



eLITIGATION

"eLitigation streamlines all components of judicial processes, from filing electronic court documents, to scheduling hearings, billing, collection, and maintaining financial records. With eLitigation, the litigation process has greatly improved. Legal professionals and the Court can now collaborate in a secure, simple digital environment that is quick and convenient, thereby improving productivity and reducing costs."

Justice Lee Seiu Kin

Supreme Court of Singapore

SUMMARY

Client: Supreme Court of Singapore

Challenge: The Singapore Judiciary implemented the world's first Electronic Filing System (EFS) for civil litigation in 2000 – a transformational shift from paper to a paperless system. Since then for the next thirteen years, it significantly revolutionised the litigation process and the law firms' interaction with the Courts. The massive backlog of 2,000 pending cases in the High Court (set for trial but trial dates were only available three years later) were reduced by 92% within a span of three years¹.

In 2013, the EFS solution could no longer keep up with the technological advancements and the needs of the legal sector. Therefore, a new system with upgraded features and capabilities was necessary to propel Singapore's litigation process to the next level.

Solution: Unlike EFS, eLitigation is a web-based platform that leverages on content management system and dynamic electronic form (e-form) technology. It offers law firms and Court users a single access point to start, and actively manage case files throughout the litigation process. Front-end users only need to input information directly into the e-forms once, and this same set of information is used to auto-populate other Court documents.

Benefits: The implementation of eLitigation has contributed to a 100% clearance rate for all civil and criminal cases in the Supreme Court².

¹ 12th Conference of Chief Justices of Asia and the Pacific – Overcoming Backlogs. Speech of the Chief Justice of Singapore, Mr Chan Sek Keong.

² Supreme Court Annual Report 2014/2015

BACKGROUND

EFS is a joint project between the judiciary, CrimsonLogic and the Singapore Academy of Law.

EFS played a crucial role in realising Singapore Judiciary's vision of a paperless litigation system. However, there were certain drawbacks in using EFS:

- Many law firms had to reserve computers solely for EFS
- Software and hardware needed constant upgrading
- Duplicated work for law firms – created Courts' forms in Word, re-entered the data into EFS and scanned the Word documents into PDF
- Limited access to case documents

Since then, technology had evolved and there is a need to keep the system relevant to meet the increasingly sophisticated use of technology in the Courts. The Singapore Judiciary took the next step to harness new technology by engaging CrimsonLogic to extend the capabilities of EFS with the implementation of eLitigation.

SOLUTION

eLitigation is a web-based platform that leverages on content management system and dynamic electronic form (e-form) technology. It offers law firms and Court users a single access point to start, and actively manage case files throughout the litigation process.

Unlike EFS, eLitigation eliminates the need for smart cards/card readers and software installation on local computers by using SingPass (an online account management to access Singapore Government e-services) for online access.

Front-end users only need to input information directly into e-forms once, and this same set of information is used to auto-populate other Court documents.

eLitigation also provides functionalities and related services that streamlines the litigation process, thereby helping to improve efficiency and enhance access to justice. Law firms enjoy full access to all documents in a case as long as it remains active. The Courts calendaring process can also be managed and streamlined to allow Court officers to better schedule current calendars. Hearing information such as outcomes can be captured and tracked for the generation of statistical reports.

The transition to eLitigation required a structured and comprehensive change management programme to train users who had been accustomed to using EFS for more than thirteen years. With the introduction of e-form technology and content management system, some of the functional roles had to be altered to enable efficient use of the system.

A series of awareness seminars, e-guides and modular training was launched to ensure seamless adoption of the eLitigation system, including ready access to support via CrimsonLogic's 24/7 helpdesk and Service Bureaux.

Dedicated resources were deployed to the post launch support channels to address difficulties arising from the shift to the new system.

BENEFITS

The implementation of eLitigation has resulted in 100% clearance rate for all civil and criminal cases in the Supreme Court. In 2014, the Supreme Court of Singapore received 14,396 new civil and criminal cases and a total of 14,355 of them were disposed in the same period³.

Law Firms

- The use of SingPass enables mobility as no smartcard readers are required.
- Every document is digitally signed and qualifies as a secure electronic record under the Electronic Transactions Act.
- Easy to use features help users to learn and remember the steps needed to complete the e-filing process. Specific data field and form validation reduces errors from data entries and provides user guidance. All these translate to a shorter learning cycle and less time spent on e-filing.
- Law firms can e-file anywhere, anytime and receive notification of case status via SMS and/or email. The filing fees are automatically calculated and payment can be made instantly via ePayment.
- Documents such as Court notices and letters can be automatically generated, saving time and minimising errors.
- Access to case file is allowed as long as a case is active. Lawyers can also save the whole case file as a PDF document using the "Pack-N-Go" function for offline reading.
- Law firms and Courts can simultaneously access up-to-date case information via a centralised depository of information.

Courts

- All users in the Courts (Justices, Registrars and Registry Staff) have access to case files that are almost identical to those seen by the law firms. Internal Court documents like minute sheets and other sealed documents will not be accessible to law firms.
- Manual work reduction is achieved through the auto-generation of Court forms during the filing process, auto-acceptance of documents, auto-fixing of hearings and intelligent distribution of work to the various departments.
- A fine-grained approach to document verification, acceptance and rejection is made possible by the use of checklists for filings e.g. probate, winding up and judicial management.
- Court users are constantly reminded of the various task deadlines throughout the entire case lifecycle via alerts and notifications.



³ Supreme Court Annual Report 2014/2015

For more information on this case study, please contact us at sales@crimsonlogic.com

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