



Superior Court of California County of Orange *News Release*

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The Court Wins National Award for Implementing Electronic Criminal Case Files

Santa Ana, CA – The national [Court Information Technology Officers Consortium \(CITOC\)](#) and the [Conference of State Court Administrators](#) honored the [Superior Court of Orange County](#) with a 2014 CITOC Innovation Award. The award for Court Business Processes recognized our Court for “notable contributions to the judiciary” for the creation and implementation of a completely electronic environment for criminal cases.

The project was initially created as a cost-saving measure due to significant budget cuts imposed upon the Court. The ongoing annual cost savings of the paperless system include \$825,000 in salary and benefits and \$80,000 in paper supplies. There were \$1.2 million in one-time implementation costs. Alan Carlson, Chief Executive Officer of the Superior Court of Orange County, said, “In addition to the cost savings, the ultimate goal is to provide better service to litigants, lawyers, and the public.”

The project had been in development since 2010 when the judicial and administrative leadership of the Court established a goal to create a completely electronic environment for managing traffic and criminal case information, data, and documents. It was first implemented for traffic-related cases (more than 350,000 new cases per year) in May 2013. Since January 2014, paper files have not been created for newly-filed criminal felony and misdemeanor cases (more than 60,000 cases per year). The full transition to use electronic files for all criminal hearings began July 2014. The Court already uses electronic files for civil, family law, probate, and mental health cases.

The benefits of keeping all-electronic case files include:

- Immediate on-demand access to case information and documents, with appropriate access for the viewer (judge, attorney, justice system personnel, court staff, public, etc.);
- Attorneys and justice system personnel are provided 24-hour access via secure portals;
- Many individuals can access the same case file at the same time;
- The public may view case information and documents, and purchase copies, at [courthouses](#) during Court business hours, not just at the location where the case was filed;
- As before, case information – but not documents – may be viewed [online](#) from any computer or mobile device with internet access;
- Files do not need to be transported to and from the file room, the courtroom, or offsite storage;
- There are no paper files to lose and no loose or missing documents in the case file;
- Storage space for new paper files is no longer necessary; and
- Older case files have been imaged, which eliminates the need for storage space and file retrieval.

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