

CLERK'S  
OFFICE  
AT YOUR  
DESKTOP

# PACER

PUBLIC ACCESS TO  
COURT ELECTRONIC  
RECORDS

## 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 the user to request information about a particular case or party using the Internet or through a dial-up connection using a computer and modem. The data is immediately available for printing or downloading.

## CM/ECF

As the new Case Management / Electronic Case Files system (CM/ECF) comes online in the federal courts, PACER will facilitate electronic access to dockets and case file documents for registered users. CM/ECF is a new case management system that allows courts to manage electronic dockets. It also allows each court the ability to receive filings electronically, pursuant to local rule or order.

## **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 system.

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 defray the costs of PACER and CM/ECF, the Judicial Conference has set a fee of seven cents per page for electronic court data via the Internet (or sixty cents per minute via direct dial). The fee applies to all users, although courts may exempt certain persons, such as indigents or bankruptcy case trustees. 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, just as they are today.



## 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, complete the online form or submit a registration form, available on the PACER web site (<http://pacer.psc.uscourts.gov>). There is no cost for registering. Once the registration form is received by the PACER Service Center, you will receive a login and password in the mail within two weeks.

## PACER FEES

Electronic public access fees fund all of the hardware, software and other costs of providing electronic access to court data. Since 1792, Congress has directed the judiciary to charge fees for copies of court documents. In response to Congress' more recent directive to charge for access to electronic court data, 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 ten cents per page, a figure which, indexed for inflation, is equivalent to almost \$2 today. To obtain a paper copy today, a person must travel to the court and pay fifty 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.





## INFORMATION

Information regarding  
PACER is available at

➤ <http://pacer.psc.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)

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