

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
A Subcommittee of the Commission on Technology
Minutes
August 4, 2006

Members Present:

Mohyeddin Abdulaziz
Ron Beguin
Joan Harphant
Karl Heckart
Correnia Honnaker
Randy Kennedy
Carol Merfeld
Gregg Obuch
Eloise Price
Rick Rager
Kyle Rimel
David Stevens

Members Not Present:

Lillith Avalon
John King
Cary Meister
Alan Turner

Others Present:

Stewart Bruner, Staff
William Earl
Gary Graham
Aaron Jones
Jeff Viemont
Karl Ward

* indicates attendance via phone

Welcome and Introductions

The August 4, 2006, meeting of the Technical Advisory Council (TAC) was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Karl Heckart, Chair. Karl asked everyone present to introduce themselves. He then updated members on the status of various initiatives and projects underway as a preview of the Commission on Technology (COT) annual meeting next week. COT will also continue the major push for electronic filing initiated a year ago. The goal is to consume electronic information from the source, not having the court key or re-key information.

Karl described the dilemma of integrating with the current case management system or waiting for the new CMSs being developed. He estimated that it will take no less than 3 years and possibly as many as 5 years to complete the full rollout of the new systems in all courts. A major factor in that longer timeline is the commitment not to “shove and run,” but to integrate new business processes and provide sufficient training to staff, more along the lines of the Missouri model, which lengthens the rollout.

Several members mentioned that their courts cannot be content to wait 5 years for major automation improvements. Karl described efforts underway today with electronic citations and standardizing forms in limited jurisdiction courts. The Maricopa i-forms project proves that standard forms can work and provides a springboard to electronic filing. General jurisdiction efforts are focused on making a multi-vendor case filing solution work. Karl described the current e-filing environment as “wet cement.”

A question was raised about why e-filing capability is not being included in the new CMSs out of the box. Rick Rager shared his concern as a project manager with scope control and his need to deliver a functioning base system on schedule. He also emphasized that the CMS development approach allows bolt-on functionality for things like e-filing.

Eloise Price asked that AOC document exactly what functionality exists in the base system and what will be considered bolt-on before any CMS rollout begins. Karl described an effort just getting underway using representatives of the court system to create a matrix of detailed functionality to be prioritized and then used to assess the functionality of the AGAVE and Tempe CMSs as delivered to the initial court. Rick volunteered to provide code to that group before Tempe CMS is fully installed.

Mo Abdulaziz expressed frustration that the two systems are still considered candidates only and asked for a clear, current status from each CMS project. In the interest of time, Karl referred members to the CACC website and provided a very brief status for each project, checking for concurrence with the project representatives on TAC.

Mesa Municipal Request for FileNet Exception

Paul Thomas, Administrator for Mesa Municipal Court, provided City of Mesa’s history in procuring an electronic document management system (EDMS). Leonard Montanaro emphasized that Mesa was not challenging the standard product but asking for a one-time exemption in order to join the city in its EDMS effort, using FileNet rather than OnBase. He listed the benefits of joining the city effort rather than the court striking out on its own:

- Over \$600,00.00 would be saved over 5 years,
- Uses common infrastructure,
- City provides technical support,
- City provides network database servers,
- City absorbs ongoing enhancement costs, and
- Commonality exists with local law enforcement and prosecutor while still supplying output in TIFF and PDF as required by the courts.

Karl reviewed the exception approval process and asked members for their issues with granting the request. Members were most concerned about integrating a CMS with FileNet versus OnBase. They also wanted to know how much electronic input the Mesa court receives today and their plans for allowing more in the future. Lenny described several projects envisioned to get to a date after which all case documents would be made

electronic or e-filed. Stewart Bruner reminded Mesa that the exception request requires the court to bear any future cost of integrating with statewide systems.

MOTION: Grant the exception to architecture standards for Mesa to use FileNet rather than OnBase. The motion passed unanimously.

The exception document will be carried forward to COT for its approval. Members will be informed of TAC's recommendation for approval.

XML Specifications for Consideration

Karl introduced the concept of further defining e-filing standards to tie together courts and justice partners. Stating XML or even GJXML as the standard in the architecture table is not sufficient. More detail is required concerning what tags to use and what tags to throw out of the superset provided by the high-level standard. TAC is looking to recommend to COT a statewide standard – either industry-standard or custom tailored – specific to e-filing to prevent chaos down the road and enable more efficient case processing by keeping the courts from having to do data entry. Courts would be allowed to extend the tag set beyond what exists in the standard as well as add descriptive tags.

The Clerk of the Superior Court in Maricopa County has worked through the specification setting process in getting their multi-vendor e-filing system up and running. Aaron Jones from the clerk's office shared the history behind Maricopa's specification development. As part of their RFP preparation process, they determined that ECF 3.0 provided the best of both worlds, Legal XML 1.1 and GJXDM. Maricopa treats e-filing as a bolt-on module. They have limited civil and criminal e-filing to subsequent filings only at this time, though they intend to expand to initial filings in the future. Aaron reviewed the business issues surrounding acceptance of initial filings. The Maricopa specification contains all the tags required for initial filings and they have not yet needed to extend the set. They are learning more as the qualified vendors begin submitting filings.

A question was raised about whether the scope of the specification being proposed includes vendors only or applies to any e-filing from any source. After discussion about required fields versus allowed fields, where the principle of multi-vendor e-filing originated, the ability for courts to create their own interface for pro se and justice partner e-filing, and the definition of electronic filing, the scope of the specification was characterized as applying to all civil filing transaction sets. "Civil" was further defined as all non-criminal filings, since criminal filings are being covered in conjunction with subcommittees of the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission (ACJC).

MOTION: Adopt the Maricopa XML specifications as an initial statewide standard for e-filing. The motion passed with one no vote.

Karl introduced the appellate court filing standards by reminding members that aggressive timeframes are being stated for bringing e-filing functionality to the Appellate

Courts. Gary Graham described an XML specification for metadata associated with transmitting a record on appeal from a trial court to an appeals court. Gary's overview described the system used to collect documents from AZTEC courts having OnBase, adding them to an MQ message, transporting those to the Appellate Court, then placing them into the CMS and EDMS once accepted by the court. MQ messaging is being used to transport the actual case documents, though the specification doesn't depend on MQ.

An index of record acts as a packing list of the documents being transmitted. Gary raised the point that superior courts are not following Rule 99-75 to properly describe the contents of documents being transmitted using their given titles. No standard has been set for defining an index structure used to integrate data with an EDMS. A lack of document type standards was raised as a root issue behind the 99-75 problems. Yavapai Superior, the current test court, has agreed to follow the 99-75 requirements in a pilot implementation, if approved.

Gary clarified that MQ doesn't require a server to exist at both ends of the transaction. A free client front-end can be distributed by AOC to courts having no server of their own. When a court places the message in the MQ queue, AOC pulls it automatically. A court transacting business with another court would require a minimum of one MQ server and one client between them. Gary also explained why the specification contains tags for far more data than the appellate courts request today. He stated that optional tags need not even be included in a transmission, but had value in preventing loss where the court already collected or received the data. He also described how the digest value tag works to verify message integrity across multiple messages in a transmission.

A question was raised about whether to adopt standards that were yet unproven, without a quantified cost, and without detailed discussion with the CMS development efforts. Members clarified that CMS efforts have been awaiting statewide standards to incorporate and that absent those, they are coding current functionality and interfaces. When they have standards, they will comply with those standards. Karl raised the question of whether there was any flaw in the standard that precludes adoption as direction to CMSs. Courts developing CMSs and the Maricopa Clerk's Office all asked that it be provided now as direction even if it ends up being iterated in the future.

MOTION: Adopt the XML specification for Appellate e-Record on Appeal in support of a pilot e-filing implementation. The motion passed with one no vote.

Further discussion ensued surrounding the standard setting and re-evaluation process. The conclusion was that if members have issues with the specifications as work gets underway, they are welcome to raise their specific issues to TAC for further discussion.

Enterprise Architecture Policies and Standard Two-Year Review

Karl reminded members of discussion about the updates to the table at several previous meetings and had Stewart describe the most recent few changes made as a result of member inputs and research on various versions of products listed. He reminded

members that items identified in the retirement column necessitate a plan to change from them to a mainstream product in the IT plan next year. While the implementation of the plan may require funds or time, the important item is for the court to have a plan that moves it off the retirement item. The table next goes to COT for approval. Stewart reminded members that the table can be changed and republished at any time as long as COT moves to approve the update.

Eloise Price suggested that a new standards-specific page be created on the COT website to display the EA table, bolt-on module information, and new technical specifications. This would prevent them from getting lost in the tables on the current documents page.

Stewart also provided a summary of issues discovered in the IT planning process this past year and some changes being proposed to address them next year.

The meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m. after Karl issued a call to the public.

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TAC's next meeting is scheduled for October 6, 2006, in Conference Room 230.

COT's next meeting is scheduled for August 10 and 11, 2006, in Room 345A/B.