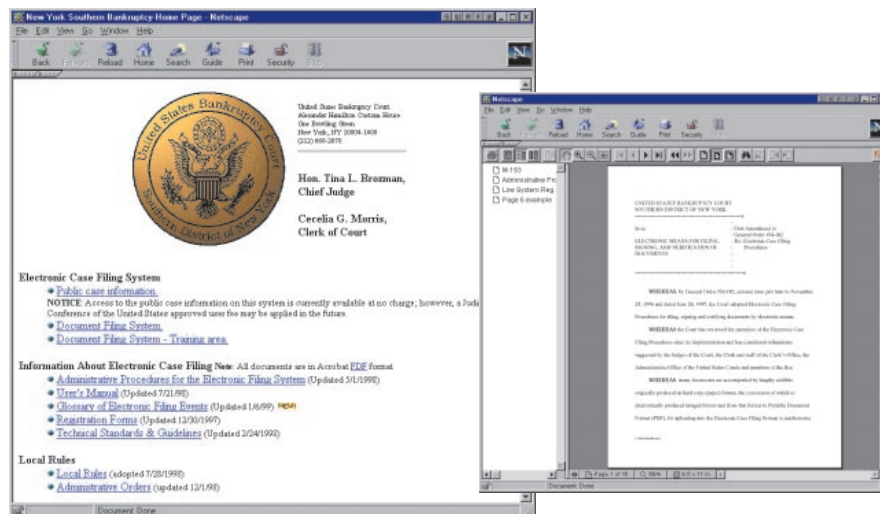


ADOBE CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

United States Bankruptcy Court of the Southern District of New York

Court Provides Better Service and Reduces Labor and Storage Costs by Receiving and Distributing Documents Via the Web, in Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF)

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The U.S. Bankruptcy Court of the Southern District of New York has created a Web-based system for filing and retrieving court documents as PDF files. Now attorneys, judges, and even members of the public can access current case information quickly and easily via the court's Web site.

Key Benefits

- Legal documents can be filed more quickly as PDF files.
- PDF files look exactly like the originals, which is critical for legal documents.
- Publishing documents as PDF files on the Web makes them accessible 24 hours a day, around the world.
- By filing documents as PDF files, law firms eliminate shipping costs.
- Referring document requesters to the Web site increases court employees' productivity.
- Storing documents as PDF files rather than paper eliminates storage space.
- Legacy documents can be converted to PDF with Adobe Acrobat Capture software.

Mention bankruptcy, and ears perk up. Not only bankruptcy attorneys and judges, but also creditors, shareholders, the press, and interested members of the public all need case information that's "current, correct, and instant," says Cecelia Morris, clerk of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court of the Southern District of New York. Providing instant information is particularly challenging in an era of government downsizing.

Until recently, law firms in the Southern District submitted their clients' bankruptcy filings as paper documents. The court responded to information requests—from other law firms, judges, and the press—by photocopying and distributing the paper documents. Now the court has improved service with a Web-based system for

filing and retrieving documents as Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) files. Law firms output bankruptcy documents to PDF files using Adobe Acrobat software.

Internet Application Speeds Filing of Legal Documents

Lawyers create bankruptcy documents in a variety of word processing applications. The documents, including a plan of reorganization, disclosure statements, and financial records, range from one to several thousand pages. When law firms ship these documents to the court, they incur delays and can incur shipping costs, depending on the number of entities noticed. The courts, in turn, suffer two key disadvantages. One is labor costs associated with retrieving and filing 22 million documents. The other is the facilities costs for storing those documents.

To improve service, the Administrative Office of the United States Courts and the Southern District of New York Bankruptcy Court created a Web-based application enabling lawyers to file bankruptcy documents electronically as PDF files. The public can view these documents at www.nysb.uscourts.gov using free Acrobat Reader software.

Small PDF Files Facilitate Electronic Transmission

Now before submitting documents, law firms use Adobe Acrobat software to convert the documents to PDF files. "As a court, we need to accommodate all our constituents," says Morris. "Acrobat is very easy to use and provides a widely accepted file format that can be viewed and printed on virtually any computer."

When an attorney is ready to submit documents to the court, he or she simply accesses the Web site via a standard browser and enters a security code to log on to a database. The Web-based application, which is based on Perl scripts and dynamic HTML, prompts the individual to upload the PDF file. All files are stored in an Informix database at the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, in Washington D.C. When a visitor to the Web site requests a document, the Web server communicates with the database to download the PDF file, which the visitor can view on-screen or print to any printer. "The small size of the PDF files makes it practical to upload and download very long text documents quickly and easily," says Morris.

Electronic Access to Documents Improves Service

According to Morris, the chief advantage of filing legal documents as PDF files is improved service to the court's constituents. In the past, accessing the files, which are a matter of public record, was difficult and time-consuming. An interested party would have to come to the court in person or wait for documents to be mailed.

"Page fidelity is a critical advantage of PDF for legal documents. This is the official document, and PDF ensures that every word and footnote is identical to the original."

—Cecelia Morris

*Clerk of the United States Bankruptcy Court
of the Southern District of New York*

Now when somebody calls the court, he or she is simply referred to the Web site. The cross-platform, cross-application nature of PDF means the file appears exactly like the original, no matter which platform the requester is using. "Page fidelity is a critical advantage of PDF for legal documents," says Morris. "This is the official document, and PDF ensures that every word is identical to the original."

In addition, requestors can easily search PDF files for specific information using the Find command in Acrobat Reader software.

PDF Slashes Physical Storage Costs

The conversion from paper to electronic documents will also enable the court to reduce its major expense: facilities. "We store the equivalent of 44,000 reams of paper, which occupy around 9,000 cubic feet," says Morris. "As we convert to electronic files and accept only PDF files on a go-forward basis, we'll reduce our facilities costs."

PDF Improves Service With Instant Information, Anywhere

Presently, about 500 lawyers are submitting their documents as PDF files, and the Web site received 23,000 hits in 1997 from lawyers, creditors, and members of the public seeking bankruptcy information.

"PDF is improving our service," says Morris. "Lawyers can file PDF documents more quickly than paper documents, eliminate shipping costs, and know that the PDF file maintains complete fidelity with the original. Interested parties can view bankruptcy documents immediately, from any browser, without playing phone tag or waiting for photocopying and mailing. And giving employees of the court these tools translates to better productivity and efficiency."

United States Bankruptcy Court of the Southern District of New York Systems At-A-Glance

Software

Adobe Acrobat
Adobe Acrobat Capture
Informix database

Hardware

HP scanners
Sun™ server for Web site

Adobe Systems Incorporated
345 Park Avenue
San Jose, CA 95110-2704 USA

Adobe Systems Pty. Ltd.
Level 4, 67 Albert Avenue
Chatswood, NSW 2067
Australia

Adobe Systems Europe Limited
Adobe House, Mid New Cultins
Edinburgh EH11 4DU
Scotland, United Kingdom

Adobe Systems Co., Ltd.
Yebisu Garden Place Tower
4-20-3 Ebisu, Shibuya-ku
Tokyo 150-6017 Japan

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