Unified Court Technology Current Projects and the Need for a Governance Structure

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Judge Superior Court

Judicial Branch IT Governance Structure

Georgia Courts Automation Commission was unfunded roughly two years ago.

There is no formal governance structure now in place for Judicial Branch IT coordination.

Georgia's Trial Courts

a. 159 Superior Courts

b. 70 State Courts

c. 159 Juvenile Courts

d. 159 Probate Courts

Georgia's Trial Courts Cont.

e. 159 Magistrate Courts

f. 381 Municipal Courts (give or take)

g. 2 Civil Courts

h. 4 Recorders Courts

Who Currently Pays For The case management systems for the courts?

County commissions and cities.
Typical cost:
$3,500 PER USER for case management software alone
[Source: Jim McMillan of the National Center for State Courts]

The Real Costs

- Day to day data entry in the trial courts
- Storage
- Local hardware
- Local communications capacity (bandwidth)

Current Projects Overview

- Notwithstanding the lack any organized structure, there are projects underway.

- Some use AOC.

- Others are done by Judicial Branch volunteers.

AOC Child Support E-filing project

- Operational in 104 superior courts and 40 DCSS offices

- 4,051 new cases processed in the month of July, 2014

- Joint project with Child Support Services Agency

- Currently funded by federal grants

AOC Express Citation Delivery Service with Georgia State Patrol

439,445 citations delivered to AOC electronically by GSP through January 2014

72 courts receive citations electronically from AOC daily

Death Penalty Case Scanning Project

- Became operational last month

- Provides online access to court documents filed in Unified Appeal cases for the Attorney General's staff attorneys, the defendant's attorneys and the habeas judges to Butts County Superior Court.

Department of Corrections Risk Assessment Project

- Joint effort of DOC and volunteer Superior Court Judges

- Provide an online risk assessment tool for superior court judges

Department of Corrections Risk Assessment Project Continued

- Uses existing Corrections databases to assist judges in sentencing decisions

- Accessible online via Web

- Became available August 1, 2014 for five pilot courts

Department of Corrections Electronic Sentences Forms

- Transmits sentencing information electronically from superior courts to the Department SCRIBE database via XML formatted sentence documents

- Programming is being done by the Department

Workload Assessment Committee/AOC Automated Case Count program

- Replace the State and Superior Court Information System (SSCIS) used for the civil case count

- Include criminal cases which were not originally included in the SSCIS

- Add case dispositions and "end-pending" counts

Civil E-filing Committee of the Judicial Council

- E-filing rules submitted to the Council of Superior Court Judges last month

- Portal recommendation not funding by the General Assembly

- ECF: The Judicial Council has adopted the ECF standard.

Magistrate Court Forms Wizard

- This system provides a simple step-by-step online tool to help self represented litigants prepare court documents for common types of magistrate court matters.

- It could pave the way for preparation AND filing and talks are underway to explore an e-filing solution coupled with this form preparation service.

Global Justice XML Data Model (GJXDM)

- National Information Exchange Model (NIEM)

- Georgia AOC has been involved in the creation and implementation of NIEM since its inception as GJXDM and as presented by AOC staff at the NIEM 3.0 launch last year.

GJDXM Continued

Staff from Georgia's AOC have served on (and chaired) the Technical Committee developing this standard - Legal XML. They still work with the NIEM Technical Architecture Committee (NTAC) which specifically documents, implements, and maintains NIEM's technical specifications.

Available Reports on Judicial Branch Technology

- Next Generation Courts Commission (State Bar)

- 2011 SEARCH report on governance

- 2004 Supreme Court Committee on Court Technology

- IT Governance Recommendations

The Need for Planning the Future Technology in the Judicial Branch

While the Executive Branch is moving forward with a highly organized and advanced plan, the Judicial Branch technology continues to languish with no organized structure and no master plan.

The Need for Planning the Future Technology in the Judicial Branch

GTA Georgia Enterprise IT Strategic Plan 2020

    i.   http://gta.georgia.gov/egap/sites/gta.georgia.gov.egap/files/related_files/site_page/High%20Ressolution%20Single%2005022014%20Final.pdf

The Need for a Governance Structure and a Plan

- There are many technology projects that Georgia should undertake.
- Examples (to name a few):
  - Full-scale GJXDM project
  - E-Access to court files
  - Integration of the courts and criminal justice agencies
    - A state-wide jail database
    - Adoption of Case Management system standards to harmonize the sharing of criminal justice information
  - Judicial Circuit cooperation (Common or shared case management systems)

Texas E-filing Example

- A single portal with multiple e-filing vendors (the non-monopoly model)
  - Lowers the cost and improves the service by providing a competitive marketplace for e-filing vendors
- http://www.efiletexas.gov/