Court Technology: Providing Better Access, Greater Convenience, and Improved Information

The Idaho Judicial Branch has set forth a solid vision to improve technology services for Idaho's courts -- focusing on better access, greater convenience, increased efficiencies and improved information. This past year served as a foundational period of preparing for this transformation of technology throughout our courts.

The Idaho Courts Embrace a New IT Strategic Plan

The Idaho Supreme Court and the Court Technology Committee adopted a new IT Strategic Plan, calling for improved access to court data for internal and external stakeholders, enhanced integrations with the Court's justice partners, and maximized efficiency and effectiveness of court business processes. In an effort to fulfill these strategic imperatives for Idaho's Courts, the Court Technology Committee initiated several technology projects to be completed over the next five years. These projects include:

- Modernizing the case management systems for its trial courts and appellate courts
- Transitioning to electronic filing of all court records
- Expanding the use of videoconferencing, and
- Leveraging a statewide network infrastructure in partnership with other branches of government.

The Idaho Judicial Branch, members of the Idaho State Bar, justice partners of the Court, and the general public will all benefit immeasurably by updating the Court's computerized case management systems, implementing electronic filing and embracing video conferencing. The new judicial technology applications and infrastructure will provide cost savings to the taxpayers, optimize the use of court personnel, free up limited physical space from paper records in county courthouses and storage facilities, and improve the Court's ability to service justice throughout the state.

Modernizing Idaho's Court Case Management System

A core component of the Court's strategic plan is the replacement of its aging computerized court case management systems with a proven, modern web-based system complete with electronic filing capabilities over the next three years. To facilitate this transition, the Court conducted a national Request for Proposal to identify and select a new case management solution for the replacement of the Idaho Statewide Trial Court Automated Records System (ISTARS). As a result of this comprehensive evaluation process, the Court entered into a strategic partnership with Tyler Technologies, a proven vendor with 10 other statewide implementations, to transition to a new court case management solution for Idaho's Courts.

Over the next three years, courts will be equipped with improved statewide capabilities for case management, financial management, electronic document management, jury management, electronic payments, public portal access, supervision for problem-solving courts and misdemeanor probation officers, and judicial workbench tools for judges. This project is underway with involvement from multiple stakeholders including judges, elected clerks, deputy court clerks, attorneys, probation officers, sheriffs, and other judicial partners.

On-Line Payments to the Courts

The final roll-out of "Court Pay" was accomplished in early 2013, finishing a multiple year deployment of on-line payment services for all 44 counties. Individuals across the state can now enter a plea and pay on-line for infractions and payable misdemeanors, post bonds for misdemeanor and felony defendants, and make on-line payments for fines, fees and restitution for previously assessed dollar amounts on all adult charges in a criminal case.

Enabling Enhanced Access and Productivity for Judges

In an effort to provide maximum flexibility to access court information and conduct work while travelling between districts or working remotely, over 100 laptops were distributed to judges who needed such mobility. This initial distribution of laptops enables judges to conduct work from any location and will enable them to access warrants, court orders, court documents and calendars as the Idaho Courts move to the new case management system.

Statewide Data Repository Enhancements

The Idaho Supreme Court Data Repository provides around-the-clock access to court information statewide. Previously, the information on the repository was only current for the previous day. Starting in 2013, all information posted on the data repository is now updated hourly to provide more timely information regarding warrants, no contact orders, and other court information used by other governmental agencies and public users.

Expanded Court-Related Information for Transportation

The Idaho Supreme Court expanded the electronic reporting of convictions (by statute), driver's license suspensions, and payment/reinstatements for infraction citation to the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD). This improvement ensures ITD has current and accurate information at all times regarding court actions related to Idaho drivers.

Wireless Capabilities for Idaho Supreme Court and Court of Appeals

The Idaho Supreme Court and Court of Appeals courtroom and offices were equipped with guest and employee access to wireless networks. This wireless network facilitates enhanced access to information throughout the Idaho Supreme Court building. As a courtesy to visiting legal counsel, parties presenting to or working from the Idaho Supreme Court now have on-line access on their laptops, phones or other mobile devices in order to access resources on the Internet, manage e-mail, access document and connect to their offices.

Expanded Infrastructure for Future Court Technology Needs

Throughout 2013, many enhancements were made to the Court's technology infrastructure to support the Judiciary's five-year strategic plan. These enhancements were designed to meet the future needs of the courts and ensure the reliability and availability of the Court's information and applications. The principal enhancements focused on expanding the core network and server infrastructure to the Court's primary co-location facility, transitioning services from the Idaho Supreme Court building to this "fit for use" data center facility. By transitioning all core services to this facility, the Courts are now supported with redundant power, air conditioning and security services, to include around-the-clock monitoring of critical systems.

Idaho Supreme Court
451 W. State Street / P.O. Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720-0101 // www.isc.idaho.gov

Patricia Tobias
Administrative Director of the Courts
ptobias@idcourts.net // 208-334-2246