



Report to Governor
C.L. "Butch" Otter
and the 1st Regular
Session of the 63rd
Idaho Legislature

Court Technology

Improved Access, Enhanced Data Sharing, and Maximized Efficiency

In the first year of a five-year plan, the Idaho Judicial Branch has officially launched into its most significant transformation for all court records and business practices. The plan serves as a starting point toward long-term refined technology services for Idaho's courts by focusing on improved access to court records, greater convenience for court users, better information exchanges with judicial partners, and significant efficiency improvements for court personnel. To accomplish these goals, the Idaho Judicial Branch has set forth to:

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

STATE-OF-THE-ART COURT CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND ELECTRONIC FILING

The Idaho Supreme Court has established a Court Technology Committee and a Design and Implementation Team to modernize the Court's case management system. In partnership with Tyler Technologies, these groups have been hard at work preparing to replace Idaho's current aging system – the Idaho Statewide Trial Court Automated Records System (ISTARS). The Court has procured and begun implementing the new case management system, Odyssey, a proven solution used to operate courts across the country for over 35 percent of the United States population.

The Design and Implementation Team has been preparing for the first go-live event in the pilot county, Twin Falls, in the spring of 2015. Step one has been to configure the new software, which will transition from 44 separate installations of ISTARS to a single, statewide installation of Odyssey across the entire Judiciary. Moving to this shared platform will allow the Idaho Judicial Branch to dramatically improve data quality, information sharing and incorporate consistent practices and forms across all of our courts.

The team, including judges and court personnel from across the state, has also been working with Tyler Technologies to establish and test the data conversion process from ISTARS to Odyssey to ensure historical court information is readily moved over as each court transitions in the next three years.

The project team has also been diligently working to establish and enhance data exchanges with judicial partners to provide a fully integrated justice system for Idaho's citizens. Efforts have begun to preserve and improve on existing data exchanges with the Idaho State Police, the Idaho Transportation Department, the Department of Juvenile Corrections, the Department of Fish and Game, the Idaho State Tax Commission and other agencies.

In addition, the Court Technology Committee is leading the effort to transition the Courts to a fully electronic court record, which will include the use of electronic judicial workbench tools for judges, electronic filing for attorneys and self-represented litigants,

Idaho Supreme Court
451 W. State St.
PO Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720

P: (208) 334-2246
F: (208) 947-7590
www.isc.idaho.gov



and enhanced web-based portal access to the public. These features of the Odyssey portfolio will enable Idaho's courts to optimize the use of court personnel and free up limited physical space from paper records in county courthouses and storage facilities, while also significantly enhancing service to court users across the state. The Committee has begun the process of assessing and determining the policy and practice issues to facilitate this transition to an electronic court record.

STATEWIDE BUSINESS PRACTICES

Uniform business practices and forms will enable our courts to maximize efficiencies and fully leverage the capabilities of this new system. These new business practices will ensure consistency in practice for court users and will provide greater automation in workflow and improved data and reporting. By adopting these new business practices, traveling judges will be able to consistently operate in any courthouse across the state, attorneys will be able to expect common electronic filing procedures in each district, and the quality and access to statewide court data will be greatly enhanced through uniform court forms and data fields. To facilitate this transition, key stakeholder workgroups, including district judges, magistrate judges and court clerks, have been working to define and establish common business processes and associated court forms. As these standardized processes and forms are defined by the stakeholder groups, the project team has been configuring Odyssey to accurately reflect the statewide business processes.

EXPANDED INFRASTRUCTURE FOR FUTURE COURT TECHNOLOGY NEEDS

Necessary enhancements to the Court's technology infrastructure are in progress to support the transition to a statewide case management system. Robust, redundant servers and storage have been procured and installed in the Court's primary co-location facility to operate the new system. Additionally, in partnership with Executive Branch agencies, the project team has begun to install greater network capacity with redundant connections to the courts that will be deploying Odyssey in the next year. This network initiative will continue over the next twenty-four months to all of Idaho's courts, ensuring each facility is equipped with the necessary network infrastructure to support their operational needs.

STATUS OF THE COURT TECHNOLOGY FUND

The Legislature has long supported a statewide approach to court technology, beginning with appropriations in FY1989, the creation of the Court Technology Fund (I.C. § 1-1623) in 1997, a subsequent increase to the Fund in FY2006, and continuing with the funding provided in 2014. Pursuant to Idaho Code § 1-1623, the Supreme Court is required to provide an annual report on the following aspects of court technology and the Court Technology Fund:

- (1) **Status of the Fund:** To support this generational shift in the technology for the benefit of Idaho court users, HB 509 was passed in 2014 to increase revenues to the Fund through an increase in civil filing fees. Revenue increases only began to accrue in August, 2014, and fluctuated in the first four months due to variables which are beyond the Court's control (i.e. the number of case filings). The Court continues to review the revenues monthly.
- (2) **Maintenance, replacement and enhancement of technology:** The Court continues to use the Fund to maintain the existing ISTARs software and will do so until all counties are converted to Odyssey. The majority of the work in FY14 has been devoted to securing networks throughout Idaho on which to deploy Odyssey; preparing to and converting data from the legacy system to Odyssey; configuring the new software to include Idaho specific laws and information; working with justice partners to create integrations through which to share data with other entities; and reviewing and approving software development necessary to enable Odyssey to meet Idaho practices and processes.
- (3) **Manner in which court technology has advanced the courts in Idaho:** Because Odyssey has not yet been deployed in Idaho, it's difficult to report on any improvements to the timely resolution of cases, improved access to the courts, or enhanced efficiency of judicial resources. However, we know from past experience that technology has enabled the courts to better process and track court filings, to make better use of a judges' time, to reach more citizens who need access to Idaho courts and to reduce the travel for judges hearing out-of-county cases. In addition, other state courts that have implemented Odyssey report significant cost and time savings.

Assuming the Court Technology Fund revenues and "one-time appropriations" meet the original projections, the Judiciary remains confident that it can replace its 25+ year-old statewide computerized case management system with a modern web-based case management system and necessary infrastructure.