

Center for Legal and Court Technology Media Center

State Court Participation Reaches 200 for CIP

Williamsburg, VA, February 5, 2004

Janel Foss, Assistant Director for Administration and Outreach for the Courtroom Information Project (CIP), today announced the participation of the two hundredth state court participant, a milestone in the project's 25 months of operation. The mission of the Project is to inform and educate members of the legal professions on the appearance and capabilities of the nation's courtrooms via the web at www.courtroominformationproject.org. The website is a free service to both the public and interested courts.

“The word is getting out about the value of this important initiative,” said Ms. Foss. “We are noticing that interest is increasing to the extent that courts are now contacting us rather than vice versa,” Foss continued. CIP staffers have generally asked courts to participate by invitation, with instructions for uploading photographs of their courtrooms and data relative to courtroom technology to the CIP website. More recently, according to Foss, courts are asking to be involved, presumably due to increased word-of-mouth awareness of the project.

Specifically, the Courtroom Information Project offers photographs and information on each participating courtroom's available technology in an effort to educate all court participants before trial. Viewers can check for the availability of specific technology such as computer whiteboards, counsel laptop projectors, or analog phones as well as learn of any restrictions their courtroom of interest might have. Lawyers can show clients and witnesses where they will be sitting by scrolling through digital photos from various vantage points in each participating courtroom. An online registration process is available for new courts to submit their details. Once registered, participating courts have exclusive access to login and update their respective records and photos as necessary. Participation is open to all trial courts with or without technology. All together, the Courtroom Information Project website seeks to provide an up-to-date snapshot of the inside of any participating courtroom in the U.S.

Since hiring a full time project director in October 2002, the website has grown enormously from 7 courts participating in the fall of 2002 to nearly 300 state and federal courts. The project goal is to continue growing the website at this rate, anticipating that over 1,000 courts will have fully registered their courtrooms by the end of 2005. The feedback from the state and federal courts has been overwhelmingly positive with a number of State Supreme Courts encouraging statewide participation and over half of the federal courts joining. While the original idea of the website was to provide a litigation resource to trial lawyers, it is increasingly being used as a research tool by court administrators and IT personnel to assist in planning their courtroom technology upgrades. A number of courts and state bar associations have added a link from their own website to the project site advertising it as an additional public service tool.

“I am thrilled that the Project is growing as fast as it is,” says Richard Herrmann, chair of the Courtroom Information Project. “Obviously, the more courts participate, the greater the value of the Project.

The Courtroom Information Project is part of the Courtroom 21 Project, the world leader in court technology demonstration, experimentation, training and education, located at the College of William and Mary and is a joint project of the National Center for State Courts and William & Mary Law School . The Courtroom Information

Project website is located at www.courtroominformationproject.org.

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