

It's 2009: So where's the case file?

A decade ago, the Clerk's office began planning for the transition from a paper-intensive filing environment to one that embraced the use of technology by relying on the digitization of records. Today, the case file we once knew no longer exists.

Here's what happened:

- In 2001, we began scanning paper documents and making them available electronically.
- In 2003, the Supreme Court approved the Sarasota County electronic filing plan. The plan required that all e-filed documents be followed up by a paper copy.
- On March 9th, 2009, the Supreme Court approved the elimination of the paper backup copy.
- In June 2009, the Chief Judge approved a plan to eliminate the filing of paper documents into a case folder.

Today, the official case file is electronic and the paper file no longer exists. Paper documents are stored in batch order by day and type. This change is expected to result in a \$373,228 savings annually to taxpayers, by eliminating the supplies and labor costs associated with processing the volume of paper received on a daily basis.

E-filing has revolutionized the filing process in the Clerk's office. And, in accordance with Supreme Court authority, remote (web based) access to cases has allowed both the Clerk and attorneys of record to monitor the contents of the case file to ensure that it is accurate, using products such as ClerkNet.

This office has received approximately 245,000 documents and 865,000 pages filed electronically. Clearly, the benefits and efficiencies of this advancing technology is supported by not only this office, but our customers who have signed up for e-filing and ClerkNet by the thousands: At last count, there were 1864 registered e-filers and 957 registered attorneys making good use of ClerkNet's access to cases.

ClerkNet II is expected to be available this month, in September 2009. This increase in service will allow attorneys of record to have access to confidential records via the internet. The development of the necessary security features is currently underway.