

Planning for an Electronic Document Management System

The MiFILE standard e-Filing solution will first go live in the model courts with the rest of the state to follow. Courts can aid their transition by reviewing the information in this document.

As MiFILE is implemented, courts will be required to maintain the official court record in electronic format and store documents in an electronic document management system (EDMS) to ensure the documents can be used in the way needed for the required retention period.

An EDMS must comply with the policies and standards established by the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO). Each court must choose whether to use the free MiFILE document management system (MiFILE DMS) provided by the SCAO, or purchase its own EDMS.

The information in this document is designed to help courts with their initial assessment in this regard and includes:

- List of MiFILE DMS Features and Functions
- Table Summarizing EDMS Options
- Considerations for Evaluating the MiFILE DMS versus Local EDMS
- Necessary Hardware and Software Purchases in Addition to EDMS
- Creating an Electronic Image of Court Seal
- Recommended Resources

EDMS policies and standards established by the SCAO are available [here](#).

If you have any questions about the information in this communication, please send them to MiFILECourtHelp@courts.mi.gov. Click [here](#) for up-to-date information on the statewide e-Filing project.

MiFILE DMS Features and Functions

The MiFILE DMS complies with the SCAO's EDMS policies and standards and its system requirements and functionality will be managed at the state level. It will process and store court case-related data only, it cannot be used for other county or city data. The MiFILE DMS includes standard document management interfaces, including imaging (scanning) capability and provides predefined workflow and case processing tasks. It supports use of electronic court seals. [See minimum hardware and software requirements for the MiFILE DMS.](#)

Table of EDMS Options

Court Options/Scenarios	Cost Impact	Considerations (Courts with EDMS now)	Considerations (Courts without EDMS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement MiFILE DMS that is part of the MiFILE solution in planned wave 	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional DMS integration required May lose workflows from previous DMS Clerk review and document workflow will be combined in one system with MiFILE DMS Does not include migration/ conversion of existing electronic documents to MiFILE DMS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No additional DMS integration required Clerk review and document workflow will be combined in one system with MiFILE DMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand and/or customize MiFILE DMS 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Court will have to work with ImageSoft after planned implementation time; cannot hold up waves Any customization of the MiFILE DMS will be at the court's expense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Court may not receive the resources from ImageSoft and the SCAO that they would otherwise receive in the planned wave Any customization of the MiFILE DMS will be at the court's expense
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement your own court EDMS (not MiFILE DMS) and integrate with MiFILE 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration may require more effort from court if ImageSoft has not worked with system before (see MiFILE Integration Guide) Clerk review and document workflow will not be combined in one system; will result in transmission delays between the CMS and the EDMS Will keep existing workflows Would provide ability to add workflows; although it would be at the court's expense, the court would not be restricted by statewide functionality Could integrate with the local/ county EDMS to implement workflow with other local agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration may require more effort from court if ImageSoft has not worked with system before (see MiFILE Integration Guide) Will require learning two systems; one for clerk review and one for document workflow Transmission time between the CMS and the EDMS is delayed Would provide ability to add workflows; although it would be at the court's expense, the court would not be restricted by statewide functionality Could integrate with the local/ county EDMS to implement workflow with other local agencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement local/ county (not statewide) version of OnBase 	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ImageSoft has done this integration before May require learning new system for document workflow Would provide ability to add workflows at the court's expense, but court would not be bound by statewide functionality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ImageSoft has done this integration before Will require learning two systems; one for clerk review and one for document workflow Would provide ability to add workflows at the court's expense, but court would not be bound by statewide functionality

Considerations for Evaluating the MiFILE DMS versus Local EDMS

The following table is designed to aid in your assessment and evaluation of the MiFILE DMS versus a local EDMS. If you are using your own EDMS, see the integration guide posted here: <http://www.mifile.info/integration/>.

Considerations for Evaluation	State EDMS	Local EDMS
Court is currently storing and managing electronic documents	✓	✓
Prefer an EDMS shared with local government (county or city)		✓
Prefer an EDMS for managing court case-related data	✓	
Complies with standards established by the SCAO	✓	?
Current document processing/workflow is relatively standard	✓	
Current document processing/workflow is customized		✓
Direct integration between EDMS and case management system	✓ ¹	✓
File plan, folder, and metadata components are predefined	✓	
Prefer ability to control file plan, folder, and metadata components		✓
Court has an IT department capable of maintaining an EDMS	✓	✓
Court does not have an IT department	✓	
Prefer to start small and reassess need for added functionality or control	✓	

Additional Hardware and Software Purchases

Beyond the hardware and software components of an EDMS, courts will also need to purchase equipment and technology for capturing, accessing, and handling electronic documents. These tools are necessary for both staff and the public and include:

Public Access and E-Filing Work Stations

Public Access: Whether e-Filing is implemented or not, when a court's public records are only available electronically, the court must provide a means for the public to view those records, while safeguarding nonpublic and confidential information. This may be accomplished by a publicly accessible computer without Internet access. See MiFILE [Brief 9: Access to Electronic Records and AO 1999-4](#) and MiFILE [Brief 5: Michigan Court Rules on Personal Identifying Information](#) for more information.

E-Filing Work Stations: A public-access computer with an attached scanner will serve as a work station for e-Filing, which may be necessary if a court wants to mandate e-Filing for all filers. Additional details about mandating e-Filing will be available before the statewide roll out

¹ This would enable a court to view documents from the CMS or to view CMS data from the EDMS. A custom integration would be required. For the MiFILE DMS, this will result in additional costs.

begins. For courts that plan to provide access to e-Filing on location, an e-Filing work station computer should be placed in an area near the clerk’s counter so that the clerk staff can assist the public in their use of the computer. An e-Filing work station computer must be connected to the Internet but it does not need to have access to the court’s network. See <http://www.mifile.info/mifile-optional-components/> for updates.

A common work station computer configuration consists of the following primary components:

- Miniature computer than can run a modern web browser
- Flat screen monitor
- Keyboard/Mouse
- Low-volume document scanner

Staff and Judicial Work Stations

Courts will need adequate and appropriate computer workstations in the courtroom, in chambers, in the clerk’s office, and in other locations throughout the court. Certain features are more desirable or necessary than others depending on the needs of the individual. For example, a judge may want a touch screen monitor for viewing and handling documents, a courtroom may benefit from signature pads for parties to sign documents, or varying scanner volume and speed may be necessary for different areas of the court. Although these and other features may be desirable, they are optional for an optimal end-user experience. At a minimum, most workstations should include:

- Computer (with Windows 10 operating system or higher)
- Dual flat screen monitors (for example, one for accessing the case management system and another for accessing the EDMS)
- Keyboard/Mouse
- Access to a scanner and printer or a multi-function device

Determining Hardware and Software Needs

The following questions are designed as a starting point for your initial assessment of hardware and software needs in an electronic court environment. We recommend that courts start with the minimum until e-Filing has been in place a while and reassess additional needs. We also recommend that courts use open standards and off-the-shelf software as much as possible to simplify expansion.

Considerations for Assessing Needs
How many courtrooms need a computer for the judge and court staff?
What kind of computer workstation does each staff person need?
How many courtrooms need a printer, scanner, or facsimile machine?
Where will document processing/workflow be accomplished (courtroom, clerk’s office, chambers)?

Where will documents be scanned and by whom (courtroom, clerk's office)?
Will physical changes to the courtroom need to be made to accommodate technology, such as electrical outlets, structural changes, Internet connection?
Will evidence be presented digitally in the courtroom?
Will your court be providing equipment onsite for the public to use for e-Filing or do you plan to use other local resources?

Making Arrangements to Create Electronic Image of Court Seal

If you do not already have an electronic image of your court seal for use on electronic documents, you should make arrangements now for creating one. You may want to start by contacting the company that produced your court's hand pump or electric embosser about producing an electronic image of your court's seal. If the company is unable to provide an electronic image of your court's seal, provide a clear, good quality image of your seal stamped or embossed on paper for use by your IT department, a graphic artist, or company that can produce the seal in a graphics format. The court seal must adequately identify the court and meet the following requirements:

- Graphics Format: PNG or TIFF
- Size: At least 144x144 pixels (height and width should be the same) – seal will be resized to 1 ½ inch on the document based upon court configuration settings
- Grayscale (not color and not just solid black)
- Opacity: Must not obscure text on a document but must still be clearly identifiable when printed and subsequently photocopied
- Orientation: Seal outlines should touch the edges of the image; whitespace around the outside will lead to sizing precision issues

Recommended Resources

1. Developing an Electronic Records Preservation and Disposition Plan: Resource Bulletin https://www.ncsc.org/_data/assets/pdf_file/0027/17694/6jtc-e-records-10-final.pdf
2. Electronic Records Management Guide for the Judiciary https://nacmnet.org/sites/default/files/NACM_ERM_GuideFINAL.pdf
3. The NDSA Levels of Digital Preservation: An Explanation and Uses http://www.digitalpreservation.gov/documents/NDSA_Levels_Archiving_2013.pdf
4. Department of Defense 5015.2 Standard <https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodm/501502std.pdf>
5. JTC Resource Bulletin, Making the Case for Judicial Tools https://www.ncsc.org/_data/assets/pdf_file/0023/17663/judicial-tools-1-0-final.pdf
6. JTC Resource Bulletin, Implementing Judicial Tools https://www.ncsc.org/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/18501/judicial-tools-ii-03-14-2016-final.pdf