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Cindy Syberg
Chief Deputy Clerk
St. Charles County Courts

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Courts Save Labor With RFID Case File Tracking Solution

Client Profile

Headquarters: St. Charles, MO

Industry: Justice

St. Charles County, Missouri, is just west of St. Louis, Missouri, and has a population of 280,000. The St. Charles County Courts include 12 judges and have an annual caseload approaching 35,000 cases.

**FileTrail Implementation: Phase 1 - 2006;
Phase II - 2007; Phase III - 2008**

FileTrail Products Implemented

- **FileTrail Professional** - Complete file tracking and records management automation with RFID technology.
- **RFEnterprise™** - Middleware that manages PassiveTracking™ - automatic tracking of file locations without the need for staff compliance.
- **FTSynchronize™** - Scheduled synchronization of case data with the case management system.
- **RFMobile™** - The portable RFID reader conducts fast audits and hunts for critical files with the FileDetector.
- **FTAuthenticate** - Single sign-on authentication using Windows, Active Directory, or 3rd-party authentication.

FILETRAIL®
...because Paper Happens®

The Problem

With 13 courtrooms and nearly 100 staff on five floors, the St Charles County Courts were spending a lot of time looking for case files. Over the years as caseloads grew, the problem seemed to grow and consume more and more labor.

“In the old days, finding files meant walking floor-to-floor and desk-to-desk, every day — sometimes several times in the same day,” said Stacy Phillips, Criminal Supervisor. “We would routinely have ten clerks looking for a file for two hours or more. That was a big waste of money.”

The Solution

In early 2006, the Courts began a search for a way to eliminate the manual searches and save labor. RFID seemed like an ideal technology, but the selection committee wanted to be sure the solution was non-intrusive, saved labor, and did not require a lot of IT support.

“Our primary requirement in evaluating solutions was that it had to require no user intervention,” said Roger Steele, Network Administrator. “We didn't want a scanning task — not even stopping to use a scan-pad. FileTrail tracks the location of every file without changing the tasks our staff must do each day.”

In the Fall of 2006, the Courts implemented FileTrail and the first phase of RFID hardware. By the end of 2008, over 100 locations — every clerk's desk, all the courtrooms, every judge's chambers, the public exit, and a few shelving areas — were equipped with RFID sensors placed out-of-sight above the ceiling tiles.

“The biggest advantage of RFID is that it reads the files from many feet away. Every time we have to be concerned about moving things and disrupting the judge's system of organization,” said Cindy Syberg, Chief Deputy Clerk. “With FileTrail we can do audits and locate critical files without touching the files. And, RFID sensors in the ceiling have eliminated the number of times we need to search Judges' chambers.”



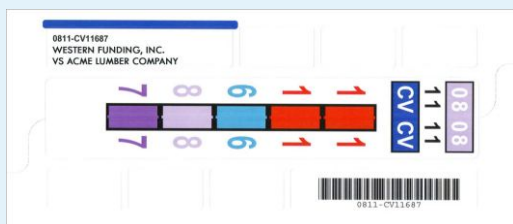
Cindy Syberg and Roger Steele have managed each of the three phases of the RFID project.

Key Results

- **Time Savings:** Many hours are saved by having passive tracking using RFID sensors in the ceiling.
- **Reliable Retrieval of Files:** Finding files is fast and easy, eliminating the panic from pulling for Calendar.
- **Less Hoarding of Files:** Staff no longer hoard files as they have learned that files can now be reliably found and delivered to them on time.
- **Simplified Audits:** RFID allows audits to be performed quickly and automatically.

Labeling

All files are tagged with an RFID tag designed specifically for the office environment. In addition, color-coded labels are printed one-at-a-time as they are needed. Each page of label stock is the size of a #10 envelope, and contains the end-tab label, plus a top-tab label and a bar code label which is used to eliminate the need to type the case number in other applications.



About FileTrail

FileTrail, Inc., is the leading provider of browser-based file tracking and records management solutions to the Justice Community. FileTrail leverages RFID, bar code, and color-coded labeling technologies to maximize labor savings for clients. Agencies of all sizes turn to FileTrail for its RFID Tracking Kit and PassiveTracking to leverage the latest RFID technology to streamline processes and automate common tasks. Headquartered in San Jose, California, FileTrail has been providing solutions to the Justice Community since 2001.

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Saving Labor

The biggest savings in labor comes from having the RFID sensors in the ceiling. Files are automatically tracked as they move to each new location. Color-coded labels printed on-demand contain textual information and greatly reduce misfiles.

“Before we implemented Phase III, the value of RFID became really obvious,” said Cindy Syberg, Chief Deputy Clerk. “Phase III was all about the 2nd floor and we were spending all our time searching for files on the 2nd floor. But, the other floors were covered by RFID so we had no more problems there.”

Finding a case file in FileTrail is easy. Staff simply launch FileTrail and are automatically logged in. Then, they type in the case number or name in the search screen. FileTrail displays each volume of the case file and its current location.

“We can’t even measure the time we are saving from having access to location data at every desk,” said Phillips. “The clerks look in FileTrail to see where a file is before they even get up from their desks.”

File Detector

Sometimes finding a file requires more specific location information than the sensors in the ceiling can provide. The portable FileDetector helps pinpoint the location of files within an office or files that has been mis-filed in the shelving.

“From the beginning, the portable FileDetector has had a huge impact,” said Syberg. “We had one file that had been lost for six months — we found it within a matter of minutes with the FileDetector about four feet from where it should have been in our filing system.”

“In another case, we were looking for a file that FileTrail said was in a Judge’s chambers but no one could find it,” said Syberg. “The FileDetector found it for us in minutes. It was completely hidden under a stack of papers on the floor where no one would have ever seen it, nor looked for it.”

Minimal IT Support

Another key factor in the selection of FileTrail was its low cost of administration. The Courts were sensitive to increasing the burden on IT staff and infrastructure.

“I spend almost no time on FileTrail. It doesn’t add any extra work to my schedule,” said Steele. “As a browser-based application, installation was easy, SQL Backups are fully-automated, and the software is very stable and doesn’t create any problems.”

Out-of-the-Box Implementation

Part of the success of the FileTrail project has been the ease of implementation and high user adoption.

“Our staff loves FileTrail,” said Judy Zerr, Circuit Clerk. “It is unusual to implement change without hearing complaints, but the benefits FileTrail is delivering are the things staff have been wanting for several years.”

“Training for new clerks is very fast,” said Phillips. “Within 30 minutes they know everything they need to know and are using FileTrail.”

Contact FileTrail Today!

For more information about the benefits of automating with FileTrail, contact your local FileTrail representative at:

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