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Cook County, Illinois, Circuit Court and DigitalBridgeSM Transform the Legal Process:
Saving Tremendous Time and Reducing Taxpayer Expenditures by Almost 90 Percent

A Case Study for Strategic Information Technology Transformation & Innovation

- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY -

In 2000, the Honorable Dorothy Brown took office as Clerk of the Court of Cook County, Illinois, one of the largest and busiest court systems in the world, and immediately sought to transform the process by which justice was dispensed. In her landmark project, *21st Century Technology Initiative*, Clerk Brown undertook one of the most daunting system upgrades imaginable: transforming the manual processes of the unified court system into electronic processes. The project was monumental, considering the sheer size of the Cook County jurisdiction and the volume of citizen requests: over two million cases each year, over six million court hearings per year, over two million continuances, over six million inquiries from the public, 18 million items of activity which have to be entered into their data entry system, and over one-half billion court records in their computer files. The Cook County system, though robust, was tasked with supporting over 400 judges, 2,300 employees in the Clerk's office, and nearly 2.4 million case filings. The Clerk's office also interacts with various other government stakeholders, including the Office of the State's Attorney, with more than 1,700 employees; the Sheriff's office, with over 7,000 employees; the Chicago Police Department, which employs more than 15,000 people; and an additional 129 municipalities, many of which have their own law enforcement personnel. To further complicate the matter, each entity has its own automated system of various manufacturers, ages, and types.

Following a lengthy RFP process, Clerk Brown chose DigitalBridge's Digital WarrantsTM solution, an information sharing technology that would allow integral parties to share and act on critical personal information in a secured and auditable manner, while ensuring that the over 30 steps in attaining a warrant follow legal due process. The result of the project is astounding: the warrant process that once took several days and cost some \$260 per warrant, can now take as little as 20 minutes to process, at a cost of \$25 per warrant, reducing the total estimated annual cost from \$13 million to just \$1.3 million to taxpayers. Equally important, the electronic process frees law enforcement officers from carrying warrants, so they can return to the job of fighting crime.

The challenge Clerk Brown confronted is one which plagues government and business alike everywhere: how can various entities with disparate information systems share critical information to accomplish a task? The typical solution has been to rip out the existing systems and replace them with costlier, new systems that force database conformity and therefore typically fail to properly integrate historical information. DigitalBridge, however, has looked at the problem in its entirety from a different perspective, treating the complete network as one system which revolves around the individual, much like an ecosystem where one entity is the focus around which the ecosystem functions. The unique digital ecosystem technology developed by DigitalBridge recognizes that multiple organizations, entities, or individuals have to successfully share protected information when transacting business with each other. But, rather than force disparate systems to conform to one system, the Digital Packet TechnologyTM solution tracks information about a person, which can be gathered, assessed, acted upon, and shared between various entities across organizational boundaries. The Digital Information PacketTM technology ties to various identifying aspects of a person to him or her; allows workflow instructions to travel with the packet; manages governance across organizations; and integrates security, audit, and use rules within the packet itself.

The Digital Packet Technology solution is driven by the DigitalFusionTM Platform, which enables the centralized or distributed implementation of a protected information sharing solution. The DigitalFusion Platform is truly innovative and unmatched in the marketplace. The platform allows the Digital Information Packet solutions of DigitalBridge to securely gather data, media, and documents related to a person, place, thing, or event from multiple disparate databases within a digital ecosystem into an intelligent document, legible both to humans and machines.

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The result of the Bench Warrant Pilot Project for the Cook County Circuit Court is the most robust and advanced warrant delivery system in the world, with streamlined processes and substantially reduced costs. Yet, perhaps the most invaluable benefit of the program is that law enforcement officials are now free from pushing paperwork and can return to the streets to fight crime.

To read the complete Cook County / DigitalBridge Digital Warrants Pilot Program case study, please visit:
<http://www.digitalbridge.com/en/us/downloads/dbjust-cs-20081204-01.pdf>.

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