

U.S. DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

CIVIL CASE OPENING IN ECF: SCREEN – BY – SCREEN

(Revised: March 2014)

INTRODUCTION

Attorneys may electronically file new civil cases, which are initiated by filing a complaint and paying the filing fee with a valid credit card or by ACH Payment.

If a mistake is made during case opening, the filer must proceed to docket the complaint to maintain and preserve the file date. If you realize you have made an error, please call the Clerk's Office helpline regarding the errors at (202) 354-3190.

BEGIN CASE OPENING

Log in to **CM/ECF**.

Select **CIVIL** from the blue menu bar, then select Open a Civil Case.

Do not make any changes or add text to the screen below. Simply click **[SUBMIT]**.

ECF Civil ▾ Criminal ▾ Query Reports ▾
Logout

Open a Civil Case

Office Case type Case number
Date filed 10/26/2011

Lead case number

Association type

Other court name

Other court number

Related cases

****DO NOT make any changes to this screen. Simply click the [SUBMIT] button.**

CIVIL CASE STATISTICAL INFORMATION SCREEN

Complete the fields on this screen using the guidelines provided below (See also *Case Opening User Guide*, page 25, for further guidance).

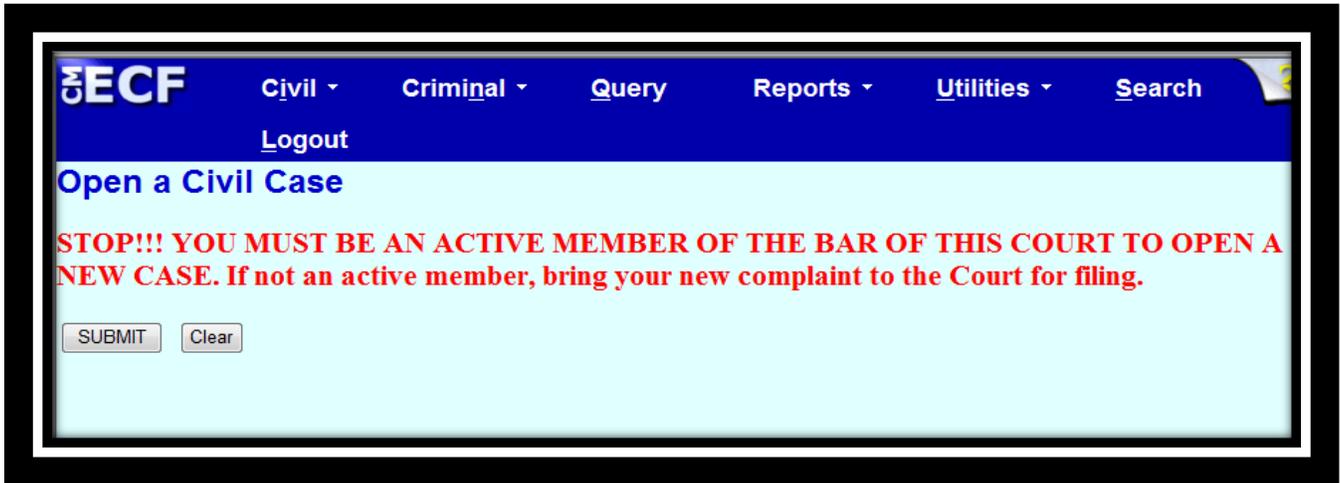
Click [SUBMIT].

-
- Jurisdiction: Select one of the following jurisdiction codes:
 - 1 (U.S. Government Plaintiff)
 - 2 (U.S. Government Defendant)
 - 3 (Federal Question) default
 - 4 (Diversity) must enter citizenship below
 - 5 (Local Question) court use only
 - Cause of action: Select the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing, as cited in the complaint
 - Nature of suit: Select the primary nature of suit from the drop-down list. (Refer to the Civil Cover Sheet and Case Opening User Guide)
 - Origin: Select 1 (Original Proceeding) used when filing the complaint
 - Citizenship: Complete this field only if the selected jurisdiction is 4(Diversity)
 - Jury demand: Complete this field only if a jury demand is contained in the complaint
 - Class action: Leave default
 - Demand: Dollar amount demanded in thousands (e.g., entering 1000 =\$1,000,000.00)
 - Arbitration code: Leave blank
 - County: Select 11001 to indicate plaintiff is a resident of Washington, D.C.; 88888 if plaintiff is resident of the U.S. but not Washington, D.C.; and 99999 if plaintiff is outside the U.S.
 - Fee status: Leave default
 - Fee date: Leave default
 - Date Transfer: Leave default

WARNINGS

Prior to adding parties to the case, you will be cautioned that you must be an active member of the bar of this court and that the complaint must be filed the same date as the case is opened. If you are an active member of the bar of this court, continue the process; if not, contact the Clerk's Office Attorney Admission's Office at (202) 354-3120 to be advised of the court's procedures to become an active member.

Click **[SUBMIT]** to continue the process after each warning is displayed.

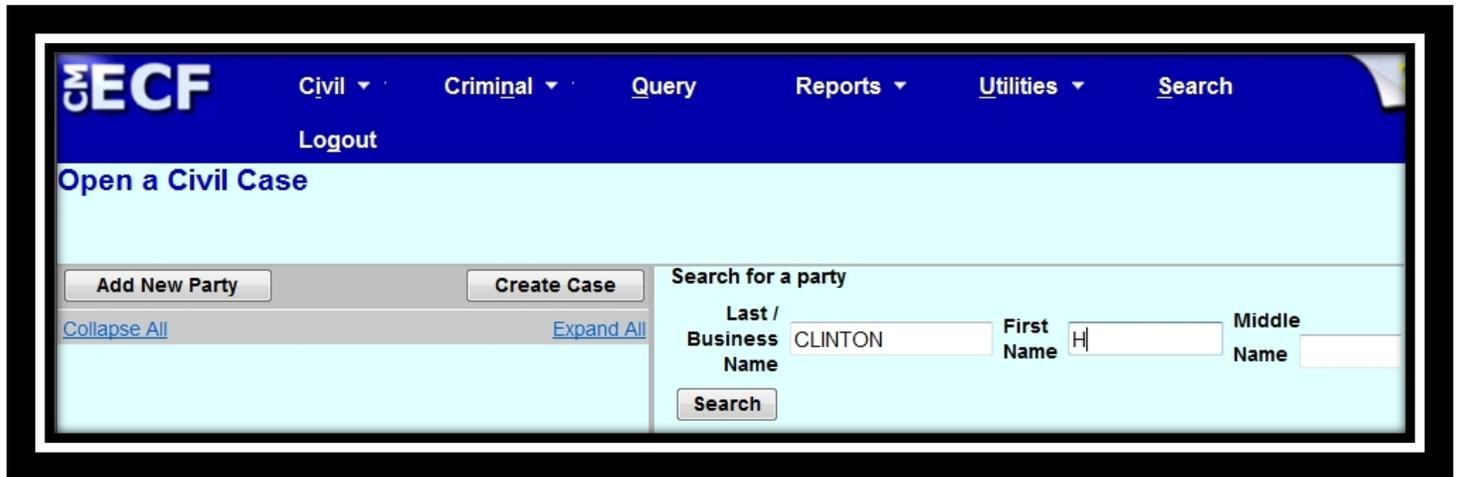


ADD NEW PARTY SCREEN

The left panel below contains the buttons to **[Add New Party]** and **[Create Case]**. Since no participants have been entered for this new case, the participant tree (under **Collapse All**) is empty.

Refer to the Case Opening User Guide for entering all appropriate parties as they appear in your complaint. First, search for each party by entering the last name, first name and middle initial in the corresponding fields and clicking **[Search]**. If the party name appears in the **Search Results** box, highlight it and click **[Select Party]**. If the party name does not appear, click **[Create New Party]** and create the party.

REMEMBER: Party names in this court are in ALL CAPITAL LETTERS.



PARTY INFORMATION SCREEN

Once you have selected a party name using either the **[Select Party]** or **[Create New Party]** buttons, the **Party Information** screen will open. The **Role** field on this screen **defaults to 2255 Govt**, as shown below.

****THE ROLE MUST BE CHANGED TO EITHER PLAINTIFF OR DEFENDANT****

If there is descriptive information for a party included in your complaint, enter it in the **Party Text** field.

EXAMPLE: HILLARY CLINTON, in her official capacity as Secretary of State.

Leave all other fields blank. **Do not enter address information.**

Select **[Add Party]**. The party will be added to the participant tree in the left panel.

ECF Civil Criminal Query Reports Utilities Search
Logout

Open a Civil Case

Add New Party Create Case

Collapse All Expand All

Party Information
HILLARY CLINTON

Title

Role 2255 (usgov:pty)

Pro se No

Prisoner Id Unit

Office

Address1

Address 2 Show this address on the

Address 3 City

State Zip Country

Prison

Phone Fax

E-mail

Party text in her official capacity as Secretary of State

Start date 10/26/2011 End date

Corporation no Notice yes

Add Party

Start a New Search

ALWAYS change the Role of the party to plaintiff or defendant.

Descriptive text of the party goes in the Party text field.

PARTICIPANT TREE AND FUNCTIONAL ICONS

The participant tree is displayed on the left panel as parties are added to the case. The **Expand All** hyperlink displays all of the participants that have been added to the case, including aliases. The **Collapse All** hyperlink displays only the parties in the case (plaintiffs and defendants), with the other participants collapsed in the tree. Also present in the participant tree are functional icons:

-  Delete this party from this case.
-  Add new alias, corporate parent.
-  Edit the party, alias, or corporate parent.

Note: The **Edit** icon only displays beside a party once it's been added to the participant tree; therefore, if no participant is added, this icon is suppressed. To add an alias, click the **Add Party** icon. **DO NOT add corporate parents or attorneys to the case.**

The right panel of the screen allows you to search for and add additional parties. Add all of the parties as they appear in the caption of the complaint. If there are 200 plaintiffs, only add the first 50 plaintiffs; however, if there are 200 defendants, you must add all 200 defendants. If you omit a party, contact the Clerk's Office Helpline, (202) 354-3190.



The screenshot displays the ECF system interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the ECF logo and menu items: Civil, Criminal, Query, Reports, Utilities, and Search. Below the navigation bar is a "Logout" link. The main heading is "Open a Civil Case".

The interface is divided into two main sections:

- Left Panel (Participant Tree):** Contains a "Collapse All" link and an "Expand All" link. The tree lists two parties: "HILLARY CLINTON" (df) and "GOOGLE, INC." (pla). Each party has a sub-tree with "Alias", "Corporate Parent or other affiliate", and "Attorney" options, each accompanied by a green plus icon.
- Right Panel (Search):** Titled "Search for a party", it features three input fields for "Last / Business Name", "First Name", and "Middle Name", and a "Search" button.

At the top of the main content area, there are two buttons: "Add New Party" and "Create Case".

Once all parties have been added to the case, click **[Create Case]**.

Once the **[Create Case]** button has been selected, you will be presented with an option to either create the case or stop the process. If you select **[Yes]** and create the case, you must continue and file the complaint. Clicking **[No]** allows you to add or make changes to the participant tree.



Once the case has been created, do not click the back button on your web browser. If you forgot to add a party or parties, or have made another type of error, please contact the Clerk's Office at (202) 354-3190.

DOCKETING THE COMPLAINT

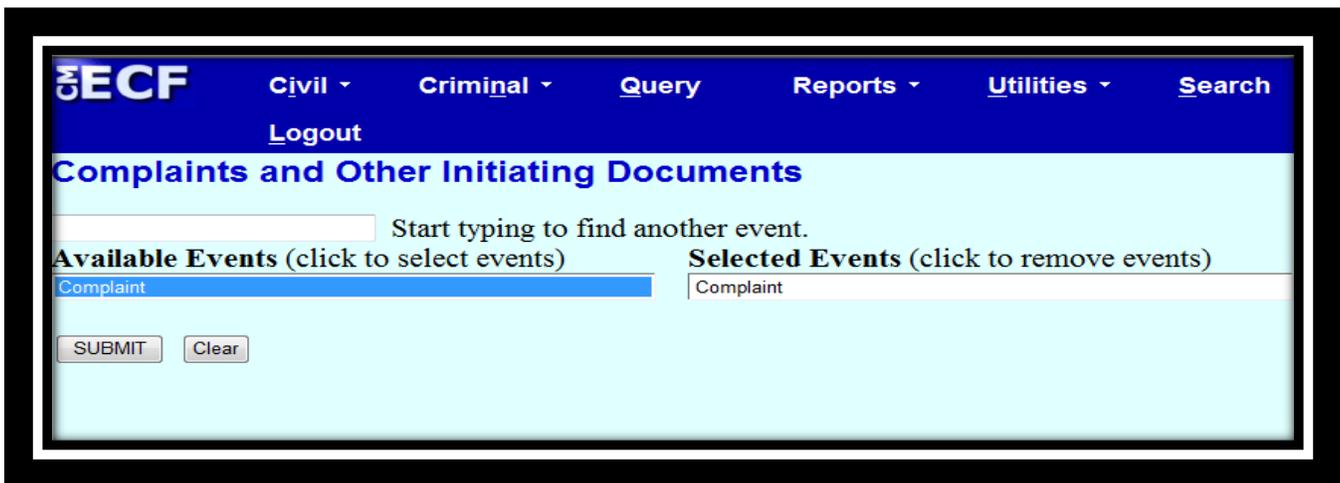
Once the case has been created, you will be given a case number. Make note of the case number so that you may file the complaint electronically.

Note: The new case number is displayed without an assigned Article III Judge. The Clerk’s Office will notify you of the assigned judge once the case has been reviewed.



The complaint **must** now be filed. Click the hyperlink, **Docket Lead Event?**.

Select **Complaint** from the **Available Events** list and it will populate in the **Selected Events** field. Click [SUBMIT].



Your new case number should be automatically generated in the **Civil Case Number** field. If not, enter the case number. Click **[SUBMIT]**.

The screenshot shows the ECF system interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: **Civil**, **Criminal**, **Query**, **Reports**, and **Utilities**. Below these is a **Logout** link. The main heading is **Complaints and Other Initiating Documents**. A form titled **Civil Case Number** has a text input field containing **1:11-cv-104**. Below the input field are two buttons: **SUBMIT** and **Clear**.

Select the filer(s) of the complaint (i.e., the plaintiffs) and click **[Next]**. **Note:** If you forgot to add a plaintiff while opening the case, you could add it now by clicking **[New Filer]**.

The screenshot shows the ECF system interface for selecting filers. The case title is **1:11-cv-00104 GOOGLE, INC. v. CLINTON**. There is a **Pick Filer** button and a **Select the filer.** instruction. On the left, a list of filers is shown with **Collapse All** and **Expand All** links. The list contains **HILLARY CLINTON dft** and **GOOGLE, INC. pla**. On the right, there is a **Select the Party:** dropdown menu with two options: **CLINTON, HILLARY [dft]** and **GOOGLE, INC. [pla]**. At the bottom, there are three buttons: **Next**, **Clear**, and **New Filer**.

Leave the box checked to the left of the party name which associates the filing attorney with the party. Unchecking the box will prevent the filing attorney and staff from receiving Notices of Electronic Filing (NEF).

ECF Civil Criminal Query Reports
Logout

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

[1:11-cv-00104 GOOGLE, INC. v. CLINTON](#)

The following attorney/party associations do not exist for the above case(s).

Please check the box on the left of the screen for associations which should be created.

If the association should *not* be created, be sure the box is *unchecked*

GOOGLE, INC. (pty:pla) represented by atty20 (aty) Lead

Select the party or parties that this filing is against (i.e., the defendant(s)) and click **[Next]**.

ECF Civil Criminal Query Reports Utilities
Logout

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

[1:11-cv-00104 GOOGLE, INC. v. CLINTON](#)

[Collapse All](#) [Expand All](#)

GOOGLE, INC. pla
HILLARY CLINTON dft

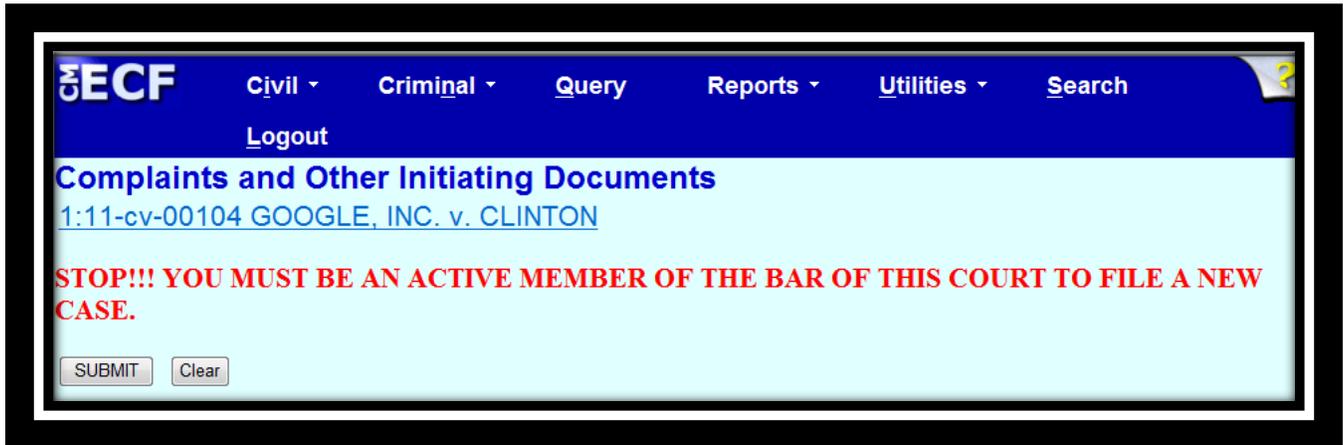
Please select the party that this filing is against.

Select the Party: OR Select a Group:

GOOGLE, INC. [pla]
CLINTON, HILLARY [dft]

No Group
 All Defendants
 All Plaintiffs
 All Parties

The next screen is a warning that the filing attorney must be an active member of the bar of this court. Click [SUBMIT].



The screenshot shows the ECF system interface. At the top, there is a blue navigation bar with the ECF logo and menu items: Civil, Criminal, Query, Reports, Utilities, and Search. Below the navigation bar is a white header with the text "Logout". The main content area has a light blue background and displays the title "Complaints and Other Initiating Documents" followed by the case number "1:11-cv-00104 GOOGLE, INC. v. CLINTON". A prominent red warning message reads: "STOP!!! YOU MUST BE AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE BAR OF THIS COURT TO FILE A NEW CASE." At the bottom of the form, there are two buttons: "SUBMIT" and "Clear".

The filing attorney must acknowledge that he or she is an active member of the bar of this court. Select **Yes**, then click [SUBMIT]. **Note:** If the filing attorney is not an active member of the bar of this court, stop filing your complaint and contact the Clerk's Office Attorney Admissions office at (202) 354-3107.



The screenshot shows the ECF system interface. At the top, there is a blue navigation bar with the ECF logo and menu items: Civil, Criminal, Query, and Reports. Below the navigation bar is a white header with the text "Logout". The main content area has a light blue background and displays the title "Complaints and Other Initiating Documents" followed by the case number "1:11-cv-00104 GOOGLE, INC. v. CLINTON". A question is posed: "Are you an active member of the bar of this court?" Below the question are two radio button options: "Yes" (which is selected) and "No". At the bottom of the form, there are two buttons: "SUBMIT" and "Clear".

The next screen alerts the filer to attach the summons and cover sheet as attachments to the complaint. In addition, it directs that any related case documents, motions or corporate disclosure statements, if applicable, must be filed as separate docket entries.

[Browse] for the PDF version of your complaint to attach it to the docket entry. Be sure to right click on the file name, then **Open Document**, to verify you have the correct PDF document. Add all necessary attachments, including the civil cover sheet, summons, and any exhibits. Once all documents have been attached and descriptions added, click [SUBMIT].

ECF Civil Criminal Query Reports Utilities Search

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

1:11-cv-00104 [GOOGLE, INC. v. CLINTON](#)

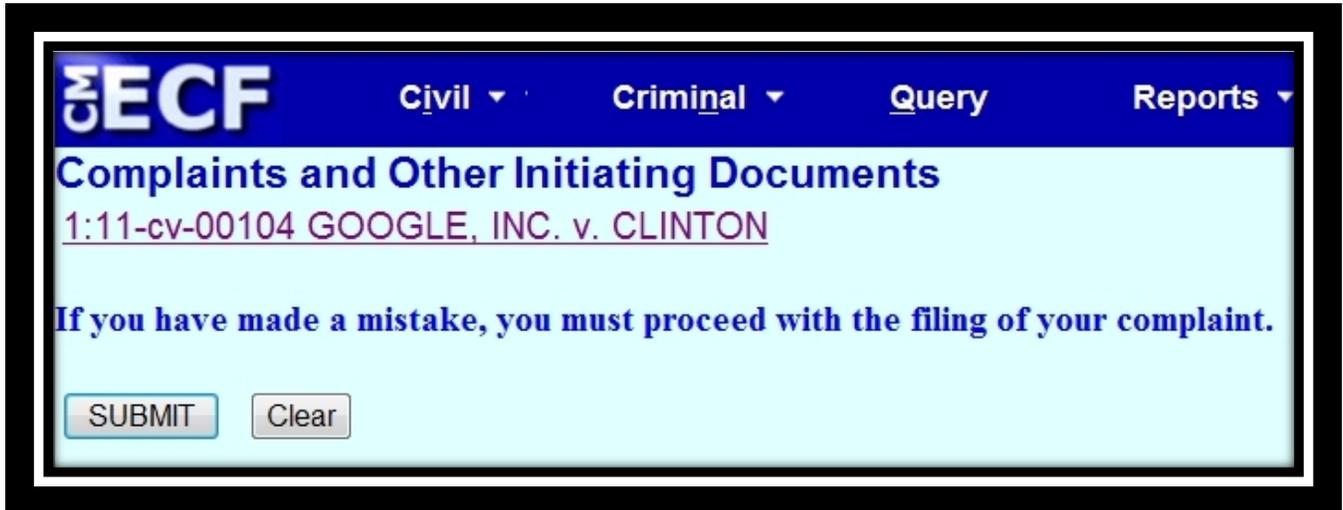
The summons and civil cover sheet are to be filed as attachments to the complaint. If applicable, file a related case document, any motions and the corporate disclosure statement, each as separate filings.

Select the pdf document and any attachments.

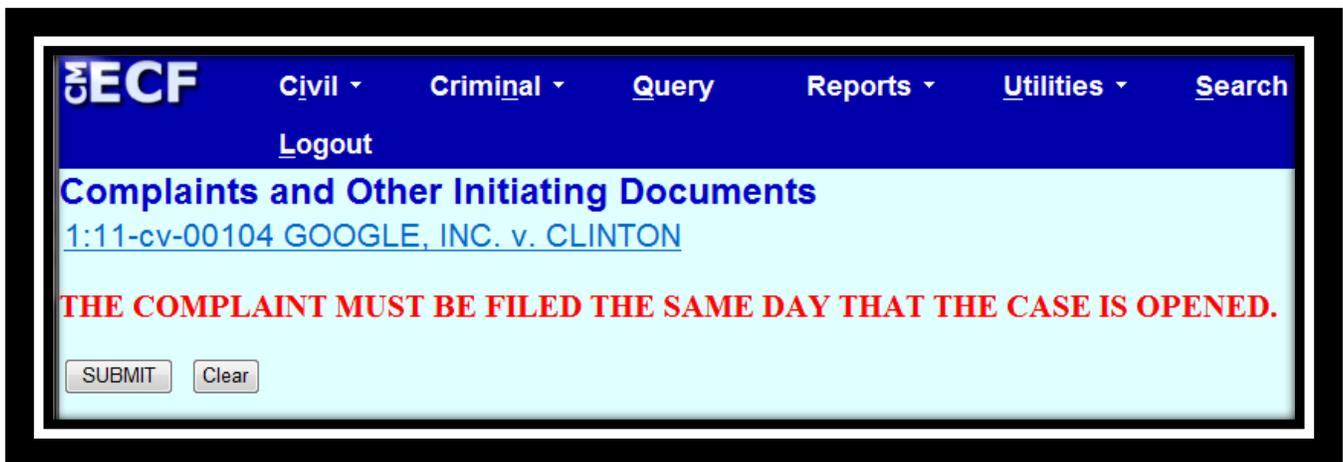
Main Document
N:\FakeDocsECF\complaint.pdf

	Attachments	Category	Description	
1.	N:\FakeDocsECF\exhibitA.pdf <input type="button" value="Browse..."/>	Exhibit	A	<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
2.	N:\FakeDocsECF\civilcoversheet.pdf <input type="button" value="Browse..."/>	Civil Cover Sheet		<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
3.	N:\FakeDocsECF\summons.pdf <input type="button" value="Browse..."/>	Summons		<input type="button" value="Remove"/>
4.	<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Browse..."/>			

The following two screens contain warnings advising the filer to continue the process even though there may be mistakes, and that the complaint must be filed the same date the case is opened. Click **[SUBMIT]** after each warning.

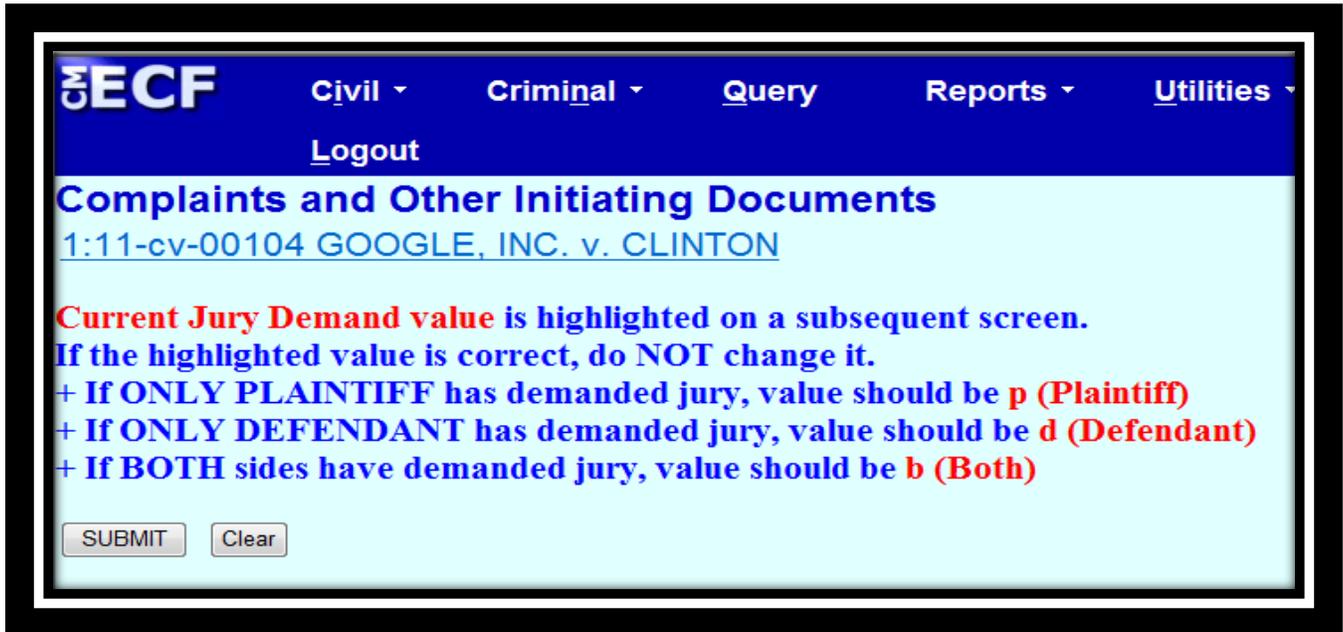


The screenshot shows the ECF system interface. At the top, there is a blue navigation bar with the ECF logo on the left and menu items: Civil, Criminal, Query, and Reports. Below the navigation bar, the page title is "Complaints and Other Initiating Documents" and the case number is "1:11-cv-00104 GOOGLE, INC. v. CLINTON". A warning message in blue text reads: "If you have made a mistake, you must proceed with the filing of your complaint." At the bottom of the page, there are two buttons: "SUBMIT" and "Clear".



The screenshot shows the ECF system interface. At the top, there is a blue navigation bar with the ECF logo on the left and menu items: Civil, Criminal, Query, Reports, Utilities, and Search. Below the navigation bar, there is a "Logout" link. The page title is "Complaints and Other Initiating Documents" and the case number is "1:11-cv-00104 GOOGLE, INC. v. CLINTON". A warning message in red text reads: "THE COMPLAINT MUST BE FILED THE SAME DAY THAT THE CASE IS OPENED." At the bottom of the page, there are two buttons: "SUBMIT" and "Clear".

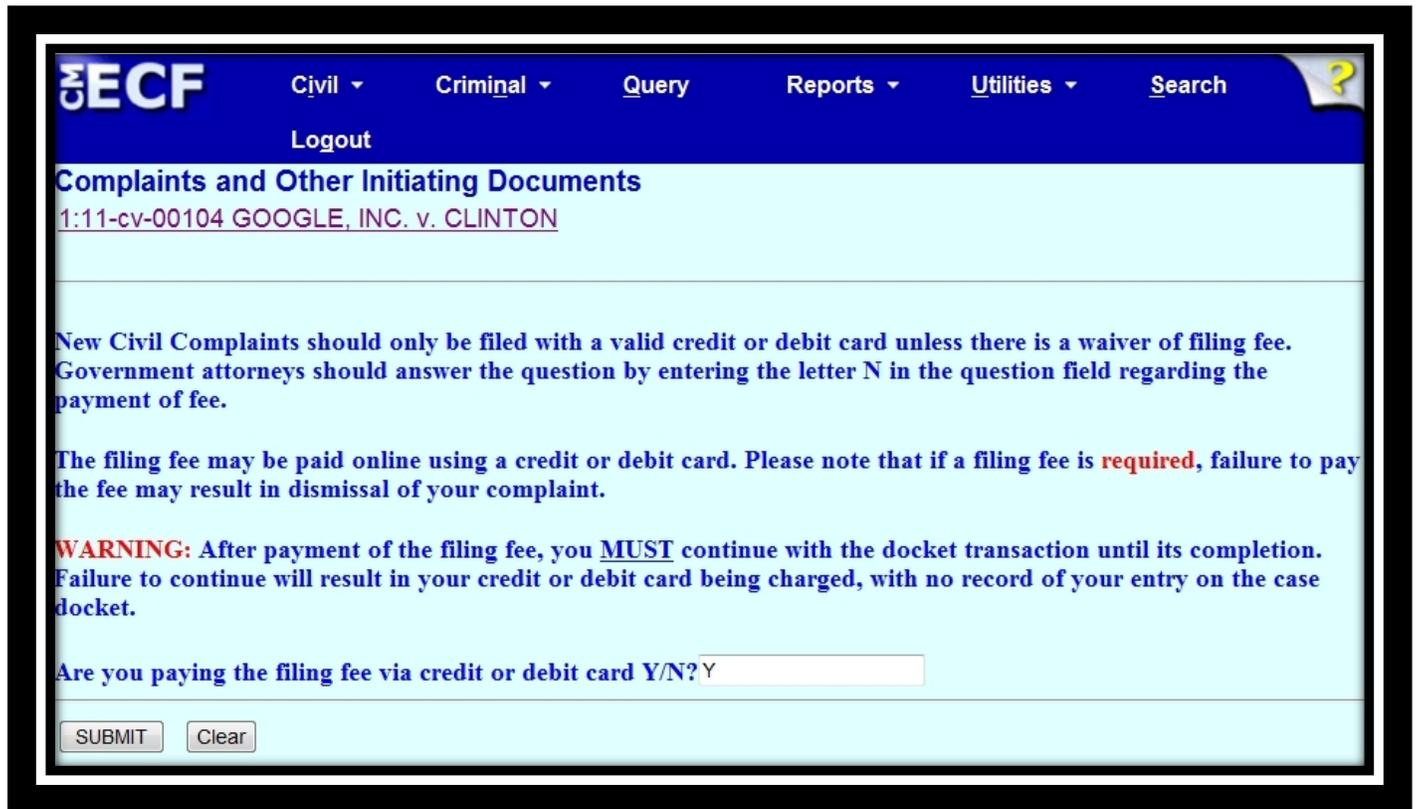
This screen explains the various values that should be entered on the following screen regarding the jury demand. After reading the instructions, click **[SUBMIT]**.



Choose the value for the jury demand from the drop-down list. In this instance, the plaintiff requested a jury; thus **p (Plaintiff)** should be chosen. Once the selection has been made, click **[SUBMIT]**.



The following screen asks whether a filing fee will be paid by credit or debit card. If you are a government attorney, enter **N** for No in the text field. Otherwise, enter **Y** for Yes. Click **[SUBMIT]**.



ECF Civil Criminal Query Reports Utilities Search ?

Logout

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

[1:11-cv-00104 GOOGLE, INC. v. CLINTON](#)

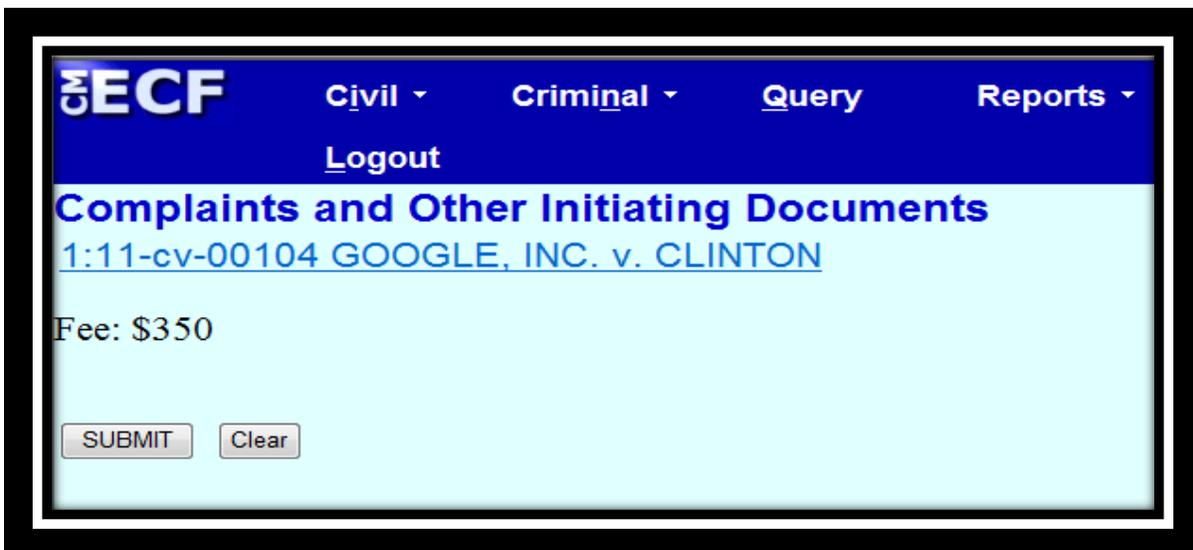
New Civil Complaints should only be filed with a valid credit or debit card unless there is a waiver of filing fee. Government attorneys should answer the question by entering the letter **N** in the question field regarding the payment of fee.

The filing fee may be paid online using a credit or debit card. Please note that if a filing fee is **required**, failure to pay the fee may result in dismissal of your complaint.

WARNING: After payment of the filing fee, you **MUST** continue with the docket transaction until its completion. Failure to continue will result in your credit or debit card being charged, with no record of your entry on the case docket.

Are you paying the filing fee via credit or debit card Y/N?

This screen alerts you of the filing fee. Click **[SUBMIT]**.



ECF Civil Criminal Query Reports

Logout

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

[1:11-cv-00104 GOOGLE, INC. v. CLINTON](#)

Fee: \$350

*Please note: The filing fee is now \$400.

You will then be prompted to enter payment information. While the payment processing screen is loading, a short message will appear: "Now loading the payment processing screen. This process may take a few seconds." Please wait until the payment processing screen is finished loading.

Once you reach the screen below, **DO NOT** use the back button on your web browser for any reason. There are two options for payment: ACH (debit) payment or credit card, both of which will be on the same screen. If you are using ACH Payment, select the **Bank Account Debit (ACH)** hyperlink and add the required information, then click [**Continue with ACH Payment**].

Pay.gov: Bank Account Debit (ACH)

This option allows Pay.gov to withdraw the filing fee from your checking or savings account.

Step # 1:
Enter Payment Information
Click on the Bank Account Debit (ACH) hyperlink to begin.
Complete all required fields marked with a red asterisk (*)
Account type options are:

- Personal Checking
- Personal Savings
- Business Checking
- Business Savings.

Click Continue with ACH Payment.

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If you are using the credit card, select the **Plastic Card** hyperlink and complete the required information, then click **[Continue with Plastic Card Payment]**.

Alternative Payment by Credit Card.

. Payment may also be done by VISA, Mastercard, American Express or Discover. This option will be on the same screen as the debit card, but will be below that option.

. Make sure to complete the required fields noted with an asterisk. In addition, the city, state and zip code should be completed.

. After all information is input, click the button "Continue with Plastic Card Payment."

Option 2: Pay Via Plastic Card (PC) (ex: VISA, Mastercard, American Express, Discover)

Required fields are indicated with a red asterisk *

Account Holder Name: *

Payment Amount: \$350.00

Billing Address: *

Billing Address 2:

City:

State / Province:

Zip / Postal Code:

Country:

Card Type:    

Card Number: * (Card number value should not contain spaces or dashes)

Security Code: * [View Finding Your Security Code](#)

Expiration Date: * / *

Select the "Continue with Plastic Card Payment" button to continue to the next step in the Plastic Card Payment Process.

Note: Please avoid navigating the site using your browser's Back Button - this may lead to incomplete data being transmitted and pages being loaded incorrectly. Please use the links provided whenever possible.

Once the credit card or ACH payment information has been submitted, authorize the payment by clicking in the authorization box. You may choose to add an email address so that you will be sent a confirmation of the payment. Click **[Submit Payment]**.

Step #2: Authorize Payment

Enter your e-mail address for confirmation.

You can also select additional e-mail addresses in the CC: field.

Check the Authorization and Disclosure Agreement box.

Click **Submit Payment**.
ECF will return you to the case opening program to complete the process.

Email Confirmation Receipt
To have a confirmation sent to you upon completion of this transaction, provide an email address and confirmation below.

Email Address: wardattorney@ward.uscourts.gov
Confirm Email Address: wardattorney@ward.uscourts.gov
CC:

Authorization and Disclosure
Required fields are indicated with a red asterisk *
I authorize a charge to my card account for the above amount in accordance with my card issuer agreement.
Press the "Submit Payment" Button only once. Pressing the button more than once could result in multiple transactions.

Submit Payment Cancel

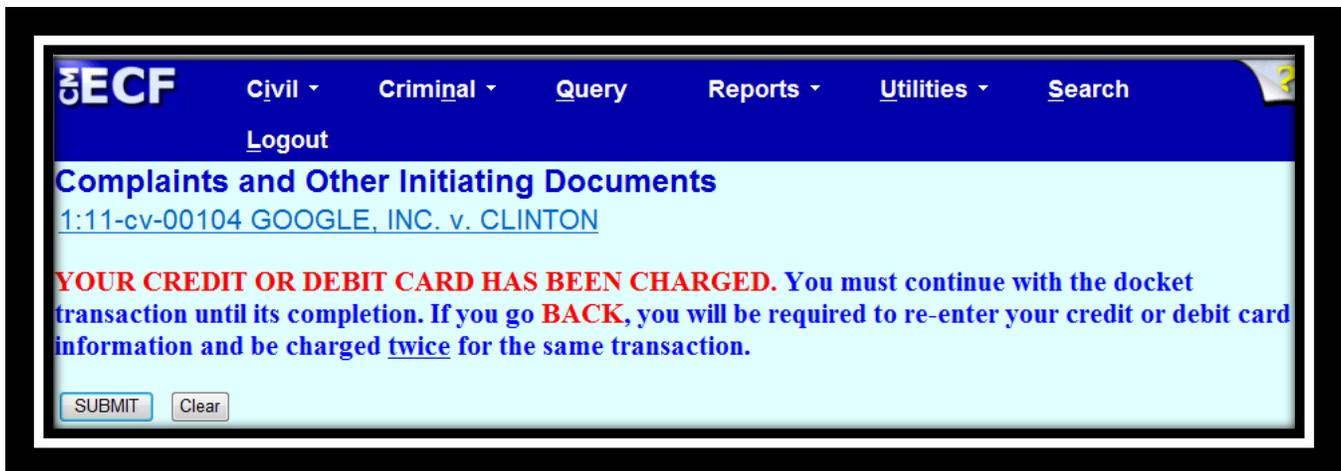
Note: Please avoid navigating the site using your browser's Back Button - this may lead to incomplete data being submitted and pages being loaded incorrectly. Please use the links provided whenever possible.

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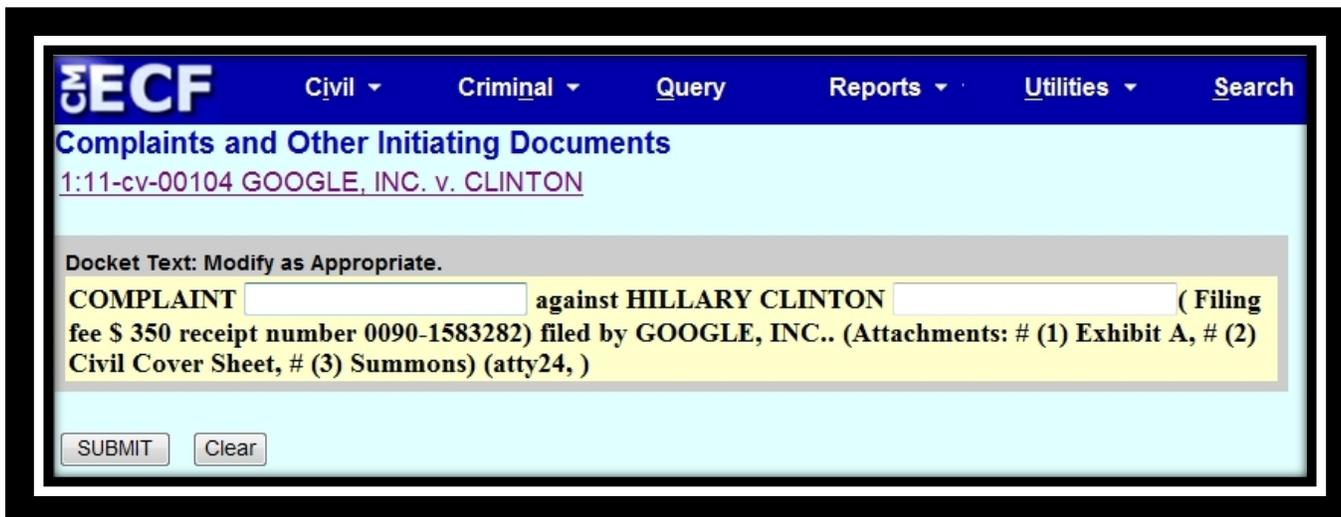
After the authorization of payment has been submitted, **wait until the fee has been processed**. **DO NOT** hit the back button on your web browser or you may be charged twice without your complaint being filed.



Once the payment has been processed, you will be cautioned to proceed with the filing. Click **[SUBMIT]**.



On this screen, you may add additional text to the text fields; however, this is unnecessary. Make sure there is a receipt number for the filing fee otherwise it has not been paid. If the fee is not paid, notify the Clerk's Office immediately. Click **[SUBMIT]** if the docket text is correct.



This is the final screen to complete your transaction. If correct, click **[SUBMIT]** and you will have completed the filing of your complaint.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents1:11-cv-00104 [GOOGLE, INC. v. CLINTON](#)

Docket Text: Final Text

COMPLAINT against **HILLARY CLINTON** (Filing fee \$ 350 receipt number 0090-1583282) filed by **GOOGLE, INC.**.. (Attachments: # (1) Exhibit A, # (2) Civil Cover Sheet, # (3) Summons)(atty24,)

Attention!! Pressing the **NEXT** button on this screen commits this transaction. You will have no further opportunity to modify this transaction if you continue.

Source Document Path (for confirmation only):

C:\fakepath\complaint.pdf pages: 1

C:\fakepath\exhibitA.pdf pages: 1

C:\fakepath\civilcoversheet.pdf pages: 1

C:\fakepath\summons.pdf pages: 1

Once the final transaction is submitted, a Notice of Electronic Filing (NEF) is generated, as shown below.

Complaints and Other Initiating Documents

[1:11-cv-00104 GOOGLE, INC. v. CLINTON](#)

U.S. District Court

District of Columbia

Notice of Electronic Filing

The following transaction was entered by atty24, on 5/2/2012 at 2:47 PM and filed on 5/2/2012

Case Name: GOOGLE, INC. v. CLINTON

Case Number: [1:11-cv-00104](#)

Filer: GOOGLE, INC.

Document Number: [1](#)

Docket Text:

COMPLAINT against HILLARY CLINTON (Filing fee \$ 350 receipt number 0090-1583282) filed by GOOGLE, INC.. (Attachments: # (1) Exhibit A, # (2) Civil Cover Sheet, # (3) Summons)(atty24,)

1:11-cv-00104 Notice has been electronically mailed to:

atty20 laura_chipley@dcd.uscourts.gov, joe_burgess@dcd.uscourts.gov, john_doe@aol.com

1:11-cv-00104 Notice has been delivered by other means to:

atty24

The following document(s) are associated with this transaction:

Document description:Main Document

Original filename:suppressed

Electronic document Stamp:

[STAMP dcecfStamp_ID=973800458 [Date=5/2/2012] [FileNumber=1882416-0]

[0ae80b65f4cdaac5aca1acebfcebc0d6bfc007f6f53a72cf8eb35c70c72069ecea0a5

After the case is examined by the Clerk's Office, you will be notified of the Article III Judge assigned to the case and the summons will be issued electronically.

Happy filing!