



HALL COUNTY (GA) CLERK OF COURTS

Case Management Meets Document Management

Located about 50 miles northeast of Atlanta, Hall County, GA, is home to about 150,000 people. At the county seat in Gainesville, four superior court judges and two other state judges depend on the Clerk of Courts Office to track docket activity, complete the necessary information in the CJIS (Criminal Justice Information System) and ensure that files are delivered as needed.

Delivery of these files could sometimes be problematic using a paper-based system. Though the information would be in the CJIS, the courts would have to send a request to the Clerk's Office to have the file itself pulled by one of the file clerks. Then someone would have to be dispatched to retrieve the file once it had been pulled.

"This has created problems in the past, as documents and files have sat for long periods of time buried on someone's desk," notes Dwight Wood, Clerk at Hall Superior and State Courts. "It would never fail that someone else would need the same file, and there would be a mad rush to try to locate it. We knew there must be a better way to organize our filing system and create efficiencies to save time and the efforts of our employees. In our search for a solution, we learned about document management systems, and it sounded just like what we were looking for."

The project was put out for bid and awarded to Southern Imaging Systems, a systems integrator and authorized OnBase solution provider. Developed by Hyland Software, Inc., OnBase is enterprise-class software that combines integrated document management, business process management and records management in a single, web-enabled application. According to Wood, the bid was awarded to Southern Imaging based on its

ability to meet the specifications set forth in the bid, the most important of which were to integrate with CJIS and not create additional labor in getting documents and data into the system.

Case Management Integration Eliminates Redundant Data Entry

Using the OnBase solution, documents received from courts, lawyers, judges and other parties are checked in and entered into the CJIS system just as before. In addition, the documents themselves are scanned using hardware from Fujitsu Computer Products of America and purchased through a grant from the Georgia Superior Court Clerks Cooperative Authority.

Because OnBase integrates tightly with CJIS, which is a custom-developed, Oracle-based application, it can simply capture the keyword values used to index the documents from CJIS. This integration is accomplished through Application Enabler, an OnBase module that links the OnBase repository to line-of-business applications without programming, reducing costs and implementation periods. As a result, there are only a few additional steps other than scanning of the documents.

However, the scanning labor is more than offset by the other advantage of using Application Enabler. Because of the integration, documents are linked to the CJIS screens as well. This allows judges, the District Attorney, the State Court Solicitor, the Sheriff's Office, the Court Administration Office and Magistrate Court to simply click on a field in CJIS to retrieve all relevant case files immediately. Wood estimates that this probably affects about 200 to 300 people working inside and outside of the courthouse.

AT A GLANCE

By integrating OnBase® with its CJIS (Criminal Justice Information System), the Hall County (GA) Clerk of Courts Office has made it possible to retrieve case files immediately from within the case management application and eliminated redundant data entry.

BENEFITS

- Authorized users have immediate access to case documents from the case management application interface.
- Tight integration eliminates need to enter data into both case management and OnBase systems.
- Allows file clerks to fill requests at the counter immediately.
- Diminish the risk of misplaced files.
- Multiple users can have simultaneous access to files.
- Allows paper files to be moved off-site, freeing valuable floor space.
- Keyword updater allows roll numbers from mandatory microfilm archive to be included as index fields.

APPLICATIONS

- Clerk of Courts Office
- Superior and State Court Judges
- District Attorney
- State Court Solicitor
- Sheriff's Office
- Court Administration Office
- Magistrate Court

ONBASE SOFTWARE

- Document Imaging
- Application Enabler
- Export
- CD/DVD Publishing

COMPLEMENTARY PRODUCT INTEGRATIONS

- Fujitsu® Computer Products of America document scanners
- Kofax® Image Products, Inc. bar code recognition
- Custom-developed, Oracle®-based case management system

Accommodates Existing Documents and Microfilm Archiving

The Clerk of Courts Office is currently scanning all incoming civil and criminal documents, about 100,000 to 200,000 pages a year. In addition, Hall County is working with Southern Imaging to scan documents that were entered before OnBase was installed. In less than 6 months, three years of civil case documents have been scanned. This represents a significant volume of documents since many civil cases can be open for several years and can potentially include thousands of pages of documents. Pre-indexing is accomplished automatically through a keyword set. Bar code reading technology from Kofax Image Products, Inc. is used to identify various document types. Existing criminal case files are also being scanned, but that process is somewhat slower because of the complexity of the cases, which often involve multiple offenders and multiple counts.

While many organizations propose document management as a replacement for microfilm, that simply is not an option for the Hall County Clerk of Courts as Georgia requires a microfilm archive. However, the OnBase solution will complement and streamline the microfilm requirement as well. The Clerk of Courts Office plans to use the OnBase CD/DVD Publishing module to create CDs with images of the documents organized by date and case type. Those CDs can then be provided to an outsourcer for conversion to microfilm. When completed, the keyword updating functionality of OnBase can be used to add the roll number of the microfilm to the document in the OnBase repository. This process will replace the manual creation of 35 mm aperture cards.

Increase Productivity and Floor Space

"We now are able to retrieve many documents at our workstations without the necessity of physically pulling a case and taking it to a copy machine, saving time and energy," says Wood. "It does take a few more steps to image the documents, but it is worth it because of all the saved time. The Clerks Office employs several part-time file clerks simply to retrieve, transport to judges' offices, make copies and ultimately re-file documents. In addition to

pulling documents for the court docket, they also field a high volume of counter requests, such as requests for a copy of a divorce from individuals wishing to remarry.

The OnBase implementation hasn't significantly increased the need for IT support in the Clerk's Office either. Maintaining CJIS is the responsibility of the county, and one of the two CJIS administrators is able to act as system administrator for the OnBase system as well.

"In addition to saving time, it also saves floor space," adds Wood. "A Clerk of Courts Office sometimes has a hard time getting enough floor space, and it really helps to be able to move files off-site. It allows us to use valuable floor space for other projects or less cramped workstations."



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