

Conceptual Framework of Functional Requirements for the Management of Electronic Court Records in the Superior Court of Malaysia

Nurussobah Hussin

Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia

Rusnah Johare

Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Technological change has always been a challenge to archivists, record practitioners, and IT personnel. The management of physical records fails to be regulated in the electronic environment as information systems fail to capture the necessary information needed and to function for long-term preservation. In the legal environment, the scope of legislation is referred to as its jurisdiction and, if not clear, can create difficulties for record managers and archivists to manage the court records. Regrettably, there are minimal policies or procedures on managing electronic court records in the Superior Court of Malaysia. Therefore, this case has developed the generic functional requirements for evaluating the existing record management systems in one of the courts in the Superior Court of Malaysia and for identifying the missing functional components for purposes of planning, upgrading, or acquiring new systems.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND OF THE MALAYSIAN JUDICIARY

Malaysia has its own judicial system, which consists of Civil Courts under the common law and Syariah Courts under the Islamic/Syariah law. The Civil and Syariah court systems, having their own distinct jurisdiction, consist of different hierarchies. In Civil Courts, the Federal Court of Malaysia is the highest judicial and the final court of appeal in Malaysia. The country, although federally constituted, has a single-structured judicial system comprised of two parts, i.e., the superior courts and the subordinate courts. The Subordinate Courts consist of the Court for Children, the Magistrate Courts, and the Sessions Courts while the Superior Courts are the High Courts, the Court of Appeal, the Special Court, and the Federal Court. In contrast, Syariah courts have three levels, i.e., Lower court, High court, and the Court of Appeal.

E-Court System

The e-court system has been implemented in some countries in the world, such as the United States (US), United Kingdom (UK), Australia, Singapore, and Malaysia. Although computers have been used in Malaysia since the 1980s, the idea of having the e-court system was only considered in 1996. However, due to the economic crisis in late 1990s, the idea finally was actualized in May 2002 (Mohamed, 2011). At the initial stage, the e-court system faced various problems and, consequently, it took about nine years for it to be fully implemented. Therefore, the complete e-court system in Malaysia actually began in March 2011. The Department of Justice in the Malaysian States of Sarawak and Sabah has led the Justice Department in Peninsular Malaysia in implementing the e-court system.

In Peninsular Malaysia, the first e-court system was implemented at the High Court level then followed by the lower courts and, finally, the Court of Appeal and Federal Courts. The four components that comprise the e-court system are the Case Management System (CMS), the Queue Management System (QMS), the Court Recording and Transcription System (CRT), and E-filing. Below are brief descriptions of these components.

Case Management System (CMS)

This system allows for the management of all court activities from registration of cases to hearing of cases. It enables the processing and sealing of documents; the searching and retrieval of cases; the sending of alerts and statistics; the moving and tracking of files; the creation of cause lists; the scheduling of cases; and the management of judges' planners.

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