

# **Feasibility Study for a Data and Document Exchange Capability Between CSE Agencies and Courts**

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# **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This feasibility study examines the viability of an electronic data and document exchange capability between state Child Support Enforcement (CSE) agencies and their respective courts. The intent of an electronic exchange capability is to benefit states by saving time and improving the accuracy of data and documents exchanged.

## **1.1 REQUIREMENTS DEFINITION**

This feasibility study was conducted in two phases. During the first phase, requirements for a data and document exchange capability were defined. Numerous documents and background materials influenced the requirements specified in this study, particularly the proposed child support document type definition (DTD) created by the child support XML workgroup. In addition, a representative sample of states and courts were surveyed to determine the level of automation that exists, how data and documents are currently exchanged, how states and courts would like to exchange information, and the possible benefits of an electronic exchange capability. The many state and court individuals who participated in this study are commended and sincerely thanked for their time and effort.

This study documents basic requirements that must be met for the achievement of a successful interface/exchange. Requirements are identified for the following categories:

- Data – includes case, person (obligor, obligee, and child[ren]), financial, and event
- Processing
- Technical
- Organizational
- Operational
- Legacy System Modification

These requirements are not detailed systems development requirements, but were used as factors for evaluating various alternatives for accomplishing the objective of a specific exchange of information between states and courts.

## **1.2 ALTERNATIVES AND COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS**

Alternatives were derived from further analysis of the current best practices from states and courts. Alternatives were assessed against the requirements to determine their feasibility. Each alternative was also assessed for its suitability to support interstate exchange. The alternatives described and evaluated in this study are:

- XML-based interface
- Traditional system-to-system interface (Colorado based)
- Imaging (Washington based)

While developing a detailed cost/benefit analysis for the identified alternatives is not possible due to the many variables that are unique to each state and court, a general comparison of costs is presented. In addition, alternatives were assessed against a standard list of possible benefits.

### **1.3 FINDINGS**

A solution employing XML is deemed the preferred solution for exchanging data and documents between CSE agencies and their courts. An XML solution best meets the requirements specified in this study, is less expensive relative to the other alternatives evaluated, and provides the best possibility for extension to interstate data exchange. Several activities are recommended for states to complete if they wish to pursue any data and document exchange solution. First and foremost is completing a detailed cost/benefit analysis that considers all the variables unique to a state and court, including staffing, technical environment, training, and operational commitment. Due to the sluggish economy and state budgets stretched to the maximum, a comprehensive assessment is needed to justify the pursuit of any solution.

To pursue an XML solution, recommended next steps include the following:

- Pursue continuation of the work completed to date by the child support XML workgroup to expand the draft DTD. Use the XML DTD as a guide and build a “palette” based on the data available in this study, data elements from CSENet, information identified and defined by the Interstate Workgroup, and more.
- Select three states and complete detailed cost/benefit analyses to further validate the XML endorsement reflected in this study.

OCSE may also consider pursuing opportunities to provide XML exposure to states via training courses, conference presentations and workshops, and materials available on the OCSE website.

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

The Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) contracted with the State Information Technology Consortium (SITC) to complete a feasibility study for a data and document exchange capability between state Child Support Enforcement (CSE) agencies and their respective courts. The primary objective of this task is to determine the viability of an electronic data and document exchange capability, given the current level of automation that exists within the courts. The intent is to benefit states by saving time and improving the accuracy of data and documents exchanged between state CSE programs and the courts. For example, if all parties could agree that specific transmitted information serves as a court order, staff would not have to wait for a paper copy of the court order prior to case prosecution.

### **2.1 BACKGROUND**

The SITC Statement of Work mentions the effort of a workgroup – composed of state, court, and Federal staff – focused on exchanging information with and between state CSE agencies and their respective courts using XML (eXtensible Markup Language). This workgroup analyzed the current electronic court filing standard to determine if the standard could support the data needed for court filing by child support agencies, as well as the data that courts send back to child support agencies. A draft document type definition (DTD) specification was prepared under a Special Improvement Project (SIP) grant awarded to the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) by OCSE. The intent of this working group was to produce a draft standard within the Court Filing Work Group of LegalXML for formal adoption through the Conference of State Court Administrators and the National Association for Court Management. At this time, the costs of an electronic data and document exchange capability have not been weighed against the benefits. It may or may not be beneficial to wait until the court systems become more automated.

### **2.2 APPROACH**

This study of the feasibility of a data and document exchange capability between state CSE agencies and their respective courts was conducted in two phases. The initial phase focused on conducting research and analysis of current file transfer technologies, business needs met by such a transfer, best practices from selected states, and previous work completed by court, state, and Federal workgroups. The principle output from the initial phase was basic requirements that must be met for the achievement of a successful interface/exchange of information between the states and their courts. The requirements provided in this report are not to be considered as detailed systems development requirements. They are to be used as factors for evaluating various alternatives for accomplishing the objective of a specific exchange of information between states and courts. The requirements are grouped into two basic categories. The first category, Alternative Specification Requirements, includes data, processing and technical requirements of each alternative. The second category, Alternative Feasibility Requirements, includes organizational, operational and legacy system modification requirements that are considered to be overarching requirements and apply to the feasibility assessment of each alternative. The requirements are provided in Section 3 of this document.

The second phase of the effort focused on identifying and describing alternatives for achieving information exchange in a standard manner that would facilitate evaluation. The alternatives were derived from further analysis of the current best practices from states and industry best practices in the

use of new technology to accomplish information exchange. The alternatives were assessed against a set of criteria (derived from the requirements) and their level of feasibility is documented in this study. Each alternative was assessed for cost and benefit. The cost/benefit analysis is documented at a general level since specific costs for each state and court are dependent on their current situation relative to automation.

As part of completing this study, research was conducted and a representative sample of states and courts were surveyed to determine the level of automation that exists, how data and documents are currently exchanged, and how states and courts would like to exchange information. A facet of this research was also to identify the benefits to states of an electronic data and document exchange capability. The survey information was used to derive requirements as well as evaluate best practices to support alternative development. To effectively conduct these interviews, a structured interview guide was developed (presented in Appendix A). The interview guide contains questions that directly contributed to this deliverable, as well as assisting in the alternatives analysis and cost/benefit analysis. Appendix B contains a summary table as a quick reference for each of the interviews and corresponding analysis and Appendix C contains the interview notes. The many state and court individuals who participated in this study are commended for their time and effort.

Additionally, during the information gathering process, documentation and background material was reviewed. Information contained in this deliverable reflects data collected from documentation provided by OCSE and the National Center for State Courts.

The following is a list of documentation used for the study:

- Volume 3 – Domestic Relations Case Processing System Functional Standards, November 26, 2001
- OASIS LegalXML Member Section Electronic Court Filing Technical Committee DRAFT Electronic Court Filing 1.1 Proposed Standard, July 12, 2002
- Draft for Consideration by National Consortium for State Court Automation Standards and COSCA/NACM Joint Technology Committee, Standards for Electronic Filing Processes, July 12, 2002
- Georgia Courts Automation Commission Court Filing Interoperability Pilot Lessons Learned Document, December 4, 2001
- Georgia Courts Automation Commission Court Filing Interoperability Pilot Lessons Learned Document II, May 20, 2002
- Electronic Filing of Court Documents, by Judge (Ret.) Arthur M. Monty Ahalt, April 1999
- Colorado documentation on automation of limited case registry and payment processing
- National Task Force on Court Automation and Integration, Court Technology Survey Report, October 18, 2001 (this is the National Survey of Court Information Technology Status document specified in the SITC Statement of Work)

- General Overview and Background Child Support XML Standards, February 22, 2002
- Draft Child Support XML Specification for IV-D Agency Review, February 22, 2002

### **2.3 ASSUMPTIONS**

The following assumptions were made in the development of the requirements analysis and feasibility study:

- No preconceived opinion on the best alternative for the information exchange
- Multiple technologies that can satisfy the requirements are evaluated
- Not all alternatives meet all requirements
- Each state has a unique relationship with their respective courts and each alternative will not necessarily be applicable for all states and their courts
- Documentation for this study was analyzed for the purpose of defining requirements and alternatives

## **3. REQUIREMENTS DEFINITION**

### **3.1 OVERVIEW OF THE BUSINESS PROCESS**

A basic understanding of the business requirements between the states and their courts is a critical baseline for the requirements definition. It is important to have a basic understanding of the interaction between state CSE agencies and courts. Knowing that technology can provide the ability to pass almost any information back and forth is not the objective of the exchange/interface. To clarify the basic business process framework applicable to the exchange requirements, a brief generic description of the state and court business processes relevant to this study is provided below. The exchange must be able to support the basic business flow between CSE agencies and the courts.

CSE case processing begins with intake or case initiation, which includes receipt and processing of applications received from non-TANF clients and receipt and processing of TANF referrals. The CSE agency caseworker makes a determination of services required at the time of application or referral.

Basic areas where the CSE agency interacts with the courts include:

- Establishment – Paternity and Orders
- Order Enforcement
- Review and Adjustment

Another area to consider is interstate information exchange. The capability to electronically share information state to state to expedite interstate case processing is another facet of consideration for this study.

#### **3.1.1 ESTABLISHMENT**

Establishment is the function by which paternity, child support orders and/or medical support orders are established. Paternity can be established via voluntary acknowledgement or via court-ordered paternity testing. Paternity can also be adjudicated. Child support and medical support orders are established by the courts or, in administrative-process states, by an executive agency rather than by courts and judges. The child support order can dictate frequency, amount, type of support, duration, and whether wage withholding is mandated. Medical support orders specify how children are provided with health insurance coverage. Child support order amounts are based on child support guidelines, which are income-based formulas that vary by state.

#### **3.1.2 ORDER ENFORCEMENT**

Enforcement of support orders is the application of remedies to obtain payment of an obligation contained in a support order. Examples of remedies include wage withholding, asset seizure, liens, license revocation, and U.S. passport denial.

### 3.1.3 REVIEW AND ADJUSTMENT

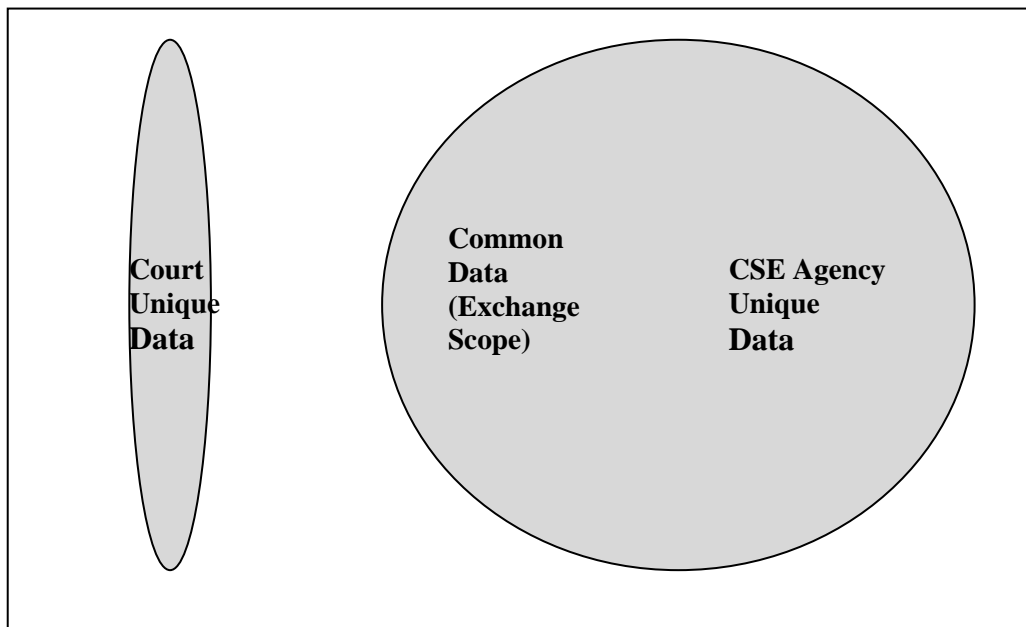
Review and adjustment is the process in which current financial information is obtained from both parties in a child support case and evaluated to determine if a support order needs to be adjusted. Reviews occur according to a recommended review cycle but can also occur upon the request of either party. For TANF cases, reviews can occur upon the request of either party or the CSE agency.

### 3.1.4 INTERSTATE INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Interstate cases, where the dependent child(ren) and non-custodial parent live in different states (or where two or more states are involved with some case activity), require states to exchange case data, such as financial, court order, and case status information. Because of our mobile society, approximately one third of all child support cases involve parents living in different states. Interstate cases represent approximately 20-30% of the total child support caseload but only 10% of collections. By providing CSE agencies nationwide with a way to exchange information efficiently, states would have the tools necessary to expedite the enforcement of orders in interstate cases and improve the current collection ratio.

## 3.2 EXCHANGE/INTERFACE REQUIREMENTS

The scope of what is being exchanged between the states and courts has as its foundation the process flow within the state CSE agencies and the courts. There are and always will be unique aspects to the CSE business within both the state and court environments. The diagram below depicts in a simple manner the scope of the exchange. Some of the work already completed by various committees and workgroups indicates that not all of the common data could be exchanged. However, other sources within the states have indicated that a broader set of data should be the scope of the exchange.



The requirements for the CSE agency/court exchange/interface are described below. The requirements are documented using the following categories:

- Alternative Specification Requirements
  - ~ Data Requirements
  - ~ Processing Requirements
  - ~ Technical Requirements
- Alternative Feasibility Requirements
  - ~ Organizational Requirements
  - ~ Operational Requirements
  - ~ Legacy System Modification Requirements

It is important to recognize that the requirements are documented to support the assessment of the feasibility of alternatives for the exchange/interface and not for the development of the exchange/interface. The requirements presented here are not intended to be used by a given state or court to implement a state/court interface. Studies have already been conducted that indicate the technology to exchange documents and data is available. The requirements identified as part of this effort focus not so much on **can** we exchange data in an automated manner, but **should** we exchange the data in an automated manner **at this time**. Therefore, the feasibility assessment of a given alternative that meets the requirements is based on more than just technology.

### **3.2.1 ALTERNATIVE SPECIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

#### **3.2.1.1 Data Requirements**

Requirements for the exchange/interface between the CSE agency and the courts pertaining to data are provided in this section. The data elements were extracted from the interviews conducted and from materials obtained from OCSE and the National Center for State Courts. Specifically, the data elements incorporate those specified by the XML workgroup and documented in the Draft Child Support XML Specification. These inputs have been analyzed; the resulting list of data requirements reflects the summation of this analysis.

Requirement 1: The exchange/interface must be able to handle data that is structured both by case and person. The source and destination systems are either case oriented or person oriented, which means that the basic processing unit is either the case or the persons involved in the case. The basic data groups provided below are generic so as to represent both case and person oriented situations.

**Case Data**

<b>DATA ELEMENT</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
Docket Number (Court Case Number)	The number assigned to the case filed in a particular court. Also called a case number.
Order Commencement Date	The date that obligations start to accrue.
Date of Order	The date on which the order was established.
Order Action	Indicates if an order is a request from a CSE agency for an order of the court or a Court Action, indicating an executed order from the court.
Order Category	Category of order, including Establish, Modify, Enforce, Modify and Enforce, Vacate.
Order Type	Type of order, child support or paternity.
Non Monetary Order	Details of the order in which payments are not required.
Monetary Order	Details of the order requiring payments (including maintenance, alimony, medical payments, health insurance, etc).
Order Payor	Name of person required to make the payment(s).
Order Payee	Trustee(s) for the payment; may include Child Support Agency, custodial parents, or direct payments to schools or doctors or other.
Obligation Type	Type of obligation can be monetary or non-monetary, including attending counseling with a child, submission to blood test, one-time payment, arrearage payment, or regular monthly payment.
Amount of Child Support Due	The final decision of the court, resolving the dispute; an opinion; an award.
Frequency of Child Support Payment	The frequency of child support payment (e.g. Weekly, Bi-weekly, Semi-monthly, Monthly, Quarterly, Semi-annually, Annually).
End Date/Duration	End date or duration of obligation (e.g. high school graduation).

### Person Data – Obligor

DATA ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION
Obligor Name <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Name</li> <li>• Middle Name</li> <li>• Last Name</li> </ul>	Name (as of time order was issued) of the person owing the duty of support. Also referred to as the non-custodial parent.
Obligor Suffix (Title)	The name suffix (as of time order was issued), e.g., Jr., of the obligor.
Obligor Now Known As Name <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Name</li> <li>• Middle Name</li> <li>• Last Name</li> </ul>	Current name of the person owing the duty of support. Also referred to as the non-custodial parent.
Obligor Now Known As Suffix (Title)	The current name suffix, e.g., Jr., of the obligor.
Obligor Home Address	Home address of the obligor.
Street Address (line 1)	Line 1 of the street address for the obligor.
Street Address (line 2)	Line 2 of the street address for the obligor.
City	City for the obligor.
State	State code for the obligor.
Zip Code 1	The first five digits of the Zip Code for the obligor.
Zip Code 2	The last four digits of the Zip Code for the obligor.
Obligor Office Address	Office address of the obligor.
Street Address (line 1)	Line 1 of the street address for the office of the obligor.
Street Address (line 2)	Line 2 of the street address for the office of the obligor.
City	City for the office of the obligor.
State	State code for the office of the obligor.
Zip Code 1	The first five digits of the Zip Code for the office of the obligor.
Zip Code 2	The last four digits of the Zip Code for the office of the obligor.
Obligor Social Security Number	Social Security Number for the obligor.
Obligor Date of Birth	Date of Birth (e.g., MMDDYYYY) of the obligor.
Obligor Home Phone Number	Home contact phone number for the obligor.
Obligor Office Phone Number	Office contact phone number for the obligor.
Obligor Email	Email address of the obligor.
Obligor Gender	Gender code for the obligor (e.g., M, F).
Obligor Attorney Name <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Name</li> <li>• Middle Name</li> <li>• Last Name</li> </ul>	Name (as of time order was issued) of the attorney of the obligor.
Obligor Attorney Bar Number	Obligor attorney's bar number.
Obligor Attorney License Authority	Obligor attorney's License Authority.
Obligor Attorney Year Admitted to Bar	Obligor attorney's year admitted to the bar.
Obligor Attorney Bar Status	Obligor attorney's bar status (e.g. active, inactive).

### Person Data – Obligee

DATA ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION
Obligee Name <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Name</li> <li>• Middle Name</li> <li>• Last Name</li> </ul>	Name (as of time order was issued) of the person to whom a duty of support is owed. Also referred to as the custodial parent when money is owed to the parent who resides with the child.
Obligee Suffix (Title)	The name suffix (as of time order was issued), e.g., Jr., of the obligee.
Obligee Now Know As Name <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Name</li> <li>• Middle Name</li> <li>• Last Name</li> </ul>	Current name of the person to whom a duty of support is owed. Also referred to as the custodial parent when money is owed to the parent who resides with the child.
Obligee Now Known As Suffix (Title)	The current name suffix, e.g., Jr., of the obligee.
Obligee Home Address	Home address of the obligee.
Obligee Street Address (line 1)	Line 1 of the street address for the obligee.
Obligee Street Address (line 2)	Line 2 of the street address for the obligee.
Obligee City	City for the obligee.
Obligee State	State code for the obligee.
Obligee Zip Code 1	The first five digits of the Zip Code for the obligee.
Obligee Zip Code 2	The last four digits of the Zip Code for the obligee.
Obligee Office Address	Office address of the obligee.
Obligee Street Address (line 1)	Line 1 of the street address for the office of the obligee.
Obligee Street Address (line 2)	Line 2 of the street address for the office of the obligee.
Obligee City	City for the office of the obligee.
Obligee State	State code for the office of the obligee.
Obligee Zip Code 1	The first five digits of the Zip Code for the office of the obligee.
Obligee Zip Code 2	The last four digits of the Zip Code for the office of the obligee.
Obligee Social Security Number	Social Security Number for the obligee.
Obligee Date of Birth	Date of Birth (e.g., MMDDYYYY) of the obligee.
Obligee Home Phone Number	Home contact phone number for the obligee.
Obligee Office Phone Number	Office contact phone number for the obligee.
Obligee Email	Email address of the obligee.
Obligee Gender	Gender code for the obligee (e.g., M, F).
Obligee Attorney Name <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Name</li> <li>• Middle Name</li> <li>• Last Name</li> </ul>	Name (as of time order was issued) of the attorney of the obligee.
Obligee Attorney Bar Number	Obligee attorney's bar number.
Obligee Attorney License Authority	Obligee attorney's License Authority.
Obligee Attorney Year Admitted to Bar	Obligee attorney's year admitted to the bar.
Obligee Attorney Bar Status	Obligee attorney's bar status (e.g. active, inactive).

**Person Data – Child (repeated for each child)**

DATA ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION
Children Names <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Name</li> <li>• Middle Name</li> <li>• Last Name</li> </ul>	All children who have not reached the age of emancipation or been legally declared emancipated.
Children Street Addresses (line 1)	Line 1 of the street address for each child.
Children Street Addresses (line 2)	Line 2 of the street address for each child.
Children Cities	City for each child.
Children State's	State code for each child.
Children Zip Code 1	The first five digits of the Zip Code for each child.
Children Zip Code 2	The last four digits of the Zip Code for each child.
Children Social Security Numbers	Social Security Number for each child.
Children's Gender	Gender for each child.
Children Dates of Birth	Date of Birth (e.g., MMDDYYYY) for each child.

**Financial Data**

DATA ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION
Remitter Name	Name of Person/Organization (e.g. employer) remitting payments to the person entitled to receive the payments.
Remitter Contact Name	Name of person responsible for remitting the payments.
Remitter Street Address (line 1)	Line 1 of the street address for the remitter.
Remitter Street Address (line 2)	Line 2 of the street address for the remitter.
Remitter City	City for the remitter.
Remitter State	State code for the remitter.
Remitter Zip Code 1	The first five digits of the Zip Code for the remitter.
Remitter Zip Code 2	The last four digits of the Zip Code for the remitter.
Remitter Phone Number	Contact phone number for the remitter.

**Event Data**

DATA ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION
Court Calendar (scheduled events)	Scheduled events such as court appearance dates.

Requirement 2: The exchange/interface must employ cross-references (i.e. the capability to connect cases to participants).

Requirement 3: The source system fields must be mapped to the destination system fields with respect to format, data type, etc.

Requirement 4: Algorithms must be established to address variances in source and destination field attributes (for example, if the source system captures a 2-line address field and the destination system captures a 1-line address field, the interface has to recognize and remember those differences).

Requirement 5: The interface must have the ability to recognize and tag data items that are considered confidential.

### **3.2.1.2 Processing Requirements**

Requirements for the exchange/interface between the CSE agency and the courts pertaining to processing are provided in this section.

Requirement 1: The exchange/interface must operate independently of the state and court systems (for example, if the interface fails, the CSE agency and court systems are not negatively impacted).

Requirement 2: The generation of the files to be exchanged must be completed without user intervention.

Requirement 3: Upon completion of an exchange, a record of the exchange must be generated (a complete audit of all transactions must be provided).

Requirement 4: The conversion of data from source to destination must be done without user intervention (no manual loading of data).

Requirement 5: The exchange/interface must be initiated based on triggers in the source system as well as by the request of state or court staff.

Requirement 6: Paper exchange of data will be reduced.

Requirement 7: The exchange/interface must be able to accommodate the data contained in the following documents and forms and also structure the data for exchange and presentation.

#### Documents

- Orders for Support
- Contempt Orders
- Default Orders

#### Forms

- Petitions to Establish Paternity & Support
- Petitions to Contempt
- UIFSA Petitions
- Depositions
- Continuances
- Service Process

### **3.2.1.3 Technical Requirements**

Requirements for the exchange/interface between the CSE agency and the courts pertaining to the technical aspects of the interface are provided in this section.

Requirement 1: The exchange/interface must be hardware independent.

Requirement 2: The exchange/interface must be able to handle multiple source/destination hardware configurations.

Requirement 3: The interface development language must be open and interpretive.

Requirement 4: The exchange/interface must be able to handle multiple source/destination operating systems and database management systems.

Requirement 5: The exchange/interface will flag incomplete information if sent from the source system (for example, data requiring verification, authorization, and/or approval will not be exchanged unless flagged as being unverified).

Requirement 6: The exchange/interface must be self-describing (i.e. the structure and content together in each document).

Requirement 7: The exchanged document must be human readable (i.e. special tools must not be necessary for processing by computers).

Requirement 8: The exchanged documents must separate data from presentation.

Requirement 9: Any software used in the exchange/interface must not be proprietary.

Requirement 10: A mechanism of connectivity must be in place (such as the internet, intranet, network).

Requirement 11: A security infrastructure must be in place (such as firewalls, controlled access).

### **3.2.2 ALTERNATIVE FEASIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

#### **3.2.2.1 Organizational Requirements**

Requirements for the exchange/interface between the CSE agency and the courts pertaining to organization are provided in this section.

Requirement 1: A workgroup must be established to address standardization of interface exchange requirements, including but not limited to data, business rules, definitions, and forms.

Requirement 2: The workgroup needs to recognize the unique organizational structures of the state CSE agency and the courts (i.e. state vs. county-administered, judicial vs. administrative).

#### **3.2.2.2 Operational Requirements**

Requirements for the exchange/interface between the CSE agency and the courts pertaining to operations and on-going maintenance are provided in this section.

Requirement 1: Organizational responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the interface must be assigned/established.

Requirement 2: Resources beyond the initial implementation to support on-going operations and maintenance must be planned.

Requirement 3: Source and destination information technology (IT) organizations must take responsibility for maintaining the transaction file generation function.

### **3.2.2.3 Legacy System Modification Requirements**

Requirements for the exchange/interface between the CSE agency and the courts pertaining to legacy system modification are provided in this section.

Requirement 1: The legacy systems must have the capability of creating the data set to be exchanged.

Requirement 2: The legacy systems must have the capability of accepting an electronic update without user intervention.

Requirement 3: The legacy systems must be able to accept both total record updates and partial record updates.

Requirement 4: The legacy systems must notify workers when the exchange/interface updates the database.

Requirement 5: The legacy systems must be able to edit for required data elements from the exchange/interface.

Requirement 6: The legacy systems must be able to report errors triggered by the interface.

## **3.3 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

To support the identification of the requirements and the definition and feasibility assessment of the alternatives, a number of already completed materials on the exchange of data between courts and state CSE agencies has been reviewed and analyzed. Some of the background material discussed below directly impacted the identification of specific requirements as well as the definition of alternatives.

### **3.3.1 NATIONAL TASK FORCE ON COURT AUTOMATION AND INTEGRATION, COURT TECHNOLOGY SURVEY REPORT**

The National Task Force on Court Automation and Integration, Court Technology Survey Report (specified as the National Survey of Court Information Technology Status in the SITC Statement of Work) is one of the specific products included as background material for the feasibility study. This report was developed as a joint effort by:

- The Bureau of Justice Assistance
- Conference of State Court Administrators
- National Association for Court Management

- National Center for State Courts; and
- SEARCH

The study was conducted in cooperation with:

- National Consortium on Court Automation Standards
- COSCA/NACM Joint Technology Committee
- Forum for the Advancement of Court Technology Industry Working Group

The goals of the survey were:

- To identify what vendors believe they and the courts can do to enable vendors to do a better job of delivering information technology to the courts; and
- To identify what courts believe they and vendors can do to facilitate court procurement and use of information technology products.

In documenting requirements and alternatives for this document, no assumptions are made as to whether or not a vendor is to be used. Therefore, there is minimal value in this survey document related to the analysis reflected in this study. However, one of the critical factors in determining the feasibility of developing an exchange/interface between state CSE agencies and their courts is the status of court automation. More standardization exists on the state side in terms of automation. So, the findings of this report may prove valuable if an exchange/interface is developed and it is likely that modifications to the legacy court systems are required.

The entire survey report can be found in Appendix D.

### **3.3.2 GENERAL OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND CHILD SUPPORT XML STANDARDS**

The General Overview and Background Child Support XML Standards states as its purpose:

“The purpose of this document is to provide a generalized, non-technical overview and background of XML and its use for child support information sharing with courts. It is intended for a non-technical audience with little or no knowledge of XML and the concepts underlying the use of the court’s XML standards for sharing data between child support agencies and courts.”

Several points are discussed in this document that apply to the effort of defining requirements and alternatives. The document focuses on XML as a solution for handling the complexity of passing data and documents between courts and state CSE agencies. This document builds on the backbone of work completed in defining electronic court filing standards. It extends the progress made in the development of court filing standards and examines the use of XML to go beyond just court filings and on to the exchange between courts and state CSE agencies. The authors conclude “the electronic court filing standard can generally support the needs of child support agencies, with the addition of some specific elements needed to fully transmit child support orders”. This conclusion and its further discussion within

the document provided input to the identification of requirements and influenced the feasibility assessment of each alternative.

The document provides a brief overview of XML, a summary of the court filing standards, a discussion of the relationship between electronic filing and child support DTDs, and a quick guide to reading a DTD. This document was extensively used in the description of alternatives. The document also includes some “next step” recommendations, which were also considered as part of the assessment.

The basic architecture of the electronic court filing standard is the “legal envelope.” It is proposed that this design could be used as the basis for the exchange between courts and state CSE agencies. The design is a three-part structure with:

- Section A presents basic data about the filing,
- Section B presents the lead document and attachments, and
- Section C presents data describing all persons, organizations, and businesses (actors) related to the case.

The design assumes generic data elements and minimal use of elements with specific coded values. The design is well considered and takes advantage of XML capabilities. It is limited in that some elements that are needed between courts and CSE agencies are not included and more work on the agreement between some specific codes and values still needs to be accomplished. It also recognizes the extreme complexity of standardization of elements on the court side and accepts that this is something that may impede broad implementation of the solution.

This is an alternative that must be considered. The work reflected here indicates that using XML is a viable technical solution for the exchange of data between courts and state CSE agencies. This document and the Draft Child Support XML Specification document were used as the basis for components of the alternative descriptions.

The entire document is provided as Appendix E of this report.

### **3.3.3 DRAFT CHILD SUPPORT XML SPECIFICATION FOR IV-D AGENCY REVIEW**

The Source section of this document states:

“The draft DTD specification was prepared under a Special Improvement Project (SIP) grant awarded to the National Center for State Courts by the US Department of Human Service Office of Child Support Enforcement, grant award number 90F10034. This work was conducted with a Courts/Child Support Work Group representing court and child support agencies appointed by the National Center for State Courts in September 2001.”

Section 1.1 summarizes the overall purpose of the document:

“The overall purpose of this specification was to provide a common structure for improved automated information and document exchange between participating child support enforcement agencies (CSEA) and courts by using common XML interfaces for

electronic filing of child support matters into courts and for receipt of court information and documents back to child support agencies from courts.”

This document presents the analysis completed to support using the electronic court filing standard as the basis for an exchange between courts and state CSE agencies. It uses the concept of the “legal envelope” described in Appendix E and referred to above. Some key items defining the scope of the court/ state exchange include:

- Calculations included in the CSE systems are not included in the specifications,
- The complexity of the many entities involved in a case can be accommodated, and
- Service and notice information was determined to be a court concern.

The design presented here is both sound and practical. Many of the complexities of the exchange of data are dealt with by proposing a solution that minimizes their impact. The solution also recognizes that meeting some of the CSE agency data needs is not possible due to limitations on the court side. These limitations are addressed and there is mutual understanding that the initial iterations of the exchange will be limited.

One of the most powerful aspects to the proposal is the workgroup’s discussion of specific business processes and business rules and how they fit into the exchange solution. This analysis further solidifies that the proposed use of XML is viable and can support the business needs (limitations are noted). The analysis has been reviewed and the workgroup’s solution has been incorporated into the identification of requirements and the development of alternatives. The XML solution presented here is viable and considered as an alternative.

The entire document is provided as Appendix F of this report.

### **3.3.4 COURT AND CSE DATA CROSS REFERENCE AND DATA DICTIONARY**

At the present time, SITC has not been able to locate this document, which is specified in the SITC Statement of Work.

### **3.3.5 CHILD SUPPORT XML STANDARDS REQUIREMENTS DOCUMENT**

The Draft Child Support XML Specification for IV-D Agency Review cites a “separate initial child support requirements document delivered under the [SIP] grant [that] detailed specific child support case needs, idiosyncrasies, and mapped needed child support elements against the ECFS [Electronic Court Filing Standard]”. At this time, SITC has not been able to locate this document. However, it is assumed that the general nature of the material contained in the document is covered by the requirements presented here in this deliverable.

## **4. ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This section presents alternatives to meeting the requirements identified in Section 3. The alternatives are identified and assessed against the requirements to determine their feasibility. The primary focus of the analysis is to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the different approaches and determine which scenario offers the best potential going forward. This approach provides states with options even though one or more of the alternatives may in fact be a better technological solution based on the requirements.

Each alternative is also assessed for its suitability to support interstate exchange although interstate exchange requirements are not specifically described.

The alternatives were derived from an assessment of previous work completed by the child support XML workgroup (described in Section 2) and from interviews with states and courts. The alternatives are:

1. XML-based interface
2. Traditional system-to-system interface (Colorado based)
3. Imaging (Washington based)

Additional alternatives were originally documented based on what some states are currently doing. However, when initial assessments were completed, these alternatives were determined not feasible for states to consider as viable options. For example, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has a unique organizational structure – the local IV-D agency is the agency of the court. All child support activities and court functions occur in one place. Thus, all child support transactions are completed via the Pennsylvania Automated Child Support Enforcement System (PACSES). Although this structure essentially eliminates the need for the exchange (since a single system is used), it is not realistic to assume that other states can reorganize to facilitate CSE agency and court information exchange in this manner.

### **4.2 ALTERNATIVE DESCRIPTIONS**

Each of the three alternatives is described below. They are described in a standard manner that facilitates their assessment against the requirements.

#### **4.2.1 ALTERNATIVE 1 – XML-BASED INTERFACE**

##### **4.2.1.1 General Description**

This alternative encompasses the approach of the workgroup mentioned above to exchange information between courts and states based on the XML court standard. XML provides the ability to exchange information between different operating systems, computer applications and databases. A detailed description of the workgroup's approach is provided in Appendices E and F of this document.

#### **4.2.1.2 Data Description**

Since the data requirements presented in Section 3 of this document are based on the work previously completed in defining a DTD, this alternative is consistent with the requirements.

#### **4.2.1.3 Processing Description**

XML is the state-of-the-art means to exchange information between diverse hardware, operating system, and application software system environments. Using XML, the source computer takes the data (and separate formatting information as well) to be transmitted and converts it to XML. The XML file is transmitted to the destination computer and converted to the appropriate structure and format of that system. The benefit is that XML does not care about the source and destination environments. XML allows for the reduction of paper flow since it can build the data in any desired format, thus avoiding the exchange of paper documents. Also, user intervention on either end of the exchange is not required using XML since the instructions and presentation are also exchanged along with the data.

#### **4.2.1.4 Technical Description**

The greatest advantage in implementing an XML-based solution is that the source and destination hardware, operating system, and application system environments do not matter. This alternative does not require modifications to source or destination environments to ensure homogeneity in the exchange. However, this alternative does require some sort of connectivity (LAN, WAN, Internet) to exchange the file.

### **4.2.2 ALTERNATIVE 2 – TRADITIONAL SYSTEM-TO-SYSTEM INTERFACE (COLORADO)**

#### **4.2.2.1 General Description**

Colorado has an automated interface with the courts. The Integrated Court On-line Network (ICON), the state's court case management system, interfaces nightly with the Family Support Registry (FSR) system (also known as the State Disbursement Unit or SDU). The FSR system is an extension of Colorado's Automated Child Support Enforcement System (ACSES), specifically focused on child support collections managed by the state's SDU. This system provides functionality that supports billing, payment processing, disbursements, income assignment issuance, and bank reconciliation.

#### **4.2.2.2 Data Description**

Since the data requirements presented in Section 3 of this document encompass the data elements exchanged via Colorado's system-to-system interface, this alternative is consistent with the requirements.

#### **4.2.2.3 Processing Description**

Court clerks enter information into ICON and the information is transferred by FTP to the CSE agency. When the court system sends a transaction to establish an account for a new order, a new case is automatically generated in the state's central registry. For a new case, no user intervention is required. For modifications to existing orders, user intervention is sometimes required to match data from the court system with the IV-D caseload. Approximately 60% of transactions are processed automatically. The data set includes 40-50 data elements.

Fields are marked mandatory or non-mandatory but desired. An exception report is returned to the court system nightly that indicates rejected records. Corrections are made the next day.

For IV-D cases, hard copies of the orders arrive at the local CSE office prior to the electronic transmission. For non-IV-D cases, hard copies of the orders are not required.

#### **4.2.2.4 Technical Description**

The FSR system is hosted on an AS400, and batch interface programs synchronize collections data between it and ACSES nightly. The ICON system is hosted on an AS400 also and uses a private TCP/IP frame relay network.

### **4.2.3 ALTERNATIVE 3 – IMAGING (WASHINGTON)**

#### **4.2.3.1 General Description**

In 1987, a Central Regulations Law was passed requiring a central area for status updates for interstate referrals. As a result, the Division of Child Support (DCS) in the State of Washington began work to use imaging technology to receive and process child support orders from the county clerks. Imaging technology permits documents or forms such as court orders to be transmitted from the court to the CSE agency electronically. One of the primary benefits of this approach is the elimination of paper and expediting the time required to transmit the document by regular mail or courier. A description of the process flow and project status can be found in Appendix C as part of the interview documentation for the State of Washington.

#### **4.2.3.2 Data Description**

The electronic transmission of a child support order is the transmission of the document itself. This means that the process is similar to transmitting a fax or a photographic image over the Internet (a “.GIF” file). The significance of this is that the only benefit being achieved is the time delay avoided that is otherwise consumed in physically carrying/mailing the document to the intended recipient. The data and critical information within the document is not parsed or put into a format that software applications can use, either to store, reason on, or otherwise interpret the information content of the scanned document. However, Washington is investigating how to tag and transmit specific data elements contained in the order.

#### **4.2.3.3 Processing Description**

The Washington DCS Imaging System uses fax machines and scanners to transport child support orders from the courts to the State’s Division of Child Support. This system was begun in 1987. At that time, which was pre-windows technology, the only technology available was fax machines. Fax machines were leased to all 39 counties and by 1997, 100% of all orders were transmitted directly to the state office using fax machines. Also in 1997, with the increase in volume of child support payment processing, imaging technology was installed to expedite the payment process. Because the Court Order Unit also wanted to utilize the benefits of imaging technology, a case archive system was built. The system was built on an infrastructure of imaging technology utilizing a phased process. For those counties using fax machines, the paper faxes were forwarded to a fax server. For those clerks who had imaging systems, they were

provided the capability to export directly into the state system. Fax machines are being replaced with scanners so that direct imaging will be available to all counties.

#### **4.2.3.4 Technical Description**

This alternative requires imaging hardware such as scanners. It also requires that all parties that are either transmitting or receiving information agree on the format of the electronic image (such as PDF, TIFF). In addition, the mechanism used to tag and extract the relevant data must be agreed upon (like XML). It also requires a connectivity capability (LAN, WAN) and all security issues must be addressed (such as firewalls).

### **4.3 COMMON REQUIREMENTS**

There are characteristics separate from data, processing, and technology that are common to each alternative. These items, specified as alternative feasibility requirements, are provided in Section 3. Each of these items is required no matter what technology-based alternative a particular state and court may wish to pursue. These requirements must be considered, planned for, and resourced prior to development of any solution.

#### **4.3.1 ORGANIZATIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

A prerequisite for a successful implementation of an information exchange between CSE agencies and courts is the establishment of an organizational entity that deals with data standardization. Of the states interviewed, Colorado has the most mature and comprehensive model of such an organization. A workgroup, composed of CSE agency and court staff, standardized all child support forms statewide.

#### **4.3.2 OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

The necessity to plan for the maintenance of software once implementation is complete is often overlooked during automation projects. An interface that shares information between agencies and courts is dynamic. Additions or modifications will inevitably be required based on Federal, state, and/or court statutory or regulatory changes related to the Child Support Enforcement program. Ownership of, and responsibility for, the interface must be identified prior to implementation. In conjunction with the organizational requirements dealing with data standardization, court and state IT entities must be in a position to react swiftly to changing CSE requirements. Agreements need to be established between IT organizations so delays in the maintenance or enhancement of the interface are minimized. XML, for example, provides a relatively easy means for modifications but someone still has to make the changes.

#### **4.3.3 LEGACY SYSTEM MODIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

Each state needs to assess current systems and determine what modifications are necessary to facilitate the data and document exchange.

### **4.4 ALTERNATIVE EVALUATIONS**

Each of the three alternatives was evaluated against the requirements (described in Section 3). The evaluation of the alternative specification requirements is presented in a narrative manner as well as

summarized for each alternative and requirement. Additionally, a discussion of each alternative's interstate requirements is provided.

#### **4.4.1 ALTERNATIVE SPECIFICATION REQUIREMENTS EVALUATION**

In the following paragraphs, each of the alternatives is evaluated within the context of the data, processing, and technical requirements. Key strengths and weaknesses of each alternative are highlighted.

##### **4.4.1.1 Alternative 1 – XML-based Interface**

###### **Data Requirements**

With the exception of some additional data items derived from interviews with states, the XML-based solution meets or exceeds the data requirements. XML is designed to facilitate the flexible mapping of data employing maintainable cross-references. XML is a technology specifically designed for exchanging data between systems and environments independently from the hardware and software architectures of the source and destinations systems.

###### **Processing Requirements**

The XML solution has no weaknesses related to the processing requirements. As part of the court filing standard, it is proposed that for both sending information to and receiving information from the court, the CSE system provides both data and actual documents in electronic form. XML-formatted documents can thus be viewed electronically and the XML-tagged data can populate the court's and the CSE system's databases.

###### **Technical Requirements**

The technical requirements provided in Section 3 are synonymous with a description of XML. There is not a better solution in terms of meeting them. XML is specifically designed to be hardware and software independent. It is specifically designed so that the interface is human readable and self-describing. It is designed to separate data transfer from presentation application (i.e. word processor, web format). It can work as long as there is a communication path between the source and destination systems.

There does not appear to be any disagreement, from either the previously cited workgroup or the states interviewed under this project, regarding the suitability of an XML solution. XML has the underlying capabilities to best handle exchange of data between child support agencies and courts. From a technical perspective, XML is the best solution, since it is a tool set designed specifically for the needs of information exchange in complex and heterogeneous environments.

##### **4.4.1.2 Alternative 2 – Traditional System-to-System Interface (Colorado)**

###### **Data Requirements**

Since the data requirements presented in Section 3 of this document encompass the data elements exchanged via Colorado's system-to-system interface, this alternative is consistent with the requirements.

## **Processing Requirements**

The system-to-system interface operates independently of the state and court systems – i.e., if the interface fails, the legacy systems are not negatively impacted. The conversion of data is completed without user intervention and a record of the exchange is generated.

Approximately 60% of transactions are processed automatically. Some user intervention is required to correct rejected records and for some data matching for modifications to existing orders. Paper exchange is not significantly reduced.

## **Technical Requirements**

Each system-to-system interface has to be designed, developed, and maintained and is not hardware or software independent.

A mechanism of connectivity is in place, as is a security infrastructure. Also, an exception report is returned to the court system nightly that indicates rejected records.

### **4.4.1.3 Alternative 3 – Imaging (Washington)**

#### **Data Requirements**

Only a small subset of the required data elements are captured from the imaged document and thus, a mechanism for addressing variations in source and destination field attributes is not available for all the required data elements. The capability exists to employ cross-references and to tag confidential data.

#### **Processing Requirements**

The currently implemented process of imaging court orders satisfies the requirements related to independent operation, reduction of paper, and an audit trail and accommodates the documents and forms specified. Because specific data element exchange has not been accomplished, those requirements are not met by this alternative at this time.

#### **Technical Requirements**

Most of the technical requirements have not been addressed, but are being planned for. Proprietary software has been resolved; connectivity and a security infrastructure are in place.

## **4.4.2 ALTERNATIVE/REQUIREMENT DETAILED EVALUATION**

The table below ranks each alternative against each of the data, processing, and technical requirements. The ranking is relative. This means that each alternative is ranked relative to the other alternatives for each requirement. For each requirement, each alternative is given a ranking of 1, 2, or 3 with 1 being the highest ranked alternative, 2 being the second highest, and so forth. If two or more alternatives are deemed to be relatively equivalent in meeting a requirement, they receive the same score. With this ranking, a lower total score indicates which alternative best meets the requirements. The alternatives in the matrix are:

Alt 1 = XML-based interface

Alt 2 = Traditional system-to-system interface (Colorado based)

Alt 3 = Imaging (Washington based)

Requirements	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3
<b>Data:</b>			
1. The exchange/interface must be able to handle data that is structured both by case and person. The source and destination systems are either case oriented or person oriented, which means that the basic processing unit is either the case or the persons involved in the case. The basic data groups are listed in Section 3.2.1.1.	1	1	2
2. The exchange/interface must employ cross-references (i.e. the capability to connect cases to participants).	1	1	1
3. The source system fields must be mapped to the destination system fields with respect to format, data type, etc.	1	1	2
4. Algorithms must be established to address variances in source and destination field attributes (for example, if the source system captures a 2-line address field and the destination system captures a 1-line address field, the interface has to recognize and remember those differences).	1	1	3
5. The interface must have the ability to recognize and tag data items that are considered confidential.	1	1	1
<b>Total for Data</b>	5	5	9
<b>Processing:</b>			
1. The exchange/interface must operate independently of the state and court systems (for example, if the interface fails, the CSE agency and court systems are not negatively impacted).	1	1	1
2. The generation of the files to be exchanged must be completed without user intervention.	1	1	3
3. Upon completion of an exchange, a record of the exchange must be generated (a complete audit of all transactions must be provided).	1	1	2
4. The conversion of data from source to destination must be done without user intervention (no manual loading of data).	1	2	3
5. The exchange/interface must be initiated based on triggers in the source system as well as by the request of state or court staff.	1	2	1
6. Paper exchange of data will be reduced.	1	1	1
7. The exchange/interface must be able to accommodate the data contained in the documents and forms (listed in Requirement 7) and also structure the data for exchange and presentation.	1	1	1
<b>Total for Processing</b>	7	9	12
<b>Technical:</b>			
1. The exchange/interface must be hardware independent.	1	3	3
2. The exchange/interface must be able to handle multiple source/destination hardware configurations.	1	3	2
3. The interface development language must be open and interpretive.	1	3	2
4. The exchange/interface must be able to handle multiple source/destination operating systems and database management systems.	1	3	2
5. The exchange/interface will flag incomplete information if sent from the source system (for example, data requiring verification, authorization, and/or approval will not be exchanged unless flagged as being unverified).	1	1	3
6. The exchange/interface must be self-describing (i.e. the structure and content together in each document).	1	3	1
7. The exchanged document must be human readable (i.e. special tools must not be	1	2	1

Requirements	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3
necessary for processing by computers).			
8. The exchanged documents must separate data from presentation.	1	3	1
9. Any software used in the exchange/interface must not be proprietary.	1	1	3
10. A mechanism of connectivity must be in place (such as the internet, intranet, network).	1	1	1
11. A security infrastructure must be in place (such as firewalls, controlled access).	1	1	1
<b>Total for Technical</b>	11	24	20
<b>Total for All Requirements</b>	23	38	41

It is not particularly surprising that the XML alternative scored the best against the requirements. Many of the requirements were derived from sources that have examined and analyzed information exchange and had previously determined that XML is the “state-of-the-art” in terms of information exchange between disparate computer systems.

The other two alternatives essentially scored the same. The traditional exchange (Colorado based) scored better for data and processing while the imaging (Washington based) scored better for technical. Both alternatives 2 and 3 are mature solutions and are successful for their respective states. Their weaknesses vs. XML are primarily because they require more hard-coded interfaces and additional hardware or proprietary software. Both have considered enhancements using XML.

#### **4.4.3 INTERSTATE**

A data and document exchange capability between CSE agencies and courts could potentially be used to extend the range of information exchange among states. Any alternative considered must be extensible to meet this requirement. Each of the alternatives is assessed in the following paragraphs as to its conduciveness to extending from court-to-state to state-to-state.

##### **4.4.3.1 Alternative 1 – XML-based Interface**

For XML, the requirement to exchange case, financial, and court order information between states is not dissimilar to the requirement of sending the information between CSE agencies and their own courts. From a technical perspective, the challenge is to exchange information between different state CSE systems that have different hardware and software platforms. Since XML is a solution that is independent from the source and destination hardware and software architectures, it is the best solution to support interstate exchange. No significant modifications to either source or destination environments are needed. However, there does need to be agreement on what is exchanged from a data content perspective. There is an assumption that most states have the same set of core data in their CSE systems but it must also be assumed that precise data formats vary.

##### **4.4.3.2 Alternative 2 – Traditional System-to-System Interface (Colorado)**

A traditional system-to-system interface is uniquely developed to operate within a particular state and/or court’s hardware and software environment. Because this solution is completely dependent on the source and destination hardware and software architectures, it is not a viable solution to support interstate exchange.

#### **4.4.3.3 Alternative 3 – Imaging (Washington)**

Washington has completed its first phase of interstate referral. They have built a case file correspondence imaging system – 100% of all case correspondence mail is centralized and 50% of all case files are imaged. For interstate cases, 50% of incoming mail is forms that have been requested from another state. All forms have bar codes that contain information to index a case. If the statewide system had a forms table, then automated actions could be performed. The interstate focus would have to be in the standardization of the forms and barcodes so that automated case setup could at least be achieved. Once this was accomplished, then interstate cases could be treated just like intrastate cases.

## **5. COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS**

Developing a typical cost/benefit analysis for the identified alternatives is not possible due to the many variables within any given state that must be accounted for. Each state has a unique set of characteristics (number of users, number of transactions, degree of legacy modifications, hardware and software required, etc.) that make it impractical to derive one set of costs for each alternative. However, some general conclusions related to costs can be derived based on the different alternatives. Also, it is possible to derive a relative comparison of costs among the alternatives.

The analysis of the requirements and alternatives is structured in a manner that makes it possible to derive a standard set of benefits. For the most part, the benefits are the same for each alternative conceptually, but providing a tangible measurement to the benefits is limited by the variations from state to state. For example, determining a discrete dollar amount for reduction of paper document storage would be radically different for New York than for Wyoming.

To give states considering the development of a data exchange capability between their CSE agencies and courts a concept of the costs involved, a relative cost comparison between the alternatives has been developed. This should give states, along with knowledge of their specific environment, some idea of which alternative may be most applicable to their situation.

### **5.1 COSTS**

The cost analysis provides a general assessment of the expenses to a state to develop an exchange interface. A majority of the effort involved with any solution is expended on organizational changes, ongoing operations, and legacy system modifications. These costs are not reflected in the analysis since they are dependent on the specific state and its current organizational structure, system environment (CSE agency and court), and caseloads. Development/ implementation and ongoing costs are relatively assessed among the three alternatives. It should be noted that the development of the exchange capability is not a large or expensive undertaking relative to statewide human services system development and implementation projects. Just because one of the alternatives is relatively less expensive than other alternatives, does not mean a state should not consider them all. The alternatives in the matrix are:

Alt 1 = XML based interface

Alt 2 = Traditional system-to-system interface (Colorado based)

Alt 3 = Imaging (Washington based)

Cost Category	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3
<b>Development/Implementation Costs</b>			
Staff Costs (State/Court Staff, Contractor Staff)	L	H	M
Hardware	L	L	H
Software	L	L	M
Other EDP Supplies	L	L	L
Miscellaneous	L	L	L
Training	L	L	M
Indirect Costs	L	L	L
<b>Ongoing Costs</b>			
Operations	L	L	L
Maintenance/Enhancement	L	H	M

Relatively speaking, the XML solution is least expensive. The traditional interface (Colorado based) is most expensive relative to staff costs for development and maintenance and the imaging solution (Washington based) is most expensive relative to hardware.

## 5.2 BENEFITS

Benefits of developing an automated information exchange between CSE agencies and courts are provided in the table below. The table contains the following items:

- **Benefit** – a name, title, descriptor of the benefit
- **Rank** – a relative ranking of the benefit in terms of the gain, savings, increase/decrease, etc. potential to a state/court
- **Measurement** – the unit(s) used to measure the gain, savings, increase/decrease, etc.
- **Comments** – further description of the benefit, rank, or measurement

Benefit	Rank	Measurement	Comments
Increased Collections	H	\$	Increased collections can be achieved via quicker delivery of child support orders and quicker child support order establishments and enforcement actions.
Positive Impact on Federal Performance Incentives	H	\$	By improving state collections, Federal performance incentives are maximized.
Paper Reduction	L	\$, Time	Dollar savings in paper, postage, storage, courier, etc. can be achieved. Also minimizes staff burden of archiving records and destroying archived records according to state regulations.
Increased Medical Participation	H	\$	Increased medical support can be achieved via quicker delivery of support orders and quicker establishment of medical support, offsetting the government's responsibility for medical coverage for children.

<b>Benefit</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Measurement</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Reduced Data Entry	M	Time	Due to current budget restrictions and hiring freezes, reduced data entry alleviates workload burden, could alleviate the need to backfill positions, and allow staff more time to concentrate on casework (and focus on the more difficult cases). Potential to alleviate backlog for both CSE agency and court.
Maximize Existing Staffing Resources	M	Time	Alleviates workload burden and allows staff more time to concentrate on casework. Any time staff can avoid dealing with paper is a labor savings. Every keystroke represents effort. Staff time is saved in distributing and filing documents.
Facilitate Access to Current Case Information (for those who to need to know)	M	Time	Alleviates need for staff (caseworkers, court staff, process servers, attorneys, etc.) to call, fax, email requests for current case information.
Facilitate National Data Exchange	H	\$, Time	Improves data exchange between CSE agencies and their own courts. The potential exists to improve data exchange among states (i.e. interstate). Alleviates need for staff to call, fax, email requests for current case information. Could also improve collections by expediting the process.
Error Reduction	L	Time	Reduce the amount of time staff (agency and court) has to spend to correct data entry errors.

The above benefits table provides states with indicators that may be helpful in completing a detailed cost/benefit analysis prior to developing an exchange interface. Each benefit has the potential to support the justification of such a project. Information gathered via interviews with states indicates that resources are extremely constrained and any IT project beyond mission critical projects would likely need to be justified and sold based on tangible benefits to the states and courts.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the requirements and potential costs, a solution employing XML does provide the best alternative for information exchange between CSE agencies and courts. Additionally, due to its flexibility, it also provides the best approach for extension to interstate data exchange. It is understood that this approach might not be the most feasible given a state's current situation and overall technical direction. If a state already has absorbed the costs of imaging technology, many of the negatives associated with an imaging solution are mitigated. If a state has established statewide standardization of technology between its CSE agency's applications and court applications, many of the negatives associated with a traditional interface can be mitigated. Colorado and Washington have successful and working solutions. Each of the alternatives, given the right circumstances, can provide an adequate means for exchanging data between the CSE agencies and their courts. However, for purposes of this study, a solution employing XML is deemed the preferred alternative.

The sections below highlight actions that states can take now, regardless of the data and document exchange solution chosen, as well as recommended next steps for moving toward implementation of an XML solution.

### 6.1 RECOMMENDED STATE ACTIVITIES

Some overarching recommendations are identified that are independent from the alternatives analyzed. First and foremost is completion of a specific cost/benefit analysis. General categories that may be considered for costs and benefits are provided in Section 5 but a declining economy dictates that a more comprehensive assessment be prepared to show justification for development. Additional overarching recommendations are:

- Completion of current analysis of the existing state and court systems. It is critical that thorough documentation of the existing systems be in place prior to determination of an approach and initiation of data exchange development.
- Establishment of an entity to define standard data. To ensure that all involved parties are represented, a workgroup or committee should be established to work together to specify and define the required data to be exchanged. For example, Colorado successfully standardized all CSE forms statewide through the efforts of the document generation workgroup, which includes CSE agency (including county) and court representatives. To ensure appropriate representation, variables to consider when determining the composition of such a workgroup include state or county administered and court jurisdictions (district, etc.).
- Identification of opportunities for creative funding of the project. Grants, Federal participation, partnerships with universities, and partnerships with vendors should all be examined as funding sources.
- Establishment of an overall project plan with consideration of phased implementation. Each of the alternatives can be implemented in phases. Phases can be defined in terms of data content or targeted counties or regions or stakeholder groups. An iterative approach could be used to

implement a small aspect of the application, which could then be piloted to acquire feedback for use in refining and expanding the application.

- Consideration of change management. States should consider the impact on business processes, workflow, and system users prior to development – for both the CSE agency and the courts. This would include training and support issues.

## **6.2 NEXT STEPS**

It has been determined that a solution employing XML provides the best alternative for information exchange between CSE agencies and courts. XML best meets the requirements and provides scalable capabilities. Scalability is a significant benefit because it can expand beyond a CSE agency and court data exchange to encompass a broader information exchange capability, including interstate. Based on this finding, two major activities are identified as next steps.

### **6.2.1 EXPAND LEGALXML DTD**

It is recommended that OCSE pursue continuation of the work completed to date by the child support XML workgroup. An expanded, comprehensive, and uniform DTD could be used not only for information exchange between CSE agencies and courts, but also for various other applications. The recommended approach is to use the XML DTD as a guide, and build a “palette” based on the data available in this study, data elements from CSENet, information identified and defined by the Interstate Workgroup, and more. The data requirements contained in this deliverable may be revised after the work products completed by the Interstate Workgroup are finalized.

### **6.2.2 COMPLETE DETAILED COST/BENEFIT ANALYSES**

It is also recommended that detailed cost/benefit analyses be completed for three states to further validate the XML endorsement reflected in this study and to help them pursue implementation of a data and document exchange solution. The following activities are proposed:

- Develop and document the cost/benefit analysis approach, methodology, templates, and tools
- Establish criteria for selecting candidate states for completion of a detailed cost/benefit analysis
- Create a list of candidate states and gather information on their CSE environment (agency and court) and status of current data and document exchange capability
- Select three states for completion of a detailed cost/benefit analysis
- Customize as necessary the cost/benefit analysis approach and methodology, templates and tools based on the uniqueness of the selected states
- Complete detailed cost/benefit analyses
- Based on cost/benefit analysis results, pursue opportunities to implement a solution in a state that may include, but not be limited to, the following activities:

- ~ Develop a detailed work plan and organizational strategy
- ~ Develop technical and functional requirements
- ~ Develop a prototype and see it through testing and pilot phases

OCSE may also consider pursuing opportunities to provide XML exposure to states via training courses, conference presentations and workshops, and materials available on the OCSE website.

# APPENDICES

## A. INTERVIEW GUIDE

The following survey instrument was used to structure the interviews with state CSE contacts and court contacts.

### Questions relating to Current Process of Receiving/Sending Information From/To the Courts

1. **What** information do you currently receive from/send to the courts?
  - Data (e.g. case information, case history, case calendar, actor status, associated case list for particular actor, content of court policy database, existing docket information)
  - Documents (e.g. court order)
  - Forms (e.g. child support complaint or petition)
2. **How are** you receiving/sending the information now?
  - What is the **method** by which you receive/send the information? (e.g. mail, fax, phone, electronic transfer, like email)
  - How **often** do you receive/send information?
  - Are there any **deficiencies, problems, issues or concerns** related to receiving/sending information?
3. **How would you like to** receive/send it?
  - What is the **method** by which you would **like to** receive/send the information?
  - What would you **have to do on your side** to receive/send it this way?
  - Would you **send anything back** to the courts notifying them that data was received?
  - How would this method **improve the Child Support Enforcement process**? (e.g. savings in staff time, expediting collections, etc.)

### Questions relating to Electronic Interface with the Courts

4. Do you have any **plans** to exchange data with your courts via an electronic interface?
  - **If so**, do you envision having to make modifications to your CSE system to accommodate this interface and if so, what would the modifications consist of?
5. What is your **computing environment** with respect to the following:
  - What **hardware** does your current CSE system run on?
  - What **software** do you use?
  - What **Operating System** do you use?
  - What **Network** do you have?
  - What type of **Database** (database environment) would be the recipient of information from the courts?
6. Concerning the **users** that would access information from the courts:
  - **How many** users would have access to the court supplied information
  - Of those, what **percentage have access to the Internet**
  - Of those, **what percentage have access to the E-mail**
  - Of those with E-mail access, what **e-mail application** do you use (e.g. LotusNotes, Outlook, etc)
7. Who would **maintain/operate** the electronic interchange environment?
8. Do you have any **documentation** related to constructing an electronic interface with the courts?

- Project Plans
- Cost Information
- Design Documents
- Implementation Plan

## B. INTERVIEW SUMMARY

The following table summarizes the analysis performed from the interviews conducted with the state and court contacts.

State	Contact	Summary of Current Exchange Process
California	Amy Silva Orange County Superior Court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No current electronic interchange capability</li> <li>Electronic filing in place before new Child Support laws; intend to begin new effort when money is available</li> <li>Use imaging technology to electronically send documents</li> </ul>
Colorado	Craig Goellner, Systems Director Division of CSE  Bob Roper Court Information Officer Supreme Court of CO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Automated payment processing</li> <li>Automated case registry – court orders are transferred nightly from Court CCMS to CSE case registry</li> </ul>
Georgia	Cindy Moss, Program Director, Information Systems Ronnie Bates Georgia Dept. of Human Resources, Office of Child Support Enforcement  Todd Vincent, contractor to the State of Georgia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Court Filing Interoperability Pilot Project provides Georgia courts and attorneys with proof-of-concept of electronic court filing and to better understand the need for, and barriers to, developing court filing systems and standards in Georgia.</li> </ul>
Louisiana	Robbie Endris Program Director – Field Operations Support Enforcement Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Electronic Federal Case Registry</li> <li>No electronic exchange in Child Support</li> <li>Using scanning technology</li> </ul>
Missouri	Alyson Campbell Deputy Director, DCSE/ISTU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Courts enter orders into statewide CSE system, MACSS</li> <li>Courts have their own judicial information system and maintain distinct court information; there is no duplication between the two systems.</li> </ul>
New Mexico	Joanne Browne, Helen Nelson, Tom Barr (Chief Counsel) Child Support Agency  Renee Cascio New Mexico Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disbanded electronic filing workgroup</li> <li>E-filing pilot in one court; project ended due to lack of funding</li> </ul>
Pennsylvania	Dan Richard, IV-D Director Joyce Match (for Jeff Rowe, Application Manager for PACSES)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unique organizational structure – the local IV-D agency (Domestic Relations) is the court in Pennsylvania</li> <li>All CSE related activities are in one place</li> <li>Forms are standardized statewide</li> </ul>
Texas	Jacqueline Nguyen and Karen Clements Texas Office of the Attorney General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 largest counties send dataset electronically to courts which is used to create a record to establish a file date and docket number; nothing returned from court</li> <li>Benefit: get file dates faster</li> <li>Still rely on paper documents</li> </ul>

<b>State</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Summary of Current Exchange Process</b>
Washington	Steve Spitzer System Manager DCS SEMS – Imaging Project  Gary Masten, County Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Imaging system to electronically transmit court orders (currently only 29% of court orders are paper)</li> <li>● Using XML</li> <li>● Have centralized 100% of case correspondence</li> </ul>
Wisconsin	Dave White Child Support Specialist (CSE Call Center), Bureau of Partner Services, Dept. of Workforce Development  Dan Floeter, Family Court Commissioner; Kerry Widish, Court Manager; Donna Wills, Net Administrator; Gail Richardson, Madison County Court Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No electronic exchange capability; not needed since CSE agency is co-located with the court</li> <li>● Office of the State Courts recently completed a two-year e-filing study</li> <li>● Court staff have access to statewide child support system, KIDS</li> <li>● CSE agency has access to court imaged database, which contains family and paternity court documents</li> </ul>

## **C. INTERVIEW NOTES**

The following notes document the interviews conducted with the state and court contacts.

**Notes on Discussion with Amy Silva, Orange County Superior Court  
State of California, Orange County  
Date: 12/9/2002**

No current e-filing project, had one from 1995-1998. Local CSE agency was filing cases electronically. Data consisted of case name and number, party name and case number was automatically dispensed. Did not have imaging then; document was sent next day, so still had paper. A case tracking system already contained the data. When document came in, all that had to be done was stamp it; eliminated data entry. In 1997, changed methodology of CS judgment; 1058 was law that created child support program; stopped e-filing because it would take a lot of effort to make changes to the system. Since that time, there have been additional changes in how CS cases are handled; new forms, new laws. For questions on methodology of how it was done, should contact the IT systems people.

In the future, would like to begin e-filing with CS agency; going to talk to other courts and see if they want to do e-filing also. CA's CSE system vendor was Lockheed-Martin and after many years, never got the system done. Some of the smaller counties were using Lockheed-Martin system, but the system was never implemented statewide. Then every county was told to pick a system to be on – there will be 3 or 4 versions of software. Orange County chose to use the LA and San Diego system (40% of population in these counties). The counties meet as a consortium to decide changes. LA (ARS) system is being used. If wanted to do e-filing, would have to discuss with other 2 counties; so, it will take a long time to accomplish.

E-filing project is on hold; need to initialize the discussion; not ready for quite a while; Orange County converted to ARS 5 months ago and they want to do e-filing.

Are using imaging now (for 2 years); want image to get burned automatically, so don't have to scan documents; then data entry has to associate image with specific document; so have to connect Case Management system and imaging system. Initial pleading is sent electronically, (not sent as paper) and then it is scanned for placement in the imaging database. Register of actions uses imaging to do all their work; every file or document is imaged now. More than 1 person can view them this way. If CSE could access imaging database, then the process would be more efficient. CSE sends in requests for judgments, various documents; 2 groups would have to work together to access images (have to deal with firewalls, etc). CSE does have access to case tracking system (BANNER), brought it up in 1995.

Criminal uses another product.

Everyone has separate databases, even those who use BANNER (juvenile, family law); OC files 25,000 cases (new family law, includes CS). CS is about 1000/month; order to show cause is one of most often filed – about 1300 a month. 18 courtrooms for family law (3 for CS law).

However ARS generates pleadings or documents, it could electronically be sent to courts. CA is forms driven (all forms are standardized); so when do initial data entry of minor child, DOB, salary, etc. and a complaint gets generated, it would be more efficient if an automated process could send data to courts. Court would have to tag it so could be uploaded to case tracking system; so would like for them to talk in

that sense. A lot of discussion now on how to access database; do not want CSE to come directly into system; would give inquiry rights. Court needs case name, type of case (paternity, parentage), who filed; so on pleading would like to tag those fields only. Would have to work out how it is uploaded; court really tracks documents; would not want most of data that CS creates.

Between 1995-1997, court would give case number automatically and that got attached to pleading; beginning of e-filing.

Contact: Mary Lou DesRochers, Exec. Director for Orange County superior courts; she is involved in e-filing project divorces (other family law, not CS), might know other family law courts who are doing some e-filing; 714-834-6045. Admin Office of Courts, Technology Unit might know of technology project; Diana Krishna, 415-865-7463. Orange County System people; Nancy Hawkins (Manager); 714-935-6262 or Kim, 935-6782 (Supervisor, reports to Nancy); Both have info about e-filing.

Issues with e-filing in 95:

- Need to make sure only one case gets filed and same case doesn't get filed 3 times
- Data entry people at DA office would hit enter key more than once, so same case got multiple case numbers

ARS system – gave CCS block of case numbers so the system generates case number and they generate report that also goes to court; it was a way to track and ensure accountability of what was being sent over.

Both sides need reporting mechanism to make sure nothing is getting lost (like logging system on both sides).

In 1995, if had defendant in office and wanted to prepare case and serve him, could do it in real-time while person was in office (transmitted to courts in real-time and got back a case number while the defendant was in office).

When make changes to both systems, in 1995, each side paid their own way; CSE are better staffed than courts now (courts has \$20M shortfall now, bad economy).

Electronic interface is high on priority list, if not part of ARS, would be pursuing it now.

Bad economy could stop it; can't replace anyone that leaves; can't hire, so that could stop it; so realistically, can't tackle right away, but are many advantages.

## Notes on Interview with Craig Goellner, State of Colorado

Date: 11/4/2002

Question 1. Colorado has an automated interface with their courts. They have a limited state case registry and they establish accounts for payments through their SDU. When a case is established, the court sends a transaction to set up an account (if new order) or modification(s) to an existing order. When the court sends a transaction for a new order, a new case is automatically generated in the central registry. For a new case, there is no user intervention; interface is crude. There are instances where they are trying to match data from the courts with IV-D caseloads, which sometimes requires human intervention, but ½ to 2/3 of transactions are processed automatically. The number of data elements are 40-50. (**Craig said he would send us the data elements**).

When asked if anything is sent back, he answered that an acknowledgement and rejection (error) loop does exist, but they don't send data back. Courts are told that something is received, etc. Some of the data is control data.

Question: Is court interested in IV-D case registry? Non IV-D is what the court gives them; very limited. There is a non-disclosure indicator that can be set on IV-D side. The court is rewriting their system to incorporate a graphical user interface. They are also looking at XML. The IV-D side recognizes that there would be value if the filings could be done electronically. Other than that there is no interest.

Colorado is county-administered (it is the local district court that is working with the local CSE). In the IV-D world, paper drives the establishment or modification of an order, so paper comes back as well as an electronic copy (paper comes first). In the non IV-D side, only get an electronic order because the parties are pursuing the order themselves, so open an FSR account (just to populate the state case registry).

CSE has a document generation facility, so all forms are standardized. Throughout the state, everyone is using the same documents (there are hundreds of documents). IV-D world has standardized on documents exchanged with courts. When the document generation was created, a committee was formed (representing all parties) to approve all changes to IV-D legal documents. Once approved, they were programmed into the document generation facility. This lends itself to XML (potential is high).

Jackie Barnett has done technical work on the interface; now one large generic transaction. It is like a higher level of integration, but there is not material to interchange. They are getting what they need. Can be compared to e-filing.

Question: What are some indicators that would let you embrace XML?

- Doesn't have time to figure out how to marry XML with CSE system
- Have to deal with confidentiality (encryption or secure transport mechanism)
- Would be interesting to see what GA has done
- Same formats at DTD; again more technical tasks
- What is the application that would give you the most bang for the buck, like e-filing or wage withholding. DFAD is using flat technology; XML could help.
- Court needs to answer how XML could help within their infrastructure
- Colorado Courts – statewide point of receipt (i.e. portal)

- Court filing standard allows an electronic document to be used in an envelope, so one step would be to transmit PDF electronically just using browser technologies

Question: What is carrot for the courts for using electronic transfer?

- Anytime you are not dealing with paper is a labor savings. If you had a repository, could provide web-access to those with a need to know (distributing documents, filing documents, etc)
- Every keystroke is a major effort to them, so if could file electronically, that would be another benefit.

Question: What other states are you aware of that might have an electronic interface with the courts?

- NM (check XML work group)
- TX (has done some limited electronic filing)
- OR – maybe, not sure
- GA

Craig asked if there were any groups working together to standardize forms to be exchanged because you need to have a human infrastructure in place before applying technology.

Craig to email contact information for Jackie Barnett.

**Notes on Interview with Bob Roper, Court Information Officer  
State of Colorado  
Date: 12/9/2002**

Question 1:  
Support Orders

- Court Case Management System is court managed and was built in-house about 2-3 years ago **(Bob will confirm)**
- Whatever orders courts issue are transferred nightly from CCMS to CSE registry
- There are mandatory fields that must be completed and are some non-mandatory fields that are also flagged when transfer is made because they also want that information
- Get back exceptions nightly, which are error messages on rejected records or missing information (based on flags set for required/wanted data); corrections are made next day
- Court orders are standardized
- Court order system – data elements are the same
- Don't have to follow-up with hard copies

Question 2:  
Deficiencies/Issues

- Court has none; everything is working smoothly
- **Percentage of errors returned, Bob will get those numbers**

Question 5:

- Hardware is IBM AS 400/730
- SW is Court Case Management System (ICON, Integrated Court On-line Network)
- Clerks key in information and it is transferred by FTP to CSE system
- OS is OS400
- Private TCPIP frame relay network
- Database is DB400 (same as DB2)
- **# of data elements (Bob will get that for us)**
  - ~ He will break it down by mandatory and non-mandatory
- Interface maintained on court side
- **Documentation**
  - ~ Bob will check on what they have and will get back to us

## XML

- XML is technology of choice; wanted to use it initially, but was not available when they built their system
- They were following the Terrie Bousquin (former New Mexico CIO) effort (XML standard group? Legal XML workgroup?)
- Would love to be a pilot for our effort once standards are finalized
- Benefits that they don't already have
  - ~ Real time updates
  - ~ Facilitate national data exchange – ease with which Colorado could exchange information with other jurisdictions if there was a standard for tagging fields
  - ~ Effort to convert
    - Have to train staff
    - 3-6 months with 1 FTE
    - Craig would also need project help

They also have a Statewide Criminal Justice Information system (CJIS); they are talking about converting it to XML in-house.

**Notes on Interview with Cindy Moss, Program Director, Information Systems, GA Office of CSE and Ronnie Bates, State of Georgia**

**Date: 11/20/2002**

Comments on Georgia Courts Automation Commission's Interoperability Pilot Project implemented by Georgia State University:

- Website: <http://e-ct-file.gsu.edu/>
- Douglas County typically files 4 cases per week which are sent FTP to remote server (Word Perfect format)
- Court file is stamped (XML/PDF format) – using LegalXML recommendations on fields
- Document can be viewed via a web browser
- Access is through a website
- Updates are made to clerks database
- Manual updates are required to CSE system
- All legal documents filed with the court – petitions, initial pleadings for support or contempt

Benefits:

- No trips to courthouse
- Reduced copies
- Process server is notified electronically
- Service information is electronically sent to courts and electronic notification is sent to CSE
- Only one website – just different links

How is system being paid for?

- Currently Douglas County is only county that is operational
- No one wants to pay for it
- Was implemented by e-filing.com
- Future is based on funding
- Another circuit court is interested but they have a different operating system
- Until it implements all of electronic filing, they are hesitant to put it out
- Requested a SIP grant; if they get the grant then they can make some of the modifications
- \$5 of what is paid to process server would be given to e-filing.com
- GA doesn't pay a clerk fee, so can't use that avenue
- Funding issue is BIG; there are no extra dollars
- There is no marketing information; currently word-of-mouth

Example of savings:

- Benefits document – Pleading --> signature approval --> filing --> process server; this used to take 22 days; with electronic filing it is now a maximum of 5 days in pilot county
- Petition/Pleading to establish support/legal documents – deficiency: manually input into the Case Management System

Other Benefits

- Douglas County wants to be able to share data electronically
- Could eliminate document creation; just go directly to the server
- Document format is not an issue; each county could require a different format as long as the fields are the same
- Can fax a document too and it can be FTPed and put into a database, so it will eliminate data entry
- Interstate forms could be sent using XML

Currently working on Comprehensive Plan: Electronic submission using XML. Estimated completion date is December 20, 2002.

Why is XML the way to go?

- Ability to cross platforms and update databases
- Simplicity (not like Cobol)
- Ability to take a fax and convert it
- Easily tagged to make modifications

Other systems that we should check into: Riverside County website

## **SURVEY (completed survey received from Georgia):**

### Questions relating to Current Process of Receiving/Sending Information From/To the Courts

#### 1. **What** information do you currently receive from/send to the courts?

- Data (e.g. case information, case history, case calendar, actor status, associated case list for particular actor, content of court policy database, existing docket information)

Court Calendar

- Documents (e.g. court order)

Orders for Support

Contempt Orders

Default Orders

- Forms (e.g. child support complaint or petition)

Petitions to Establish Paternity & Support

Petitions to Contempt

Rule Nisi

UIFSA Petitions

Depositions

Continuances

Service Process

#### 2. **How are** you receiving/sending the information now?

- What is the **method** by which you receive/send the information? (e.g. mail, fax, phone, electronic transfer, like email)

Mail

In Person

Electronic ( E-filing)

Fax

Phone

- How **often** do you receive/send information?

Daily

- Are there any **deficiencies, problems, issues or concerns** related to receiving/sending information?

Mail/In Person – timeframe and man hours. Currently we must take the documents to the courthouse have the Judge sign, return to the office make 3 copies, return to the court for filing, go back to the office, return to the court house to pick up the documents, return to the office, call the process server to pick up documents for service, wait for service, process server returns service papers to office, make copies, return to court house to file service papers.

3. **How would you like to receive/send it?**

- What is the **method** by which you would **like to** receive/send the information?

Electronic Filing. Generate electronic documents, Attorney approved, document goes to Judge electronically, he signs, then it is submitted to the Clerk, she files electronically, auto notice sent to OCSE that document filed and ready for pick up at the same time the process server receives notice. He serves the documents and then electronically submits service papers back, clerk electronically files and notifies OCSE. OCSE computer system auto accepts data and updates the database. Notices auto go out to CP/NCP. Constituent self-service.

- What would you **have to do on your side** to receive/send it this way?

Technical upgrades and programming

- Would you **send anything back** to the courts notifying them that data was received?

No

- How would this method **improve the Child Support Enforcement process?** (e.g. savings in staff time, expediting collections, etc.)

Save man hours, which could be used to take actions to collect support. Decrease the time to obtain orders and court dates.

Improved Customer Service.

Questions relating to Electronic Interface with the Courts

4. Do you have any **plans** to exchange data with your courts via an electronic interface?

Yes, pilot currently underway.

- **If so**, do you envision having to make modifications to your CSE system to accommodate this interface and if so, what would the modifications consist of?

Yes, need to be able to accept data from the court system.

5. What is your **computing environment** with respect to the following:

- What **hardware** does your current CSE system run on?

Mainframe, CICS

- What **software** do you use?

\$TARS application, WordPerfect

- What **Operating System** do you use?

Windows 95/98

- What **Network** do you have?

LAN is Novell

- What type of **Database** (database environment) would be the recipient of information from the courts?

DB2

6. Concerning the **users** that would access information from the courts:

- **How many** users would have access to the court supplied information

1400

- Of those, what percentage have access to the Internet

100

- Of those, what percentage have access to the E-mail

100

- Of those with E-mail access, what **e-mail application** do you use (e.g. LotusNotes, Outlook, etc)

Groupwise

7. Who would **maintain/operate** the electronic interchange environment? [Vendor](#)

8. Do you have any **documentation** related to constructing an electronic interface with the courts? [Yes](#)

- Project Plans
- Cost Information
- Design Documents
- Implementation Plan

**Notes on Discussion with Todd Vincent – developer for Georgia Courts Automation Commission's Interoperability Pilot Project**  
**State of Georgia**  
**Date: 2/28/2003**

Georgia Courts Automation Commission's Interoperability Pilot Project Discussion

- There are 5-7 applications with different interfaces that all have to talk to each other.
- Georgia had a back-end mainframe and document generation system that merged into WordPerfect. They now use WORD and their own document generation system; they take data and documents and send through court filing process (based on Legal XML – using DTD). Generic way to pass filing info; once it gets to court, goes through 2 applications and then goes through adapter that takes data and puts it into the case management system; they are moving to another system.
- Project funding: vendor gives work and software free. They made an arrangement with sheriff for service of process; vendor gets piece of money paid to sheriff. Want to roll out to other places of state; dependent on volume also. Todd is funded by courts; vendor is not paid for. Todd is a contractor for the state (through the University); he is also a contractor for the university; project answers to GA courts automation commission.
- CA has a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation court filing process; Georgia will be moving to this type of process; there is a link on their website describing this process.
- Issue is not technology, but the funding; submitted a SIP grant request; did not get a grant; theirs is not a good business model for vendors to get involved in; courts and DHR can't come up with adequate funding; they plan to repackage the SIP grant request into smaller amount.
- They want to get involved with an actual implementation; have one of the most advanced implementation systems in the country; information flows in circle – DHR-court-DHR. Wanted the grant to close the loop back into the DHR system; need \$200K over extended period of time. Big issue is training and support; not a lot of data that gets passed over; have to facilitate communication among all parties. Data issue – 7 systems all with different data.
- Information necessary for filing (Legal XML). Court doesn't care about data is document (DHR has that in their systems); court only cares about filing information.
- CSE process: File a complaint and 4 other documents which initiates case; hearing set; and that date is set and communicated manually; subsequent filings; case sits for 2 years maybe and other documents are filed; existing case # will come over with document and other documents will be associated that way. Prioritize easiest exchanges and do those first; small steps. What they are doing is most advanced; only funding issue; Ronnie Bates could give more detail and another perspective.

**Notes on Discussion with Robbie Endris, Program Director - Field Operations  
Support Enforcement Services  
State of Louisiana  
Date: 12/12/2002**

- Louisiana is only doing Federal Case Registry electronically
- Not doing any electronic exchange in Child Support
- Have bought scanner/printers
- They do have an XML workgroup
- Their IT workgroup is in social services, under division of administration.
- There is now one parent agency for IT for the state. CSE has as one of its higher priorities to get moved there. They have a good CSE system.
- Contact in IT group is: Mark Hodges, 225-922-2075

One of their technology goals is to get technology to the caseworkers in the field (by means of laptops) so that they can input their data as they collect it and it will then get uploaded into the CSE system; also want to be able to take laptop into court room and do input in courtroom.

Issue in Louisiana:

- They have expedited their child support process by means of hearing officers who can hear the case and make an initial assessment (they have a lot of hearing officers); this doesn't take up district court time; cases move quicker through. Hearing officer decision may be appealed to an elected judge within 72 hours; if not appealed, then judge has to put signature on it; can cause problem; always 72 hour delay; can wait a month to get paper order.
  - ~ How do they deal with this potential delay – for most of the jurisdictions, when CS attorney leaves court, he has a copy of the recommendation in hand; can act on recommendation (usually wait 3 days to see if recommendation will be appealed)

Louisiana is state-based; judicial, not administrative; license suspension is only administrative process in the state.

**Notes on Discussion with Alyson Campbell, Deputy Director DCSE/ISTU  
State of Missouri  
Date: 2/26/2003**

Information exchange process between CSE agency and the court:

- MACSS (Missouri Automated Child Support System) – courts enter orders into MACSS (both IV-D and non-IV-D cases); can see the order in the system; have been doing this since 1998; court clerks access MACSS with PCs with 3270 emulation.
- Child support staff can see court order information in MACSS and payment information if circuit clerk receives the payment; now most payments have been redirected to SDU; for those few cases that the court receives and receipts payment – it is done in MACSS. Child support staff don't see docket sheet, petitions.
- Courts have their own judicial information system and they maintain court records there as well; information is different in the two system; no duplication.

The Office of the State Court Administrator governs the courts. They have developed a new web-based program called CASENET. CASENET is open to the public; it provides information like docket entries for cases. When all CSE staff have Internet access, they would be interested in the CASENET system. It is new and its utility to CSE staff has not been evaluated; an example of its use would be for criminal non-support cases – cases could be tracked without having to call the district attorney's office for information.

Opportunity for increased efficiency via electronic transfer:

- Some enforcement actions require certified copies of court order – primarily interstate cases that require an interstate referral asking for enforcement on Missouri's behalf (small number of cases); have to ask for certified copy manually; can't get it electronically (needs seal). Long delay in bigger courts (Jackson county can be months); smaller courts would have within 2 weeks; St. Louis City also big court and there is delay there too. Federal law or state statute requires certified copies of court orders; Missouri is an administrative state and they don't require certified copy of court order for intrastate cases.
- Otherwise they have what they need in MACSS; from the time MACSS was brought up in 1988, non-IV-D cases were included, so don't have to go back to the court to ask for more information.

Missouri has not adopted electronic signature.

Missouri is just now becoming technology-enabled; in the last fiscal year CSE staff were given PCs, prior to that they had green screens; proposals are on the table for imaging and web communication; budget is an issue.

**Notes on Interview with Joanne Browne, Helen Nelson, Tom Barr (Chief Counsel), State of New Mexico**

**Date: 12/3/2002**

New Mexico had a working group some time ago (since disbanded) to define the requirements for electronic filing; composed of CSE agency and court staff; meetings were sporadic; not much headway and no products were generated. There was a design document created and **Joanne will send that to us**. The workgroup looked at XML; not aware of any other technologies considered.

All legal forms are accessible on-line and are data scrapped into a database. **Joanne will give us the data elements captured**. The forms are part of a packet. The Navajo Nation has access to the forms, but don't use all of them.

Survey Instrument:

- NM does not file anything electronically with the courts; they can access certain information, but are not filing anything electronically at this time;
- Electronic signature is legal in NM, but are not using it
- Court clerks do not have access to CSE system
- CSE agency can view court system
- Courts have their own system and assign their own case ID number. Case information, case history, etc. is also kept on the court system.
- Document interchange is through the mail or delivered to the courthouse in person
- They might be able to pull up a calendar
- All documents are hard copy
- Information is exchanged daily in the larger cities
- There is not a CSE office in every county seat
- Problems related to receiving/sending information:
  - ~ It takes several weeks in Albuquerque to process documents; shorter times in other parts of state. Enforcement petitions are processed first.
  - ~ Albuquerque is flooded with petitions
  - ~ Courts are under funded and have been so for last 8 years
- Enforcement action is filed the day it is received
- When information is received from the court, it must be entered manually into CSE system; time consuming
- Only acknowledgement from court of information sent is a date stamp
- What would like to receive electronically
  - ~ All filings
  - ~ Like to file electronically and get endorsed copies back electronically

- Their working group did look into XML; need to review design document to see what was done
- No plans to resurrect the workgroup (it was composed of agency and court staff)
- Electronic interface would be major impact to the courts and modifications would be fairly minimal
- Only technology solution discussed by the workgroup was XML
- Benefits to electronic interface
  - ~ Money savings (postage and time spent going back and forth to courthouse)
  - ~ More expeditious
  - ~ Slow downs and bottlenecks affect everything
  - ~ Easier to track at both ends
  - ~ Would expedite collections
  - ~ Positive impact on Federal performance incentives

Privacy has already been addressed (most filings are public record).

**Notes on Interview with Renee Cascio**  
**New Mexico Courts**  
**Date: 1/24/2003**

Current exchange capability with the CSE agency:

- Electronically send data file, place on FTP site and child support agency pulls it down. Occurs at least monthly. Information sent includes case number, date of order issuance, party demographic data (such as names, dates of birth, SSNs), address, relationship, when child support ordered, amount, and a flag for domestic violence (as specified from the parties). Follow with certified copies of orders. Nothing received electronically from the CSE agency.
- Statewide case management system – in every district court in the state.
- Don't image court documents at all.
- Individuals have to submit pleadings through the court for a case to be opened. Child support agency doesn't open cases to her knowledge – goes through court. Don't receive anything from the agency.
- Had e-filing pilot project in one court in the state; had to end because legislature wouldn't fund it. Not dealing with any electronic exchange currently. Electronic signature was a significant issue. **Will talk to IT people about availability of data elements identified for the pilot and send to us if possible.**
- The courts only hear and consider what's presented to them – anything other than that is a violation of judicial ethics.
- Interstate data exchange – no exchange with other states. Believe that the information they send to the CSE agency is forwarded to the Federal Registry, but there is no follow-up to confirm this.

Still track the latest with LegalXML.

**Notes on Interview with Dan Richard (IV-D Director) and Joyce Match (for Jeff Rowe, Application Manager for PACSES)**

**Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**

**Date: 2/12/2003**

- Local IV-D agency is the court in Pennsylvania – Court of Common Pleas and a Domestic Relations Section (IV-D agency) in every county; unique relationship. Pennsylvania is a judicial process state. Domestic Relations is a highly administrative branch of the local court system. Docketing activities are completed by Domestic Relations themselves.
- All CSE related activities are in one place. Child support functions completed in the statewide child support system, PACSES.
- If a complaint is filed for child support, a conference takes place during which an interim order is generated. If not appealed within 15 days, becomes final; then a paper copy is issued that the judge will stamp; or it is pre-printed from the court order.
- PACSES has 354 forms within the system, including orders for support, license suspension, liens on assets, income attachments. Forms are standardized statewide.
- There is no waiting for an order; IV-D agency is creating the order; some have rubber stamp; some send to the judge for review and signature; local offices have different requirements. Don't have to wait for piece of paper to post payment or respond to customer concern.
- Similar organizational structure in Michigan – “Friend of the Court”, which performs a similar function as Domestic Relations in Pennsylvania. Not sure if they can establish a temporary order. Friend of the Court is an administrative agency that takes care of enforcement and related actions; they don't hold support hearings or establish the order.
- Pennsylvania's organizational structure – advantages include a streamlined process, no extra judicial process for contempt, don't have to refer cases to a court because the court has spoken. Really no disadvantages, other than issues that arise when two separate branches of government interact – separation of power issues, can't regulate the courts, neither side can dictate to the other. Cooperative agreements are with the judicial branch – have to be aware of political differences and issues. Most counties are of sufficient size to have family court judges who are familiar with the program, so they are not going to another body where they have to start from scratch if there are larger issues. Support guidelines are issued by Supreme Court rule, so can't be declared unconstitutional; therefore, can circumvent a lot of jurisdictional issues.
- PACSES was fully certified in December 2001 (including PRWORA).
- Technical environment: Unisys Clearpath mainframe with servers in counties where forms and screens (GUI interface) are downloaded. Store form templates and latest versions of screens at the county level. Each county worker has a PC; they are upgrading to IBM state-of-the-art flat screen PCs. Also have PACSES homepage, data warehouse, portal, and intranet.
- Applications: COBOL, support layer is proprietary to the state as a bridge between COBOL programs and screens so it is easier to write the programs.

- Database: DMS, RDMS (converting slowly).
- Want to share information with other courts, like child support with criminal, domestic violence, custody; there is also some conversation of communicating with other agencies.
- Child welfare is an administrative agency in Pennsylvania, not part of the court. To place a child, they have to go to court and file a petition and start there.
- Interstate: Pennsylvania is fully CSENet compliant and communicates that way. Interstate cases are handled at the county level, not centralized. Philadelphia County has the largest caseload (140,000 active cases).

**Notes on Interview with Jacqueline Nguyen and Karen Clements**  
**State of Texas**  
**Date: 12/5/2002**

State-based, judicial state with a quasi-administrative method as well

254 counties in Texas

Current Data Exchange Process:

- When a pleading is produced, CSE creates a dataset and sends it to court and it is used to create a record in their system
- Court establishes a file date and docket number and their permanent record of pleading
- Replaces their data entry process; eliminates data entry errors; still have to follow up with paper (petitions or pleadings)
- Only used in 4 largest counties – looking to expand; this covers most of cases (60-70% of cases); all have different systems capability; have to assist with some programming as well; other counties still file manually.

Plans:

- Group in formation; e-filing work group
- It has not met yet
- They want to look into ways of electronic filing
- They are just at point of sending people to training to understand more about the technology
- No charter at this point
- Agency staff only at first, eventually bringing in other groups

Do get anything back when send dataset:

- No, are working on cog number and file date that will automatically update CSE system; not in place now; now get it back manually and have to put it in CSE system;
- It is helping courts

Benefits:

- Expedites process; helps get file dates in couple of days; no help in data entry though;
- Reduces court backlog which helps the agency process cases

Question 8:

- Have some documentation, but may not be same as will have for electronic interface with courts;
- Timeframe for implementing true interface – one of first topics for workgroup; workgroup will be agency first, then involve other entities they would interact with.

Will have 100 new district clerks because of election; also new attorney general.

Benefit of electronic interface:

- Savings, staff time;
- Eliminate errors;
- Expedite process of establishing CS order, which would lead to expediting collection.

Other Comments:

- No resistance on court side
- CSE makes changes and sometimes buys equipment for the courts
- They pay for hardware and programming effort for courts
- Resources are only problem; in 4 counties CSE provides programmers
- 4 largest counties have most of caseload
- Just starting working group/committee to look at electronic filing
- Get filing date electronically
- Still get paper

Texas is interested in the results of the feasibility study, especially the alternatives analysis and CBA.

\*Send the NCSC link

**SURVEY (completed survey received from Texas)**

**Questions relating to Current Process of Receiving/Sending Information From/To the Courts**

1. **What** information do you currently receive from/send to the courts?

- Data (e.g. case information, case history, case calendar, actor status, associated case list for particular actor, content of court policy database, existing docket information)

**SEND TO COURTS**

*Case Information  
Parties Information*

**RECEIVE FROM COURTS**

*Filing Date  
Hearing Date  
Cause Number*

- Documents (e.g. court order)

**SEND TO COURTS**

*Court Orders (for Judge's signature)*

**RECEIVE FROM COURTS**

*Court Orders (with Judge's signature)*

- Forms (e.g. child support complaint or petition)

**SEND TO COURTS**

*Petitions to...  
Establish Paternity  
Establish Child Support Order  
Enforce Child Support Order*

**RECEIVE FROM COURTS**

*Notice of Hearing*

2. **How are** you receiving/sending the information now?

- What is the **method** by which you receive/send the information? (e.g. mail, fax, phone, electronic transfer, like email)

**SEND TO COURTS**

*Personal delivery  
Mail  
Electronic – limited use for data transfer only*

**RECEIVE FROM COURTS**

*OAG-CSD staff personally pick-up  
Mail*

- How **often** do you receive/send information?

**SEND TO COURTS**

*Daily*

**RECEIVE FROM COURTS**

*Daily*

- Are there any **deficiencies, problems, issues or concerns** related to receiving/sending information?

**SEND TO COURTS**

*Any electronic data transfer must be followed-up with a paper copy of documents or forms filed.*

**RECEIVE FROM COURTS**

*Delays in data entry (due to backlogs) by Court staff results in filing dates being aside well after the OAG-CSD has delivered documents/forms.*

3. **How would you like to receive/send it?**

- What is the **method** by which you would **like to** receive/send the information?

**SEND TO COURTS**

*True electronic filing without follow-up  
With paper copies*

**RECEIVE FROM COURTS**

*Electronic data transfer and notices*

- What would you **have to do on your side** to receive/send it this way?
  - ~ Systems programming changes to allow for data transfer
  - ~ Coordinate with approximately 250 District Clerks in Texas to develop and implement
  - ~ Coordinate with other entities individually, e.g. different districts of Bankruptcy Courts
- Would you **send anything back** to the courts notifying them that data was received?
 

*Yes, confirmation that data transfer was received.*
- How would this method **improve the Child Support Enforcement process?** (e.g. savings in staff time, expediting collections, etc.)
  - ~ Savings in staff time
  - ~ Reduce/eliminate data entry errors

Questions relating to Electronic Interface with the Courts

4. Do you have any **plans** to exchange data with your courts via an electronic interface?

- **If so**, do you envision having to make modifications to your CSE system to accommodate this interface and if so, what would the modifications consist of?

*Yes. Current programming to create interface to provide updates to the system of filing date, hearing date, cause number, indicator that filing was completed. Programming also to be performed to accommodate electronic filing with bankruptcy courts.*

5. What is your **computing environment** with respect to the following:
- What **hardware** does your current CSE system run on?
    - ~ Compaq Deskpro EN833
    - ~ EVO 1.8 Ghz Desktops
    - ~ Dell Latitude 700 Mhz Notebooks
  - What **software** do you use?
 

*Please refer to attached list, at end of survey.*
  - What **Operating System** do you use?
 

*Windows 98 until March 2003, after which will be Windows XP*
  - What **Network** do you have?
 

*Netware 6*
  - What type of **Database** (database environment) would be the recipient of information from the courts?
 

*ADABAS Natural*
6. Concerning the **users** that would access information from the courts:
- **How many** users would have access to the court supplied information
 

*All OAG-CSD Field Operations employees, approximately 2,100.*
  - Of those, what percentage have access to the Internet
 

*100%*
  - Of those, what percentage have access to the E-mail
 

*100%*
  - Of those with E-mail access, what **e-mail application** do you use (e.g. LotusNotes, Outlook, etc)
 

*Novell Groupwise*
7. Who would **maintain/operate** the electronic interchange environment?
- Likely the OAG-CSD, as is currently the case with limited electronic filing current being performed in interfaces with four county District Clerk's offices.*

8. Do you have any **documentation** related to constructing an electronic interface with the courts?

- Project Plans
- Cost Information
- Design Documents
- Implementation Plan

*Because current data exchange with county District Clerks is not true e-filing, it is not necessarily the basis for documentation of electronic filing to be developed.*

*Development and documentation of electronic filing with Bankruptcy Courts is in progress.*

<b>Application</b>	<b>Version</b>
Acrobat Reader	5.05
Compaq Diagnostics *	4.02a
Earthlink Lite	5.0.7
Entire Connection	4.3.1.1
Groupwise Client *	6.0 SP2
GWFax Client *	5.5
IPTV Viewer	3.4
Java 2 Runtime Environment *	1.4.1
MacroExpress	3.0f
Shockwave	8.5.1
Flash *	6
Authorware	6.5
Netscape Communicator *	4.8
Norton AntiVirus Corporate Edition	7.61 41b
Novell Client *	4.83 SP1
Novell Client for Windows	
Remote Management	
Zenworks Imaging Service	
Zenworks Application Launcher	
Novell Workstation Manager	
Novell Distributed Print Services	
Office Professional *	XP SP1
Access	
Excel	
PowerPoint	
Word	
Photo Editor	
PowerToys	XP
Alt-Tab	
CmdHere	
TweakUI	
Printer drivers	
Lexmark Optra, E32x (PCL)	7.4
Epson Stylus C80	5.3
Xerox DocuColor 12	1.5
QuickTime Player	6
RealOne Player	6
Rumba for Mainframe	7.1
Seiko Smart Label	4.61
Sybase Client	12.5
TechSmith Codec	2.0.2
Visio Viewer *	2002
VitalAgent	8.2.5
VPN Client	3.52
Windows Media Player	8
Internet Explorer	6.0 SP1
Windows Script Host	5.6
System Restore	
Remote Desktop Connection	
WinZip *	8.1
WinZip Command Line Add-on *	1
WordPerfect	8 / 10

**Notes on Interview with Steve Spitzer, System Manager, DCS SEMS Imaging Project and Gary Masten, County Clerk  
State of Washington  
Date: 12/10/2002**

Washington is state-based, administrative remedies.

SEMS Imaging System Discussion

- System had its genesis in 1987 when the Central Registry Law came out; it provided for a central area for status updates for interstate referrals – it let other states know status of a case.
- Washington created a centralized area (Central Repository); cases were established within the CSE system.
- Legislation was initiated that required county clerks to submit copies of child support orders to a central location and payments had to be submitted to this same central location (regardless if the case were IV-D or not); so all orders and payments came to the central registry (was initially a nightmare because there are 39 counties).
- Technology available at that time (pre-windows) was fax; fax machines were leased for all counties (slow, labor intensive for clerks; some refused to fax orders and just mailed them).
- By 1997, 100% of orders and payments were coming to the central location; welfare reform had just gone into effect; SDU was now the law.
- In 1997 an imaging system was installed to process child support payments to keep up with volume (80,000 payments/month; by October 2002 there were 196,000 payments/month with 100,000 being electronically deposited); no new staff were hired.
- Court order unit also wanted something built, so in 1997 Case Archive system was built.
- Built an infrastructure in an imaging environment; followed a 4-phase process:
  1. Identified present processes used in counties
  2. Had to be able to process paper and then switch those using fax to redirect images to fax server
  3. Identified those clerks that had an imaging system and have the capability to export directly into the state system with index information; so county clerk would not have a delay for case setup (would be done automatically) and would go directly to state-wide system; no extra work for caseworker
  4. Then double back on low technology counties without imaging systems; state would provide imaging systems to them to eliminate fax; scan would go directly to state system
- Phase 3 is complicated; counties have chosen different imaging products; so have to publish standards; 4 standards already exist; standard 5 is case file application (case file imaging system to eliminate archiving).

- IV-A is also building an imaging system and considering being able to exchange information with them; they are using XML.
- Currently only 29% of court orders are paper (fax or mail; 5% mail).
- Have centralized 100% of case correspondence.
- Washington uses IRS codes to build administrative remedies; they take direct enforcement actions; majority are Superior Court orders (only few are absent of court order which are usually separated parents); most are entered by county clerks; trend is more IV-D agencies are in control to see that program is carried out efficiently (like SDU).
- Centralized court orders should be done so that all caseworkers can query system.
- Benefits of XML:
  - ~ Standard file format; wouldn't matter what kind of system sender has
  - ~ TIF is still used for imaging; XML would have name of image file, or may contain many different court orders and relates back to images that come in separately
  - ~ Adding XML because it is becoming the standard
  - ~ Most imaging systems have export capability; some use PDF format and they convert to Group 4 TIFF compression; some are multi-page format; so have to be able to read multi-page TIFF and PDF
  - ~ Counties are protective of their firewalls, so have to be able to map servers; WA uses Virtual Private Network which allows them to get behind the state firewall and make the transfer
  - ~ Preferred way to send images is email (but are limitations on file size)
  - ~ Can be difficult to change infrastructure
  - ~ So, they are trying to identify the most common methods for exporting; XML could help with trying to standardize the methods
- Documentation
  - ~ They are writing a System Documentation Book
  - ~ Have some description documentation (flow diagrams, phases); are in VISIO, Steve will send
  - ~ Cost-benefit data
  - ~ Had quality tools that collected info about court order piece
  - ~ Have won several national awards and the award documentation contains benefit data
  - ~ Steve will send documentation and we will follow-up

## Washington County Clerks and DCS Imaging System

DCS began efforts a few years ago to use imaging technology to receive and process child support orders from the county clerks. The strategy has been to implement this in four phases as budget and development cycles allow. Phases One and Two are now complete. To expedite the process, Washington has combined Phases Three and Four to be implemented concurrently. Brief descriptions of the phases, with their respective status, are provided below.

1. Phase One – Converts all faxes and mailed orders to images via scanners in DCS Central Operations. The purpose of this important phase was to introduce court order imaging to DCS staff and develop the DCS court order imaging infrastructure. This phase did not affect the county clerks. This phase is now complete.
2. Phase Two – This phase simply redirected the clerks' DCS fax machine phone number to a new Fax Server phone number. This required the clerks to add bar code separator pages between faxed court order documents in order for the DCS Fax Server to recognize the documents. This phase saved DCS Central Operations the chore of having to sort and manually scan the court order documents. An unexpected twist was discovered when it was revealed that the clerks with imaging systems could not easily add the bar code separator sheets when using the fax out features of their imaging systems. This excluded the clerks with imaging systems from the Phase Two development. Phase Two is now complete.
3. Phase Three – During this phase, DCS negotiates with the county clerks who have imaging systems and arranges for those counties to export directly out of their imaging systems into the DCS imaging system. Depending on the county capability, DCS may also import shared index data. DCS has successfully tested this with Pierce County. Pierce County has been using this method since April 5, 2002. The State now has many more counties converted to this method. Negotiations with the county network staff will be successful, but it takes time to address security concerns. It is estimated that the clerks with imaging systems will be converted by March 2003. Benefits to the DCS Central Operations Unit will include the elimination of sorting and scanning the paper. The benefits to the county will depend on how the county's imaging system workflow is designed and the current process to get court order documents to the DCS Central Operations Unit. These county benefits may range from neutral to substantial, depending on the county. Overall benefits will include quicker delivery of child support orders and faster DCS establishment and enforcement actions.
4. Phase Four – During this phase, DCS-provided fax machines will be replaced with scanners. This solution is intended for those counties who do not have imaging systems. The State has identified 18 counties that fit this criterion and all have been contacted. Nine of them are ready to make the change right now. The State is either negotiating or waiting for responses from the other nine. Process should be complete no later than June 2003, if all 18 remaining counties are converted to this solution. Presently, Snohomish County is using this solution and the feedback received has been very positive. For counties that have been laboring over fax machines, this is a welcome solution. It also helps the DCS Central Operations Unit since staff will no longer have to sort and scan the paper. In addition, the child support orders are delivered faster resulting in quicker child support enforcement activities.

To summarize, if all goes well with the acquisition request, Washington should be able to complete Phase Three by March 2003 and complete Phase Four by June 2003. For counties that are eligible for Phase Four, two counties per month should be converted beginning October 2002.

***Current status:*** 75% of all court orders are now imported from the counties to the system; 100% of all mail is imaged; 50% of the back file conversion of case file document is completed.

For counties that fax court orders to the state, data exchanged currently consists of a bar code separator page for each faxed court document that identifies the document.

For those advanced counties that are exporting the document directly out of their imaging system, those data elements that are relevant to the statewide child support system (such as date filed and cause number) are indexed and that information is inserted into the child support system directly. The electronic court order is transmitted electronically to the DCS imaging system.

To fully automate setup of the child support cases, it is necessary to expand the number of data elements indexed from the court order. This task is currently being investigated. There are strict rules about how an order is formatted, so court orders are fairly standard. OCR technology is being considered to identify the particular section that specifies order amount (for example) and to capture the value specified and then automatically transmit it to the child support system.

The data requirements that specify how the data would be mapped will be considered during the design of the indexing capability.

**Insert Washington's Imaging Process Flow Chart (1 page)**

**Insert Washington's System Development Overview (1 page)**

**Notes on Interview with Dave White, Child Support Specialist (CSE Call Center)**  
**Bureau of Partner Services, Department of Workforce Development**  
**State of Wisconsin**  
**Date: 2/21/2003**

Current exchange is a paper process. CSE agency is co-located with the courts.

Office of the State Courts recently finished a two-year e-filing study. Study recommends a pilot in appellate and circuit court. Contacts regarding study: Teresa Owen, 608-261-4301 and Andrea Olson (Clerk of Court Automation Project [CCAP] technical staff member), 608-264-6908.

Completed a cost/benefit analysis for a KIDS/CCAP interface in 1994; didn't proceed primarily because of lack of funding and also determined it wasn't worth the effort.

Order processing – CSE agency staff involved in court cases, present in court. They generate the paperwork and file with the court.

Interstate: use CSENet. Incoming request comes to state office and is sent to counties. Other states do not send requests or communicate with courts directly.

E-filing would have a significant impact on the agency.

Bureau of Child Support, Operations Section, KIDS contact – Steve Buechner, 608-267-9539.

**Notes on Interview with Dan Floeter, Family Court Commissioner; Kerry Widish, Court Manager; Donna Wills, Net Administrator; Gail Richardson, Madison County Court Administrator**  
**State of Wisconsin**  
**Date: 2/26/2003**

Existing capability of electronic exchange from court perspective:

- CSE agency emails calendars to courts
- KIDS access – have look-up capability, can schedule court dates, generate notices, update addresses, look for an order and the order amount, review and print payment records, do income assignments, see case notes.
- Started imaging last year. Imaged database contains family and paternity court documents (stored on county server); available for users to view after scanned; IV-D also has access to the database.

Imaged database process – orders are generated by KIDS; hard copies are sent to court and those are imaged; Dane County server stores the images; not everyone has passwords or direct access on their desks.

Courts system – county; KIDS – statewide. Office of State Courts uses CCAP system. Office staff on county network. Support enforcement staff on county network. Paperwork is exchanged between state and county systems.

Benefit of electronic interface:

- Is suspect because they would have to change the way they do business. Have access to KIDS for what they need.
- Study for electronic filing indicated there would be a benefit for clerk's office, public defenders, attorneys with respect to added efficiency; child support was not mentioned in the discussions. Study going on to the State Supreme Court; will be 2 years before it is a reality.

New courthouse is being built and will be finished in 2005. Offices will be wired for KIDS so they will not lose any access they currently have. Will have access to imaged orders for newer cases where orders have been imaged. May change the way they do things; electronic filing may be available from CCAP which would change the environment.

Suggestion was made to talk to someone in CCAP about the electronic filing study.

## **D. NATIONAL SURVEY OF COURT INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STATUS**

**E. GENERAL OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND CHILD SUPPORT XML STANDARDS**

**F. DRAFT CHILD SUPPORT XML SPECIFICATION FOR IV-D AGENCY REVIEW**