

# Case Management Electronic Case Filing

# CM/ECF

## Implementation - March 2003

### A Message from the Clerk of Court:

All change is growth. And with growth, even an institution as traditional as the United States District Court for the District of Puerto Rico needs to be energized and invigorated to further its goal of Justice for all. We are thus proud to embrace yet another technological project called Case Management/Electronic Case Filing. It has been designed for the benefit of the bench, the bar, and the public. I encourage you to join this new era with a newfound sense of enthusiasm and optimism.

**Frances Ríos de Morán**

### What does CM offer?

CM/ECF will allow attorneys to file and view documents from their office, home or anywhere they have access to the Internet, 24 hours a day.

Documents are automatically docketed as part of the filing process and are immediately available electronically.

CM/ECF also provides the following benefits:

24-hour access to filed documents over the Internet

Automatic email notice of case activity

The ability to download and print documents directly from the court system

Concurrent access to case files by multiple parties

Secure storage of documents (so files are not misplaced)

Potential reduction in courier fees

### What is CM/ECF?

Case Management/Electronic Case Files (CM/ECF) is the new automated case management and electronic docketing system for the district of Puerto Rico. CM/ECF provides a new, easy-to-use electronic case filing feature that will make life easier for you by allowing you to file and view court documents over the Internet.

### When will the CM/ECF system be available?

Plans are to implement the CM/ECF system in this court starting in **March 2003**. The implementation period lasts approximately 10 months, with a goal of going live in **January 2004**.

### What do I need to use CM/ECF?

- \* A personal computer running a standard platform such as Windows or Macintosh
- \* Word processing software
- \* Internet access and a browser. The system has been certified with Netscape and is being tested with Internet Explorer
- \* Software to convert documents into PDF
- \* Scanning equipment may be useful

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### **How does it work?**

The electronic case files system accepts documents in a portable document format (PDF). PDF retains the way a document looks, so the pages, fonts and other formatting are preserved. Filing a document with the court's CM/ECF system is quite easy:

- \* Create the document using word processing software.
- \* Save the document in PDF format.
- \* Log onto the court's CM/ECF system, using a court-issued login and password.
- \* Follow the set of simple prompts to provide information about the case, party and document to be filed.
- \* Attach the PDF document and submit it to the court for filing (by pressing a submit button).
- \* Save or print the CM/ECF electronic receipt emailed from the court confirming that the document was filed.

### **How will I sign documents?**

The court will issue logins and passwords. Using your login and password to file a document is considered to be your signature.

### **Are there fees?**

There are no added fees for filing documents over the Internet using CM/ECF; existing document filing fees do apply. Electronic access to court data is available through the Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER) program. Attorneys and litigants receive one free copy of documents filed electronically in their cases; additional copies are available for viewing or downloading at seven cents per page. Directed by Congress to fund electronic access through user fees, the judiciary has set the fee at the lowest possible level sufficient to recoup program costs.

### **How secure is CM/ECF?**

CM/ECF has many security features and has passed an evaluation by the National Security Agency. Access to the system is through a court issued login and password.