

# TECHNOLOGY

**A**s we enter the last year of the 20th century, the court system is building the foundation for a technological infrastructure that will serve it well into the next millennium.

## **CourtNet**

In 1998, the court system's Division of Technology completed Phase I of its CourtNet program with the distribution of laptop computers to over 1,200 judges and the installation of 2,680 desktop PCs, 550 printers and 75 new file servers in court-houses throughout the State. With all major courts now cabled for both local and wide area network access, 1998 saw the addition of thousands of new e-mail users, with over 6,000 judges, staff and back office personnel now on-line. Phase II of the CourtNet initiative is now under way, which will involve the distribution of another 4,000 desktops, 500 printers and 250 scanners, with linkage of all but the smallest courts in the system expected by year's end.

## **Y2K Compliance Project**

The court system began its Year 2000 compliance effort two years ago, and a majority of the 7,000 programs affected by this issue (representing over 4,000,000 lines of code) were remediated this past year. A number of the programs that support the administration of the courts—including the JMS (Jury Management) System, the AFCRIS (Family Court) System, the CCIS (Civil Supreme Court) System and the CARS (Case Activity Reporting ) System—have been expanded, modified and placed back into production as Y2K compliant applications. Other systems such as Attorney Registration and Fiduciary Appointments are being replaced with new, web-based applications that are Y2K compliant.

## **Mainframe Conversion**

During 1998, the Division of Technology consolidated the court system's two mainframe operations into a single location. Prior to this merger, two separate mainframes were maintained on a seven-day-a-week, 24-hour-a-day basis in Troy and Albany, with each running different applications upon which various courts depended. To achieve the consolidation, a new



mainframe with enlarged capacity was purchased to allow the handling of the workload of the two operations and provide for growth over the next several years. As a result of the consolidation, the Division of Technology has realized substantial savings in both operating costs and staffing requirements.

## **Universal Case Management Program**

One of the Division of Technology's key goals for 1998 was to begin development of a major case management application that would transcend court type and be useable by all courts in all parts of the State. A first step in the achievement of this goal was the creation of a Statewide Family Court Automation Project, which is now studying the requirements and business practices of Family Courts throughout the State in preparation for the development of a uniform Statewide automation system. A similar effort is now under way for the lower civil courts.

## **Civil Case Management System**

With substantial assistance from court staff, including direct input from sitting judges, the Division of Technology has developed case management software for Civil Supreme Court justices and staff. The customized system is fast, easy to use, easily installed and upgradable. Used in chambers, courtrooms and back offices, and accessed via laptop or PC, the Civil Case Management System provides access to case information including motions, appearances, attorneys, calendars and case histories. Personalized sorting, reporting, case tracking, forms and tickler systems designed for individual judges and court staff make this a very useful technology tool. The Civil Case Management System is currently used in New York, Kings, Suffolk and Nassau Counties, with implementation in Erie, Queens, Westchester and Richmond Counties set for early 1999.

## **Electronic Filing**

A subcommittee of the Civil Practice Law and Rules Advisory Committee has been expanded to include court personnel from throughout the State to draft legislation and evaluate the prospect of electronic filing in the New York State courts. The Division of Technology is working closely with this Committee in considering various pilot projects testing the use of electronic filing and filing by fax in the coming year.