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DA's Juvenile Division Goes Paperless; Digital Saves One Million Pieces of Paper

Innovative New System Wins Two Awards for Collaboration

San Diego County District Attorney [Bonnie Dumanis](#) announced today a new digital system for managing case files in the DA's Juvenile Division, which was part of an award-winning county collaborative effort. The project, known as JELS (Justice Electronic Library System) allows Deputy District Attorneys, Deputy Public Defenders and County Probation Officers to manage juvenile case files electronically from the court room and to share documents in a secure environment.

"We're always looking for ways to leverage technology and improve efficiency," DA Dumanis said. "The JELS project in our Juvenile Branch streamlines case work, saves paper and makes the court process more efficient. This collaboration with other county departments brings our office into the 21st century and saves taxpayer dollars."

The Juvenile Division of the District Attorney's Office worked closely with the County Information and Technology group in developing and piloting the digital system. The program streamlines case file management for attorneys and staff members while empowering county attorneys in the courtroom and accelerating court proceedings. The software cornerstones of JELS are Microsoft SharePoint and Adobe Pro.

Prior to the JELS program, DDA's would typically have to physically carry between 25 to 30 case files into the courtroom. Now they use their laptops to securely access the case files and corresponding documents, which are obtained or created by the District Attorney, Probation or Public Defender employees. Each agency has its own secure site, ensuring that only the appropriate and relevant files are shared among the agencies.

Going paperless is estimated to save about one million pages a year based on 25,000 calendar hearings per year that each create about 250 pages of documents, distributed to four players in the case – the District Attorney's Office, Probation, Public Defender and the Superior Court.

(More)

“JELS has made handling large volumes of cases more efficient,” said Juvenile Branch Chief Giacomo Bucci. “Our DDA’s are better prepared in court by having the ability to quickly and accurately navigate large files for information. In addition, minors receive the benefit of good record keeping as well as the security that JELS provides to their information. “

About 500 hearings a week are now being conducted electronically. That figure is set to increase when other Juvenile Court divisions including drug, truancy and mental health courts come online.

The collaboration began when representatives of the District Attorney’s Office, San Diego County Probation Office and The Office of the Public Defender expressed an interest in a completely electronic process and worked with the County Information Technology Office to make it happen.

The program has since been honored with two awards for collaboration including the Best of California Award, given by the Center for Digital Government and the Innovation Award given by the California County Information Services Director’s Association. The CCISDA is the professional organization of all 58 California County Chief Information Officers.

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