

Appendix C

Technical Advisory Group Meeting: Participant Information Packet

Included items:

1. Meeting Logistics Memorandum
2. Meeting Agenda (Participant List Removed)
3. Briefing Paper

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memorandum

DATE: March 6, 2003
TO: Participants of the Technical Advisory Group Meeting
of the District Court Case Weighting Study
FROM: James B. Eaglin, Research Division Director
SUBJECT: Meeting Logistics

Thank you for accepting our invitation to attend the meeting of the Technical Advisory Group for the District Court Case Weighting Study. This group--composed of court personnel having technical knowledge of docketing systems and procedures--has been established to advise research staff on the challenges involved in extracting and using information docketed in case management databases.

The meeting will be held in Washington, D.C. on March 20-21, 2003. The first-day session be held from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and the second day will convene between 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. This schedule permits attendees to travel home the afternoon of the second day. Expenses to attend the meeting will be covered by the FJC, and a TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION form for your use is accordingly enclosed.

This memorandum provides information about the meeting s logistics. Included with the memo is a document describing the project and listing topics to be explored at the meeting. Please contact Pat Lombard (202-502-4083; plombard@fjc.gov) or Carol Krafka (202-502-4068; ckrafka@fjc.gov) if you have questions not covered here.

MEETING LOCATION

We will meet in the FJC Conference Room on the sixth floor of the Thurgood Marshall Federal Judiciary Building (TMFJB). The building is located directly east of Union Station at One Columbus Circle, NE. From the building s atrium, please proceed to the south lobby and present picture identification to the security personnel. You will find the conference room located next to the bank of elevators on the sixth floor.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND OTHER EXPENDITURES

The FJC has reserved a room for you on March 19 and March 20 at the Holiday Inn On The Hill (415 New Jersey Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001). The FJC will pay the single room rate of \$150.00 per night by purchase order. You will need to contact the hotel sales manager, Ms. Cresma Reotutar (202-434-0110; cresma@holinnhillcom) by **Friday**,

March 14 to confirm your reservation, and you should inform her at that time that you are with the Federal Judicial Center.

The Holiday Inn is located less than 10 minutes walking distance from the TMFJB. If you need to take a taxi between the hotel and the TMFJB, please request a receipt and include it with your travel voucher when seeking reimbursement.

REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENDITURES

As noted, the Center will pay the hotel directly for your lodgings on March 19 and March 20. If you itemize expenditures, you may claim daily reimbursement for meals and allowable incidental expenses of up to \$38 per day on March 19, 20, and 21. Ground transportation does not count toward the limit on allowable incidentals.

Upon completion of travel, please submit your voucher for reimbursement of expenses to the Clerk of Court for your district, with a copy of the Center's TA attached. A copy of your voucher should additionally be sent to our office so that we may monitor expenditures for the meeting (send to: Jeannette Summers, Federal Judicial Center, One Columbus Circle, N.E., Washington, DC 20002).

AIR AND GROUND TRANSPORTATION

Our travel authorization urges the use of economy fares for those who will fly. All participants are entitled to use government fares for this meeting; National Travel Service at 1-800-445-0668 can provide fare information and assistance with travel arrangements.

Taxi service is available from Reagan National Airport for about \$30.00 each way. Shuttle service is available from Dulles Airport for about \$20 each way (reserve by phone at 1-800-258-3826 or online at www.supershuttle.com). Rental car reimbursement is not authorized for this meeting beyond the ground transportation equivalent (\$60). First class travel is not authorized for this meeting.

AGENDA AND MEETING OBJECTIVES

The meeting will focus on the logistics of extracting data from district court case management databases. Matters to be discussed include:

- differences in docketing events, especially between ICMS and CM/ECF databases;
- the form that extracted data records will take;
- the level of event detail that can be obtained in a standard way from all courts;
- what the extraction process will likely entail;
- an assessment of the level of technical difficulty involved in the extractions (specifically, an assessment of how difficult it would be for courts to perform the extractions, if they were asked to do so); and
- an assessment of the time required for courts to complete extractions, if they were asked to do so.

Federal Judicial Center
2003 - 2004 District Court Case Weighting Study

Technical Advisory Group Meeting

March 20 - 21, 2003
FJC Conference Room, Sixth Floor
Thurgood Marshall Federal Judiciary Building
One Columbus Circle, NE, Washington, DC 20002-8003

Agenda

Thursday, March 20, 2003

9:00 Welcome Carol Krafska
Research Division, Federal Judicial Center

James B. Eaglin
Director of Research, Federal Judicial Center

9:15 Discussion of the Project Proposal

- Overview of case weighting issues
- Features of the proposed design

9:45 Overview of Court Data Extraction Component

- Case and event records
- Standard event list and cross-reference table
- Transfer of data to FJC

10:15 General Discussion of Feasibility

- What are the major roadblocks
- ICMS differences (e.g., different starter dictionaries, court customizations)
- Can we adapt and use any ICMS-to-CM/ECF conversion tools

11:00 Direct Extraction Data Items

- Case identifiers and characteristics (e.g., nature of suit and offense codes, title and section, defendant identifiers, number of parties, number of counts, pro se)
- Event specifics (e.g., date, judge, party, type codes, pointers to other events)

12:00 *Lunch*

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1:15 Standard Events and Docketing Issues

- What categories of events are most useful to identify judge-related activities (e.g., answers, complaints, minutes, motions, trials)?
- What level of detail can we get in a standard manner (e.g., just conference or type of conference too)?
- Other complicating distinctions: Each day of trial vs. trial started, evidentiary vs. non-evidentiary hearings, proceeding held vs. scheduled, link ruling or answer to original motion or complaint, events that refer to multiple cases or defendants, differences in docketing depending on type of case (e.g., criminal, civil, miscellaneous), docketing in practice vs. theory (e.g., events actually used compared to range of possible events)

3:00 Cross-reference Table

- Can a default table be built? Just one or do we need 3 (AZ ICMS, TX ICMS, CM/ECF)?
- Identifying and converting non-standard events
- Convert to CM/ECF codes or project specific codes? What about non-judicial events?

4:00 Data Extraction Request

- Who to contact? What kind of package to put together?
- Estimate of effort to comply with request? How long will it take?
- Contingency plans (e.g., event mapping by FJC, docket sheet parsing)?
- What other difficulties / issues should we look out for?

5:00 *Adjourn for the day*

Friday, March 21, 2003

9:00 Working Session

- Identify components of data extraction package
- Develop extraction algorithms, instructions, etc. as time allows

12:00 Wrap-up Discussion

- What are the next steps? Future role for Technical Advisory Group members
- Schedule for pilot test of procedures and full extraction effort

1:00 *Adjourn*

Technical Advisory Group Briefing on the 2003-2004 District Court Case Weighting Study

Case weights indicate the relative demands that different types of cases place on judges' time. Because the weighted caseload accounts for differences in case types, it offers a more precise estimate of a district's caseload burden than a simple count of raw case filings. When assessing district court needs for new judgeships, the Judicial Conference considers the weighted caseload of a requesting court to be a critical piece of information.

The current system of case weights has been in use for over a decade. In recent years, judges have pointed out that changes in the law and in case management techniques are likely to have affected the judicial resources needed to dispose of many types of cases. With this in mind, the Judicial Resources Committee of the Judicial Conference has determined that the current system of case weights should be updated, and has asked the Federal Judicial Center to calculate new weights for the Committee to review by midyear 2004.

The development of district court case weights in the past depended on two types of information for each defined case type--the frequency of the case type in the relevant pool of studied cases and a measure of total time expenditure associated with case terminations. Obtaining frequency information from standardized case information regularly submitted to the Administrative Office by clerks of courts was fairly straightforward. Obtaining information on time expenditure, however, required judges to keep detailed records of the time they spent working on cases and related matters. While this study design provided a direct and objective assessment of case processing demands, the time-keeping requirement was considered burdensome by many district judges.

The current effort to update the case weights uses a different approach, one that does not rely on judges keeping time records. The design instead takes advantage of case processing information captured in the district courts' case management databases. The case weight calculations combine information about the kinds of events that are docketed in cases (e.g., days of trial, motions filed, conferences held), the average frequency of those events in different types of cases, and the time that judges spend on those activities. The information on the type and frequency of case events, however, must be extracted from district courts' internal case management databases.

The extraction of data from court databases is the primary subject of the meeting for the Technical Advisory Group. Issues that staff from the FJC will want to discuss with the group include:

- differences in docketing events, especially between ICMS and CM/ECF databases;
- the form that extracted data records will take;

- the level of event detail that can be obtained in a standard way from all courts;
- what the extraction process will likely entail;
- potential problems that might interfere with extractions;
- an assessment of the level of technical difficulty involved in the extractions (specifically, an assessment of how difficult it would be for courts to perform the extractions, if they were asked to do so); and
- an assessment of the time required for courts to complete extractions, if they were asked to do so.