



An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service

Courts Service ICT Strategy Statement

2011 – 2014

March 2012

INTRODUCTION

The ICT Strategy 2011 – 2014 supports and compliments the recently published Courts Service Strategic Plan 2011-2014. At a high level the strategy is to maintain provision of day to day ICT services at a high standard to the judiciary and staff and the public through online services and our website. To implement more online services, to ensure the technical infrastructure is future proofed, and to continue to reduce the costs of ICT services and equipment.

As described in the Strategic Plan we are operating at a time of unprecedented uncertainty for the country, the public sector and the Courts Service. However, the Courts Service will aim to maintain the high level of ICT services to Judiciary, staff and the public as heretofore. This can be achieved by changing the way services are delivered through ensuring value for money from service providers and suppliers, through maximising the use of in-house staff, exploring greater use of public-sector shared service arrangements and exploring greater use of open-source and other new technologies.

The Courts Service Strategic Plan recognises the potential of using technology to meet its strategic goals, actions and outputs over the next three years. For instance Goal 2 states

- In consultation with the judiciary seek to maximise the use of modern ICT tools in the administration of justice

and in Goal 5

- Implement changes to ICT systems to support operation of the Fines Act
- Increase the number of services available online
- Increase the exchange of data electronically with agencies interacting with the Courts Service
- Maximise the use of existing information & communications technology, including courtroom technology and telephony
- Maximise the potential of website and intranet platforms
- Maximise the opportunities afforded by mobile technology and social media.

A new applications architecture is being adopted that will enable the development and hosting of a series of new online systems and services. This approach will ensure that modern, flexible and,

where opportunities arise, innovative technologies, are available to allow both judiciary and staff to operate in a changing, challenging environment and in a context of reduced funding.

High level proposals in this strategy:-

- Further enhancements to the Criminal Case Tracking and Courts Accounting Systems such as the Implementation of Fines Act 2010 requirements, extension of CCTS to the higher courts and electronic transmission of charge sheets from An Garda Siochana
- Adoption of a single Civil Case Management System(CCMS) by court offices and the elimination of legacy systems. Features will include online submission of case information (efiling) and payment of fees, initially for Liquidated Debt cases
- A Centralised Jury Management system
- Implementation of new telephony voice over IP system
- Future-proofing of technology infrastructure
- Explore innovative ways to exploit technology for the benefit of the courts

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS FOR THIS STRATEGY

There are a number of factors that need to be taken into account that are critical to the success of this strategy

The strategy includes the introduction of new systems that will change the way work is processed. This will require provision of support and assistance to judiciary and staff in all Jurisdictions to ensure its acceptance and success.

The extent to which opportunities to increase the information exchanged electronically with other Justice agencies and with other organisations is exploited is critical.

There needs to be increased electronic communication through greater use of the website and online services for external users and the modern intranet and collaboration tools for internal users.

Arrangements will be put in place to ensure services are maintained at a satisfactory level within the resources available. Technology will be future-proofed to the extent possible and costs will be reduced in the provision and maintenance of the ICT infrastructure

BENEFITS

There are also benefits from successfully achieving the strategy. A single system for civil business will assist in standardising processes and services.

Staff will be better positioned to concentrate on higher value work as routine tasks are automated. This also enables increased mobility between offices.

Provision of a number of services online will lead to a measurable reduction in duplication, reduced data entry and a reduction in paper handling (paper on demand)

There will be ongoing reduction in support costs across all applications. There will be reduced training requirements, data entry, document handling and hand-offs in processing cases in court offices which will allow staff to be freed up for other work.

In relation to implementation of the Fines Act 2010 it will see the delivery of new functionality that supports

(1) Payment of Fines by Instalment

(1) Improved Enforcement

In future it will provide for attachment orders if such legislation is enacted.

The approach to systems development will switch from enhancements of legacy systems to adoption of the new system architecture.

There will be reduced telephony and line rental charges due to a new telephone system. Online service delivery will reduce the number of telephone calls and public office callers to the Courts Service. Better internal communications will enable a greater sharing of knowledge. A robust ICT service desk and support will be provided,

Constraints

- Delivery of the strategy will rely on the availability of sufficient resources, both staff and financial.
- New centralised processing services need to be established to maximise the benefits of online service delivery.
- Major change management required internally and externally to ensure a smooth transition from current systems and processes.
- Reduction in the use of paper will require strong guidelines and processes

- The data network infrastructure needs to have sufficient bandwidth to carry new services, such as voice, video and online.
- Legislative and rule changes may be required to enable certain initiatives
- There will be improved customer service as a result of a more efficient and effective Courts Service

RISKS

Financial

- **Budget** ; the single highest risk is the extent to which the budget allocated to ICT projects can deliver this strategy
- Insufficient resources available to ICT to deliver strategy.

Staff/People

- Success will depend on buy-in from Judges/Staff and user interaction for certain projects
- Adequate training is required for Courts Service staff within ICT and outside ICT
- Unavailability of user resources for requirements, testing etc;
- Over-reliance on outsourced resources
- Inhouse ICT skills, skills transfer and ongoing support is necessary to ensure continuity and support of systems developed in-house;

Legal/Compliance

- Legal requirement re provision of services. Care is needed regarding systems being developed before legislation & rule change

Technology

- Insufficient disaster recovery leads to data loss and excessive downtime.
- Technology becomes obsolete and not fit for purpose
- Insufficient bandwidth to support centralised databases

STRATEGY

The key strategic themes of the ICT Strategy 2012-2014 reflect how ICT will influence the achievement of the goals set out in the Courts Service Strategic Plan 2011-2014: Delivering Service, Transformation and Value.

Strategic Plan 2011 – 2014	ICT Strategic Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Goal 1: Deliver High Quality Services by Transforming Administrative Structures and Processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide an ICT infrastructure that supports combined offices, enables standardisation and centralisation of processes and improved customer service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Goal 2: Support the Judiciary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure the judiciary are equipped with the appropriate and correct ICT tools to enable them to perform their judicial functions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Goal 3: Support our People 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide staff with appropriate technology and training in ICT that will enable better internal and external communications and collaboration and will allow for greater mobility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Goal 4: Improve Case Management and Listing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provision of systems that support the judiciary to manage courts business and sittings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Goal 5: Maximise the use of all accommodation and information and communications technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Maximise the potential of existing information and communications technology and, as resources permit, invest further in the deployment of technology to improve service to court users and value for money.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Goal 6: Deliver Excellence in Governance, Accountability & Value for Money 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Implement best practice ICT governance and project management methods to ensure excellence and accountability in delivery of projects and technology.
Strategic Programme	
<p>The Strategic Programme which details the initiatives and projects to be undertaken over the lifetime of the strategy, is contained in Appendix 1 under the Corporate Strategic Goals in the following Strategic Areas:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Operational Systems ➤ Technology and Infrastructure ➤ Governance and Organisation ➤ Innovation ➤ eGovernment 	

Appendix 1

*** GOAL 1 DELIVER HIGH QUALITY SERVICES BY TRANSFORMING ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES**

Operational Systems	Technology and Infrastructure	eGovernment	Innovation
<p>* Provide appropriate ICT services and support in the rollout of combined court offices</p>	<p>* Implement a new architecture for strategic systems using vendor supported open source technology.</p>	<p>* The application architecture used in conjunction with an enterprise architecture approach will ensure the modular evolution to centralised business systems replacing the need to build and maintain distributed variants as at present. Proposed Projects as resources permit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Judgments Online System - eRegisters - Probate System - Family Law System - Central Jury Management System - interactive/online Jury System that makes it quicker to handle communications reducing possibility for delay in jury selection etc. Use scanners & bar-codes for juror attendance 	<p>* Explore the possibilities of “Portal”/ATM/Kiosk type services in offices to reduce physical data input;</p>
<p>* Replace current single jurisdiction civil case management systems with a single consolidated civil and family law case management system for all jurisdictions and retire older systems. This will assist to standardise business processes where appropriate</p>	<p>* Continue to consider open source software options where feasible</p>		<p>* Explore the possibilities of video customer services:- local office video links to staff in a centralised location;</p>
<p>* Extend CAS and CCTS to higher jurisdictions and to track District Court Appeals.</p>	<p>* Embed new architecture as the strategic architecture of choice for all new systems. Migrate legacy systems to new architecture.</p>		<p>* Examine a “paper on demand” approach to submission of online case information by practitioners and lay litigants in the JOL system</p>

Operational Systems	Technology and Infrastructure	eGovernment	Innovation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Roll out criminal interim case tracking system (ICMS) on a single database. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Retire legacy Lotus Notes and Progress applications as they are migrated to new architecture 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Consider the possibilities of moving to a paperless courtroom.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Continue to centralise and rationalise server estate 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Utilise upgraded bandwidth to provide centralised data processing access central databases. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Provide Secure & reliable infrastructure and communications; 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Continue to develop the WAN by providing higher bandwidth 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Maximise WAN bandwidth through framework agreements 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Replace Refresh older equipment; 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Support combined offices in single locations 		

★ GOAL 2 SUPPORT THE JUDICIARY

Operational Systems	Technology and Infrastructure	eGovernment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Provide order processing, including provision of online orders as a service within the Civil Case Management System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ In consultation with the judiciary and the Irish Prison Service continue to expand the use of Video Conferencing Technology between courts and prisons for remand and bail appearances. Provide training and support for currently deployed Digital Audio Recording and video viewing/video conferencing technologies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Improve remote access/facilities available
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Enable Video over IP where possible Utilise upgraded WAN links to video conference between Courts and Prisons over IP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Upgrade hardware with more targeted delivery;
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Encourage greater use of Video Conferencing in court; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Provide for the production of Court Order functionality in CCMS;
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Provide training and support in courtroom technologies; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Publish orders online
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Extend Digital Audio Recording to remaining non-networked courts; 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Extend use of mobile devices for non-networked courts support 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Explore use of Video Conferencing between Courts and An Garda Siochana; 	

★ GOAL 3 SUPPORT OUR PEOPLE

Technology and Infrastructure	Innovation
★ Provide training to all staff in the use of the ICT systems they use	★ Maximise use of Lotus Notes collaboration capabilities e.g. Sametime video and instant messaging
★ □ Maximise use of current technology for improved communication and collaboration.	★ Maximise potential of integrated mobile and voice telephony.
★ Implement new Voice over IP telephone system throughout the Courts Service.	★ Increase self sufficiency of ICT staff.
★ Maximise use of new Voice over IP auto-attendance	★ Provide ICT expertise to support business initiatives and projects
★ Encourage greater self reliance in relation to roll-out and support of Voice over IP services,	
★ Implement Instant Messaging and Video Meeting services,	
★ Explore greater use of Collaboration Tools,	
★ Use increased bandwidth to encourage video and other VOIP related conferencing features	
★ Introduce browser based e-mail; for use in remote offices / home access;	
★ Plan for modern office productivity tools (e.g. Office 2010);	
★ Provide a modern Intranet service;	
★ Make greater Use of Video training clips;	
★ More efficient business processes driven by ICT requirements	
★ In relation to ICT staff, initiate training and career tracks in prioritised and feasible areas for self sufficiency such as Business Analysis, Project Management and Report Development.	

*** GOAL 4 IMPROVE CASE MANAGEMENT AND LISTING**

Operational Systems	Technology and infrastructure	eGovernment	Innovation
<p>* Ensure Case Management Systems compliment and support changes to legislation and court rules aimed at improving case management and listing</p>	<p>* Pilot an eFiling project using the Judgments Online system and expand to other case types</p>	<p>* Provide in-house services in the areas such as Business Analysis, Project Management and Report Development</p>	<p>* Provide a Unified/ Integrated Court Diary</p>
<p>* The Civil Case Management System to be a Single Unified system;</p>			
<p>* Implement provisions relating to Road Traffic Act 2010, and other legislative changes;</p>			
<p>* Plan to move ICMS to a more modern platform</p>			

*** GOAL 5 MAXIMISE THE USE OF ALL INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY**

Operational Systems	Technology and infrastructure	eGovernment	Innovation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Provide ICT systems which implement the provisions of the Fines Act as regards payment by instalment and appointment of receivers and prepare plans for attachment of earnings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Provide an Integrated data, telephony/communications infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * As funding permits, provide for the electronic transmission of charge sheets from AGS to the Courts Service, and the transmission of higher court outcomes to AGS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Implement Server / Desktop Virtualisation and introduce thin clients to reduce cost of desktop estate management
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Use services from Revenue or Central Government cloud offering as they become available; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * examine interoperability with other areas of the Justice Sector and external agencies, such as Prisons Service and Probation Service and develop an interoperability architecture for exchanging information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Converge mobile and voice telephony
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Outsource volume Printing - Remove printing requirement from in-house <i>e.g.</i> by making use of the Revenue Commissioners printing facilities; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The Courts Services architecture will be service oriented through the design approach, the data structure, and the technical model. This will in turn facilitate the delivery of interoperability requirements within the Courts Service, across the wider public sector and to enable private sector partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Explore implementation of Wi-Fi services in courthouses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Reduce cost of maintenance on peripherals <i>e.g.</i> printers; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Prioritise systems that provide online facilities for Court users to carry out their business electronically with the Courts Service, <i>e.g.</i> Probate, eRegister applications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Evaluate suitability of Cloud technology
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Examine how social media and mobile technologies can be harnessed for improved efficiency of the courts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * As future IT service offerings to external customers will rely on secure authentication, greater use of identity services offered by central departments will be exploited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Evaluate use of Open Source Desktop and Office Software

Operational Systems	Technology and infrastructure	eGovernment	Innovation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * All applications will be accessible to users in a standard web browser. This will evolve to support for mobile devices or smartphone applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Examine feasibility of using open-source content management tool for intranet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Explore feasibility of 'Bring your own Device' (BYOD) Programme.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Use new architecture to deliver all new online services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Migrate eSmall Claims to new architecture. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Greater emphasis will be placed on ensuring that all future applications deployed on the new architecture support agreed, optimised and standardised business processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Continue to enhance and provide support for the Courts Service website. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Over lifetime of strategy migrate Digital Audio Recording Central Storage to Government d Data Centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Streamlining of Electoral Register data take-on for jury selection system; 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Maximise Use of upgraded bandwidth <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to carry Digital Audio Recording traffic to central storage 2. Centralise data processing 3. For Voice and Video over IP implementation 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Continue the present strategy to optimise hardware and software assets using virtualisation, asset management and consolidation approaches. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Integrate equipment in use e.g. photocopiers also used as network scanners printers, faxes. 		

*** GOAL 6 DELIVER EXCELLENCE IN GOVERNANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY & VALUE FOR MONEY**

Operational Systems	Technology and infrastructure	eGovernment	Governance and Organisation	Innovation
* Provide enhanced support for comprehensive Management Information ;	* Value for Money will be achieved through a number of projects:	* Security capabilities will be enhanced in tandem with eGovernment requirements	* Generate savings through an integrated mobile & telephony approach;	* Continuous development of ICT Project Management processes and skills;
	* Reduce costs through consolidation and virtualisation of Courts Service server estate.		* Constant review of spending versus Budget;	
	* Take advantage of upgraded WAN to consolidate remote servers to central data centre		* All ICT projects to have proper governance model;	
	* Implement Voice over IP (telephony, video)		* Provide timely reports to SMT, ICT Governing Committee CEO and Board;	
			* Review ICT Governing Committee;	
			* Work with Managed Service Provider to provide and enhance services and to improve value for money	
			* Adopt more standard project/contract management approach <i>e.g.</i> PRINCE2 <i>etc.</i>	