



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

As the Third Branch of Government, we provide access to justice through the timely, fair, and impartial resolution of cases.

Idaho's Judiciary Looks to the Future

There are two reasons the Supreme Court, with the assistance of the Governor and Legislature, must replace its computerized case management system. The first is the Court's aging statewide computerized case management system, Idaho Statewide Trial Court Automated System (ISTARS), has been declared by its vendor to be at "end of life." The software which supports ISTARS is based upon outdated programming code and software licenses that are becoming non-renewable. The second reason is to meet the Court's Constitutional mandate to "resolve court cases without delay," a modern computer system to meet today's business environment is a must. There have been significant advances in technology which provide tremendous efficiencies the current system cannot deliver.

Recognizing the inevitable end of the existing system, and the need for significant "due diligence" relating to an effort of this magnitude, the Supreme Court established a Court Technology Committee, which is chaired by the Chief Justice and includes judges, clerks, attorneys, and administrators. With the assistance of three nationally recognized court technology experts and a Design and Implementation Committee, the Court undertook a careful analysis of the available options and concluded that a move to a modern, web-based case management system would best serve Idahoans for the next generation. Through an extensive RFP process, developed case management software known as Odyssey by Tyler Technologies has been selected as the most cost effective system. Tyler is a proven software company with 10 statewide court implementations and over 500 county court implementations across the country.

Dedicated to Providing Open and Accessible Courts

Further recognizing that the Courts must remain open and functional between "now and then", the replacement of the Court's existing computer system requires a methodical and deliberate transition over time. The Committee has worked diligently to develop a deployment or "go live" schedule, starting first with a pilot county (Twin Falls), then to the state's largest county (Ada), followed by three regional deployments covering the remaining counties of the state. The entire "go live" deployment is projected to take 3 years.



Both costs and cost savings of this project have been fully analyzed. Tyler was not only the most cost effective system, it is the only fully developed system, and has the lowest on-going maintenance costs. Tyler software also includes an important "ever-green" feature, which means all software updates into the future are provided free of additional cost and can be downloaded automatically. The Idaho Judiciary has a history of keeping a computer system for a generation and Odyssey will continue the trend by serving the needs of Idaho for years to come.

Idaho competes with other states for business development and a modern efficient court system supports a robust economic development environment by ensuring that all cases are resolved fairly, timely, and efficiently. This modern 24/7 web-based case management system will benefit every aspect of private commerce and public business in Idaho by taking advantage of significant advances in technology generally, and in court technology specifically. Ultimately, across the board cost savings will be achieved, which is good public policy.

The Legislature has long supported a statewide approach to court technology, dating back to the first appropriations in FY1989, followed by the creation of the Technology Fund (I.C. § 1-1623) in 1997, and the subsequent increase to the fund in FY2006. With the continued assistance of the Governor and the Legislature, the time to begin the transition is now. The Supreme Court submits a 5 year business plan and proposes funding alternatives to accomplish the necessary

***Report to Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter
and the 2nd Regular Session of the 62nd Idaho Legislature***

replacement and installation. Once the system is fully implemented, there will be an opportunity for revenues to offset some of the ongoing annual costs.

One-time costs over 5 years are \$21.6 million which includes:

- \$11.4 million for the new case management software, the necessary infrastructure, and new electronic court records equipment;
- \$5.6 million to replace courthouse computers, printers, and outdated digital recording software; and
- \$4.6 million to provide video conferencing to all courthouses.

On-going annual costs of \$5.9 million, includes:

- electronic filing and service for all parties; and
- maintenance and support, telecommunications fees, necessary technical personnel, and software subscription costs.

Recognizing the various challenges and opportunities, the Court has devised a variety of funding alternatives to accomplish the 5 year technology strategic plan. Options identified to-date include seeking one-time funding in FY15, along with either a \$30 or graduated increase in the Court Technology Fee, or alternatively a \$10-12 increase in the Court Technology Fee and a redirection of the filing fees already being collected by the Courts and deposited into the State's General Fund. Whether one of these identified options or some other alternative is crafted, the Court looks forward to working with the Governor and the Legislature to secure the right approach to provide the necessary funding to accomplish the strategic plan.

This proven technology, which is in everyday use in many different courts across America, is made up of multiple components to be fully implemented in Idaho over the 5 year transition period, and includes the following:

Case Management System

- Replaces the existing "end of life" ISTARs computerized case management system with a new computerized system
- Provides a modern solution for the almost ½ million court cases filed annually in Idaho's 44 counties and appellate courts
- Includes the financial accounting component which tracks the \$50 million dollars a year in court generated obligations collected and disbursed to state and local entities
- Provides necessary technical personnel to support project coordination, data integrations, report form creation, portal development, application management, security, database and help-desk support
- Provides necessary hands-on, regional based training before "go live" dates for court clerks, judges, problem solving court coordinators, misdemeanor probation officers, and other court personnel

E-Filing and E-Service

- Enables parties to submit electronic documents to Idaho's Courts, 24/7/365 from anywhere
- Enables parties, the public, and commercial enterprises to view or retrieve court case filings via the Internet
- Allows filing parties to digitally serve others and eliminate paper service costs, including time and mailing costs
- Automatically files the document into the electronic court case record

Electronic Court Record Systems

- Provides essential systems and devices to judges, clerks and other court staff to gain the maximum benefit of the new technology
- Enables public access to electronic court records for those without Internet access by using a courthouse kiosk
- Provides wireless network capability to court personnel and attorneys



- Will allow the many judges in Idaho who travel to other counties to hear cases, to access and transport all of the necessary court files simply by using their laptop or tablet computer
- Allows multiple persons to access and work on the same court record at the same time from different locations

Video-Conferencing

- Delivers essential video backbone infrastructure and courtroom video systems, equipping each courthouse with one video conferencing system and each district with two additional full capability systems
- Provides the opportunity for significant cost savings in judge travel, prisoner transport and use of experts, as well as significant efficiencies and security
- Includes the technical personnel required for design, architecture, support and monitoring of this new system

New Computers and Printers

- Replaces existing courtroom and clerk office computers and printers which are coming off of warranty and will be over 5 years old
- Replaces outdated digital recording software
- Replaces existing courthouse data servers used to manage and store court audio recordings
- Provides a consolidated, enterprise, electronic mail service for all courts to enhance communication and calendaring
- Offers the opportunity for cloud-based applications (e.g. Word, Excel, PowerPoint, SharePoint) for all court users statewide

Other Important Features of the Odyssey System

- E-payments of court ordered financial obligations, including victim's restitution
- A jury management module
- An appellate court case management system
- A prosecutor case tracking system
- A public defender case tracking system
- A problem-solving court supervision module

Cost Savings Will Be Achieved

Once implemented, the Odyssey applications and infrastructure will provide real and significant time and cost savings to taxpayers, the public, lawyers, litigants, counties and cities, and the numerous different court records consumers, whether they be private or commercial enterprises such as banks and credit unions.

How these time and dollar savings will be achieved include at a minimum the following:

- provide 24/7/365 e-filing and retrieval of court case documents;
- optimize the time and use of existing court personnel;
- minimize the need for additional personnel as caseloads increase;
- decrease the opportunities for human error in processing the tens of thousands of transactions accomplished annually;
- free up significant quantities of limited physical space from paper records in county courthouses and storage facilities;
- enhance access to court data and reporting functionality;
- provide a seamless transition of court records from the trial courts through to the appellate courts;



- increase the Court's ability to exchange information with law enforcement, adult and juvenile corrections, probation, jails, and executive branch agencies which include Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Idaho Department of Correction, Department of Transportation, Pardons and Parole, Idaho State Police, Idaho Fish and Game, Department of Education, and Juvenile Corrections; and
- improve the Court's ability to deliver justice timely throughout the state, particularly the more rural counties.

By providing web-based capability to 24/7 filing, service and access to Court records, the Courts' Constitutional mandate to "be open to every person" will be substantially increased and will contribute to the public's trust and confidence by enhancing transparency and accountability. Interested persons with Internet access will have quick and easy entry to case filings and the ability to track case processing without the need to come to the courthouse. As a measure of how important this is, consider that Idaho's current case filings are about ½ million cases a year, the Court's repository gets about 200,000 hits per day, and the Court collects and disperses about \$50 million dollars a year in court ordered obligations. These numbers clearly demonstrate that the goals of access, transparency and accountability have important meaning to Idaho's citizens and the public.

Additional benefits to modernization of Court Technology and well-functioning courts include elimination of unnecessary delay in criminal case processing. When Courts are able to process criminal cases quickly, it saves taxpayers money by reducing the time that defendants spend in jail awaiting trial. Not funding technology costs taxpayers money by increasing delay.

Commerce and Businesses, whether they are large, small, new or old, benefit greatly from a smooth functioning, reliable and stable court system. Modern technology helps the courts achieve those goals and many more. When businesses are looking to Idaho as a potential home, the strength and predictability of the State's court system is often cited as one of the important considerations in the decision making process.

Our Courts are the final line of protection for individual rights. They provide access to justice, help ensure the safety of our communities and they protect our most basic Constitutional rights. At the end of the day, it is not just the sum of the component parts of the Court's strategic technology plan that make the difference. Ordinary court users, citizens, taxpayers and businesses have a vital and vested interest in a smooth functioning, modern day, and efficient court system, and the value of the total system exceeds the sum of the parts.

For further information, contact Patricia Tobias (ptobias@idcourts.net)
or Senior Judge Barry Wood (bwood@idcourts.net) or call 208-334-2246

