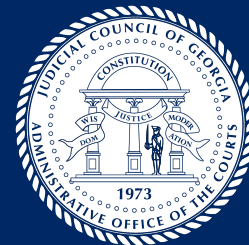# COURT TECH TALK

JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF GEORGIA
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIVISION

CELEBRATING OUR 50th ANNIVERSARY

Rule of Law
Through Technology

On September 17th, 1787, delegates to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia signed the U.S. Constitution, a written charter for a new — and enduring — federal government. 236 years ago, the delegates convened at Philadelphia developed a framework that would provide balance and freedom, consider federal and state interests, and guarantee individual human rights.

We take the opportunity to reflect on the foundations of our legal system and the Rule of Law we have come to know. It is a time to celebrate the rich history of our most precious founding document. It is a time to acknowledge the ways in which it has shaped the American story and continues to inform and inspire our stories today.

Several components make up the concept of the Rule of Law. Generally, Rule of Law is a principle under which all persons and institutions are accountable to laws that are: widely and publicly shared, equally enforced, and impartially adjudicated. These basic ideas emerge from centuries of traditions and law, going back to the Code of Hammurabi and the Bible (".צדק צדק תרדף *Tzedek, tzedek tirdof*. Justice, justice shall you pursue." — Deuteronomy 16:20), through Magna Carta ("*Nulli vendemus, nulli negabimus, aut differimus rectum aut justiciam.* To no one will we sell, to no one will we deny or delay right or justice." — Clause 40), and our country's founding documents but align with contemporary standards in human rights and international law.

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ACCESS TO JUSTICE

includes removing structural and cost barriers to the courts and equal treatment in the civil and criminal legal systems. Unless citizens have access to justice, the rights and duties enshrined in international treaties, constitutions, and laws are meaningless, and fail to provide protection to vulnerable groups.

Expanding access to justice is accelerated through research, data, and innovative strategies to improve fairness and efficiency in legal systems and to ensure court services and programs incorporate modern policies and reforms that improve accountability, fiscal responsibility, and safeguard the integrity of legal systems and processes.

The responsible use of technology is central to providing equitable access to justice for all. To that end, we must develop and utilize tools that enhance access to justice. Technology increases opportunities for participation, usability, accountability, efficiency, and transparency in our justice system must not diminish. Technology in the justice system must be easy to use, affordable, fair, and efficient.

Courts that have implemented digital solutions have progressed in reducing their backlog of cases as judges, lawyers and litigants started to interact more effectively. Legal tech tools can help courts manage their caseloads more efficiently, allowing them to process more work and still maintain quality. Legal tech's most common uses for these issues include technology that offers accurate information, connects people to attorneys, produces documents, and automates workflows.

Standards allow courts to manage secure, reliable, and effective information systems that are consistent with the rules established for judges and court staff to maintain and advance the judicial, administrative, and operational functions of the court. Technology and standards allow courts to provide leadership and facilitate collaboration among internal and external judicial partners, to better integrate systems; improve communication, data, and information sharing capabilities; and enhance the delivery of public services.

Technology can increase and maintain access to justice by eliminating or reducing social and economic barriers. Courts must prioritize and focus on people's experiences when implementing technology, ensure due process and procedural fairness in all proceedings, regardless of technology used, and maintain transparency and public confidence.

Using online, web platform technology to "open up" courts will make using courts easier and faster for litigants, which will make it more likely that they will exercise their legal options in the first place. Automating with standardized procedures yields increased efficiencies contributing to increased legal certainty. Using automated procedures, parties receive notice of upcoming events automatically, deadlines will be adhered to more strictly, costs contained, and errors reduced. Automated case processing sets a higher standard for handling cases.

With the cooperation of all justice partners, efforts to improve the penetration of technology will allow courts to observe data trends, which can help overcome current backlogs, increase access to the justice system, inform policies that drive down mass incarceration, improve transparency, and seed a revolution in justice technology that strengthens the rule of law and improves access to justice for all Georgians.

Tech Tips for the Holiday Season

As the holiday season approaches, make sure you stay aware of scammers, hackers, bots, and all sorts of other nefarious actors who will always be waiting to take advantage of the seasonal good cheer of eager and unsuspecting consumers, travelers, and revelers.

- **Shop carefully**, with a known vendor. We would all love to find that perfect small online retailer with custom, hand-made gifts at the lowest price, but a mainstream, established site is a safer bet. Ensure the security of the website you are shopping on by checking that its URL starts with https://, not just http. Online or off, don't let your charge card out of your sight. Not trying to scare anyone, but if you are shopping with a vendor and need to create a password, make sure it's not the same as your work or personal banking password in case of a data breach. The best practice is to use a passphrase, unique to that seller, that follows proper guidelines.

- **Check your bank and card accounts frequently** or set up an automatic notification at your bank for purchases over a certain limit. Also keep aware of debit card scanning and card skimmer machines that can try to steal your information.

- **New Tech.** When a new computer arrives, run all the operating system and application updates, as well as any updates available from your PC manufacturer, install and keep up to date antivirus software, preferably with advanced ransomware protection and cloud-based detection response technology, remove any undesired pre-installed software, and set up a firewall.

- **Old Tech.** When it's time to get rid of your old computer or phone, make sure to wipe all your personal data from the hard drive. Take out the hard drive and have a professional recycler destroy it, at least use military-grade wipe and overwriting software on it. Don't forget that your printer may contain a drive containing every document you've ever printed.

- **Secure traveling.** If you really need to bring along that computer, try to stay offline-not connected to the internet. Don't connect to strange, public wi-fi networks. Don't post your vacation plans to social media or photos and comments while you are gone. It can wait until you get home. It's too easy for the bad guys to look up your address and rob your empty house.

- **Keep your kids safe online.** Most devices, like your new computer, tablet, or cell phone, should give you the option to configure parental controls when you first begin its set up. You may want to consider monitoring how long your child is on their device and limit the times they can use applications. Consider setting up parental controls prior to giving a child a new device. Also, teach them about how to stay cybersafe to start them out right.

- **Think before you click.** During this time of year, we tend to be more charitable. Make sure those requests originate from who they say they are. Don't reply to the link embedded in a solicitation text or email without checking it, go to their normal website.

- **Log out.** Be sure to put down the mobile phone and prioritize the time with your family and loved ones. These are the holidays; do you really need to be on your computer? Work will still be there in January.

- **Rest up** for there will be challenges in the new year to come.

happy holidays

From JC/AOC IT

The Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts (JC/AOC) 50th Anniversary and Meeting Highlights

The Judicial Council welcomed Senator John Kennedy and Representative Soo Hong at the August 18, 2023 general session held at the Nathan Deal Judicial Center in Atlanta. They presented resolutions from the Georgia Senate and the Georgia House of Representatives in honor of the Judicial Council/AOC's 50th anniversary. We are grateful to both of them for sponsorsing these resolutions, for being with us in person to present them, for their kind words, and for their service to our state especially as lawyer legislators.

Thank you to Senator John F. Kennedy (left) and State Representative Soo Hong (right) for the resolutions celebrating the Judicial Council of Georgia's 50th Anniversary. Pictured with AOC Director Cynthia H. Clanton (center).

thank you!

Thank you to all who came to our Habitat for Humanity Build on Saturday, September 30, 2023

Pictured Left to Right is Celesta Murray, Noelle Lagueux-Alvarez, Guylaine David, Petterson David, Judge Tain Kell (Ret), Bruce Shaw and Cynthia H. Clanton

Pictured Left to Right is Judge Tain Kell (Ret), Ben Luke and Cynthia H. Clanton

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Kriste Pope (L), and Ben Luke (R) attended the Council of Superior Court Judges Conference at the Jekyll Island Conference Center in July/August

JC/AOC IT CTO Ben Luke (L) and Program Manager Kristy King (R) gave a technology update presentation at the GCCA Conference on September 27th

Having a little fun at the CACJ Photo Booth!

JC/AOC IT team members at the Georgia Council of Court Administrators conference held September 24th-27th at St. Simons Island, GA.
Pictured L to R are Kriste Pope, Amber Range, Ben Luke, Jessica Jones and Kristy King

GCCA CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

The Georgia Council of Court Administrators held the
Fall Conference & Business Meeting at the
King & Prince on St. Simons Island September 24-27, 2023

Congratulations

2023-2024
OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

L to R Mallory Minor, DeAndre Moore, Colin Slay (Secretary), Kriste Pope, LeNora Hawkins-Ponzo (President), Chief Judge LaTisha Dear Jackson, Justin Dobson, Katie Young, Kimberly Ciccaglione (Treasurer), Lindsay Mobley (Vice-President), Lynn Ansley (Immediate Past President), and Tim Ezell (President-Elect)

AWARDS CORNER

LeNora Hawkins-Ponzo (R), GCCA President presented outgoing GCCA President Lynn Ansley (L) with an award in recognition of her many years of service and dedication to GCCA

President Lynn Ansley presented Distinguished Service Awards to Conference & Education Co-Chairs Kriste Pope (L), Abby Carter (C), and Tracy Johnson (L)

LeNora Hawkins-Ponzo (L), GCCA President presented the ARPA team with an award recognizing their continued service to Georgia courts. Ben Luke (R) accepted the award on behalf of the ARPA team

TRAINING CORNER

Upcoming Training Opportunities

Offered by the JC/AOC IT
Court Technology and Support Services

REGISTER NOW

Training & Development

Click Training & Development to bookmark upcoming training opportunities on our website!

Microsoft Word Table Tips & Tricks
Wednesday, November 1st from 12-1 pm

Creating a Fillable Form in Microsoft Word
Tuesday, December 12th from 12-1 pm

RSVP for each class by clicking the link. We will send you a calendar invite after you register!

Microsoft Teams 101
Thursday, January 25th from 12-1 pm

Please feel free to forward these training announcements to judicial members who might have interest in attending!

3RD QTR TRAINING STATS

- Over 100 members of the Judicial community benefited from training opportunities offered in July and August by the Court Technology and Support Services Team.

WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK

"Great job today! I have been practicing with the quick parts and find that it has really streamlined my drafting. I used to use keystrokes and was looking for the "new" version of that and so glad that y'all have addressed this shortcut."

"Really enjoying all these little hour trainings. So much to take in. Great presentation with colors and all! Thank you!"

We will announce more training opportunities in the January Issue of Court Tech Talk.

Do you have a suggestion for a training class? Are you interested in scheduling a one-on-one or group training on a specific topic? Our team can travel to you or schedule a remote session. Please contact us for consideration. Someone from our team will be in touch! We look forward to hearing from you.

See you in January

2024

Your Court Tech Talk Team,
Michael, Kriste & Amber