

# Georgia Courts Automation Commission Electronic Court Filing Interoperability Pilot Requirements Document

September 6, 2000, Version 0.1

## 1. Definitions

### 1.1 *Administrator Electronic Filing Interface (“Administrator EFI”)*

The “Administrator EFI” is a web or application-based interface available to court administrators and other court personnel. The Administrator EFI is used for reviewing incoming e-filings and for performing other administrative tasks.

### 1.2 *Case Management System (“CMS”)*

A “CMS” is software that records and manages information about court cases, records, calendars, finances, and other court information. A CMS will usually have an existing interface that is different and distinct from the “Administrator EFI.” CMSs vary among courts and vendors.

### 1.3 *Court-Specific DTD*

"Court-Specific DTD" is a preliminary DTD based on the "Legal XML DTD" that a specific vendor will use in a specific court for a to-be-determined period of time. There will be five “Court-Specific DTDs for each of the five court/vendor pairs involved in the Pilot. These DTDs will be used on a court-by-court basis simply to allow vendors to have some autonomy and ability to move forward.

### 1.4 *Court Data Elements*

"Court Data Elements" are data elements from the court's case management system that the court determines are necessary for filing and docketing an electronic document.

### 1.5 *DTD*

A “DTD” is a document type definition as specified in the W3C’s XML 1.0 Recommendation published at <http://www.w3.org/TR/1998/REC-xml-19980210>.

### 1.6 *Docket*

A “Docket” is an index of all documents filed in a particular case. In Georgia, O.C.G.A. § 15-6-61 and Georgia’s Uniform Rules defines dockets for the Superior Courts, Rule 39.1 define the information contained in a docket. That information usually includes a Civil Action Number (a unique case number assigned to each action); names of all attorneys of record; names of all parties; date of filing; advance cost paid; additional costs paid; date of service; type of service, including whether a second original is sent and where; the date and type of specific disposition of the action, including clear entries for dismissals (with or without prejudice), settlements, judgments and the type of judgment, five-year and other administrative termination, and, transfer to court with proper jurisdiction and venue; whether the verdict or judgment is for the plaintiff or defendant; whether there was a mistrial; the date of the trial, if any; whether the case was tried

(with or without jury); the name of the judge making the final disposition in the case; date a Fi. Fa. was issued; a cross-reference to the minutes and final record and page number; a cross-reference to the records storage area and box number if the case file is stored off-site, and; a summary of all pleadings in the case and the dates of their filings, transcripts filed, motions for new trial, notices of appeal, and remittiturs.

### **1.7 Document Management System (“DMS”)**

A “DMS” receives, manages, stores, and retrieves, electronic court documents.

### **1.8 Electronic Docket**

An “Electronic Docket” is a “Docket” that is electronic and available via the Internet or an open network. A “Docket” may be password protected or otherwise limited to certain parties. For purposes of this pilot, an “Electronic Docket” may, but must not, contain all of the information in a “Docket.” Courts, Vendors, and GCAC will cooperate to determine information to be contained in an “Electronic Docket” on a court-by-court basis.

### **1.9 Electronic Filing or E-filing**

An “Electronic Filing” or “E-Filing” is an electronic document delivered to a court by electronic means. “Electronic documents”, “Electronic Court Documents” and similar terms are synonymous unless the context provides otherwise.

### **1.10 Filer Electronic Filing Interface (“Filer EFI”)**

The “Filer EFI” is a web or application-based interface available to lawyers, judges, and other court officials or citizens used to file electronic documents into a court.

### **1.11 JTC/Legal XML Court Filing 1.0 Proposed Standard**

“JTC/Legal XML Court Filing Standard” is the July 24th JTC/Legal XML Court Filing standard published at <http://www.legalxml.org/CourtFiling/>. JTC is The Joint Technology Committee. The JTC is a joint committee of Conference of State Court Administrators (“COSCA”) (<http://cosca.ncsc.dni.us/>) and National Association of Court Managers (“NACM”) (<http://nacm.ncsc.dni.us/>).

### **1.12 Legal XML Court Filing 1.0 Proposed Standard (“Court Filing Standard”)**

“Legal XML Court Filing 1.0 Proposed Standard” is the July 24th JTC/Legal XML Court Filing standard published at <http://www.legalxml.org/CourtFiling/>

### **1.13 Legal XML DTD**

“Legal XML DTD” is the DTD specified in the July 24th JTC/Legal XML Court Filing standard. See <http://www.legalxml.org/CourtFiling/>.

### **1.14 Middleware**

“Middleware” is software that logically resides between the Lawyer EFI and the court’s CMS and DMS. Middleware must be able to receive and process well-formed XML that can be

validated against the “Pilot DTD” or a “Court-Specific DTD” depending on the stage of the pilot. Middleware must be able to pass information from any “Valid, Well-Formed XML” it receives to a court CMS or DMS. “Middleware” may have other functionality. It is expected that “Middleware” will be implemented differently by different vendors.

### **1.15 Parser**

A "Parser" is software used to check for well-formedness. A Validating Parser is a parser that validates well-formed XML against a DTD. Although all parsers and validating parsers are supposed to implement the W3C XML 1.0 standard the same way, there are slight nuances among them that may interfere with interoperability.

### **1.16 Pilot DTD**

This is a DTD based on the "Legal XML DTD" but modified and harmonized based on rules agreed upon by pilot participants and GCAC. This will be the "final" DTD that all Vendors are expected to have implemented by the end of the pilot.

### **1.17 Valid, Well-Formed XML**

For purposes of this pilot “Valid, Well-Formed XML” is XML that validates against the Pilot DTD or a Court-Specific DTD, depending on the stage of the pilot.

### **1.18 Well-Formed XML**

"Well-Formed XML" is an XML document that meets the W3C standard. See <http://www.w3.org/TR/1998/REC-xml-19980210#sec-well-formed>. Well-formed XML will be passed among lawyers and courts. Well-formed XML will be validated against either a Court-Specific DTD or a Pilot DTD, depending on the stage of the pilot.

### **1.19 XML**

“XML” is a technology developed and recommended by the World Wide Web Consortium (“W3C”) and defined at <http://www.w3.org/TR/1998/REC-xml-19980210>.

## **2. Scope**

### **2.1 Out of Scope**

#### **2.1.1 Business Rules**

The Pilot’s scope does not include defining standard or interoperable business rules. To the extent business rules interfere with technical interoperability, GCAC may ask Vendors to relax or modify their business **rules for the purposes of the pilot only**.

#### **2.1.2 Court Rules and Civil Procedure**

The Pilot’s scope does not include standardizing Court Rules and Civil Procedure. It is expected that Vendors and Courts will experiment with rules and policies on a court-by-court basis, as they see fit. The lesson’s learned document will attempt to analyze various rules and policies and possibly make recommendations for the future.

### **2.1.3 Pro Se Filings**

The Pilot's scope does not include pro se court filings.

### **2.1.4 Case Types other Than Civil Filings**

The Pilot's scope does not include filings types other than civil filings, such as criminal, juvenile, probate, or small claims filings. GCAC and the Court may provide an exception to this rule depending on circumstances.

### **2.1.5 Imaging Documents**

The Pilot's scope does not include imaging new or legacy paper documents.

## **2.2 In Scope**

### **2.2.1 Technical Interoperability**

One of the primary goals of the Pilot is to test technical interoperability using the JTC/Legal XML Court Filing standard.

### **2.2.2 Technical Requirements**

All of the technical requirements, outlined below, are within the scope of the project. GCAC, the Courts, and the Vendors will agree on specific technical requirements in a workgroup setting based on consensus. Where consensus is in doubt, GCAC will make decisions.

### **2.2.3 Civil Filings**

All pilot implementations will do civil filings, unless otherwise agreed.

## **3. Technical Requirements**

**[THESE TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS ARE DRAFT ONLY. THERE ARE HERE FOR THE PURPOSES OF DISCUSSION. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT THEY WILL BE MODIFIED AND MORE FULLY DETAILED BASED ON CONSENSUS.]**

### **3.1 Phase I Technical Requirements**

#### **3.1.1 Implementation of Filer EFI**

Vendors are responsible for developing and implementing a Filer EFI. Vendors should collect all information through the Filer EFI necessary for filing and docketing of an electronic filing as specified by the Court. Vendors may accept any type of document via the Filer EFI; however, Vendors must deliver an Adobe PDF document to the Court.

### **3.1.2 Implementation of Administrator EFI**

Vendors are responsible for developing and implementing the Administrator EFI. The Administrator EFI must allow an administrator to accept or reject a filing. The Administrator EFI may allow an administrator to add or correct information in the submitting filing.

### **3.1.3 Development and Installation of Middleware**

Vendors are responsible for developing and installing middleware, except for the vendors working in Courts using the SUSTAIN case management system. GCAC is responsible for developing middleware in Courts using SUSTAIN.

### **3.1.4 Population of CMS and DMS**

Unless otherwise agreed, Vendors that are responsible for developing and installing middleware are also responsible for populating the Courts existing CMS and DMS.

### **3.1.5 Creation and Publication of Electronic Docket**

Vendors are responsible for the creation and publication of an Electronic Docket.

## **3.2 Phase II Technical Requirements**

### **3.2.1 Development of Pilot DTD**

Vendors are responsible for creating a Court-Specific DTD for use in the electronic court filing system installed in its partner court. All Vendors, Courts, and GCAC are responsible for harmonizing those DTDs into a Pilot DTD. The Pilot DTD must be used in Phase II, interoperability portion of the pilot.

### **3.2.2 Testing Interoperability**

All Vendors will test interoperability by passing well-formed XML between their Filer EFI and the middleware installed in one or more courts. The goal is to test interoperability among all Vendors in all courts. The ability of some Vendors or GCAC to develop Filer EFIs and/or middleware, may limit the ability to test interoperability.

### **3.2.3 Live Interoperability**

Vendors may elect to participate in live interoperability. Live interoperability is the official filing of an electronic court document. Some vendors may wish not to participate in live interoperability because their business rules may be in conflict with technical interoperability.

## **4. Timelines and Milestones**

Timelines and milestones for completing technical requirements will be determined after the parties agree on specific technical requirements. The format for recording timelines and milestones may look as follows:

**[EXAMPLE ONLY]**

	JusticeLink	E-Filing.com	VeriLaw	Counterclaim.com	@Court
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Implementation of Filer EFI					
Implementation of Administrator EFI					
Development and Installation of Middleware					
Population of CMS and DMS					
Creation and Population of Electronic Docket					
Developing of Pilot DTD					
Testing Interoperability					
Live Interoperability					