



piece-JUSTICE
Piecing IT Together

**Issued by the Department of Justice and
Constitutional Development**

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**Piecing systems and technology
together to give justice the edge!**



Introduction

The advent of cyberspace, business pressures, developments in information technology and globalisation, require that Justice systems should be re-engineered, integrated and supported with appropriate information technology. The way in which the average citizen deals with the courts has remained largely unchanged in the last century and a half.

Likewise, demands of the new economic order, the need to stimulate investor public confidence and reduce the crime rate, as well as the imperative to maintain an efficient, effective and economical administration of justice, suggest a paradigm shift and a radical change in the way that the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development carries out its mandate.

Prosecutors and Presiding officers spend a significant portion of their time collating information and statistics and tend to spend a large portion of their day working on administrative chores. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that most of the complaints about our civil courts relate to problems with the administration of caseloads and the costs of delay, and not to the quality of justice.

The National Crime Prevention Strategy was established in 1996. A year later the Integrated Justice System User Board came into effect. The partner departments within this cluster are the South African Police Services (SAPS), Department of Social Development, Department of Correctional Services and the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development.

The e-Justice System



To give effect to the integrated Justice approach required by government, the current situation was researched and critically analysed. The analysis showed that the Justice system was running out of capacity. Courts have huge backlogs and prisons in general are overcrowded with large numbers of awaiting-trial prisoners. The investigation / research proposed change management, functional and business integration, and various enabling technologies. In responding to this, the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development has embarked on the following projects:

- Digital Nervous System (DNS)
- Financial Administration System (FAS)
- Court Process and Case Management System (CPS)
- Records Management & Management Systems (MIS)

All these projects have been designed and prioritised to promote government policy and to give substance to the strategy of developing an integrated Justice system. Maximum cooperation within the Justice Cluster is necessary to achieve these goals.

DNS - Digital Nervous System



The objective is to provide 80% of Justice officials with the necessary infrastructure, internet connection and research facilities by the end of 2002.

In April 2000, less than 10% of departmental officials had access to computers on about ten local area networks. Apart from being outdated, this small component of computer systems was limited to word processing and elementary forms of financial administration capabilities.

The Digital Nervous System will provide state of the art technology and leapfrog our justice system into the modern information age.

The DNS project will provide the following:

Word Processing and Spreadsheet capabilities on the network

With a typewriter, a single mistake often means a page, or in some cases, that a whole document, has to be retyped and reprinted. By using a PC, the typist merely makes the changes on the computer. If the Head of Office or senior also has a PC on the network (i.e. linked to the network of that court) the typist can forward the document to him/her electronically for final corrections; there is no need for the typist to

receive it again. The latest rendition of the document will then be processed and stored. This project also seeks to connect the computers in your office in such a manner that all documents can be stored in electronic form for later retrieval. If a court wishes to give the Cluster Head access to certain information, he/she will be able to access this from his/her office.

E-mail (electronic mail) facilities

This allows messages, memos and letters to be sent to anybody within the Department, irrespective of where the person is situated, providing that the office has a network as described above, or to any person outside the Department, who has such facilities. One would also be able to receive messages. A policy decision has been taken that all circulars will in future be distributed by e-mail instead of using

hard copies. External correspondence between offices could also consist of e-mail rather than of letters.

Electronic access to Jutastat / Butterworths on the network

Several courts already have access to this facility, but on a stand-alone computer, which is usually located in the library. Having Jutastat / Butterworths on the network allows everyone to have instant access to this resource from his/her desk.

Internet facilities to identified users

Not all users will be granted access to the internet. Only those who have a bona fide need to access information in this manner, will have this facility. For those users, this service will open up a new world of information.

Computer-literacy training

This will commence at each office within two weeks of installation of the network.

Users will be trained to use applications such as MSWord, (word processing)

MS Excell (spreadsheets) and MS Outlook (e-mail and diary). Some users will also receive training in applications such as Internet Explorer and Jutastat.

On-line applications

The Head of Office, or elected person, will be able to check the particulars of staff such as leave credits on the PERSAL system from his/her office without having to rely on the National Office.

It is planned that officials will shortly be able to file their applications for leave from their own PCs instead of having to complete traditional leave forms.

Authorisation of leave applications will also be given on-line by the supervisor with an "electronic signature". The supervisor will be notified automatically of a person's available leave days and if a sufficient number is available, the system will accept the approval and deduct these automatically from PERSAL; in this manner ensuring that these credits are registered correctly on the PERSAL system. Also in the pipeline is a system to collect debits from outstanding S&T advance claims.



A facility will also be created for offices to capture all payment transactions onto the FMS system without having to post them to National Office for capturing. Offices would then be in a position to pick up errors within a day of capturing the information.

FAS - Financial Administration System



Development of a Financial Administration System includes the administration of the Guardian's Fund (which takes care of minor children), the State Attorneys and the Maintenance System (to the benefit of mainly women) as a priority.

Reports will be generated by the system, thereby saving lots of effort and headaches for the office. Manual calculation of figures should therefore be minimised. Since the National Office can be granted access to this informa-



tion, it should not be necessary for any such reports to be forwarded to the National Office anymore.

Justice Deposit Account System (JDAS) & Maintenance System

The system has been implemented at Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, Bloemfontein, Pretoria, Wynberg (Cape), Athlone Maintenance Hub, Germiston, Bellville (Cape Town), Pietermaritzburg, Elizabeth House (Eastern Cape) and Verulam.

Discussion between the South African Postal Services and the Department is currently under way to allow maintenance to be paid in, or paid out, at the South African Post Office. A court has been chosen as a pilot site to determine

the feasibility of this exercise. If this proves to be successful, the system will be connected as a service point at the South African Post Office closest to that particular court. First, instead of having to travel to court, this will allow women to collect maintenance money at the SAPO nearest to home - men can also effect payment at the SAPO. These transactions will automatically register on the court's system. With the advent of Postbank it will not be necessary for parties to go and queue at the SAPO, because they will be able to use these ATMs, twenty four hours a day, every day of the week. Secondly, the influx of

clientele at the courts during peak periods should be something of the past.

State Attorneys System (SAS)

This is a new debt collecting system which will be integrated into the litigation system. This system has already been implemented at all State Attorneys' Offices.

Guardian Fund System

This system will be developed and implemented at all Masters' Offices within the next couple of months. A representative of the project team providing the developers with input on behalf of all the Masters' Offices.

CPP - Court Process Project



The purpose of this project is to pilot the re-engineering of the way in which our courts function. The system will provide them with the necessary tools to deal

with caseloads and management of courts in a more effective manner. The project also links the police, prosecutors, welfare officials, courts and prisons in an integrated manner.

This system will have the following functionalities:

Electronic Filing of Documents / Dockets

For the filing of documents such as the charge sheet or a summons in electronic form.

Workflow Capabilities

The ability of the system to automatically and timely notify supervisors/Head of Offices, or any identified person, of events or actions that were not attended to, or are overdue.

Scheduling of Resources

This is the ability to make use of an electronic diary to schedule events and resources.

The system will be web-based

The ability for any private attorney, or sheriff, who has Internet facilities, to register as an authorised user to access this system from his/her office. They will no longer have to send a clerk/messenger to court to have a summons stamped and filed. This will also give a 24 hours, 7 days a week service to the legal fraternity.

Statistical reports / Management Information Services

These will be automatically generated and it can be printed immediately.

All four departments involved with the criminal justice system, i.e. the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, the South African Police Services and the Departments of Correctional Services and Social Development, are participants in the development of the criminal case management system. Cases are tracked and managed electronically from the SAPS office (pre-adjudication), through the courts (adjudication), to the Department of Correctional Services (incarceration) or the Department of Social Development (detention of juveniles). The case information is captured at the SAPS and carried through the entire value chain without having to re-type or duplicate data.

In civil case management, the case is initiated by the plaintiff's attorney and electronically sent through to courts. Requests for default judgments/writ of executions are also done and granted



electronically. The revenue stamps will be replaced by a transaction fee, which the attorneys have to pay. This fee still has to be determined. All pleadings will be filed electronically and the need to have large amounts of storage space, will disappear gradually. Since everything is done electronically and stored on a database, queries can be dealt with much quicker and more efficiently. Attorneys, who have access to the system, will be able to schedule set-down dates electronically.

This system is in its proof-of-concept phase and if successful, a tender for the national roll-out will be published shortly. The Johannesburg Magistrate's Court and Durban Magistrate's Court, including some of their branch courts, have been identified as pilot sites. A few selected South African Police stations, prisons servicing these courts and also some places of safety, have been included in this pilot programme.

The Rules Board and the Department is jointly involved with the drafting of the required new Rules and Acts.

Human Resources spin-offs

The success of the e-Justice programme depends on effective change management. This is a strategic intervention that cuts across each of the projects that will be undertaken and campaigned by our human resources component.

Batho Pele and e-government policy guide our strategy. We need to put the interests of the people first and adopt key strategic approaches to develop

business solutions that result in interoperability, IT security, and economies of scale and eliminate duplication amongst members of the Integrated Justice System Cluster.



Management Information Services

This programme relates to management information services, content management, knowledge management and records management. This project will start shortly.

e-Justice

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