

Wednesday, March 26, 2004

During my eight years as a Municipal Court Clerk, one of the favorite topics at court seminars and training classes, I have attended, has been the “paperless” court. I had envisioned how I thought a “paperless” court would operate but I was always a skeptic as to whether or not something like that could ever actually work in the “real world”. Additionally, my personal observations of “paperless” environments and scanning packages, only served to solidify my belief that a court can never really go “paperless”.

My various observations led me to the determination that most “paperless” systems and environments were really records storage and retrieval systems. Mountains of paperwork was still being generated, passed around and processed. Also, the “paperless” environments and systems I observed, in addition to the mountains of paperwork, required the added steps of scanning the mountains of paperwork and then interfacing the scanned images to the court’s software. The extra work created by the “paperless” environment required additional staff. That was *not* my idea of “paperless”.

My skeptical attitude changed when PCSS introduced me to their imaging package. The JEMS Imaging Module operated how I had always envisioned a “paperless” environment would, and even better. The mountains of paperwork our court generated on a daily basis, was reduced by more than ½ almost immediately upon installing the imaging module and we weren’t even fully utilizing it.

Now, all the paperwork coming into our court is quickly and easily scanned and imaged to the appropriate docket in one easy step (in about the same amount of time it takes to make a photocopy). And what’s even better is that, literally, every document generated by our court (such as complaints, judgments, orders, notices etc.) can be created as an “image” and a single or multiple signatures can be captured via a stored electronic signature or an electronic signature pad. Additionally, signatures can be captured immediately or later as part of a workflow system. Images are saved directly to the docket for which they were created and can later be viewed quickly and easily.

I am still not utilizing the PCSS JEMS Imaging Package to its full potential. However, everyday I find a new process or document that I can integrate into our imaging and workflow. At this point, I have reduced our court’s paperwork by about 80%. The reduction in paperwork has reduced our need for filing cabinets and created more office space. And best of all, the ongoing implementation of our “paperless” environment is being done without the need for additional staff.

Kathryn Wells-Vogel
Certified Municipal Court Clerk (CMCC)

Municipal Court Clerk
City of Victoria