

Frequently Asked Questions - Technology in the Courtroom

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integrate it into the audio/visual system?**
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1. Can an attorney bring a laptop into the courtroom and integrate it into the audio/visual system?

Yes. Laptops can be connected either at the attorney tables in the courtrooms or at the evidence display podium. Anything that is displayed on the laptop can be displayed on the evidence display monitors and plasma display in any of the three courtrooms.

2. Is there any testing that needs to be performed if an attorney wants to use a personal laptop in the courtroom?

Yes. Every laptop is different. We HIGHLY recommend that attorneys bring laptops into the court at least a day or two in advance so that you can test it in the courtroom. Contact chambers to schedule a time for equipment testing.

3. What type of laptop will work with the courtroom audio/visual systems? What does a user need to do before they bring in the laptop for testing?

The laptop brand and operating system are transparent to the audio/visual system. Windows and Macintosh laptops work equally well. The user will need to know where the video port is on the laptop. Some laptops require a certain keystroke sequence (such as CTRL-F10) to be typed in before the laptop image will display through a projection system. Each laptop is different and the user will need to know the keystroke sequence for the particular laptop model. This information is often available in the laptop user's manual.

Users should always bring the power supply for the laptop that will be used. The battery on a laptop will only work for a couple of hours. Every laptop power supply is different and the Court will not be able to provide a power supply for a user's personal laptop. There is a place to plug in the power supply in the Courtroom so the unit doesn't run out of power during a proceeding.

4. Is the same technology available in all three courtrooms?

Yes. All three courtrooms (Judge McFeeley, Judge Starzynski and the 11th floor courtroom) have the same wiring infrastructure. The Court owns two evidence display carts and they are portable. Most of the time, these carts reside in the 13th floor courtrooms but they can be moved to the 11th floor as needed. It is possible that equipment may have been moved or may be down for maintenance at any given time. If you need particular equipment, contact chambers in advance so that staff can insure the equipment is available.

5. Do I have to bring in a laptop, or is there another way I can display files in the courtroom?

The evidence display portable cart has a PC in it. The machine is equipped with a floppy disk drive and a CD ROM. Attorneys may bring in files on floppy disk or CD for display through the evidence presentation system. The PC is equipped with viewing software for Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, WordPerfect, and the Adobe Acrobat Reader. Internet access can be made available from this machine if prior arrangements have been made. We highly encourage attorneys to come in a day or two in advance to insure that their files will work on the machine. Contact chambers to schedule file testing.

Attorneys should take steps to insure that any media brought into the courtroom (e.g. floppy disks, CDROMS) is not infected with a virus. Even though Court systems are protected with anti-virus software, we ask customers to help insure that these systems remain virus free.

Contact chambers in advance if you own special software and you would like to have it installed on the PC in the courtroom temporarily so it can be used for evidence display. Every software application is different and this may or may not be possible. Court staff will need to see some proof that you own a license for the software. The software will be installed prior to the proceeding and will be purged from the machine after the proceeding.

6. Can evidence be presented in the courtroom on a DVD?

The Court does not have a DVD player connected to the evidence display system. If you have a laptop with a DVD/ROM, you can connect your machine to the evidence display system and play the DVD through the evidence presentation system.

7. What is an annotation system?

Special monitors are located on the witness stand and at the evidence display station. Users can use their fingers to draw on the screen. This screen annotation appears on all of the evidence display monitors in the courtroom. There is a printer inside the evidence display cart. The annotated copy of the evidence can be printed in color off of this printer.

8. Can I use PowerPoint demonstrations in the courtroom?

The computer in the evidence display cart is equipped with the PowerPoint Viewer application so that users can present evidence saved in a PowerPoint file. A user can also bring in a laptop and present evidence in PowerPoint format if PowerPoint is loaded on that machine.

**** Caution** - Users should test their presentations carefully to determine whether or not sound has been used in the application. If sound is a critical part of the PowerPoint presentation, you will want to make sure that the sound can be heard through the courtroom audio system. If sound has been inadvertently added, the user will want to make sure sounds are turned off and cannot be heard through the audio system.

9. Is there any technology available that might be useful for an individual with a physical disability?

Yes. The courtrooms at 500 Gold are each equipped with a system that amplifies sound in the courtrooms. The user would wear a pair of wireless headphones. The noise coming through the sound system would be amplified. The headset has a volume control so the noise level can be adjusted by the user.

Systems are not pre-installed in the courtrooms to accommodate other types of physical disabilities, but the Court has historically been able to work with people to find solutions. Contact chambers staff to discuss individual situations.