May 7, 2007

Hon. Dale Sandstrom
Chair, Court Technology COmmittee

Justice Sandstrom:

In June of 2005, we started, in earnest, our current Enhanced Records Management Project (ERMS) with a 2 baseline assumptions: 1) We would be able to deploy to our pilot counties within 9 – 12 months with statewide rollout beginning shortly thereafter; 2) That UCIS would be around for 6 – 8 years. Since that time, we have proven both of those assumptions wrong. 1) We are nearly 2 years into the project and we are literally months from being able to go into production in our pilot counties; and 2) We have essentially secured funding to begin replacing UCIS starting in July, 2007.

For these reasons, I believe it is in our best interest to undergo a significant course correction and suspend all efforts related to our ongoing ERMS project.

Reviewing the project's 22 month history, there was a whole assortment of problems encountered. Alone, each would not be significant enough to halt development. However, assessing them together and factoring in the decision to replace UCIS, I feel there is no better alternative. It should also be noted that most vendor-supplied case management solutions include "imaging" in their product offerings. Because of this, it is my belief that we should restart our ERMS deployment efforts within the UCIS replacement project. The experience gained through this project will certainly help in those efforts.

Furthermore, as we are about to begin the huge undertaking that will be the UCIS replacement project, it would be extremely difficult to have adequate personnel resources to continue the current ERMS efforts while replacing UCIS. Also, as we are not near production use, our development efforts would need to include ties to UCIS AND ties to the UCIS replacement system.

An assessment of the current project status and the status of existing issues includes:

1. Document scanning:
    1.1. The software used to scan documents was expected to be "Scan Station" for the 6 counties that are connected to the state network via fiber connections. "Scan Station" uses Teleform, a product to verify the document scanned. The Judicial Branch resides in one active directory; ITD (and Teleform) reside in another active directory. Teleform does not support multiple active directories. An alternative is to use Teleform via citrix, which is being tested and seems to work, but increases costs and complexity.
    1.2. As an alternative to "Scan Station" we began development using a product called "Web Capture", and subsequently using Teleform via Citrix. Several months went into development

of this effort. During testing, it was found that there is an approximate limit of 30 pages per document. Our needs routinely exceed that limit.

1.3. There is another alternative product called "Remote Capture" which may fulfill our needs. However, ITD does not have the product in its inventory of software. Therefore, it has not been acquired, installed or tested.

Point summary: A comprehensive, workable scanning solution does not exist. "Remote Capture" may be an alternative, but it has not been acquired or tested. Acquisition and deployment of "Remote Capture" would likely take months and testing would take more time beyond that.

2. Memory Problems
   2.1. While scanning, there seems to be a problem with computer hardware resources. Scanning computers need an exorbitant amount of memory. While memory is relatively inexpensive, on a statewide basis, this could be a burden. Additionally, the root cause of the memory usage is unknown, leading one to wonder what the upper limit of requisite memory would be.
   2.2. The interface application written between UCIS and Filenet does not use memory optimally. Each usage of the application uses computer memory and does not release the memory until the application is closed. This forces us to close the application after each use. Closing the application requires another sign-in during subsequent usage. This will likely cause justifiable complaints by users. The cause of this is unknown. The Department of Transportation, using a similar process, also experiences the problem.

   Point summary: Memory problems exist in 2 areas. Alternatives exist, but the alternatives are problematic

3. Annotations
   3.1. Signatures, redaction, "sticky notes" are applied to a document as annotations. Currently, when a document is emailed, the annotations are not included. The cause and a subsequent solution are unknown.
   3.2. Signatures, when applied look fine. However, subsequent retrieval of the document results in the signature missing, or incorrectly sized or placed.

   Point summary: The usage and subsequent viewing of annotations, including signatures and redaction are not functional. The cause and a subsequent solution are unknown.

4. Viewer problems
   4.1. The document viewer currently used in the production installation does not support annotations. This means we cannot sign, redact or mark up documents. A new version of the viewer, one that facilitates annotations is being tested. However, deployment is contingent upon the deployment of a companion forms product. That forms product is expected to be released in May, 2007. Assuming it is released by the vendor on time, it will likely be months before it is acquired, tested and put in to production by ITD.

   Point summary: We cannot annotate documents in a production environment. Deployment of the solution to allow annotations in production will likely be late fall, 2007 at the earliest.

5. Capturing attachments emailed currently is not functional. This feature would be used to embrace the current email filing process used within the district courts.
   Point summary: The cause and a subsequent solution are unknown.

Assessment summary:

Filenet is configured to store documents for the Judicial Branch.
Document index information is being moved from UCIS to Filenet when a paper is "filed" in UCIS.
Security is defined and configured to ensure the correct people can access the appropriate documents.
The link between UCIS and Filenet is developed and working (with memory problems defined above).
Basic workflows between the clerks' offices, judges and administrative office have been developed.
Scanning of documents is not functional and a solution is not identified nor tested.

Entering documents received via email is not functional.
There are memory problems in two specific areas.
Viewing, emailing annotations does not work.

The project has been a significant learning process for both the court IT staff and ITD. It was observed by one team member that, throughout this project, “ITD is barely one step ahead of the courts”. It was hoped and expected that ITD would be able to lead the technical aspects of the project while the courts would lead the business and UCIS aspects. In hindsight, it seems that ITD did not possess the personnel resources to adequately assemble a comprehensive solution and the courts did not possess a thorough understanding of the ERMS process. Each question that arose was answered with significant discussion and subsequent fact finding, thereby leading to significant and recurring delays.

While many of the costs related to the project will be “lost” by this correction, the knowledge learned will inevitably help us with subsequent ERMS/imaging efforts, which should be done with the replacement of UCIS.

In summary, I believe that an ERMS is necessary within the Judicial Branch. I believe that the way to that ERMS is to include it with the upcoming UCIS replacement project.

Sincerely,

Kurt T. Schmidt
Director of Technology
ND Judicial Branch

CC: Court Technology Committee Members