



YORK COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS OFFICE GOES DIGITAL

Its new solution electronically processes over 13,000 case files generated each year, allowing documents to

be scanned in within a day of being received, and consolidating paperwork at file creation, while

creating a central, searchable database.

As a result of the rapid growth of York County, Pennsylvania, over the past few years several county departments had outgrown their paper filing systems. This was most acutely seen in the Clerk of Courts Office, where over 4 million pages of files were stored offsite.

Paperwork transport among the Courthouse, the prison and off-site storage often led to hearing or booking delays. Using paper files sometimes meant the paperwork necessary to process an inmate in or out of jail wouldn't show up in time, stalling the entire process. The Sheriff's Department needed to store documents so 19 Magisterial District Judges' offices located throughout the County could retrieve Central Booking information. In addition, the County's Children and Youth Services (CYS) department had to manage case files that could span over 21 years. Files also needed to be shared with fiscal staff, oversight managers, the court-

house and after-hours emergency. Internal reviews and oversight of cases were time-consuming and inefficient using paper. Shuffling files to the courthouse for court cases added another layer of duplication and cost. Fiscal managers needed access to files for funding requests, which caused what could be described as "a nightmare of back and forth exchanges."

Today, these issues have been addressed with the help of careful strategic planning that included the rollout of an enterprise content management solution (ECM) called Laserfiche. The ECM solution is used to electronically process over 13,000 case files generated each year and allows documents to be scanned in within a day of being received, consolidating paperwork at file creation, as well as creating a central, searchable database based on the filing structure developed by staff, according to their needs. Integration with the state database

automatically pulls the case number into Laserfiche and creates a predetermined folder structure. The ECM also automatically sorts and files case documents, which minimizes staff training.

EASY REMOTE ACCESS

A computer terminal was installed in the Clerk of Court's Office to provide public access to the stored files stored. The County now uses Laserfiche WebLink to provide remote, password-secure access to 15 million pages of court documents to 400 private attorneys practicing in the area.

IS Department Project Supervisor Mary Jane McCluskey chairs an initiative to develop a countywide continuity of operations plan, of which Laserfiche is a key component. "This is a three-year project that moves far beyond disaster recovery," she says. "We focus not just on technology, but also people, process and location

to identify vulnerability. With departments that only have paper files, like our public defender or mental health department, what happens if they can't get back into their building for months? What happens if the files are gone entirely?"

In the Divorce Masters Office, Laserfiche is used in real-time for court testimony. Before the matter goes to court the Masters review the arguments from both sides in an effort to plot a course for the case in court. What happens in court can deviate from the sworn depositions submitted beforehand. When it does, the Divorce Master calls up the sworn statements stored in system in real-time to see where testimony may have strayed from earlier statements.

SPEEDING THE BOOKING PROCESS

The York County Sheriff's Department uses Laserfiche as the foundation of a time-saving process in Central Booking. Police officers from 15 districts drop off suspects and are quickly back out policing York's communities instead of filling out paperwork. Specialists process and book arrestees using customized e-forms, take digital fingerprints and catalog the detainee's possessions. Automated e-forms save time and paperwork for staff—no more trying to read an officer's handwriting, no more having to drive another five miles to dig up a file when someone who's been released claims they didn't get their cell phone back—because all their information is stored safely in the system.

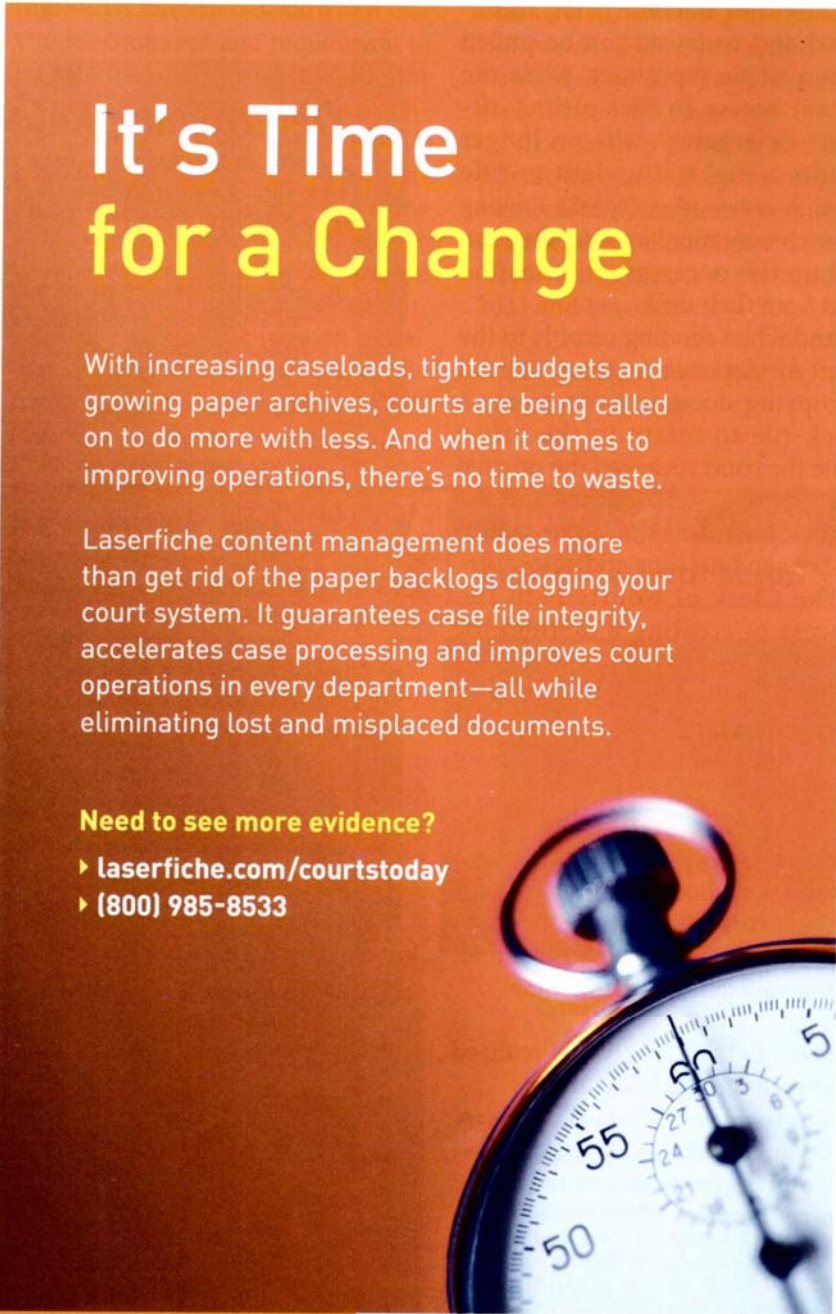
To speed the booking process even more, the County uses Laserfiche tools to enable a unique video arraignment process. With Laserfiche WebLink, arrest histories and outstanding warrants are available to the judge, who appears on a monitor in Central Booking's processing room for a video arraign-

ment to set bail—which means no more unreadable faxes, extra manpower or transportation costs for the five-mile trip to the courthouse.

In the Children and Youth Services (CYS) Department, the ECM solution was integrated with the department's existing ZOC data-

base, which has stored client information for over 20 years. Staff can access documents stored in the system without leaving the database.

Staff has also customized seven batch-folder headings, which "can expand to manage up to 26 kids per family," McCluskey explains. "This

An advertisement for Laserfiche. The background is a solid orange color. In the bottom right corner, there is a close-up image of a silver stopwatch with a white face and black numbers. The text is arranged as follows: a large headline, two paragraphs of text, a call to action, and contact information. The Laserfiche logo is in the bottom left, and the slogan 'Run Smarter' is in the bottom right of the ad area. A vertical copyright notice is on the right edge of the ad area.

It's Time for a Change

With increasing caseloads, tighter budgets and growing paper archives, courts are being called on to do more with less. And when it comes to improving operations, there's no time to waste.

Laserfiche content management does more than get rid of the paper backlogs clogging your court system. It guarantees case file integrity, accelerates case processing and improves court operations in every department—all while eliminating lost and misplaced documents.

Need to see more evidence?

- ▶ laserfiche.com/courtstoday
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may seem excessive, but we actually have one family with 23 kids. We're saving hundreds of pages in overlapping documents—and that's just one family."

The implementation of ECM has proven to be invaluable in daily operations, particularly for the effective management and supervision of caseloads. This means that paper records that needed to be transferred and reviewed can be pulled from a single repository, while the instant access to files means off-hours emergency calls no longer require a night attendant to rifle through caseworkers' desks looking for documentation; instead, they can pull up the necessary information right from their desk.

And when sending records to the Court for dependency cases, instead of copying documents to create a mock-file to retain in the office while the court reviewed the original file, now the file is scanned and the original is sent to the Court, which is a tremendous time and cost saver.

The Clerk of Courts is in the process of creating a method for electronically providing documents to the Magisterial District Judges' offices. Servicing, which was previously done by U.S. mail, is now much faster with ECM.

Additionally, the Clerk of Courts recently purchased two document classification licenses so that multiple sessions of documents can be intermingled and scanned together, saving valuable processing time.

Overall, the County has realized success in the following areas:

- **Case File Management.** York County provides immediate access to over 13,000 case files annually to judges, attorneys and staff. It also is planning to provide direct, real-time access to content stored in Laserfiche—including content

in the Children and Youth Services repository—to judges in their courtrooms.

- **Continuity of Operations.** The system serves as the foundation for the County's continuity of operations plan, which focuses on uniting people, process, location and technology to move beyond disaster recovery.

- **Database Integration.** Integration with the Children and Youth Services Department's existing ZOC database—which has been in use for over 20 years—provides immediate access to scanned documents and electronic content to staff, who do not have to switch programs or leave the database.

Determining Return on Investment

It is difficult to pinpoint how much time it takes for new technology to provide a pay-back. Factors used to determine ROI can include savings in labor hours and reduction of costs associated with risk. Some of the quantifiable benefits derived are:

- *Improved revenue generation for \$9 million collected in costs, fines and restitution annually.*
- *Simultaneous file access to 25+ County departments who need to access criminal court records handled by the York County Court of Common Pleas (managed by the Clerk of Court's Office).*
- *Elimination of the need to continually pull files from the offsite document storage facility located five miles from the Clerk of Court's Office as files can be accessed electronically.*
- *Integration with the Court's state database, which automates folder creation and document sorting and filing, and also minimizes staff training.*
- *Web access to 15 million court documents available to 400 private attorneys.*
- *Electronic submission of Superior and Supreme Court appeals—in planning stages.*
- *Elimination of faxed documents to the county prison, located five miles from the Clerk of Court's Office, alleviated the practices of turning away inmates because paperwork*



hadn't arrived or inmates who couldn't be released because the prison didn't know case disposition.

- *Video arraignment process in Central Booking saves manpower, time spent faxing documents and transportation costs for the trip to the courthouse.*
- *Integration with Children and Youth Services (CYS) Department's ZOC database saves hundreds of pages in overlapping documents for children in the same family and eliminates paper copies made for the fiscal department, the Court and internal reviews.*
- *Instant access to case files for judges, deputies, D.A.s, defense attorneys, probation officers and staff.*
- *Reduction in copying paper case files for sharing between departments.*

- **Front-End Scanning.** Scanning case files upon receipt saves time and provides instant access to the over 25 County departments who need simultaneous access to them. Files are scanned into the system within four hours of receipt.
- **Mainframe Integration.** Integration with the state AOPC (Administrative Office of the Pa. Courts) main database pulls case numbers into the program, where they are used to create a pre-determined folder structure. The system then automatically sorts and files case documents. All staff need to do is create batch header sheets with bar codes, which minimize training.
- **Online Case File Access.** Online case file access is provided to 400 private attorneys practicing in the County as well as local police departments. Online case file access is already available for district attorneys and public defenders within the County system.
- **Video Arraignment Management.** Video cameras, monitors and electronic signature pads posted in the judge's chambers and the county Sheriff's central booking facility have taken arraignments out of the courtroom almost entirely. With Laserfiche WebLink, arrest histories and outstanding warrants are available to the judge in real-time in his chambers so there is no hand copying and delivering of those documents for each arraignment. The judge also appears on a monitor in central booking's processing room for a video arraignment of the prisoner, who no longer

has to be transported.

When the implementation began in the Clerk of Court's Office, staff was threatened with contempt of court charges by a judge who was against front-end scanning. "It was a bit of a gamble on my part," says Clerk of Court Don O'Shell. "It's always gut-check time knowing that the judge has the authority to cite you for contempt and require you to pay a fine, send you to jail—or both!" Fortunately, thanks to a concerted effort to win judges over—including providing hands-on training during lunch breaks—the same judge who initially refused to see the value in Laserfiche ECM is now one of the system's biggest advocates.

McCluskey also chairs an initiative to develop a countywide continuity of operations plan, of which

Laserfiche plays a key part. This three-year plan moves beyond disaster recovery, focusing on people, process and location as well as technology to identify vulnerabilities and ensure that vital County operations continue even in case of disaster.

In the Children and Youth Services Department, the system makes vital information more available to staff, including Megan's Law notices. It also ensures that confidential files are kept secure, in accordance with state law.


The savings in paper and transportation costs have contributed tremendously to their green initiative shrinking their carbon footprint. New initiatives are planned into 2011 and beyond.


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