



ECF NEWS from The Nation's Capitol

United States District Court for the District of Columbia

ECF Enhancements Scheduled for May, 2006

December, 2005

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Inside this issue:

Version 3.0 of CM/ECF, which will be released in the spring of 2006, will add some needed features to the software.

The most exciting feature for the bar will allow attorneys to designate secondary users to receive emails in specific cases. It is expected that counsel can also designate a reasonable number of recipients and allow clients to receive emails in specific cases.

Another enhancement will allow civil cases to be transferred from jurisdiction to jurisdiction without delays due to mailings.

Finally, attorneys will be able to file ex parte pleadings without notice to opposing counsel.

The Court is currently using Version 2.5 which made a small but noticeable change to the Query Screen in October, 2005.

The query screen allows the user to search information three different ways:

- search by case number
- search by case status, file date/entry date and nature of suit.
- search by case status and name(party or attorney)

The user will notice that the date the case is closed, if applicable, will now display on queries by name or date range (previously only the filed date displayed.) This change allows users a choice to search for either pending cases involving a

party or attorney, or all cases involving a party or attorney. Previously, the only option was to run a query for all cases; to determine if the case was pending or not, users had to click on the link to each individual docket sheet. With the 2.5 upgrade, the status of the case is immediately evident.

It is hoped when 3.0 software is loaded on the system that law firms will send a representative from their firm to obtain additional training which is expected to last no more than an half of an hour. Further information to be provided in the spring.

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SPAM FILTERS MAY CAUSE USER PROBLEMS

Of course, no one wants to receive spam emails and accordingly, many firms and private practitioners have added spam filters to their email accounts. However, the spam filters may prevent a user from receiving e-notices from the Court.

When messages are delivered by ECF, the Court's server communicates with the recipients server. When the two servers

communicate, the Court considers service to be accomplished by the system. Problems occur when the user's system recognizes the Court's email as SPAM and dumps it into the individual's trash bin. To avoid this situation, users should make sure that the Court's e-mail address is listed as an exception in their SPAM protection software. Messages from our Court will come from DCD_ECF Notice@dcd.uscourts.gov.

Users who upgrade their SPAM and/

or virus protection software should always make sure that the new upgrade does not filter out the address.



MONITORING DOCKET ACTIVITY

The ECF Software provides a built-in feature that can reassure case participants that they have received service of all documents filed electronically. Specifically, the Docket Activity Report is a snapshot of all docket activity in specific cases in the District of Columbia.

Counsel will find this report particularly useful during the days following vacation or travel or when they may have concern about the receipt of their e-mails due to increased filtering by their internet providers. The report also is an asset when an e-mail is accidentally deleted prior to the “free look”

To access this report, go to Reports, Docket Activity Report.

Make sure to check the box “only cases to which I am linked” and click on the radio button for “Full docket text.”

The viewing of this report is only a single charge to your PACER account.



PAY NOTICE OF APPEAL FEES ONLINE-COMING IN SPRING

The court is in the process of preparing to allow attorneys to file their Notice of Appeal document and pay online using a credit card.

Filers will be using Pay.gov, the U.S. Treasury’s Internet payment processing feature, to pay their fees as they docket the Notice of Appeal using a major credit card instead of paying in person.

Pay.gov will accept VISA, and

Mastercard.

Users may obtain a report under the Utilities Menu Option through CM/ECF called Internet Payment History so that internet credit card payments can be tracked.

It is expected that this will begin sometime in March.

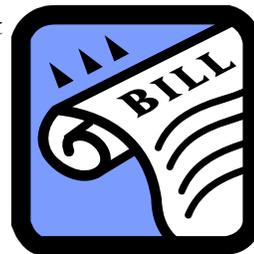
A future pilot project may involve allowing attorneys to open their own civil cases online with the same credit card option. In order to participate, attorneys would have to be trained and certified to open cases. Interested law firms should email Joe_Burgess@dcd.uscourts.gov

PAY.GOV

NEW EVENT-Motion for Victim Rights

The Justice for all Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-405), which provides for crime victims’s rights and enhanced DNA collection, testing and training, became law on October 30, 2004. This new law requires the Administrative Office of United States Courts (AO) to report annually to Congress the num-

ber of times that a right established under this Act is asserted in a criminal case and the requested relief is denied, and the reason for such denial. The AO has created

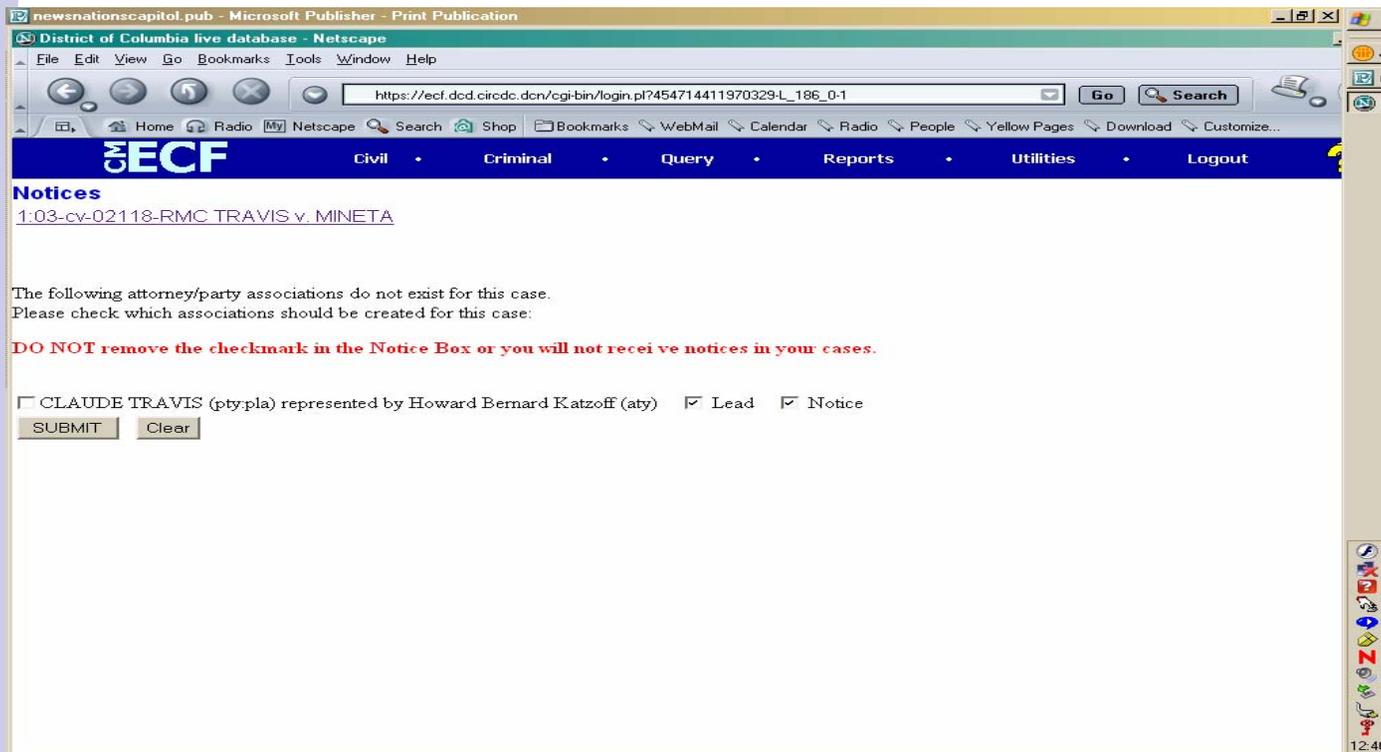


Act requires victim rights be reported to Congress

a new event called “Motion for Victim Rights.” Please file an appropriate motion using this new event whenever a victim asserts his or her rights under the Act.

NOTICING PROBLEM?

If so, it could be related to not checking the box to the far left for the party you represent (in the example below-not checking the box next to Claude Travis) when filing the first pleading or notice of appearance OR by unchecking the Notice Box (located at the far right)



!!! SIGNATURE REQUIREMENT TO BE ENFORCED !!!!!!

Counsel are expected to comply with the rules regarding signatures on pleadings. The signature to be used on all pleadings is “/s/”. Each attorney must place above their name “/s/” and with the full address following. Although multiple attorneys may be listed within the pleading, only those

attorneys whose names are preceded by an “/s/” will be entered into the system.

Those attorneys who are members of the bar of our Court will be entered into the system. Pro hac vice attorneys must file a motion with the Court requesting permission. The signature of the local attorney

must precede the attorney who has been granted pro hac vice status .

The practice of the Court has not been changed. Failure to comply will result in counsel not being added to the case.

CLEARING CACHE IN INTERNET BROWSER IMPORTANT

A user's browser cache might be considered as a double edged sword. By storing internet pages, the user may have visited in the cache, the browser only has to load information on the page that has changed since their last visit. On the positive side, the cache can speed up searches and page reloading, especially when you press the Back button. On the negative side, as your cache files increase and you revisit the same pages, it may take longer to search the cache for a page and display it.

To eliminate the browser cache as a potential problem and to speed up internet searches, you should clear your browser's cookies and cache on a regular basis.

Finally, by not clearing a cache regularly a user, can obtain false information.

“CACHE-a record of what you have seen, heard, or downloaded from the Internet. These files are stored in temporary Internet folders.”

“COOKIES-files created by an Internet site to store information from your computer, such as preferences when visiting that site”

CLEARING INTERNET EXPLORER CACHE & COOKIES

1. Start Internet Explorer.

2. On the tools menu, click Internet Options.
3. On the General Tab, in the Temporary Internet Files section, click on Delete Files, then Delete Cookies.

CLEARING NETSCAPE BROWSER CACHE

1. Start Netscape Communicator or Navigator.
2. On the Edit Menu, click Preferences.
3. Click Advanced.
4. Click Cache
5. Click Clear Memory
6. Clear Disk
7. Click OK.

“HELPLINE”

Hours of Operation

9:00 AM to 4:30 PM

Criminal (202) 354-3060

Civil (202) 354-3190

FREE REPORTS AND OPINIONS

Did you know that District Court Judges began marking select opinions they post to ECF as “written opinions.” By doing this in ECF it marks the file as a free document in PACER. To access the free written opinions:

1. Login into ECF on PACER
2. Click on the Reports link in the top menu bar.
3. Click on the Written Reports

Link.

4. Use the various choices to filter out a specific case.
5. Click on the Run Report Button.

If you click on the hyperlink for a docket report, you will be charged eight cents per page for access-



Written Opinions on PACER

ing the docket. The report and the opinions, however are free.

**United States District
Court for the District of**

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E-mail: criminal
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FOR FILING TIPS

Please go to the following website
<http://www.dcd.uscourts.gov/ECF-Filing-Pointers.html>

Acknowledgement: Several articles were provided from the United States District Courts for Nebraska, Western District of Missouri, Minnesota and the Western District of New York.

“Social Security Cases are Not Made Electronically Available to the General Public”

Files are not made available because of their personal nature and the potential for misuse. The full content of these cases are still available at the courthouse.



*SUBSCRIBE
TO NEWSLETTER*

Users Urged to Upgrade to Adobe Acrobat 6.0

Since most users are using Adobe Acrobat 6.0, it is strongly recommended that all users upgrade to this version of Adobe. Adobe Acrobat 6.0 is compatible with CM/ECF, however PDF documents created with 6.0 cannot always be read by lower versions of Acrobat. Nevertheless, if a users installs the Acrobat 6.0, the settings must be changed to be compatible with prior versions. Instructions regarding Adobe can be found at the Adobe website (www.adobe.com)



Problem logging into the system to file documents?

Possible Solutions:

- **May be logged in with Pacer account**
- **Logins/Passwords are case sensitive-may have capital locks on. Use lower case for logging.**
- **Using another court's login and password.**