

## PACER AND CM/ECF

For all federal courts, PACER facilitates electronic access to docket sheets and other case information. It also allows access to images of court documents, if a court has chosen to use electronic case files. Each court maintains its own case information, as well as an Internet site, which may contain local rules, court forms, and other items available to the public free of charge. PACER provides the interface with each court system and funds the network that facilitates these web sites.

A user accesses court information via the court's Internet site or through the PACER Service Center. Although each court manages its own procedures for electronic filing, all electronic public access to case file documents occurs through PACER.

To fund the costs of PACER and CM/ECF, the Judicial Conference of the United States has set a fee of eight cents per page for electronic data via the Internet, with the total charge of any document, docket sheet, or case-specific report not to exceed the fee for 30 pages. However, transcripts of federal court proceedings shall not be subject to the 30-page fee limit. The fee applies to all users, although no fee is owed by users who do not incur more than \$10 of use in a calendar year. Parties entitled to documents as part of the legal process receive a free electronic copy, although they will be charged for replacement copies, whether in paper or electronic form.



### INFORMATION

Information regarding  
PACER is available at

➤ <http://www.pacer.uscourts.gov> or:

- **PACER Service Center**  
P.O. Box 780549  
San Antonio, TX 78278-0549  
(800) 676-6856  
[PACER@psc.uscourts.gov](mailto:PACER@psc.uscourts.gov)

CLERK'S  
OFFICE  
AT YOUR  
DESKTOP

# PACER

PUBLIC ACCESS TO  
COURT ELECTRONIC  
RECORDS

Information regarding the Administrative Office  
and CM/ECF is available at <http://www.uscourts.gov>  
and your local court's web site.

## WHAT IS PACER?

Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) is an electronic public access service that allows users to obtain case information from federal courts. PACER is a service of the United States Judiciary, provided by the Administrative Office of the United States Courts.

PACER offers an inexpensive, easy-to-use alternative for obtaining case information without having to visit the courthouse. PACER allows an Internet user to request information about a particular case or party. The data is immediately available for printing or downloading.

## CM/ECF

Case Management/Electronic Case Files (CM/ECF) is an electronic case management system that provides federal courts with enhanced and updated docket management capabilities, including the option of permitting case documents to be filed with the court over the Internet.

CM/ECF implementation in the bankruptcy courts has been underway since early 2001. District court implementation began in 2002. The appellate courts began implementation in late 2004.

## PACER FEES

Electronic public access fees fund all of the hardware, software, and other costs of providing electronic access to court data. Congress has authorized the Judiciary to charge fees, to the extent necessary, for remote electronic access to court documents. The Judiciary has set fees at the lowest level sufficient to fund the program. The development of Internet technology has facilitated dramatic improvements to the quality of public access at a significantly reduced cost.

## SOME PERSPECTIVE

In 1853, the cost of a copy of a court document was set by Congress at 10 cents per page, a figure which, indexed for inflation, is now equivalent to almost \$2. To obtain a paper copy today, a person still must travel to the court and pay 50 cents per page. Technology and the work of court staff, funded by public access fees, have brought the courts closer to the citizens, allowing round-the-clock access to court information from anywhere in the world at a fraction of the cost.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

PACER offers convenient electronic access to:

- Case file documents
- Listings of all case parties
- Reports of case-related information
- Chronologies of events entered in the case record
- Claims registries
- Listings of new bankruptcy cases
- Judgments or case status
- Nationwide party/case index

Users are billed quarterly and are allowed to enter a client code of their own choosing to facilitate tracking costs.

To register instantly, visit the PACER Service Center web site – [www.pacer.uscourts.gov](http://www.pacer.uscourts.gov) – and click on the Registration icon. Fill out an online form and provide a valid e-mail address. If credit card information is provided, an account will be established immediately. Non-instant registration will remain an option for those customers who do not wish to provide a credit card number. Those customers will receive the login information by U.S. mail. There is no cost for registering.

