

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

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## 1. Definitions

### 1.1 *Administrator Interface (“Administrator Interface”)*

The “Administrator Interface” is a web or application-based interface available to court administrators and other court personnel. The Administrator Interface 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 Interface.” 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 Superior Court Rule, 39.1 define the information to be contained in a docket for the Superior Courts. 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 Document Index**

An “Electronic Document Index” is an index of electronic court filings and associated information filed in a case. An “Electronic Document Index” is different than an “Electronic Docket.” An “Electronic Docket” is a complete index of both paper and electronic filing and associated information in a case.

### **1.9 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.

### **1.10 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.

### **1.11 Filer Interface (“Filer Interface”)**

The “Filer Interface” 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.

### **1.12 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/>).

### **1.13 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/>

### **1.14 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/>.

### **1.15 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 different vendors will implement “Middleware” differently.

### **1.16 Parser and Validating 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.

### **1.17 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.

### **1.18 Technical Interoperability**

“Technical Interoperability” is the ability of any Filer Interface to successfully file an electronic document into any court. For instance, if Filer Interface A is created by Vendor A; Middleware B and Administrative Interface B are created by Vendor B; and Middleware C and Administrative Interface C are created by Vendor C, then a filer should be able to successfully use Interface A to file a document into either Court B or C. Likewise, a user should be able to use Filer Interface B or C to file into Court A, B, or C.

### **1.19 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.

### **1.20 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.

### **1.21 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 Privacy and Confidentiality of Sensitive Information**

Protecting the privacy and confidentiality of sensitive information is within the scope of the pilot. Participants recognize that submission of sensitive information may need to be done under one set of policies, while publication of the same information may need to be done under another set of policies. Further, the role of a person (whether judge, attorney, court administrator, or citizen) matters and may vary depending on the type of information.

#### **2.2.2 Technical Interoperability**

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

#### **2.2.3 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.

## **2.2.4 Civil Filings**

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

# **3. Technical Requirements**

## **3.1 Phase I Technical Requirements**

### **3.1.1 Implementation of Filer Interface**

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

### **3.1.2 Implementation of Administrator Interface**

Vendors are responsible for developing and implementing the Administrator Interface. The Administrator Interface must allow an administrator to accept or reject a filing. The Administrator Interface may allow an administrator to add or correct information in the submitted 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 Confirmation to Filer**

A Vendor's middleware is responsible for sending a confirmation back to the sender of the filing through the direct path from which it came. For instance, if User A using Filer Interface A files a document into Court B using Middleware B, then Middleware B must send a confirmation back to Vendor A. Middleware B may not send a confirmation directly to the user. The confirmation may [must] contain additional information important to Vendor A, such as payment information.

### **3.1.6 Authentication**

Username/Password authentication is acceptable for authenticating users of Filing and Administrative Interfaces. However, authentication of one Vendor to another Vendor may not be done using Username/Password authentication, but rather a more secure technology, such as public key certificates.

### **3.1.7 Payment Systems**

Courts and Vendors will use ACH for payment of court fees and usage fees.

### 3.1.8 Creation and Publication of Electronic Document Index

Vendors are responsible for the creation and publication of an Electronic Document Index. Vendor may publish an Electronic Docket. (This requirement may be subject to change.)

## 3.2 Phase II Technical Requirements

### 3.2.1 Development of Pilot DTD

During Phase I, Vendors are responsible for creating a Court-Specific DTD for use in the electronic court filing system installed in its partner court. During Phase II, all Vendors, Courts, and GCAC are responsible for harmonizing the Court-Specific 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 Interface, the middleware installed in one or more courts, and a Court's CMS and DMS. The goal is to test interoperability among all Vendors in all courts. The ability of some Vendors or GCAC to develop Filer Interfaces 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

The following are milestones for the Project. Vendors are to submit timelines to GCAC. GCAC will keep the timelines confidential.

Milestone	Responsibility	Subsequent Action
Collect Court Data	Court and Vendor	Give to GCAC;
Collect Business Rules	Court and Vendor	Give to GCAC;
Map Data to Legal XML Spec in Excel Format with Xpath expressions	GCAC provides an example and Vendor does the mapping (with assistance of Court or GCAC, if necessary)	Give to GCAC
Publication of ACH information	Court	Give to GCAC and Vendor
Publication of Fees	Court	Give to GCAC and Vendor
Publication of HTTPS Specification	Vendors	Give to GCAC; GCAC will harmonize and publish
Publication of Vendor-to-Vendor Security Protocol	Vendors	Give to GCAC; GCAC will harmonize and publish
Creation of Court-Specific DTD	Vendor	Give to GCAC
Creation of well-formed XML that conforms to Court-Specific DTD and is populated with court data	Vendor created well-formed XML; GCAC performs additional tests to confirm successful validation	Give to GCAC for Validation
Harmonization of Court-Specific DTDs	GCAC with Vendor assistance	GCAC publishes to Vendor

Implementation of Filer Interface (without XML output)	Vendor (review by GCAC, Court and interested lawyers)	Demonstration
Implementation of EFI with XML	Vendor	Testing/Demonstration
Implementation of Administrator Interface (dummy interface)	Vendor (review by GCAC and Court)	Demonstration
Implementation of Administrator Interface (functional)	Vendor	Testing/Demonstration
Development and Installation of Middleware	Vendor (and GCAC in Sustain Courts)	Testing/Demonstration
Population of CMS and DMS	Vendor (except in Sustain Courts)	Testing/Demonstration
Test of Single Vendor Payment Systems	Vendor	Testing/Demonstration
Creation and Population of Electronic Docket (Electronic Document Index)	Vendor	
Individual Vendor testing of submission policies, business rules, and court rules	Vendor (with assistance of Court)	Publication of results to GCAC
Developing of Pilot DTD	GCAC and Vendors	Publication to all Participants
Development and publication of well-formed XML that validates against Pilot DTD	Vendor	Give to GCAC for testing
Receipt of Successful Transmission Among Vendors	Vendors	Publication of results to GCAC/Demonstration; Big Party
Sending Confirmation Among Vendors	Vendors	Publication of results to GCAC/Demonstration
Authentication Among Vendors	Vendors	Publication of results to GCAC/Demonstration
Payment System Test among Vendors	Vendors	Publication of results to GCAC/Demonstration
Testing Interoperability among vendors	Vendors	Publication of results to GCAC/Demonstration
Live Interoperability	Willing Vendors	Publication of results to GCAC/Demonstration