Petitions Clerk

Ken

"I help my department run smoothly every day and ensure my work is accurate and timely."

- Knowledgeable
- Detail-oriented
- Proud of his work
- 8 years in role, 8 years at the Court

Ken is one of six Petitions Clerks who work under the guidance of the Petitions Clerk Supervisor and Assistant Petitions Clerk Supervisor. As a member of the Petitions team, Ken receives and transcribes new Petitions from Court-approved practitioners and the public. Sometimes Ken handles the intake process, retrieving incoming mail and verifying which department each piece of mail should go to. Ken also processes checks that have been received and checks for payments made through Pay.gov.

Incoming Petitions must be checked for duplicates in the system before the supervisor assigns them to a Petitions Clerk. Like the other Petitions Clerks, Ken receives a batch of 30 Petitions to handle each day. He checks his batch for high priority items to work on first and monitors his caseload for new high priority items as the day goes on. He's usually able to complete his batch of 30 Petitions every day, unless he discovers a problem with a Petition. Sometimes he picks up more work if he has time. If he's on vacation or sick, his work will be distributed to his teammates because such time-sensitive work can't wait.

Petitions often come in with a lot of extra information, sometimes thousands of pages and even books. Petitions themselves frequently come on napkins, notecards, or other irregular formats. Ken scans everything, piece-by-piece, into the system from his desktop scanner. When Ken finds missing, illegible, or inaccurate information, he creates an order to correct it. Throughout the day, he takes calls from Petitioners to answer questions. The phone rings constantly. Ken juggles his Petitions and phone calls at the same time, which sometimes causes him to enter data incorrectly. Although calls can be distracting and time consuming, especially from repeat or angry callers, Ken enjoys the opportunity to help people.

Since Ken has a lot of varied tasks to manage, he's very conscientious and carefully checks his work because incorrect information can cause delays and/or additional work. When Ken is done transcribing a Petition, he submits it to the IRS holding queue and prepares the paper documents for the Records department. His supervisor reviews all submissions for accuracy.

Goals

- Monitor the workload for high-priority items so they can be processed first
- Complete assigned Petitions in a timely manner
- Keep the backlog of work from piling up
- Stay up-to-date on processing rules
- Review Petitions for accuracy and completeness before sending to the IRS
- Manage paper Petitions and associated documents (e.g. scanning documents into the system, sending documents to Records)
- Help petitioners with their questions

Frustrations

- "Junk" sent with Petitions (such as small stacks of paper, lottery tickets, books, odd shaped items, and boxes of paper) are challenging and time consuming to scan
- Limited search and no filters, making searching by common names challenging when looking for duplicate Petitions or finding a case without a docket number
- Incomplete, inconsistent, and illegible addresses can be hard to verify
- Checking the service batch for errors is time consuming and labor intensive
- Figuring out who was working a Petition so it can be unlocked from their computer if they aren't available to finish it (went home sick, went on vacation, etc.)
- Can only have one application open across two monitors at a time

Environment

USTC office, sometimes from home, uses two side-by-side monitors

System Usage

- Scans, transcribes, submits Petitions
- Searches for cases
- Searches for and enters payments
- Issues orders

Close Collaborators

- Docket
- Asst. Deputy Counsel
- Admissions
- Records
- Chambers

Wish List

- Single system so he doesn't have so many logins and systems to manage
- Electronic notices for rule changes and searchable rule book that stays current so he can answer Petitioner questions
- A way to search for and identify duplicate / similar cases, locate case without a number
- Reports to help him and his supervisor visualize work performance, balance work across the team, and verify that all cases have been filed appropriately
- Ability to enter and track certified mail, compare to the daily post office receipt
- A way to store / note correspondence in the system but not on the docket record
- Ability to electronically send practitioner-submitted Petitions to
- Admissions and know when the Petition is ready to be processed; a way to check practitioner's status
- Ability to collaborate with other departments on digital documents and ask questions
- An Auto-checklist to validate Petitions are complete, accurate, have all necessary orders

  Easy and accurate method for researching and annotating payments
- More informative Petition form that asks if petitioners have sent in a Petition before and helps them send in the correct items
- Built-in address standardization / validation to check accuracy and completeness
- Dashboard with quick case and docket number search, indicator that payment has been associated with a case, and prioritization of work items by date

Docket Clerk
Carmen

"Everything goes through the docket clerk, from beginning to end."

- Knowledgeable about processes
- Proud of work
- Detail-oriented
- 8 years in role, 20 years at the Court

Carmen is part of a team of 13 Docket Clerks, including one Docket Clerk Supervisor and one Assistant Docket Clerk Supervisor. She loves her job and loves being a key member of the team who keeps cases moving along. She works in the system all day, ensuring documents are accurate, sending to the Judges to take action, uploading and processing case documents, assigning event codes, and answering questions as needed. She knows what cases she's responsible for because each docket clerk has a digit assigned to them that corresponds to the last digit of the docket number. She also sometimes works the cases of other Docket Clerks when they are out. After serving orders, she prints a service list and checks it to make sure that everything is served correctly; she doesn't trust the system to do this accurately. She has the trust of several Judges; they ask for her specifically to process their documents, and she loves being trusted with that responsibility.

Goals

- Identify priority items so they can be processed first
- Understand what action to take on a case (e.g., which orders are needed)
- Record case notes
- Run and analyze reports to reconcile filings, review case status, view performance stats
- Prevent cases from being calendared prematurely
- Confirm that documents are filed in the correct case
- Ensure service of orders is completed in a thorough and timely fashion

Frustrations

- Getting cases ready to send to appeals court "is a mess," have to write in document numbers manually, can only save one document at a time, file size limit is too small so they have to break cases down into many parts, ect.
- Only one person at a time can scan exhibit documents into a case
- Pro se petitioner can change service type from paper to electronic at any time, so she checks service preference again at 2:30pm before the batch service to make sure it's still the same
- Searching is done between several independent systems and doesn't always yield helpful results
- Have to check each queue continually throughout the day to make sure she doesn't miss anything

Environment

USTC office, home

System Usage

- Enters and reviews information
- Manages and processes trial documents
- Moves cases through the Court
- Manages case communication
- Searches for case information
- Scans and uploads documents

Close Collaborators

- Assistant Deputy Counsel
- Calendar
- Chambers
- Trial Clerk

Wish List

- Notifications for due dates and case status changes
- Ability to add notes to documents
- Have real way to flag case so it doesn't get scheduled for trial, instead of their workaround "9s" report
- Ability to create own event codes
- Receive trial transcripts electronically
- Run any kind of report
- Dashboard with pending motions, access to form templates, and anything set for trial

Trial Clerk

Cynthia

"I prepare all case files for trial and ensure trial sessions run smoothly."

- Knowledgeable about processes
- Detail-oriented
- Trusting relationship with Chambers
- 8 years in role, 8 years at the Court

Cynthia is part of a pool of nine Trial Clerks. Her supervisor assigns her to a trial session and Judge, so she works with many different Judges throughout the year. She makes sure case information is up to date and prints case files two weeks before the trial date and ships them to the trial location. In the week leading up to the trial, she manually checks all cases again to see if new information has come in, then prints and ships it if it has. She's usually managing three calendars/trial sessions at a time—next week, this week, and last week.

She travels with Judges to the trial session location and is responsible for ensuring all needed documents are available during the session. This involves a lot of printed case files, since Internet access at trial locations is often unreliable. She also verifies and manages all the logistical information for the trial. During the trial, she keeps track of everything that's happening—who appears, what cases go to trial, what exhibits are presented in the case, and she documents it on the Minutes Sheet. She drafts and proofreads orders for Judges during the trial session and tries to get the Minutes into the system as soon as possible, because Docket can't process the case without them. While onsite at the trial, she often feels disconnected from the D.C. office and wishes communication could be improved.

Cynthia also mails all the exhibit documents received during the trial session back to D.C. to get scanned into the system there. Once the trial is over, she doesn't interact with the case except to help track down missing files.

Goals

- View all information for assigned cases such as case status, pending items, and trial schedule (including location details) in a single, easily accessible place
- See all information about a single trial session in one place, including which cases no longer need to be tried
- Communicate important information and receive answers to questions from USTC personnel in D.C. during trial sessions
- Easily take notes for the Minutes Sheet and get them into the system quickly
- Make the trial session run as smoothly as possible for the Judges and taxpayers by having the most up-to-date case information available at the trial
- Easily create orders from previous ones the Judge has issued or through templates

Frustrations

- No easy way to check case status before trial preparation, must click into each case
- Has to manually check for new filings each day in order to print and mail documents that come in after the case file has been mailed to the trial location
- Can't bulk download or print all documents for a case; printing documents individually takes a lot of time
- Unreliable Internet hinders access to documents and communication with USTC personnel in D.C. during a trial session
- Only one person can be in a case at a time; if Judge is in a case, she can't create an order or upload minutes; read-only status is not useful when she has to make an update
- Current system not designed for Trial Clerks to use, so they have a workaround log in, but have to take extra steps to do everything in the system
- Paper files get lost and they have to hunt them down

Environment

USTC office, trial session locations (74 nationwide)

System Usage

- Accesses and checks case information and documents
- Drafts and proofreads orders
- Manages and processes trial documents
- Views trial information on the calendar
- Prints case documents and ships to trial location

Close Collaborators

- Docket
- Calendar
- Chambers
- Law Clerk
- Records

Wish List

- Way to track where paper files are throughout the process to help prevent them from getting lost
- Ability to save documents as a draft before completing them and sending to docket
- Have Minutes Sheets auto populate with basic case information and add notes to them before sending to Docket
- Can sign orders for the Judges on the trial sessions she's assigned to
- Print all case files at once instead of individually
- Notifications of when there's new activity on a case that's scheduled for trial
- Have key trial information available offline, such as petitioner's phone numbers, courtroom address, and calendar
- Indicate what motions are pending on which cases so she easily knows to take care of them at trial
- Dashboard with updated calendar with session assignments, view session details, notifications of new filings on cases

Records Clerk / Supervisor

Jermaine

"From the creation of the physical file, I maintain and store all physical documents for the Court."

- Trustworthy
- Detail-oriented
- Takes responsibilities seriously
- 9 years in role, 9 years at the Court

Jermaine leads a team of seven Records Clerks as the Records Clerk Supervisor. He acts as the inventory management specialist, maintaining all physical property of the Court in addition to court records. His days are filled overseeing the management of physical files from case initiation to record destruction. His team creates physical docket and correspondence files for all cases, maintains and stores those files, and tracks their movement around the Court.

In addition, Jermaine and his team are responsible for fulfilling, tracking, and ensuring any applicable payments have been received for all file requests including requests for trial session, ad hoc internal requests, and public requests. As the Records Clerk Supervisor, he has the added authority to view sealed documents and cases, which his team cannot view. He and the Records Clerks work closely with all internal court members and are public-facing representatives of the Court.

Goals

- Efficiently receive and manage all file requests in a single place
- Fulfill file requests efficiently, with proper approvals, and according to priority
- Track the location, history, and ownership of physical files to prevent loss
- Adhere to records retention policies by efficiently tracking record age and status for file destruction

Frustrations

- Tracking the location of physical files is a manual and inconsistent process causing files to be frequently lost
- Received file requests through email, in person, or by phone, and they aren't easily tracked or prioritized
- Must access several disparate systems to complete one file request
- Calculating copy costs and tracking payments is a cumbersome and time-consuming process
- Copy requests can't currently be sent electronically, exhausting additional time and resources to print and mail paper copies
- Search results are not consistent and it takes additional time to locate the correct case by search

Environment

USTC office

System Usage

- Searches for cases related to incoming file requests
- Checks case status for public file requests to see if it requires Judge approval before fulfilling a copy request
- Views cases on trial session calendar
- Views electronic docket record and compares against the physical file
- Prints case documents

Close Collaborators

- Petitions Clerks
- Docket Clerks
- Trial Clerks
- Judges

Wish List

- Way for users to request public copies through an electronic form and send them via electronic delivery
- Electronic and integrated queue for tracking and prioritizing all file requests
- Notifications when file and copy requests come in
- Ability to track the location and who's in possession of physical files
- Ability to send public file requests to Judges for approval within the system
- Notifications or reports telling him which records are eligible for destruction

Law Clerk
Tim

“My work is intellectually stimulating, and I work with good people.”

- Loves the research aspect of his job
- Task and process driven
- Very thorough in his approach
- 3 years in role, 3 years at the Court

Tim is one of two Law Clerks assigned to one Judge, and they split up the cases between them. Most of his work involves researching his cases and writing drafts of opinions for his Judge. He may work on four or five cases at a time, but tries to limit it to one larger, long-term case. He spends the majority of his time researching cases, including reading through all case documents, including Petitions, motions, files, trial transcripts, exhibits, stipulations, and briefs. He searches the internal system for similar cases, but prefers tools like Westlaw or Lexis/Nexis for their advanced search capabilities.

Throughout the case, he needs to communicate his status and findings to the Judge. After thorough research and discussions with the Judge, he’ll draft an opinion and send it to the Judge for review and revisions. The opinion may go back and forth between them (and possibly the Chief Judge) before being considered final. Cases are always in flux, so he works on several cases simultaneously, because he may be waiting for a document to come in for one case and work on another case to keep things moving.

Goals

- Easily research cases and relevant case law
- Review all case materials thoroughly and easily navigate between documents
- Write and collaborate on opinions
- Have a holistic view of all cases assigned to the Judge and be able to easily track the cases he’s working on

Frustrations

- Document versioning is managed outside of the system and can’t be tracked easily (e.g., opinions)
- Document collaboration is managed outside of the system (WordPerfect, paper printouts, lack of ability to add inline comments)
- Poor keyword search capabilities; no way to search cases by issues within Court system
- Viewing and navigating through documents in the docket record can be cumbersome
- Tracking assigned cases and “to-dos” is all done offline and cannot be easily communicated to others within the Court

Environment

USTC office

System Usage

- Searches for related cases
- Views all documents associated with a case (transcripts, pending, motions, briefs, etc.)
- Drafts opinions
- Researches tax law information
- Communicates via Chambers (internal Court message program)

Close Collaborators

- Chambers Administrator
- Judge

Wish List

- Efficient case search with filtering by case topic, case year, court, Judge, and area of law, “ a Lexis/Nexis, Westlaw type of search” for researching related case opinions
- A way to track the cases he’s working on and receive notifications about where the case is within the process
- A way for users to collaborate on opinion documents and preserve versioning in a single system
- More control over how he can view and manage documents in the docket record (all at once, click “next”, etc.)
- Ability to tag documents for his own use (e.g., “not relevant” or “important”)

Calendar Section Supervisor

Dorothy

“I love checking documents for mistakes.”

- Detail-oriented
- Takes pride in her work
- Comfortable with established process
- 6 years in role, 12 years at the Court

Dorothy manages two Calendar Clerks as their supervisor. Dorothy and her team schedule and provide trial communications on more than 100 cases at once, and work is distributed evenly between the two clerks.

Dorothy and her team’s primary duties are driven by the trial session calendars. After receiving the session calendar, she runs two reports to check case eligibility for trial: eligible report by trial location and the exception report by trial location that includes cases with outstanding issues. She’ll review both reports and assign eligible cases to their appropriate trial session. For cases on the exception report with outstanding issues, she’ll research what the issue is and generate orders for missing documents. She may also need to coordinate with an Assistant Deputy Counsel (ADC) or the Court Administrator to handle more complex issues. After orders are generated, she’s no longer responsible for tracking them until they appear in her report again.

Dorothy and her team also generate the trial communications (Notice of Trial; Standing Pre-Trial Order/Notice; etc.) to the parties. She checks reports and generates notices to petitioners to provide them with details about their court date and any outstanding fees. If changes are made to a trial session, she must update all cases and regenerate notices individually and mail the updated communications to the parties. Sometimes a trial notice will be returned, and she’ll have to make several attempts to obtain a new address and issue an order to correct the information or notify the Judge that there’s an issue with the case.

Goals

- Run reports and identifies which cases can be set for trial
- Set eligible cases for trial based on location and trial session calendar
- Generate orders to resolve issues preventing cases from being set for trial
- Ensure that petitioners are informed of trial information and any updates through notices
- Ensure that returned mail is properly handled and cases are updated appropriately
- Issue orders to correct or update case information

Frustrations

- She can’t apply bulk changes to trial session information and it must be individually updated on each case
- Templated forms are not available for all corrections, such as street address

Environment

USTC office

System Usage

- Assigns and manages cases on trial session calendar
- Runs eligible and exception reports for each trial location
- Reviews case details for missing documents and outstanding information
- Generates trial and fee payment notices
- Issues orders to correct or update inaccurate information

Close Collaborators

- Clerk of the Court
- Judges

Wish List

- Ability to apply bulk changes to a trial session that will automatically update the cases in that session and print the appropriate notices
- Efficient way to identify cases that are ready for trial and those that have outstanding issues
- Address verification for sending hearing notices and notices for fee payment

Chambers Administrator

Vanessa

"I'm a guard for my Judge, a liaison between my Judge and the public, especially on the road."

- Knowledgeable about processes
- Detail-oriented
- Trusting relationship with her Judge
- 8 years in role, 8 years at the Court

Vanessa works with a single Judge and two Law Clerks in Chambers. Her responsibilities are broad because the Judge trusts her. She contacts petitioners and answers their questions when they call. She sends orders, manages all incoming mail, and messages for the Judge. She checks documents for signatures, tracks orders, pending cases, drafts orders, and responds to motions. She also manages the Judge's calendar. She collaborates with others on documents, so document versioning is important for her.

Goals

- Research cases and relevant case law
- Write and collaborate on opinions
- View most pertinent information for assigned cases such as case status, pending items, and trial schedule (including location details) in a single, easily accessible place
- Access a single system for case management, including document templates

Frustrations

- Document versioning is managed outside of the system and can't be tracked easily (e.g., opinions)
- Case search returns results with no ability to filter
- Can't easily see what she needs to act on in the system (what's pending, what motions need attention, etc)
- No easy way to track orders in system, so she does it in Outlook, Excel, and on paper
- Broken scanners at trial locations delay getting bench opinions into the system

Environment

USTC office with dual screens, sometimes from home

System Usage

- Prints motions and case documents
- Drafts orders and opinions
- Reviews case documents
- Communicates with other USTC users

Close Collaborators

- Judge
- Law Clerk
- Docket

Wish List

- Robust search and filtering system so she can search for text within an opinion, exhibits, issues, etc.
- Central repository of common or helpful reference documents to attach to orders (e.g., resources for pro se petitioners)
- Single system for case management, including templates (responses to motions, due dates, orders of dismissal, and decisions) for document creation
- Notifications of when things are due or need her attention
- Easily see what cases in a trial session no longer need to be tried (e.g., when cases are settled before trial)
- Custom reporting capabilities
- Access a single calendar where she can enter and view other people's notes related to the cases for that trial session and can also toggle between different trial session calendars
- A way for users to collaborate on opinions and preserve versioning
- Dashboard with upcoming trial session she's assigned to, upcoming due dates, things waiting to be processed

Judge
Eric

"It's a people job. Litigation is all about people."

- Very thorough in his approach
- Enjoys trying cases
- Loves interacting with people
- 30 years in role, 30 years at the Court

Eric is one of 31 USTC Judges. As a Judge, he travels from September through June, up to four weeks each term, to the USTC's 74 trial locations. Eric has two Law Clerks assigned to him, as well as a Chambers Administrator who is also his Trial Clerk. Eric and his staff will usually have 100+ cases calendared for a trial session, but many of these cases are settled prior to the trial date. Out of those 100+ cases, fewer than 10 will actually go to trial. 80 percent of the cases are pro-se, so his staff spends time communicating with petitioners, answering questions, and directing them to resources that may help them with their case.

To prepare for trial, he has to review all case documents. Most documents are filed by paper, but some are electronically filed. All of the documents have to be entered into the system and tracked, and the Judge enters notes into the system. There are several different systems that the Judge and his staff work in, and there are also two separate calendars, one that is accessed in the USTC office and one that is accessed on the road during a trial session.

He often encourages petitioners to settle their cases prior to trial. Eric would like the ability to flag settled cases on the calendar so he can have an accurate view of what cases are actually going to trial.

When traveling for a trial session, Eric needs location and logistical information such as preferred hotels and nearby restaurants, how close the trial location is from the airport, things like that. During a trial session, Eric takes a lot of notes, and these notes need to be entered into the system and associated with the case. He may release a bench opinion, and that also needs to be entered into the system. Trial Clerks often have exhibit documents that need to be entered into the system as well. Eric desires a single system that will enable him to access case information and manage case documents and notes efficiently, while in the USTC office and on the road.

Goals

- Take ownership of a case once it's scheduled for trial
- Understand all the relevant information on a case before it goes to trial
- View most pertinent information for assigned cases such as case status, pending items, and trial schedule (including location details) in a single, easily accessible place
- Take notes electronically and be able to see the case documents at the same time
- Add notes and documents to a case without it becoming part of the official docket record (off-the-record phone calls, etc.)
- Stay focused on the active cases during a trial session by removing the settled cases from the calendar, lists, etc.
- Communicate privately with members of his Chambers staff

Frustrations

- Has to use multiple systems to complete a single tasks (e.g., two different calendar systems for trial session)
- Messages don't always have a link to the document that is referenced
- Takes a lot of notes by hand because it's too difficult to see the case and take notes in the system at the same time
- Can't choose what information to download from a case when he's going to work offline so has to sift through all of it
- Can't easily remove settled cases from the calendar before or during a trial session, which causes a lot of unnecessary "noise"

Environment

USTC office, trial session locations (74 nationwide)

System Usage

- Assigns trial sessions and motion review sessions (Chief Judge)
- Writes opinions and review motions
- Communicates with other USTC personnel via Chambers (internal Court messaging program)
- Creates case notes and reviews the notes of others
- Tracks case status
- Reviews all cases scheduled for his trial session

Close Collaborators

- Judges
- Law Clerk
- Assistant Deputy Counsel
- Trial Clerk
- Chambers Administrator

Wish List

- Single integrated system to view case details, the calendar, and documents
- Take notes on documents, cases, or calendars and set permissions for who can view the notes
- Create opinions inside the system and save as draft with permissions on who can view or edit
- Easy way to see what cases he's assigned to and if they're still open
- Run report by ZIP code to evaluate where new trial session locations should be held
- Easy access to trial session details including nearby hotels, restaurants, parking info, etc.
- Receive notification when a new document has been filed in his assigned cases
- Identify what evidence was received with the Petition and then returned to the petitioner
- Always have docket numbers clickable to the case detail
- Dashboard with what he needs to do for others and what they owe him, due dates for orders

Practitioner
Bill

“It would be nice if the process were as easy as possible for taxpayers.”

- Very thorough in his approach
- Enjoys reviewing cases, drafting opinions
- Loves the research aspect of his job
- 3 years in role

Bill is one of 70,000 practitioners registered to practice before the USTC. As a practitioner, he represents his clients, receives service electronically, files documents on behalf of his clients, and advises his clients on their specific cases.

Bill may represent up to 30 clients at a time and needs to file documents and keep track of due dates in all of their cases. He takes pride in his role as a practitioner, and always does his best for his clients. He spends a lot of time researching tax law information for cases, reviewing transcripts, case records, and pending motions. He uses Westlaw and Lexis/Nexis almost daily to search for information and wishes that the USTC had a robust search tool and an ability to get reference files to him more quickly and efficiently. He reviews daily opinions and accesses related historical information to provide guidance to his clients regarding their cases.

Goals

- Monitor case load for status changes so he can act quickly
- Support his clients’ cases by referencing historical case opinions, relevant tax law, and similar case filings
- Stay informed of all activity on his cases, including new filings, due dates, changes to respondent counsel, etc.
- Create and file required case documents by the due date assigned by the Court

Frustrations

- Search capabilities are poor and don’t support in-depth research of historical case information
- Receiving case documents when needed can be time consuming because files have to be requested in person or over the phone and sent via snail mail
- Tracking due dates for cases requires accessing each case individually and noting the due date on a calendar or tool outside of the system
- Case activity notifications are generic and require going into each individual case to review the new activity
- Doesn’t receive notification when the IRS attorney has changed

Environment

His office, trial session locations

System Usage

- Reviews daily opinions
- Reviews case information for clients
- Accesses and reviews historical case information that relates to client cases
- Searches for cases
- Researches tax law information
- Reviews transcripts, case records, and pending motions
- Files entries of appearance, motions, and other documents for clients

Close Collaborators

- Petitioners
- Records

Judges (at trial)

Wish List

- See upcoming due dates on his cases
- Detailed notification of case activity, such as when a case has been set for trial
- A way to monitor case load for status changes to track where the case is within the process
- Efficient case search on the public USTC site with filtering by case type, case topic, case year, Judge, and area of law, “a Lexis/Nexis, Westlaw type of search” for researching
- Ability to filter the docket record by document type (e.g. orders, motions, briefs, etc.) and view related filings clearly
- Service throughout the day from docket instead of once a day, so the work can be managed throughout the day

Clerk of the Court

Naomi

"I pay attention to the details; I keep things running smoothly and look for ways to improve processes."

- Detail-oriented and analytical
- Forward-thinking
- Loves the variety of tasks
- 3 years in role, 10 years at the Court

Naomi enjoys her job because it's varied and offers her the opportunity to be a problem-solver and create a vision for the Court. She's involved with all aspects of the Court, overseeing case services (including Petitions, Docket, and Calendar), Facilities, Financial Management, Human Resources, Information Systems, Library, and Trial Clerks. She also interacts closely with the Judges.

Naomi often spends her day solving problems from around the Court or doing odd tasks that no one else knows how to do. She processes items in cases, advises on case management issues, issues orders, and answers questions regarding cases within her areas of expertise. One of her main duties is planning and organizing the trial session calendars for the year. She's responsible for gathering and consolidating the trial location preferences of the Judges and establishing the trial session calendar.

She is forward-thinking and has a vision of how to make planning and running trial sessions more efficient for herself and other Court employees. She'd love a future state where analytics can drive scheduling decisions and all trial details will be accessible from a consolidated calendar. She'd also love for the calendar to be accessed and edited on mobile devices, so Judges and trial clerks can view updated information on the road.

Goals

- Have a holistic view of the overall functioning of the Court
- Establish a trial session calendar that meets the needs of the Court Judges and public
- Be able to advise other Court employees by understanding all information for cases
- View trial sessions and associated case details in a single interface with multiple customizable views

Frustrations

- No analytics capabilities and the inability to access and manipulate the system data prevents her from being able to make data-driven decisions
- Trial session, case information, attorney admissions information, and calendar scheduling are all in disparate systems so it requires additional time and effort to locate the information she needs
- Planning / scheduling trial session calendars takes place in multiple systems and offline
- Doesn't have the ability to drill-down from a trial session to its assigned cases
- No easy way to see case information by Judge to see how Judges are performing, how many cases are in their backlog, etc.
- No notifications or reminders for due dates, have to be logged into to see them
- Admissions process for practitioners is in a completely different database, and most of it is done in paper, so there's no easy way to track and verify admitted attorneys

Environment

USTC office, home, desktop, laptop, mobile

System Usage

- Searches for cases
- Views case details, pending items, case statuses, and jurisdiction
- Issues orders
- Views trial session information

Close Collaborators

- Judges
- Interacts with all Court staff

Wish List

- Consolidated calendar view (including integration of events and conferences)
- Ability to view all details for a trial session, including cases, confirmed and borrowed spaces, assigned Trial Clerk and Judge, scheduled outside resources (Security, Court reporter, etc.) supplies needed
- Integration of calendar items with reimbursement forms to facilitate completion of expense reports
- View calendar in different ways depending on situation (during trial session, etc)
- Receive notifications to track due dates on different kinds of devices (email, text, etc.)
- Improved case search, keyword search, attorney search, and OCR document search
- Analytics, reporting, and data visualization (e.g. heatmap of petitioner locations, etc.)
- Automated calculation of eligible cases in a city
- Ability for Judges and Trial Clerks to view trial information on mobile devices
- "Health check" for Judges with a view of pending, open, and active cases
- Ability for the system to recommend an order based on case information
- Universal and customizable templates for orders
- Ability to group or associate cases for tracking purposes (e.g. similar tax protestors)
- Ability to add notes to cases (e.g. whether jurisdiction has already been verified)
- Integrated admissions process for practitioners

Assistant Deputy Counsel
Gerri

"I babysit cases in the general docket before the case is assigned to a Judge and calendared for trial."

- Detail-oriented
- Wears many hats
- Trustworthy
- 8 years in role, 8 years at the Court

Gerri manages cases in the general docket, meaning she works on cases before they are assigned to a Judge. She and the other ADCs divide up the cases based on the last digit of the docket number, and they become the go-to people for questions and advice regarding those cases, working closely with the Docket Clerks. She acts in an advisory role for the cases under her jurisdiction, but has other responsibilities including verifying practitioner admissions, serving as part of the admissions ethics committee, and handling whistleblower cases.

When a practitioner submits an entrance of appearance, Gerri is responsible for verifying they have been admitted to practice at the Court. Searching the admissions database can be cumbersome, and she'd love for the admissions database to be integrated into the system so she can access everything she needs from a single location. As part of the Admissions/Ethics Committee, she's involved in the review of ethics violations and any disciplinary actions for practitioners, but this information is separate from the case management system.

Gerri is one of the few employees with full access to the case information for whistleblower cases, and she maintains samples of orders, issues orders, and resolves motions when she has the authority. Gerri would love for sealed cases and/or documents to be filed electronically because it would make it easier to manage the documents.

Gerri's role and expertise means she is often asked to review orders. Chambers will send the order back and forth with comments and edits during the review. She has templates for different situations, all maintained outside the system. She'd love to be able to store and manage those templates in the system with the ability to easily search and find orders.

Petitioners can call and get answers for procedural questions, and those calls are often transferred to the ADC to handle. Gerri will look up the case and provide answers. Sometimes petitioners can be persistent or rude. Gerri would love to create notes in files to remind her, and inform others who may work on the case, that a petitioner may require special handling.

Gerri also supports Trial Clerks when they're away at a trial session and don't have access to the system. She'll enter in case information on behalf of the Trial Clerk and also works with them regarding inaccurate or returned documents (like subpoenas).

Goals

- Easily track and manage all assigned cases and stay informed of case status
- Easily and securely manage sealed cases and documents and control access to them
- Receive and respond quickly and efficiently to requests to review cases and documents
- Easily locate and verify practitioner information for admissions
- Create, revise, share, and issue orders using a single system

Frustrations

- Accessing multiple systems to complete a single task
- Handling the nuances of sealed cases and documents and working with staff who's unfamiliar with these types of cases is frustrating
- Can't view two cases at the same time (for comparison, duplicates)
- There's no way to associate duplicate cases when one is closed, and it requires an order to be issued to close the second case
- Admissions process and attorney information is managed externally and requires rifling through another system to obtain the information she needs
- Difficult to get all the information she needs at hand from the many disparate systems
- Case history information goes away when the case is assigned to a Judge

Environment

USTC office, sometimes at home

System Usage

- Searches for cases and orders
- Views case documents and details
- Issues and reviews orders
- Manages and tracks sealed cases
- Searches for attorneys and reviews admissions information

Close Collaborators

- Docket Clerks
- Judges
- Trial Clerks

Wish List

- Library of templates (responses to motions, due date, orders, etc) for document creation integrated into the system
- Improved search capabilities, search by keyword, search orders

  Integrate admissions data into the system, including access to the original admissions applications
- eFiling capabilities for sealed cases and documents
- Way for Chambers to send her items to review with notifications
- View and associate duplicate cases
- Persistent view of case status and detailed case history
- A way for users to collaborate on documents and preserve versions