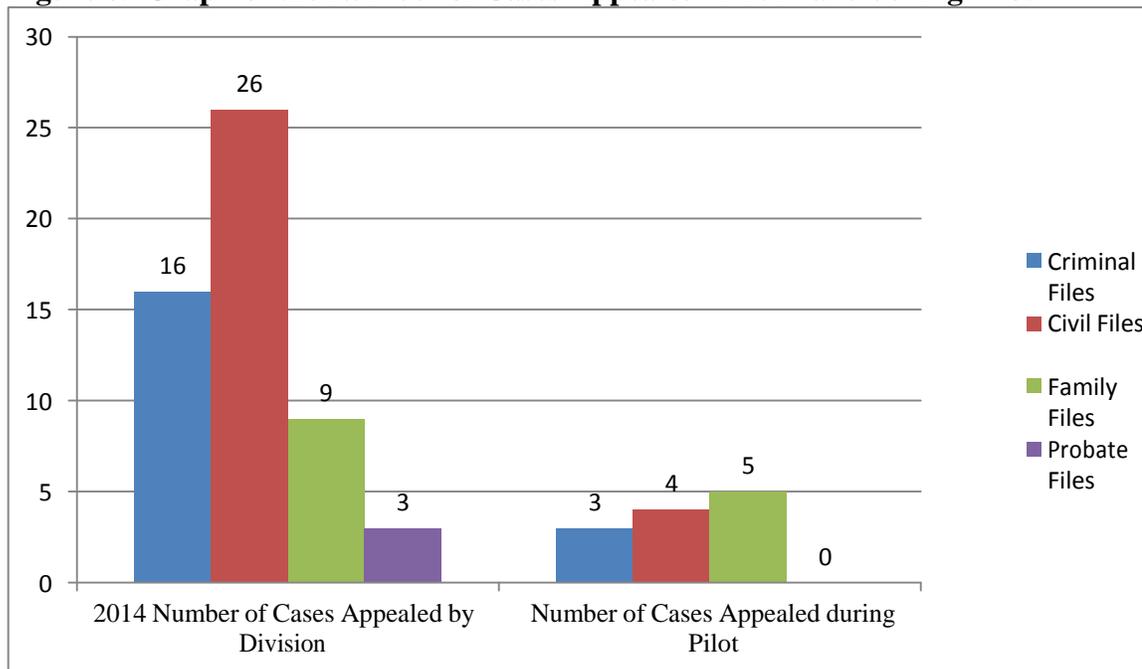
Moving the back-scanning of files from the Court Records Division to the specific division was definitely more efficient, as the divisions are more knowledgeable in the naming of

the documents and the appropriate security levels associated with each one. This change also involved this responsibility going to the person setting the hearing, which removed the steps of requesting the file be back-scanned and the date of the hearing put on a SharePoint site, and moving files from one person to another.

Moving copy requests that come in through eFS to the division was also a much smarter process, as when it was done by Court Records it required the division to print out the request, forward it to the Court Records Division and then print out the document when available and send it. This was a step that was identified as continuing with the paper process in an electronic world. Another step that was identified as no longer necessary was front counter staff continuing to send requests to Court Records to make a copy out of a file, when customers request a copy of a document that is electronic. This step was eliminated by the management team and front counter staff simply prints the documents for the customer.

The centralization of the preparation of e-Appeals files had mixed results. One obvious advantage in having one person handle these is they become specialized. Figure 6 below shows the number of cases appealed in 2014 and the number of cases appealed during the pilot.

Figure 6. Graph of the Number of Cases Appealed in 2014 and during Pilot



The timings on the 12 files processed during the pilot period took anywhere from one hour for the shortest file preparation time to 11 hours for the longest file preparation time. However, it should be noted that for the file that took only one hour to process, all of the documents were scanned in prior to the request. In the file that took 11 hours, there were six volumes of documents that needed to be scanned into the record. According to the job time standards that were done for e-Appeals by each division, it took on average 109 minutes to process four file requests. It is difficult to make a comparison of the timings due to the fact that during the original job time standards, the size of the files requested and how many documents requiring scanning was not documented. However, those involved found the following benefits:

- Creates a process that has greater consistency and better accountability through the fact they perform the task on a more regular basis.

- Reduces learning costs as it's only necessary to train two staff on the process and they are specialized.
- Streamlines the process because processing all case types allows for one set of rules and procedures.
- Avoids duplication of efforts between divisions.
- Process should eventually take less time through the benefits of specialization.

Centralizing the acceptance of electronic documents in the criminal area proved to be somewhat of an adjustment at first, however, efficiencies were determined. With centralization there is quicker turnaround time for document acceptance, as the staff handling this task are able to go in several times a day and clear out queues. Since other staff go into court, they would not be available to process the e-Filings as quickly. The adjustment came in the area of staff using the reports for further case processing on e-Filed subsequent document filings. Staff struggled at first to determine which documents were their responsibility, and it was determined that some things were getting missed. It was necessary to institute a process where the report was printed by one staff person and then passed around the division and each staff initialed which cases they processed. The report is kept in a book, and the supervisor goes through it weekly to make sure all filings were reviewed for the necessary follow-up steps. The timings showed that the paper process of reviewing the documents, distributing and processing took about 40 minutes per day, and printing, distribution of the report, and processing takes about 15 minutes per day, a significant time savings.

Transferring venue from one county to another electronically became available very recently. The process involved uploading the transfer of venue order into MNCIS, then contacting the other county by email requesting they set up the shell of the new case and giving

them the appropriate information, and finally copying the file information and documents to the file. The efficiencies with this process were enormous; the timings showed previously it took 60 minutes to prepare a family file to be transferred and 16 minutes for civil, as opposed to the electronic timings of 17 minutes for family and 4 minutes for civil.

The pilot for using reports for notifying judicial teams of documents filed electronically was not able to be fully implemented, so there was no real data collected on whether this process created any efficiency. However, it should be noted that the civil and family staff are sending approximately 80-100 emails a day to 10 judicial teams. We were able to have one meeting with the law clerks, who all agreed receiving and reviewing all these emails was extremely time consuming and involved a good portion of their day.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The information gathered from the original job time standards performed, the surveys sent out and the interviews conducted, as well as through the pilot study, provided valuable information. It showed how important it is to evaluate current business practices to determine if changes should be made to create efficiencies when implementing a drastic change in the way you do business. The assumption of this researcher was that Washington County had not evaluated their current business practices to determine if there was a more efficient way of doing business. This researcher also anticipated that staff may have been just replicating the same paper process in the electronic world and therefore creating no real efficiencies, and in some instances, it may have been increasing their processing time.

The findings showed that in some instances staff were not processing work as efficiently as possible, and that attempting to streamline certain areas could provide time savings. Also, changes with the electronic world were simply necessary to create a fully electronic environment such as serving orders electronically. However, it also showed that until e-Filing is mandatory in all areas and a forum is created for all pro se litigants to e-File, case processing will be a bifurcated process of both paper and electronic, which in itself creates inefficiencies. As a result of the data collected in this project the following recommendations and conclusions are made.

Conclusion 1: Electronic records and electronic filings do provide for a more efficient court.

The job time standards showed that there is a time savings with electronic filings. The fact that manual data entry is no longer necessary provided a decrease in processing time in both new case filings and subsequent filings. Documents are in the case file as soon as they are accepted. There is no longer a need to open mail, manually file stamp, enter documents and then file them in the paper file. Judges can review files and documents immediately and don't have to wait for the file or paperwork to get up to them. These findings showed that even though this

researcher was concerned there had not been any real time savings in moving to electronic records and filings this was incorrect with e-Filings. As other counties begin to accept e-Filings they will also begin to experience this advantage.

Also, through the surveys that were sent and the interviews conducted it was obvious that all the courts who participated felt that moving to an electronic record provides for a much more efficient court. The findings showed that with electronic records it is no longer necessary to pull files for court, make copies, answer questions from the public, which also decreases the traffic at the customer service counter. It is also no longer necessary to search for misfiles. So despite the fact that a paper process is still necessary and staff is still required to image documents the results from those surveyed and interviewed showed that using electronic records as opposed to paper files created efficiency.

Recommendation 1: Washington County should consider streamlining front counter staff as more case types become mandatory and access to images becomes available to government agencies and the public.

It became apparent through the research done that as electronic records and electronic filings become available, the number of customers that come to the courthouse decreases. It is no longer necessary to drop off last minute filings and when needing to review documents in a file you can do so electronically at the public terminals. Minnesota is in the process of rolling out technology that would allow for government agencies to be able to view documents electronically from their offices which will further reduce the number of customers.

Through the job time standards and interviews conducted, it definitely appeared as though it is no longer necessary to have as many staff working the customer service counters as previously required in the paper world. This researcher recommends that cross-training take place for those working the customer service windows so the amount of staff dedicated to these areas can be reduced and streamlined.

Conclusion 2: Staff are struggling to leave the paper processes behind and in some instances are continuing to perform steps that are non-value added tasks, in the electronic world.

Through the job time standards it was observed that the steps that staff were programmed to do in the paper world were continuing in the electronic world and thus creating some non-value added tasks. As business and case flow processes were observed it appeared as though some processes included non-value added tasks. Whenever a large change is implemented in how you do business it is necessary to re-evaluate and possibly streamline the work. The move to electronic records has proved to be frustrating for staff with the additional steps of scanning in paper documents, back scanning files for court and following many of the same steps in case processing as in the paper world. The need to create greater efficiencies and to re-engineer business processes exists.

Change is always difficult. This researcher concluded that one of the reasons staff was finding it challenging to leave the paper world behind was due to the fact that in the paper world you could physically see how much work you had to do. You had paper files or paper filings on your desk which not only gave you a feeling of security but also showed what you needed to accomplish that day. Work was distributed and put in your mail box so you knew what you were responsible to process for the day.

In the electronic world staff need to get beyond this, take responsibility for filings electronically and work in a different way. Some really struggled with this and it caused them to continue to process their work in the same manner as with paper. This created inefficiencies by performing non-value added tasks. The findings of the job time standards also showed that even though staff maybe didn't feel like it was taking less time to process certain tasks in the electronic world, it really was.

Recommendation 2: The Washington County management team should continue to work with staff to help them create efficiencies and involve staff in re-engineering current business processes as the move to the electronic world continues.

When instituting any major change in how you do business it is important to involve staff in decision making and process re-engineering; after all they are the ones performing the job tasks. Discussing, as well as observing how work is processed allows for questions to come up as to why are you continuing to perform that step and is it still of value. Involving staff in these questions assists them in realizing the step may no longer be necessary and eliminating it could save them processing time. This researcher found that some staff are reluctant to change how they are doing their work. If you don't include them in the process changes and show them why doing it differently is more efficient, they simply become frustrated and may go back to the old process. Explaining to staff why a task is being streamlined on a pilot basis encourages them to give it a try. If something does not prove to be as effective, it's important to realize it and simply try something else or go back to the old way.

Conclusion 3: A more efficient way to move workflow between staff members as well as between judicial teams and staff needs to be developed.

Unfortunately the time period for this research did not allow the pilot for using reports to alert judicial teams of relevant filings to be fully implemented. However, through discussions with staff and law clerks it was apparent that there is frustration in how this is currently being done. Staff is sending an incredible number of emails each day to the 10 judicial teams notifying them of electronic filings on assigned cases. Most of the counties that were interviewed were using email notification process, but did acknowledge the importance of ensuring that notification of filings requiring judicial involvement were not missed and done timely.

Minnesota also needs to improve the e-Signature process. Currently staff send an email to the judge team, the Judges pull documents from MNCIS, save them to a personal folder, sign

the document and then move it to another folder. The Judges are frustrated with this process as it requires way too many steps. A system enhancement that will allow for movement of documents within the case management system is being developed and will allow for the documents to be electronically signed within it also, but this enhancement is still a year or so out before full implementation; however, once implemented it will allow for a reduction in processing time for both staff and the judicial teams.

Recommendation 3: Until more efficient technology is developed the use of reports to notify judicial teams of pertinent electronic filings that need to be addressed or signed should be piloted.

Through the observations of staff processing work and discussions with the Washington County law clerks it became very apparent that everyone is spending an incredible amount of time sending and reviewing emails. Since the tool to move documents within the case management system is still in development, using the reports seems like a much more reliable short term solution. The current email process is not only time consuming but it also appears to allow for a greater chance of error in the fact that staff could miss sending the email and the Judge team could overlook the email altogether. The use of reports would allow for the judge team to receive a daily listing of important documents filed on cases they are assigned to. For instance if a brief is filed and a staff person gets interrupted with a phone call while in the middle of creating the notification email, and it is never sent, a Judge may miss getting an under advisement done on time. By using the report, once the brief is filed into MNCIS it will appear on the report and the judge team will know it was filed and when.

Another benefit of the report is that all the information about the case and filing is included, plus comments the filer might have entered such as the date of the next hearing. This will allow the law clerk or Judge to scan the report and not have to open all the individual emails

to find out what was filed, and then go back into MNCIS to find out more details and determine if they should sign the document. The recommendation of this researcher is to implement this process on a pilot basis with a few select judge teams and determine if it proves to be efficient. After the pilot participating staff and judge teams should be interviewed to determine if it would be beneficial to roll out to the remaining teams until the new technology (Task Manager) to move work and signing documents within MNCIS is fully implemented.

Conclusion 4: Electronic Service of Orders is not only necessary, it is also more efficient in the divisions that are mandatory, but may not be as feasible for those areas that are not yet.

Sending orders electronically is necessary when we require attorneys to file documents and serve parties electronically. E-Service for all orders should be looked at and attempted in the civil and family divisions as they are mandatory. Other areas can attempt to implement e-Service now, however they may not find it efficient until all case types are mandatory. The pilot did show that the money saved in postage, the value in how quickly the orders are received by the parties and the certainty that the parties received them and were no returned as undeliverable by the post office, it was extremely beneficial. Staff who participated in the pilot in the child support and child protection (CHIPS) areas determined the advantages of e-Service for orders outweighed the disadvantages. In speaking to the Washington Juvenile County Attorney regarding the pilot, he indicated that previously it took weeks for his office to receive orders submitted in CHIPS cases back signed and now they receive them in a matter of days.

However, in the areas that are not mandatory parties may not be using the eFS system and are therefore not signed up for e-Service, necessitating a bifurcated process that creates frustration for staff. These areas may not be ready to begin using e-Service because tasks could take longer if staff are having to go into the system to see who might be signed up for e-Service

every time they are going to process an order. The training period for attorney's and justice partners to become familiar with the e-Filing system, and sending reminders to sign up for e-Service on all of their cases, can be extensive, but once it is accomplished the benefits are immense in the mandatory case types.

Recommendations 4: Continue to work towards serving orders electronically in all mandatory e-Filing areas and implement this change in other remaining areas when mandatory goes into effect, in the summer of 2015.

Due to time frames it was not possible to implement e-Service for orders in the civil division. However, from the information gathered it is a necessary step and should be implemented as soon as possible. All but one of the pilot counties are using e-Service for orders and when postage costs, copying time and the cost of paper and toner are taken into consideration it proved to be more efficient. Through the pilot conducted and the information gathered from interviews, when e-Service is implemented there is a learning curve for parties. Reminders to parties that they are required to sign up for e-Service is necessary for a while, however, eventually this will no longer be necessary in the mandatory case types. Therefore, the civil division should implement serving orders electronically, if not in all case types, at a minimum in those that are most likely to have attorneys, such as major civil.

As much as the desire is there to implement e-Service in the non-mandatory areas it probably would not be as beneficial at this time. In the criminal area the system requires prosecutors to sign up for e-Service on every case. Because of this many of the prosecutors are currently not signed up, which creates an issue. However, the court should begin working with attorneys and prosecutors to sign up for e-Service, because mandatory is around the corner. Then when it becomes mandatory in July 2015 e-Service on all orders should begin immediately.

Conclusion 5: It is more efficient to centralize the acceptance of subsequent documents filed through eFS in the Criminal Division, as well as centralize the preparation of files electronically for the Court of Appeals office-wide.

It proved to be very advantageous in the criminal division to centralize the acceptance of e-Filed subsequent documents. This created a much quicker turnaround time and those accepting the documents had the time to go through and make certain the three criteria for acceptance were met and also the document security level was correct. The e-Filing queues were emptied throughout the day and the rest of the division was able to do their follow up tasks as time allowed. The reports showed all electronic filings and could be reviewed for more immediate tasks allowing for the opportunity to prioritize work. It also allowed for others to process work if the primary person was not available. Even though some in the division were frustrated with the change at first, they did eventually realize it was more efficient. Once the change was made to keep copies of the report in a book and reviewed by a supervisor the process became much more accountable.

The e-Appeals centralization should continue, given the fact that the job time standards showed staffing levels in some divisions to be over the workload FTE. This change should prove to be a way to distribute work more evenly throughout the office. The specialization that will be obtained as more cases are processed by the two designated staff should prove to make this process more efficient. Appeals are spread throughout the year and it is quite possible that several months might go by without receiving a file request for a certain case type. By centralizing this task you are processing for all case types, giving designated staff more experience with this process and creating a subject matter expert in the area.

Recommendation 5: Washington County should continue to experiment with centralization of certain tasks and perform job time standards on these tasks to determine if it has created efficiency.

Centralizing job duties proves efficient through specialization. Minnesota has already centralized certain areas within the branch and as the court moves to an all-electronic record the possibilities are there to expand. Most of the people interviewed agreed that they could foresee a way for acceptance of filings in certain case types at a central location; whether that is at a district level or county level remains to be determined. Most agreed however, that cases involving a higher degree of case processing after the filing should remain with the specific division. One clear benefit of centralization is accepting documents faster and being able to clear our queues in eFS in a timely manner. An additional advantage of this is the parties are notified when their filing is accepted through eFS, so it reduces the calls inquiring about them.

The Washington County management team discussed going to a process where one person within a division accepts all filings, but this was only implemented in the criminal area. This should be experimented with in other divisions. All agreed that due to staff's many different job assignments, the eFS queues will often get backed up and staff are receiving calls from concerned filers. By instituting one or two staff who only accept e-Filings this issue could be resolved. However, to make certain this is truly more efficient it is important for staff to keep track of their timings and make a comparison. If it proves to more efficient then make a permanent change to this business process in other areas.

Also changes to how quality assurance is done and review of the document security reports was not able to be implemented for this paper, however these are very time consuming tasks and have caused an increase in the staffing need for the Court Records Division. Part of the reason the quality assurance is so time consuming is the number of paper documents that are still being filed. Currently we are receiving approximately 170 documents daily in the

civil/family divisions and approximately 400 in the criminal division. This will hopefully be reduced when mandatory for all case types is instituted, however there will still be the pro se filers. The review of the document security reports is now done by all supervisors this researcher believes this could be centralized either at a county level or possibly a district level.

Conclusion 6: Mandatory e-Filing is necessary to realize a truly efficient court in the electronic world.

The findings in the job time standards that paper versus electronic filings, both initial and subsequent, created a considerable savings were not unexpected, as with the electronic process manual data entry is no longer necessary, nor are the additional steps of opening mail, receive stamping or file stamping and routing documents. However, the fact that the paper process is still necessary itself creates inefficiencies and that may not be eliminated until all case types are mandatory and the system allows for pro se individuals to use it. Through surveys, interviews and observations it was apparent that many tasks involved a bifurcated process causing frustration to courts. The need to make all areas mandatory is in the process and will most likely happen as early as July 2015 for pilot counties. Even though there are still concerns with certain justice partners being prepared to handle this technology-wise, particularly in the criminal area.

One of the efficiencies in the electronic world is e-Filing but when documents are filed in paper it requires staff to perform the additional step of scanning in the documents and entering the appropriate security level. These additional steps create frustration for staff. An amendment to the current rules will allow for pro se individuals to e-File starting in July if they have the technology and the skills to do so. The rules will state that once they begin to e-File they will be required to always e-File. Once mandatory for all case types is implemented and pro se litigants are using the system a truly efficient court will be realized.

Recommendation 6: Minnesota needs to work with all attorney's and justice partners to prepare for mandatory e-Filing and needs to develop a means for self-represented litigants to have access and use the e-Filing system.

What we have learned as a pilot for e-Filing and also in the process of observing staff perform the pilot tasks set up for this paper, is that there is still a need to contact attorney's and justice partners regarding the e-Filing process. Often times attorney's struggle with the naming of documents, the appropriate security levels associated with documents and generally how the whole system works. When staff are accepting the documents they often have to contact the filer and explain how it should have been done. This creates inefficiency and slows down the process. It also can make it more difficult to centralize the acceptance of documents because that first level acceptor needs to stop what they are doing, and make a phone call. Or they must speak to those that process the case after the acceptance and let them know the issues so they can make contact with the filer.

Therefore as Minnesota moves toward mandatory e-Filing in the pilot counties it is important to have a training plan for the filers. Currently there is an on line training new filers are required to view. But it is important to provide training specific to your county and make certain your local bar as well as justice partners are informed when mandatory e-Filing is going into effect and the dates training is available. Encouraging partners to attend the training even if they are already using the e-Filing system allows for discussions and questions on how things are best done at a local level.

Also through this research it became very apparent that all the benefits cannot be fully realized until all filers can e-File. The number of documents still being filed in paper daily even in the mandatory areas proves that mandatory alone does not eliminate the dual world of paper and electronic. This means a process for pro-se filers needs to be set up and quite possible

technology provided at some level for them to use. Minnesota has a wonderful self-help center - one of the leading in the nation. It can be accessed through each county law library or from any computer. A forum for pro se litigants to e-File is already being explored in the 4th Judicial District which is also where the self-help center was developed.

There are many advantages of the electronic record but until all phases of the project are implemented and Minnesota is a fully electronic court it is difficult to really re-engineer how we do business and be able to realize a true savings in the number of staff needed.

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Appendix 1 – Washington County 2014 Case Filings

Case Filing Statistics Report

STATE OF MINNESOTA

Washington County, Washington, Cottage Grove,

Case Filing Date Range: 01/01/2014 to 12/31/2014

Case Category Case Type and Case Subtype	Cases Filed in Date Range	Total Cases Filed Year To Date 2014	Total Cases Filed Year To Date 2013	Case Filing Increase/Decrease		% Case Filing Increase/Decrease	Projected Year Total
Civil							
Administrative File	5	5	4	1	+	25 +	5
Appeal from Administrative Agency	4	4	0	4	+		4
Appointment of Trustee	17	17	10	7	+	70 +	17
Assessment Appeal	1	1	0	1	+		1
Change of Name	127	127	143	16	-	11 -	127
Civil Other/Misc.	261	261	288	27	-	9 -	261
Conciliation	1,949	1,949	2,143	194	-	9 -	1949
Conciliation - Forfeiture	31	31	25	6	+	24 +	31
Conciliation - Housing	2	2	4	2	-	50 -	2
Conciliation Appeal	17	17	10	7	+	70 +	17
Condemnation	2	2	4	2	-	50 -	2
Condemnation Appeal	1	1	0	1	+		1
Confession of Judgment	74	74	68	6	+	9 +	74
Consumer Credit Contract	204	204	197	7	+	4 +	204
Contract	77	77	95	18	-	19 -	77
Default Judgment	698	698	688	10	+	1 +	698
Eminent Domain	12	12	1	11	+	1100 +	12
Employment	8	8	9	1	-	11 -	8
Eviction (UD)	613	613	694	81	-	12 -	613
Foreign Judgment	46	46	43	3	+	7 +	46
Forfeiture	67	67	69	2	-	3 -	67
Habeas Corpus	14	14	13	1	+	8 +	14
Harassment	185	185	185	0		0	185
Implied Consent	262	262	244	18	+	7 +	262
Malpractice	4	4	5	1	-	20 -	4
Mechanics Lien	2	2	1	1	+	100 +	2
Minor Settlement	18	18	18	0		0	18
Personal Injury	108	108	113	5	-	4 -	108
Property Damage	9	9	8	1	+	12 +	9
Quiet Title	11	11	15	4	-	27 -	11
Receivership	0	0	2	2	-	100 -	0

Case Filing Statistics Report

STATE OF MINNESOTA

Washington County, Washington, Cottage Grove,

Case Filing Date Range: 01/01/2014 to 12/31/2014

Case Category Case Type and Case Subtype	Cases Filed in Date Range	Total Cases Filed Year To Date 2014	Total Cases Filed Year To Date 2013	Case Filing Increase/Decrease		% Case Filing Increase/Decrease	Projected Year Total
Rent Escrow	8	8	5	3	+	60 +	8
Replevin	2	2	6	4	-	67 -	2
Restitution Judgment	77	77	140	63	-	45 -	77
Tax Court	232	232	280	48	-	17 -	232
Torrens	72	72	125	53	-	42 -	72
Transcript Judgment	925	925	821	104	+	13 +	925
Transcript Judgment From Other Minnesota County	36	36	40	4	-	10 -	36
Trust	4	4	9	5	-	56 -	4
Welfare Appeal	0	0	1	1	-	100 -	0
Wrongful Death	3	3	1	2	+	200 +	3
Total Civil	6,188	6,188	6,527	339	-	5 -	4829
Criminal							
Crim/Traf Mandatory	5,382	5,382	5,145	237	+	5 +	5382
Crim/Traf Non-Mand	22,171	22,171	21,965	206	+	1 +	22171
Delinquency	243	243	253	10	-	4 -	243
Delinquency Felony (Age 16 and Older)	34	34	61	27	-	44 -	34
Extradition (Adult Criminal)	48	48	40	8	+	20 +	48
Juvenile Petty Offense	433	433	515	82	-	16 -	433
Juvenile Traffic	313	313	326	13	-	4 -	313
Total Criminal	28,624	28,624	28,305	319	+	1 +	28624

Case Filing Statistics Report

STATE OF MINNESOTA

Washington County, Washington, Cottage Grove,

Case Filing Date Range: 01/01/2014 to 12/31/2014

Case Category Case Type and Case Subtype	Cases Filed in Date Range	Total Cases Filed Year To Date 2014	Total Cases Filed Year To Date 2013	Case Filing Increase/Decrease		% Case Filing Increase/Decrease	Projected Year Total
Family							
Adoption	53	53	54	1	-	2 -	53
Annulment	1	1	0	1	+		1
Child in Voluntary Foster Care for Treatment	11	11	17	6	-	35 -	11
CHIPS	32	32	41	9	-	22 -	32
CHIPS - Permanency	14	14	26	12	-	46 -	14
<i>Private</i>	0	0	3	3	-	100 -	0
<i>No Subtype</i>	14	14	23	9	-	39 -	14
CHIPS - Runaway	9	9	7	2	+	29 +	9
CHIPS - Truancy	50	50	34	16	+	47 +	50
Custody	97	97	78	19	+	24 +	97
Dissolution with Child	368	368	412	44	-	11 -	368
Dissolution without Child	362	362	348	14	+	4 +	362
Domestic Abuse	264	264	269	5	-	2 -	264
Family Other	13	13	12	1	+	8 +	13
Legal Separation	5	5	3	2	+	67 +	5
Paternity	122	122	108	14	+	13 +	122
Summary Dissolution	2	2	1	1	+	100 +	2
Support	302	302	315	13	-	4 -	302
Total Family	1,705	1,705	1,725	20	-	1 -	3064

Case Filing Statistics Report

STATE OF MINNESOTA

Washington County, Washington, Cottage Grove,

Case Filing Date Range: 01/01/2014 to 12/31/2014

Case Category Case Type and Case Subtype	Cases Filed in Date Range	Total Cases Filed Year To Date 2014	Total Cases Filed Year To Date 2013	Case Filing Increase/Decrease		% Case Filing Increase/Decrease	Projected Year Total
Probate							
Commitment - Chemically Dependent	3	3	4	1	-	25 -	3
Commitment - Mentally Ill	56	56	73	17	-	23 -	56
Commitment - Mentally Ill & Chemically Dependent	25	25	34	9	-	26 -	25
Commitment - Mentally Ill and Dangerous	3	3	2	1	+	50 +	3
Commitment - Mentally Ill and Developmentally Disabled	1	1	0	1	+		1
Decree of Descent	16	16	10	6	+	60 +	16
Formal Supervised	4	4	3	1	+	33 +	4
Formal Unsupervised	70	70	70	0		0	70
Guardianship/Conservatorship	75	75	94	19	-	20 -	75
<i>Conservatorship - Adult (GCV)</i>	1	1	1	0		0	1
<i>Conservatorship - Minor (GCV)</i>	8	8	2	6	+	300 +	8
<i>Emergency Guardianship/Conservatorship (GCV)</i>	3	3	9	6	-	67 -	3
<i>Guardian - Minor (GCV)</i>	1	1	0	1	+		1
<i>Guardianship - Incapacitated Person (GCV)</i>	42	42	65	23	-	35 -	42
<i>Guardianship/Conservatorship (GCV)</i>	16	16	14	2	+	14 +	16
<i>Guardianship/Conservatorship Minor (GCV)</i>	1	1	0	1	+		1
<i>Protective Arrangement (GCV)</i>	1	1	1	0		0	1
<i>No Subtype</i>	2	2	2	0		0	2
Informal Probate	179	179	165	14	+	8 +	179
Probate Document	474	474	429	45	+	10 +	474
Probate Other	1	1	3	2	-	67 -	1
Special Administration	12	12	3	9	+	300 +	12
Summary Administration	6	6	5	1	+	20 +	6
Total Probate	925	925	895	30	+	3 +	925
Grand Total	37,442	37,442	37,452	10	-	0 -	37442

Appendix 2 – 2014 Electronic Filings

Washington County Court Administration
2014 EFS Filing Information
 Taken from: Tyler Reports - Reviewer Operations Monthly 060000

Month	Documents Filed				
	Initial	Subsequent	Total	Accepted	Rejected
January					
• Civil	699	1,841	2,540	2,481	59
• Criminal	-	1,596	1,596	1,586	10
• Family	432	1,867	2,299	2,209	90
• Juvenile	40	153	193	189	4
• Probate or Mental Health	135	184	319	302	17
Total	1,306	5,641	6,947	6,767	180

* Number of Cases Represented by Documents Filed		
Initial	Subsequent	Total
248	709	957
-	757	757
63	526	589
20	66	86
46	73	119
377	2,131	2,508

February					
• Civil	777	1,654	2,431	2,348	83
• Criminal	-	1,424	1,424	1,415	9
• Family	493	1,775	2,268	2,175	93
• Juvenile	16	158	174	165	9
• Probate or Mental Health	149	161	310	288	22
Total	1,435	5,172	6,607	6,391	216

261	677	938
-	684	684
73	496	569
7	63	70
37	57	94
378	1,977	2,355

March					
• Civil	679	2,106	2,785	2,703	82
• Criminal	-	1,700	1,700	1,692	8
• Family	455	1,788	2,243	2,112	131
• Juvenile	33	207	240	218	22
• Probate or Mental Health	114	170	284	275	9
Total	1,281	5,971	7,252	7,000	252

248	939	1,187
-	813	813
65	503	568
16	77	93
37	60	97
366	2,392	2,758

Quarter Total **4,022** **16,784** **20,806** **20,158** **648**

1,121 **6,500** **7,621**

* number of cases may represent a single case more than once

April					
• Civil	1,283	1,872	3,155	3,026	129
• Criminal	-	1,759	1,759	1,750	9
• Family	655	1,979	2,634	2,491	143
• Juvenile	33	194	227	220	7
• Probate or Mental Health	108	204	312	302	10
Total	2,079	6,008	8,087	7,789	298

505	728	1,233
-	853	853
89	545	634
12	81	93
38	68	106
644	2,275	2,919

May					
• Civil	798	1,542	2,340	2,243	97
• Criminal	-	1,354	1,354	1,349	5
• Family	494	1,973	2,467	2,330	137
• Juvenile	17	212	229	226	3
• Probate or Mental Health	155	168	323	318	5
Total	1,464	5,249	6,713	6,466	247

274	620	894
-	682	682
78	543	621
15	97	112
45	60	105
412	2,002	2,414

June					
• Civil	1,499	1,688	3,187	3,018	169
• Criminal	-	1,544	1,544	1,536	8
• Family	626	1,650	2,276	2,182	94
• Juvenile	12	178	190	181	9
• Probate or Mental Health	235	122	357	323	34
Total	2,372	5,182	7,554	7,240	314

369	671	1,040
-	770	770
93	479	572
8	86	94
30	66	96
500	2,072	2,572

Quarter Total **5,915** **16,439** **22,354** **21,495** **859**

1,556 **6,349** **7,905**

* number of cases may represent a single case more than once

**Washington County Court Administration
2014 EFS Filing Information
Taken from: Tyler Reports - Reviewer Operations Monthly 060000**

Month	Documents Filed				
	Initial	Subsequent	Total	Accepted	Rejected
July					
• Civil	1,089	1,753	2,842	2,739	103
• Criminal	-	1,632	1,632	1,624	8
• Family	664	2,054	2,718	2,545	173
• Juvenile	21	201	222	208	14
• Probate or Mental Health	233	111	344	342	2
Total	2,007	5,751	7,758	7,458	300

* Number of Cases Represented by Documents Filed		
Initial	Subsequent	Total
282	764	1,046
-	813	813
93	527	620
7	82	89
36	77	113
418	2,263	2,681

August					
• Civil	898	1,399	2,297	2,245	52
• Criminal	-	1,538	1,538	1,523	15
• Family	392	1,863	2,255	2,131	124
• Juvenile	49	168	217	198	19
• Probate or Mental Health	128	241	369	353	16
Total	1,467	5,209	6,676	6,450	226

264	553	817
-	751	751
63	518	581
6	73	79
24	77	101
357	1,972	2,329

September					
• Civil	891	1,616	2,507	2,381	126
• Criminal	-	1,700	1,700	1,691	9
• Family	493	1,823	2,316	2,178	138
• Juvenile	57	146	203	186	17
• Probate or Mental Health	143	246	389	369	20
Total	1,584	5,531	7,115	6,805	310

279	609	888
-	832	832
72	493	565
7	64	71
30	82	112
388	2,080	2,468

Quarter Total **5,058** **16,491** **21,549** **20,713** **836**

1,163 **6,315** **7,478**

* number of cases may represent a single case more than once

October					
• Civil	934	1,733	2,667	2,592	75
• Criminal	-	1,702	1,702	1,694	8
• Family	669	2,122	2,791	2,658	133
• Juvenile	14	172	186	185	1
• Probate or Mental Health	137	232	369	363	6
Total	1,754	5,961	7,715	7,492	223

333	669	1,002
-	869	869
97	542	639
10	75	85
35	76	111
475	2,231	2,706

November					
• Civil	754	1,371	2,125	2,051	74
• Criminal	-	1,387	1,387	1,377	10
• Family	429	1,603	2,032	1,978	54
• Juvenile	85	158	243	237	6
• Probate or Mental Health	136	243	379	369	10
Total	1,404	4,762	6,166	6,012	154

275	529	804
-	677	677
63	457	520
17	78	95
39	77	116
394	1,818	2,212

December					
• Civil	888	1,281	2,169	2,094	75
• Criminal	-	1,677	1,677	1,670	7
• Family	612	1,954	2,566	2,488	78
• Juvenile	36	182	218	214	4
• Probate or Mental Health	114	187	301	300	1
Total	1,650	5,281	6,931	6,766	165

334	553	887
-	827	827
92	573	665
10	78	88
38	73	111
474	2,104	2,578

Quarter Total **4,808** **16,004** **20,812** **20,270** **542**

1,343 **6,153** **7,496**

* number of cases may represent a single case more than once

Total for Year 2014 **19,803** **65,718** **85,521** **82,636** **2,885**

5,183 **25,317** **30,500**

Appendix 3 – Job Time Standards Spreadsheet

Appendix 4 – Survey Email

My name is Kris Cunningham and I am the Administrative Hearing Office Supervisor in Washington County. I am participating in the National Center for State Courts fellowship program and as part of that program we are required to do a court research project on a relevant subject to our court. I am researching eCourts and examining how our current business processes in Washington County can be streamlined as we move into the electronic world.

You have been chosen to take the survey as you are either a pilot county or have been identified as being innovative in your processes. If you would like someone else in your office to respond please email me at Kris.Cunningham@courts.state.mn.us with their information and I will forward the survey to them.

The survey is 10 questions and should only take about 15 minutes. The information will be used to select courts for follow-up interviews. If chosen I am hoping you will be willing to answer a few follow up questions about your current processes. If you are interested I would be happy to share with you my final project report.

Any questions please let me know.

Here is a link to the survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx>

This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address. Please do not forward this message.

Thanks for your participation!

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx>

Appendix 5 – Electronic Survey

Records Business Process ChangesElectronic

Electronic Records Survey

Thank you for taking the time to participate in my survey on use of electronic documents in MNCIS and any business process changes you have made since beginning imaging and/or electronic filing. I am participating in the National Center for State Courts Fellowship Program and this data is being collected for my fellows court project paper. Once the results are received you may possibly be asked for a follow up interview in order to collect more specific data.

Thank you again for your participation!

1. What judicial district are you in?

2. Are you a pilot county for e-filing? And if so have you implemented all case types?

If you are a pilot county but have not implemented all case types please list case types you have implemented

3. Do you use auto docket batch scanning or interactive scanning for imaging paper documents?

Any other type of batch scanning

4. Do you send court orders or notices out electronically?

Which notices or orders do you send electronically?

5. Are your court hearings paperless in that Judges and staff rely on the imaged documents in MNCIS only?

Case types we are using electronic documents in MNCIS for

Electronic Records Business Process Changes

6. Since implementing document imaging and/or e-Filing have you changed any of your business processes with regard to case flow processing? For instance how mail is processed, electronic filings are accepted, back scanning of files for court hearing or scanning of files, exhibits and transcript for e-Appeals?

7. With the implementation of document imaging and/or e-filing have you changed where work is processed or centralized any case flow processes in your office?

If yes what have you centralized?

6

8. If you have centralized business processes have staff found any time savings with these changes?

6

9. Overall do you believe that electronic records and e-Filings makes your office more efficient?

6

If yes in what ways

6

10. Contact Information for Follow up Interview

Name

County

Email Address

Phone Number

Appendix 6 – Survey Reminder Email

I appreciate our taking a minute to view this email. This is just a reminder about the survey I know how busy your all are.

Again if someone else in your office is better suited to take this survey please forward me their contact information.

Thank you!

My name is Kris Cunningham and I am the Administrative Hearing Office Supervisor in Washington County. I am participating in the National Center for State Courts fellowship program and as part of that program we are required to do a court research project on a relevant subject to our court. I am researching eCourts and examining how our current business processes in Washington County can be streamlined as we move into the electronic world.

You have been chosen to take the survey as you are either a pilot county or have been identified as being innovative in your processes. If you would like someone else in your office to respond please email me at Kris.Cunningham@courts.state.mn.us with their information and I will forward the survey to them.

The survey is 10 questions and should only take about 15 minutes. The information will be used to select courts for follow-up interviews. If chosen I am hoping you will be willing to answer a few follow up questions about your current processes. If you are interested I would be happy to share with you my final project report.

Any questions please let me know.

We are conducting a survey, and your response would be appreciated.

Here is a link to the survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx>

This link is uniquely tied to this survey and your email address. Please do not forward this message.

Thanks for your participation!

Please note: If you do not wish to receive further emails from us, please click the link below, and you will be automatically removed from our mailing list.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx>

Appendix 7 – Interview Questions

Interview Questions

1. You indicated in your survey that you send out various notices and orders electronically through eFS do feel this is an efficiency or necessary because of the move to a paperless court? Do you do this for all case types? Are parties usually signed up for eService?
2. You indicated in your survey that you have either moved more work into the courtroom or do more in court updating can you elaborate on this please? Specifically how that has made you more efficient
3. If you use auto docket for scanning documents where is it used for mail, courtroom or each individual staff person as they process their work?
4. Do you believe that e-Filings can be accepted anywhere (any location)?
5. Do you separate the acceptance of e-Filings and the processing of the filings after acceptance? If so how is the information given to those that process the work through reports or some other means?
6. What are the pro's and con's you see in separation of these duties?
7. Have you found a time savings in the centralization of e-Appeals?
8. Do you feel data security reports could be reviewed and monitored by one location?
9. What additional job duties do you think could be streamlined or centralized eventually?

Appendix 8 – Court of Appeals Event Listing Report

Event Listing

STATE OF MINNESOTA

Entered Range: 02/11/2015 to 02/11/2015 Case Types: CNVDWK, CNVFFD, CNVDAF, CNVSPD, CNVGFD, CNVNMM, VIB, CNVMMP, TRF, CNVHCM, CNVDWI, CNVFEL, CNVPDN, C
Event Types: APLCRTJUD, APLCRTOPN, ORAPPEAL...

Washington County; Washington, Cottage Grove; Washington, Stillwater

[Washington, Stillwater](#)

Event Type	Case #	Style	Case Type	Case Subtype	Entered By	Event Status Event Status Date	Date/Time Entered	Judicial Officer
Case - Appellate Court Order	82-CR-14-225	State of Minnesota vs Jerryl William Bobo	Crim/Traf Mandatory		IntegrationAdmin, IntegrationAdmin		02/11/2015 03:26 PM	

Washington, Stillwater: 1

Appendix 9 – Event Listing Report for Criminal Filings in EFS

Event Listing

STATE OF MINNESOTA

Entered Range: 03/04/2015 to 03/04/2015 Time Range: 7:30 AM to 10:29 AM Case Types: CNVDWK, CNVFFD, CNVDAF, CNVSPD, CNVGFD, CNVNMM, VIB, CNVMMP, TRF, CNV
 Event Types: RPT, ACO, ACCDRGCRT, ACCDWICRT...

Washington County; Washington, Cottage Grove; Washington, Stillwater

[Washington, Stillwater](#)

Event Type	Case #	Style	Case Type	Case Subtype	Entered By	Event Status Event Status Date	Date/Time Entered	Judicial Officer
# 13 Case - Presentence Investigation Report	82-CR-13-5129	State of Minnesota vs GRANT EDWARD SCHELL	Crim/Traf Mandatory		User, File and Server		03/04/2015 10:12 AM	
Copies sent to the pros and defendant **Email sent to Judge's team**								
# 24 Case - Warrant Request	82-CR-14-1521	State of Minnesota vs JASON EARL BUBB	Crim/Traf Mandatory		User, File and Server		03/04/2015 09:34 AM	
Warrant Request - CR Violation								
# 22 Case - Discovery Disclosure	82-CR-14-3706	State of Minnesota vs NORA CHRISTINE SALDANA	Crim/Traf Mandatory		User, File and Server		03/04/2015 08:56 AM	
Prosecution Disclosure Pursuant to Rule 9.01								
# 23 Case - Discovery Disclosure	82-CR-14-3706	State of Minnesota vs NORA CHRISTINE SALDANA	Crim/Traf Mandatory		User, File and Server		03/04/2015 08:56 AM	
Descriptive List								
# 28 Case - Discovery Disclosure	82-CR-14-4156	State of Minnesota vs TONYA MARIE HAMPTON	Crim/Traf Mandatory		User, File and Server		03/04/2015 09:34 AM	
Prosecution Disclosure Upon Defense Counsel Request Pursuant to Rule 9.01, Subd. 1								
# 29 Case - Discovery Disclosure	82-CR-14-4156	State of Minnesota vs TONYA MARIE HAMPTON	Crim/Traf Mandatory		User, File and Server		03/04/2015 09:34 AM	

Descriptive List of Items Disclosed to Defendant

Event Listing

STATE OF MINNESOTA

Entered Range: 03/04/2015 to 03/04/2015 Time Range: 7:30 AM to 10:29 AM Case Types: CNVDWK, CNVFFD, CNVDAF, CNVSPD, CNVGFD, CNVNMM, VIB, CNVMMP, TRF, CNV
 Event Types: RPT, ACO, ACCDRGCRT, ACCDWICRT...

Washington County; Washington, Cottage Grove; Washington, Stillwater

[Washington, Stillwater Continued...](#)

Event Type	Case #	Style	Case Type	Case Subtype	Entered By	Event Status Event Status Date	Date/Time Entered	Judicial Officer
# 25 Case - Discovery Disclosure	82-CR-14-4402	State of Minnesota vs SAMANTHA REGINA ROSS-BLUME	Crim/Traf Mandatory		User, File and Server		03/04/2015 08:55 AM	
Prosecution Disclosure Pursuant to Rule 9.01								
# 26 Case - Discovery Disclosure	82-CR-14-4402	State of Minnesota vs SAMANTHA REGINA ROSS-BLUME	Crim/Traf Mandatory		User, File and Server		03/04/2015 08:55 AM	
Descriptive List								
# 35 Case - Warrant Request	82-CR-14-4772	State of Minnesota vs ANTHONY ALLEN FOKKEN	Crim/Traf Mandatory		User, File and Server		03/04/2015 09:34 AM	
Warrant Request - CR violation								
# 11 Case - Correspondence	82-CR-15-87	State of Minnesota vs David Patrick Curran	Crim/Traf Mandatory		User, File and Server		03/04/2015 08:57 AM	
Letter to Opposing Counsel								
# 25 Case - Warrant Request	82-CR-15-331	State of Minnesota vs MICHAEL PAUL GALE	Crim/Traf Mandatory		User, File and Server		03/04/2015 09:34 AM	
Warrant Request - CR Violation								
# 5 Case - Certificate of Representation	82-CR-15-425	State of Minnesota vs Steven Christopher Cerecedes	Crim/Traf Mandatory		User, File and Server		03/04/2015 08:08 AM	

Certificate of Representation

Washington, Stillwater: 12

Appendix 10 – Summary of 2014 Complete Job Time Standards

WASHINGTON COUNTY JOB TIME STANDARDS SUMMARY 2014**

Court Scheduling		FTE COUNT
Total Actual FTE's		10.50
FTE Needed		9.92
TOTAL FTE (deficit)/surplus		0.58

5.52%

Probate		FTE COUNT
Total Actual FTE's		1.80
FTE Needed		1.11
TOTAL staff (deficit)/surplus		0.69

38.33%

Criminal		FTE COUNT
Total Actual FTE's		9.00
FTE Needed		7.83
TOTAL staff (deficit)/surplus		1.17

13.00%

Hearing Officer		FTE COUNT
Total Actual FTE's		2.00
FTE Needed		1.95
TOTAL FTE (deficit)/surplus		0.05

2.50%

Juvenile		FTE COUNT
Total Actual FTE's		3.00
FTE Needed		2.72
TOTAL staff (deficit)/surplus		0.28

9.33%

Jury		FTE COUNT
Total Actual FTE's		0.50
FTE Needed		0.50
TOTAL FTE (deficit)/surplus		0.00

0.00%

Civil		FTE COUNT
Total Actual FTE's		4.00
FTE Needed		3.92
TOTAL staff (deficit)/surplus		0.08

2.00%

Financial		FTE COUNT
Total Actual FTE's		3.00
FTE Needed		2.62
TOTAL staff (deficit)/surplus		0.38

12.67%

Court Records & Administrative Services		FTE COUNT
Total Actual FTE's		3.00
FTE Needed		3.08
TOTAL staff (deficit)/surplus		(0.08)

-2.67%

Family		FTE COUNT
Total Actual FTE's		4.00
FTE Needed		3.91
TOTAL staff (deficit)/surplus		0.09

2.25%

** Not including record retention or exhibit management

Total		FTE COUNT
Total Actual FTE's		40.800
FTE Needed		37.560
TOTAL FTE (deficit)/surplus		3.240

7.94%