

# CHAPTER 12

## THE DIGITAL COURT

### Chapter Outline

#### VOLUME 1, CHAPTER 12

- § 12.1 Technology and the Courts
- § 12.2 Integrated Court Databases
- § 12.3 The Tech-Friendly Courtroom
- § 12.4 E-Filing
- § 12.5 Remote Working



### Chapter 12 Introduction

#### WHERE TO BEGIN

Attorneys have, as a group, tended to resist new technologies. Any secretary or paralegal in the mid to late 1990s can attest to this fact: long past the point when the rest of the country was utilizing *Windows*-based operating systems, many law firms continued to use *MS-DOS*, an operating system requiring the knowledge of specific commands and short-cuts, as opposed to the graphical user interface (GUI) used by *Windows* (and other operating systems).

It should come as no surprise, then, that courts (which are run by judges who are themselves attorneys) have also been reluctant to embrace new technologies. However, this reluctance to utilize emerging technologies tends to

melt away once a judge or court administrator sees first-hand how much more effectively presentations can be demonstrated in court, and how much more efficiently court administration is made by computers, enhanced display systems, and the Internet.

Fast-forward to the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. There are precious few things one can point to as being positive during that period, but from a technological standpoint perhaps the judicial system's long overdue embrace of online technology can be appreciated. Not only will this acceptance make for a more dynamic and efficient legal system in the future, it likely saved jobs and lives by allowing many to work remotely during a dangerous time.

IN THIS CHAPTER . . .

**TECHNOLOGY IN THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM**

**COURTROOM TECH TOOLS**

**E-FILING**

## § 12.1

**Technology and the Court***Long Overdue***INTRODUCTION**

The term “wired court” started to be used in the early 2000s and meant different things to different people. However, when a court describes itself as being “wired,” it usually means the following:

- *Integrated Databases*
- *Tech-friendly Courtrooms*
- *Electronic Filing of Court Documents*

If there is a challenge for the courts, and for attorneys and paralegals, it is that the technologies utilized are by no means universal or consistent. It is still very possible that the courtroom for one judge may provide for large video-demonstration software and devices while, just down the hall, another does not. More likely is the possibility that an attorney preparing a demonstration in a county court using one form of software may find him or herself using a totally different software program for another court. Thus, flexibility is crucial. If your attorney is going to trial, find out what technologies (both hardware and software) are provided by the court, and prepare according to those limitations.

The phrase “wired court” is already itself outdated. It is not enough to simply be “wired.” As we will see, the truly “wired” court today must also be “wireless.”

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There is an advantage to having skills in *PowerPoint*. Most case management software tools have the ability to either embed or import *PowerPoint* presentations within those applications. Consider taking a *PowerPoint* class at your school, or search online. There are many high-quality e-learning tutorials available online, and many are free. In addition to trial presentation tools, litigation-support software packages are being created, blended, and updated constantly. Many of these are now incorporating the ability to present demonstrations at court. Examples of litigation software include *Summation*, *CaseMap*, and *Concordance*.

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If you don't have *Microsoft Office* on your computer (which includes such tools as *Word*, *PowerPoint*, and *Access*, among others), consider this incredible site. It provides software equivalents to *Microsoft Office* at no cost.

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<i>Access</i>	<i>Base</i>