



NEWS RELEASE

Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts

March 13, 2002

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Judicial Conference Approves Pilot Program for Remote Public Access to Criminal Case Files

The Judicial Conference of the United States today approved creation of a pilot program to allow selected courts to provide Internet access to criminal case files. The Conference adopted a recommendation from its Committee on Court Administration and Case Management, and delegated to the Committee the authority to choose participating courts.

The action follows last September's adoption of a Conference policy to make most civil and bankruptcy case documents available electronically to the same extent they are available at the courthouse. The Conference at that time voted to prohibit public remote electronic access to criminal case documents, with the understanding that the prohibition would be re-examined within the next two years.

Conference members were told in a report accompanying the Committee's recommendation that the Federal Judicial Center has agreed to track the participating courts within a two-year time frame and provide the Committee with information to aid its review of the criminal cases access policy. The Committee's 2001 *Report on Privacy and Public Access to Electronic Case Files* is available at www.uscourts.gov/Press_Releases/att81501.pdf.

In related action, the Conference today voted to amend its policy by allowing Internet access to criminal case files when requests for documents in certain "high profile" cases impose extraordinary demands on a court's resources. Electronic access would be permitted only if all parties consent and the trial judge or presiding judge of an appellate panel finds that such access is warranted.

The Conference's Executive Committee recently had approved a temporary exception to the prohibition on Internet access to criminal case files. That action was generated by a very high number of media and public requests for copies of documents in *U.S. v. Moussaoui*, currently pending in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia. Today's action makes the policy exception permanent.

The Judicial Conference is the principal policy-making body for the federal court system. The Chief Justice serves as the presiding officer of the Conference, which is composed of the chief judges of the 13 courts of appeals, a district judge from each of the 12 geographic circuits, and the chief judge of the Court of International Trade. The Conference meets twice a year to consider administrative and policy issues affecting the court system and to make recommendations to Congress concerning legislation involving the Judicial Branch. A list of Conference members is attached.

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JUDICIAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED STATES
March 2002

Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist, Presiding

Chief Judge Michael Boudin Chief Judge D. Brock Hornby	First Circuit District of Maine
Chief Judge John M. Walker, Jr. Chief Judge Frederick J. Scullin, Jr.	Second Circuit Northern District of New York
Chief Judge Edward R. Becker Chief Judge Sue L. Robinson	Third Circuit Delaware
Chief Judge J. Harvie Wilkinson III Chief Judge Charles H. Haden II	Fourth Circuit Southern District of West Virginia
Chief Judge Carolyn Dineen King Judge Martin L.C. Feldman	Fifth Circuit Eastern District of Louisiana
Chief Judge Boyce F. Martin, Jr. Chief Judge Lawrence P. Zatkoff	Sixth Circuit Eastern District of Michigan
Chief Judge Joel M. Flaum Chief Judge Marvin E. Aspen	Seventh Circuit Northern District of Illinois
Chief Judge David R. Hansen Chief Judge James M. Rosenbaum	Eighth Circuit District of Minnesota
Chief Judge Mary M. Schroeder Judge Judith N. Keep	Ninth Circuit South District of California
Chief Judge Deanell R. Tacha Chief Judge Frank Howell Seay	Tenth Circuit Eastern District of Oklahoma
Chief Judge R. Lanier Anderson Chief Judge Charles R. Butler, Jr.	Eleventh Circuit Southern District of Alabama
Chief Judge Douglas H. Ginsburg Chief Judge Thomas F. Hogan	District of Columbia Circuit District of Columbia
Chief Judge Haldane Robert Mayer	Federal Circuit
Chief Judge Gregory W. Carman	Court of International Trade

Conference Secretary:
Leonidas Ralph Mecham, Director
Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts