

**Introduction to  
CM/ECF for Attorneys  
and Law Firm Staff**

U.S. District Court  
District of Colorado

2004

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**Objectives**



By the end of the session:

- n You will be more familiar with the CM/ECF system
- n Know more about the project
- n Have a better understanding how this will affect your job

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**What does CM/ECF stand for?**

- n CM = Case Management
- n ECF = Electronic Case Files
- n An automated case management and docketing system programmed specifically for the federal courts



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## ECF Project Goals



- n Provide a better case management system for federal courts
- n Replace aging national systems
- n Allow for electronic filing and management of documents (ECF)

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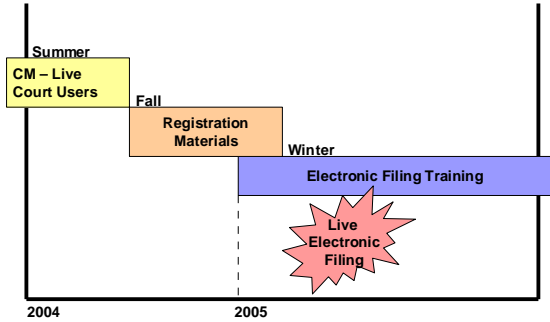
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## ECF Project Timeline - Civil



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## The "M" Word

- n Participation in electronic filing by attorneys shall be required by the court unless good cause is shown
- n There will be exceptions such as pro se and pro se prisoner cases
  - o Pro Se's will be able to file electronically with the court's permission
  - o Pro Se Prisoners will not, at this time, be able to file electronically
- n Attorneys will have the ability by motion to ask the court to be deferred from filing electronically



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## Security and Signature Issues

- n Deemed secure by National Security Agency
- n Documents are assigned a unique electronic identification
- n Uses a login and password to authorize users
- n Recognized as equivalent to signature
- n Attorneys must register to use the system



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## What you need to use ECF

- n PC or MAC
- n Word processing capability
- n Internet access
- n Software/hardware to convert files to PDF
- n CM/ECF login and password
- n PACER login and password



<http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov/register.html>

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## Fees



- n No fees for filing electronically
- n One-time free access to documents filed in your cases, then 8 cents per page
- n Fees assist with development and support of electronic public access program

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## How ECF Benefits Attorneys

- n 24-hour filing over the Internet
- n 24-hour access to docket sheets and court case files
- n Always in real time
- n Automatic e-mail notification of case activity
- n Access to files concurrently with chambers, court staff and other attorneys

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## How ECF Benefits Attorneys

*Cont'd*

- n Ability to download and print documents directly from the court's electronic system
- n No waiting for file retrieval from clerk's office or archives
- n Reduction in mail, courier & copying fees
- n Secure document storage (no misplaced paper files)
- n Diminishes geographical barriers
- n Easy to learn

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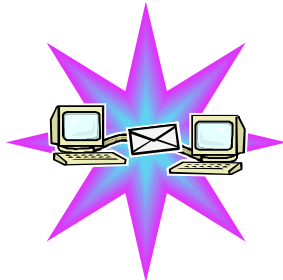
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## Filing demonstration



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## Things to Think About

- n E-mail management
- n Upgrading software/hardware
- n Document management
- n Password management
- n Personnel
- n Training
- n Workflow processes
- n Security



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## Frequently Asked Questions

- n How do I open a case?
  - At this time, the complaint must be filed on disk or via e-mail with the Clerk's Office.
- n How many other courts are using ECF?
  - 48 District Courts are operational and 75 Bankruptcy Courts
- n Must each attorney have their own login if they are from the same law firm?
  - Yes, each attorney must have his/her own login and password to file documents in ECF.
- n What cases are included in ECF?
  - All new civil and soon thereafter criminal cases will be filed electronically as well as documents in all existing cases.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

*Cont'd*

- n Are sealed cases included in ECF?
  - No. Sealed cases and sealed documents will be excluded from ECF at this time.
- n What kind of notification does the attorney of record receive?
  - All registered ECF users will receive e-mail notification of all filings, which include a hyperlink to the document. Participants who are not registered users will be mailed a copy of the filing.

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## External Input



- n Attorney Advisory Task Force
  - Ideas
  - Viewpoint
  - Comments
  - Questions
  - Suggestions

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## Proposed ECF Training



- n Training is not required
- n Training sessions at courthouse
- n Train the law firm trainers
- n CD ROM or Web based tutorials
- n Users Manual
- n Prior Experience

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## What's Next?

- n Communications Plan
- n Changes to local rules
- n ECF Procedures
- n Training Demo
- n Project Updates

[www.cod.uscourts.gov/Dindex.htm](http://www.cod.uscourts.gov/Dindex.htm)

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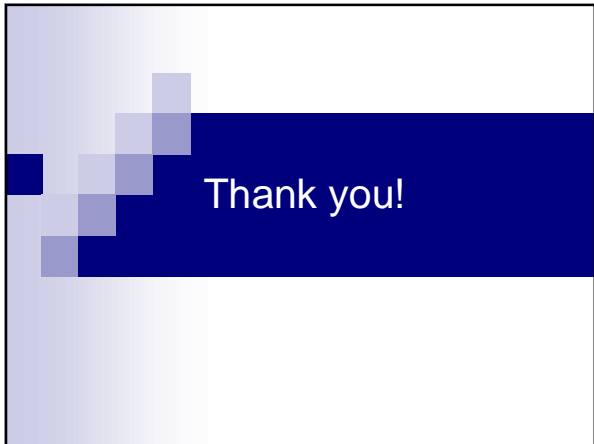
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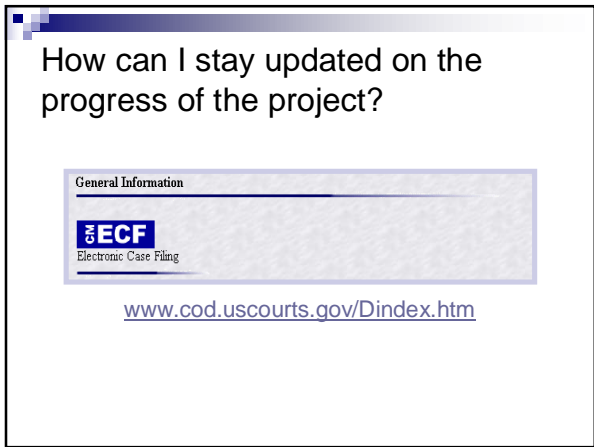
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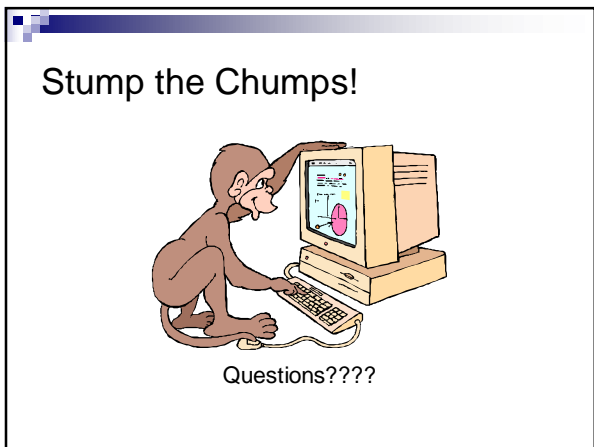
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Who can I contact if I have additional questions?

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CM/ECF Project Manager  
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303-335-2009

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