

California Courts News

Title CCMS Judicial Council Site Visit

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The Judicial Council is responsible for overseeing the statewide administration of justice. So on this day a council delegation, including Chief Justice Ronald George, got a firsthand progress report on the California Court Case Management System – called CCMS.

Sheila Calabro, Regional Dir, CCMS Executive Sponsor:

“We really just want an opportunity to show you what we’ve been working on, why we think it’s important and why you have been supporting it; now we want you to see something tangible, something that will work in your courts and benefit the people that we serve.”

When CCMS is fully deployed statewide, all 58 courts will be able to share critical information seamlessly. They’ll manage all cases more effectively and economically, improve public safety, and provide greater convenience and access to justice for court users.

Paul Robinson, Deloitte Consulting:

“The impact will be absolutely phenomenal and I think you’ll get a sense of that today.”

Deloitte Consulting has been working with the California courts for 7 years developing a case management system, which is sorely needed.

Hon. Ronald M. George, Chief Justice of Calif.

“We really have to get out of the electronic tower of Babel that we have now with some dozens and dozens of individual systems that cannot communicate with each other and are not compatible with each other.”

But our state is so massive and our court needs so complex – there is simply no suitable software now available off the shelf.

Alan Carlson, Orange CEO:

“It’s just not there yet. The vendors are not willing to put in the kind of money you have to put in to develop this sophisticated a system.”

Right now there are 222 people from 29 courts actively involved in building the system, alongside 130 Administrative Office of the Courts employees, and 160 justice partners.

Margie Borjon-Miller, AOC Assistant Division Director:

“We really have the state covered from north at Siskiyou down to Imperial County and from west to east with San Francisco and Inyo. So we are really reaching out to everybody as well as managing the project on a statewide level.”

The task has been huge – unlike any other in the world – getting more and more ambitious as courts realized additional functions that CCMS could perform. The design blueprint for the software is now more than 18,000 pages long, responding to more than 4,600

requirements; that is, 4,600 different things that CCMS will have to do – some big, some small – but all of them important.

Some elements of CCMS are already up and running in San Joaquin, Ventura, Sacramento, San Diego, and Orange.

Hon. Kim Dunning, Orange PJ:

“These 5 courts represent 25% of the civil, including small claims, the probate and mental health filings statewide. So we are not some little boutique type operation. We are doing a sizable chunk of the state’s work.”

Alan Carlson, Orange CEO:

“We have 343 people, staff people, using it every day, involving 891 hearings per day running through the system, and 3,660 documents every day are run through this system just in Orange County. We use it. We use it every day, we use it all day, we would die without it.”

Granted, it does cost them a bit more than their old system.

Kim Dunning, Orange PJ

“When you talk about how much this costs, you also have to factor in what it allows you to do that we could never do. We all need space in courthouses. We are able to capture space because we are not keeping paper files. We don’t lose documents, we don’t have misfiled documents, a file is always at anybody’s fingertips.”

In fact, any number of people can be looking at the same case at the same time - including the judges.

Hon. Robert Moss, Orange Court Technology Committee Chair:

“So we can see the files, see the pleadings, see the rulings that have been made, not just the court but also the public can access the documents over the internet, electronically.”

Now they’re building on the successes of these incremental steps, and learning from mistakes.

Have different stages of development always worked perfectly? Of course not!

Alan Carlson, Orange CEO

“When you do stuff that big it doesn’t always work the first time, it’s not always easy. If it worked perfectly I’d say somebody’s hiding something.”

Court clerks offered an example of how refinements are made while the software is being used.

Edward Ojeda, Orange Technology Project Manager:

“We took those concepts and said OK let’s touch on large case participants and let’s try to make it faster and easier for us in the system.”

And a time analysis in probate administration revealed significant efficiencies.

Hon. Ming Chin, California Supreme Court Associate Justice:

"They also told me that they could now do in 2 hours what previously took them all day."

Back at the Deloitte facility in Santa Ana, they're finishing up development of the software.

Paul Robinson, Deloitte Consulting

"There are some tipping points in large programs like this, inflection points, this is one of them because we are that close; we are almost there."

They're fixing defects, making improvements, and testing to confirm that every step that's been developed delivers the correct result. The team includes folks from the courts. Arnold Lara's in charge of Ventura's criminal database.

Arnold Lara, Ventura Superior Court:

"We're testing against those scripts to make sure that everything we said it should do it is doing."

The final phase, product acceptance testing, is scheduled for 5 months in early 2010. Then San Diego, San Luis Obispo, and Ventura are due to be the first adopters.

Hon. Ming Chin, California Supreme Court Associate Justice:

"I think we're almost there; but we have to stay the course."

Kevin Kelly, Deloitte CCMS Project Director:

"We are 75% completed with the development and testing of this piece of software that will be CCMS."

Hon. Terry Friedman, L.A. Superior Court

"If we turn away now and say we can't afford it, we've got to shut it down, we're going to look back on this as one of the most mistaken decisions that could possibly have been made. "This system gives us the opportunity to step up and provide greater service to the public."

When funding is available, CCMS will link all 58 courts in a consistent and standardized case management system that's efficient and transparent.

I'm Leanne Kozak reporting from Santa Ana for California Courts News.

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